

# PLUCK

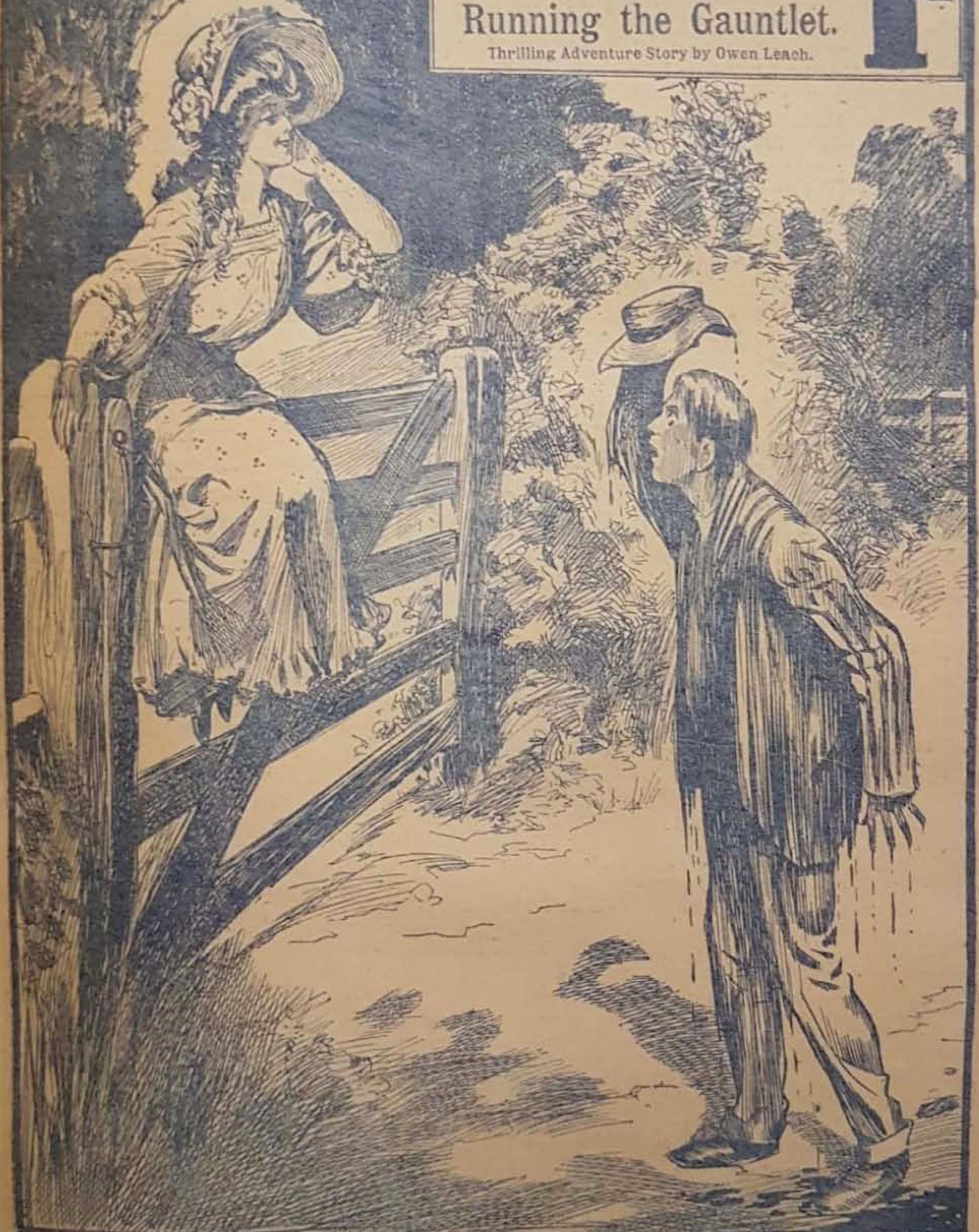
The New Head.

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.)







"Faith," growled Pat, "I think I'll resign. I've had enough of being leader of this study. How am I to get 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 boulder?"

"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 rascal's 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 set 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 lag, 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 weakened 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."

