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Herbert Strang

By WILLIAM H.P. CREWDSON

One of the best kept secrets in the realms of literature, was, for many years, the true identity of the author known to the world as Herbert Strang. The name 'Herbert Strang' was a nom-de-plume that hid the identity of two authors who, together, worked in close collaboration to produce some of the finest stories ever penned.

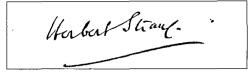
George Herbert Ely and Charles James L'Estrange were those wonderful two who, when their partnership began in Glasgow in 1903, concocted the pseudonym that disguised their partnership, being a combination of Ely's Christian name with a simplification of L'Estrange's surname.

Both were born in London - George Herbert Ely in 1866 at St. Georges, Hanover Square, the son of James Ely, grocer and provisioner - Charles James L'Estrange at Kennington, South London in 1867. It is not known if, during their formative years, the two boys ever met, or to which schools they attended. However, though there is no record of the schoolboy interests of L'Estrange, quite a considerable amount is known regarding those of Ely.

A book-worm he certainly was, and like most boys of his generation, avidly read the tales of Kingston and Ballantyne. In later years, he recalled how he revelled in Kingston's Peter the Whaler and The Three Midshipmen and its successors, and Ballantyne's The Young Fur Traders and The Lifeboat, though both Kingston and Ballantyne had rather a tendency to preaching.

After Kingston and Ballantyne came Henty, who, it appears, had quite a bearing on the future life of the young Ely, who, in later years, wrote:- "I do not think we had heard of Henty until he was introduced to us by Kingston. Kingston had started a boys' paper called *The Union Jack*; but finding his health failing, he handed over the editorship to Henty, for whom, in a graceful introductory letter, he bespoke our support. Henty carried on the paper for several years, but never made a success of it.

His failure was perhaps due in part to the unsuitability of his stories for serial publication. His leisurely manner, and the solid chunks of history which took up a large proportion of his space, militated against the quick pace, the crescendo of excitement, so necessary in serials.



Signature of Herbert Strang

But Henty became our hero. We begged his autograph and photograph. We went even further. A school magazine had just started, and I was made first editor. Ambitious to signalise my term of office, I wrote to Henty, with a boy's cheerful audacity, asking if he could induce one of his friends to provide us with a serial story! He replied with his wonted kindness, explaining that it was not a case in which he could apply to his friends, but offering to write us a story himself. This he did. He sent me a sea yarn, entitled The Fate of the Seaflower - some 15,000 words, written in his small crabbed hand in violet ink. When I dispatched it to the printer he returned it, complaining that the compositors could make nothing of the handwriting; would I have a copy made? Rashly I undertook to transcribe it myself. Some days later I took the proof to Henty at the Standard office. He was busy with his daily article, and looked very formidable behind his big pipe and immense black beard. I shook in my shoes when glancing at the proof. He began to anathematise the poor compositor for making such "d....d balderdash" of his work. Not until his anger - easily roused, soon spent - had burned out did I venture to confess that the offender was, not the compositor, but myself, and then his frank hearty laugh quelled my terror and I breathed again.

I had other schoolboy interviews with Henty, who had a bluff kindliness of manner that endeared him to every boy lucky enough to meet him. His example so fired me to emulation that I spent all my spare time for months in penning a story of 80,000 words in his own style. It was, I remember, a story of 1815. The Cornish hero fell foul of a gang of smugglers, who kidnapped him and shipped him to Brittany. He escaped their hands, trudged across country alone, encountering endless perils and surprises by the way, and arrived on the field of Waterloo in the nick of time to help the Duke to victory. With mingled pride and timorousness I took my bulky

parcel of foolscap to Henty. He kept it for a week or two, then sent for me, warmed my anxious heart with praise chiefly of my grammar! - pricked holes in the plot, discussed some suggestions he had pencilled in the margin, and sped me on my way with the genial words, "Stick to it, my lad." On the strength of this encouragement - and I never told him this - I revised the story and sent it to his publishers. In a few days I received a very polite note saying that if I pleased they would be happy to estimate for the printing and publishing of an edition of a thousand copies. My visions of early opulence as an author vanished, and I did not write another boys' story for some twenty years."

