

# PLUCK

The New Head.

Grand School Tale by H. Clarke Hook.

Running the Gauntlet.

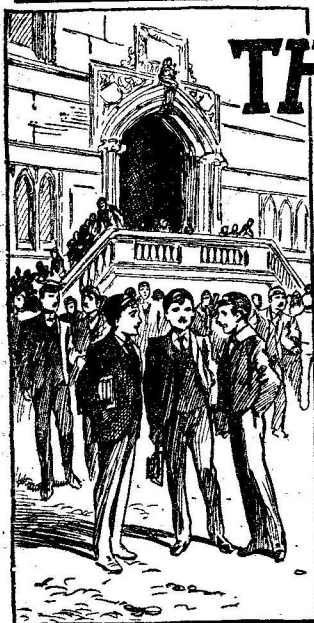
Thrilling Adventure Story by Owen Leach.

1<sup>d</sup>



**ROUGH ON DICK!** "IS THERE ANY CAUSE FOR THIS GIGGLING, DORA?" ASKED DICK COLDLY. "DON'T LET ME INTERRUPT YOU IF IT AMUSES YOU, BUT—" (See page 66.)





# THE RIVALS OF ST KIT'S

By Charles Hamilton

## BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

When Pat Nugent arrives at St. Kit's an election is taking place for the captaincy of the school between Arthur Talbot and Eldred Lacy. Talbot gains the victory. One day a tramp named Black comes to the school and, at the instigation of the two Lacys, who for some reason fear and dislike Talbot, claims Talbot as his son. As Arthur has never seen his parents he does not know what to do; but Black is warned off the place by one of the masters. Talbot resigns his position as captain of the school. He quarrels with Lacy, and the latter plays him a cowardly trick, but Talbot lets him off. Soon after the election for the position of captain, which Talbot has vacated, draws near, and Talbot's chums have their doubts as to the result, but they decide to get rid of some of Lacy's backers. "Somehow or other," cried Pat, bringing down his fist with a thump that made the table dance—"somehow or other we are going to get rid of twelve of Lacy's supporters before seven o'clock to-morrow evening!" (Now go on with the story.)

### Lacy's Offer—Pat Plays the Game.

"That's all very well," Blagden remarked; "but it's easier to say than to do, Paddy. And I for one don't see how you are going to do it."

"I don't either," agreed Pat. "That's what we've got to put our heads together and find out, and the sooner we do it the better."

The three juniors looked at one another seriously and solemnly. It was a difficult position. None of the St. Kit's electors took this election so seriously as the last had been taken. All agreed that Brooke was a good old chap, and a decent fellow, and that sort of thing, but he certainly had not the charm about him that Arthur Talbot had.

The general opinion was that Lacy would get in, and then the reign of the fast set would begin at St. Kit's, and all who had been prominent in backing Brooke would find themselves marked down for punishment in the black books of the new captain. That was a serious outlook for seniors who wanted to get into the first eleven and represent St. Kit's in the cricket-field; for the captain of the school was captain of the sports, and in matters of cricket his word was law.

It was still more serious for the juniors, the fags whose lives had been made a good deal easier while Talbot was captain, and who would be at the mercy of the bullies when a captain who was a bully himself was at the head of affairs. Talbot had always been down on bullying, and had earned a great deal of unpopularity in his own Form on that account, and when his place was taken by Eldred Lacy, the fags had a warm time to look forward to. And such of them as had voted for Brooke would get spiteful reminders of it, when Talbot was no longer in a position to protect them.

Consequently, a number of boys who would have been glad to see Brooke get the captaincy, has decided to vote for Lacy, or else absent themselves from the hall and not vote at all. Others, who did not care a rap who was captain of St. Kit's, meant to vote for Lacy, in the hope of getting into favour with the new captain.

Brooke would no more have been guilty of favouritism, especially in matters connected with the sports, than Arthur Talbot. With Lacy it was different. A fellow who backed him up through thick and thin had an excellent chance of getting into the first eleven, and that was hardly a secret.

And so a host of worries had descended upon the busy juniors of the end study.

They had tried to make Talbot withdraw his resignation, and had failed. Now they had taken Brooke under their wing, and they were determined to get him in as captain by hook or by crook. But how?—that was the question. How was it to be done?

