

JONATHAN KEARNS

RARE BOOKS



SPRING CLEANING 2023

LIST #1

ONCE AGAIN WE ENTER THE TIME OF YEAR WHEN DECKS NEED TO BE CLEARED AND THE COBWEBS BRUSHED AWAY. IN VIEW OF THAT THIS IS THE FIRST OF A COUPLE OF “SPRING CLEANING” LISTS OF RECENT ACQUISITIONS, ALL AVAILABLE AT A 20% DISCOUNT TO ANYONE WHO FANCIES A SHELF OR TWO OF STRANGENESSES.

PICTURES UPON REQUEST, ALL ENQUIRIES ANSWERED, QUESTS UNDERTAKEN.

YOUR FEEDBACK AS ALWAYS IS WELCOMED

JONATHAN@KEARNSRAREBOOKS.COM

1. **Asquith, Cynthia [Editor]. *The Third Ghost Book*.**

London: James Barrie, 1955.

First edition. 8vo. 302pp. Publisher's original black cloth, minor scuffing, some light edgewear and inoffensive bumping, a very good, clean copy in a bright, strong example of the dustwrapper with some foxing to the rear panel. Internally clean, light spotting here and there, mostly to the page edges. A handsome copy of a desirable anthology containing some absolute gems from the likes of Robert Aickman, Mary Treadgold, Elizabeth Bowen, and Lord Dunsany, among others. Surprisingly elusive.

[Ref: 1387] £175

2. **Benson, E.F.. *More Spook Stories*.**

London: Hutchinson, [1934].

First edition. Large 8vo. 288pp. + 8pp. ads dated Spring 1934. Publisher's orange paper covered boards titled and decorated in black to spine and front board. Minor wear to extremities, a superficial split in the cloth of the rear spine hinge, and some isolated bumping and fraying, strong and tight. Internally clean, with the half title apparently removed for some reason. Normally, despite its durability this copy wouldn't be the kind of condition we like to go for, but a multitude of its sins are eaten by the positively divine indulgence of it having been inscribed by E.F. Benson on the front flyleaf:

“For Charlie, from E.F. Benson, March 27. 34”

The fortunate Charlie, in this case, was Charlie Tomlin, the man who had known Fred since his 13th year and remained with him as manservant for the whole of his life. Almost certainly the person who knew more about Fred Benson's complicated and gently clandestine life, and someone with whom he shared a strong, devoted, lifelong closeness. Originally one of the staff at Tremains, the home of Benson's distinguished and faintly disturbed parents, Charlie opted to remain by Fred's side after he left home. Inscribed Benson material is scarce and rather lovely, he wasn't exactly shy, being a rather outgoing sort of chap, but he was private, reticent about his inner self, and therefore not one for whom gadding about signing things to people willy-nilly came naturally. So, he didn't. Scarce thus.

[Ref: 1316] £750

3. **Benson, E.F.. *Visible and Invisible*.**

New York: George H. Doran, 1924.

First US edition. 8vo. 298pp. Publisher's original grey-green ribbed cloth titled and decorated

in dark green to spine and front board. Minor edgewear and bumping, including a more aggressive than usual bump to the lower front corner, lightly sunned to spine, with some softening of the head and tail. A very strong, solid copy, built along durable lines with good quality paper, typical of mainstream US books from that period, far more resilient than most things we were producing. Internally clean. Benson's best known collection, probably, bringing together a number of his most accomplished pieces of weird and unsettling fiction, including "Negotium Perambulans", and "Mrs. Amworth" a rather British vampiric story. Obviously the UK first is the true first of this collection, but this copy bears the ownership signature of C.E. "Charlie" Tomlin to the front flyleaf, indicating that it came from the collection of Benson's lifelong companion and manservant, and the person who shared more of his life than even his wildly talented brothers.

[Ref: 1317] £250

#### 4. **Bridge, Ann [pseud: Mary Ann Dolling O'Malley aka Cottie Sanders]. *The Song In The House*.**

London: Chatto and Windus, 1936.

First edition. 8vo. 283pp. Publisher's original russet cloth, minor scuffing and edgewear, light bumping and sunning to spine ends, originally titled in yellow to spine, but the yellow has mostly flaked off, which I would consider to be more of a production issue than any unfair wear and tear, a very good, tight copy in a very good example of the elusive dustwrapper, notably fragile and with a tendency to turn to biscuit. This has happened here, but only the area of some general uniform toning and minor chips of loss to the edges and spine ends, quite heavy toning to the spine panel, and a closed tear towards the bottom third of the spine panel. It's an elegant rather than durable piece of book design, with its sparse but delightful three colour Philippa Webb wrapper design. Internally clean, ink ownership to front flyleaf, and with some sporadic, marginal spotting. The paper quality is peak Chatto, heavy and creamy and supremely confident that it's going to be shelved in a household that speaks at least three languages, values flower arrangements, and contains laughter that at least occasionally could be described as "tinkling."

Ann Bridge is another of those women who makes me wonder about the mysteries of time and how people just disappear periodically from public consciousness, rise back into it fleetingly, and then just settle into a kind of *"Not forgotten because known by three people, but it's a close run thing."*

This mundane peculiarity of humanity is absolutely core to the world of rare books, in case you were wondering. I repeatedly use what I refer to as Street Testing; if I walked down a street in central London or New York, how far would I have to go before I met someone who could have a conversation about Dracula, or James Bond? About 3 feet is the probable answer, but how far would I have to go before I met someone who knew anything about Bram Stoker or Ian Fleming? A bit further, but probably not too far. How far for G.K. Chesterton? Jane Loudon? Fergus Hume?

Obviously I don't run this little exercise in my head to suggest people don't know anything; there was a point in 2012 where *every* teenage boy could tell you what a "Favela" was, and where to find them, and why they existed, but most people over 35 wouldn't have a clue, it's just how knowledge works and travels, suggesting otherwise is a dick move.

I only ask the question so I can figure out the quantum diplomacies of how to bring stuff to people. Depending on who you are talking to, it's kinder and more useful to say *"Mary Shelley...did you see Penny Dreadful?"*, than it is to say *"Mary Shelley, you know,*

*Wollstonecraft's daughter?*" They're both fine, and they are both grand avenues to understanding, but they work on different worlds.

Basically I spend a lot of quality AuDHD time trying to figure out how people sink and rise in the current of time, and how to keep them rising.

Ann Bridge is like that. She was writing novels, damn fine, popular, novels, filled with complexity and wry observation and the suffocating difficulties of social navigation across cultures and families, whilst I was wondering why I didn't live in a house or go to school like the other kids did.

