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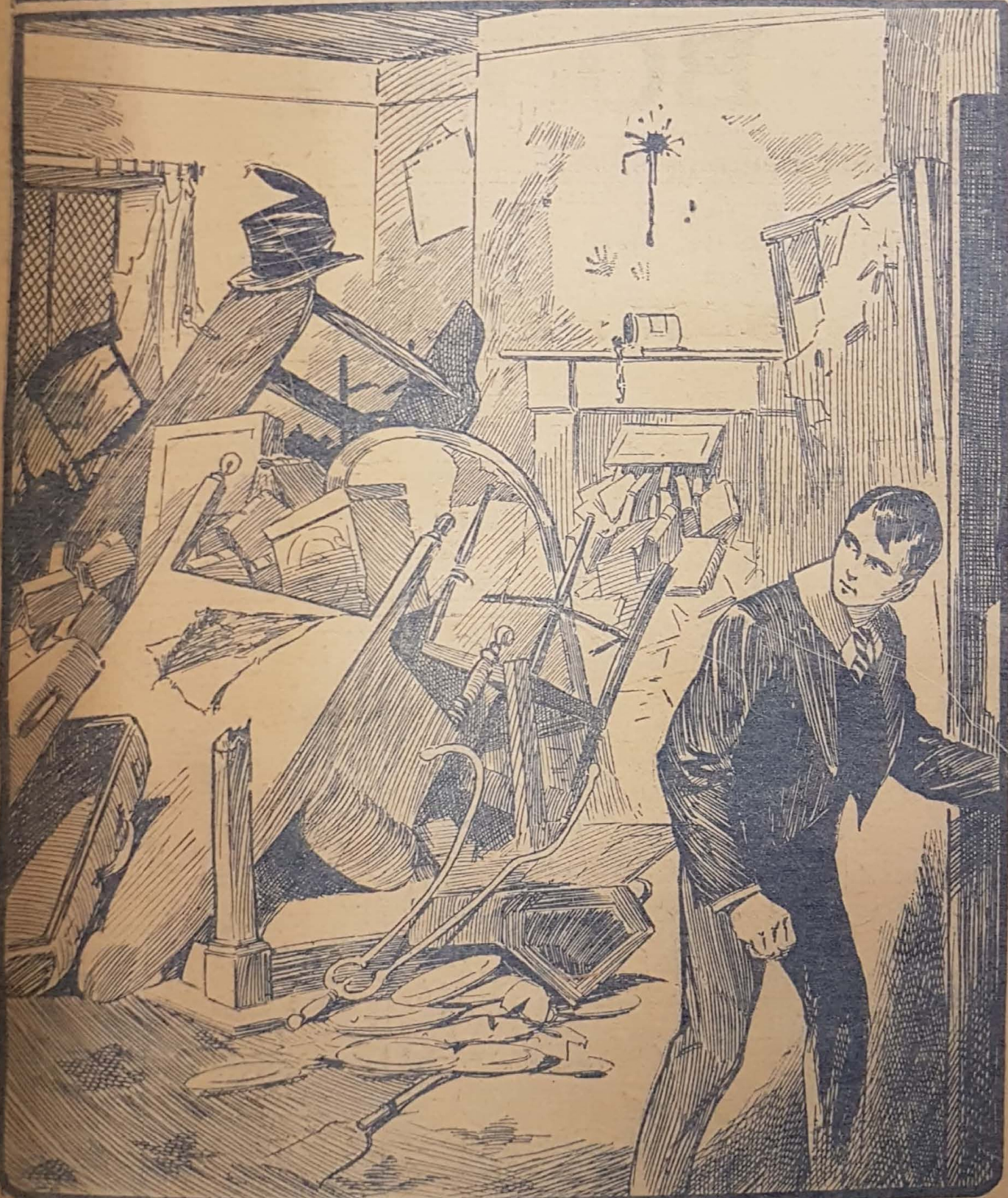
No. 1.

PLUCK

SPECS, THE TWINS & CO.