Lacy, at the lowest computation according to Pat's calculations, could depend upon a majority of a dozen or so voters at the election, and the election was to take place in twenty-four hours.

What was to be done?

"A dozen of them," said Pat, drumming reflectively upon the table. "Trimble, especially, must be got rid of. He's fighting tooth and nail for Lacy, trying to get into his favour again. Lacy has been awfully rough on him ever since he had to own up to that firework trick, which nearly frightened poor old Lacy out of his wits. Trimble and Cleeve, and Hooper, and Jones are the worst—I mean, most set on getting Lacy in, among the juniors. They don't like him; but it's up against us, you see. Caddish!"

"Yes, they're a lot of cads," agreed Blagden; "but all the same, I don't see how we're going to prevent them from voting as they choose."

"We're going to," growled Pat. "Ways and means are the only question. Lacy's party are getting up to all sorts of mean tricks to get votes. I know Rake has been giving half-crowns to fags who have promised to put up their hands for Lacy."

"Bribery and corruption," said Blagden.

"Horrible!" ejaculated Greene. "The Head ought to know about it."

"Of course, we can't sneak! But it's rotten, and ought to be put down somehow. Then some of the fags know they're booked for a hiding if they don't vote for Lacy, and they're going to do it to save their miserable skins. Brooke's backers don't do anything of that kind. Brooke wouldn't let 'em."

"Good old Brooke!"

"Yes, good old Brooke; but he won't get in, you see," said Pat discontentedly. "It's a great responsibility for us, having to shove him in. Still, we must do our duty, I suppose. But, as I was saying, Lacy's party are getting up to such a crowd of the dirtiest and meanest sort of tricks, that we shall be justified in any device to get their voters away from the poll. Of course, we wouldn't do it if it wasn't justified by the tactics of the other party."

"Of course not!"

"We've settled that it's going to be done. How are we going to do it?"

"Blessed if I know," said Blagden.

"Blowed if I do," said Greene.

"Lot of use you two are in a giddy council of war."

"As I remarked before, you're leader," said Blagden, grinning. "Greene, old man, ain't you coming down to the fives-court? We don't want to miss our game, and our great leader is quite capable of thinking this out by himself, with his mighty brain."

"Right-ho!" grinned Greene, and he took up his cap.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Pat. "You bouncers—"

"Ta-ta!" said Blagden. "I hope you'll have an idea, old son, by the time we come in to tea. Come on, Greene."

The two juniors quitted the study, leaving Pat Nugent looking very wrathful. As they said, he was leader; but it wasn't all honey to be a chief and looked up to for plans and ideas when none were forthcoming.

"Faith," growled Pat, "I think I'll resign. I've had enough of being leader of this study. How am I to get Trimble and a dozen more out of the way to-morrow?"

The door opened again, and Pat looked up from his calculations.

"Hallo, talk of the Old One! What do you want, Trimble?"

The lanky captain of the Upper Fourth came into the study with a confidential expression upon his face, and closed the door. Then he came towards Pat.

Pat stared at him in astonishment.

"What the dickens do you want, you bouncer?"

"Mum's the word, Nugent. I've got something to say to you—"

"Say it, then, and then get on the other side of the door," said Pat politely.

"Don't get ratty, Nugent. It's important. Look here, we haven't been on very good terms. I don't want to rake all that up again now."

"Couldn't get on good terms with you, Trimble. You see, you're such a cad," said Pat—"such a regular, out-and-out, howling sort of a cad, you know."

Trimble scowled, but restrained his temper with an effort.

"I didn't come here for a row, Nugent," he said pacifically. "Look here, you want to be captain of the junior cricket eleven, don't you?"

"Of course I do. So do we all."

"So do I," said Trimble. "And as I'm head of the Upper Fourth, and you're in the Lower Fourth, you know I've got more chance."

"I dare say you have; but what's all that got to do with me?" said Pat. "Come to the point."

"I'm coming to the point. I've got more chance than you have, so have two or three other fellows in the Fourth Form. But it's pretty certain that the chap who is backed up by the captain of the school will captain the junior eleven."

"Very likely," assented Pat. "What about it?"

"I dare say you expect Brooke to back you up if he gets in as captain."

"I haven't given the matter a single thought."

