

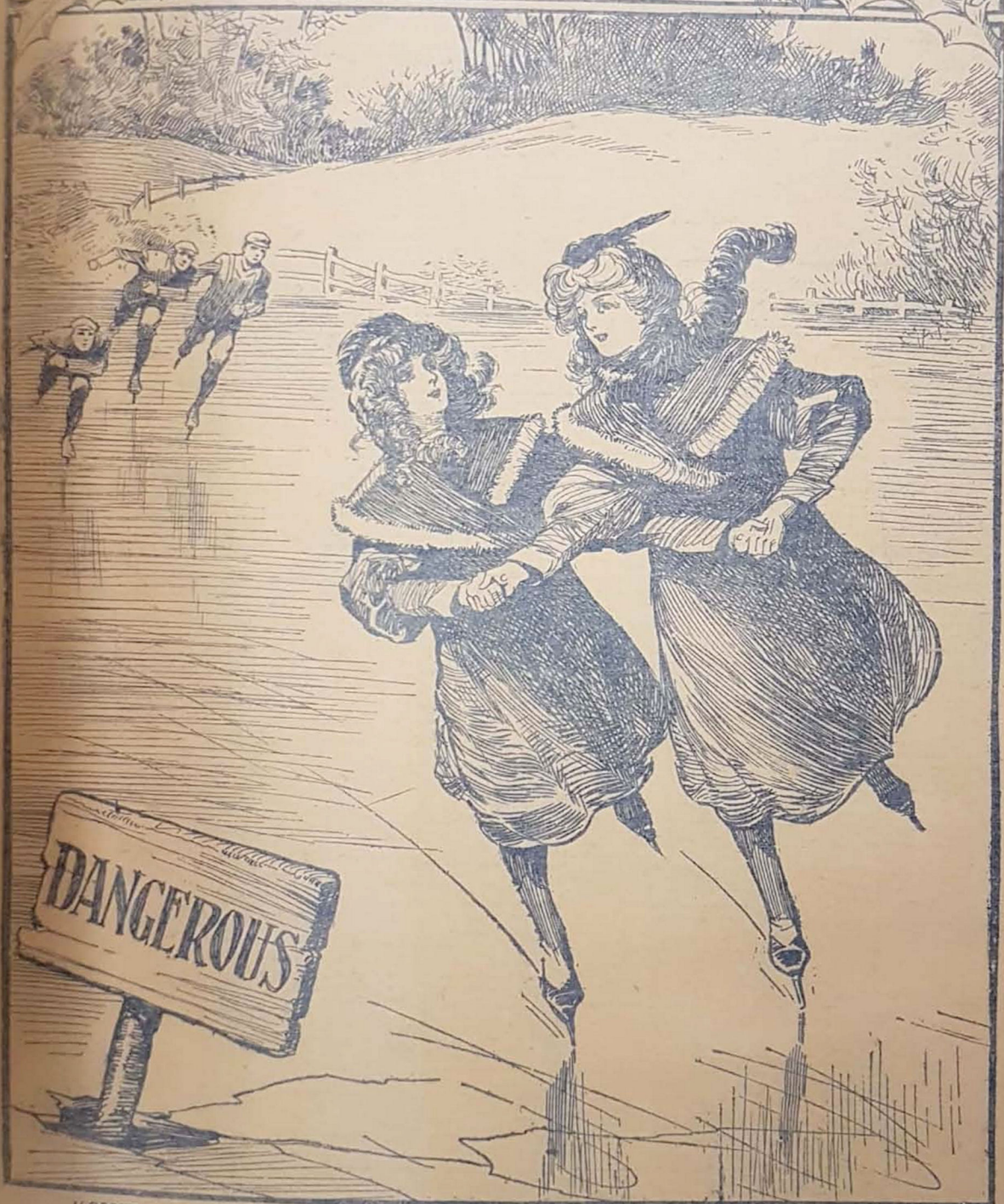
SPECIAL SCHOOL STORY NUMBER price 1d.

