

Grand Complete School and Detective Tales.

PLUCK

THE MAJOR'S CUP.

A School Tale of Specs & Co.

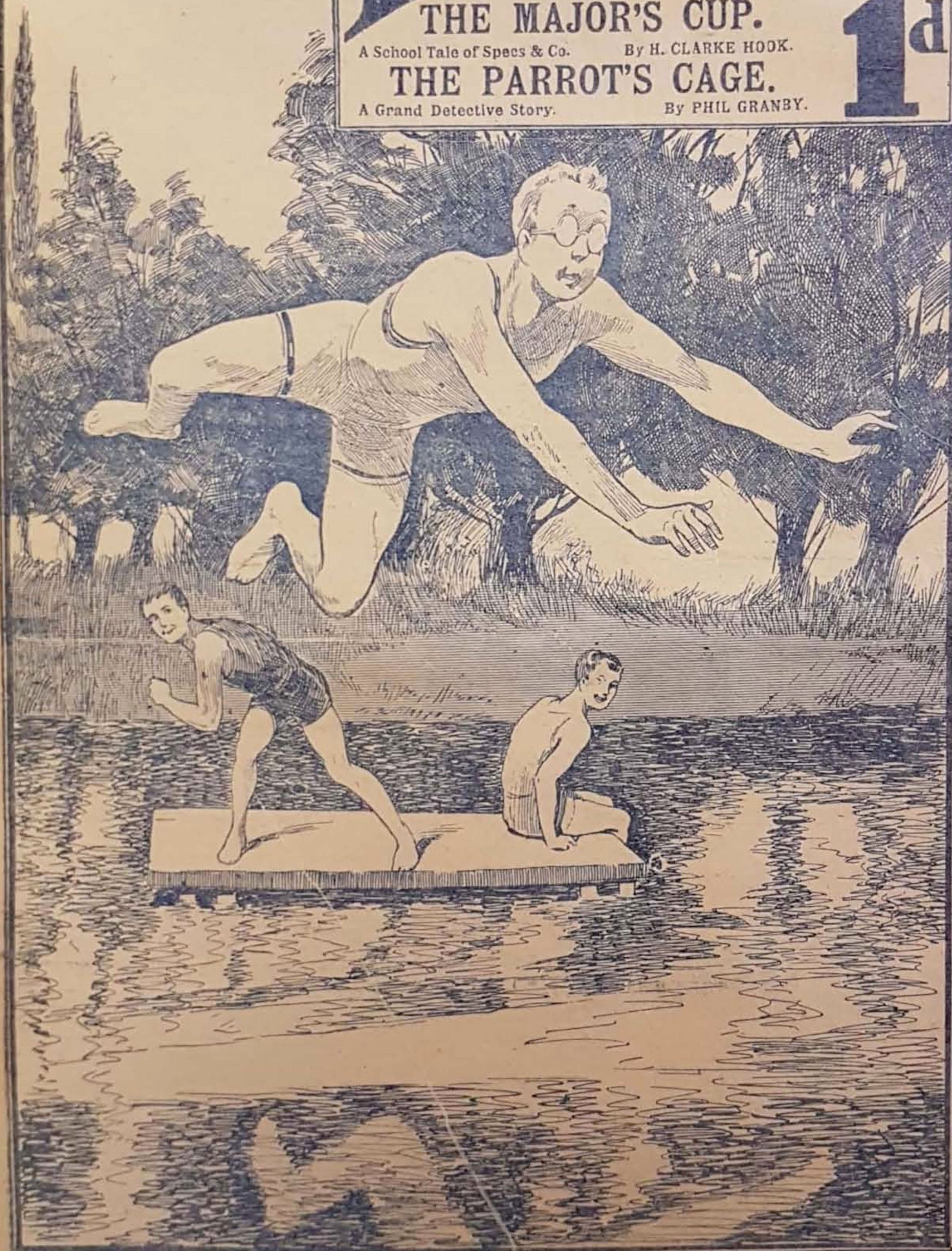
By H. CLARKE HOOK.

THE PARROT'S CAGE.

A Grand Detective Story.

By PHIL GRANBY.

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"OW!" GASPED SPECS, AS HIS SWIMMING INSTINCT TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS GOING TO TAKE THE WATER "FLAT."

NO. 147. VOL. G. NEW SERIES.

The train began to slow down.

"The junction," said Halton.

"Quite so," answered Vance. "I hope they got my wire."

Vance's silky imperial fluttered in the wind as he leaned out of the carriage-window. On the platform he could distinguish a little group of three men in uniform, waiting for the train to bring their prisoner.