"Oh, come, you know, that humbug won't do for me!" said Trimble. "I'm speaking to you confidentially, and I think you ought to treat me in the same way."

Pat's eyes flashed.

"If you are hinting that I am a liar, Trimble—"

"Oh, no!" said Trimble hastily. "I don't mean that! Don't get ratty. What I mean is this—that I want you to back me up in getting Lacy in."

"Then you'll be disappointed."

"Lacy knows," went on Trimble, unheeding, "that the election depends on the votes of the juniors, and he knows you have a lot of influence. Of course, he's certain to get in—"

"Then I don't see what you're after now."

"Don't catch a fellow up so. He thinks there's just a slight chance Brooke may win, and he wants to guard against it."

"You don't mean to say that you've come here as an ambassador from Lacy?" exclaimed Pat, in astonishment.

"Well, yes, it amounts to that," said Trimble hesitatingly.

"To speak right out, I've got to tell you, Nugent, that if you help Lacy to get in, he'll see that you are made captain of the junior eleven after the election."

Pat's cheeks went red.

"Hum! So that's the price of my support, Trimble?" he asked quietly.

"Yes," said Trimble, delighted to see Pat taking the rascally suggestion so quietly. "Yes, Nugent. You see, I'm really unselfish in the matter. I'm standing out myself, and you know I've a good chance. I don't mind that. Help us to get our man in, and you're captain of the second eleven. Honour bright!"

"And Lacy would keep his word?"

"He'd give you a solemn promise."

"He might keep it. I wonder! I don't think I shall put him to the test, though."

"You won't refuse an offer like that, Nugent?"

"Yes, I shall refuse."

"Look here," said Trimble, becoming eager, "don't be a fool, Nugent! What's the beastly election to you? What do you care who becomes captain of St. Kit's, so long as you look out for your own interests? Don't be an ass! You'll never get a chance like this again. I tell you right out, that you are the only junior Lacy is afraid of in this matter, and the only one he would make such an offer to."

"Oh, so he's afraid of me over the election, is he, Trimble?" asked Pat, with a peculiar smile.

"Yes; he knows you carry a lot of the fags with you, and he thinks you may get up to some trick or other at the last moment to foil him. That's the reputation you've got."

"Sure, and then I shall try to live up to it."

"Come, Nugent, just say that you'll take it on, and I'll go

and tell Lacy he can rely upon you," said Trimble persuasively.

Pat rose to his feet. He was quite calm, but the glitter in his blue Irish eyes was rather dangerous.

"Trimble, old man, you can go and tell Lacy he can rely upon me—to fight against him tooth and nail at the election."

"You don't mean that, Nugent? I shouldn't dare to give him such a message. I—"

"And did you notice, Trimble darling, as you came in, that there's both a door and a window to this study?" asked Pat, in a honeyed tone.

Trimble stared at him.

"Yes," he said. "What are you talking about? What on earth has that got to do with the matter we're speaking of?"

"Nothing," said Pat, "only I was wondering which you preferred to go out by, that's all."

Trimble gritted his teeth.

"So you refuse, then, you fool?"

"Better language, please, and get out of my study before I lay hands on you. I'm trying to keep my temper."

"You fool, you think you'll be able to get as much out of Brooke, if he gets in; but he won't, and you'll be sold, I tell you that. You cad—"

"Trimble, I've asked you to get out."

"I'll go when I like. I'll tell you what I think of you first. You're a—"

Trimble broke off as Pat seized him by the collar.

"Trimble, old dear, you've got to go."

Trimble, who was furious, began to struggle. Pat grappled with him, and they reeled to and fro in the study, and the table went with a crash against the door, blocking it up.

"You've got to go," panted Pat.

With a mighty heave he twisted Trimble to the open window. Another heave, and the lanky Upper Fourth boy was twisted out upon the window-sill, and only Pat's grip upon him prevented him from slipping down into the close.

"I'll break your neck for this!" roared Trimble.

"You look more like breaking your own, darling," said Pat. "Now, if you wriggle, you go down with a wallop."

"Let me get in."

"I gave you the chance to go out by the door, and you wouldn't take it. Now you're going out by the window."

And Pat, still keeping a grip on Trimble's jacket collar, jerked him off the window-sill and lowered him against the wall below.

"Think you can drop it?" asked Pat.

