

## DIME NOVELS FOR BOYS

HOW THE AVERAGE PENNY DREADFUL IS WRITTEN.

Men Who Can Write One a Week With Ease—A Novel Written in Thirty-six Hours—Rules the Authors Have to Follow—Has Its Rigid Morality.

To the romantic imagination of the small boy the writer of dime novels is of the same heroic and fire-eating type as the heroes he portrays, writes Walter L. Hawley in the Washington Star. The actual fact is so different that if it were known, the resultant loss of glamor would undoubtedly be accompanied by a corresponding decrease of sales. The men who write dime novels do not wear their hair long. They carry no six-shooters nor bowie knives and many of them never saw a live Indian or cowboy. The writing of such literature is a business rather than a profession, and the only special qualification requisite to success are an imagination of great resource and fertility, and an unlimited capacity for hard and rapid work. Each publishing house engaged in the business employs a staff of regular writers, paying those who do nothing else a salary, and to those who do other work a fixed sum for the manuscript and copyright on each story. This is carried on the business of embodying and re-embodiment of the good old heroes, Alkali Ike, Gentleman Joe, Big Foot Sandy, One Eye Pete, Deadwood Dan, Dare Devil Dick, The Man With the Iron Hand, The Boy Detective and all the other popular favorites, who are still on duty, trawling Indians, hanging horse thieves, rescuing kidnapped maidens, finding lost heirs, recovering lost fortunes and in other ways helping good people out of bad scrapes and leaving bad people "clinging, weak and despairing, to a yielding twig, that holds them for one thrilling moment suspended between the edge of the cliff and the yawning, rock-bound abyss a thousand feet below."

In addition to the men who are engaged to produce a certain amount of copy within a given time in order to supply the regular issues of the "libraries" each publisher has a list of men who can write a story to order at short notice. They are classed as "extras" or "specials," and are called upon when a regular writer is ill, on a vacation or falls behind in the production of copy. These extra writers are usually newspaper men employed on some paper in the city or men engaged in some other class of literary work that does not fully occupy their time. Nine-tenths of all the so-called "blood-and-thunder" stories produced are written to order. As a rule the author does not even select the title of his story, and in many cases he is compelled to follow a plot suggested by the publisher or to use some incident in real life as a basis.

The publishers keep a close watch upon the daily papers for stories of sensational crimes and adventure that may serve as incidents in the fiction prepared for the small boy, and when a great event or an incident of national interest occurs there is an exciting race between publishers to be the first to put upon the market a dime novel relating in some way to the affair that is in the public mind. Within a week of Dewey's victory in Manila a score of thrilling stories in which that battle was the chief incident were on the newsstands. When the sailors of the United States cruiser Baltimore were attacked in the streets of a South American city a few years ago, and there was much wild talk of war, a publishing house in New York put on sale 48 hours after the news of the affair reached this country, a dime novel with the murdered boatwain's mate of the cruiser as the hero. The author of the story wrote for 36 hours without rest or sleep, producing 40,000 words of copy, which went to the printers sheet by sheet as he wrote it. This is probably the record for rapid literary production. It often happens that a writer of such literature is called upon to produce a story of 40,000 to 50,000 words in three days.

Writers of dime novels do not, as a rule, attempt a polished style of English, and rarely re-read or revise a page of their copy. The publishers want action, plot, incident, dialogue and thrilling situations. A successful writer of dime novels must possess at least superficial knowledge of a great variety of subjects. He must be able to write a story of life in the slums of a great city, one of adventure on the western plains, of war in Cuba or the Philippines, without making any material error in the descriptive sections. It is a rigid rule that the plot and incident must be plausible. No matter how improbable the deeds of the hero may be, the author must be careful to avoid impossibilities and absurdities. If Alkali Ike scalps an Indian in the Black Hills in the morning and cleans out a faro bank in Deadwood at night, the story must explain satisfactorily how he made the journey from one point to the other in the time specified.

The dime novel writer must also be able to take up a character created by another writer and carry the imaginary individual along through other stories and new adventures without changing his habits or permitting him to repeat himself in deeds of daring. It often happens that one central character is carried along as the hero through 20 or 30 stories published in the modern "library" style of such fiction. While the same name or nom de plume may appear on the title page of each story, a dozen different authors perhaps contribute to the series, each taking up the characters where they were left by the preceding

writer, and carrying them on to new fields of adventure.

