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VANITY FAIR

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JOSEPH PARKS, 2 IRVIN AVENUE, SALTBURN-BY-SEA.

VANITY FAIR OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB.

SUBSCRIPTION 2/6 PER YEAR.

Formed for the purpose of the sale and exchange of old boys papers, and for drawing into closer companionship lovers of the old boys journals.

Each month a list will be published and mailed free to members. The list will be in three sections: for Sale, Exchange, and Wanted.

All that is necessary to become a member is to forward a postal order for 2/6 to Joseph Parks, 2 Irvin Avenue, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorks, with list of what you have to sell; or wish to exchange; or what you are in search of.

Announcements must be kept as brief as possible, and consist of not more than 48 words, but can be changed monthly. The subscription merely covers postage, etc., but affords at once a reliable medium for collectors to add to their collection or dispose of their duplicates.

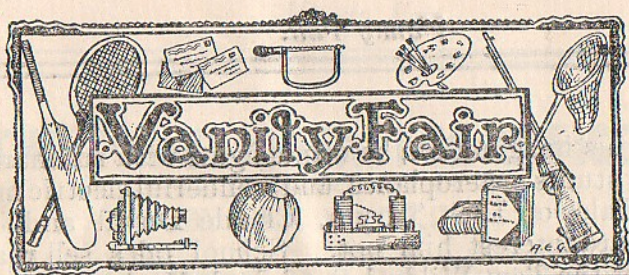
We solicit the support of all interested, for unless a sufficient number of members are enrolled it cannot be a success. Send that P.O. to-day, it may save you pounds, and bring to you that elusive item you have been searching years for.

JOSEPH PARKS, 2, IRVIN AVENUE,
SALTBURN-BY-THE-SEA.

WANTED A CHECK LIST OF OLD BOYS PERIODICALS.

I think I am correct in stating that "Vanity Fair" is the first and only periodical devoted primarily to "Penny Bloods", and I know that the Editor will be only too pleased to act upon any suggestion for the benefit of his readers. I therefore, suggest that one of "Vanity Fair's" well-informed contributors, should send in a complete list of Old Boy's Periodicals for publication. He could commence with the earliest known Magazine and give the dates of the first and last numbers, the number of pages, size, and name of publisher. Other brief details of interest could be added, such as the principal tales, editors, authors, artists, etc. The list would of course be arranged chronologically, and be published in serial form. Such a list should prove of immense value to collectors. Who will oblige?

EDWARD F. HERDMAN.



No. 17, Vol. 2.

December, 1925.

PAST AND PRESENT. THE PENNY DREADFUL. A COMPARISON

BY JOHN JAMES WILSON.

The old penny dreadful is as dead as the dodo. But the more expensive 'orrible now occupies its place. As a lover of the old boys journals I have wondered that present day editors have not paid attention to this class of literature. Now, that it is dead, we are just beginning to realise its worth. We old boys found it out decades ago yet remember it lovingly.

Some weeks ago I dropped into an up-to-date news agency and for the fun of the thing enquired for the "Boys of England". The youth behind the counter shook his back hair over his face and said he would fetch the head salesman. The head salesman was an elderly man who knew the newsvending business inside out and liked to talk about it. "Sorry, sir", said he, "but there are no Boys of England now. Alas, they are no more". "And what class of literature for boys reading has taken its place?" I asked. "Oh, the Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake sort of stuff. Their sale is enormous. The literary tastes of the modern boy is very much the same as when I was a lad. Boys love adventure but the modern boy wants it up-to-date and expects more scientific ingenuity. Highwaymen, Pirates and Red Indians don't

excite his imagination; he wants fights with submarines, daring stunts in aeroplanes, and wonderful electric machines. Tales of Dick Turpin, Claude Duval and Jack Sheppard interest him not. School tales sell readily but not the Tom Wildrake and Jack Harkaway type.

