

# PLUCK

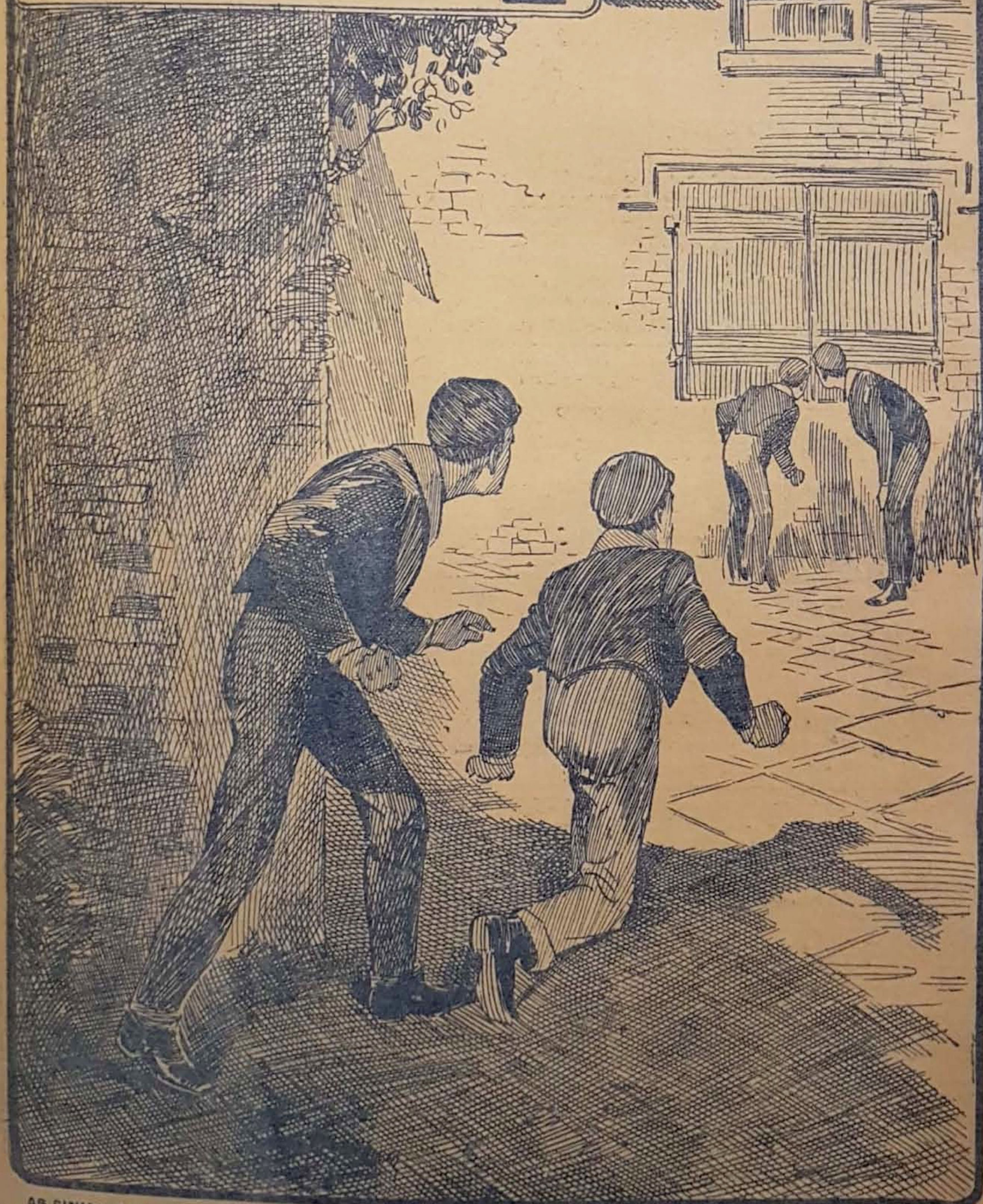
THE BROTHERS OF BORDEN.

A Tale of School Life.

THE READY MONEY CLUB.

A Story of the Three Messenger Boys.

1<sup>D</sup>



YOU CAN START NOW.

NEW SCHOOL TALE.