A publisher who had created a romantic western adventurer with a name that proved popular with the boys contracted with one of his regular writers for a series of twenty stories. After sixteen of the series had been issued, one every two weeks and the other four extensively advertised to appear on certain dates, the author fell ill. The publisher sent for one of his daily writers, who was employed on a daily newspaper, and arranged with him to take up the work and carry on the central characters unchanged. In order to prevent delay in getting out the stories as advertised, the extra writer had to read up the career of the hero from the start and write four novels of forty thousand words each in twenty days. The task was successfully accomplished, and the writer in question did not lose an hour from his regular work as a reporter. Devoting only nights and Sundays to the stories, he dictated them to a stenographer, working sometimes six and seven hours at night at a rate of two thousand words per hour.

The regular writers of such stories, men who do not attempt any other work, are able to produce one story of forty thousand to fifty thousand words a week, for six months or a year with comparative ease. Under pressure, they can readily write two a week, but could not long continue that rate of production without a period of complete mental and physical rest. The author who attempts to lay out a schedule of his story, to work out a plot to the end in his mind, and name all his characters in advance, cannot write dime novels. He must be able to take a title, a name and an incident suggested by the publisher, and write a story of a specified length, letting the plot grow and develop as he writes. He must invent names as he forms the letters that spell them and create a thrilling incident or climax. Virtue must always triumph, in the dime novels, and vice be overthrown, the desirable consummation being achieved invariably in the last chapter, and the hero must be an example of all the virtues. Nor must the villain be too wicked, for in certain respects the morality of the dime novel is very rigid. It may surprise many persons who denounce such fiction as wholly bad, to know that the publisher will not permit a line or situation that might so much as suggest indecency or vulgarity. The villains as well as the heroes all swear "under their breath," and oaths are never used in the lines of the story. Four or five large publishing houses in New York produce tons of such literature every week and the business is conducted in a systematic way. There is the sharpest kind of competition in the trade, and the writer who can suggest and work out new and novel plots or situations will find a demand for all the material he can produce.

### THE EXILED BOERS.

The British Have Scattered Them Widely in Different Parts of the World.

A small sketch map, occupying a corner of the Geographischer Anzeiger, shows the places in Portugal and India where hundreds of the Boers captured in South Africa are now kept in confinement. Having distributed the prisoners from India to Bermuda, it will certainly not be easy for them to plot against the British government.

Cronjé's soldiers, the first large party to fall into the hands of the British, were landed on the island of St. Helena in April, last year, and have been living ever since on Deadwood plain, as the islanders call the plateau that rises about 600 feet above the sea on one side the port of Jamestown.

Another part of the Boer army, 700 in number, marched eastward over the Transvaal frontier into Portuguese territory. They were captured near Komati Poort, the gateway through the mountains by which the railroad from Lorenzo Marques ascends to the Transvaal plateau. They were sent to Portugal at the expense of the British government, which is now paying the cost of their maintenance. Four hundred of them are confined in the citadel at Penicue, a small fortress on a peninsula jutting out into the sea a little north of Lisbon. It is a very secluded place, the few thousand inhabitants around the citadel being devoted almost exclusively to lace making. Four hundred men are all that the storage capacity of the citadel would accommodate, and so the other 300, excepting the officers, were sent to Alcobaca, a few miles inland. Commander Pienaar, who was in charge of the party when it surrendered, is kept a prisoner at Thomar, about 50 miles north-east of Lisbon, where still stands the famous monastery of the Knights of Christ to whom was conceded the privilege of "conquering the new world," whose deeds of prowess and rapacity both in Brazil and in the East Indies gave them an enduring and not very desirable reputation. The other officers are confined at Caldas da Rainha.

Another transport from South Africa carried 600 Boers to Bombay, whence they were taken inland about 100 miles to Ahmednagar. Their present situation does not appear to be particularly inviting if it is proper to call Ahmednagar "a hot, waterless, pestilent hole," in which terms a correspondent of the Manchester Guardian has given his opinion of it.