Speaking of the writers of the old boys journals, take the King Pippin stories by Roland Quiz, Treasure Island by Robt. Lewis Stephenson, the Harkaway series by Bracebridge Hemying, the Mutiney of the Thunderer and the Idols Eye by Stephen Hayward, the Crusoe tales by Percy B. St. John, The Headless Horseman by Capt. Mayne Reid, The Mexican border tales by Gustave Aimard, and hundreds of others. I should say Mr Burray the author of Ching-Ching and Wildrake stories and most of those that appeared over the name of Geo. Emmett, was the best and most prolific writer of boys stories.

Speaking of the old writers I must mention the artists who illustrated the old journals. First is Hablot K. Brown, (Phiz), then Harry Maguire, Proctor, Sir John Gilbert and Prowse. There is not such an array of talent possible as these old authors and artists to draw upon in these days, and certainly none to compare with them. From a literary and artistic standpoint the present writers and illustrators of boys journals are far in the background of their prototpyes. The old authors and artists were men of considerable attainments.

The present day youth is less fortunate than the boys of the seventies and eighties. The old journals only charm elderly men now because they bring back the days of their youth. Yes, the old periodicals are as dead as the dodo, aye, as dead as the boy himself, for has not the present decade produced that peculiar paradox, the boy-old-man?" The old newsvender shook his head sorrowfully, as I shook hands with him and thanked him for our pleasant little chat.

THE PENNY DREADFUL OFFICES.

BY BEN WINSKILL.

Between 1885 and 1890, it was my good fortune to hold the important post of errand boy in a Fleet Street publishing office, and as my pet hobby was reading as many Highwayman stories as my pocket money would afford, it was quite natural that I should take a strong interest in the offices from which they came. It was my custom to always buy copies at the offices themselves and I must have become pretty well known to some of the men whose names appeal so much to us in these later days. Charles Fox managed his own business and had but one assistant. He served me many times over the counter of the old Shoe Lane office which I must say was one of the cleanest and tidiest of them. He never objected strongly to giving me a poster when I asked for one and I had then a very interesting collection of these. The old yellow posters with page illustrations from Turnpike Dick, Sweeny Todd and Ching-Ching delighted me most. The office afterwards moved to Red Lion Court, and I remember that Fox was a hearty bluff sort of man who always seemed more interested in the big winner than he did in Turnpike Dick, an attitude that I could not understand.

The old office of E. J. Brett in Fleet Street, was crammed from floor to ceiling with the bound volumes and penny numbers and was a very busy place. Certainly not so clean as Fox's. I saw E. J. Brett there several times, though without knowing then who he was. There were about half a dozen men and boys serving and packing there.

Wm. Cates trade counter was a very small corner of the works in Bouverie Street presided over by a typical young London publisher. It was furnished with a

small highly polished counter and there was a bookcase displaying all the cloth bound volumes, which fascinated me. The "News of the World" machines roar now where I used to watch the wharfedale producing the old penny numbers in the basement.

Harrisons, where Blueskin came from, was in a dark corner of Bride Court and the Black Bess numbers where all arranged in little boxes along the wall.

Ritchie's was a busy wholesale news concern, presided over by Ritchie himself. It was always full to the door and overflowing with boys from the newsagents. The publishing of the boys books at that time always seemed to be something of a sideline.

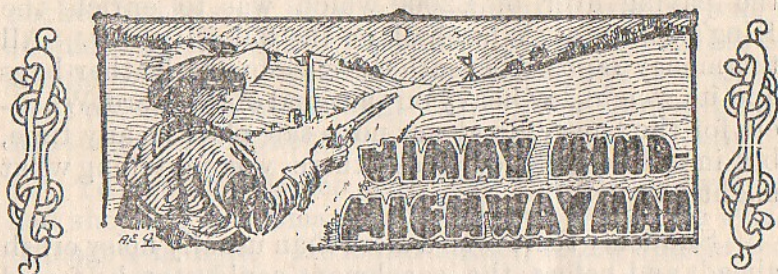
It was likewise with Henry Vickers at the corner of Drury Court. In those days it was one of the big wholesale distributors of newspapers and had a very big counter trade.

