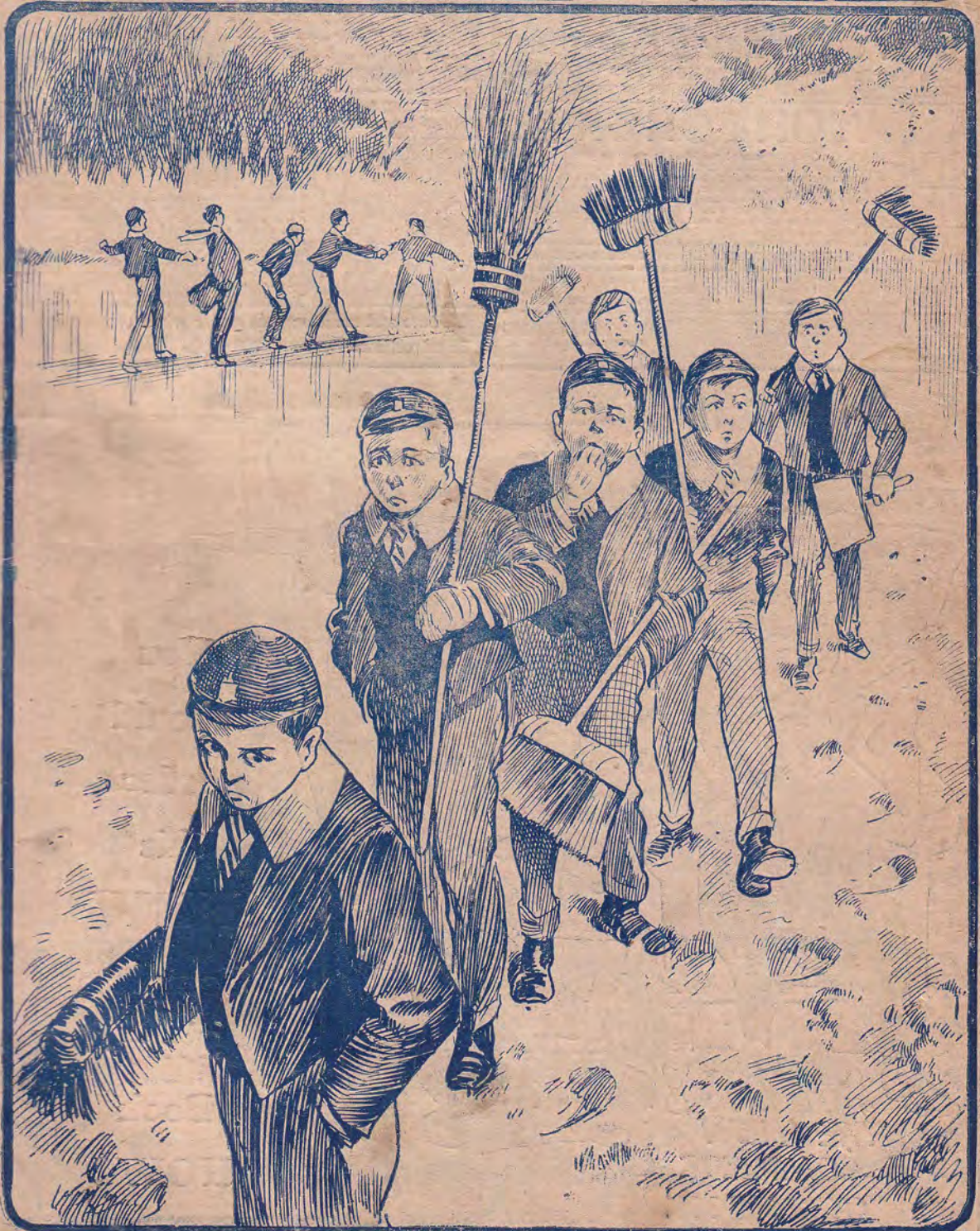


SCHOOL AND DETECTIVE TALES IN THIS ISSUE.



There were half-a-dozen or so smallish boys, who pursued their way in slow and solemn misery. They made no haste, they did not shout; their hearts were too full for words, even in complaint of the injustice they were suffering—they were miserable fags!