1^D

KIT & CORA, DETECTIVES.



The Wrecking of the "Slacker's" Study.

NO. 171, VOL. 6, NEW SERIES.

NEW SCHOOL TALE.

"By our agreement I was to pay my three assistants a regular salary from my own pocket. The entire proceeds of each exploit were to be given to the poor. I had stipulated that Garnett and Hapforth should keep from me all knowledge of the owner of the house selected for entry. I had friends in English society, and I did not want to learn that I was about to rob my own friends. It might have unstruck me."

"Thus, you see, Miss Twyford, I had not the slightest idea that the very house selected for our first exploit—for it was the first—was that of my cousin, Horace Massfield!"

"You might almost say it was your own house you burgled."

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READ THIS FIRST.

The train containing the boys of St. Winifred's slowed down alongside Ferndale Station platform. "You boulder! 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 sniggered. "Oh, of course, you don't know; you're a new kid. We're at daggers drawn with the Fifth at St. Winifred's, and Kendall 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 at the tea-table, and Clive throws a cup of hot tea in his tormentor's face. (Now go on with the story.)

"I was getting my own back, sir!"

Hot tea was soaking Courtney's collar, drenching his black hair, and pouring down the inside of his jacket. The cup fell to the floor and was smashed. The Sixth-Former turned upon the new boy like a tiger.

Clive jumped back. Courtney was looking dangerous. Mr. Neill was upon his feet.

"Courtney, control yourself! Do you hear—"

But Courtney was too blind with rage to heed even the voice of a master. He sprang at Clive. It was impossible to dodge him and escape. He seized the new boy, and Clive was swung nearly off his feet by the furious senior. A rain of blows descended upon him.

Crash!

Clive's blood was up. The plate in his hand smashed in the face of Courtney, and the senior let him go and reeled back. His cheek was cut and the blood was running down it. Clive stood with heaving chest and panting breath.

"Courtney!" thundered Mr. Neill. "How dare you! Take your seat, sir!"

"You see how he has acted—"

"You had no right to strike him! Lawrence, you may resume your place. Another word, Courtney, and I shall report your conduct to your Form-master!"

Courtney sullenly left the hall to get a change of linen. The tea was soaking down his back, and he felt extremely uncomfortable. Clive resumed his place at the Fourth Form table. He was breathing hard and there was a cut on his cheek; for Courtney had struck recklessly, and with his clenched fists.

"I take it for granted, Lawrence, that that was an accident?" said Mr. Neill.

Clive was silent. The Form-master looked at him sharply.

"Is it possible that I was mistaken, Lawrence?"

Still Clive did not speak. He was not the kind of boy to tell an untruth.

"Answer me at once, Lawrence! Was that upsetting the tea an accident or not?"

"No; it wasn't, sir," said Clive frankly. "I did it on purpose!"

Mr. Neill gasped, and so did the Form. They were not accustomed to such candour as this from a junior. Mr. Neill was keen enough to guess that there was something behind it all.

"Have you any excuse to offer for your conduct, Lawrence?"

"Yes, sir. Courtney knew why I couldn't sit still, and he grinned at me. I was getting my own back, sir!"

Fisher looked scared. This was not the way to talk to a

The housebreaker's confession, attested by Kit Twyford, the surgeon and Inspector Stunt, of course, completely cleared Oswald Chester, who was speedily released.

Martin Massfield was arrested on the charge of burglary, but the bulk of the stolen property being virtually his own, and the remainder having been restored to its owners, his public trial was, by Kit Twyford's influence, easily avoided.

Martin resigned the whole of his fortune to charities and went to New Zealand, where, when Kit last heard of him, he was doing well as a sheep-farmer.

Captain Dick Garnett and the worthy Mr. Jack Hapforth wisely made themselves scarce after that first, and most disastrous exploit.

THE END.

(One double-length complete school tale next Saturday, entitled: "In Open Rebellion," by Jack North.)

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NEXT SATURDAY: DOUBLE-LENGTH SCHOOL TALE.