PLUCK

RIVALS OF
WYCLIFFE.

1d

A Splendid School Story. By JACK NORTH.



"COME BACK! COME BACK!" YELLED HARRIS, DASHING FORWARD AT FULL SPEED.

NO. 164 VOL. 6, NEW SERIES

A Splendid New School Story by Martin Clifford, author of the famous tales of Tom Merry now appearing every week in "The Gem" Library.

The Secret of St. Winifred's



The Fifth Crow over the Fourth.

The juniors looked rather sheepish. "N-nothing exactly!" stammered Fisher. "But to let the Fifth get the brakes would be—would be— What's that beastly word, Locke?"

"Rotten!" suggested Locke. "No; it's a Latin word—*infra dig.*, that's it! It would be *infra dig.*, Trelawney. You know the Fifth don't know how to keep their place already."

"I know you youngsters are always ripe for a row," said Trelawney; "and you don't show a proper respect for a higher Form."

"Perhaps we don't," said Fisher. "But, then, the Fifth don't show a proper respect for a lower Form. You must do as that, Trelawney."

"It's no good talking to you, I see," said the captain of St. Winifred's. "But we must keep order. Mind, there's to be no rowing at the station. The Head asked me particularly to see that there was none."

"Oh, he did, did he?" "Yes, he did, Fisher, and if there's any disputing over the brakes at the station, I shall know whom to call into my study at St. Winifred's, when I get there," said Trelawney. "Now, remember! Hallo, Baker! I was looking for you."

Trelawney walked away with another Sixth-Former. The Fourth-Formers stood in a dismayed crowd, looking at Fisher for instructions. Fisher was evidently the leader, in spite of Pyc's counter-claim.

"We're not going to walk," said Sugden. Fisher shook his head. "But we can't make a row about the brakes, after what Trelawney said," Locke remarked.

"Let's go and see, anyway," said Fisher. The juniors poured out of the station. The members of the Fifth were already mounting upon a large brake. Another one stood waiting. It was for the lordly Sixth, and even the most venturesome of the Fourth-Formers would not have dared to set a sacrilegious foot in it.

Kendal and Keene looked across at Fisher and his companions as they came out of the station, and grinned at them provokingly.

The Fifth were crowded round the brake, and were quite prepared for war if the juniors should entertain the thought of dispossessing them.

"Hallo, kids!" exclaimed Kendal, in a drawing voice. He was rather a swell in the Fifth, and affected a dandified drawl. "Hallo! I see there's not brakes enough, as usual, and you youngsters have got to wait."

"Hard lines!" said Keene. "But we'll send the brake back as soon as we can, kids. You won't have to wait more than an hour or two."

READ THIS FIRST.

The train containing the boys of St. Winifred's glowed 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 newkid. We're at daggers drawn with the Fifth at St. Winifred'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 make a rush for the brakes. They are stopped, however, by Trelawney, the captain of the school. "Why are you rushing for the brakes? What's the matter with walking half-a-mile through a pleasant lane on a fine dry winter day?" asked Trelawney, laughingly. (Now go on with the story.)

"What's the matter with walking?" asked Hulke, another Fifth-Former. "It's rather muddy in Ferndale Lane, but that's nothing to those kids. They never keep themselves clean in any case, and a little more mud won't hurt them."

"Quite so!" said Kendal. "Better walk, youngsters; that's my advice."

"You can keep it till it's asked for," said Fisher. "Oh, don't get ratty, my child!" implored Kendal. "Keep its ickle temper. I am really sorry—ha, ha!—that there's no room for any of the Fourth in this brake."

"Oh, we couldn't stand them in the brake if there was room, Kendal! I'm not a particular chap, as a rule," said Keene; "but I bar those dirty little outsiders in the lower Forms."

"Yes, that's just what they are—rotten little outsiders!" The Fourth-Formers were simply furious.

The Fifth were, of course, bigger fellows, and they were in force, too; but the Fourth Form would have rushed the brake but for Trelawney's prohibition.

