

35, Westholm,
London, N.W. 11.
Jan. 10, 1945.

Dear Mr. Gander,

Many thanks for your letter of Dec. 5, enclosing copies of the S.P.C., which I was very glad to see. It was quite interesting to read my little article in your paper: and I was interested, too, in the article on Hamilton Edwards, whom I knew well in the old days. He has a very honourable mention in my Autobiography.

PIE may not find its way across the Atlantic during the War, especially as it sells so quickly that the issues are very soon out of print. But I put in at once for a copy of CHRISTMAS PIE to send to you, and I enclose it herewith: you will find 'Frank Richards' and 'Carcroft' on Page 51. In a short story there is not much room for that prolific author to move: but it is, at least, a sample of what is to come, when paper is once more available. There will be another "Carcroft" story in 'SPRING PIE'.

Frank Richards's latest activity is the production of cross-word puzzles in Latin, which really is an unique idea, and ought, I think, to interest many readers. But the most difficult task in the world is to induce an editor to take a single step off the beaten track. However, I now have an unusually intelligent editor at least looking at a specimen, and shall hope for the best till I hear the worst. I well remember that when 'Billy Bunter' first came to life in my fertile brain, I offered him to an editor for whom I wrote a great deal at that time, and the wise man "did not see much in him"---and poor Bunter had to be put into cold storage for several years---till the "Magnet" came along. I really think that the event proved that the author's judgment, in that case, was rather better than the

editor's. Bunter lasted for thirty-three years after he had once got into print. So, I shall hope that Frank Richards will get away with his Latin cross-words. Actually, I had one published many years ago, in a paper called "Modern Boy": and the interest it excited among the readers was quite unexpected ~~nam videtur in unum impendit~~ ---net by me, for I was sure that it would interest many, as was demonstrated by the correspondence that poured in. Oddly enough, it caused more interest than a French cross-word I had published earlier. I am now trying to persuade an editor to publish a set of cross-word puzzles, in Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian: which surely ought to "go" as it has never been done before: but alas! the fact that a thing has never been done before, causes the average editor to develop characteristics remarkably resembling those of a mule. But as I am now in touch with an unusually intelligent specimen, one is permitted to hope, like the young men in the Victorian novels,

By the way, in turning out lumber in search of salvage, I have lately come upon some copies of a song I had published about forty years ago. It is a football song, called "On the Ball". If you would be interested in the metrical performances of Frank Richards, let me know, and I will send along a copy. I used to write a great deal of verse in my younger days, and there must be any amount of it "scattered far and wide, by mount and stream and sea" ---now all gone into the Ewigkeit, which perhaps is the best place for it. Indeed I am still writing verse, and have lately completed the "book" of a musical comedy: but are the theatrical managers jumping at it? Not so's you'd notice it, as the Rio Kid used to say. They have no more jump in them than the Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, after Smiley's friend poured the shot into it.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Charles Hamilton
(Frank Richards)