NO. 173. VOL. 6. NEW SERIES.

New School Tale.

A SPLENDID SCHOOL TALE

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, Author of
THE TALES OF TOM MERRY.

The Secret of St Winifred's



READ THIS FIRST.

The train containing the boys of St. Winifred's slowed down alongside Ferndale Station platform. "You bouncer! Why didn't you yell?" Locke, a Fourth-Former, shouted the question to Clive Lawrence—a new boy, but one in no way shy or constrained. "What was there to yell about?" asked Clive. Locke sniffed. "Oh, of course, you don't know; you're a new kid. We're at daggers drawn with the Fifth at St. Winnie's, and Kendal and Keene, who are standing over there, are the heads of the Fifth." Clive joins the party of Fourth-Formers, and they eventually get to the school by capturing the Sixth Form brake. Clive is told to share a study with Fisher and Locke. Courtney bullies Clive; but the new boy is rescued by Trelawney, the captain of the school. (Now go on with the story.)

Clive's Strategy.

"How did they lam you?" asked Locke. "We knew they were laying into you, and that's why we brought the skipper on the scene. Was it a fives bat?"

"No; a leather strap."

"Ah, that's another favourite of Courtney's! But you've got off cheap. He likes to twist your arm, you know, and that hurts worse than anything. He's up to all those nice little devices, and he works them off on us."

"The brute! He ought to be kicked out of the school."

"Well," Locke remarked reflectively, "I dare say he would be, if Dr. Esmond knew the kind of a blackguard he is. But he doesn't, you see; and, of course, we can't sneak, even of a brute like Courtney. Of course, he isn't so bad to fags who go the right way to work with him, and give him plenty of soft soap, you know."

"He won't get any soft soap from me," said Clive.

The chums of the Fourth chuckled.

"He doesn't get much from us," Fisher remarked. "We're at daggers drawn, but as a member of the Sixth he has it pretty much his own way."

"It was awfully decent of you fellows to bring Trelawney on the scene," said Clive. "I'm very much obliged to you."

"Oh, that's all right! Juniors are bound to stand by one another against the common enemy," said Fisher. "Besides, you're our study-mate, and I dare say we shall chum up and get on famously, if you learn to keep your place."

That was evidently an important point in the eye of Fisher, that of Clive keeping his place. The new boy smiled slightly, but he was too much obliged to the chums to argue about it just then.

"And now for tea," Fisher remarked. "As a rule we have tea in our own studies, when we've got the tin to get in the tummy. It's usual to feed in the hall the first day of term, though, so we may as well keep up the custom. Come in!"

Clive went into the dining-hall with his friends. Cool and self-possessed as he was, the new boy felt the value of having made friends, as he entered the great, lofty apartment with its long tables, its crowded occupants, and its hundreds of staring, inquiring eyes.

"Hallo! That's the new fellow!"

"Chap who collared the Sixth Form brake, you know."

"A good-plucked 'un!"

"I don't know. Like his cheek, it seems to me."

"I dare say it does, Carker. You wouldn't have the nerve."

"Oh, rats, Pye! I should have ridden in the brake if I had been there. I came down by a later train, or I should very likely have worked off the wheeze myself."

"Yes, I could see you doing it! You'd have scuttled off like a frightened kid if Courtney had looked at you."

"Pooh! I don't believe in making a fuss of a new fellow. He's bound to get a swelled head if you do."

"He'll get a swelled nose, then, if he gets a swelled head."

"Ha, ha! Have you taken him under your wing, Fishy?"

"He's in our study," said Fisher. "No. 7—"

There was a howl from a dozen of the Fourth-Formers. It was evident that Study No. 7 was much in request.

"Have you got that again this term, Fisher?"

"It's not fair! Two terms running, and the best study in the Fourth—"

"I wanted it. Why, I told you so myself, Fisher; as we came down in the train."

"Go hon," said Fisher. "I dare say you did. But it's ours again, and so it ought to be. Studies ought never to be changed till a fellow gets his remove."