She's not even one old person away from "known", but if I street tested her I'd be very tired before someone said "*Oh, yes, her, friend of Mallory the Everest Chap? Unhappy and unfulfilled wife of a China Hand diplomatic type? Escaped the Nazis via the Trans-Siberian Express, and wrote 'Illyrian Spring' which single-handedly made Yugoslavia a popular travel destination? Author of the Julia Probyn Mysteries? Love her stuff!.*"

It's a private preoccupation, both personally and professionally, because rare bookdealing is basically sex work, but offering memories and histories you didn't know you had a kink for. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the three people who read these catalogues for their time and tolerance. I'd also like to say that this little collection which masterfully blends otherworldly elements and mundanity until you don't know which is which, is really good, and we need Ann Bridge on the surface.

[Ref: 1391] £250

5. **Burke, Thomas. *Whispering Windows; Tales of The Waterside.***

London: Grant Richards, 1921.

First edition. 8vo. 309pp. Publisher's ochre cloth titled in black to spine and front board, clean and bright, minor light edgewear and bumping, in a very good, clean dustwrapper with some marginal wear and creasing, 8/6 price to spine panel, a very handsome copy. Internally clean, light, sporadic spotting to page edges. Bottom edge untrimmed. A very attractive and complete copy of one of Burke's follow ups to the wildly successful "Limehouse Nights", an absolutely seminal moment in the creation of Victorian London as a writhing nest of opium dens, tortuously complicated criminal organisations, and constant devious assaults upon innocence and decency. "Whispering Windows" is a later refinement of themes of which W.T. Stead, and Ben Farjeon would heartily approve.

[Ref: 1345] £500

6. **Corbett, Mrs. G. [Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett]. *Secrets of a Private Enquiry Office.*** Being: Tales Weird and Tales Ghostly, Tales Humorous and Tales Pathetic, Tales Exciting and Tales Curious..

London: Routledge, 1891.

8vo. 256pp. Publisher's terracotta bevelled boards titled in gilt to spine and front board, slight sunning to spine, minor bumping to spine ends, a very good copy with some scuffing and a small cup ring to front board. Top edge gilt. Internally clean, light spotting to prelims. As is usually seen with this book, there are a couple of proud gatherings. Ink ownership to front flyleaf. A collection of 15 stories, some supernatural and weird in presentation, some just peculiar, all presented in the form of the case files of a London detective agency, the collection also features the exploits of Dora White, an undercover lady detective ("detective" as against "a woman who investigates or solves crimes or mysteries unofficially", people get all grumpy when I don't differentiate; "She's not a detective!" They howl, "She's just a woman investigating mysterious stuff!" Well this one's a detective, Jimothy, go rewatch some old Joe Rogan until you calm down), she's a touch too late to be in the first two or three incarnations

of the lady detective pantheon, but she is one of the earliest written by an actual woman, and in addition an actual woman who had already written "Adventures of A Lady Detective", a year or two earlier, and who would expand on the theme with the creation of Annie Clory, another woman sleuth, in the rather epically titled "When The Sea Gives Up Its Dead" in 1894. A quite remarkable woman, by all accounts; an early feminist best known for her "New Amazonia: A Foretaste of The Future", a Utopian novel of women's suffrage written in fluent and acerbic response to Mrs. Humphry Ward's 1889 piece in "The Nineteenth Century" entitled "An Appeal Against Women's Suffrage" (which La Corbett described as the "*most despicable piece of treachery ever perpetrated towards women by women*") and which was co-signed by 2000 or so women. It probably doesn't need to be stated that the 2000 or so women who co-signed (the article was presented in the form of an open letter), were all rich influential white ladies with rich influential husbands, and the argument was basically that men are all thrusting and forceful and can do rough stuff, but sensible women find that unpleasant and would rather wield more domestic authority, direct the servants to have his slippers waiting when he gets home, and generally refuse to be involved in politics or the mechanisms of male society, and instead believe that "*...the physical capacity, the accumulated experience and inherited training of men ought to prevail without the harassing interference of those who, though they may be partners with men in debate, can in these matters never be partners with them in action.*" Mrs. Humphry Ward has clearly never met Rebecca Romney, or indeed most of those identifying as women in the rare book trade. One of my favorite responses to the piece, aside from New Amazonia which has a strong Untouchables "You bought a magazine article to a book fight" vibe, comes from The Women's Penny Paper which points out regarding the signees that they were "wives of men eminent for intellectual attainments and high character...if only their bit of the world were a sample of the whole, instead of being an exception to the whole, their views might possibly be sound..." which as an argument, hasn't lost its sharp edge in a century and a half. Mrs. Corbett wrote maybe a dozen novels all told, and a couple of collections of short stories, of which this delightful volume is one, in all likelihood a lot of her work was also for the Mad Beehive of the periodical market, and can be tough to track down. Obviously she held radical views (I would say "for the time", but I can't because \***gestures at planet\***) and as such wasn't universally popular (I doubt Mrs. Humphry Ward and her aristo friends were very "Yass Queen!" about the whole thing), but added considerably and notably to the field, and was in contemporary sources ranked alongside Conan Doyle as a masterful practitioner of the detective story. Scarce.

[Ref: 1389] £975

7. **Craik, Mrs. [Dinah Maria Mulock]. Romantic Tales.**

London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1866.

Early edition, the first being 1859. Small 8vo. 406pp. + 3pp. ads to the rear and some illegible ads to the rear panel of the binding. Publisher's original very bright orange cloth, the hallmark of these little Smith Elder publications, and as usual the spine has bleached to white, and the boards are rubbed enough to be all but illegible, it looks like someone has made an attempt to clean it at some point (don't do that), the inner hinges have been reinforced with cloth tape, although to be honest there's little evidence it was needed. Internally clean and strong. A very good copy based on the fact that it is strong, solid, durable, has a clean and bright page block and any edition of this collection is elusive. It's not ugly, but it doesn't look quite as it should (which frankly, people have said about me). An early collection of some of her lesser known, or perhaps forgotten, tales, including some with a distinctly otherworldly bent.

[Ref: 1260] £250

8. **Crowe, Mrs. Catherine. *The Story of Lilly Dawson.***

London: George Routledge, 1850.