"Let me get in, you rotter!"

"I'm afraid I couldn't, Trimble. Your weight is a bit above my strength. You've got to drop now, and I'll send you down as softly as I can."

"You—you hound! I'll—"

"I wish there were something soft for you to fall upon," said Pat, as Trimble wriggled against the wall. "Hallo, here's Lacy! If he'd put his head underneath—"

The prefect, who was in the close, had caught sight of the proceedings at the study window, and was coming quickly towards the spot.

He looked up angrily at Pat.

"What are you doing, Nugent? Let Trimble get in immediately."

"Can't be done," said Pat cheerfully. "Would you mind getting underneath for me to drop him on you, Lacy? I want something soft. Your head would do."

"Take him in at the window at once!"

"Can't. He's too heavy. Do you think he will break his neck?" asked Pat thoughtfully. "It would be a bother to have a funeral here."

The prefect approached closer, his face suffused with anger. The sight of Trimble dangling under the window showed him pretty plainly what answer Pat Nugent had given to the offer conveyed to him by the unhappy messenger.

"Nugent, obey me instantly. Take Trimble in."

Pat grinned. He had not the slightest intention of obeying the prefect's command.

The ground was only six or seven feet under Trimble's boots, and the drop was an easy one, or Pat would never have acted as he had done.

"Here goes," said Pat. "Are you ready, Trimble?"

"Hang you, I—"

"There you are!"

Pat let go, and Trimble went. He fell upon his feet, and staggered violently into the prefect, as Pat had intended that he should.

Lacy gasped for breath. Trimble was a heavy weight to come suddenly and violently against his waistcoat, and the shock took his breath away.

"Trimble, you clumsy fool—"

**NEXT SATURDAY:**

**"THE BOARD-SCHOOL BOY."**

A Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale, By Jack North.

AND

**"THE SECOND MILLION."**

A Thrilling Tale of John Smith, Detective.

**IN "PLUCK," 10.**

"It wasn't my fault!" howled Trimble. "You sent me into the study, Lacy, and—"

"Hold your tongue!"

And Lacy, seizing his unfortunate fag, began to box his ears right and left.

"Oh, ow, ow!" roared Trimble. "Lemme go, you brute!"

"You clumsy dolt, I'll teach you to butt into me! Take that, and that, and—"

Trimble, with a desperate wriggle, tore himself away, and bolted across the close. Lacy, whose wrath was not fully wreaked yet, dashed after him in pursuit. Pat was doubled up on the window-sill with laughter.

### The Trapping of Trimble.

Election day!

Very different from the last one at St. Kit's. Fellows went about their business as if nothing unusual was impending. Lacy and some of his backers were anxious and busy, and the end study were highly excited. The rest of St. Kit's took it quite calmly.

Pat's electioneering had hardly prospered. The general feeling that Lacy would get in took the heart out of Brooke's party, and they had not been very enthusiastic to start with.

In the Upper Forms it was practically certain that at least half the fellows would vote for Lacy, while a quarter, at least, would not vote at all.

In the Lower Forms, where the end study had been untiringly at work, Lacy's majority was not so large. The fags would have plumped for Brooke, as a matter of fact, but for the under-hand methods Lacy's backers had adopted to secure votes.

Many of the youngsters declared that they would vote for Brooke, if they could do so without catching the eye of their masters, so that Lacy's majority on paper was not likely to be wholly realised at the election.

The prefect knew that very well, and he was leaving no stone unturned to get votes.

His attempt to win over Pat Nugent had failed ignominiously, but in other directions he had met with better success.

A totally unscrupulous fellow had every chance of getting ahead of a quiet, sober old fellow like Brooke, who couldn't even suspect anybody of sharp practice, let alone plan how to counteract it.

Talbot had very strong doubts about his friend's success, but for the sake of the school he hoped for the best. But Talbot did not take a very prominent part in the electioneering.

(Another long instalment next Saturday.)

## Your Editor's Corner.

All letters should be addressed, "The Editor, PLUCK 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London."

### "THE BOARD SCHOOL BOY."

Our first long, complete school tale for next Saturday's issue will be written by Jack North. It's a fine tale, and you will follow the trials, tribulations, and the— No; I won't say any more. Suffice it that I am sure you will like "The Board School Boy."