Bob Moffat sat by the open window in Massiter Street, listlessly fluttering his Japanese fan. In his mouth was a snowy white pipe, in place of the old black shiny one, sadly missed and sincerely mourned.

"Looks like working up for another thunderstorm," he muttered. "Good job I've got no Charles II. business to do to-day. But that reminds me. I'll have to get P. & Burton to fetch me a few twigs from that tree on Barnes Common as a souvenir of the Redbury case. I wish that telegram would turn up."

"Lah-di-day laddy pom-pom! Lah-di-day laddy pom-pom!"

The lady over the way banged out the old excruciating chorus.

"Gosh," said Moffat, "I believe it's that piano-thumping that brings on the thunder and lightning! I'll get on a grim and grisly disguise, and I'll go over and haunt her till she shrieks in highstrikes and kicks in convulsions. She has shown no mercy, and none she'll be shown."

Just then Jimmy Sindon entered, whistling the air, "Lah-di-day laddy pom-pom."

"And thou, too, Brutus," groaned Moffat. "Then die, Caesar! The bucket stands ready. Kick boldly, and like a valiant Roman."

"Hallo, Moffat!" said Sindon briskly. "You look out of sorts."

"So would you be out of sorts if you had a new pipe to savor, and if you'd been reading the piffle in the paper. Great blowing of trumpets about the speech to be delivered to-day by the Independent candidate for the Littlewood Division of Lantshire. Triumph! Strikes me that the next time the candidate speaks in public will be in the dock at the Old Bailey, when he's asked if has anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon him."

"I wonder how the boss is getting on?" said Sindon thoughtfully.

"Auguste with the gaiter and the draughtboard suit—eh?" replied Moffat. "Don't you worry, sunny. Your dinner's all right."

"Ah, the dinner!" said Jimmy. "I didn't exactly understand about that."

"Well, it's this way. The boss has invited you and me and Dr. Ainslie and Dr. Colthorpe to dine with him to-night, provided that he lauds his man all right. He is going to confirm or cancel the invitation by telegram from Littlewood."

"I bet it won't be cancelled," said Sindon.

"No takes, Jimmy—not here, at least. Try Tommy Stott. But he's bilious. Melon—say nothing. By gum, the Redbury business about the quickest on record. It was only yesterday morning we were told about it—it was only yesterday morning that Tommy Stott bought his melon. And now the Redbury case is as good as settled, while Tommy is still suffering from the effects of his bargain. But I wish that wire would turn up."

At that moment Tommy Stott came in with it.

"At last," muttered Moffat, as he tore it open.

Curiously enough, the first words Moffat read were the same as those he had just uttered. "At last." He handed the form to Sindon, who read it; and then, with shining eyes, the two assistants shook hands heartily across the table.

For the telegraph form bore the words:

"At last. Invitation for to-night confirmed.—WENDELL VANCE."

THE END.

(Two fine, long, complete Tales next Saturday. Please order your copy in advance. Mean while get "The Gem" Library. Price One Halfpenny. Now on Sale.)

GRAND SCHOOL TALE.

THE RIVALS
—OF—
ST. KIT'S.

Talbot has a Whack, and Trimble Catches a Tartar.

As Talbot crossed the close, with a step very unlike his usual springy stride, there was the distinct sound of a hiss.

A boy looked at him from the gym, and shouted "Thief!" and ran away.

Talbot's heart gave a throb of anguish. It was a foretaste of what was to come if he remained at St. Kit's. He had always carried his head high, in the pride of honour and truth; now his enemies had dragged it down to the very dust.

He passed out of the gates of the school. Under the trees, walking on the soft grass, he breathed more freely; he was out of the sight of eyes that mocked and of lips that curled at the sight of him. He walked along in a deep, sad reverie. He was trying to think out something of his future course; but his thoughts would not come clearly.

A footstep startled him.

"Hallo! Blessed if it ain't my boy!"

Arthur Talbot looked up.

Seth Black, the ruffian who claimed to be his father, stood before him.

"Pat Nugent!"

"Hallo, Trimble."

Pat made the reply in a dull, spiritless tone.

It was just after he had left Talbot's study, and as he went towards his own quarters with Blagden and Greene, he was met by Trimble, Cobb, Cleeve, and several more of their set. Pat was usually ready for warfare at the sight of his old enemy, but just now he didn't feel inclined for warfare with anybody. The misfortune which had fallen upon Arthur Talbot reflected itself in the countenance of the Irish lad, and his usual cheery expression was conspicuous by its absence.

"I want to speak to you, Nugent."

"Speak away, then."

"You've just been to Talbot's study."

"What about it?"

"This—you're not to go there again."

