

# THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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JULY 1956

FRONT PAGE "BOYS' HERALD"

No. 2, 8/8/1903

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# The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 11 No. 115

Price 1s. 6d.

JULY, 1956

Editor, HERBERT LECKENBY,  
c/o YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES,  
7, The Shambles, York

## From The Editor's Chair

IN TIME OF SORROW. I must start on a very personal note this month. On June 3rd my wife died with tragic suddenness. We had been together for 42 years. She went to a meeting on Saturday evening, came in, chatted a while making no complaint of feeling unwell; she retired to bed, and in the very early hours of Sunday morning I found to my grief that she had passed away, the only consolation being she probably did so in her sleep.

The June number was in the process of being run off, and Mr. Gore-Browne so very thoughtfully worked in ~~that~~ paragraph informing you of the sad event. It was so helpful too, as it explained why I was not replying to many of my correspondents.

Within 48 hours, letters and telegrams expressing sympathy poured in. Oft times I have said that I have made more real friends since I started the C. D. than in all the rest of my life put together. In this sad moment I have had proof of it, indeed, a lump comes to my throat as I look through those letters again. I think, too, with gratitude of the many occasions when hobby friends visiting York made her happy when she joined us for tea. She loved to describe to them the show places of the ancient city.

After the funeral I felt I must get away for a rest, so I arranged to go to London for a few days. Fortunately, I was able to fit in the London Club meeting. There, among so many friends, I soon felt a good deal better - the Brotherhood of Happy Hours at work! My heartfelt thanks, London, not only to those who were at the meeting but also the others I visited, including John Jukes and his hospitable wife at Bournemouth.

Now to the future. Thank God I have the C. D. and all it entails

Without it I should be very lonely and would dread the days ahead. In the past, as some of you know, there have been times when things have been very difficult but I shall now be able to devote all my energies to the work I love. And when things have settled down I hope to travel more and visit friends with whom until now, I have only been able to correspond.

My dearest wish is to turn out the old mag. until the day comes to join her on the other side.

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ANOTHER SCOOP. Frank Vernon Lay sprang a pleasant surprise at the recent London meeting. The previous day he had had a long interview with Mr. E. E. Briscoe, who for so many years was a star illustrator for boys' weeklies, particularly those of the A.P. Especially noteworthy were his inimitable sketches of famous public schools in the Nelson Lee Library, and the buildings of St. Frank's itself.

Despite the fact that Mr. Briscoe is now 74 and a very sick man, he gave Frank a most cordial reception, told him many interesting stories, and generously gave him a large number of examples of his work in the Boys' Realm, Union Jack, Champion, etc.

Frank's account of the interview will appear next month.

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THE "SILVER JACKET" IS TAKEN OFF. Extract from letter from V. Colby of Australia to Len Packman.

7. 6. 1956.

"The Silver Jacket" is dead..... I went into the newsagents and saw No. 38 on the stand..... my eye caught the heading of the Editorial: 'Farewell to the Silver Jacket'.....

I read on: 'Well, boys, I'm sorry to say this is goodbye. This is the last issue of our magazine. We've done everything we could to keep it going, but the battle is over. I'd want to thank all you loyal readers who have bought and kept every issue - but the trouble has been that there have not been enough of you. Perhaps when you are all grown men in about 20 years' time, this country will have a large enough population to support such a worthwhile publication, but not at present'..... 'Although the artists and writers work on 'Silver Jacket' is finished, it will never die as long as a copy of our famous magazine

is found on this earth. If you are the proud owners of bound copies, do all you can to keep them for all time. Then in years to come, when you have children of your own, you can show them the magazine that thrilled you in your youth. In that way our beloved publication will carry on the good work it set out to do right from the beginning. Goodbye, boys, and good luck to you all'.

A. D. GORFAIN,  
The Editor,  
"Silver Jacket".

In thanking the artists, writers, etc., he went on: 'Also I cannot forget my dear friend Frank Richards, the world's greatest writer of school stories'.

(Hard luck, Mr. Gorfain. It deserved a better fate. H.L.)

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THE TENTH C. D. ANNUAL. Christmas is still a good way off, but for reasons stated in the C. D. a month or two ago we are anxious to make an early start this year. I am pleased to say that contributors have responded well to my request, and several articles are well on their way to completion. You will have the usual forms with this issue and I shall be grateful if you would return them as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,  
HERBERT LECKENBY

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WANTED URGENTLY: Nelson Lee Libs. Old Series, Nos. 1-103, 105-116, 119, 121, 123, 126, 128-133, 137, 139, 142, 153, 166, 199, 240, 241, 244, 248-250, 252, 253, 288-290, 295, 296, 298, 300, 302, 306, 308, 312, 314, 318, 329, 332, 334, 337, 342, 344, 345, 348, 350, 353, 355, 357, 358, 363, 387, 389, 390, 394, 398, 407, 410, 423, 435, 441, 443, 445, 451, 454, 458-460, 467, 470, 483, 501, 505, 544. All or any of the above accepted if in good condition. No rubbish, please. BERNARD THORNE, 1231, WARDEN AVENUE, SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO, CANADA.

12 Comic Life 1917 - 1919, 12/-; 12 Union Jacks 1905 - 1910, 2/6 each; Nugget Lib. Peter Flint 292, 298, 304, 2/6d each; Boys' Friend 3d. No. 33, bound, 7/6d; No. 72 Blake, and 218 Ferrers Lord 4/- each. W. CLOUGH, 3, FONTHILL GROVE, SALE, MANCHESTER.

WANTED. "Jack of all Trades", Schoolboys' Own, Populars. 38, ST. THOMAS ROAD, PRESTON.

(Note: Here is another interesting article by 76 year old Dick Milton who wrote "Brilliant Blake" and "In the Dear Old Days of the Dreadfuls". H.L.)

G. W. R. REYNOLDS, Early Victorian Writer of "THRILLERS"

-by-

Dick Milton

The eldest son of a post-captain in the navy, George William McArthur Reynolds was born at Sandwich on July 23rd, 1814. After attending an elementary school at Ashford, he entered the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, February, 1828, but, possessing little taste for army life, he abandoned a military career for the more care-free existence of continental travel, whereby he acquired a wide knowledge of French life and literature, which afterwards had a great influence upon him both as a politician and novelist.