Nevertheless, his ambition to become an author did not diminish. As a schoolboy, he had eagerly bought the first issue of the Boy's Own Paper in January, 1879, in which, in the October 4th issue of that year, the paper published an engraving entitled The Tournament by Charles Cattermole. The B.O.P. offered three cash prizes for the best essays on the subject of tournaments; "Certificates of Merit" would be awarded to the hundred competitors who came nearest to the prize winners. The competition was divided into three categories:- class 1 ages 17-21, class 2 14-17, and class 3 ages up to 14. Ely entered the competition, and received a certificate of merit in the class 3 group. The list of winners being published in the issue of 27th March of the following year.

Ely was aged 13 years at the time of entering the competition, and was living in Pimlico.

History and grammar were young Ely's favourite subjects, both in which he passed with flying colours.

Out of school, he had a penchant for church-organ music. He loved to hear those beautiful hymns being played in his local church, to which he went with his parents on Sundays. Would that he could play such an organ, he told his parents one day, and so, after much deliberation, his wish to receive tuition came to fruition, and, in the fullness of time, and in like manner to all else on which he had ever set his heart, he attained distinction.

At what age Ely's literary career began is not known, what is known

however, is that, it was as a reader in the Clarendon Press at Oxford that his career in the world of literature first commenced.

In 1893, he edited with others. Blackie's Junior School Shakespeare, and in 1896, Blackie published his History of England from 1603 to the Present Time. In 1899 he took to translating, the first translation being that of Songs of Beranger, published in London by Blackie, 1899; next came The Women of the Renaissance: A Study of Feminism, by Rene de Maulde-la-Claviere. London. Swan Sonnenschein, 1900; The Art of Life, by Rene de Maulde-la-Claviere. London. Swan Sonnenschein, 1902; and Saint Cajetan, by Rene de Maulde-la-Claviere. London. Duckworth, 1902.

It was also in 1902 that G.A. Henty, Blackie's best-selling author passed away. Aware of the void left by this great man in the field of juvenile fiction, Ely lost no time in contacting Blackie, with a view to filling that void. That he did so, and how well he compared with his predecessor, the world was soon to know.

Shortly after his arrival in Glasgow, for it was there that it was arranged he should be employed, he met up with fellow Londoner Charles James L'Estrange, who, it appears, was himself also a writer, a book by him, entitled Familiar London had been published in London by Nister in 1890. L'Estrange, from all accounts, was also desirous of employment by Blackie, having travelled, he said, over most of England, and many parts of the world, and could, therefore, use the knowledge he had gained during his world-wide travels as background material to a number of stories he already envisaged.

However, when he learned of Ely's wide historical knowledge and perfect grammar, he felt slightly apprehensive regarding the likelihood of his being the one chosen to don Henty's mantle. Thankfully, his apprehension was shortlived; at Ely's suggestion, it was decided to approach Blackie with the unusual idea of both working together in partnership, L'Estrange to weave the plots, and manipulate the events, and Ely to write the books as they actually appeared.

After giving considerable thought to the suggestion, Blackie finally agreed, and the pen-name 'Herbert Strang' decided upon. The dual-personality of the writer to be kept secret.

Their first book, *Tom Burnaby*, appeared in 1904. A story of Uganda and the Great Congo Forest, it brought to light the extensive knowledge amassed

by L'Estrange, of the African continent's many and varied regions and peoples, during his travels there. The book proved a sensation, and many were the rave-notices concerning it. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote: "...I think it is a really excellent picture of African Life." Mark Lane Express reported :- "...Mr Strang has come to the front rank with a bound..." Glasgow Evening News said "...a masterpiece in the Henty manner." Possibly the finest tribute of all, was however, the one presented in the Liverpool Mercury:- "The record of his career deserved to be bound in leather and blocked on all sides with gold."

Blackie were delighted with this first offering, and shortly afterwards invested copiously in advertising it, while also keeping safe the secret of the writer's dual-personality. It was a secret that was to remain for many a long year.

