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Story Book

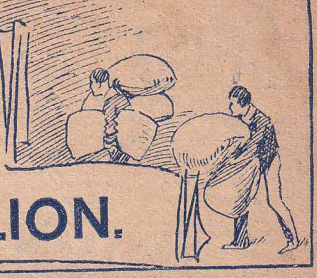
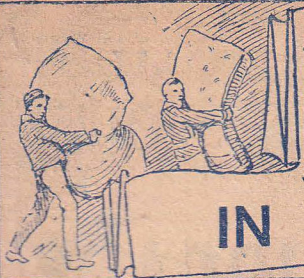
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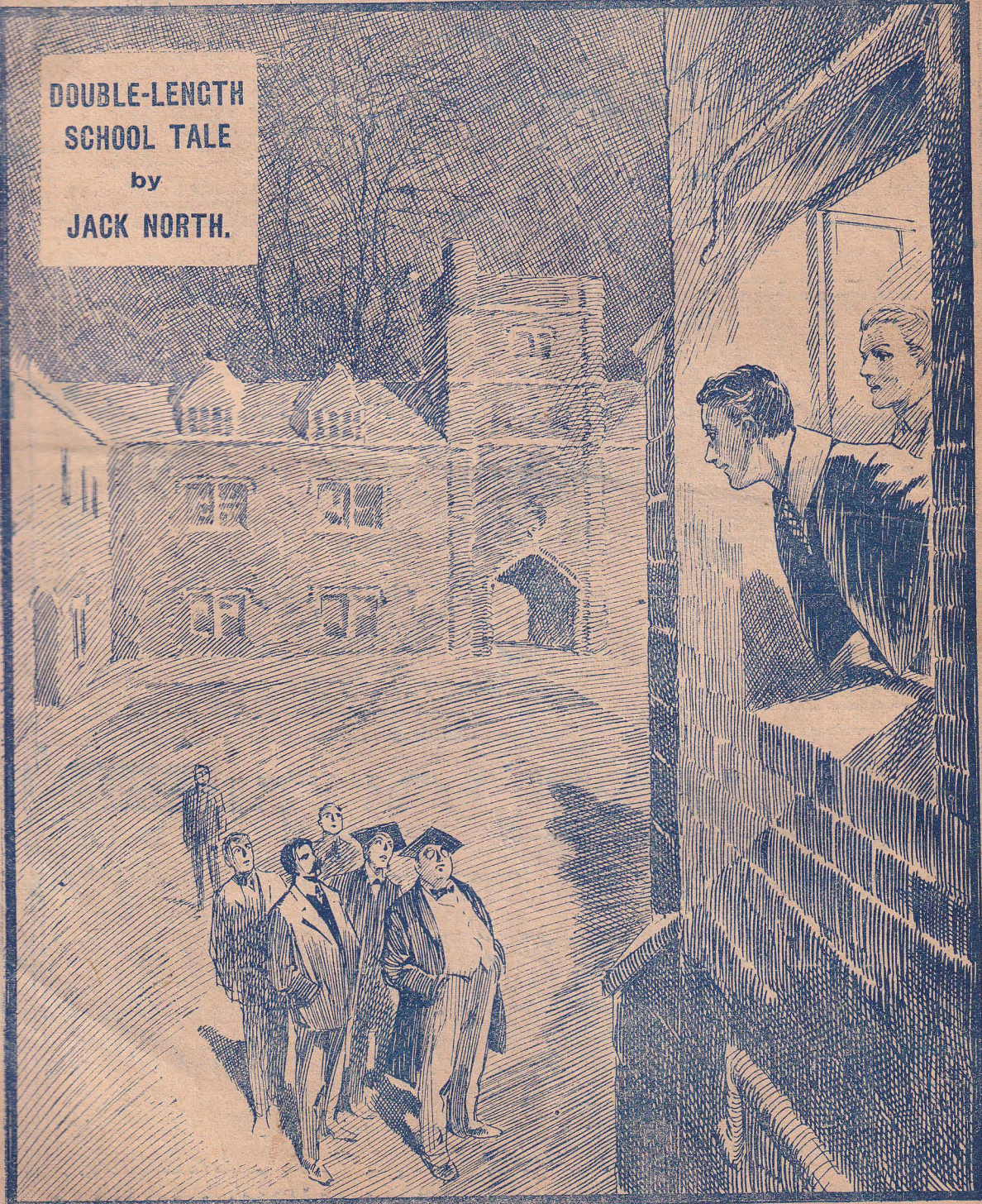
No. 1.