Another batch of prisoners has been sent to the Bermudas. It seldom happens in any war that the defeated prisoners are so widely scattered.—Sun.

### NIGHT WORKERS IN NEW YORK.

Figures That Show the Number of Them to Be Upward of 40,000.

There are 800,000 persons, men and women, employed in what the law describes as gainful occupation—working for others for compensation—in New York City, says the Sun. It has heretofore been supposed that about 5 percent of these were employed at night, which would give a total of 40,000 night workers in the city.

Recently a table has appeared intended to show how many night workers there actually are in the four boroughs, and this estimate gives 3200 policemen, 3000 railroad employes, 3000 bakers, 3000 newspaper employes, 2500 engineers and firemen, 2500 actors and musicians and 1000 restaurant employes. The total is 20,600, the balance being made up of butchers, peddlers, steam railroad employes, telegraphers, watchmen, electricians and miscellaneous workers.

The table, accurate in many respects, fails short of completeness as to the total number of persons employed at night in New York. There are in New York and Brooklyn 2167 Rained law hotels which are open all night, in each of which there is at least one man employed and usually two. This figures up 3500.

The table does not include the market men, a considerable group of night workers, who number at least 1000, the men who work along shore loading or unloading boats to the number of 1000 additional, and it does not take into account either those employed on or connected with the ferry business of the city, which is carried on all night, in which there are at least 500, a total of 6000 additional.

The number of watchmen is estimated at 400, actually it is nearer 2000, for there are watchmen of buildings under construction, watchmen of office buildings, watchmen in care of material, factory watchmen, private watchmen and ordinary night watchmen.

There are 250 hotels in New York City and the number of night employes of these—clerks, porters, elevator men, watchmen, bell boys, gas men and cleaners is 2500, or an average of about 10 for each hotel.

Another considerable item of night workers is made up of the employes of apartment houses, elevator men and janitors, and still another of city employes connected with the water supply department, which is going all night, and in charge of public buildings.

Gashouses in New York do not shut down at night time, but employ night shifts of men, and the same is true of the foundry business, and there are all the night drug stores as well as the all night saloons, and the night hawk cabmen, whose chief time of profit is between midnight and daybreak.

Taking all these classes together, it is probably no exaggeration to say that there are 40,000 night workers in New York, exclusive of physicians and clergymen.

### Bolivar Scared Him.

The life of a photographer is not always a happy one. He has to invade precincts which are almost sacred in his efforts to get a snap shot, and sometimes he literally takes his life in his hands when he has to set up his machine in dangerous quarters. A well-known artist had an exciting experience the other day when he essayed to make a photograph of Bolivar, the huge elephant at the Zoo. Getting inside the cage in which Bolivar has been confined for so long, the photographer set up his machine and awaited a favorable moment.

Bolivar seemed to be disturbed by the presence of the suddenly whisking in his cell, and, suddenly whisking around, managed to snap the chains by which he is always bound. The frightened photographer made a dash to one side to escape the waving trunk which he saw coming his way, and in his confusion made a mistake which landed him, camera and all, in a pit in which the waste hay and refuse of the cage are kept. Luckily for him the keepers rushed to his assistance and dragged him out before the angry animal could get at him. His camera was badly damaged, and nearly a week passed before he could muster up sufficient courage to renew his attempt.—Philadelphia Record.

### The Arms of Wales.

The king is said to be favorably disposed to the inclusion of the arms of Wales in those of the future Princes of Wales. It is to be hoped that the dragon will not be used as the symbol of this inclusion, for nothing, heraldically, could be more absurd. The dragon does not occur in the coats of arms of any of the ancient Welsh princes or in those of any of the old Welsh families. It is sometimes spoken of as the emblem of the Tudors; but Owen Tudor, the founder of the Tudor family, was not armoriferous; and the red dragon which Henry VII. adopted was not that of the Tudors, but was a compromise between the white bull of York and the red lion and greyhound of Lancaster.

### Big Window, No Harmony.

The Builders' Trade Journal says that plate glass, the creation of comparatively recent times, is responsible for many of the enormities which render the street architecture of today so devoid of grace and harmony. Those, however, who contend that a house window glazed with small panes—even those so popular at the beginning of the 19th century, about 12x15 inches—is much more pleasing in appearance than one glazed with one great sheet, are, we think, quite in the right.

