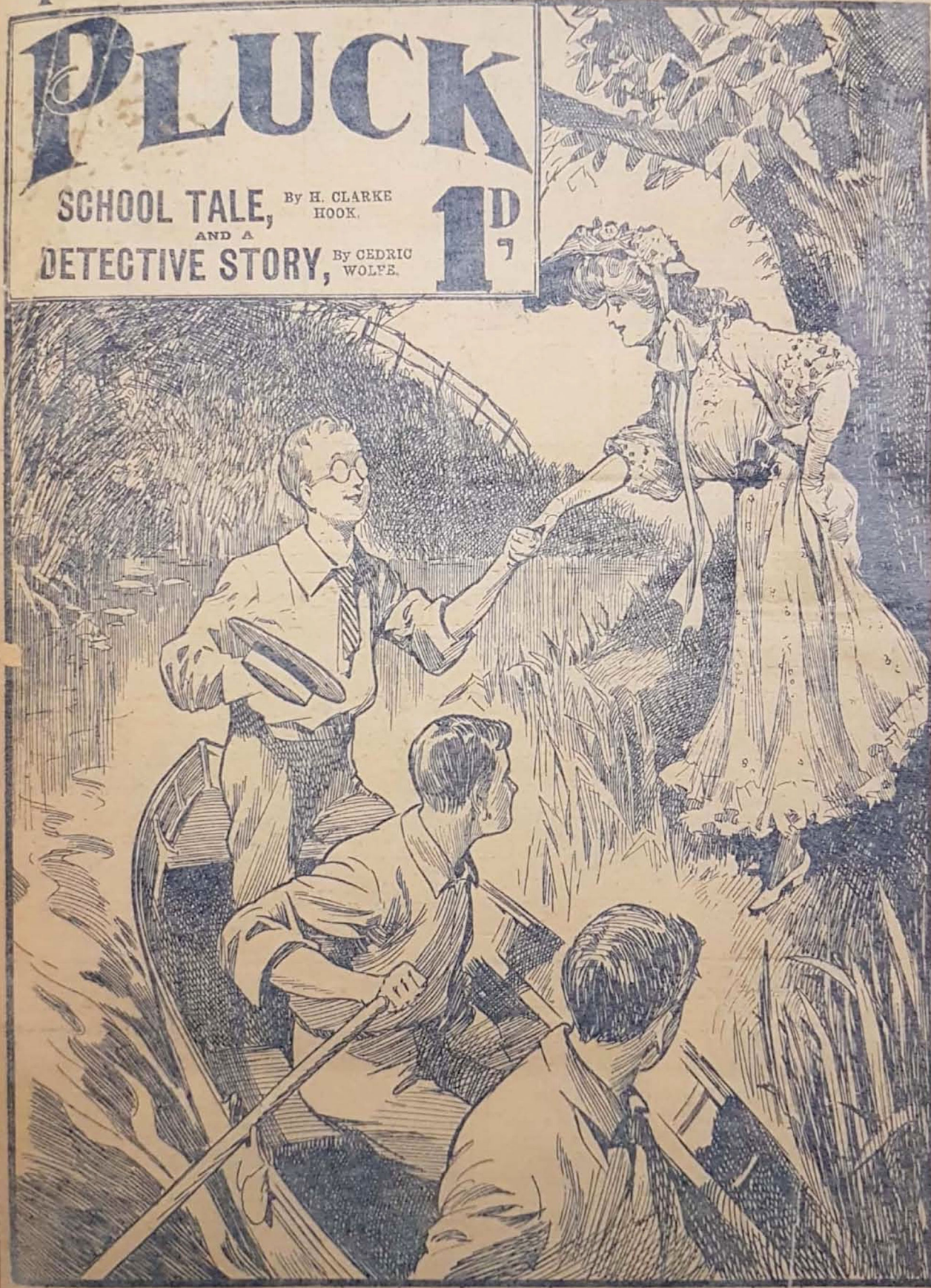


Splendid School & Detective Tales.

# PLUCK

SCHOOL TALE, By H. CLARKE HOOK.  
AND A DETECTIVE STORY, By CEDRIC WOLFE.

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17



**HERE AGAIN! SPECS, THE TWINS, AND CO.**

"HALLO, DORA!" SPECS EXCLAIMED CHEERFULLY. "JINGO, BUT YOU DO LOOK STUNNING!"  
(See page 14.)

NO. 133. VOL. 6. NEW SERIES.

NEW SCHOOL TALES.

YOU CAN START NOW.