# THE RIVALRY OF ST KIT'S

## 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, but afterwards resigns his position on account of a mean plot instigated by Eldred Lacy and his brother, who is Squire of Lynwood. Soon after, the election for the position of captain, which Talbot has vacated, draws near, and Talbot's chum Brooke, who opposes Lacy, gains the majority of votes, and so is elected captain of St. Kit's. Lacy is asked by his brother to steal a silver box belonging to Talbot which contains important documents. He gets possession of it. But Pat and his chums are instrumental in getting it back for their champion. The next morning the Headmaster finds he has been robbed of £30. Arthur Talbot is suspected; and Haywood, a senior, tells the Fourth Form that he is sure Talbot is the thief. "It's a lie!" shouted Blagden, jumping up. And, in a moment, the whole of the Fourth were on their feet, howling at Haywood till he was nearly deafened: "It's a lie—it's a lie!" (Now go on with the story.)

### The Head Interviews Arthur Talbot.

Arthur Talbot entered the Head's study at St. Kit's, little dreaming of what awaited him there. He gave a slight start as he saw the pale, harassed expression upon the face of the good old doctor.

"Is anything the matter, sir?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, Talbot; something is very much the matter," said Dr. Kent, in a low and troubled voice. "Something has happened that I never dreamed would happen in this school. Last evening, while I was away from my study, my desk was robbed!"

Talbot stared at the doctor. The news amazed him.

"Is it possible, sir?"

"Unfortunately, it is too true. Quite a large sum in gold and notes has been taken. There seems to be no clue to the thief. I hope you will be able to help me, Arthur."

"I don't see how I can help you, sir," said Talbot thoughtfully. "I haven't the faintest idea, of course, as to who can have been scoundrel enough to take the money; but I will do anything in my power."

"I have just spoken to Haywood and Dunn," said the Head. "I learned that they came to my study last evening to speak to me on some matter connected with the late election, and, finding me absent, did not come in."

"Yes, sir. I met them near your door," said Talbot innocently.

"That is what I was coming to. They mentioned that they met you here, but they saw no one else near the study. I hope you may be able to give me the clue they could not give me. When you were here, or going or coming, did you see anyone about?"

Talbot reflected.

"No, sir. Only those two fellows you have named."

The doctor looked disappointed.

"This is serious," he said. "I am convinced that the boy, whoever he was, came to the study to speak to me, and yielded to a sudden temptation. I will never believe that any boy at St. Kit's was base enough to come here with the deliberate intention of committing a theft. Besides, he could not have known that I should be absent. It was quite by chance that I stayed away so long when I left my study. Had I foreseen it I should, of course, have locked my desk before leaving."

The doctor passed his hand over his brow. He had hoped that Arthur Talbot might be able to afford him a clue to the thief, but it was evident that the late captain of St. Kit's knew no more than he did.

Talbot's face was very concerned. He knew that it was not the loss of the money that was troubling the Head, though the loss was considerable enough in itself. It was the disgrace that was certain to fall upon the school if the matter became public, as it must become public if the truth were not immediately discovered. In any case, it would be hard enough to hush up such an occurrence; but in case of

a searching inquiry any hushing up was, of course, impossible.

"It is very hard," said the doctor slowly. "I hoped to be able to find the thief, and then he could have been made to restore the money, and could have quietly left St. Kit's without any unnecessary talk. Now——"

He broke off with a sigh.

"I wish I could help you, sir," said Talbot feelingly; "but I cannot. Even if I had seen any fellow near your study, sir, I shouldn't like to suspect him without something definite to go upon. It seems incredible that we have a thief at St. Kit's!"

"Yet the fact is indisputable," said the doctor, with a nod towards his desk. "Yesterday I should have refused to believe it. Now, Talbot, I am about to ask you a question which I hope you will answer for the sake of the unfortunate lad concerned. I think it is your duty to tell me anything that can assist me."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Can you tell me of any lad who is more likely than another to have done this base act? I am aware that there are some boys—or were—at St. Kit's who had secret dealings with a betting set in the village, at that disreputable place called the Dragon. Can you give me any information on that point?"

Talbot hesitated, the red flushing into his cheeks. Dr. Kent saw his hesitation, and understood it.

"My dear boy," he said, laying his hand on Talbot's shoulder, "if you could tell me anything I think you should do so. This is not an ordinary case. I understand your objection to anything that might appear in the light of tale-bearing, but my object is to save the unfortunate lad concerned. I want to save him from the consequences of his act, and St. Kit's from a black disgrace. Under the circumstances, you should speak."