Early reprint, the first being published in 1847. Small 8vo. 303pp. Old tan quarter calf with brown title label, over dark brown paper covered boards. Clean and bright, extra gilt to spine. Internally clean, olive endpapers, some light soiling here and there. A very handsome copy. Easily one of the Victorian eras most successful novelists (the majority of the most notable ones being women with strongly held opinions), this was Catherine Crowe's third novel, and it's an absolute cracker. Shipwreck, abduction, forced drudgery, pirates, smugglers, murder, a spot of lustfulness, blind beggars and housemaids down on their luck, villainous cousins, and a sizeable amount of very coherent and palpable anger directed at how contemporary society treated women, focussing on the suggestion that girls can only exist in two states; coddled and worshipped, or cast out and vilified. Not one for holding back, Mrs. Crowe, and this is one of her most brisk, forthright, and uncompromising pieces of story telling. Scarce in early printings.

[Ref: 1239] £200

9. **Fenn, George Manville. *Christmas Penny Readings.***

London: George Routledge and Sons, 1867.

First edition. Small 8vo. 252pp. + 2pp. ads. (plus ads instead of endpapers and pastedowns, and the illegible ads to the rear board, Routledge never saw an inch of space they didn't want to put an ad in). Publisher's original bright orange oilcloth over limp boards. Boards are still bright, although faded to the spine, but the original titles and decoration in black has almost completely vanished from the boards, Routledge printings with these orange limp boards, and the earlier Smith Elder editions on yellow, have a habit of becoming oddly bright books with illegible titles, never intended to be terribly durable, ranks of them must have looked utterly splendid on the booksellers shelves, but once they've been dragged on a couple of steamtrain rides to Brighton or passed around the Officer's Mess and the Remove Common Room, they are pretty much indistinguishable from each other. This copy has lost almost all of its titles, but is still strong, solid, and eminently readable. Internally clean, with some isolated foxing and spotting to some sections, it's a mad little collection of stories, from fairly early in Fenn's career, veering between wholesome Christmas fare with nice family chaps and their nice red faced children, some rather Victorian comic pieces, and the area where Fenn really comes into his own, and which is where his quiet influence stems; slightly unsettling, slightly off-kilter stories of people under duress and stress, struggling to retain some semblance of normality. It's in evidence here, in *A Ghastly Deed*, and *A Horror of Horrors*, for all that in the main they are Fenn baiting and switching, but it's little tales with hooks like these that led him to create some of the most fascinating round table writers ensemble pieces for later periodicals from Routledge, Dicks etc. (like "Seven Frozen Sailors" and "Stormbound" etc.) that in essence and later on in execution, are the direct disfunctional parents of the sci-fi and fantasy magazines of the 1920's. A little battered, but nevertheless interesting (also, by coincidence, my dating app profile).

[Ref: 1384] £150

10. **Finney, Charles G. *The Circus of Dr. Lao.***

London: Grey Walls Press, 1948.

First edition. 8vo. 131pp. Publisher's original bright yellow cloth titled and decorated in green and gilt to spine and front board, some slight discolouration of the cloth. In a clean and

bright pricelipped dustwrapper with some light marginal wear and chipping, and a couple of closed tears. A very good copy. Illustrated with utterly unhinged weirdness in full page plates by Gordon Fish. A truly wonderful book, set in and around the travelling circus of Dr. Lao, inspiration for the 1964 film "The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao" (which starred Barbara Eden as "Angela, The Widowed Librarian" rendered somewhat sweaty and unnecessarily distracted by the pipes of Pan), and which was one of only two movies every to receive an Oscar specifically for makeup work. Very much the grandfather of "Something Wicked This Way Comes" (which Bradbury was open about), and the great grandfather of "The Night Circus" both of which are tremendous additions to the micro-genre of "Small towns are thrown into wondrous and disturbing disarray by a Circus that suddenly appears, turns everyone's heart inside out, and then just as suddenly disappears again."

There are related little thematic seams; mysterious gunfighters, travelling salesmen (I wonder if I could make an argument for Tijuana Bibles being part of this phenomena on a very earthy scale?), shops that appear in dead end alleys. I feel the approach of a very niche subject catalogue. This however, originally published in the US in 1935, is one of the earliest examples, perhaps primarily because Depression era travelling circuses and freakshows bringing sex, colour, and weirdness into rural people's lives are what we naturally think of when we imagine such things. Finney served in the US army in China in the 1920's, a military posting that in his case inspired Dr. Lao, but which also gave rise to a number of other works from various people that might be grouped under the title of "The Adventures of Old China Hands", with I think China and the surrounding expanse of Asia serving the same role in the American consciousness as India and South Africa used to serve in the European. Not a scarce book, but a necessary one.

[Ref: 1375] £175

11. **Greenwood, James. *Unsentimental Journeys, or Byways of the Modern Babylon.***

London: Ward, Lock, & Tyler, 1872.

New Edition (the first being printed in 1867). 8vo. 232pp. Publishers embossed bevelled board in burgundy, titled and embellished in blue, black and gilt. A rather deluxe little production. Rubbed and scuffed to extremities, notably corners, cloth a little dulled, spine ends softened rather than actively fraying. A very good solid copy, Internally clean, at some point it has had some work done as it has black endpapers, very smart and all, but not the original patterned ones. All edges defiantly gilt. Laid in at a couple of points are some bits of pressed greenery, which I always like to encourage. Copiously illustrated with scenes depicting the lives of the disadvantaged for the edification of the privileged, so a bit like Prime Minister's Question Time, except for grown ups. Several of the illustrations are double page images of places like Mr. Dodd's Dust Yard, and the Long Bird Market ("Live Rats Bought and Sold"), offering a glimpse of how people really let themselves go and lose all their standards when the people who are supposed to be looking after them treat them as less than human. The "Modern Babylon" meme of the mid to late Victorian period oscillated wildly between the well meaning expressing publishable shock at how bad things were, and the simply deplorable cashing in on a kind of 19th century Jerry Springer show but with more syphilis and child prostitution. Greenwood mostly leans towards the former, and recounts his observances in the focussed manner of a war correspondent in a burned out village. There's a lot to be learned from the Modern Babylon writings, not exclusively about the 19th century, or colonialism, or the divide between the haves and the have nots; but also about how British history is basically a film about exploitation, played on successively larger and larger screens, in higher and higher definition (except for now, where British history henceforth will be

being played of a black and white 14 inch Rediffusion portable with a wire antenna, running off a car battery from an Austin Allegro). Someone needs to build a collection.

[Ref: 1250] £175

12. **Haweis, The Reverend H.R. [Hugh Reginald]. *Ashes to Ashes, A Cremation Prelude*.**

London: Dalby, Isbister & Co., 1875.

