

ROSE LAWN,

KINGSGATE-ON-SEA,

KENT.

March 6th, 1948.

Dear Mr. Robyns,

Many thanks for your letter, and especially for the card from Elaine, and to Mrs. Robyns for her kind thought in sending it to me. So Elaine now has a baby sister, and I judge is very pleased with that gift of the gods. And you, I have no doubt, feel the happiest man in Sussex. Congratulations to you, my dear boy, and best of wishes to the happy mother and the dear little mite.

I also have been getting some good news, though not so good as yours. Which is, that the two new Greyfriars books will both be out during the present year, with a not too long interval between. We hope that a fourth volume may follow early in 1949: but that is rather vague at present. -- in these days one cannot plan too far ahead.

I am very interested to hear that there is a "good display" of the Bunter book in Boots at Brighton. Next time you write you might tell me whether they are still there. In some quarters all copies are sold out, and fresh demands are met by the dismal word "reprinting". Which being interpreted means that new supplies depend on paper. I had the usual six from the publishers, and an extra six; which I thought would see me through; but I have been sending copies to friends abroad, and found myself reduced to just one; and then I learned that I could not get any more till the third edition is out. This question of paper would exasperate me if I were not the placidest old bean that ever was! I wanted another copy specially to send to a missionary chap at Asmara, in Eritrea; and by the same token, a letter arrived from a correspondent at Bideford, in Devon, telling me that there was just one copy left at the bookseller's there, and I asked him to bag it for me, so that was all right. That was before I received your letter or I might have raided Mr. Boots. What queer times we live in, when a scribbling fellow cannot get copies of his own book!

Did I tell you that a copy of Bunter was ordered

for the Library of the House of Commons? It amused me very much when the publisher told me. I chuckled at the idea that some Honourable Member, after looking into it in the reading-room, might begin his next speech inadvertently with "I say, you fellows!" But really, if I were a member, I think I should prefer Billy Bunter to Hansard for a leisure hour.

I hope Mr. Davis will have good luck. No, I don't mind in the least your mentioning that I am over seventy. The fact is that I have left seventy so far behind now, that I feel rather like Oliver Wendell Holmes when he remarked "O to be seventy again!"

The cold snap you mentioned in your letter seems to be gone for good. We have been getting some lovely spring days, and it is very pleasant to see the buds coming in the garden. Little more than a week ago, we were almost buried in snow, and then nearly blown out to sea by a terrific north-easter. Now, while I write, Lady Jane is sunning herself on the lawn, and her daughter frisking about the fir tree. Lady Jane, I should add, is the cat!

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Frank Richards