S. Dacre Clarks office, at 83, Farringdon Street, was an interesting place. It was the house in which Tit-Bits was first issued in London. I worked in the house afterwards on a paper called the Liberal and Radical, and it was after this paper ceased publication that Guy Rayner issued the Boys Popular from there. I saw him often in those days and used to wonder if he was the great ventriloquist he was supposed to be.

Hendersons, which published the Young Folks Paper and many story books was a well organized publishing office which for business method might have equalled many a higher class place.

I was the first stranger who went into Answers office on its very first publishing morning and payed a penny for number one. I little thought then that his activities would put an end to all the wonderful old books that then seemed the most desirable literature in the world.

One more office was that of the Boys of London. It was printed from plates sent over from New York and Jackson and a boy were all the staff I ever saw there. The boy and I were great chums and I had a fine set of the paper almost complete, sorted out from the returns. There are now in my collection 100 copies but not of that fine original lot which I kept for years and then sold.



BY BEN WINSKILL.

The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports lolled back in his roomy old coach as it gently rolled down the long slope from Dover Castle to the London Road. His ears took in gratefully the measured hoof beats and the rattle of the accoutrements of his escort as they rode two before and two behind the gilded equipage.

The night was dark and a fine mist made the great lamps in front appear to turn the air into clouds of golden grey though they were of little use for the discernment of objects much beyond the ears of the horses. Over the cobbles of the Market Square it rolled and into the quaint old main street where an occasional oil lamp swung across the road, served to keep the vehicle from missing the road and bumping into the posts that lined the way.

Soon however these lamps came to an end and the men in front were thinking some very hard things about

his Lordship which they dared not say, for the blackness could almost be felt and many a time the coachman was warned of trouble by hearing a curse whilst the horse of one of the soldiers scrambled from a ditch.

But the Lord Warden and his Lady were to grace a Ball given by The Marquis of Blean at his mansion at Shepherds Well. Moreover there was business to be transacted—business of state—which involved the paying over of £2000 which was to enrich the King's coffers at Whitehall on the following day. All this money reposed beneath the cushions in leather bags and its weight lay heavy on the mind of the Lord Warden, for the Dover Road was not a safe place at any time, but in this terrible darkness there was no telling what might happen.

Suddenly there was a more than usually noisy crash ahead, and before the coachman could stop he found that all his horses were floundering in the road along with those of the first part of the escort.

Those behind made to ride forward, but they found beside each of them a masked man with a pistol held at each of their heads.

They were brave men and would have drawn their swords had not someone toppled them out of their saddles very neatly.

In a trice they were all disarmed and belts were buckled round their arms rendering them quite helpless.

Down came the window with a crash as his Lordship thrust forth his head, only to bump his nose on the muzzle of a pistol. "Be careful your Lordship", said a clear but firm voice, "You may hurt yourself".

"Fear nothing Lady", the voice continued as her Ladyship began to scream, "Jimmy Hind does not hurt

women, nor anyone else if they do as he tells them".

The door swung open and Jimmy could be seen standing with a pistol in his hand inviting them to alight. Her Ladyship seemed rather struck by the handsome Knight of the Road, for she made no further outcry but allowed him to assist her to alight.

The Lord Warden thought this a good opportunity to try to save his wealth, and drawing a pistol from a pocket by the seat, he was presenting it over his wife's shoulder when a sharp voice from the other side advised him to drop it. Startled, he turned and the pistol went off, but the bullet went through the front window and took off the coachmans hat, much to his dismay.

To give him his due, the Lord Warden thought he had shot the coachman, and bounced out to see what damage was done. He found himself seized and carried away to the ditch, where he was gently deposited, while Jimmy soon found the money beneath the seat.