PLUCK

IN OPEN **1^D** REBELLION.



DOUBLE-LENGTH
SCHOOL TALE
by
JACK NORTH.



WITLEY LAUGHED DERISIVELY. "WE CAN'T ACCEPT YOUR TERMS, SIR!"

With his hand upon the key, with the door unlocked but not yet open, Witley stopped. Nothing was more certain than that if the door was opened the draught would cause the fire to rage more fiercely than ever.

He stepped back and picked up Dando, last left of all, in his arms.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said. "If we go out together an' slam the door directly, there can't be much harm done."

Tranter and Green ran down to him, but the others turned their steps upwards.

"You can go on," said Harris. "We want to see that all's goin' well above."

But when they reached the top of the flight they found the four Hittites, Tranter and Witley carrying Dando between them, close behind.

"By Jove, you fellows have behaved like men!" said Harris admiringly.

"D'ye think nobody but you beastly Brothers of Borden has any pluck?" snarled Tranter.

Everything was going well above: the panic had been scotched. There was plenty of pluck in the crowd, now that its members had regained their heads. The fire-escape was being worked quickly and well, and ladders were up at some of the other windows. The engine was in the quad, too, and now the door had been flung open, and those who waited their turn could hear the swish of the water playing upon the flames that licked up the stairs.

Witley was the last to leave the place; Harris, though loth to do so, going before him without protesting. Down in the quad, they found that none of the fellows who had

been thrown to the ground in that crush was seriously hurt, though it was little less than a miracle that all had escaped with their lives.

The fire had been caused by a match carelessly flung into a heap of firewood in the boiler-house by Burrell, who frankly admitted his fault, and escaped punishment because of his admission. Not much damage was done except in the lower part of the building, for the flames were soon got under by the good work of the fire brigade.

And thus, almost in tragedy, ended the great rebellion at Wycliffe; coming to a close before the man against whom it was directed had stirred hand or tongue to stop it. And no one suffered expulsion. It was understood that Witley and Tranter and the five ex-prefects were all to leave at the end of the term; but how could the Hittite leaders be expelled after their pluck in that place where death menaced them, and how could the others be so punished if they were not?

The two had escaped through a chance given them of showing one of the few good qualities they possessed—courage. But it was no good thing for Wycliffe that they had so escaped. Their natures had not been changed by that ordeal, and the knowledge that in any case this must be their last term was likely to have anything but a restraining influence upon the two. Witley and Tranter were to give yet more trouble before Wycliffe saw the last of them.

THE END.

(Two long, complete stories again next Saturday. Please order your copy of PLUCK in advance.)



NEW SCHOOL TALE.

The Secret of St. Winifred's
A Splendid New School Story,
BY
MARTIN CLIFFORD,
Author of the tales of Tom Merry, appearing every week in the "GEM" Library.

READ THIS FIRST.

The train containing the boys of St. Winifred's slowed down alongside Forndale 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 new kid. We're at daggers drawn with the Fifth at St. Winnie'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 eventually get to the school by capturing the Sixth Form brake. Clive is told to share a study with Fisher and Locke. It has been explained that all the new boys are to be chosen for fags by the seniors. (Now go on with the story.)

Fag!