# 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. Pat is thrown into a cupboard by some juniors, and falls asleep. On waking up he hears voices—the voices of Eldred Lacy and his brother, Rupert Lacy, the squire of Lynwood; "You must ruin and disgrace Arthur Talbot, and drive him from the school. He is a menace to me—to both of us. But ruined and disgraced, driven forth into poverty and obscurity, I shall no longer fear him!"

Pat becomes great chums with Blagden and Greene, and remembering what he had heard when locked in the cupboard, Pat decides to shadow Lacy, and overhears the bully and Black, a tramp, hatching a terrible plot against Arthur Talbot. The next day Black comes to the school while a cricket match is on, and claims Talbot as his son before them all. However, Black is warned off the place by one of the masters, and Talbot goes to his study. Later in the day Arthur pins up a notice on the notice-board saying that he has resigned the captaincy of the school.

Lacy at once puts his name up as candidate, and Arthur Talbot tries to persuade his friend Brooke to oppose him. "I shall back you all I can," said Talbot, "and I believe the Lower Fourth and most of the Upper will plump for you." (Now go on with the story.)

### Brooke's Decision.

"Lacy's following will be strongest in the Upper Forms," continued Talbot; "but we can only do our best, and trust to the fortune of war."

He picked up the paper from the table.

"Suppose you draw up a sort of manifesto, old fellow, while I take Lacy's property back to him."

"Good!" said Brooke. "Come back here and help me with it."

He sat down at the table, and Talbot, with a nod, quitted the study. Lacy's study was dark and untenanted. The prefect was in the common-room, chatting with a group of Sixth-Form fellows.

They all turned their heads as Talbot came in, and smiled significantly. Talbot felt his heart beat faster. It was the first taste of what was to become more pronounced as time went on, and he felt it; but he did not allow his temper to rise. Straight towards the prefect he walked, the tell-tale paper in his hand.

"This belongs to you, Lacy," he said.

He held out the paper. Lacy glanced at it, recognised his own writing, and crumpled it in his palm.

"How—how—how did you—" he gasped, quite losing his self-possession for a moment.

"Your friend Black dropped it, I suppose," said Talbot scornfully.

Lacy's hand was closed convulsively upon the paper.

"I—I—" he stammered.

The other fellows were looking on in wonder.

"Have you no lie ready?" asked Talbot ironically.

"Have you no pretext—no falsehood? I am sorry I took you so much by surprise."

The words were bitter, but Talbot had endured much at the hands of Eldred Lacy, and his breast was full of angry scorn.

Lacy started, and bit his lip hard.

"Talbot, you—I—"

"Enough!" said Talbot contemptuously. "I don't want to say anything more to you, Eldred Lacy. You are hardly the kind of fellow I care to speak to."

He swung away on his heel. For a moment Lacy stood motionless. Every eye in the room was fixed upon him, and as he did not reply to Talbot's stinging words, derisive smiles came upon many faces. He snapped his teeth. With a spring he reached Talbot as he was about to stride away, and struck him with his open hand full on the cheek.

"That's for your insults!" he said, in a grating voice.

"You blackguard! You low-born brat of a wandering beggar!"

Talbot swung towards him, with his eyes ablaze. His face was deadly pale, save where the red mark of the blow showed upon his cheek.

"Eldred Lacy, you have gone too far this time!"

His fist shot out. Lacy strove to elude the blow, but in

vain. It crashed in his face, and he dropped like a log. Haywood sprang to help him up. Several of the fellows came between the foes, whose enmity was no longer concealed on either side.

Lacy staggered to his feet, with Haywood's assistance. Talbot faced him with flashing eyes. The prefect was choking with rage. He had never cared to come to close quarters with Talbot before, but now all prudence seemed to be forgotten in rage and hate.

"You—you hound!" he stammered thickly. "You—you shall answer for this! When—where will you meet me?"

"When and where you like."

And Talbot turned on his heel and walked away. Back to Brooke's study he went, and the Sixth-Former looked up in amazement at his expression.

"What has happened, Talbot?"

"Nothing; only Lacy has come out into the open at last. We are going to meet, and fight"—Talbot's eyes glinted—"and I am going to give him the thrashing of his life, Brooke, if it lies in me to do it."

### Lacy's Arrangements for the Fight,

"So you are going to meet Talbot, Lacy?"

Haywood looked at his friend with a peculiar expression as he asked the question.

The scene between Talbot and Lacy was the talk of St. Kit's. A dozen fellows had witnessed the quarrel, and heard the challenge given and accepted. A fight between a captain of the school and one of the head prefects was an unheard-of event at St. Kit's, and naturally the news caused a good deal of excitement.

