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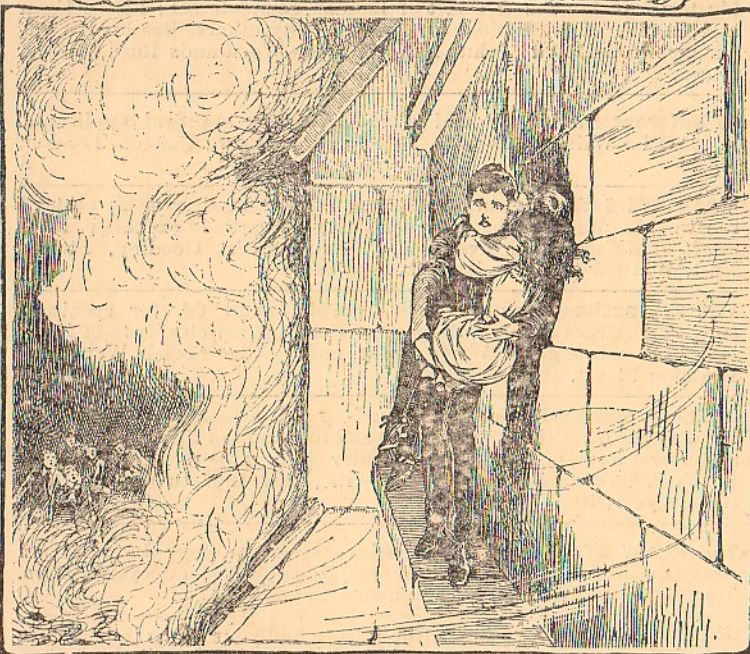
LIBRARY

Vol. 2.

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FOR ALL

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By
FRANK
RICHARDS



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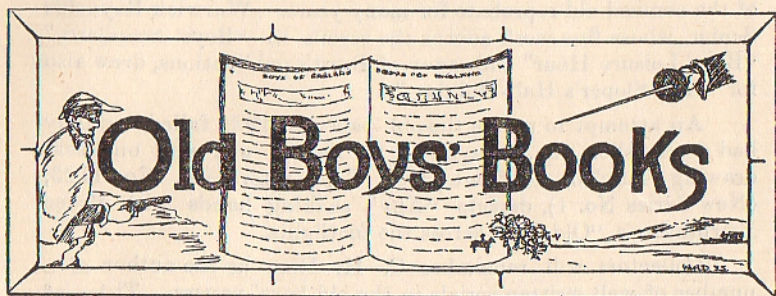
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The Collector's Miscellany

*A journal for collectors of Old and Modern Boys'
Books, Bloods, Penny Number Romances, Etc.*

No. 8 (5TH. SERIES)

APRIL, 1947



WHO INVENTED ALLY SLOPER ?

BY F. N. WEARING

I NOTICE a demand is springing up among boys' book collectors for copies of "Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday," a popular humorous periodical of the eighties and nineties, running from 1883 to 1893. The inventor of Ally Sloper was Charles H. Ross, editor of "Judy," and the first appearance of Ally Sloper was in a full page of pictures entitled "Some of the Mysteries of Loan and Discount," in the issue of that paper for August 14th, 1867.

Ross himself confirmed this in print in the "Sloper" Summer Number for 1885. "Some years ago," the former proprietor said, "For many years I met Charles H. Ross practically every day of the week, and I never heard him speak to the contrary." All the drawings in the above mentioned subject are plainly signed C.H. R. Later drawings were signed M.D. or Marie Duval, and this has led to confusion. Marie Duval was an actress ; her real name was Tessier. She was clever and accomplished, and became the wife of Charles H. Ross, who no doubt, availed himself of her artistic tendency in helping him with his Sloper drawings. His work was always crude and amateurish ; its redeeming character was its humour.

But it was W. G. Baxter who really created the Sloper family as known to the British public, from the year 1884

onward. Taking Ross's "crudities" as a foundation, Baxter turned all the characters into grotesque human beings. On Baxter's retirement from "Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday" his place was taken by W. F. Thomas who drew the front page illustration of the comical old reprobate for many years. Warwick Reynolds Senior, whose fine work adorns the serials in "Boys' Standard," "Boys' Leisure Hour" and many of Brett's publications, drew also for "Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday."