But the word of the captain of St. Winifred's was law. Fisher and Locke looked at one another in helpless rage, as the Fifth Form laughed and jeered.

"What are we going to do?" muttered Locke. "They'll not let us hear the end of this all through the term if we let them drive off under our noses."

"I know they won't. But Tre said—" "I say, what does it matter what Trelawney said?" exclaimed a bold voice. "I vote that we rush the brake, and take those chaps down a peg or two."

Every eye was turned upon the speaker—the new boy at St. Winifred's.

Clive Lawrence met the glances of the Fourth Form coolly. "I mean it!" he exclaimed. "I don't think we ought to let the Fifth crow over us like this. I'm only a new boy—" "Thought you'd forgotten that," interposed Fisher sarcastically.

"Not at all; but I for one don't feel like knuckling under to those jeering monkeys."

"Do you think any of us feel like it?"

"Well, let's do something for the honour of the Form, then," said Clive. "I know Trelawney is captain of the school, but—"

"Oh, you're an ass!" said Fisher impatiently. "It's not only that he's captain. We wouldn't mind a licking, or a dozen lickings, for the matter of that; but we back old Tre. He's the best fellow at St. Winifred's. We wouldn't go against him for anything."

"That's how it is," said Locke. "If you did anything to bother old Tre, young shaver, we would snatch you laid-headed on the spot. Do you savvy?"

"I see," said Clive slowly.

(An extra long instalment next Saturday.)

WHO'S PARTRIDGE?

See the "MARVEL." Now on Sale.

THE RIVALS OF ST. KIT'S.

A Tale of School Life.

Captain of St. Kit's (continued).

"Yes, there's no rot about Brooke. I suppose there will be an election, but it will be a walk-over for Arthur. Good old Arthur! The more I think about it, kids, the more satisfied I am with us for taking that kid under our protection."

"Under our giddy wing!" said Greene. "Chaps in the Sixth usually walk about looking as if they'd never heard of the Fourth Form. But what I say is, where would Arthur Talbot be if he had depended on the Sixth to see him through?"

"Echo answers, 'Where?'" said Pat. "Does it?" said Blagden, looking puzzled. "Then there's something decidedly wrong with the acoustics of this study. Echo ought to answer 'through.'"

Pat flung a lexicon at him, and Blagden dodged it, and it swept a jar of flowers from the table with a crash. "Arrah!" roared Pat. "Sure, and ye— Hallo, Talbot!"

The door had opened, and the handsome, good-natured face of Arthur Talbot—or, rather, Lacy—looked into the room. The boys of St. Kit's never could get used to his new name.

"Making a row, as usual, I see," laughed Talbot. "I hope you are not quarrelling, you youngsters."

Pat shook his head.

"Sure, and we never do that here, Talbot darling! I was just shying a book at Blaggy in a friendly way, and the spalpeen dodged, and I basted the jar. Blaggy will have to buy a new one, that's all."

"Catch me!" said Blagden. "But we're glad to see you, Talbot. Come to tea?"

Arthur laughed.

"No; I thought I would look in to give you the latest news. I hear that I am under your protection, and that I have to seek the advice of the end study before I do anything."

The chums looked rather sheepish.

"Oh, that's all rot, you know!" said Pat. "You mustn't take any notice of what the juniors say, old kid. We—we don't."

The Sixth-Former laughed again good-humouredly.

"That's all right," he said.

"If you youngsters hadn't stood by me a while back, I don't know where I should be now."

And Arthur Talbot spoke earnestly and sincerely. "Right hot!" said Pat. "In a sense, we look you over our wing, you know. But I know what you mean. We're not going to get swelled heads on the subject. I'm sure safe from any danger of that sort, being a naturalist and modest sort of chap."