Reynolds' natural bent was towards literature, and in 1835, he published his first novel, "The Youthful Imposter", an effort in sensational fiction. In 1839 his "Modern Literature of France", a discriminating study of living French authors, gave a further fillip to his growing reputation as a writer of uncommon power. Then followed a long series of romances, novels, and other works: "Pickwick Abroad" (which many famous critics considered to be worthy of Dickens), "Grace Darling", "Robert Macaire in England", "Alfred, or a French Gentleman's Adventures", "Master Timothy's Bookcase", etc.

About 1846 Reynolds became editor of "The London Journal", in which was published his sensational "Mysteries of London". The same year the first number of a similar periodical, "Reynolds Miscellany", appeared with a portrait of the editor as frontpiece. During the twenty-three years of its issue, Reynolds wrote a long succession of dramatic tales for it. In 1847 he also issued a number of sensational novels in illustrated weekly numbers, which became so popular that they were bought up even before the printed sheets were dry.

Since 1840 Reynolds had interested himself in politics and for a time had charge of the foreign intelligence department of the London Dispatch, his work being conducted in full and out-spoken sympathy with continental revolutionary movements, his criticism of Louis-Phillipe being strongly pronounced. In 1848 he made his first appearance in public as a political leader. A meeting in Trafalgar

Square was called for March 6th to demand the repeal of the Income Tax. The chartists decided to elicit from the gathering a vote in favour of the revolution in Paris. In spite of the government declaring the meeting illegal, it was held nevertheless, Reynolds being voted to the chair. After an eloquent address, the resolution was put and carried, the orator, amid cheering and acclaim, being escorted along the Strand to his residence in Wellington Street, from the balcony of which he addressed his riotous supporters. Reynolds thus definitely allied himself with the chartists, and was at once accepted as a leader. On March 13th he presided at a demonstration on Kennington Common to express sympathy with the French revolutionists, and in the national convention of chartists which met in the John Street Institution on April 4th, he represented Derby. Reynolds also engaged in the arrangements for the great meeting on Kennington Common on April 10th of the same year, which, however, proved a fiasco.

During the Spring of 1850 he addressed numerous meetings in the Midlands, and North of England and in Scotland. His political activities were many in subsequent years, his last connection with chartism being in 1856, when he was Chairman of the Fergus O'Connor monument committee.

Reynolds' later years were almost exclusively devoted to journalism and novel writing. It was on May 5th, 1850 that he published the first number of "Reynolds Weekly Newspaper", Price 4d. The new paper became at once the mouthpiece of republican and advanced working-class opinion. To its production Reynolds devoted himself during the last twenty years of his busy life and except through its widely read columns did not appear much in public.

As a writer of romance he challenged the popularity and supremacy of G.P.R. James, the latter's literary output being equally prolific as Reynolds', but lacking the dramatic quality of his rival. In his writings, too, Reynolds aimed at social reformation, as witness the powerful essays interspersed with his fictional narratives in "Mysteries of London", the "Court of London", and also in the pages of his numerous novels and romances. As an orator he was intense, powerful and declamatory, his remarkable gift of colourful language, as exemplified in his books, standing him in good stead. It was in Woburn Square, London, that he resided during the latter years of his life, and where he died June 17th, 1879, aged sixty five.

Reynolds' tales, romances and periodicals are still sought after

and read by the older generation of book enthusiasts and collectors, their rarity fetching high prices among dealers. The writer of these lines, himself an omnivorous reader of mid-Victorian literature, has had every one of Reynolds' books, without exception, pass through his hands, during the last forty years, and makes bold to assert that, in comparison with some of the cheap volumes exposed for sale and labelled "thrillers", the works of G.W.R. Reynolds, are veritable works of art.

## BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London S.E. 22

Some two or three months ago I thought the S.B.L.'s were going from bad to worse - but the worst was yet to come! On reading this month's stories I had a real shock! After 60 years or more in Baker Street Sexton Blake has removed to Berkeley Square. He now has a suite of offices in one of those new blocks - all glass and chromium plate - complete with a young lady Receptionist and ditto Secretary. There is also a capable middle-aged lady - Miss Pringle - who looks after them all. As for Tinker - he is relegated to the background and now almost a nonentity, while Pedro is not even mentioned in the set-up. It is obvious that this is the work of the new S.B.L. Editor, because both of this month's issues introduce the new characters and surroundings although written by (presumed) different authors. I am now wondering how our old friends Rex Hardinge, John Hunter, A. Parsons, W. Tyrer, etc., will react to the new framework. Will they adapt themselves to the modern set-up or will they cease to write for the Library? They say 'A New Broom Sweeps Clean'; it remains to be seen whether it does or not in this case! For those who wish to 'read all about it', the details are to be found in S.B.L. No. 359 "Frightened Lady" (page 32).

And now forget the present and 'Turn Back the Clock' with Eric Copeman.

Josie Packman.

TURN BACK THE CLOCK

by Eric Copeman

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The date: 1st January, 1956.                      New Year's Day.

I thought it might be a good policy to "start the year with Blake" and, in a fit of nostalgia, went back over the shelves containing my Sexton Blake Libraries and eventually selected a yarn called "The Case of the Mummified Hand". The title intrigued me and also the cover. Also the date of publication: 27th February, 1926. Just on 30 years ago!

What's more, I hadn't read it. In 1926 I was too young to appreciate Blake. I began to take an intelligent interest in the Man from Baker Street in 1929 with "Union Jack" No. 1330 entitled "The Green Flash" (it was a good yarn and made me want to read more about Blake, though I've never been able to learn who wrote it!) My collection now goes back to 1919, though unfortunately, there are still many gaps.

But back to "The Case of the Mummified Hand". I felt I was really "turning back the clock". The cover was promising. Blake lying on the floor, his gun knocked from his hand and beyond his reach and Tinker at the door, horrified. In the words of the author, "Blake's motionless body lay sprawled out like one dead. Over him, and with open jaws at his throat, was a great black jungle beast... one of the terrible black leopards occasionally to be found in Arabia and the dense bush of Somaliland and Abyssinia."

Good stuff? So it should be, for the author was none other than the late George Hamilton Teed, and the setting was Mademoiselle Yvonne Cartier's duplex flat at Queen Anne's Gate. The cover illustration, incidentally, was the work of Arthur Jones.

I confess I approached the yarn a little doubtfully. Nostalgia was all right but could I honestly enjoy it as I would have done twenty years ago when I used to eat most of my meals with a Blake yarn beside me? Possibly the style would be dated, stiff or pedantic.