In return for the services of a fag, it was the rule for the seniors to help the juniors in their lessons, and look over their exercises and advise them upon knotty points. Some of the seniors shirked these duties, certainly, but there are shirkers everywhere, and the system should not be judged by the exceptions. Within limits, it was not such a bad system as might seem to be the case on a hasty judgment.

Any fellow in the Lower Forms at St. Winifred's would have given a term's pocket-money for the honour of fagging for Oswald Trelawney, the captain of the school, and the captain's fags always had a good time of it. On the other hand, many lads would have given a little finger to escape fagging for a fellow like Carne. As for Courtney, he was cruel at times, but only when he was crossed; and a sufficient

amount of flattery and subservience would always keep him in a good humour. And there were boys at St. Winifred's, as everywhere, who had the required qualities, unfortunately.

Oswald Trelawney and Baker were talking together, and Courtney and Carne were there, with most of the Sixth. Courtney was looking round the hall, and his eye gleamed as it fell upon Clive Lawrence. It was evident that he had been looking for Clive.

"Come here, Lawrence!" he called out.

The new boy obeyed. He now discovered that there was a group of new boys standing apart from the rest, and Courtney told him to join them. There was a very unpleasant tone in Courtney's voice, but this was not the time to stand upon trifles, and Lawrence quietly obeyed the senior's directions.

Trelawney looked at the new juniors. They were the additions to the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's, and at least four of them were looking very sheepish and frightened at being singled out like this before the crowd. Clive Lawrence looked cool enough, however.

"You understand what's going on, I suppose, youngsters," said the captain of St. Winifred's, in his kindly way. "You're going to be chosen as fags for the current term. All the kids here have to fag for the Sixth if they're wanted to."

"We don't mind, please!" came a squeaking voice from a fat, timid-looking youth standing beside Clive Lawrence.

The captain smiled.

"Now then, chaps, how many of you are in want of fags?"

There were four of the Sixth in that deplorable condition, including Courtney and Carne. Trelawney looked at them suspiciously.

"I thought Carker was fagging for you, Courtney?"

"So he was, but he's no good. I've given him away," said Courtney coolly. "I can do so if I like, I suppose, and take my chance of getting another."

"Oh, certainly!"

"Choose your beastly fags and get this over," said Allingham of the Sixth, with a yawn. "We're wasting time over these stupid kids."

"Better give the kids a choice first," suggested a good-natured senior. It all comes to the same thing; they're as good as one another, or, rather, as bad as one another, but they'll be more satisfied if they have their choice.

"That's a good idea, Melton," said Trelawney. "I approve of it."

"What rot!" broke out Courtney. "I don't believe in coddling the brats. I want Lawrence for my fag—"

"We're going to give them their choice, I think," said the captain quietly. "Now, then, kids, speak up!"

Glady enough would Clive Lawrence have spoken up, and chosen either Allingham or Melton for his future master. But the looks of those two good-natured seniors had made the same impression upon the other new boys as upon Clive Lawrence. They eagerly made their choice known, and Clive's pride prevented him from calling out as eagerly as

NEXT SATURDAY:

"THE WILD MAN OF PRINCLE ISLAND,"
A Powerful Long, Complete School Tale,
by Michael Storm.

"DARING & COMPANY,"
AND A Thrilling, Complete Tale of John Smith
Detective, by Mark Darran.

IN "PLUCK." 1d.

the others. He let them have their choice first, and Melton and Allingham were snapped up at once by two of the new boys.

This left three, including Clive, to be disposed of between Carne and Courtney. The fat boy, who answered to the name of Peck, was rudely pushed aside. Nobody wanted him. Courtney's hand fell heavily upon Clive Lawrence's shoulder.

"I want you, Lawrence."

There was nothing to choose between Courtney and Carne. Clive had nothing to say. He was in his enemy's power, and there was nothing to be done.

"Very well, I'll take this kid," said Carne. "I'd rather have Lawrence, he looks as if he could make himself useful; but friendship first."