An attempt to revive the old paper in 1922 failed and only had a very short run, though W. G. Baxter was still on deck, drawing "Ally" on the front page. Copy before me, No. 1723, (New Series No. 1), depicts "Ally" shaking hands with Bruce Bairnfather's "Old Bill" across the footlights.

Collectors will remember C. H. Ross as the author of a number of well written serials in the old boys' papers. Titles of some of these are : "Philip's Perils" (Boys of England, No. 142, Vol. 6, Aug. 4, 1869) ; "Clam the Arab Grand" (No. 121, Vol. 5, May 10, 1870) ; "The Young Deerslayer," (No. 141, Vol. 6, Sept. 27, 1870), both the latter appearing in "Young Men of Great Britain," and "Runaway Jack" ("Boy's Herald," No. 15, Vol. 1, Apl. 14, 1877). Ross also wrote a number of serials in the sixties for "Reynold's Miscellany" and "Bow Bells." A friend of mine is of the opinion that Ross was also the author of "Charley Wag, the new Jack Sheppard," a rare old blood, issued in 73 penny numbers, about 1861.

THE COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY

**A journal for collectors and all who are interested in
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THREE ALDINE LIBRARIES

No. 1—THE DICK TURPIN LIBRARY

BY HERBERT LECKENBY

—continued from page 102

BY the summer of 1909 the "Turpins" would appear to have lost their appeal. This was the year in which the English Channel was flown by aeroplane for the first time, and maybe the lads wanted a quicker means of transport than that supposed to be provided by Black Bess. Anyway, No. 182 saw the last of the "Dick Turpin Library" through readers were asked to look out for the next numbers. Actually though, there was an attempt to carry on under a new name, for in Oct. 1909 there appeared instead "The Black Bess Library". The size was exactly the same as its predecessor, but the cover design was different, drawn by the evergreen Robert Prowse, with his familiar titling, which could be recognised at a glance.

Stephen Agnew continued to write the stories and he seems to have surpassed himself in an attempt to find plots new and bizarre. For example: No. 1 "Silver Spurs, or, the Secret of the Veiled Princess." No. 4 "The Snake Charmer's Secret, or the Beadle of Brentwood." No. 7 "Black Bess in Peril, or, Captain Mystery." However, even titles like those failed to attract and with No 14 the proprietors started playing tricks with time, for Claude Duval somehow wandered in, in a story entitled "The Man of Mystery, or, the Days of Claude Duval." No. 18 however saw the finish of the "Black Bess Library."

Years later, when the Aldine Company had fallen on hard times, the copyright of the Turpin stories was bought by Newnes and some of them were re-issued, one edition being pocket size at 3d. They had a good run, but to old timers they lacked the appeal of the originals, and to-day there is little or no attempt to collect them.

No. 2—THE CLAUDE DUVAL LIBRARY

ENCOURAGED by the success of the "Dick Turpin Library," the Aldine Company, on Saturday, October 4th, 1902, brought out the first four numbers of the "Claude Duval Library" and the titles were: -

- 1—"The Sword of Vengeance, or, how Claude Duval and Prince Rupert became Friends."

- 2—"Strike for the King, or, the Black Masked Cavalier."
- 3—"In the Track of Death, or, Claude Duval's Fight for the Royal Standard."
- 4—"The Fall of the Axe, or, Claude Duval takes to the King's Highway."

The page size was exactly the same as that of the "Turpins." Robert Prowse was once again at work with the covers, and if anything they were more picturesque than those concerning the later highwayman, for Claude, who was reputed to dance with the ladies in the moonlight on the King's Highway, cut even a gay and gallant figure in his Cavalier dress. There was plenty of scope for adventurous plots, for it was the period of the Great Fire and the Great Plague. Charlton Lea, who wrote the majority of the stories, made the most of his opportunities, introducing those notorious characters, Judge Jefferies, Colonel Blood and My Lord Rochester.

Even so, for some inexplicable reason, the "Duvals" had a much shorter run than the "Turpins" for there were only 48 numbers in all, the last being "Every Inch a Rogue, or, Claude Duval Seals the Doom of the Jesuit General." A few of the stories were republished in the "Boy's Own" and "Diamond" Libraries.