"That's all very well for you, you bouncer! What about me, stuck in a three-cornered hole without a fire-grate in it?" demanded the wrathful Fourth-Former.

"I dare say that's good enough for you, kid. Anyway, No. 7 is ours, and we've got Mr. Neill's permission. The new chap shares it with us."

"The cheek! A new chap in the best study in the Fourth—"

"No good grumbling, Sugden. Dry up, and let's get some tea. I'm famished."

And Fisher dropped into his place at the Fourth Form table. The other juniors bent very hostile looks upon Clive Lawrence. He had carried off a prize all unconsciously in getting a third share of Study No. 7, and they didn't like it. They stared at him, and discussed him before his face, with the delightful freedom and candour of schoolboys.

"Funny-looking sort of a waster, isn't he? What is he twisting himself about for like that?"

"Got the collywobles, I expect."

"Or the St. Vitus's dance."

"He's been licked," said Locke. "Courtney pasted him for collaring the brake at the station to-day."

"Serve him right for his cheek," said Carker.

"Oh, shut up, Carker! He doesn't go sneaking round trying to curry favour with the bullies of the Sixth, as you do, at any rate."

"Who says I do?" demanded Carker fiercely.

"I do!" retorted Fisher. "Got anything to say about it, Carker?"

Carker was saved from the difficulty of replying by the entrance of Mr. Neill, the master of the Fourth, who took his place at the head of the Form table.

Something like order fell upon the juniors. Courtney came in, and went to the Sixth Form table, accompanied by Carne. Kendal and Keene, at the Fifth table, glanced across at Clive, and the new boy nodded coolly and pleasantly, making Kendal turn red with anger.

Mr. Neill glanced at Clive Lawrence as the meal proceeded.

"THE LUCKY THIRTEEN,"

A Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Specs, the Twins & Co., by H. Clarke Hook.

"FATE'S WARNING"

AND A Thrilling Story, dealing with Kit & Cora, the brother and sister detectives.

IN "PLUCK." 1d

NEXT SATURDAY:

"Sit still, Lawrence!"

"Yes, sir."

Clive tried to sit still, but it was of no use. The pain where Courtney had thrashed him was too acute. He was soon shifting uncomfortably again. Mr. Neill glanced at him severely.

"Are you ill, Lawrence?"

"No, sir."

"Then, if you move again, you will leave the table and miss your tea."

Clive coloured. The juniors were all grinning. Clive was soon moving again, and the eye of the Form master fell upon him.

"Leave the table, Lawrence!" he exclaimed. "I am ashamed of you. How dare you wriggle about like a worm when you are at your meals? Take your tea and stand up against the wall there, and finish your meal standing."

Clive turned as red as a peony.

"If you please, sir—" he began.

"Not a word! Do as I tell you!"

"But, sir—"

"Another word, Lawrence, and I will send you to the headmaster to be caned."

There was nothing for it but to obey. Clive rose and took his cup and saucer in one hand, and his plate of bread-and-butter in the other, and left the table. The juniors were all sniggering, and fellows looked round from the other tables and grinned at him. Most of them had heard Mr. Neill's angry words.

Clive's face was crimson. He felt himself the cynosure of all eyes. Kendal and Keene sniggered as he passed the Fifth Form table on his way to the wall. Mr. Neill had pointed out a spot where he would be in full view of the whole hall, and Clive had to pass the Upper Form tables to get there.

Courtney looked at him with an ill-natured grin as he came by. He knew, of course, what was the cause of the trouble, but he wasn't inclined to enlighten Mr. Neill. Clive's eyes flashed as he caught the sneering smile on the bully's face.

He had to pass very close to Courtney. He was carrying his plate, cup, and saucer held out before him. As he passed Courtney's chair his foot slipped, and he lurched forward. Courtney gave a terrific yell as the teacup crashed full on the back of his neck, and the hot liquid poured over him.

He sprang to his feet in a fury.

(An extra long instalment of this splendid school tale next week.)

Your Editor's Corner.

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

"A LUCKY THIRTEEN."

The first long complete, a school tale, appearing in next Saturday's issue, will be contributed by H. Clarke Hook, and will deal with the adventures of

SPECS & CO.