"IN OPEN REBELLION." BY JACK NORTH.

THE SECRET OF ST. WINIFRED'S.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Form master, and he wished he could have given the new boy a hint. But Mr. Neill understood.

"I think I know what you mean, Lawrence. But you will kindly refrain from 'getting your own back,' as you term it, in the dining-hall in future. You will take fifty lines."

"Yes, sir," said Clive cheerfully.

He didn't mind that. He had got even with the bully, and that was the chief thing he cared about

Choosing the Fags.

Tea was over at last, and the juniors strolled out of the hall. Fisher, Locke, and Clive Lawrence went up to Study No. 7 and began to unpack their belongings. There was coal in the locker now, and Fisher soon had a cheerful fire going, and the belongings of the three youngsters disposed about the room, imparted to it a very homelike appearance.

Fisher's foils were arranged on the walls, and Clive's boxing-gloves, and room was found for a punching-ball. Fisher had brought some pictures from home, which looked very nice on the walls, and Locke added a cheap German clock to the furnishing. Clive, who had no previous warning that he would be required to help in furnishing a study, felt rather left out of it as he saw the chums unpacking the various little adornments they had brought for the improvement of the common home.

"I'll stand my whack later!" he exclaimed. "When we have a half-holiday we'll go down to the town, if you like, and make a round of the second-hand shops and get some things. I'm pretty flush with money."

Locke fell upon his neck.

"Doesn't he talk just like a picture-book, Fishy?" he exclaimed.

Fisher grinned amiably.

"Well, I admit he's the right sort," he remarked. "We shall get on if he keeps his place. Look at these nobby curtains. My mater had them made up for me during the holidays. I took home the measure of the windows."

"Ripping!" exclaimed Locke and Clive Lawrence together.

The curtains, indeed, gave the study a very cosy look. The juniors soon had them rigged up. Locke produced a revolving-bookcase, and books were packed into it. The juniors were still busy when Pye put his head in

at the door. He gave an admiring glance round the new apartment.

"By Jove, you're making it look nice!" he said. "That new kid's in luck. But I say, I looked in to tell you that there's a meeting going on in the hall. You're wanted."

"Right-ho!" said Fisher. "We'll come!" And Pye vanished.

"I expect they're nominating the fags now for the term," said Fisher. "Keep your peepers open, Lawrence, and don't let Courtney get you if he tries. He's pretty certain to try for the sake of wreaking his nasty spite on you."

"I'll keep out of his clutches if I can," said Clive. "If I go to him, though, I suppose I have no choice of refusing."

"Oh, no; the Sixth settle all that!" "I don't want to buck against any old-established customs," remarked Clive. "I don't want to run my head against a brick wall, you know. If Courtney gets me as a fag, I'll fag for him. But the first time he lays a finger on me I strike. I won't fag for any fellow who can't treat me decently."