No 3—THE ROBIN HOOD LIBRARY

ALTHOUGH I have left the "Robin Hoods" until last, they were slightly senior to the "Turpins" for the first four numbers appeared on the bookstalls on October 19th, 1901. They were slightly smaller in page size than the "Turpins" or "Duvals," but had 32 pages instead of 24. The covers were distinguished by a yellow border, and, of course, the Lincoln green of the Outlaws of Sherwood Forest were often very much in evidence. The first four numbers were :—

- 1—"Sweet Liberty or Death, or, how Robin Hood became an Outlaw of the Greenwood."
- 2—"Robin Hood and the Tyrant of Nottingham."
- 3—"The Fighting Friar of Sherwood Forest."
- 4—"Robin Hood to the Rescue."

The second four made their appearance nearly three months later on January 4th, 1902. They continued to be issued in sets of four at about intervals of about ten weeks, though towards the end, eager readers had to wait a little longer.

(continued)

THE ORIGIN OF SWEENEY TODD

BY JOHN MEDCRAFT



ABOUT a century and a quarter ago, a small magazine named "The Tell Tale" ran its brief career of 48 parts and was then numbered with the past. Amongst the contents of this rather uninspiring journal, comprising stories, articles, legends and poetry with one half page woodcut per number, is one short story which grips the imagination. Thomas Peckett Prest must have read this story in those far off days and was inspired thereby, to write his most famous romance "The String of Pearls, or, the Barber of Fleet Street" published by Edward Lloyd in 1850. (see illustration on page 127). About 35 years later the story suffered further elaboration at the behest of Charles Fox to emerge in its best known form as "Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber of Fleet Street" (see illustration on page 128).

In christening Sweeney Todd, Prest was probably influenced by the name of an even more callous and debased wretch and one who really had existed, namely, Sawney Bean, the Monster of Scotland. I think this can be safely assumed for the two names have a rhythmic similarity which seems to rule out the possibility of chance selection, moreover both men were in the same line of business.

The story from which Sweeney Todd germinated is now long forgotten and for the benefit of all collectors and students of the lore of the Penny Dreadful we reproduce it in verbatim.

"TERRIFIC STORY OF THE RUE DE LA HARPE, AT PARIS!"

"In the Rue de la Harpe, which is a long, dismal, ancient street in the faubourg of St. Marcell, is a space or gap in the line of building upon which formerly stood two dwelling houses, instead of which stands now a melancholy memorial, signifying that upon this spot no human habitation shall ever be erected, no human being ever must reside.

Curiosity will, of course, be greatly excited to ascertain what it was that had rendered this devoted spot so obnoxious to humanity, and yet so interesting to history.

Two attached and opulent neighbours, residing in the same province, not very remote from the French capital, having occa-

sion to go to town on certain money transactions, agreed to travel thence and to return together, which was to be done with as much expedition as possible. They were on foot, a very common way, even at the present, for persons of much respectability to travel in France, and were attended, as most pedestrians are, by a faithful dog.

Upon their arrival at the Rue de la Harpe, they stepped into the shop of a perquier to be shaved before they would proceed upon their business or enter into the more fashionable streets. So limited was their time, and so peremptory was their return, that the first man who was shaved proposed to his companion that, while he was undergoing the operation of the razor, he who was already shorn would run to execute a small commission in the neighbourhood, promising that he would be back before the other were ready to move. For this purpose he left the shop of the barber.

On returning, to his great surprise and vexation, he was informed that his friend was gone; but as the dog, which was the dog of the absentee, was sitting outside of the door, the other presumed that he was only gone out for a moment, perhaps in pursuit of him; so expecting him back every moment, he chatted to the barber while he watched for his friend's return.

Such a considerable time elapsed that the stranger now became quite impatient, he went in and out, up and down the street, still the dog remained stationed at the door. 'Did he leave no message?' 'No;'—all the barber knew was that when he was shaved he went away. 'It was very odd.'

The dog remaining stationed at the door, was to the traveller conclusive evidence that his master was not far off; he went in and out, and up and down the street again. Still no sign of him whatever. Impatience now became alarm; alarm became sympathetic. The poor animal exhibited marks of restlessness in yelps and howlings which so affected the sensibility of the stranger that he threw out some insinuations not much to the credit of 'Monsieur;' an altercation ensued, and the traveller was indignantly ordered by the perquier to quit his botique.