First edition. 8vo. 260pp. + 6pp. ads. Publisher's brown cloth titled and decorated in gilt to spine and front board. Rubbed to extremities with a touch of bumping here and there, signs of splitting to the rear spine hinge, as yet not progressing beyond the cosmetic into the structural. A trifle dusty, internally clean, with the most glorious glazed cherry endpapers, fresh and lovely, and entirely at odds with the contents, which are tending enthusiastically towards the sombre. It is essentially a fictionalised argument for cremation over burial (amongst other things) with our protagonist being exercised into a state of extreme distress by the finding of a human bone during a casual graveyard wander, and suddenly realising the horrors of earth burial. Before I became a bookdealer, I was a gravedigger, and I am here to tell you that the Reverend is not wrong. There's a lot of other stuff going on, Haweis was a man of immense talents, considerable vanity, and a number of rather unusual accomplishments, as a young man he marched with Garibaldi for the hell of it, crippled with a variety of afflictions since birth, he overcame most of them to become a musical prodigy, he wrote a considerable number of works vainly trying to get people to be nice to each other, he was preacher at the Magdalen Hospital for a while, he specialised in taking over almost deserted parishes and converting them into popular places of worship. His methods were questionable, he was very much more rock and roll than fire and brimstone, he introduced popular music to churches, and amongst other things is one of the reasons we have museums and art galleries open on Sundays, and so many open public spaces. A bit of a firebrand, about as popular as one would expect for the late Victorian age, prolific, eccentric, adored by his wife (Mary Musgrave Joy who was herself an artistic prodigy, exhibiting at the Royal Academy at the age of 16), they died within a couple of years of each other, and were both, needless to say, cremated. A melodramatic rarity with a serious message, much like its author.

[Ref: 1264] £200

13. **Le Queux, William. *The Intriguers*.**

London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d. [1921].

2/- Edition. Small 8vo. 251pp. Publisher's original embossed red cloth titled in black to spine, clean and exceptionally bright in a similarly exceptional example of the dustwrapper, clean and fresh with only the tiniest traces of wear. A very good copy indeed of a cheaply produced book. Internally clean with some cosmetic wear to inner hinges and a general uniform toning of the page block due to very sub par post war paper stock. A remarkable copy. Le Queux wrote more books during his career than the next 10 most popular writers put together, and for the time in which he was writing that's quite the achievement. Romance, mystery, espionage and intrigue are all literary fields that owe a lot to Le Queux and his unerring ability to pick a publicly recognisable antagonist for every period he wrote in, and then move on to another when diplomacy and world events interfered. *The Intriguers* places our accomplished violinist protagonist into the murky complexity of the Imperial Russian Court, skullduggery ensues, and a beautiful princess requires rescue. It's classic stuff hurled out into the world by Le Queux, who took ideas in at one end and then blasted them out the other like a fiction based woodchipper.

[Ref: 1393] £150



14. **MacDonald, George. Phantastes, A Faerie Romance.**

London: Chatto and Windus, 1894.

First edition thus, stated "New Edition", intended as a very high Victorian lavishly decorated and illustrated edition with a new suite of illustrations by John Bell. 8vo. 277pp. Publisher's light blue decorated cloth, titled and embellished in white and dark blue to spine and front board, with gilt titles to spine. Some rubbing, scuffing and discolouration to the cloth, most noticeable to the spine spine panel. Nevertheless and strong, solid and attractive copy. Internally clean, floral patterned endpapers in light blue. Ink ownership to half title. All edges tinted blue. Originally intended as a deluxe reissue of MacDonald's faerie fantasy, the MacDonald estate, led by his son, disapproved greatly of the presentation and illustration style, full of rather wispy creatures clad in butterfly wings (more Dadd than their Dad to be fair), and some occasional side drifts into absolute nutcaserly. They attempted to halt the production and distribution and ended up buying out the print run and copyright and consigning the majority of the stock to the trash heap. As such it is a pretty scarce and rather peculiar edition of a very significant work by the man that said the words and opened the wild gates to what we now think of as Faerie Land, influencing Carroll and Barrie and Kingsley and Cicely Mary barker and a slew of others right up to the modern day representations from Cassandra Clare and Neil Gaiman. George MacDonald laid down upon the wall of thorns so that following seekers of the Seelie Court could walk across his back (just in case anyone thought I don't take this stuff seriously enough).

[Ref: 1346] £375

15. **MacLeod, Torquil. The Dame of The Fine Green Kirtle.**

London: John Long, n.d. [1902].

First edition. 8vo. 218pp. Publisher's dark green cloth titled and decorated in gilt and pale green to spine and front board. Minor scuffing and edgwear, some bumping to extremities and an old smear of blue ink or paint to the front board. A very good, solid copy. Internally clean, ink ownership to front pastedown, some toning to prelims, upper corner missing to page 10, not affecting text, otherwise a very handsome book. A collection of Scottish folk inspired tales, many supernatural, divided into three sections "Tales of Lochabar", "Tales of The Isles" and "Tales of The North." some of which were published in the Celtic Monthly and other periodicals of the Scottish or Celtic revival movement, MacLeod's retelling of these tales was considered a reclamatory effort at preserving a culture for a society that many felt correctly was approaching a devastating upheaval in which cultural identities might be lost. That's a story that can go for ill or good, as we now know, but certainly modern day Celtic identity owes a lot to the efforts of people like MacLeod, and Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Lord Dunsany. A scarce book now.

[Ref: 1083] £375

16. **Middleton, Jessie Adelaide. The White Ghost Book.**

London: Cassell, 1916.

First Edition. 8vo. 287pp. Publisher's grey cloth titled in green and black to spine and front board. Minor bumping and edgwear, some fading to the spine. A clean handsome copy. Internally clean. Slight foxing to prelims. "Illustrated with four ghost photographs and other plates". The third in Jessie Middleton's true ghost story collection, containing information of photographing a ghost and a lengthy section detailing haunted houses and their supposed alleged occupants. Lovely.

[Ref: 1325] £150

17. **Perez-Reverte, Arturo. *The Dumas Club*.**

London: The Harvill Press, 1996.

First edition. 8vo. 323pp. Fine in publisher's red cloth, titled in gilt to spine, in a fine example of the dustwrapper. Internally clean. A sharp, bright copy of the UK first edition, which precedes the US printing. A story of rare books, the rare book underworld (basically not sure it has an upper world), pacts with the Devil and a number of other literary and diabolical themes that was adapted (for better or worse) for the screen by Roman Polanski in his film "The Ninth Gate" starring Johnny Depp, who made a surprisingly good bookdealer, and who caused a stir on Charing Cross Road once by turning up in Any Amount to do a bit of research. Reverte is one of those writers that makes people who want to write, stop wanting to write if they can't write like him. I vividly remember reading "The Fencing Master" as a budding novelist and totally reassessing my abilities. Reader; they were meagre.