Shame on me for even thinking such things! It wasn't long before I forgot all about style, cast all thoughts of the technicalities of writing to one side, and began to revel in a good well-told yarn which gave me the opportunity to meet a lot of people I look on

as old friends. Not only Blake and Tinker, but Prince Menes, The Black Eagle, Prince Wu Ling, The Three Musketeers, Matthew Cardolak, Madame Goupolis, Doctor Huxton Rymer, Mary Trent, Mademoiselle Yvonne and "Uncle" John Graves. Quite a gallery. And when I said "friends" I meant it. Across Blake's stage many of them appeared as crooks but looking back now, I think of them as actors playing a part, a part which gave (and still gives) a lot of readers a lot of joy. And now all of them are gone and are but memories. George Marsden Flummer took a prominent part in the yarn too and though he and Rymer featured in stories written after 1929, most of the other characters I first met originally, as it were in "retrospect", for their tales had been told before I first set eyes on that momentous "Green Flash" in the "U.J." in 1929.

I've no intention of telling the plot of the story but I can't help commenting on the highlights:

1. A shrivelled, withered mummified hand which came in a cardboard shoe box with the label of a well-known Bond Street shoemaker on it and addressed to Yvonne. Anna, Yvonne's maid, opened the box -- and the hand tried to strangle her! Teed says: "The heavy dull red spots on Anna's throat looked as if they had been caused by the violent pressure of human fingers". But after Blake has seen and examined the hand, he says (to another old friend, Sir George Saddler, otherwise Hsui-fsi, the Mystery Man of 'Frisco): "We have here a mummified hand which is absolutely impregnated with old Egypt. Not only has it lain for thousands of years in such an atmosphere, but I should not be surprised if it did not once belong to a priest of the mysterious Order of Ra. Take such an object and bring to bear upon it all the art of hypnotic concentration of which the priests of that Order are masters, convey it into the hands of the person whom it is desired to reach and take into account the superstitious mentality of the average layman regarding mummies and such things -- and there you have an ideal subject (for hypnotism) with the correct train of thought already started. Then the projection of the astral command through space, concentrated on the subject, and I do verily believe that a state of complete hypnosis could be established as easily as if the operator were present in physical person..... I am not dealing with the supernatural, I leave that to others. I am dealing with scientific fact. I am not suggesting that the mummified hand sprang at the girl's throat and tried to throttle her. What I do suggest is that the choking was done while it was held in her hand -- that it was she, under hypnotic control, who lifted it to her throat".

Melodramatic? Maybe. But after reading that far, I had no desire to put the book down. Not only was Teed giving me a grand gallery of characters but he was throwing a fascinating plot in for good measure.

2. In his article in "Collector's Digest" No. 107, Derek Adley says of Doctor Huxton Rymer, "he was a complete out-and-out crook and a deadly foe, but one story published in the "Union Jack" ("The Case of the Stricken Outpost") proved that he was not without honour".

"The Case of the Mummified Hand" seconds Derek's remarks. Rymer and Mary Trent arrive on Blake's doorstep late at night. Rymer is wounded and Mary begs that Blake let them in. Blake is suspicious but tells Rymer that if he is really wounded his wounds must be attended to before anything else. So Rymer comes openly into Blake's very home and his reason there is to warn Blake (and he has not only been wounded but has risked his own life to do so) that a group of organised criminals led by Prince Menes has determined that Blake must be killed. And Rymer's reason for doing this? He wanted to repay Blake for allowing him to slide out of a nasty business on the China Coast not long before! So that even with crooks of Rymer's calibre, "one good turn deserves another"!

3. Even George Marsden Plummer is not without his loyalties. Working under the Egyptian, Prince Menes, he begins to make trouble when Menes talks of killing Huxton Rymer if he approaches Blake. Plummer wouldn't stand for that, as Rymer was his friend and partner.

No wonder we still talk so much of these old-time characters and rue their departure from the pages of the Blake books. Even the worst of them were not all bad and had their appeal, otherwise they would have been despatched to their ultimate destination much sooner.

I betray none of the plot of the story when I say it has its share of thrills and excitement, thoughtful observations and intense action, fantastic happenings, shootings and plottings. In many ways it could easily have been written today, rather than thirty years ago, as it has a background of uprisings and dissention in Morocco, China and Egypt. Even now when you read Teed you don't feel "behind the times!"

Interspersed throughout the plot, too, are facts, one of these being the grim incident in Egypt when two Britons were cut to pieces in a certain town up the Nile, and their flesh sold in the native bazaar as "good British meat!" A similar fate was intended, incidentally, for Sexton Blake!

And then of course, there are little tender passages hinting of

the depth of Blake's regard for Yvonne and making him strangely enough more strongly human than ever. One scene near the end where Blake and Yvonne talk together draws this comment from Teed: "What was said between them was for themselves and no others, but it was a very quiet Yvonne who followed Blake to the lower floor, keeping close to him". And Blake only makes his final explanations after "he carried Yvonne in his arms and placed her on the couch. Blake busied himself over her, revealing, for him, an extraordinary amount of solicitude. She obeyed him meekly, and he was sitting on the side of the couch with one hand protectingly over hers when Graves arrived". A few minutes later, Tinker indiscreetly comments on a box of Yvonne's cigarettes Blake has just taken from a drawer to offer her. "The gov'nor always keeps a box of those in the desk", he blurts out. "Blake's fingers fumbles a little..... Yvonne shot a look at Tinker, then smiled softly to herself....."

And now, what have we?

Yvonne and her creator have gone. Blake carries on, though many of his most formidable opponents (or rather, all) have gone too. But what we must be grateful for is that he does carry on, when so many of his contemporaries have "perished by the wayside". Maybe we think of G.H. Teed, Gwyn Evans, Gilbert Chester, Coutts Brisbane, Robert Murray, Anthony Skene, Pierre Quiroule, Mark Osborne, Lewis Jackson, Paul Urquhart, John G. Brandon and the rest and say "the best is past".

Well, maybe some of the best is past.

But why be pessimistic about it? I loved the work of the older school of Blake writers, but I also love the new writers. I am reading now an excellent Indian Blake adventure by Anthony Parsons. I did like the work of Walter Tyrer, John Drummond, Rex Hardinge, John Hunter and Hugh Clevely. Rex Hardinge is one of the older school, but is included with the newer writers because he is still writing Blake adventures. Let's be thankful that these men are carrying on and if perhaps some of the old-time traditions have been flouted, let's remember that Blake isn't the only one who has changed since World War II. He may have changed but he is alive. That's the important thing.