"You are right, sir; but I have nothing to tell you."

"You know nothing on that subject, then?"

"Nothing definite, sir."

"Not enough to mention a name?"

"No, sir; not really. I have had my suspicions, especially of a certain person, and if I had remained captain of the school I should have looked into the matter severely; but it is possible that my dislike of the person I have named has coloured my thoughts of him."

The doctor nodded. He did not need telling that the person in Talbot's mind at that moment was Eldred Lacy, for he knew well enough that there was no love lost between the rivals of St. Kit's.

"Then you cannot help me, Talbot? I am sorry. It will be necessary, I am afraid, to make the matter public. It is impossible to submit quietly to the loss. Nothing is worse for a boy inclined to dishonest ways than impunity. It would encourage him to commit the same rascality again on another occasion. Thank you, Talbot!"

"Shall I go back to the Fourth room, sir?"

NEXT SATURDAY:

"SPECS' MISTAKE."  
A School Tale (Extra Long),  
By H. Clarke Hook;

AND

"THE IMPOSTOR."  
A Splendid Story of Captain  
Frank Ferrott, Detective.

IN "PLUCK," 10-

"No. You may go into the Sixth. I had hoped to settle this matter without calling public attention to it, or it would have been dealt with before lessons commenced. Now I shall have to assemble the school in hall."

And the doctor gave a sigh.

Arthur Talbot quitted the study, and made his way slowly to the Sixth Form class room. The miserable occurrence troubled him almost as much as the Head, though as yet he did not suspect what the next development was to be. He entered the Sixth Form room, and there was immediately a slight buzz perceptible. Mr. Slaney looked at the Form in amazement.

"Silence!"

Buzz!

"Do you hear me? What is the meaning of this noise?" demanded the master angrily.

Talbot went to his place. The next boy to him was Rake, and Rake drew away as far as he could from Talbot as the latter sat down. Talbot stared at him. Rake ostentatiously squeezed away from him, so as to make it apparent to all the class that he was doing so.

Mr. Slaney noticed it, and he looked at Rake inquiringly.

"What are you moving for, Rake?"

"To give Talbot room, sir," said Rake.

"Talbot has plenty of room. You—"

"I don't want to sit too close to him, sir," said Rake, with a lurking grin.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm wearing my gold watch, sir!"

"Your gold watch! Are you making a silly joke, Rake? What can your gold watch possibly have to do with it?"

"I don't want to lose it, sir. It was a present from my pater, and—"

"Rake!"

"Yes, sir."

"Explain what you mean, before I send you to Dr. Kent to be punished for an infamous insinuation against Talbot!"

Talbot was sitting as if turned to stone. He was taken so utterly by surprise that he was incapable of a word.

Rake shifted uneasily. He was one of Eldred Lacy's set, and the enemy of Talbot; but as he felt the master's angry eye upon him he felt that he had taken too much upon himself this time. However, there was no backing out now, and encouraging whispers came from his friends.

"Buck up, Rake!"

"Go it!"

"Buck up!"

"If you please, sir," said Rake uncomfortably, "Talbot could tell you best what I mean, sir. He knows what's the matter."

Mr. Slaney looked at Talbot.

**Another long instalment next Saturday.)**

# Your Editor's Corner

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

## "SPECS'S MISTAKE"

is the title of next Saturday's special, long, complete tale. It will deal with the adventures of the indomitable trio—Specs, Dick, and Tim, by H. Clarke Hook. The second, entitled

## "THE IMPOSTOR,"

will deal with the adventures of Captain Frank Ferris, detective.

Please order your number of next Saturday's PLUCK in advance. It is the only way of making sure of getting your copy.

On Wednesday, July 31st, there will be published a special Bank Holiday Double Number of our companion paper,

"The Marvel," containing, with other stories, one of nearly 100,000 words in length, dealing with the adventures of the three famous comrades—Jack, Sam, and Pete.

You must not fail to obtain this special issue, and to ensure getting your copy you should place an order with your newsagent to-day.

On Friday, August 2nd, two more new additions to "The Boys' Friend" Threepenny Complete Library will be on sale.