Following swiftly upon the heels of Tom Burnaby came Boys of the Light Brigade, A story of Spain and the Penisular War. It is a story in which both Ely and L'Estrange combined in equal measure their outstanding qualities to bring to perfection a tale of outstanding historical and geographical accuracy, so accurate that Professor Oman (Chichele Professor of Modern History at Oxford, and Author of A History of the Penisular War), wrote "I can't tell you what a pleasure and a rarity it is to the specialist to find a tale on the history of his own period in which the details are all right where the right divisions and the right generals turn up at the proper moment, and the names are spelt properly, and the geography works out. Pray accept thanks from a historian for having got historical accuracy, combined with your fine romantic adventures."

The demand for more tales from the pen of 'Herbert Strang' was of so uncommon a degree, that work continued unceasingly to fill that demand. It is said that Ely could so immerse himself in a story, that he could write for hours without pausing for a word. At one time he was organist at a Scottish church, and one of his choirboys used to say that he read manuscripts and proofs during sermons.

The following year saw the appearance of Herbert Strang's third book, Kobo, A story of the Russo-Japanese War, viewed from the Japanese stand-point. Of this book, Saturday Review said:- "Last year a new name of great promise appeared in the list of writers of boy's books. This year the promise shown by Mr. Herbert Strang in Tom Burnaby is more than borne out by Kobo and Boys of the Light Brigade... He shares the late Mr. Henty's

knowledge of history and war; he is less encyclopaedic in his descriptive methods perhaps than Henty, though he gives the same air of verisimilitude to his chapters by means of maps and charts ... he has an admirable style, and a sense of humour which he handles with the more effect because he never turns a situation into broad farce."

1906 saw the publication of Brown of Moukden, also sub-titled 'A story of the Russo-Japanese War'. In the preface the authors pointed out that 'while in Kobo the struggle was viewed from the Japanese stand-point, in Brown of Moukden, the reader will find himself among the Russians, seeing it from their side.' Of this second tale of that war, Academy said:- "Related with the same spirit and intimate knowledge of the East that made Kobo a marked success." Army and Navy Gazette reported the following:- "When Mr Henty died, boys were disconsolate, for they had lost a real friend; but now we have Mr. Herbert Strang most capably taking his place. He was welcomed as showing great promise in Tom Burnaby, but he did better in Kobo, that strong story of the earlier pages of the Russo-Japanese War, and now he has done better still in Brown of Moukden."

Strang's next book, The Adventures of Harry Rochester, 'A story of the days of Marlborough and Eugene', followed soon afterwards. Of this stirring tale, Speaker had this to say:- "Since Mr. Henty died, there has arisen a greater than he in the person of Mr. Herbert Strang, whose historical knowledge and literary craft and pleasant sense of humour, make him not only the best living writer of books for boys, but a born teacher of history."

Academy wrote:- "If the 'mantle of Henty', about which we have heard much, has descended on anybody, it has descended on Mr. Herbert Strang. ...His writing is pre-eminently healthy, and 'Tom Burnaby and Kobo - the best books of their season - have a worthy successor in The Adventures of Harry Rochester.

Sadly, for Blackie, it was to be Strang's final book for that company. The reason for their parting has never been revealed, but the two men wrote no more for Blackie, but instead, offered their services to Hodder and Stoughton, London. It was early in May of that same year that they did so, after which an interview was arranged for both men on Tuesday the 22nd. One week later, on Thursday the 31st, Hodder and Stoughton wrote to them as follows:-

27 Paternoster Row, London. May 31st, 1906. Gentlemen,



On the Deck of the Privateer An illustration from Humphrey Bold by Herbert Strang



The First Landing on the Site of Melbourne An illustration from The Early Settlers. Australia's Story Edited by Herbert Strang

We have pleasure in putting on record the terms of the arrangement made between us at our interview last week with regard to our Educational Juvenile and Prize Book departments, of which you will take the charge, subject to our control, for three years from the first of October of this year.

In consideration of your exclusive services in connection with these departments and of all literary and editorial work done in connection with them, given to us during these three years we will pay into your joint account the sum of £600 per annum, payable monthly, and to be divided between you as you may arrange.