[Ref: 1386] £250

18. **Porsenna, N. [Nicu Porsena Ionescu]. *Strigoii*.**

Bucharest: Editura Tip. Gutenberg Soc., 1920.

First edition. 8vo. Romanian language. Bound in institutional blue rexine, with the original illustrated front wrap laid on to the front board, all locatable copies of this work, a mere handful, are rebound in plain boards, and there seem to be no images of the original wraps extant, rendering this something of a redemption for the nondescript nature of the rexine. Internally clean, although the paper stock is distinctly sub par and has tones uniformly and is a little susceptible to some very incidental marginal chipping. A very good copy of a book that is seldom seen or referenced, despite the author's standing in his native Romania. Nicu Porsena Ionescu was a decidedly passionate and vibrant figure, described variously and often simultaneously as a publisher, film-maker, journalist, writer, philosopher, social psychologist, inventor, political prisoner and noted paranormal investigator. He is perhaps mainly remembered, despite the rollercoaster of his reputation, political alignments and activism throughout the turmoil of mid century Romania, as a translator par excellence of Western works of literature, including Wilde, Byron, Baudelaire, Blake, Keats, and Verlaine among many others. A considerable amount of his translation seems to have been performed whilst he was in prison as a political dissident after the second world war, before his release in 1964. He seems to have been a tirelessly curious and hungry sort of man, of Transylvanian and Wallachian heritage, the son of a printer, a staunch campaigner for the revitalisation of Romanian heritage, society, and identity; although to the modern eye he strayed quite far into the fields of exceptionalism and nationalism, bordering on outright racism and rather predictably antisemitism, always the dog whistle for the hounds of purity. In the late 1930's, he delivered and published a strongly worded denunciation of the fallacies of antisemitism, but then was absorbed into the Axis aligned Antonescu regime as a ministry worker. His work in the Labour Ministry however seems to be much more Marxist aligned than fascist and can probably be looked at as a vivid cautionary example of the incredibly disrupted, turbulent, and changeable nature of Romanian political existence between the 1920's and the 1960's, and then beyond. He was a soldier, undoubtedly a patriot, with all the baggage that descriptor carries, and a constant searcher after some form of truth and progress whether in this world, or another more esoteric one. The novel itself, with its title referring to ghostly vampiric spirits, now widely understood to be the Romanian folklore variant of the classical vampire, is not explicitly supernatural, although it is definitely strange, it's more of a febrile, lush examination of the dangers and traumas of war, although the repeated themes of magnetic, almost hypnotic male personalities causing people to behave in uncharacteristic

ways, its inextricable ties to Romanian history and culture, and its slightly decadent complexity certainly allow for a vampiric reading. It, like Ionescu, is complicated, burns erratically, and is virtually forgotten, which places it firmly within my remit.

[Ref: 1369] £200

19. **Powers, Tim. *The Anubis Gates*.**

London: Chatto and Windus, The Hogarth Press, 1985.

First UK Edition. 8vo. Publisher's green cloth titled in gilt to spine, a near fine copy in a bright, clean near fine dustwrapper. Not a condition report I get to write very often, but here we are. Internally clean and fresh. Inscribed, upside down and diagonally because Tim Powers never met a convention he didn't want to mess with, to the title page:

*"For Wade, & if you can explain this to me, please do. Cheers, Tim Powers 3/22/86"*

A rather glorious copy of a book I was introduced to by the great and eternal Martin Stone, book-runner and rock god; whose skeletal elegance, sweet, lethal curiosity, and perpetually nomadic soul left us a while ago, with the feeling that the world became smaller and meaner with his passing. "Never pass up a copy of this book!" he muttered, tapping the cover with a finger that possessed far too many joints for a mere human, "wonderful book, this." He was right, as he often was, and I am now incapable of walking past a copy. It is the very strangest of things, and it never ceases to present you with a new question and a new line of knowledge every time you read it. It's like if Umberto Eco just wanted to tell you a good story, or if Neil Gaiman wanted to write Foucault's Pendulum, packed with beggar lords, dilapidated gentlemen, the intimation of the crumbling of Empire, Spoonsize Boys, old mad Ashbless, and the most horrifying clown in literature until Stephen King published "IT" a year or more later. Powers is one of those people you don't realise is influential until you read him, and then you realise he pretty much crops up everywhere.

[Ref: 1378] £275

20. **Powers, Tim. *On Stranger Tides*.**

New York: Ace Books, 1987.

First edition. 8vo. Publisher's black linen spine over red paper covered boards, titled in gilt to spine, a very good copy indeed in a bright, clean and delightful illustrated dustwrapper. Internally clean, red endpapers, signed and inscribed \*twice\* in typical Powers style (upside down, in corners, and with a drawing) to the title page:

*"For Jack! This shameless rip-off of every Sabatini book! Cheers, Tim Powers"* and then again in the corner with a sketch of himself downing a pint *"Author delivering inspiration, Tim Powers"*

Another rather undeniably glorious book from Dr. Powers, and one which I vividly remember reading and having to stop to pace up and down because I was so excited and filled with glee. This is the book that once read, leaves one wondering how Disney got away with not giving credit on Pirates of The Caribbean until the fourth movie (although there should be some Crimson Pirate respect thrown in there too), vodoun, zombies, rum, sugar, blood, a love story, the secret of eternal life and enough casual pirate pseudo history thrown in to shiver anyone's timbers. Powers has an uncanny ability to just chuck in a tiny detail or device that will have you wondering how you have never seen or heard of such a thing before, and leave you simultaneously satisfied and frustrated, clawing at the shiny surface of a world you have briefly seen but cannot enter. The most glorious of fictions.

[Ref: 1379] £200

21. **Pragnell, Festus [Frank William Pragnell]. *The Machine God Laughs*.**

Los Angeles: Griffin Publishing Co., 1949.