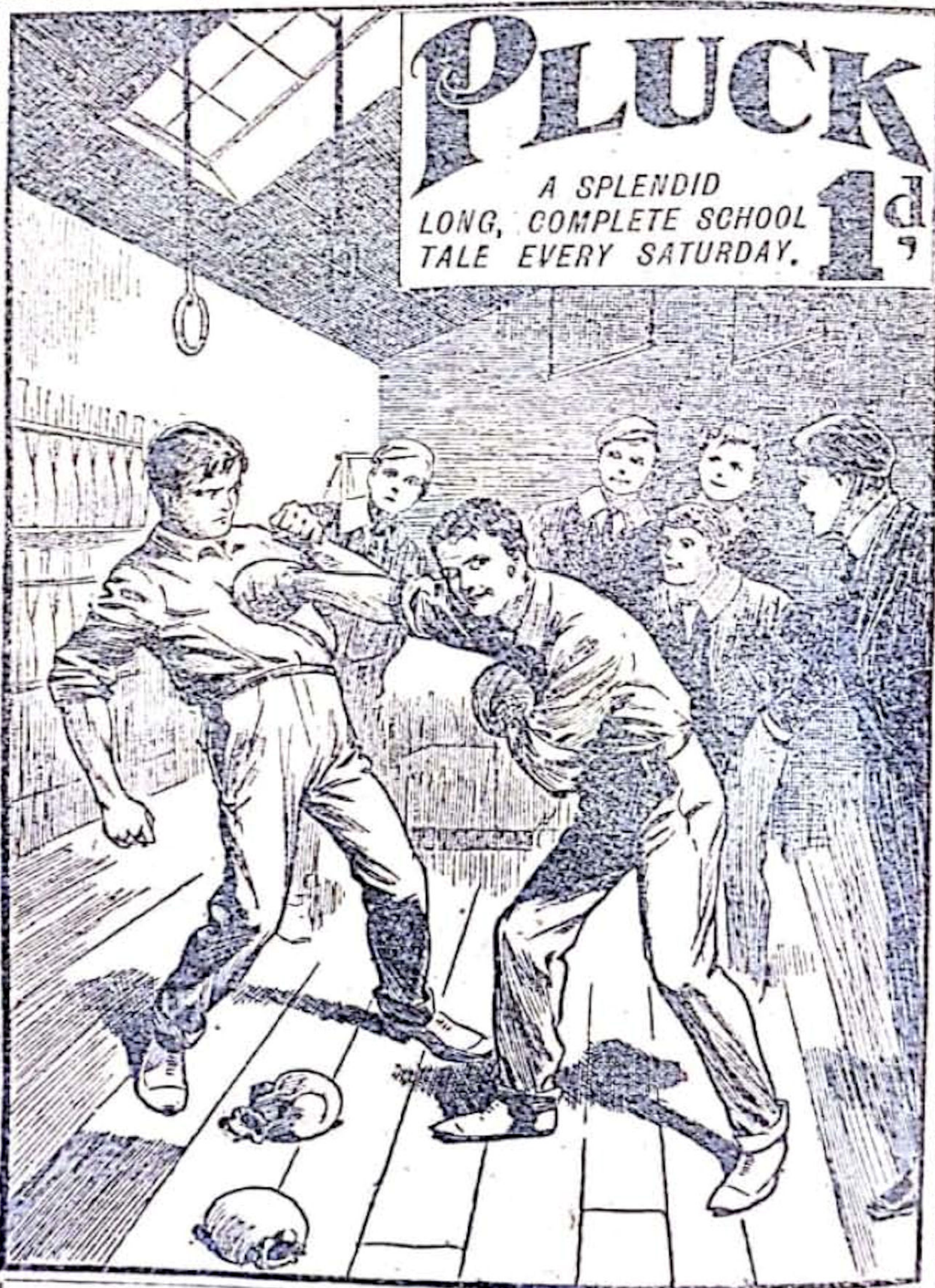
## "THE BOARD SCHOOL BOY."

Our first long, complete school tale for next Saturday issue will be written by Jack North. It's a fine tale, and you will follow the trials, tribulations, and the—  
 "The Board School Boy."  
 won't say any more. Suffice it that I am sure you will like it.

For our second long, complete story I have chosen "THE SECOND MILLION," another tale of John Smith, of Durrant & 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 must draw your attention to a very popular school tale now appearing in "THE GEM LIBRARY."

This character 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 tale is not exactly to the liking of those who are enough to enjoy Tom; but that's their fault, and not your fault if you miss a good thing.  
 The price of "The Gem" is only ONE HALF PENNY, but it's good!



# PLUCK

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YOUR EDITOR