Upon quitting the shop, he found it impossible to remove the dog from the door. No whistling, no calling, no patting would do, stir he would not. In his agony this afflicted man raised a crowd about the door, to whom he told his lamentable story. The dog became an object of universal interest, and of close attention.

He shivered and he howled but no seduction, no caressing, no experiment could make him desert his post. By some of the populace it was proposed to send for the police; by others was proposed a remedy more summary, namely, to force in and search the house which was immediately done. The crowd burst in; every apartment was searched—was searched in vain. There was no trace whatever of the countryman.

During this investigation the dog still remained sentinel at the shop door which was bolted within to keep out the crowd that was immense outside.

After a fruitless search and much altercation, the barber, who had prevailed upon those who had forced in to quit his house, came to the door and was haranguing the populace, declaring most solemnly his innocence, when the dog suddenly sprang upon him and flew at his throat in such a state of terrific exasperation, that his victim fainted and was with the greatest difficulty rescued from being torn to pieces. The dog seemed in a state of intellectual agony and fury.

It was now proposed to give the animal his way, to see what course he would pursue. The moment he was let loose he flew through the shop and darted downstairs into a dark cellar where he set up the most dismal lamentation. Lights being procured, an aperture was discovered in the wall communicating with the next house which was immediately surrounded, and in the cellar whereof was found the body of the unfortunate man who had been missing. The person who kept this shop was a pattissier.

It is unnecessary to say that these miscreants were brought to trial and executed. The facts that appeared upon their trial and, afterwards, upon confession were these:—

Those incautious travellers, whilst in the shop of this fiend, unhappily talked about the money they had about them; and the wretch, who was a robber and murderer by profession as soon as the one turned his back, drew his razor across the throat of the other and plundered him. The remainder of this story is almost too horrible for human ears, but it is not upon that account any the less credible.

The pastry cook, whose shop was so remarkable for savoury patties, that they were sent for to the Rue de la Harpe from the most distant parts of Paris, was the partner of the peruquier; and those who were murdered by the razor of the one, were concealed by the knife of the other in those identical patties; by

which, independently of his partnership in these frequent robberies, he had made a fortune.

This case was of so terrific a nature, it was made a part of the sentence of the law, that besides the execution of those monsters upon the rack, the houses in which they perpetrated those infernal deeds, should be pulled down and that the spot upon which they stood should be marked out to posterity with horror and execration."

FINIS

THE "BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY"

1st. SERIES, SEPT. 1905—MAY 1925

COMPILED BY HERBERT LECKENBY

(continued from page 106)

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| 154—In the Far Wild Seas (Jack, Sam & P.) | S. Clarke Hook |
| 155—Ten Years Penal Servitude (Sexton Blake)— | — — — |
| 156—Gypsy of St. Simons | David Goodwin |
| 157—Earl of St. Simons | David Goodwin |
| 158—White King of Africa | W. Murray Graydon |
| 159—Voyage of the Vulcan (J. S. & P.) | S. Clarke Hook |
| 160—Trapper and Redskin | S. Clarke Hook |
| 161—Across Siberia | W. Murray Graydon |
| 162—Cad of St. Cortons | David Goodwin |
| 163—The Rebel Chieftain (J. S. & P.) | S. Clarke Hook |
| 164—Smythe the Cortonian | David Goodwin |
| 165—Sexton Blake's Quest | — — — |
| 166—The Haygarth Detective | Jack North |
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| 168—Champion of the World | Allan Blair |
| 169—The Wrong Trail (Jack, Sam & Pete) | S. Clarke Hook |
| 170—King of the Ring | Allan Blair |
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| 173—Hal, the Lion Tamer | E. Harcourt Burrage |
| 174—Scrapegrace of Swishall School | Claude Heathcote |
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| 179—Under the Southern Cross | Reginald Wray |

(continued)

IMITATION GREYFRIARS AND ST. JIM'S STORIES IN THE "MAGNET" AND "GEM" LIBRARIES. By John R. Shaw.

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Among the "Gems" containing reprinted St. Jim's stories there are the following imitations: - Nos. 1304, 1327, 1370, 1377—78, 1448—49, 1478, 1512, 1541, 1577, 1586—87, 1608, 1611, 1622. This concludes the list; but please read the note at the end of this article.

"Gems" Nos. 1625 to 1663 all contain new original stories written by Mr. Hamilton.