First edition. 8vo. 134pp. Publisher's original sea blue cloth, untitled, because it was that type of publisher. Slight scuffing and wear to extremities, in a bright, clean and vibrant pictorial dustwrapper with a closed tear and a small but sleazy tape repair to the upper corner of the rear panel, tiny loss and some tape residue, a small thing, but there nevertheless. Internally clean, a very good, strong copy. Festus Pragnell was one of those pulpy periodical pillars of the US fantasy/sci-fi circuit writing for Fantasy Magazine with the likes of Robert Bloch and S. Fowler Wright, whose unremittingly enthusiastic output, for good or ill kept the the alternative fiction wagon rolling accessibly for all. There are some downsides, nearly anything closely associated with Forrest Ackermann requires brain bleach, and a lot of the populist shortcuts favoured by writers who are chucking out more words than well attended rap battle, involve some scatter-gun stereotyping not only racially (although crikey does white supremacy happen a lot), but sexually, and also philosophically, because who doesn't like a pause for thought interlude where we speculate on the natural superiority of cold logic and reason over having feelings and empathy, especially where colonising new planets is concerned? This particular war of the near future paranoia piece is brought to us by "Super intelligent robot brains and China are both scary so lets put them in a story with the byline 'this could happen tomorrow' but it probably won't because we know nothing about how either of those things work and I'm out here making Sax Rohmer look like a candidate for a diplomatic post in Beijing." It's not anyone's finest moment, although nobody can deny the enthusiasm, this volume also contains "Star of The Undead" by Paul Lavond, which is one of the best examples I've ever encountered of the writer having a very clear and detailed idea of what's happening in his mind but absolutely no idea of how to make his readers feel the same way, it basically a chaotic foundation stone of the "\*grabs pistol\* The Moon is Haunted" meme. The part of me that loves things like this is the part of me that believes everyone has to learn how dumb they are somewhere, otherwise they stay dumb forever, but the conversations over beer that these guys had must have been mind boggling.  
[Ref: 1336] £100

22. **Rohmer, Sax [Arthur Henry Sarsfield Ward]. Dope.**

London: Cassell and Company, 1924.

First popular "Cassell's Half Crown Novels" edition, the first being published in 1919. 8vo. 304pp. Publisher's blue-grey cloth titled and decorated in dark blue to spine and front board, a very good, clean copy indeed, light bumping to spine ends, in a very bright, clean example of the scarce pictorial dustwrapper with some marginal chips and pieces of loss, some light creasing to the front panel, and some closed tears. There's been some tape reinforcement to a nasty closed tear to the spine panel at some point, shows very well despite being an intrinsically fragile thing. Internally clean, ink ownership to front flyleaf, remarkably bright and strong. Sax Rohmer needs no introduction, obviously, although he increasingly requires some contextual explanation. This particular novel, which obviously wouldn't be complete with the villainous and inscrutable Chinese occupants of Limehouse being depicted in typical Rohmer style, deals not with opium (the most ironic of narcotic sins to lay at the feet of the Chinese), but with cannabis, and is based loosely (very loosely) upon the scandalous death of waif like West End actress Billie Carleton, who died of a cocaine overdose (supplied to her by a foppish society friend, you know, rather than purchased in a den full of porcelain dragons and drowsy sailors down by The Grapes) and somehow managed to kickstart a bit of post-war Sinophobia in the process. Rohmer, the unpleasant M.P. Shiel, and a bunch of other contemporary writers of the weird and sensational, either came up during, or came out immediately after, the somewhat disastrous Boxer Rebellion, in which traditionally inclined Chinese groups conducted an uprising against British missionary communities and Chinese

Christians, to devastating effect and considerable outrage (for those of you who require a pop culture reference point, it's that bit in Buffy where Angel, Drusilla, Spike, and Darla are in China, everything is on fire, and Spike fights a Slayer...I only mention that because most sinophobic fiction of the time bears slightly less cultural and historical accuracy than that rather silly 45 minute episode, which at least had people speaking Mandarin rather than outrageous pidgin).

It was an open secret at the time that the British Government, always on the lookout for some quality spin, wasn't above chucking a bit of money at Fleet Street and the periodical magazines, who started paying a bit of a premium for anything that cast the Chinese (and London's Chinese communities) in a bad light. Things had been iffy for a while, with there being a disruption to the ecosystem of London's vice industry a decade before the Boxers, when W.T. Stead made it known that London's sex workers were much happier working for Chinese establishments because they were shockingly less likely to be beaten, stabbed, or otherwise mistreated. This obviously outraged our home grown trafficking and exploitation community, who considered a day somewhat wasted if you couldn't spend a bit of it extorting women through threat of violence, and it may possibly have been one of the earliest examples of the revolting and witless "coming over here taking our jobs and our women" dog whistle. This meant that any hack with either a penchant for bigotry, or simply moral flexibility where cash was concerned, started churning out Yellow Peril material, some of which has lasted the test of time as representative of a less than impressive literary period, and some of which has been completely forgotten.

Obviously a lot of us, including me, grew up on a diet of Hammer Fu-Manchu movies with Christopher Lee in atrocious makeup, and it can feel difficult to separate how much I enjoyed those as a child, from how grotesquely shitty they are in most things that they represent. It isn't that difficult though, I just reflect on the fact that I enjoyed them before I needed to learn how to care for and respect other people, and now they are a historical artefact with context and nuance of their own. Like Harry Potter. Out of that period came Rohmer and those like him, and they were enormously popular, and their works endured well into the 1970's and 80's before losing momentum at about the same time the younger generation started getting access to culture and information that didn't come from parents or schools. Funny how that happens. Dope is a pretty entertaining book, and it does have some cultural context, and this is a cool copy of it, but it comes with baggage.

[Ref: 1376] £225

23. **SCUDDER, Antoinette. *The Grey Studio*** The Story of a Haunted Provincetown Studio.

Boston: Ruth Hill, 1934.

Octavo. First edition. Publisher's original black cloth boards with title to front and spine in red. No scuffs or marks. Pictorial grey jacket illustrated in red to both front and back panel, title to spine in red. Spine ends a trifle worn, otherwise excellent condition. Internally fine, bookplate to the front pastedown, that of Oswald "Ossie" Train, notable collector, publisher of fringe fictions, and founder and attendee of the world's first Science Fiction Convention, in Philadelphia in 1936.

Artist, poet, playwright and novelist Scudder spins a rather intense tale of a haunted artist's studio. In the same year this title was published, Scudder purchased a paper-mill which she transformed into The Paper Mill Playhouse within several years. Ever the multi-hyphenate, she served as actor, playwright and wardrobe mistress as desired.

[Ref: 1396] £80

24. **Shore, Major John. Tom Flaherty's Ghost, and Other Stories.**

London: Simpkin and Co., 1901.