You will assign to us the exclusive right of printing and publishing in Great Britain, its Colonies and Dependancies all your books published during these three years and written under the pseudonym of "Herbert Strang", and you will furnish us with approved copy of two books in time for autumn publication of 1906, i.e. not later than the middle of August, and will provide not less than two complete

books in August 1907 and August 1908. These stories shall be of the average length of the books you have

already published under the name of "Herbert Strang", and the scheme and contents of each book shall, of course, be subject to our approval.

We will pay for these "Herbert Strang" books to your joint account a royalty of 10% on the published price of all copies sold up to 4,000, 15% on subsequent sales, thirteen copies to be reckoned as twelve. For each of these books we will pay a sum of £100 on account of the above royalties to your joint account, being £50 on receipt of the complete MS. and £50 on the day of publication.

The payments made in connection with the "Herbert Strang" books shall be in addition to those made in connection with the Educational Juvenile and Prize Book departments

A sum equivalent to 2% on the net receipts in excess of the present annual net receipts from our Educational Juvenile and Prize Book departments shall be paid to your joint account each year. The account shall be made up from October 1 to September 30

and shall be settled in the month of December following in that year. In reckoning net receipts all trade discounts and 10% for working expenses shall be

deducte

As soon after you enter our employ as possible we will give you a marked catalogue of our publications showing the volumes included in the Educational Juvenile and Prize Book departments, and an account shall be made out of the net receipts from our Educational Juvenile and Prize Book departments from October 1 1905 to September 30, 1906, and this shall form the basis of this arrangement so that we shall pay you on the net receipts each year above the net receipts for 1905-1906.

This 2% on the amount of the net increase shall be continued for three years after the expiration of this agreement between us, or shall be liquidated in one sum as shall be mutually arranged.

Reasonable out of pocket travelling expenses shall be paid extra to the above salary.

At the expiration of this agreement between us you shall be at liberty to purchase from us the stock and plates of the "Herbert Strang" books we have published at cost price, and the publishing rights at a sum equal to three years purchase, based on the net profits



Cyrus goes down to the Severn An illustration from Humphrey Bold by Herbert Strang

of these books.

You shall give us your whole time and exclusive services, and shall not be engaged in any business other than in connection with our publications and the writing of the "Herbert Strang" books.

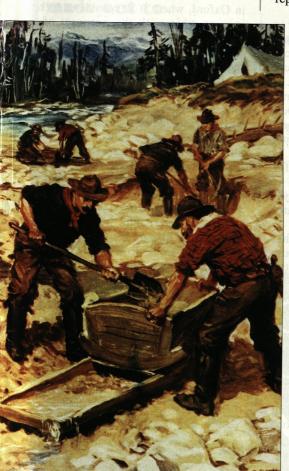
Should either of you during the three years be disabled by illness or other misfortune from attending to the business for three months a proper and proportionate allowance would have to be made to us in respect of the £600 per annum.

Nothing in the arrangement between us shall be considered as in any sense creating a partnership between us, or as giving either of you any of the rights or subjecting you to any of the liabilities of partners.

Should any dispute arise between us in connection with this agreement it shall be referred to the arbitration of an arbitrator to be mutually agreed upon, or failing such mutual agreement, of an arbitrator to be appointed by the President of the Publisher's Association, and the decision of this arbitrator shall be final and binding upon all parties.

Yours very faithfully,

The above letter arrived at its destination the following day, and in





The 95th Charge Home An illustration from Boys of the Light Brigade by Herbert Strang

reply, Ely informed the publishers of its receipt, and stated that L'Estrange

and himself would discuss the terms most carefully, and in due course, furnish them with their decision.

It was to be another four weeks before so doing. L'Estrange being the one to notify Hodder and Stoughton of the two writers joint decision:-

400, Great Western Road,

Glasgow

July 3. '06

Messrs Hodder and Stoughton

Dear Sirs,

I have much pleasure in accepting the terms of your letter of May 31st and June 6th last - the latter being in reply to Mr. Ely's letter of June 1.

I regret that owing to illness I have not been able to send this formal acceptance earlier.

Yours faithfully

Gold-Washing on the Banks of the Frazer. An illustration from Pioneers in Canada. Canada's Story. Edited by Herbert Strang.