### A BUTTONHOLE CASE.

Brought to Decide the Precedence of the Opening.

Once upon a time a case was brought before a learned judge, in which the question at issue was as to whether the button was made for the buttonhole or the buttonhole for the button.

Counsel for the button held that it was so plain as to render argument superfluous that the buttonhole was made for the use and behoof of the button; still, for form's sake, he would give a few reasons why his contention was the correct one. It was apparent, he said, that without the buttonhole the button would be unable to perform its function, and hence it was plain that the button preceded the buttonhole, and that the latter was invented in order that the button might be of service to mankind. It should be clear to everybody that had it not been for the button the buttonhole never would have been thought of. Its existence necessarily presupposed the existence of the button.

The lawyer for the other side was equally positive in the stand he had taken. He employed to take the stand that the buttonhole preceded the button; that, in fact, the button was merely an afterthought. He said that, as every one knew, the buttonhole can be employed without the button, as witness Farmer Jones, who invariably uses a nail or sliver of wood instead of the conventional button, whereas it was impossible to make an effective use of the button without the aid and assistance of the buttonhole. Hence it was shown beyond peradventure that the buttonhole was of greater importance than the button, and it was natural to infer that the buttonhole was first invented and that the button came later simply as an ornament or, at best, as an improvement upon the nail, sliver or other instrumentality wherewith the buttonhole was made to perform its duty. To show the relative value of the buttonhole and the button, he said, take this simple example: When a button comes off the buttonhole can still be made serviceable, but if the buttonhole is slit open the button is of no use whatever. With this the learned counsel closed his case, although he claimed that he had not exhausted the subject.

When the court came in after recess the learned judge promptly decided the case in favor of the buttonhole—clearly a just decision, although it was whispered about the court room that the decision might have been different but for the fact that while changing his linen between adjournment and re-assembling of the court his honor had dropped his collar button and hunted for it without success for half an hour, and perhaps might never have found it had he not stepped upon it. But, of course, this suggestion came from the partisans of the button and may fairly be imputed to their disappointment and chagrin.—Boston Transcript.

### Many Uninhabited Islands.

If you should want an island, that is, an uninhabited island, for the purpose of occupying it alone, Robinson Crusoe like, or to use it for romantic fiction, or for any other purpose, the exclusion of all others in the world, you need have no trouble in finding one, if you see fit to make a journey to the Indian ocean. In the waters between Madagascar and India you can find more than 15,000 of them, where there is not a human being, and where you can, if you will, be monarch of all you survey.

An English traveler has recently been among the small islands that dot the western end of the Indian ocean, and made an inventory of them, and reports that he counted 16,100, and found only about 600 of them inhabited. Now, there is a good chance for any one who may want an island.

These particular islands are not large, as islands go, but very many of them are sufficient for the purpose of a Robinson Crusoe or an island novel, or for even a small colony of shipwrecked mariners or other persons who might be cast on one of them or seek for the purpose of making a home pretty much out of the busy world.

Some of them are only an acre or two, well elevated above the tide, while others are a quarter of a mile in diameter and running from that up to a mile or two in length, and a quarter or less of the length in breadth. Many of them are granitic structures that rise steeply from rich soil through which small fresh water streams hurry to the sea, which they reach after flowing over beaches of glistening calcareous sand that are beart by coral reefs, which form walls about the islands.—New York Sun.

### New York's English Women.

It is one of the singularities of the New York woman's fashion that she will appear in midwinter with her head uncovered and pass from the theatre to her carriage without any quilts. But as soon as the warm weather sets in upon us her hat is as essential to her piece of mind as is one of those wonderful creations with which the East End "Arriets of London require for bank holiday wear. To go about with one's head uncovered is the sign of the provincial. And no matter how lovely or sensible a fashion is, so long as it is not acceptable here, it is to be cast into the outer darkness—which is the provinces.—New York Press.

### Suitable Attired.

Mrs. Chatterton—Henry, for goodness sake, don't wear such short trousers! Give them to the ragman! Chatterton—Not much! You women haven't got any patent on the rainy-day costume idea. These are my rainy-day trousers.—Brooklyn Eagle.