"Yes, of course I'm going to meet him!" snapped Lacy.

"Didn't you hear me agree to do so?"

"Yes, I know; but—" Haywood hesitated.

"But what? Did you think I should funk it?"

"Oh, no, of course not!" said Haywood hastily. "It would be impossible to do that now—quite impossible. Well, as you're going to meet him, would you like me to be your second?"

Haywood could not help looking, and feeling puzzled. He was Lacy's friend, but he knew perfectly well that the prefect was no match for Arthur Talbot, and he knew that Lacy knew it himself.

Impossible as it seemed to avoid the fight without confessing himself a "funk," Haywood had thought that Lacy would find some way of wriggling out of it before the time came to stand face to face, foot to foot, with the finest athlete at St. Kit's.

And so Lacy's apparent determination to go through with the affair puzzled Haywood considerably, and he still had a lurking suspicion that the prefect was not dealing quite frankly with him.

"My second?" said Lacy, with an air of reflection.

"Well, yes, Haywood, so far as making the arrangements

NEXT SATURDAY: "AT HALF-PAST THE ELEVENTH HOUR."

Grand School Tale Extra Long.  
By Jack North.

AND

"THE MYSTERY OF MERA"  
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By Owen Leach.

IN "PLUCK," P.

goes. I think it will be wiser to have the meeting quite private."

"Without a crowd, do you mean?"  
 "Without anybody at all but Talbot and myself. A fight like this isn't an affair to be fought out in public. Talbot is captain of St. Kit's—or was, until a few hours ago—and I am one of the head prefects. There's no getting out of the fact that it's a disgraceful affair for us to settle a difference by slogging each other like a couple of juniors."

"Well, that's so, and the Head would get his rag out over it, I imagine, if he heard of it. But I don't see how you're going to keep it dark, Lacy. Half the school knows about it already, and the other half will know soon. It will be the talk of the Upper Forms, and it will soon spread to the Lower. St. Kit's will be buzzing with it to-morrow."

"I know all that!" growled Lacy.  
 "How are you going to keep it dark, then? All the Sixth will want to see it, and there will be a contingent from the Fifth, too, and every junior who can nose out where the fight is to take place, will be there to see it."

"That's what I don't want to happen. I want you to go to Talbot to make arrangements for the meeting to be strictly between ourselves. I expect he'll shrink from a public slogging display as much as I do, and so there won't be any difficulty about it. You'll ask him if he's willing to meet me at a certain hour to be fixed by a note between ourselves without a single spectator on the ground."

"But you must have seconds."

"I don't see that it's at all necessary."

"I've never managed a fight on such queer lines before," said Haywood, in disgust. "I was quite looking forward to it."

"I dare say you were; but I'm not going to turn myself into a peep-show for your benefit or anybody else's," said Lacy savagely. "Just you ask Talbot what I say. If he insists upon seconds being present, I will think over it; but I don't believe he will. When he's cool he'll be just as ashamed of the whole affair as I am."

"Oh, all right, I'll do as you say; but I don't like the idea."

"I don't ask you to like it, do I?" was Lacy's polite rejoinder.

The study door opened, and Dunn looked in.

"Your fag told me you wanted to speak to me, Lacy."

"So I do," said Lacy. "Haywood's just going. Got that settled with Talbot, Haywood, and let me know the result, will you?"

"Oh, all right!" said Haywood, still looking extremely dissatisfied. And he went out of the study. Lacy closed the door after him.

**(To be continued in next Saturday's issue of PLUCK.)**

# Your Editor's Corner.

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

## "AT HALF-PAST THE ELEVENTH HOUR."

The first long, complete school tale for our next issue will be written by Jack North, author of so many extremely popular tales, and I hope you will all make a point of ordering your copies of next Saturday's PLUCK in advance.

## "THE MYSTERY OF MERA."

I proved a true prophet when I said you would want to read some more stories by Owen Leach, and in accordance with the wishes of those who have written to me praising "United We Stand," I am including in our next issue a tale you will like even better than Owen Leach's first.

Now, I have just a few words to say to those of you who

are suffering from a smack in the eye. I don't mean an actual punch from a big fist, but a dig from Dame Fortune.

If someone did give you a smack in the eye, you'd hit back right heartily, Good! And if Fortune gives you the cold shoulder, do exactly the thing that fits the case—hit out in some direction or another. Don't be down-hearted! Grin and bear the rough side of life, and you'll come out smiling!

Some really capital school tales are now appearing in "The Gem."

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**YOUR EDITOR.**



# PLUCK

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