

ROSE LAWN,

KINGSCATE-ON-SEA,

KENT.

July 9th, 1948.

Dear Frank Snell,

I am quite ashamed to be so late in replying to your letter and returning your book: you must put it down to Billy Bunter, who has been crowding everything else off the typewriter. I have just finished No. 4 of the new series, "Billy Bunter in Brazil", in which, in spite of the title, our old friend Lord Mauleverer plays the leading rôle. Most likely the book will not appear till after Xmas, owing to the paper problem: still, everybody tells me that I am very lucky to have two books coming out this year, so I won't grumble.

Your remark that the "beauty of it all is that everything is gratis" reminds me of some experiences of my own. When I was in Nice about forty years ago I contributed to the English paper there---on the same disinterested lines, and how often I have done the same kind of thing since I couldn't recall. But sometimes it is a real pleasure and a privilege, for I thoroughly enjoy writing Greyfriars stories for publication in Braille, and wouldn't miss it for anything. I had a jolly letter the other day from a man at St. Dunstan's to whom I sent a copy of "Billy Bunter's Birthday Present" in Braille, and it made me feel as pleased as Punch.

But, judging by your play, my dear boy, you won't always be writing gratis. You are wise to what I have always believed the best way to write---getting the job through, and pruning afterwards. Slow writers make slow readers.

I am returning your book herewith, with many thanks for lending it to me. It is a very curious book. The most curious thing, to my mind, is that I should never have dreamed that the writer was a Cornishman. He must be Cornish, as his name is Rowse, but his manners and customs seem to me more corny than Cornish. I think you told me that many Cornish people did not like the book---at which I do not wonder. It is well worth reading, and one must admire the man's grit and pertinacity in sticking to his object, and I think that he must be a good man according to his lights. Many of his remarks, such as that upon Colonel Repington's book, are very just. But I am afraid that his Socialism was founded chiefly upon an envious dislike of people more fortunately placed, which is unworthy of a man of such intellectual

powers, If he had been born Squire Rowse of Rowse Hall I don't think he would have become a Socialist. Now, obviously one's system of belief ought not to be founded upon one's own personal circumstances---what we ought to seek is the truth, whether it suits us or not. I gather from the book that the writer has very little use for religion: which always seems to me an unhealthy sign. One text at least he might have done well to bear in mind, which is, "Little children, love one another!" And it is quite curious to note how he takes it for granted that everyone who disagrees with him must be either a fool or a villain. I am afraid that he is a rather unreasonable chap, and has cultivated the Ego to an inordinate extent. All the same, I am very glad to have read the book.

Yea, I read the letters you mention in the C.D. I have told Herbert Leckenby what I think on that subject: it does seem to me a mistake to let a note of recrimination creep into the paper. I usually send my copy to someone or other after I have finished with it, by way of getting new readers: but one or two numbers have been so full of disputatiousness that I thought they might make a bad impression instead of a good one, so kept them in my desk. The fact is that an editor requires to have a strong hand on the reins or his team will run away with him.---and this applies to all editors from Printing House Square to York. The last couple of numbers seem to me more in the old friendly style, which I was glad to see. It is a good little paper, and I should not be surprised to see it develop some day on really extensive lines. But it does seem to me essential that everybody should keep in a good temper.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

Frank Richards