For our second long, complete story I have chosen "THE SECOND MILLION," another tale of John Smith, of Daring & Co. You know the cool, unruffled detective.

This story is by Mark Darran.

My readers have often expressed their approval of the school tales that appear every week in this paper, and I feel I must draw your attention to a very popular schoolboy now appearing in "THE GEM LIBRARY."

This character is known as Tom Merry, and you can be certain that he not only has a merry time, but he and his chums lead others a very merry dance. Sometimes the tune is not exactly to the liking of those rash enough to oppose Tom; but that's their fault, and it's your fault if you miss a good thing.

The price of "The Gem" is only ONE HALF-PENNY, but it's good!

NEXT  
SATURDAY'S  
COVER.

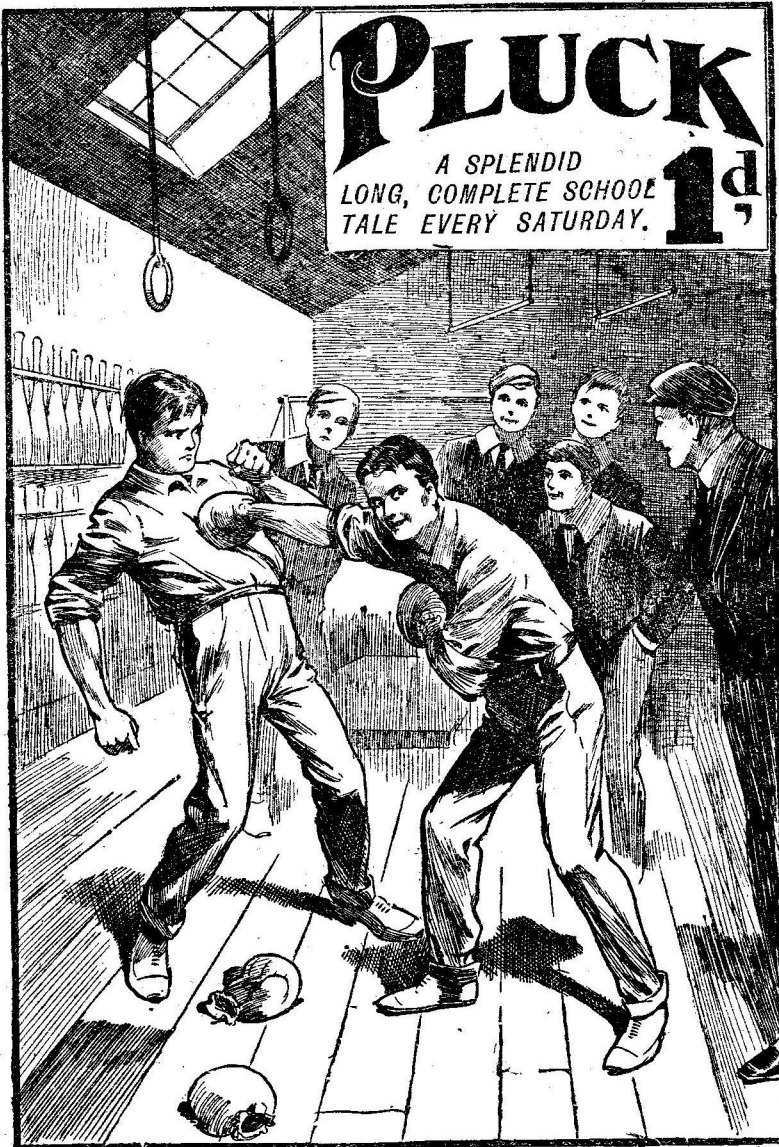
NEVER BEFORE  
PUBLISHED!

You should not fail to look out for the new volumes of "The Boys' Friend" 3d. Library.

No. 21 will be "PETE'S HOLIDAY," a splendid new and complete tale dealing with the adventures of Jack, Sam, and Pete, in Brighton and other holiday resorts, by S. Clarke Hook.

No. 22, entitled "SPORTING LIFE" is a new and original tale of school and cricket and of adventure at home and abroad, by A. S. Hardy.

YOUR EDITOR.



This picture depicts an exciting incident from "The Board School Boy," by Jack North, one of the two complete tales for next Saturday's PLUCK. Price 1d.