But he'll only stay alive so long as we give our support.

I enjoyed "turning back the clock", and I'll think of "The Case of the Mummified Hand" (S.B.L. Second Series, No. 35) as a happy and nostalgic interlude. It is easy to throw brickbats and give bouquets. It isn't so easy to accept the facts of a changed generation and a

more modern Blake.

Maybe he has gained more than he has lost. Who are we to say? He's been my friend for twenty-seven years and I'm sticking to him to the end.

And I hope the end isn't in my generation!

(The author of "U.J." No. 1330 "The Green Flash" was - GWYN EVANS.  
Josie P.)

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UNION JACK TITLES - YEAR 1919 (July - December)

No. 821	The Mystery of Oag Island (Lawless)	A. Murray
" 822	The Smoke Signal (Lawless)	A. Murray
" 823	The Case of the Car Copers (Carlac)	A. Murray
" 824	The Diamond of Disaster (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 825	The Case of the Decoy (Kestrel)	L. Jackson
" 826	The Case of the Blank Cheque	W. M. Graydon
" 827	The World Tour Swindle (Nantucket)	A. Murray
" 828	The Oil Seekers	W. M. Graydon
" 829	Sinister Island (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 830	The Man from the Sea (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 831	The Valley of the Missing Men (Tinker's Letter File, introducing Lee & Nipper)	E. S. Brooks
" 832	The False Clue	?
" 833	The Riddle of the Rector's Wife (Kestrel)	L. Jackson
" 834	The Great House-Purchase Fraud	A. Murray
" 835	The Case of the Mormon Son	A. Murray
" 836	The Case of the Four Detectives (Kestrel)	L. Jackson
" 837	A Duel to the Death (First Zenith)	A. Skene
" 838	The Trail in the Sand (Crim. Con.)	R. Murray
" 839	The Case of the Missing Goalkeeper (Carlac)	A. Murray
" 840	The Mystery of the Salt Mine	M. Poole
" 841	Mr. Smith of London (Crim. Con. & Yvonne)	R. Murray
" 842	The Tenth Case (Zenith)	A. Skene
" 843	The Isle of Revenge (Kestrel)	L. Jackson
" 844	The Man in Motley (Zenith)	A. Skene
" 845	Presumed Dead	M. Poole
" 846	The Mystery of Fiume	W. M. Graydon

(Number 821 is dated 5th July, 1919, and number 846 is dated 27th December, 1919).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?By J. R. Murtagh, New Zealand

Here's a true story of a dream come true - almost, and then turned into a nightmare. I'll give you all the facts and leave you to form your own conclusions.

On the 12th of March, 1956, I received a letter from a Mr. Kingsley, "Grange Cottage", Clapgate, Wimborne, Dorset, England. Briefly, it said "I can let you have Nelson Lee Libraries (Old Series) Nos. 15, 16, 17, 27, 40, 49, 50, 59, 64,65,68,73,75, 78, 92, at the rate of 1 for every 3 that you send of following (here followed a list of some 70 Lees he wanted in first 200, he also wanted any Nuggets). This was a reply to my requirements listed in the "Who's Who" in the last Annual in which I offered 3 Lees for every one of my wanted numbers.

I replied at once stating that I could supply 21 Lees and 2 Nuggets. I enclosed 20/- and asked him to send 9 of my wanted Lees for above and to hold balance of my wants and advise me of any other boys' papers he'd accept for the balance of my requirements. I posted this letter on 12th March, 1956. Back comes a reply on 29th March, written on 20th March, he listed a whole lot more wants including Monster Libraries, for which he offered 2 Lees - also he advised he could supply more of my wanted Lees, making a total of 17 now. (Almost too good to be true it seemed to me). Here's some extracts from his letter, "yes, I will be glad to let you have the Lees Old Series"(here he listed the numbers I wanted, followed by a list of the ones he wanted me to send, stating) "I cannot afford the luxury of having them sent to me by Air Mail however", "I have more of your listed wants available so I'll list them herewith and await your reply, then I can send them all off together Air Mail, as you request. Please get mine off as soon as you can, won't you, as it'll take a long time to get here sea mail." He finished his letter with this P.S., "let me know as soon as possible so I can get yours off to you. Anything I've listed will be acceptable on the terms I quote so if you agree to the terms and have sufficient suitable items, there is no need to query first."

I replied at once on the 29/3/56 stating, "I am sending off to you a parcel containing from your want list: 4 Monster Libraries, 2 Nuggets, 21 Nelson Lees" (listed all the numbers between 1 and 201).

I went on to say "Please send in return as agreed the following, 17 Old Series Nelson Lees - Please send them by Insured or Registered Air Mail post; I have already sent you a £1 for postage, if it comes to more advise me and I'll Air Mail the balance".

Two weeks or so later I received a letter from Kingsley breaking to me the sad news -- here's one or two extracts from it, "thanks for your letter. I expected a reply to my letter of 20th March by April the 2nd or 3rd at the latest, which in my estimation should have given you 3 or 4 days at least, to reply in; actually, I gave you 'til 6th April, then as I had to go up town job-hunting, I told my wife if any callers came after Old Boys' Books she could let those go I had put on one side for you, if she was offered a good price, which she was. I've had so many people change their minds after saying they'd take particular items that I presumed you must have changed your mind. I know you sent a pound postal note for postage, but that wasn't a deposit and if you had changed your mind I'd have had to return same. I've had it happen before, see. (He forgets he instructed me to get his parcel in the mail at once - or does he?) As regards those you've sent me I'll send you another old Lee in lieu of each Lee you were expecting from me. (This means he is sending me Lees, any old numbers that I don't require.) I will send them surface mail, you obviously won't want me to send them air mail! and return herewith a 15/- postal note. I have deducted 5/- from the £1 you sent for the postage of the parcel surface mail." (Very nice, I'm getting a parcel of Old Lees I don't want and have the added pleasure of paying the postage even though I paid the postage on the parcel to him).

Well, readers and friends there's the sad story and I leave it to you, as the title says "What Do You Think?"

There's one ray of sunshine, but it's certainly not shining on friend Kingsley - you could even call it an O. Henry ending.