Friends or Foes? An illustration from Barclay of the Guides, by Herbert Strang C.J. L'Estrange

Almost before the ink was dry, the two now inseparable partners were on their way to London, and employment with their new publishers. In agreement with the terms of their employ, not only 2 but 3 books were written, and approved copies of them furnished in time for autumn publication. The titles of the three books being:- Jack Hardy, A story of One Hundred Years Ago; One of Clive's Heroes, A story of the Fight for India; and Samba, A story of the Rubber Slaves of the Congo.

In the preface of *One of Clive's Heroes*, Herbert Strang, though in this particular instance, in reality, L'Estrange, says:- "For several years I myself lived within a stone's throw of the scene of the Black Hole; and though at that time I had no intention of writing a story for boys, I hope that the impressions of Indian life, character, and scenery then gained have helped to create an atmosphere and to give reality to my picture.

1907 found the two partners even busier, for in addition to producing Rob the Ranger, A story of the fight

for Canada; With Drake on the Spanish Main and King of the Air, or, to Morocco on an Aeroplane, they produced their first Herbert Strang's Annual for Boys, on sale in the bookshops in time for Christmas, (dated 1908). They also



produced the first in a series of historical tales for young people. Entitled *Herbert Strang's Historical Series*, each partly-fictional tale was set in the reign of a different English monarch, and written in collaboration with either Richard Stead, (Fellow of the Royal Historical Society,) John Aston, or George Lawrence.

The first in the series was With the Black Prince, A story of the Reign of Edward III, the preface to which reads: "The object of this series is to encourage a taste for history among boys and girls up to thirteen or fourteen years of age. An attempt has been made to bring home to the young reader the principal events and movements of the periods covered by the several volumes.

If in these little stories historical fact treads somewhat closely upon the heels of fiction, the authors would plead the excellence of their intentions and the limitations of their space.

With the Black Prince, With Marlborough to Malplaquet, A story of the Reign of Queen Anne; A Mariner of England, A story of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth; One of Rupert's Horse, and Lion-Heart, A story of the Reign of Richard the First, were all written in collaboration with Richard Stead.

Others in the series are Claud the Archer, A story of the Reign of Henry the Fifth; In the New Forest, A story of the Reign of William the Conqueror, both written in collaboration with John Aston. Roger the Scout, A story of the Reign of George the Second, and For the White Rose, A story of the Reign of Edward the Fourth, were both written in collaboration with George Lawrence.

It was in 1908 that another name appeared along with that of Hodder and Stoughton on both the spine and the title page, that name was Henry Frowde, who, in 1874 was offered and accepted the management of the London office of the Oxford University Press, took over in 1883 the publication of all Clarendon Press books, and was formally entitled 'Publisher to the University of Oxford', a position from which he later retired. It was therefore, under the joint imprint of Henry Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton that Ely and L'Estrange continued to produce great stories of adventure, history, and when the Great War came, tales set in that great conflict too.

Some of the most popular stories produced under the above imprint being *Humphrey Bold*, his chances and mischances by land and sea. A story of the time of Benbow, 1909; *Barclay of the Guides*, A story of the Indian Mutiny, 1909; *Palm Tree Island*, the adventures of two boys in the South

Seas, 1910; Settlers and Scouts, A tale of the African Highlands, 1910; The Adventures of Dick Trevanion, A story of eighteen hundred and four, 1911; A Gentleman-At-Arms; being passages in the life of Sir Christopher Rudd, Knight, as related by himself in the year 1641, and now set forth by H. Strang, 1914.

It was due to such outstanding tales, that, like Blackie, Henry Frowde; Hodder & Stoughton published, on the fly-leaves of their boys' books, the press reviews praising the works of Herbert Strang:- "Excellent as many of the best stories by the best writers for boys are, we feel that he is first of them all. Saturday Review.

"It has become a commonplace of criticism to describe Mr. Strang as the wearer of the mantle of the late G.A. Henty...we will go further, and say that the disciple is greater than the master". Standard

"Mr Strang's name will suffice to assure us that the subject is seriously treated". *Spectator*.

"We rank Mr. Strang above Henty in many respects." *Academy*.