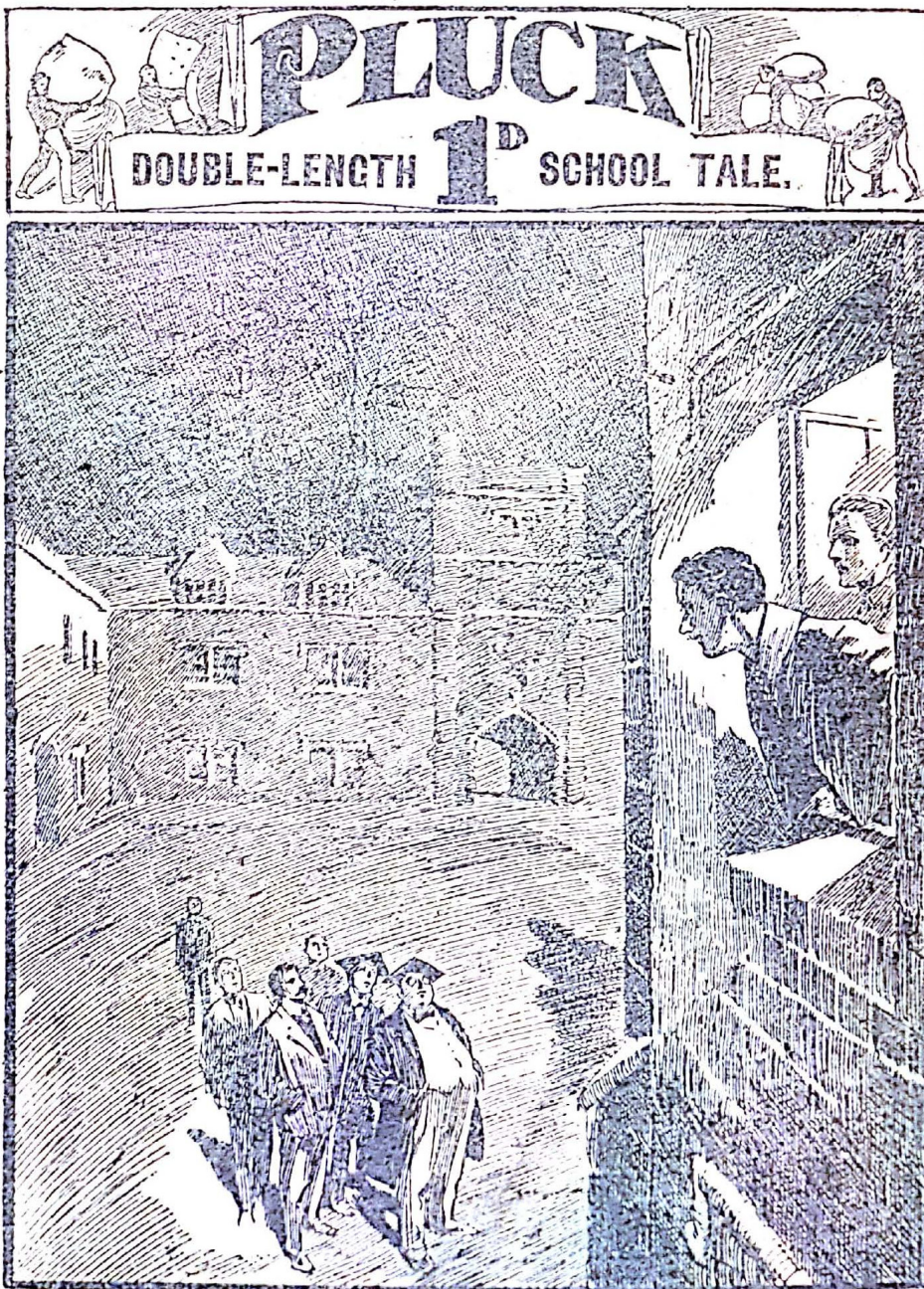
"Well, that's a jolly good plan, if you can carry it out, young'un," said Locke; "but you'll want a big nerve, kid."

They quitted the study, turning the gas down to a mere point of light. The hall was crowded when they entered it with fellows of all the Forms at St. Winifred's. At this hour most of the school had arrived, although there were a few late-comers, who would not get in before the morning.

The Sixth were there in force, and seemed to have the proceedings pretty much to themselves. They had been settling matters relative to the school clubs, and electing and re-electing the club officers. This over, they came to the important question of the fags.

St. Winifred's was a public school of the old sort, and the system of fagging was in full swing there. And it was not such a bad system, either, take it all in all. It wasn't pleasant for some youngsters to come from luxurious homes and start washing tea-cups and toasting cheese for their masters. But it did most of them good, and took a great deal of the "side" out of youngsters who were inclined to have swelled heads. When the son of a marquis found himself required to light the fire and lay the breakfast-table of a common mortal, it filled him with a juster idea of his own real value than he might otherwise have had.

(An extra long instalment of this popular tale next Saturday.)



Owing to want of space I am compelled to leave out my usual Chat, but I hope my readers will note the above picture, and look out for it, bearing in mind that our next issue of PLUCK will contain a double-length school tale, by Jack North.—Your Editor.