Our friend seemed so keen for me to get the stuff in the mail to him, before he sent anything, that I took one simple precaution, which I did not mention to him. I addressed the parcel to Mr. Kingsley, c/o Herbert Leckenby, etc. The idea, of course, being that as soon as I received Kingsley's Air Mail parcel of Lees, I would air mail Herb. advising him to send the parcel on to Kingsley.

However, on being advised by Kingsley I'd missed the bus, he didn't know it, but he missed the bus too, as I at once air mailed Herb. to return my parcel when it arrives. I have not replied to Kingsley's last letter, and he, no doubt, eagerly awaits the mail each

day now looking for the parcel. He's sure going to have a long wait. As for the parcel he says he has sent me - when and if it arrives I will be glad to return it to him if he will pay the postage and re-imburse me for the various postages I have had over this deal - wouldn't you do the same, readers?

In conclusion, here's the Lees Old Series I still want, Nos. 4, 7, 16, 17, 31, 40, 64, 65, 68, 69, 71, 73, 75, 76, 78, 82, 88, 92. I still offer 3 for each one of above.

Jack Murtagh,

509, Selwood Road, Hastings,  
New Zealand.

(Note: Mr. Kingsley lives in a quiet country lane off the main road, and it is hard to visualise a procession of Lee enthusiasts taking the trail in the hope of being lucky.

Jack's offer of three for one is a generous one, and it stands to common sense that he has a right to expect the numbers he asked for only.

Two other members have had somewhat unsatisfactory deals with Mr. Kingsley, but too trifling to give in detail. H.L.)

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SCHOOL FRIEND WEEKLY. Wanted any issues for 1919, 1920, and 1921 or ly. Oddments or runs welcomed. L. PACKMAN, 27, ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON S.E. 22.

AMERICAN COLLECTOR wishes to purchase old dolls and old buttons, 18th and 19th centuries. Any amount. Write: THEO. OLBERT, PALAIS ALBERT I.E.R. VILLE FRANCHE, SUR MER, A.M. FRANCE.

WANTED. School Friend Annual, years 1928, 1929 and 1930. Your price paid. LEONARD PACKMAN, 27, ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON S.E. 22.

URGENT. Many Sexton Blake Libs. wanted (1st and 2nd series) complete with covers. Serial numbers, series and price please. Also any Union Jacks in good condition for the years 1917, 1918. JOSIE PACKMAN, 27, ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON S.E.22.

FOR SALE: MAGNETS Nos. 1299 to 1350, 2s. each. S.O.L. 2s. each.

WANTED: MAGNETS Nos. 1351 to 1390.

H. V. ROBERTS, 12, CLAIRVIEW ROAD, STREATHAM, LONDON S.W.16.

# HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby

JOHN ARLOTT, HAMILTON FAN. In the "News Chronicle" 26.5.56 there appeared in 'John Arlott's Column' the following very interesting paragraphs. It's evident that the popular broadcaster on many subjects was, in his youth, an avid reader of the stories of the three famous schools.

"It was an antiquarian bookshop. Note - ANTIQUARIAN. The difference between an antiquarian bookshop and a second-hand bookshop is the same as that between an antique shop and a junk shop.

A bookish-looking man was leaning into a large box and, peeping over his shoulder, I saw he was sorting through a stack of the boys' papers of the early twenties - THE MAGNET, THE GEM, THE POPULAR, THE BOYS' REALM - the "literature" I was brought up on.

There they were, my old favourites, pictured on the covers - Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, Jimmy Silver - the Famous Five, the Fistical Four - and - ? Someone had been very careful with these, for they were as fresh and clean as when I first bought my copies of of them 30-odd years ago.

## 60 times

How much were they, I asked. "Two shillings each here", he whispered, "but in some places they are as much as ten shillings." I thought ruefully of all the twopences, I spent on them, little realising that over the years their value would appreciate by 60 times, as they became rarities, instead of the treasured nonsense of little boys."

Len Packman wrote to him and received a very cordial reply in which John Arlott revealed the address of the "antiquarian bookshop".

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IN HAMILTON COUNTRY. Browsing over the list of C.D. subscribers I was able to compile the following addresses with a touch of Hamiltoniana about them.

Basil Adam lives in Derwent Street, Newcastle.

Cyril Banks at Dalton, Huddersfield.

W. H. Broster in Primrose Cottage, Kinner.

Jack Corbett in Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham.

Harry Dowler in Hamilton Road, Longsight, Manchester.

Miss T. B. Flinders in Conquest Close, Hitchin.

A. L. Hall in Compton Crescent, Leeds.

Ron Hodgson in Silver Street, Wakefield.

David Harrison (until recently) in Marton Mansions, West  
Wimbledon.

T. Johnson in Raby Cottage, Raby Park, Neston.

L. G. Kelshaw in Selby Avenue, Blackpool.

C. J. Parratt, in Compton Buildings, Gosmore Road, London.

And John Jack's abode is called Greyfriars way up in Ayr, but I  
have a suspicion that there is more design than coincidence.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins

No. 18 - Boys' Friends Nos. 1183-1188

Mr. Bootles was not the only master to be summarily dismissed from Rookwood. The same fate befell his successor, Mr. Dalton, some three years after he had taken over the post of master of the Fourth. Mr. Dalton's offence had been a refusal to cane the entire form on the Head's instructions, a hasty order given by Dr. Chisholm in a moment of wrath. Having dismissed Mr. Dalton, the Head naturally assumed that the matter was at an end, but he was soon disillusioned. He found the words "We want Dicky" painted on the glass panels of the bookcase in his study, and the same message was given to him verbally over the telephone. Indiscipline became more and more pronounced, until finally, the new master of the Fourth, an unpleasant gentleman by the name of Carker, was tarred and feathered, for which act of lawlessness Jimmy Silver was sentenced to be expelled, and his associates were promised a severe flogging.

This was the signal for a rebellion, which took the form of a barring-out on an island in the river Roke. This theme was more fully developed in the Magnet in the famous Poppers Island Rebellion Series of 1934 but, within the limits of the shorter space available in the Boys' Friend, the original Rookwood version was well executed. The plot followed the usual, but nonetheless exciting, lines: the Head made a fruitless demand that they should all surrender; a party of prefects found themselves overwhelmed by the juniors; and a gang of toughs (hired by Mr. Carker) would have been successful but for the intervention of a third party (Mr. Dalton). In the end, it was Mr. Dalton who was effective in bringing the rebellion to an end.