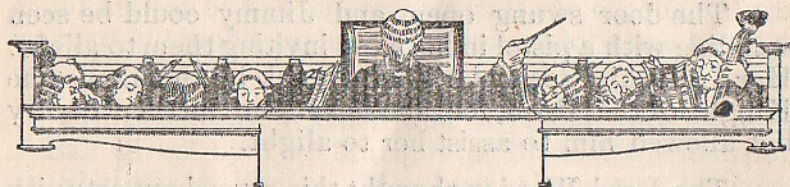
There was a slight scurry, and then a dead silence fell, except for the moans of the Lord Warden who was face downwards in the mud.

Jimmy Hind and the three Alsatian Night Riders had disappeared as though the earth had swallowed them.

A mile up, on the road to London, the four were removing soft pads from their horses hoofs. "An easy victory boys", said Jimmy. "But we shall be chased for this." And so it came about, for the Lord Warden having cleared his mouth of mud, released the crestfallen soldiers and having righted the horses, they left the coach to get to its journey's end as best it could, while they started helter skelter towards Canterbury in the hope of finding some trace of the robbers.

The Chase to London will be told in the next story.

THE FOURPENNY GAFF



BY JOSEPH PARKS.

Twenty years ago, before the Cinema had girdled the world with a white screen, one of the most looked forward to event in the life of all villages of importance and practically every small town not boasting of a permanent Theatre, was what was vulgarly known as the "Fourpenny Gaff".

Many of my readers will have pleasant memories of these old "Barn-stormers", now, alas, a thing of the past. Dickens and other writers have given us an insight into the lives of these harum-scarum vendors of the Drama. They usually arrived during the fall of the year, and, provided the necessary patronage was forthcoming stayed until the following spring.

The first signs of the artistes arrival were usually vivid displays of Bi-coloured posters informing all and sundry that Mr——— and Company would positively open on such a night with a galaxy of Drama and Comedy. A fresh piece would be performed nightly, the whole to conclude with a laughable farce. Mr——— further invites the inhabitants to roll up in their thousands. At the foot of the posters was often a motto; one in particular that appeared to be popular amongst them was, "Its not in mortals to command success, but we'll do more—deserve it." However, let us hie to their booth and witness these shining devotees of the Sock and Buskin.

The Theatre is pitched in a field adjoining the highway and near to the gateway. A long gaunt building with the canvas roof flapping noisily in the stiff breeze. A few flaring naphtha lamps mark the entrance and the adjoining pay-box. We pay the necessary coppers and enter. The booth is illuminated by lamps, and the keen atmosphere is warmed by a huge coke brazier. The seats with the exception of a few for those who prefer to pay a little extra, are arranged in tiers, bare forms in fact, not unlike a circus, but not withstanding, fairly comfortable. The curtain is a neatly painted Venetian scene showing numerous Gondolas, all in vivid colours.

A good audience has already assembled and the atmosphere is thick with tobacco smoke, and the smell of oranges—truly a strange admixture. One industrious youth is roasting potatoes over the brazier.

The manager takes several sly peeps round the curtain, then tinkle tinkle goes a little bell, up goes the foot-lights and the orchestra arrive. The orchestra consists of a little red nosed man with a fiddle, accompanied by a stout lady at the piano. They are soon busy grinding out some byegone popular airs. Tinkle, tinkle, again goes the bell, and we are soon engrossed in the melodrama of "The Corsican Brothers", with all its thrills, duels and excitement.

Who can forget those grand broad-sword combats—how we used to hoot the villain and cheer the hero when he rescued his fair lady? Who can forget those stirring times? A few pieces I can recollect are, Maria Martin, Sweeny Todd, Sixteen String Jack, The Silver King, Two Little Vagabonds, Jack Sheppard, and of course many of Shakespeare's plays. I well remember seeing Hamlet played. Hamlet was decidedly drunk, and the rest were well on their way to being so.

[TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH].

OLD WOOD-CUT BLOCKS.

BY EDWARD F. HERDMAN.

(Continued from page 36).