The St. Jim's stories in "Gems" Nos. 253 (reprinted in 1444), 254, 255 (reprinted in 1453) and 261 differ in style of writing from the other stories of this period, but they are not imitations. They are stories which were first published in "Pluck" during the years 1906-07, and subsequently re-written by Martin Clifford for the "Gem" Library.

A few stories by Frank Richards and Martin Clifford were printed in the "Boys' Friend 3d. (later 4d) Library" (First Series). Most of these volumes are genuine stories, but there are four imitations among them. The following are the numbers of all about or connected with Greyfriars or St. Jim's Schools. They are all original stories except where otherwise stated. First the list of

those written by Mr. Hamilton : — Nos. 30, 38, 288, 328, 367 (reprint), 383, 509 (reprint), 513 (reprint) and 517 (reprint). The four imitations are Nos. 153, 276, 319 and 489.

NOTE. It is not possible to make these lists of imitations quite complete because the writer's sets of the "Magnet" and "Gem" each lack about 20 numbers. However the authorship of only 28 is in doubt, as the remainder are possessed in the form of reprints. Here is a list of the 28 numbers : — "Magnets" Nos. 282, 290, 293, 339, 382, 400—01, 404, 412, 428, 455, 688, 695, 698, 717, 720—21. "Gems" Nos. 74, 78, 81, 99, 384—85, 388—89, 392, 423 and 491. Collectors possessing these numbers may like to read them, and to decide for themselves as to the authorship of the stories. Some are known to be imitations.

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Wanted Halfpenny Union Jacks, No. 456 "Dermot the Outlaw" numbers containing "Boys of St. Dunstons" and "Three Jolly Midshipmen", also Christmas number for 1902 containing "The Witch of the Moor." Will purchase or exchange for other halfpenny Union Jacks. Also "Books for the Bairns", Aldine Red Rover, Ally Sloper, Comic Home Journal. Pettingell, Highfield Lodge, Wise Lane, London, N.W 7. 8

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THEY MET SEXTON BLAKE

No. 2—LEON KESTREL

BY H. M. BOND

IT is possible that, of all the strange criminal figures who have featured in Sexton Blake stories, Leon Kestrel, the "master mummer," was the strangest and also probably the most talented. Blake has had to fight all kinds of crooks in his time, but I do not think that any of them have baffled him and taunted him more than this American actor with the criminal kink in his brain. Kestrel had a great respect for the detective, however, and although Blake had been at his mercy on numerous occasions he has always refrained from taking full advantage of his chances. He always declared that it would be an insult to the detective to take his life, but quite apart from his respect for the sleuth's capabilities it was apparent that he really enjoyed his contacts with Blake. This curious, and quite unusual attitude of a criminal to his natural enemy made the Kestrel series even more attractive, and Blake for his part had great admiration for the talents of the Mummer. In recent stories by the creator of Kestrel, Lewis Jackson, the Mummer's name has often been mentioned in connection with some disguise that the detective has adopted, and it is therefore safe to say that Blake has learned quite a bit about the art of make-up from him.

Kestrel's conviction was, that the simplest disguise was often the most effective, and it is a fact that in the old days the reader could never be sure whether or not a certain character in the story might actually be the criminal in disguise. The Mummer had a hundred methods of disguising his identity at a moment's notice which was very confusing, both to the reader and to the upholders of law in the yarns. On one occasion Kestrel disguised himself as Sexton Blake, and actually called at Baker Street. Even Mrs. Bardell was convinced that it was her master, and when later having to account for Blake's movements on a certain evening to the police, unwittingly gave the police officer false information, which considerably embarrassed the detective. A certain amount of amusement was derived from this situation by all concerned when the affair was over, but at the time Kestrel had the biggest laugh for Blake was completely baffled.

Some idea of Kestrel's audacity can be gained by relating how he once kidnapped a certain well-known magistrate and took his place in court the same day. This was on an occasion when

Fifette Bierce, Kestrel's beautiful accomplice, had been arrested and was unlikely to get bail. Of course the actor-crook gave her bail all right, and once again laughed at the law.

Perhaps Lewis Jackson was inclined to make his characters exceed the bounds of credulity at times, but one must confess that the idea was intriguing and Kestrel was a very loveable villain. All the members of his "party" (he hated the word "gang") were of a very quiet nature, but each was extremely clever in his or her profession, which helped the Mummer considerably in his various escapades. Madrano the steeplejack, for instance, was invaluable to Kestrel and one does not need any explanation of the reason why.