## REAL YELLOW PERIL.

IT WILL COME NOT IN WAR, BUT IN TIME OF PEACE.

Victories in Domain of Commerce—Views of an American Who Has Lived in China—Startling Observations—Japan the Ally of China—Wonders in Imitation.

An American who has lived in China for the past three years, and who was at the headquarters of the allies since their entry into that country until six weeks ago, was in Washington recently. Owing to his important business interests he refused to allow his name to be used, but with that condition expressed himself freely to a Star man as to his view of the situation in the Orient. He said:

"The awful crimes of three of the allied powers will not go forever unpunished by China. France will be driven out of southern China some time in the near future. Germany will lose the money invested by her citizens in Chinese enterprises, for the atrocities committed by her soldiers will not be forgotten or forgiven. The nation which will lose most of all is Russia. The day of settlement will be long delayed, but the appalling outrages committed by the Russian troops on the Chinese of Manchuria, where between 300,000 and 400,000 were murdered last winter, will remain fresh in the memory of the Chinese nation.

"In the distant future, when Li Hung Chang and all of the other thieves who sold themselves and their country to Russia and who stole the money given to them by their country to build forts and buy arms, ammunition and supplies, are gathered by the devil unto himself, and when the patriotism of the restored Chinese emperor has injected some honor into the army of China, there will be trouble for Russia.

"When that day comes China will have an ally in Japan, a people any other nation in the world may well dread to meet in war, one with an undying hatred for Russia and everything Russian; a people lying in wait and praying for the hour when she can strike the czar a deadly blow, a feat she cannot hope to accomplish alone.

"The Japanese are a nation of soldiers, and as soldiers I admire them greatly. Their best men go into the army. Their army officers are proud of the army, of its honor and reputation. Their ambition is to keep faith in all ways as do other western nations. In business, however, where the second grade of Japanese are found, there is no sense of honor, of business integrity, of the solemnity of the promise, engagement or obligation which under any pretext can be evaded.

"In China the reverse is true. There the best, the brightest, the most ambitious of the race choose a business career, and while they squeeze you hard any trade, if they finally agree to give their word it is faithfully fulfilled in the most minute particulars. In politics they are corrupt as individuals and as a nation, and are without political principle, ascendance or honor. They rob their soldiers of their beggary pay; they rob their country of the money given without stint to strengthen the nation's defenses. Being themselves without patriotism, they tempt the empress dowager down their pernicious example, set for generations has stifled all patriotism among the masses of the people.

"My hope is that the allied powers, from jealousy of one another, will keep China intact; that their own greed to secure the unlimited wealth of the empire will make them force the Emperor Kwong Hsu, whom they will enthrone, to open the country in fact as well as in name to foreign trade. The public spirit of the emperor, assisted by a progressive ministry, will do the rest. Kwong Hsu's empire are at least a century in advance of those of Li Hung Chang, who has ruled the empress dowager and assisted her in degrading the empire to its present low estate.

"Assuming that all this will come to pass, that Kwong Hsu will be restored, the country thrown open to the building of railroads and the development of mines and other industries, there will follow a growth of material wealth such as no nation in the world's history has ever conceived possible.

"It is realized, however, by those familiar with the situation and the character of the Chinese people that this wealth will not be for the outside world that will develop the resources. The profit will be reaped by the Chinese, and for one I am glad it will be so. The industrious, tireless, thrifty, shrewd Chinese; those who have already grabbed a good share of the wealth of Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tien Tsin; who own the mines already open, the large banking interests, immense shipping interests and who monopolize the mercantile trade already established, will, with the increased facilities furnished by foreigners, not only hold their own, but increase their wealth a hundredfold.

"When the western world opens China to the great manufacturing and wonderful mineral possibilities of the latter country, when other nations point the way, China will develop her resources in such a manner that no nation unwilling to let her laboring men live as the Chinese live can hope to compete with the native population. My admiration for the physical strength and endurance of the Chinese knows no bounds. Physically they are possessed of vast reserve strength. I wish I could tell you of what I have seen them do, how they work like giants 24 hours at a stretch, never closing their eyes, singing all the while and living solely on rice. Physically these men are the wonder of the laboring world.