This series was a particularly good illustration of Dr. Chisholm's character. He was as hasty and as brusque as ever, yet there were a number of revealing incidents which rounded off his character and brought him even more clearly to life. For instance, when Lovell was caught visiting Jimmy Silver in the punishment room, the Head unexpectedly stated that he could make allowance for Lovell's natural concern about a friend under sentence of expulsion. Again, when Mr. Carker insinuated that Mr. Dalton was probably encouraging the rebels, Dr. Chisholm told him in no uncertain terms that he could entertain no such suspicion of the master he had dismissed. Similarly, when Peele deserted from the rebels, and offered to show the Head a way to penetrate their defences, Dr. Chisholm asked him in a voice of thunder if Peele was suggesting that he make him an accomplice in an act of treachery. Finally, when the rebellion was over, the Head, without losing an inch of dignity, very graciously asked Mr. Dalton if he would favour him by returning to his post as master of the Fourth. The Head of Rookwood was not, perhaps, the ideal man for the position; on the other hand, he was far from being a tyrant. This Rookwood rebellion series shews how remarkably well Charles Hamilton succeeded in sketching the character of a headmaster who was hasty and not over-considerate of the feelings of others, lofty and indifferent to the opinions of his subordinates, yet withal an honest and a just man, and fair according to his own lights. It is doubtful whether quite so convincing a picture has ever been drawn of a headmaster in fiction. The portraiture is restrained yet wholly credible. It is a pity that Dr. Chisholm was not allowed to feature even more extensively in the Rookwood stories.

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C. D. "POINTERS" No. 1. Probably the best possible score for this puzzle was as follows:-  
 Rylcombe 26; Wayland 22; Fish 10; Richards 26; Clifford 26.  
 Total: 110.

Several correct solutions were received, the first handled being from J. K. Morgan, 58, Moorfield Road, Liverpool 23, to whom a postal order for 5/- has been sent.

concluded on Page 192

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 FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE. Magnets 1329, 1343, 1359, 1367. R.A. NICHOLLS,  
 THE GREY HOUSE, STAUNTON LANE, WHITCHURCH, BRISTOL 4.

"COLLECTORS' DIGEST" POINTERS No. 2.

T	I	O	R	T	H
N	F	E	R	L	W
D	K	K	S	H	O
R	N	I	T	W	A
E	A	N	H	T	R
H	N	E	R	N	O

The object of the game is to score as many points as possible. Start with any letter and, moving from that square to any adjacent square, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, spell out the longest word you can find. Make a note of the word and, in the squares, cross out the letters you have used. Now look for another word and continue until there are no more words to be

found. It is not necessary to use all the letters. Work out the total number of points you have scored.

For a two-letter word count 1 point; for a three-letter word count 3 points; for four letters, 5 points; five letters, 7 points; six letters, 9 points. And so on, adding two points for each additional letter. CHARACTERS or PLACE-NAMES in connection with the hobby count DOUBLE POINTS.

Write on a postcard the words you have made, with the points they score, add your own name and address, and post to the Editor. A postal order for 5/- will be sent to the sender of the first correct solution received.

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MY ALL-STAR CRICKET XI

By Don Webster

During the winter season we had a long controversy over selecting the all-star Football XI to represent our favourite schools, so with the advent of the Cricket season I think the time is opportune - particularly as we have the added attraction of the Australians (and fine weather!) this summer - to see what talent we possess at St. Jim's, Greyfriars and St. Frank's.

Let's start with the batsmen; we must have Harry Wharton, reported to be the best junior bat at Greyfriars. St. Jim's can supply Tom Merry and Talbot in this category, and St. Frank's provide Jimmy Dodds as a certainty for inclusion. With Smithy as probably the best all-rounder, we now have five accredited batsmen, most of whom can bowl more than a bit.

Bowlers, that's easy! It's a question of whom to leave out. take Inbry and Fatty Wynn, and Gresham from St. Frank's. These three with Smithy can bear the brunt of the attack. That's eight automatic choices so far, and if we give Hardy from St. Frank's preference as wicket-keeper it's because he is a good forcing bat, though it's with reluctance I omit the dependable Squiff. Two places to fill, oh dear, I've so many names left. Bob Cherry, Harry Noble, Nipper, Jack Blace, Piggy, Gussy, etc. I'm afraid I'll have to give Rookwood a miss this time, so I'll put the following eleven into the field in batting order.

- |     |                 |               |
|-----|-----------------|---------------|
| 1.  | T. Merry        | (St. Jim's)   |
| 2.  | H. Wharton      | (Greyfriars)  |
| 3.  | R. Talbot       | (St. Jim's)   |
| 4.  | J. Dodd         | (St. Frank's) |
| 5.  | H. Vernon Smith | (Greyfriars)  |
| 6.  | E. O. Handforth | (St. Frank's) |
| 7.  | R. Cherry       | (Greyfriars)  |
| 8.  | G. Figgins      | (St. Jim's)   |
| 9.  | H. Gresham      | (St. Frank's) |
| 10. | H. Singh        | (Greyfriars)  |
| 11. | D. L. Wynn      | (St. Jim's)   |

Seems a well-balanced team to me - good fielding side too. Tom Merry as Skipper?

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MAGNET TITLES: (cont'd) 1569 Carter Takes The Count; 1570 Bunter Gets The Boot; 1571 Billy Bunter's Twin; 1572 Goodbye Greyfriars; 1573 Bound For The Wild West; 1574 On The Texas Trail; 1575 Harry Wharton & Co. In Texas; 1576 The Schoolboy Range-Riders; 1577 Ructions On The Ranch; 1578 A Prisoner In The Desert; 1579 A Raid On Kicking Cayuse Ranch; 1580 The Man With The Hidden Face; 1581 The Trail-Thief's Secret; 1582 The Trail-Thief's Last Ride; 1583 Bunter The Hypnotist; 1584 Walker On The Warpath; 1585 Five In A Fix; 1586 Up For The Sack; 1587 Punishing Ponsonby; 1588 Loder's Unlucky Day; 1589 South Sea Adventurers; 1590 The Outcast Of Kalua; 1591 The Schoolboy Crusoes; 1592 The Beachcomber's Secret; 1593 The Scuttled Schooner; 1594 Adrift In The Pacific; 1595 Big Chief Bunter; 1596 The Castaways Of Cannibal Island; 1597 The Man Behind The Scenes; 1598 Saved By A Foe; 1599 The Boy Who Wouldn't Be Tamed; 1600 The Rat Of The Remove; 1601 The Runaway; 1602 Tricky Tracy; 1603 The Mystery Of Mr. Quelch; 1604 He Let The Side Down.

# OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

## LONDON SECTION

Study Number 6, at 6 Pembroke Gardens in the Royal borough of Kensington was the scene of the June meeting of the club. It was very pleasing to see our Herbert enjoying the company of his London friends and it must be said that it was a good tonic to him. Meeting for the first time was Derek Adley of South Harrow and what with the wealth of statistics that he had with him and the wonderful account of Frank Vernon-Lay's visit to E. E. Briscoe, the gathering was a really happy success. Roger excelled in the catering, some feed indeed. Quizzes, talks and debates plus the forementioned visit to the famous artist and the many examples of his work that were shewn round made this meeting one more on the roll of happy memories. Next meeting at Wood Green on Sunday, 15th July.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

## NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, 9th JUNE, 1956

This meeting was unique. Gerry and Mrs. Allison were absent. It was the first time Gerry had missed a meeting since the start of the Northern Section and almost the same goes for Mrs. Allison. It did seem strange without them. Needless to say, it was unavoidable. Another almost ever present, Bill Williamson, was also prevented from attending, so the company was less than usual.

It was Ernest Whitehead's evening. He had prepared his first Quiz, and it was a jolly good one entitled "By Their Words Shall You Know Them", forty favourite sayings of favourite characters. He led off with obvious ones like "I say you fellows" and "Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!" but as they progressed they got more difficult, repeat, more difficult.

J. Breeze Bentley and Jack (That Man Again) Wood tied with 32 points each and Ron Hodgson third with 29.

Molly Allison ably deputised for Mrs. Allison at refreshments time and to fill in the rest of the evening I gave a spontaneous talk "Collectors I Have Met". They were just chosen at random from my host of friends and I don't think any of them would have minded what I said.

Next meeting, 14th July, 1956.

HERBERT LECKENBY

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING, 28th MAY

Business meetings are necessary and indeed also valuable; but the contrast between this month's business meeting and last month's "Chapman" meeting was like unto the contrast between a banquet in Guildhall followed by being reduced to dining on bread and cheese!

"Howsomedever" as old Dave Oke would say, we got through a lot of necessary and useful business.

Minutes were followed by a quotation from John Arlott's column in the "News Chronicle" on 26th May, in which he referred to pleasant memories aroused by seeing copies of the "Magnet" and "Gem" in a connoisseur antique shop. Pity he didn't say where he saw these. Clearly however, he greatly appreciates the work of Charles Hamilton.

Business proper began with the accounts, copies of which were circulated to members by Treasurer Norman. We were very pleased to see the healthy state of the finances. After discussion of various points, the adoption of these accounts was moved with very appreciative references to Norman's work, and carried with acclamation.

After further discussions the re-election of the officers was also carried. We were sorry to learn that Mrs. Brown felt impelled to resign from the committee on account of pressure of other activities, and so did not seek re-election. I take this opportunity of recording our appreciation of her services in this capacity. We welcomed two newcomers to office; namely, Mr. Ingram to the committee, and Miss Russell as Librarian.

As is usual with the annual business meeting, we finished the evening with sundry discussions on such matters as future organisation.

EDWARD DAVEY

MERSEYSIDE SECTION MEETING

Sunday, 17th June, 1956

There was quite a good attendance at Waterloo House for this meeting, and the Chairman opened by welcoming another new member, Mr. E. W. Staen from Wallasey. This was followed by correspondence, cash report and announcements, and then the members got down to solving a Book Titles Quiz, which was won by Bill Windsor with 23 out of 25. Second place was shared by George Riley and John Burke with Peter Webster third. After tea and biscuits, during which the library did a brisk trade, the meeting terminated with a general discussion.

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, 8th July, at 6.30 p.m.

(196)  
when it is hoped "our Herbert" will be able to attend, in which  
event it will be "C. D." night. L. B. W.

\*\*\*\*\*  
WANTED URGENTLY. Nelson Lees (Old Series) Nos. 4, 7, 16, 17, 31, 40,  
64, 65, 68, 69, 71, 73, 75, 76, 78, 82, 88, 92. Three for one of the  
same series offered for any of the above. JACK MURTAGH, 509, SELWOOD  
ROAD, HASTINGS, NEW ZEALAND.

WANTED Any Publications containing reproduction of Blackpool Summer  
Holiday Poster, 1920. T. ARMITAGE, 205, BATLEY ROAD, ALVERTHORPE,  
WAKEFIELD, YORKS.

FOR SALE: Collectors' Digest Annuals.  
Bound: 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950  
Unbound: 1949-54  
  
Bound Volume of C.D. Nos. 1-24, Nos. 24-100 loose.  
Bound Volume Scoops. Nos. 1-20.  
Approx. 20 Wild West Weekly  
Goldhawk and Mandeville Tom Merry Books.  
Bunter Books. Frank Richards Autobiography.  
  
Gem Nos. 220, 1338, 1506 and 302 Double Xmas No.  
Boys' Friend Xmas D/Number 549.  
  
Rovers, Adventures, Hotspurs, Wizards, Knockouts - Period  
1947-1950.  
  
Offers to: P. J. CHECKLEY, 18, TARLINGTON ROAD, COUNDON, COVENTRY.

\*\*\*\*\*  
SALE: 10 Magnets between (271-165), 4/6 lot. 15 Nos. Amateur  
Photography 1944-1955. 2 Motor Cycles 1954-1955, 6d. each.  
Pearson's Magazine Vol. 1898 (Captain Kettle Stories), 3/-  
WANTED: Magnets and S.O.L's, Greyfriars, Rockwood, Grimslade.  
E. MAGOVENY, 65, BENTHAM STREET, BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND.

Advertise in the C.D. - 1d. per word.

# Nelson Lee

## Column

by JACK WOOD

NOSTAW, 328, Stockton Lane,  
YORK



Owing to the length of a very fine article, I am handing over the whole of my allotted space to an old friend of ours this month. Here then, is the story of a familiar Nelson Lee series, recalled by James Cook.

### THE MORDANIAN EPISODE

by

James W. Cook

Usually, when the boys of St. Frank's returned from adventures overseas, the matter ended there and then, but I have been reading one particular series where enemies, which had been made abroad, continued to threaten after the St. Frank's crowd had got back to England!