The second tale, by the very popular author, Cedric Wolfe, will tell of the detective prowess of the famous brother and sister detectives—Kit and Cora Twyford.

FOUR NEW BOOKS.

Next Friday, February 7th, two new numbers of "The Boys' Friend" Threepenny Library will be on sale.

Order to-day of your newsagent:

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A new, long, complete detective tale.

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A grand, complete school tale, by Henry St. John.

Don't forget—Nos. 39 and 40 will be on sale next Friday, February 7th.

Nos. 41 and 42 will be on sale on the third Friday, February 21st.

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"CHUMS OF GREYMINSTER." A grand school tale, by Henry St. John, telling of the further adventures of Tom Andrews and Herbert Haviland; and

No. 42:

"THE IRON WAY."

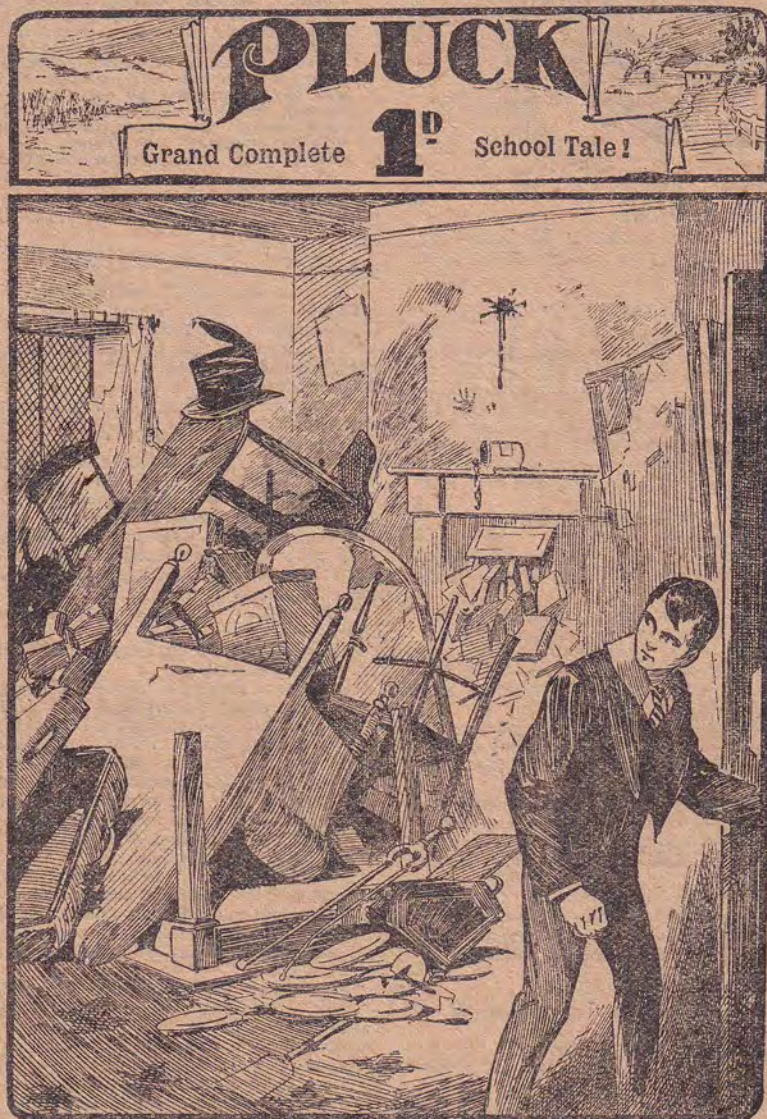
A magnificent, complete story of life on the railway.

Now I have to make two very important announcements:

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11th, appears No. 1 of "The Magnet," a new story book. Price one-halfpenny.

ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13th, appears THE FIRST ISSUE of "THE GEM" LIBRARY.

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This picture depicts a dramatic incident in "A Lucky Thirteen," a tale of school life, by H. Clarke Hook, one of the two complete stories in next Saturday's PLUCK. Price 1d.