Towards the close of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, small books of songs and ballads were issued in large quantities throughout England and Scotland. The wars of the time were no doubt largely responsible for their publication. The perpetration of a crime, the trial of a criminal, or an event of general interest, were also made the occasion for the issue of a chap-book. Histories or Lives of noted outlaws and dashing highwaymen, were also issued. Robin Hood Dick Turpin, and Jack Sheppard were popular heroes even in those far off days. Another interesting and rare little book was "The Merry Life and Mad Exploits of Captain James Hind, the Great Robber of England."



FIGURE 6.

Then, a reader could get all about Dick Turpin, in prose or verse, compressed into 24 small pages for the popular

penny. Now the same tale can be spun out infinitely by enterprising authors.

These little chap-books were greatly favoured by soldiers, sailors, peasants, and the working classes generally, and were circulated by Chapmen, or Pedlars, when journeying through the country.

Almost invariably the books had on the front page a quaint wood-cut, more or less appropriate to the subject dealt with. Often the same cut was made to do duty for different publications. For example, we have in our collection two chap-books—one published in 1799 recording "Lord Howe's Victory," the other, printed in 1806, singing the praises of "Lord Duncan's Victory over the Dutch Fleet, Oct. 12. 1797." Both are illustrated with the same wood-cut, viz: two frigates in action. A wood engraving, showing a ship in full sail, was also a block kept in stock by printers for use in illustrating series of sea songs.



FIGURE 7.

The wood-cuts given in this article were, no doubt, used for the class of literature referred to, and during the

same period, for the chap-books. etc., we possess bear illustrations of similar size, style, and craftsmanship.

Fig. 6 shows a country squire walking with his dog through his grounds—a subject frequently met with in wood-cuts of about the year 1810. We have a songster in which the block is used to illustrate the song “My Dog and I”.



FIGURE 8.



FIGURE 9.

The subject of Fig. 7 is difficult to indentify, unless it is supposed to represent a shepherd and shepherdess. The block is of late 18th. century work and was probably cut in the provinces. The drawing of this subject

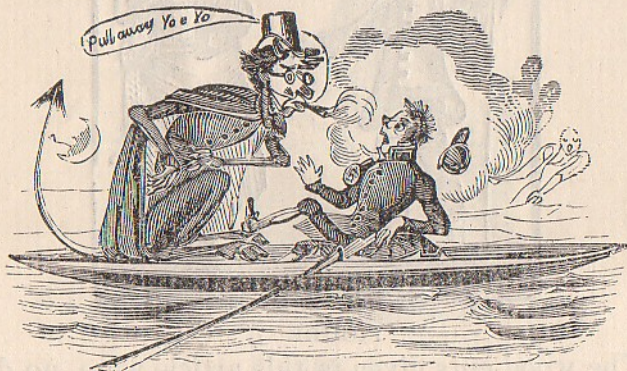


FIGURE 10.

is poor, although the workmanship of the block is not at all bad.

Figs. 8 and 9 are small wood-cuts too much worn to show the characteristic marks. We have seen similar small blocks used as tailpieces.

The next wood-cut (Fig. 10), is remarkably well drawn and executed. The subject, which is out of the usual, sufficiently explains itself. It dates back to the second decade of the 19th century, and is without doubt of London workmanship.

Another instalment of this out of the way serial will appear in next "V.F." Still more curious wood-cut illustrations—Editor.

THE "XMAS" NUMBER.

One of my boys has just brought it in and it was lying on the table when I entered—a brilliantly coloured thing—the Christmas Number of a modern boys paper.