But the Mummer gave short shrift to failures, and wielded a particular unhealthy looking whip at times. Lashes from this whip were more effective than lashes from the tongue, in Kestrel's estimation. But rarely did his accomplice-victims have any desire for revenge. It was a case of failure, they knew their fault, and so took the punishment! Some idea of the influence the criminal had over his minions can be gained from this.

Yes, a strange character indeed was Leon Kestrel, but once again an unique one who has never been surpassed in detective fiction. It is to be hoped that Lewis Jackson will revive his old creation at the earliest opportunity for I am sure that he would be as popular to-day as he was twenty odd years ago.

NOTE: The next character to be dealt with in this series will be
DOCTOR HUXTON RYMER.

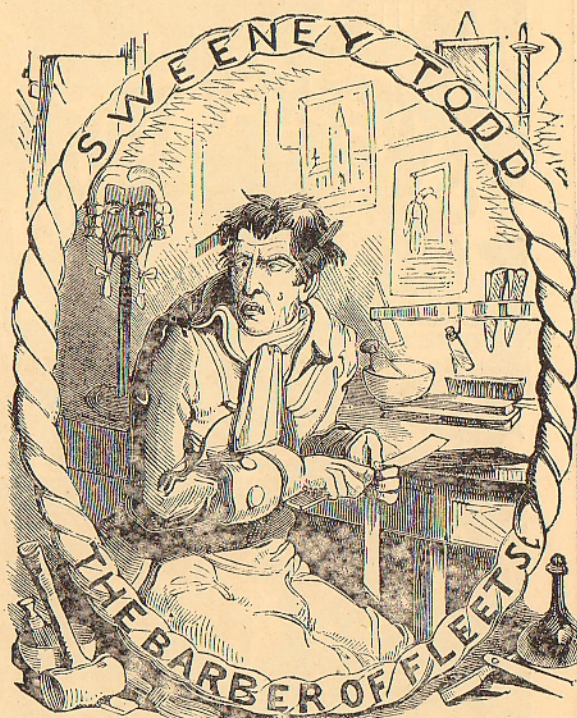
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A few copies of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 (5th. series) of this journal are still in print, price 1/3d. each post free. Parks, Printer, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorks.

A set of the Aldine "Dick Turpin Library" was translated into Spanish and published in that country, complete with covers.

FOURTEEN numbers of the Aldine "Robin Hood Library" were reprinted by that company. These were wrongly numbered by the publishers 1 to 14. Actually they were Nos. 11 to 24 of the original issue.

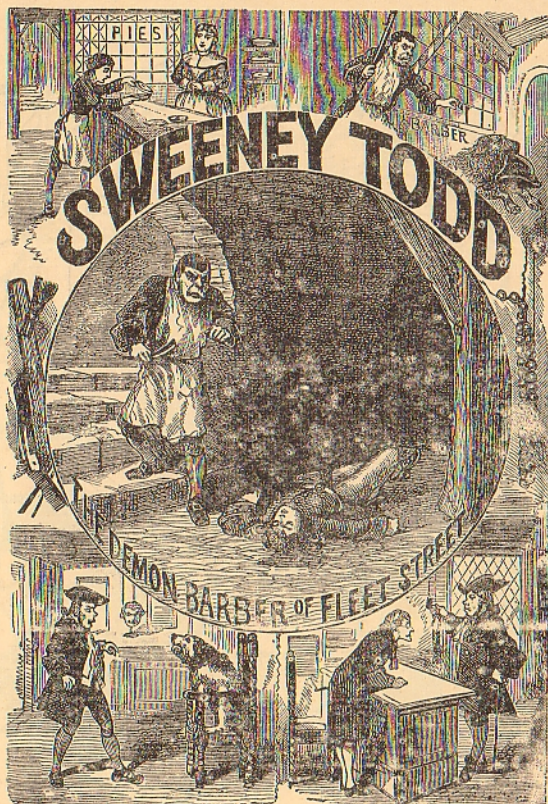
THE STRING OF PEARLS.



[FROM A RARE OLD PAINTING BY READING, IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.]

see article on page 119

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See article on page 119

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