"Boys who read Mr. Strang's works have not merely the advantage of perusing enthralling and wholesome tales, but they are also absorbing, sound and trustworthy information of the men and times about which they are reading." Daily Telegraph.

"Mr. Henty was the ancient master in his kind; the present master, Mr. Herbert Strang, has ten times his historical knowledge and fully twenty times more narrative skill." *Manchester Guardian*.

"If the place of the late G.A. Henty can be filled, it will be by Mr. Herbert Strang, whose finely-written and historically-accurate books are winning him fame." *Church Times*.

"This is the literature we want for young England." Gentlewomen.

"He is far and away the best boys' entertainer we have among us". *Military Mall*.

1909 saw the publication of the first volume of the many that were to appear over a great number of years under the heading of Herbert Strang's Library, volume containing INTRODUCTION prior to the first chapter, culminating in simularity to the following, quoted in this instance from Ben-Hur, by Lew Wallace:- "To bring the story within the limits of this edition, it has been necessary to make extensive cuts. The whole of the first section. which consists largely of philosophical discussions between characters only one of whom has a part, and that a minor part, in the subsequent narrative, has been omitted; and in the later sections

similar passages, which, however great their interest for adult minds, are certainly above the heads of the girls and boys for whom this series is intended, have been removed, with advantage, I venture to think, to the youthful reader."

A number of other series were embarked upon during the following years, all of which were edited by Herbert Strang:- The Romance of the World, 23 vols, 1910-1915; The Red, (Green, Blue, Brown, Purple, Orange, Crimson, Scarlet) Books for Boys, 8 vols, 1911-1920. Along with the Herbert Strand's Annuals, these were the most popular.

However, of all the many series begun under the imprint of Henry Frowde; Hodder & Stoughton, only *The Romance of the World* series was to be completed under that imprint, for, although the 'Herbert Strang' literature was in itself 'a little gold-mine', other departments in the juvenile field were not proving quite so lucrative. Hodder wanted to enter the school-book field, but a shortage of capital prevented them doing so.

Humphrey Milford of Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, had, for some considerable time, thought of entering the juvenile market with what were customarily called 'prize books'. Such literature had been sadly neglected in Oxford, where it is considered to be incompatible with the purposes of a University Press. Nevertheless, as Milford pointed out, 'recreative' literature could be educational as well.

It was therefore only natural that, on hearing of the situation then prevailing at Henry Fowde; Hodder & Stoughton, Milford should seek discussions with that company, with a view to taking over all their juvenile book stock, including that pertaining to 'Herbert Strang'.

Milford was successful, both in his much sought-after discussion, and the acquisition of all the stock, when, in 1916, the joint venture with Hodder & Stoughton of Ely and L'Estrange ceased, and all the stock sold to the Oxford University Press. The two inseparable partners were engaged by the O.U.P., to continue as heretofore under the pseudonym of 'Herbert Strang'. Known as 'the heavenly twins', they remained with the Press, until their retirement, during which time, according to the records of the O.U.P.: "they produced between them, hundreds of books under the name of Herbert Strang (or, when they felt so inclined, Mrs. Herbert Strang). The readers, arithmetics, poetry books, the annuals and tales for tiny tots, sprang in their tens of thousands from the joint venture, and the output became

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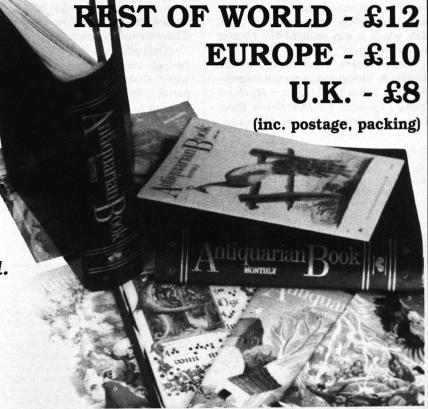
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Collectors BINDERS

so great in the end, the General Catalogue stopped trying to keep abreast of it."

Before their departure from Henry Frowde: Hodder & Stoughton, the two collaborators, in addition to their other tales of derring-do, produced a number of stories set in the various theatres of the Great War, the most notable being:-A Hero of Leige: A story of the Great War, 1914; Frank Forester: A story of the Dardanelles, 1915; and Through the Enemy's Lines: A story of Mestopatamia, 1916. In 1918, the series culminated with With Haig on the Somme, their first book under the auspices of the O.U.P.