First edition. 8vo. 295pp. Publisher's pale tan cloth titled and decorated in black to spine and front board, a very good clean copy with only slight wear and light bumping, a rather dramatic looking object. Internally clean, lovely paper that has managed 121 years without a spot or blemish. A collection of short stories, some of a supernatural or weird bent, but seen through a military lens, and several of which need a bit of a "Rampant Colonialism" warning, seeing as a staple of military fiction, supernatural, criminous, or otherwise was for an extended period centred around meddling, abolishing, or generally disparaging indigenous customs and lifestyles. This is no exception, the stories are written for an avid, presumably majority white audience, even when they are good, they are still jarring out of context, the context being that there can be little better or stranger than the soldier's life in far off climes. Interesting.

[Ref: 1261] £175

25. **Spencer, Denton [pseud: Arthur Spence]. Old Thane's Mummy.**

London: Henry J. Drane, 1912.

First edition. 8vo. 95pp. Publisher's decorated paper covered boards, titled and illustrated in black and purple to spine and front board, with ads to rear panel. Minor scuff, some very light chipping to the spine ends, a little grubbiness to the white portions but overall very clean, strong and bright, a very good, attractive copy. Internally clean, with a small contemporary review pasted to the verso of the front board. A rather odd little bit of book production; I've seen Drane's in paper, I've seen Drane's in cheap cloth, but this is one of the very few I've seen with illustrated paper covered flat boards, it's like they wanted it to be a shilling paperback (there may well have been a simultaneous paperback issue) but realised it would go to pieces quicker than dreams of Empire, and opted for something more durable. It's lovely though. Essentially a harking back to the shilling shockers of a decade earlier involving a disappearing Egyptian Mummy that is thought to have got up and wandered off, an Egyptologist's beautiful missing daughter, and a hefty serving of gasps of shock and surprise. Spencer, or rather Spence, was an actor/playwright/dramatist escaping a life of boredom as a chemist in Leeds by hurling himself full length into Theatreland, and to all evidence being embraced in return, he produced a handful of pretty popular plays and sketches, and weirdnesses like this which does show signs of having been produced with dramatic interpretation in mind. I love Drane's with an unhealthy passion, they are usually randomly selected, cheaply produced little grenades of weirdness and off-putting obsessions, but taken as a snapshot of fringe fictions, especially the bits that slipped past the mainstream, they are unmatched. Scarce and delightful.

[Ref: 1394] £450

26. **St. Germain, Marie. Tales of The Weird and The West Countree.**

Plymouth: William Brendon and Son, 1924.

First, and seemingly only, edition. 8vo. 142pp. Publisher's cream coloured card wraps titled in red to spine and front cover. Some chipping and loss to the spine ends, not interfering with the text. Light discolouration and staining to the wraps, most notably to the bottom edge of the front panel where there is a shallow waterstain. Internally clean, with some unsightly spotting to the prelims, and foxing to the page edges. Containing 16 dense, short and weird stories including "The Pixies Way", "Too Many Gods", "The Spectral Canoe", and "Cecile de Vallincourt"; it seems virtually unknown, there was a copy in a notable collector's auction about 30 years ago, and it's mentioned in passing as an invaluable West Country folklore source, but beyond that it's out there as another tantalising piece of salvage from the book

reef. It's a rather obscure and fragile book, and I'm impressed with its ability to stand up and be counted, a tenacious, and tough little book.

[Ref: 1326] £575

27. **Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.***

London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1886.

First edition, first issue. 8vo. 141pp. + 1pp. ads to rear (in addition every available surface, the inside flaps, the rear cover, the verso of the half title etc. are all covered in ads for additional publications by Stevenson, Bret Harte, Whyte-Melville etc.). Publisher's original buff wraps, with hand corrected date, titled and decorated in red and blue to front cover. Some light soiling to the pale wraps, some flattened creases to the corners, and some very light chipping and flaking of the vulnerable spine panel. A much superior copy to the majority of those I've handled, it's an issue notorious for getting grubby, losing the spine and generally being ratty around the edges, and this copy, as well as being free of repairs or restoration, is noticeably clean and sharp. Internally clean, a tight, sharp and extremely handsome copy, housed in a red morocco spined slipcase and chemise titled in gilt to spine. An old case, miraculously enough, that this copy seems to have spent most of its life in, accounting for its nicely preserved state. All copies of this glorious paperback issue are beautiful in their own way, this one is just a bit more classically so. As a title, it's one of the grandparent books of the weird and macabre genre, it's up there with Frankenstein, The Mummy, The Vampyre, Varney, and Dracula as one of the dysfunctional ancestor archetypes of our nightmares. Every collection has to have a copy. Scarce in both this issue, and this condition.

[Ref: 1253] £4,250

28. **Stoker, Bram. *The Mystery of The Sea.***

London: William Heinemann, 1902.

8vo. 498pp. + 32pp. ads. Publisher's black cloth, titled in gilt to spine and front board with additional decoration in green and gilt. Smart, strong and clean, barely any rubbing of the gilt or chipping of the green as is often seen with this title. Minor edgewear, some light bumping to extremities, perhaps a bit dusty, a very good copy. Internally clean, ink ownership to front flyleaf. Light spotting to prelims and page edges. Secret codes, Armada treasure and ancient curses; what more could one ask for. Tricky to find in nice condition.

[Ref: 1363] £575

29. **Stoker, Bram. *The Mystery of The Sea.***

London: William Rider and Son, 1913.

Reprint edition. 8vo. 498pp. + 4pp. ads. Publisher's burgundy cloth titled and decorated in black to spine and front board. Clean and bright with a little edgewear and bumping to the spine ends, in a very good example of the scarce pictorial dustwrapper with a couple of closed tears and some chipping and small loss to the head of the spine panel, touching the title. Internally clean and fresh, on good quality paper, a solid little volume, with few pretensions towards economy. The Holloway dustwrapper artwork is two colour on this printing, with there being a far scarcer and slightly earlier colour variant on far thinner and less durable paper. A very nice example of a reprint of one of Stoker's most intriguing novels without a horny vampire in it (that's how we divide up Stoker's works: The Horny Bi Vampire books, and Everything Else), an awkward romance (Stoker on home territory there), some deep dives into history and folklore, and a Francis Bacon inspired cypher that had Conan Doyle holding forth about how impressed he was. Tricky thus.

[Ref: 1383] £250

30. **Sturgeon, Theodore. *More Than Human*.**

London: Gollancz, 1954.