"Oh, my hot!" said Blagden. "I really don't see what you want to introduce your hot into the conversation for, Blaggy," said Pat. "Keep it in your swelled head about me, but I admit there may be some danger as regards Blaggy and Greene—"

"My word!" said Greene. "Keep your words, Greene! I'm talking, and, sure, I can utter enough to please anybody. But I've got my eye on 'em, Talbot—I mean, Lacy—and whenever they show any signs of getting too large for their boots, I'm going to come down on 'em heavy. I'll have no swollen accounts in this study."

"Very good," said Arthur. "And now, if you've quite finished—"

"Well, I haven't, as a matter of fact," said Pat coolly. "but I won't keep you. You can take the chair now, Arty."

"Well, I've just looked in to tell you that, as Brooke has resigned the captaincy, there will be a new election this evening at seven."

"Why, we were just talking about it," said Pat.

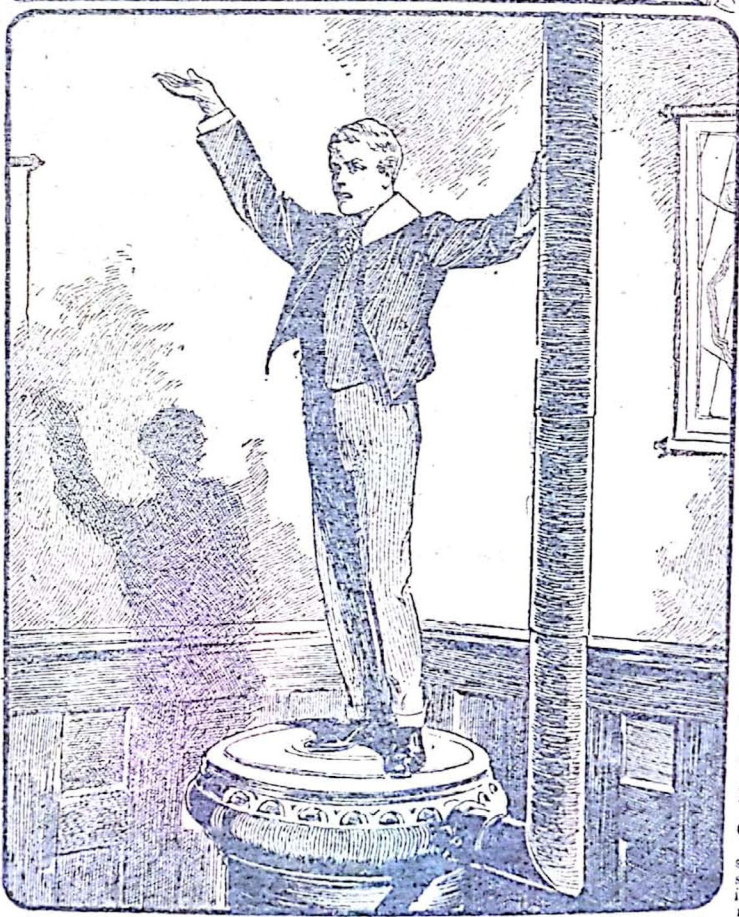
"Didn't I say to you, Blaggy, that it was time we made Talbot captain again? Ahem!"

"What price a swelled head now?" inquired Blagden.

"Well," said Talbot, laughing, "you can come along and do your little bit, anyway. I expect it will be a walk-over, as there is no rival candidate as yet; but we shall see."

And, with a pleasant nod, Arthur quitted the study.

"I'm sorry there's no rival candidate," said Pat reflectively.



A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU.

Again this week I am compelled to forgo my Editor's Corner, space is so limited, but I trust you will take it for granted that our next Saturday's two long, complete stories are all that they should be. Above is the picture to look out for.—YOUR EDITOR.

"An election without a rival candidate is pretty tame. We sha'n't have an excuse for leaning up any of the kids in the crypt, or shoving the ball door shut before they can get in. There won't be the remotest prospect of a row."

"Rotten!" said Blagden.

"Beastly!" said Greene.

"Still, we can do some shouting," said Pat, brightening up. "We can make things hum a bit if we get the whole of the Fourth Form to back up."

(To be concluded.)