These are the numbers and titles you should ask for:

No. 23:

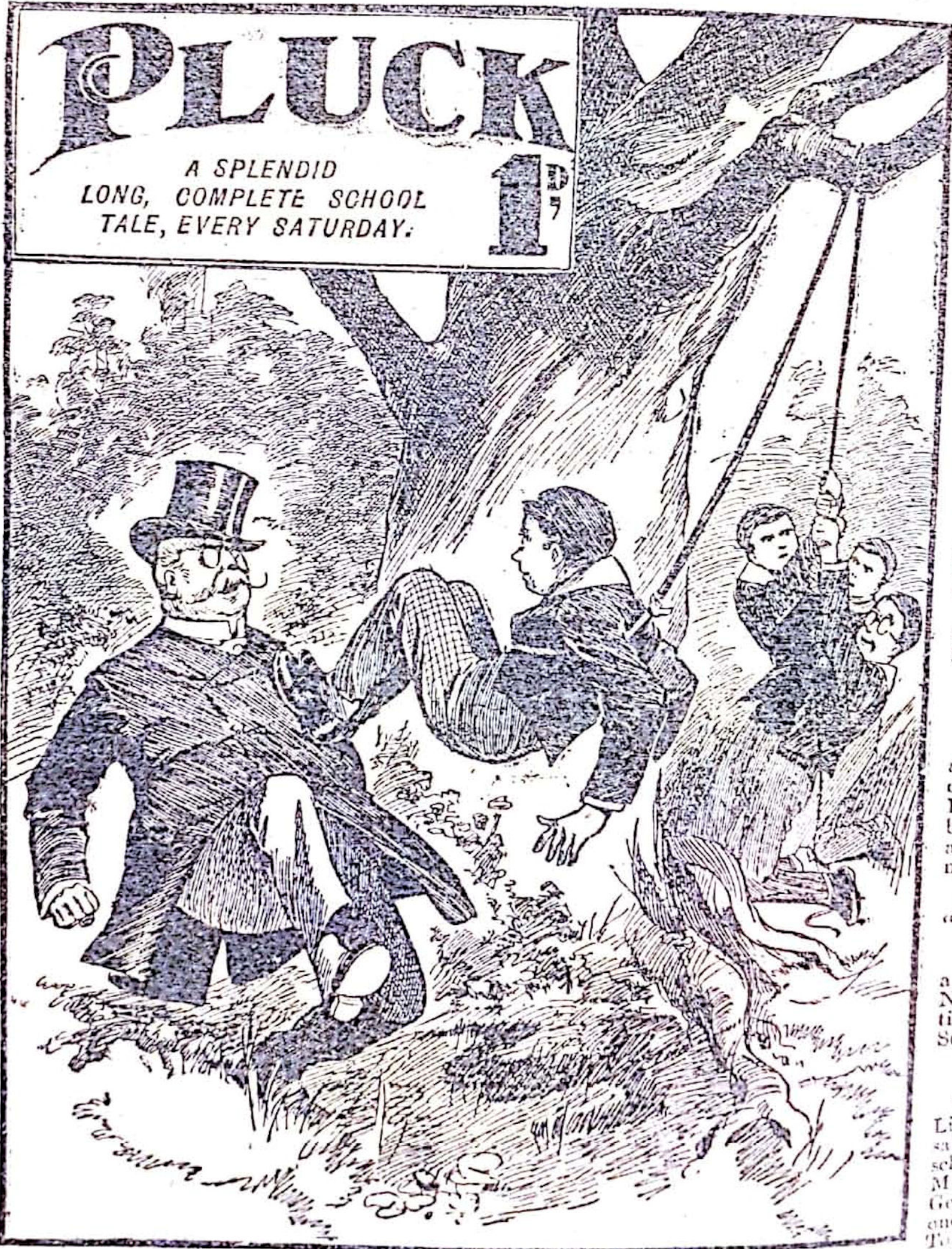
"PETE'S SCHOOLDAYS," a new and original complete tale of Pete's school life, by S. Clarke Hook and Maurice Merriman.

No. 24:

"THE GREAT UNKNOWN," a marvellous tale of Nelson Lee, detective, by Maxwell Scott.

"The Gem" Library, now on sale, contains a school tale of Tom Merry. "The Gem" only costs one halfpenny; and Tom Merry is a schoolboy you will like.

YOUR EDITOR.



This picture depicts an amusing incident from "Specs's Mistake," by H. Clarke Hook, one of the two complete tales in next Saturday's PLUCK. Price 1d.