Courtney laughed. Trelawney looked worried for a moment, but it was impossible for him to interfere. He had given Clive all the chance he could, but Courtney had had his way all the same.

The meeting broke up, and Courtney slipped his hand through Clive's arm and led him away. Fisher and Locke gave him glances of sympathy.

Clive was prepared for trouble. But it seemed hardly likely that Courtney would commence tyranny at once, with the captain's recent interference so fresh in his mind. And Clive noticed that Carne remained in the hall, talking to Allingham and Melton. His assistance was not wanted.

Courtney did not go to his study. He stopped in the passage, and fixed a peculiar look upon Clive's face. Clive wondered what was coming.

"Now, Lawrence," said Courtney, after a glance round, as if to make sure that no one was at hand, "you are my fag. You understand that?"

"Yes," said Clive.

"You understand that you're in my hands, and that I can make your life a burden if I like?"

"I dare say you could," said Clive, "if you're cad enough."

Courtney's eyes gleamed.

"I advise you to be careful how you speak to me, Lawrence. I am not a fellow to stand much talk of that sort from a junior, and Trelawney will not always be by to take your part."

Clive realised that and he was discreetly silent.

"But I'm quite willing to let bygones be bygones," said Courtney, in a blander voice, "if you are willing, and make yourself useful. I don't want to bully you; I never bully my fags if they behave themselves. I don't work them too hard, either, and I look over their lessons sometimes."

Clive Lawrence looked at the senior in amazement. He had not the faintest idea of what all this was to lead to.

"You've only got to do as I tell you, and make yourself useful, to make a

friend of me," said Courtney. "There's something you can do now."

Clive understood. He was wanted to do something of an unusual kind, something the senior thought he was peculiarly fitted to do, and hence this unusual blandness of the bully.

"What can I do for you, Courtney?" he asked.

"I want you to take a note for me, and to bring back an answer."

"I can easily do that."

"It's to someone in the village."

Clive Lawrence gave a start. He knew perfectly well that the boys were not allowed to go out after locking-up, and that Courtney wanted him to break bounds. And to break bounds, especially after dark, was a serious infraction of the rules of St. Winifred's.

"I suppose you're afraid," said Courtney, with a sneer.

Clive flushed hotly. He was not afraid, but he had naturally hesitated. He did not desire to signalise his coming to the school by breaking one of the most important rules, nor did he exactly know how serious such a matter might be deemed if it were found out.

"I'm not afraid," he said slowly; "but—"

"Mind," said Courtney, "I have a right to order you to go, but I am asking you. I want this note taken particularly, and I can't very well slip away myself without my absence being commented on, on the first night of the term. There's to be a lot of foolery in hall, and it would be noticed at once if I went. You can slip out easily enough."

"How can I get out if the gates are locked?"

"I can give you a key to the little gate the masters use. I have a duplicate. Mind, that's a dead secret. Will you go?"

"Yes," said Clive slowly.

He was very dubious in his mind. If Courtney had ordered him to go, he would probably have refused. As the senior asked, it was more difficult to do so. He was Courtney's fag, and it seemed like asking for trouble if he commenced his fagship by refusing to do the first thing he was required to do.

Courtney's face cleared as Clive answered in the affirmative. He drew a note from his waistcoat pocket.

"Take that down to Ferndale. You know the Jolly Seaman, don't you?"

Clive started. He had noticed the Jolly Seaman—an inn outside the village on the road to the sea—as he came to the school that day. He had driven past it. It was a low-class inn, he remembered that, from the look of it.

"Do you want me to go to that place?" he asked.

"Only just to take the note there."

Clive bit his lip. He had said that he would go, or he would now have instantly refused to have anything further to do with the matter.

(To be Continued.)



This is the picture to look out for on next Saturday's cover. PLUCK will contain two fine complete stories, School and Detective.