"They are imitating, ingenious and

inventive. When foreign stoves were selling in Tien Tsin for \$100 in Mexican money I have known the Chinese to take one for a mold from which to make new castings, imprinting even the names of the foreign manufacturers so well that detection was impossible. From this one stove bought of the foreign dealer they would make many and sell them at a profit of 900 percent. A country whose people can do this, and many other things like it, will, as soon as the utilities of the civilization of the west are appreciated, build up a manufacturing and commercial industry which will mark a new epoch in civilization.

"The allied powers have driven the iron deep into the soul of the Chinese nation. Who can say, with Kwong Hsu on the throne, that these people may not learn the lesson of patriotism. They learn all other lessons given them, and this last one will be told to their children's children. No ghost stories will be needed in China to terrify the young until the occupation of the allied powers in the last year of the old century has been forgotten.

"Those who ridicule Sir Robert Hart are wide of the mark. His only error, in my opinion, was putting the cart before the horse. Yellow Peril will not come first in the form of war, for its victories will be those of peace in the domain of commerce and manufactures with which no other nation, not even Japan, can hope to compete."

### QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

In a church at West Kensington, London, a notice was lately posted announcing the sale of five pews. One of the "advantages" of these pews, ran the notice, was that "the contribution box was not passed to them."

Our friend the cat is called kat in Danish and Dutch, katt in Swedish, chat in French, katti or katze in German, catus in Latin, gatto in Italian, gato in Portuguese and Spanish, kot in Polish, kots in Russia, ket in Turkish, cath in Welsh, kath in Cornish, catua in Basque, and goz or katz in Armenian.

Chinese in London who wish to worship without leaving the city now have an opportunity of doing so. The largest joss ever brought to England has just arrived from Swatow, near Foo-Chow. Its full height is about five feet 10 inches. It has a central made figure three feet high, dancing on a rustic stand and holding up some sacred fruit.

An entire town has recently been discovered in the dominions of the Czar of the existence of which no one seems to have any idea. Deep in the forests of the Ural lies a flourishing city, the inhabitants of which speak a curious language of their own, and seem to form a sort of ideal commonwealth, in which taxes and tax-gatherers, among other troublesome things, are unheard of.

The most costly state funeral which has ever taken place was, perhaps, that of Alexander the Great. A round \$1,000,000 was spent in laying Alexander to his rest. The body was placed in a coffin of gold, filled with costly aromatics, and a diadem was placed on the head. The funeral car was embellished with ornaments of pure gold and its weight was so great that it took 84 mules more than a year to convey it from Babylon to Syria.

A painstaking meteorologist has undertaken the laborious task of measuring the dimensions of rain drops. He finds that the largest are about one-sixth of an inch, the smallest one five hundredths of an inch, in diameter. They are larger in summer than in winter and larger in hot than in cold climates. The size of the drop when it reaches the earth depends on the height from which it has fallen. In summer the lower strata of air are warmer than in winter, and therefore clouds are formed at a greater height.

Peppercorn rents are very common throughout England, especially in building leases, where, for the first year or two, a nominal rent of one peppercorn is payable. At Highgate, in the County of Denbigh, that rent has been paid since 1602. At King's Brome, in Warwickshire, a peppercorn rent has taken place of a pair of tongs, which formerly had to be given yearly rent for certain lands. So for land at Wakefield the peppercorn has taken the place of an annual rent of 1000 clusters of nuts. Two farms at Carlecoat, in Yorkshire, which not long ago paid as rent, the one a right-hand and the other a left-hand glove, now pay one shilling yearly, the other a peppercorn.

### The Lost Smoke Consumer.

It was sheer vanity that kept Grant Finlay from giving the world the benefit of his invention of the total abolition of smoke. He evolved a simple system by which any fire or light could be made to consume its own carbon; and though he demonstrated the usefulness of the invention many times, obstinately refused to put it on the market or sell the secret of it. His own house, just outside Glasgow, was fitted with his system, which did not cost him 30 shillings for the entire building, and not a jot of smoke was ever emitted there. All his fires consumed their own smoke, and he was fond of showing the efficacy of his invention to guests, but never would explain the working of it; and he died two years ago, carrying his secret with him to the grave. A week before his death he had all the "anti-smoke" apparatus stripped from his house and destroyed.—Answers.