I don't think this has happened before in any of the other series in the Nelson Lee Library, or in any of the companion papers.

It is most unusual, and rather refreshing, when one considers the delightful impudence of E. J. Brooks in giving his readers a double dose.

I refer to the Mordanian series which started in April, 1921.

Lord Derrimore was giving one of his famous parties at Derrimore Hall in Suffolk and at 7 o'clock one morning, sixteen juniors together with Nelson Lee and Lord Derrimore journeyed to an aerodrome to board the Suffolk Queen "a magnificent rigid vessel which was purchased from the government by the East Anglian Aircraft Co. Ltd., and was to be used for passenger traffic."

All the St. Frank's crowd had been invited by Captain Mason V.C. on the trial trip to London, but only sixteen boys desired to go.

The airship had commenced her trip in perfect style. She had

left the ground gracefully and had swung over the aerodrome, rising higher and higher as she circled.

And then, with all her engines humming, she had set off for London - a triumph of aerial construction.

Those juniors, who had remained behind wondered how they could spend the day with nearly all the fellows away. Then some dark clouds had been noticed - a storm was coming up. Thunder sounded and the storm burst in all its fury.

The Suffolk Queen was forced to return, but before the airship could reach the ground a tremendous wind squall had come sweeping across the ground and lifted the airship as though it had been a feather. The rear part had been lifted high by the wind and with tremendous force it came crashing down, smashing the two rear power cars to smithereens and rendering the airship absolutely helpless. And then, completely in the control of the sudden squall, the airship was torn away from the scores of men who held her, and sent careering aloft, high in the air. Missing the great hangar by inches she swooped upwards and was swallowed up in the dense thunder clouds.

The Suffolk Queen had gone; vanished into the clouds with all her engines disabled and her rudders and elevators out of action.

Four hours later not a single word had come in. Nobody knew what had happened to the airship and her crew and passengers.

The anxiety at the aerodrome was overwhelming. Telegrams and wireless messages were sent all over the country for information should the disabled monster be spotted.

But there was no sign of the airship. Later on news came in that it was sighted at a great height over Dutch territory, 8 or 10,000 feet up, drifting helplessly and making for the direction of Germany. After that, hundreds of people had seen it making for Bavaria.

The next message stated it was drifting out to sea! And then - silence.

A cable from Brindisi announced that airship wreckage had been sighted and investigations made. The Suffolk Queen, it was confirmed, was a total wreck and sinking rapidly.

The most appalling news of all was that nobody had been saved. Not a living soul had been seen on the wreckage or near it. The Suffolk Queen after drifting right across Europe had come down in the Adriatic. Everybody on board had perished - everybody had gone down!

And all those in Dorrimore Hall were stunned - almost speechless with horror. In spite of all their hopes this was the result.

Clapson summarises the general feeling of ghastly loss when in a

whisper he says "Dead! Good Heavens! Nipper, Sir Montie, Handforth, Mr. Lee - all of them! They've gone down - gone into the water - gone -!" He broke off, his voice choking, and, in front of everybody he commenced sobbing like a child!

But by great good fortune a schooner had come along and butted into the submerged airship.

Everybody had collected onto the platform at the top and all they had to do was to flounder over the huge envelope of the airship and climb on board.

Thus, when later the airship was seen sinking with no sign of life it was assumed all had gone down with her.

The schooner is a mystery ship - a deserted vessel, but in fine condition.

The great sails were intact and the decks, although not particularly tidy were fairly clean, and perfectly dry. Altogether the three-master schooner was a gift from Heaven. Aboard, Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore and Captain Mason, held a conference on the subject. "Well, of course, its deucedly mysterious" said Lord Dorrimore, "I'm not getting away from that, Lee. How on earth did it happen that this schooner was floating about the Adriatic - without a soul on board?"

"That is a mystery which I should like to get to the bottom of" said Lee slowly, "so far as I can discover, this vessel is a Greek. We found her with sails fully set, and without any living being on board. And yet she is perfect; there is nothing whatever the matter with her. Down below, her store-rooms are filled with excellent food; and there is no indication of foul play - as, for example, mutiny."

"Yes, but there's evidence that the ship was deserted in a hurry" put in Captain Mason.

The discussion goes on and the solving of the mystery is left to Nelson Lee.

Afterwards they inspect the hold and find a dagger which Lee thinks is of Mordanian origin.

"I have heard of Mordania" said Mason thoughtfully, "a mountainous little kingdom somewhere in the Balkans, isn't it?"

"Exactly" said Lee. "It possesses quite a respectable piece of coast line, and I do not suppose we are very many miles distant from it at this very moment, since it is almost certain we are in the Adriatic. Many mysterious things occur in Mordania, as you probably know."

And Nelson Lee goes on to say that only two or three foreigners have attempted to enter Mordania. Two of them never returned, and the third - who happened to be a rich man - was captured, and his release was not effected until a very large sum was handed over to the brigands who had seized him.

Mordania is a country of hills - a wild desolate place which the average Englishman can scarcely conceive of.

"I have never actually been there, but I have travelled near to the border".

Further investigations produces a piece of paper which was found in the Captain's cabin, and on it was a crudely executed drawing which represented a torch flaming fiercely at the top. To Lee this emblem is significant. For it is the sign of the Tagossa - "a vast secret society more deadly and dangerous than the Camorra of Italy. No man has ever been known to escape death after he has been marked down". "Foreigners are not allowed to enter Mordania and they are shot out of hand at sight".

The scrap of paper, Lee thinks, suggests that the inhabitants of the schooner was marked down by the Tagossa, and removed, leaving the vessel to the mercy of the wind and sea.

Packing cases are found and the first one contains glass tumblers. But when others are opened brand new, glittering revolvers, rifles and ammunition are found.

Then a number of curious-looking metal cases are inspected and Lee is startled, "High explosive" he exclaims in a low voice. Wires leading to an electric battery and then on to a cheap clock explain the whole set-up.

The ship ought to have been blown to atoms, but the clock had stopped. The intricate wire system was disconnected and the explosive was thrown overboard.

And so the ship drifted on. It required no attention, although a man was at the wheel on duty. He had nothing to do. Everything was quiet, still and peaceful.

It is at this period that a strange-looking man with long black hair is found on board. There is consternation for a time, but Lee states the man is insane and harmless.

They clean the man, cut his hair and shave him, and to everybody's surprise Lee announces that the man is Paul, Crown Prince of Mordania!

(to be continued)