After attending to the wants of the inner man, with my feet on the fender and a good pipe going, I took it up and dipped into its contents. They were uninspiring. A few stories placed in every period of the year but Christmas: some jokes, illustrated full page and coloured. Anything less "Xmassy" would have been hard to find. And looking at it our mind went back to the Xmas Numbers of the old "Penny Dreadfuls". These *were* Xmas Numbers. For a matter of four weeks, the announcement on the second last page of our weekly favourite had prepared us for its coming. A complete story "The Haunted——" something or another. It would have the old village inn with its roaring fire, its hearty landlord. There would be snow outside: mysterious travellers: a mysterious deed: a ghost: in short everything necessary

in an Xmas story. Of course we knew what it would contain, we knew the whole bag of tricks but our knowledge didn't prevent us on the morning of its appearance, being at the stationer's before the worthy man had scarce time to take down the shutters, eager to get the long anticipated number in our hands, and scan its pages. With what interest we did it, too; glancing at the illustrations; applying a critical and experienced eye, to the new serial just starting, and weighing it up in a way that would have made its author tremble, if he could have but seen it. Verily! those were the days.

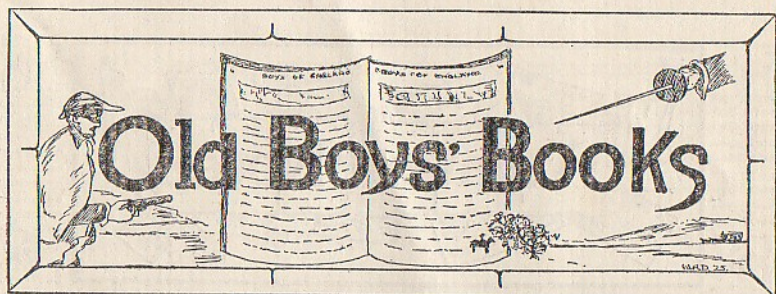
We again glance at the modern sample of Xmas literary fare in our hands and throw it contemptuously aside. It is a poor thing: the unworthy production of a degenerate age.

Matthew M. Hunter.

DEATH OF MR RALPH ROLLINGTON.

Your readers will be sorry to learn of the death of Mr Ralph Rollington, (whose real name was Albert John Allingham), which I have just discovered took place in London on Aug. 24th, 1924. His body was taken to the little village of Chappel in Essex, where his daughter resides and was buried in the churchyard there. His end was peaceful and typical of the old bohemian spirit, as he asked for, and smoked a cigar just before passing away. He was therefore the last but one of the old bohemian writers and authors of boys tales to pass away, at the ripe old age of 81. Mr. Charles E. Pearce, was therefore the last one of the old school. May both rest in peace.

Frank Jay



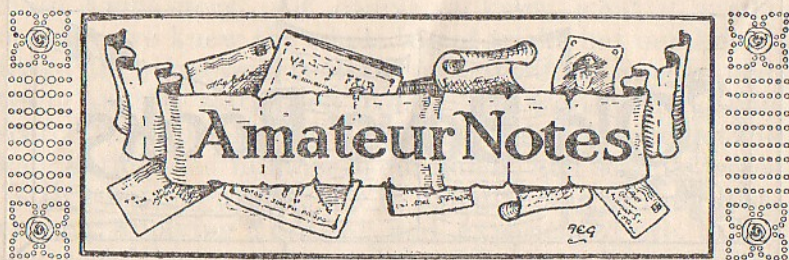
JACK O' CLUBS.

"Jack O' Clubs" was a fine old boy's tale dealing with the days of James I. It appeared in the Boys' Standard in 1881, and was written by Charles Stevens, who wrote many historical stories for the beloved journals of our youth. The memory of it has inspired me with the following verses.

Henry Steele.

Jack O' Clubs was a fine sort of chap
 With a few more like, I'd certainly go nap.
 A bold kind of fellow and a knowing card,
 To find his equal, it might perhaps be hard.
 Clubs was the suit Jack always played,
 Of Alsation bullies he was not afraid.
 In the days of King James an apprentice was Jack,
 When law and order were decidedly slack.
 In many a fight Jack was right in the thick,
 But with Clubs he invariably took the trick.
 A swashbuckler once attacked him with zeal,
 But as Jack dealt him one, he said, "its my deal."
 The Bully was sorry—said he was provoked,
 But Jack merely told him that he had revoked.
 In all these affairs Jack came out trumps,
 In spite of hard knocks, and a few nasty bumps.
 At the game of bridge Jack was also all right.
 For at Old London Bridge he had a desperate fight
 He rescued sweet Alice from a watery grave,
 Her hand she gave him for this deed so brave.
 His partner for life she became at last,
 When the game was finished, and all trouble past.
 Of all the boys' tales in the years far back,
 Jack O' Clubs was one of the best in the pack.