First UK edition. 8vo. 233pp. Publisher's deep red cloth titled in somewhat dull gilt to the spine, clean and bright in a similarly clean and bright yellow Gollancz dustwrapper with some very light wear and a negligible touch of sunning and discolouration. Internally clean. A very good copy indeed of what is probably Sturgeon's best known work, a claustrophobic examination of the classic superhuman trope, although with the typically Sturgeon twist of six people blending together to create a greater whole whilst still retaining coherent individual identities. The journey from outcast lower to potent "higher" form is actually one of those hard sci-fi tropes that make me generally avoid sci-fi, at least professionally. I'm not into certainty, and genre is often a scam, but Sturgeon's ability to combine the normal and the vividly abnormal with the assurance that they belong together is deeply appealing, and is definitely part of the pipeline that leads unerringly to Iain M. Banks, plus he said "90% of everything is crap" which is a useful phrase to keep in mind provided you remember that every single human is talking about a different 90%.

[Ref: 1323] £100

31. **Taylor, Joseph. *Apparitions, or, The Mystery of Ghosts, Hobgoblins and Haunted Houses, Developed***

Being a collection of entertaining stories, founded on fact, and selected for the purpose of eradicating those ridiculous fears, which the Ignorant, the Weak, and the Superstitious are but too apt to encourage, for want of properly examining into the causes of such absurd impositions..

London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1814.

First edition. 12mo. 223pp. + 3pp. ads. Contemporary half brown calf over marbled boards, tan title label titled and ruled in gilt to spine. Light scuffing and edgewear, some rubbing to extremities, nothing more than the mildly superficial, strong, tight, and rather handsomely bound in that slim, streamlined early 19th century fashion. A bit dusty to the red speckled edges, internally clean with some light and occasional spots. Armorial bookplate (of Charles, 1st Viscount Eversley, of Heckfield, Speaker of The House of Commons, and Governor of The Isle of White) to front pastedown. Frontispiece engraving of "The The Haunted Beach", 3 leaves in the middle of the book are slightly shorter and are thus untrimmed in a rather lovely bit of insight into 19th century book production processes. Ink signature of the Countess Grey to the upper corner of the title page, which makes sense, as Viscount Eversley married Emma Grey, the daughter of Lady Elizabeth Grey, in 1817, and this book has all the hallmarks of one of those volumes drifting through the labyrinthine aristocratic libraries of the British upper classes, collecting provenance as they go. The Grey family in question is the one that gave us, amongst other things, some pretty rampant colonialism and that rather nice tea (the first Earl Grey, it has to be said, spent most of his life as the aggressively sharpened bayonet of the British Empire, serving avidly in every major conflict we had going on, not really to lasting credit if you are anything other than British, but nevertheless one of the most prolific military men we have every produced).

Taylor's "Apparitions", despite its unfeasibly completist title, is less of a glib debunking than it is the clear and significant grandfather of subsequent collections of "true" ghost stories and tales of the supernatural collected by people like Mrs. Crowe, James Hogg, and a host of other in the spirit obsessed frenzy of the literary gothic period. It's solid recounting of supernatural, or supernatural "adjacent" events, puts it more in the category of an important and seminal collection rather than being an example of something hastily thrown together to capitalise on the fact that everyone enjoys a ghostly thrill. It stands up remarkably well. A very handsome,



rather aristocratic copy of an important work.

[Ref: 1365] £850

32. **Twain, Mark. *Mark Twain's Curious Dream*.**

London: George Routledge and Sons, n.d. [1890's].

Reprint Routledge sixpenny edition. 8vo. 150pp. +8pp. ads. Publisher's original card wraps titled and decorated to spine and front panel, with every other inch of space being dedicated to advertising Fry's Cocoa and sulphur based skin lotion (which I'm betting worked a treat). Some chipping and edgewear, a little discolouration and spotting with some small paper loss to the base of the spine (One of my favourite rare book cataloguers, at B. L. Rootenberg, recently described this process as "revealing the sexy workings" of the book, so I'm going to go with that). A very good copy, not to mention being once again a fantastic repository of the lunacy of late 19th century advertisement culture.

The front panel illustration, by H.L. Shindler, of a horrifying shrouded skeleton rearing up in front of a grave stone, is one of those covers that summons you from across the room (which is what it did with me), and then leaves you staring at it going "Mark Twain?? Really??" The publishing history of this little title is quite the bibliographic hedge maze, with the first Routledge edition being extremely hard to obtain, and basically there alongside Huckleberry Finn to teach bookdealers how important it is to keep track of your issue points. This is a simple little reprint of the the tricky edition, all gussied up in a super sinister paperback edition. That shouldn't detract from how much effort a book of this fragility has to put in to reach a point on my cataloguing desk 130+ years distant from whatever railway station kiosk it was originally purchased. Respect is due.

[Ref: 1381] £125

33. **Wells, H.G. *The First Men in The Moon*.**

London: Collins, n.d. [1920's].

Collins Ninepenny Novels edition, basically the perfect pocket sized paperback beloved of every schoolboy and long distance traveller, light as a feather, and generally either speculative, or crime fiction. 12mo. 254pp. + 2pp. ads (not counting the covers and every square inch not otherwise taken up with the story). Publisher's brightly illustrated paper wraps, clean and bright with minimal wear, some light scuffing and rubbing to extremities and the head of the spine, but one of the best preserved examples of this series I've had in recent years, with a rather lovely full colour ad for Waterman fountain pens to the rear wrap. Internally clean, although toned, seeing as the intention here was the production of cheap, disposable popular fiction rather than displaying any particular leaning towards durability. This was going to be passed around the Fourth Form common room and exchanged for conkers by young men who were young enough to be mystified by the last war and who were destined to be just old enough to be horrified by the next one. Inbetween though, there was a veritable blizzard of incredible fictions from every corner. It's fortunate in many ways that books aren't like pets, lovers, or parents, and they don't sit there on the shelves waiting for their readers to come home, wondering why they left without finishing the story. Basically it's Wells being Wells, and taking the previous 20 years of moon based fiction, Wells-ing it up and then shipping it off to George Newnes wrapped in brown paper and string so that Strand readers could miss their mouths with chunks of buttered crumpet whilst reading. The science comes from Verne, and the moon dwellers come from an 1870's opera, but the pace and the verve and the oil and pipe tobacco and the plus-fours of fearless endeavour come from Wells. Wells, Kipling, and Doyle could almost have been one person, and he might not always have been the greatest person, but the unshakable dedication to a thrilling story, and the practised skill in producing

it, cannot ever be denied. The three headed God of Victorian speculative fiction watches over everything that has been produced since, and this little tale is one of the middle god's more deft and accessible contributions.

[Ref: 1382] **£60**