Following quickly on the heels of With Haig on the Somme, came The Long Trail: A story of African adventures, and Tom Willoughby's Scouts: A story of the war in German East Africa, both written in 1918, dated 1919. The Herbert Strang's Annual, which had appeared each year since its inception in 1908, continued until 1926, after which it was re-titled The Oxford Annual for Boys.

Other series, first started under Hodder & Stoughton, were continued:-Herbert Strang's Library; Herbert Strang's Readers; The Red (Green, Blue, Brown, Purple, Orange, Crimson,

The Adventures of Dick Trevanion. A story of eighteen

The Adventures of Harry Rochester. a tale of the days

hundred and four

of Marlborough and Eugene

The Heir of a Hundred Knogs

of Benbow

In Trafalgar's Bay

A Hero of Leige: a story of the Great War

Humphrey Bold: his chances and mischances by land and sea. A story of the time

Honour First. A tale of the Forty-Five

Jack Hardy: or, A Hundred Years Ago

Kobo: a story of the Russo-Japanese War

King of the Air: or, To Morocco on an airship

Scarlet) Books for Boys, and those Edited by Mrs. Herbert Strang. New series were also entered upon, and to so great an extent were stories produced under the heading of Edited by Herbert Strang, and, or with, Mrs. Herbert Strang, in addition to Strang's Penny Books, of which there were 38 volumes, books of poems, etc., that as O.U.P. records show:- "Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Strang were as prolific as ever. New series abounded: the Something to Do Series in nine volumes and the Dumpy Series in sixteen; not to mention the Peek-a-Boo and Madam Mouse and the Happy Hour Series, and one called simply the Two Shilling net Limp Series.

The variety of subjects seemed endless, and as the volume of their work increased, so did the popularity of their stories in whatever form they appeared, and the prestige of the amazing two who produced them. In 1937 the honourary degree of M.A. was conferred on both men, who were presented by the Public Orator, Dr. C. Bailey, as Gemina Preli Clarendoniani columina.

Time and tide, it is said, wait for noone, not even for 'Herbert Strang', So it was, that, the 'Herbert Strang' partnership, which Ely and L'Estrange claimed to be the longest in the history of literature - it lasted 36 years - came to

A CHECK-LIST OF THE FIRST EDITIONS OF HERBERT STRANG

(1910) 1911

(1905) 1905

1924

1914

1923

1909

1915

1908

1905

(1906)

True as Steel

Winning his Name. A romance

With Drake on the Spanish Main

With Haig on the Somme: a story of the Great War

A Little Norman Maid

an end at the beginning of the Second World War, when L'Estrange retired to Worthing, Sussex, and Ely to a house he bought in the Cotswolds.

After but a short stay in Worthing, L'Estrange removed to Thorverton, near Tiverton, Devon, where he died at his home, 'Apple Garth', on the 8th January, 1947, aged 79 years, his cause of death being given as Carcinoma of Tongue. He left over £15,000.

Some years later, Ely also changed his abode, and removed to live at 51 Tilehurst Road, Reading, Berkshire. He died in Battle Hospital, Reading, on the 7th September, 1958, aged 93 years, his cause of death being given as Bronchopneumonia and Arteriosclerotic Parkinsonism. He left over £3,000.

* The original letters are in the present writer's possession.

Acknowledgments:- Special thanks to Blackie & Son, and Celia Clothier, Librarian, Oxford University Press, for their assistance, without which this feature would not have been possible.

Photographs of illustrations, including the front cover, kindly provided by Robert D. Crewdson.

(1025)

1923

1922

1908

(1918)

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The Bog Book of Scouting Stories	1940	Shoulder to Shoulder	1915
The Big Book of trains	1937	Stand By!	1920
The Blue Book for Boys The Blue Book for Children	(1912) (1915)	Stirring Tales Stories for Boys	(1911) (1940)
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The Dainty Series. 7 vols.	1930	Oxford Annual for Girls. I(1927-41)	1927
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