Henry Steele.



The artist who sketched our cover design and the heading for old boys books is W. A. Downes. Mr Downes is secretary for the *Irish Amateur Press Association*, a flourishing organization which all Amateur Journalists would be well advised to join. The subscription is 2/6 per year, and the address of the secretary is Mr W. A. Downes, St. Kevin's Park, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.

Wheeler Dryden recently played the part of Giuseppe Verdi, the famous Italian composer of *Il Trovatore* *Aida*, *Rigolletto*, etc., in a little one-reel film, one of a series known as the famous Music Masters Series. The film was shown at the Tivoli Theatre in London recently

At the time of going to press we are unable to give further details of the *Amateur Press Combine*, but no doubt one of our contemporaries will be doing so.

MAGAZINES RECEIVED

British (Printed) Cat, No. 84, South Eastern Amateur, No. 9, (M.S.S.) Caledonian, Oct.

Irish (Duplicated) News Circular, No. 2, Collector, No. 4.

American Seattle Amateur, No. 1, Vol. 15, Coyote, No. 1, Vol 8, Searchlight, No. 5, Vol. 27, Plain Speaker, 2 numbers.

Cuban El Arroyuelo, Ye Christmas Pudding.

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Advert Rates : Full Page 8/-, Half Page 4/6, Quarter Page 3/3, undisplayed Adverts, 1d. for 4 words.
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200,000 Brand New Cigarette Pictures. Sets 6d. each. Your own sets completed. Good allowance for clean exchange cards ; send parcels. Speciality: Old Boys Papers, Cheap. Budge, Almondbury, Huddersfield.

WANTED. Boys Periodicals for 1880—1900. Aldine Coy's publications including The Lambs of Littlecote, The Island School and The Brave Boy of the Basilisk. Also several boys papers, similar to dispose of ; sale or exchange. Hunter, North Lodge, Sweetthope, Midlothian.

WANTED. The Boys Illustrated News, numbers 6, 7, 8, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 35, 36, 37, 39 and index to vols. 1 and 2. Also The Chase of Leviathan by Captain Mayne Reid, 1st. or any illustrated edition. John Nesbitt, 7 Kinaird Terrace, Antrim Road, Belfast.

SALE OR EXCHANGE London Journal, 30 vols., Reynolds Miscellany, first 10, Boys Own 18 vols. parts. Every Boys Annual 6 vols, Union Jack, (ed. Henty). 4 vols, Cassell's Paper, folio, all published, Weekly Welcome, 1877—9, containing Burrage's Romances, Something to Read, vols. parts, Cornhill, 20 vols. Once a Week, 18 vols, Good Things, Harpers, Young People. Books on all subjects, state requirements, Darby, 10 Gt. Sutton Street, London, E.C.

WANTED. Old boys papers issued 1900—12. Boys Herald, Boys Friend, Boys Leader, Boys of the Empire, Big Budget, Nuggets, True Blue, Pluck, Marvel, etc. Also old printed and manuscript amateur magazines. J. Parks, 2 Irvine, Ave., Saltburn, Yorks.

FOR SALE. Ellen Percy, (Reynolds) vols 1 & 3, 2/-, Brett's Bob Blunt, 2 vols 2/6, Jane Shore, (bound) 4/-, History of old boys books, 6/-, Boys Own Paper, 6 early vols (bound) 18/-. All post free, will exchange for others. J. Parks, 2 Irvin Avenue, Saltburn-by-Sea.

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JOHN JEFFERY

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Old Journals of Every Description. Will
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