Pat stared. This was a new tone for Trimble to take towards him. He eyed the lanky captain of the Upper Fourth in amazement.

"What are you talking about, Trimble?"

"I know what I'm talking about."

"You may, but I'm blessed if I do," said Pat. "Sure, and you're talking out of your hat, anyway."

"You heard what I said. You're not going to Arthur Talbot's study any more. You're not to speak to him again."

Pat's eyes began to gleam. The bullying tone Trimble had adopted would have roused up a quieter temper than that of the quick-blooded Irish lad.

"Who says so, Trimble?"

"I do, and the whole Form."

"What do you mean?"

"Arthur Talbot is a thief—"

"That's a lie."

"Well, you can stick it out that he isn't if you like," said Trimble, with a sneer, "but the rest of the school have made up their minds about it."

"The rest of the school are a lot of asses, then."

"Bah! Do you think the facts don't speak for themselves? If Talbot didn't steal the money, how did it come to be hidden in his study?"

"Somebody put it there."

"That's a likely story. Fancy a chap stealing a heap of money and then hiding it in another fellow's study!"

"Rot!" said Cobb. "Why, he wouldn't run the risk of stealing if he wasn't going to keep it himself, whoever he was, I should think."

"Of course not."

"It was done to ruin Talbot," said Pat Nugent quietly. "Who wanted to ruin him?"

"I don't know. Lacy very likely."

"You'd better let Lacy hear you say so," grinned Trimble.

NEXT SATURDAY:

"SIXTEEN OF THEM." A Splendid Long, Complete Mystery Tale by Jack North.

AND "HARRY'S MISSION." A Thrilling Story of Adventure, by Lewis Hodge.

IN "PLUCK." 10.

Your Editor's Corner.

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

"I'm not afraid to say it to his face." "Meanwhile, I'll give you a chance, then," said Trimble. "You can hold what opinion you like, young Tipperary, but the whole school knows that Talbot is a thief and so long as he stays at St. Kit's he is barred." "Rats!" "Mind, any chap who speaks to him will be ragged." "Rot!" "You'll be sent to Coventry, too, if you stick to him." "I'd rather be in Coventry than talking to a cad like you, Trimble."

Trimble flushed angrily. "It won't be only me, it will be the whole Form that will be down on you," he exclaimed. "I'm giving you a fair warning, the whole Form—" "Oh, let 'em rip!" "And the whole school—" "Let them rip, too." "Look here—" "Shan't! Your face gives me a pain." "I'm not going to have any of your cheek," shouted Trimble. "The whole Form have decided that nobody shall fag for Talbot again, and nobody's to speak to him. The Fifth and the Sixth have passed the same resolution." "That only shows that the Fifth and the Sixth are as big asses as the Fourth." "Are you going to obey the Form's orders?" "I'm going to do as I like." "And stick to Talbot?" "Certainly." "And you two, Blagden and Greene?" "I do whatever Pat Nugent does," said Blagden. "And what's good enough for Pat and Blaggy is good enough for me," said Greene.

Trimble bit his lip. "Then you three will be cut by the Form." "A lot we care for that, you spalpeen. I wouldn't care to speak to fellows, anyway, who think that the finest fellow at St. Kit's is a thief." "He's a thief right enough," said Cobb; "the loot was found hidden in his study." "I've already said what I believe about that." "Stuff! Why, his own chum Brooke has turned against him." "More shame for Brooke, then!" said Blagden hotly. "I don't believe it," exclaimed Pat Nugent. "This is another of their lies, Brooke isn't the kind of chap to desert a chum when he's in need of a helping hand." "He's deserted him because he knows he's a thief." "He can't know it when it isn't true." "Rats! It is true." "I'm not going to talk about it," said Pat. "Sure and we stand by Talbot. That's enough for you."

(Another fine instalment next Saturday.)

"SIXTEEN OF THEM!"

Our first long, complete school tale for next Saturday's issue will deal with the adventures of the Wycliffe boys on their holidays.

"SIXTEEN OF THEM"

is a tale that will please you, and I hope to receive postcards from you all saying that it is one of the best tales Jack North has as yet written for PLUCK.

"HARRY'S MISSION,"

the second long, complete story, is a very fine tale of adventure, and, as a tale of this class should be, is full of thrilling incidents.

"HARRY'S MISSION"

is written by Lewis Hockley.

Dear old Figgy & Co. are in "The Gem" Library this week.

The price of "The Gem" is only one halfpenny.

From my office I can hear the hum of printing-machines, and those machines are turning out pile after pile of two new issues of "The Boys' Friend" 3d. Library.

They are - No. 25,

"THE STOLEN SUBMARINE,"

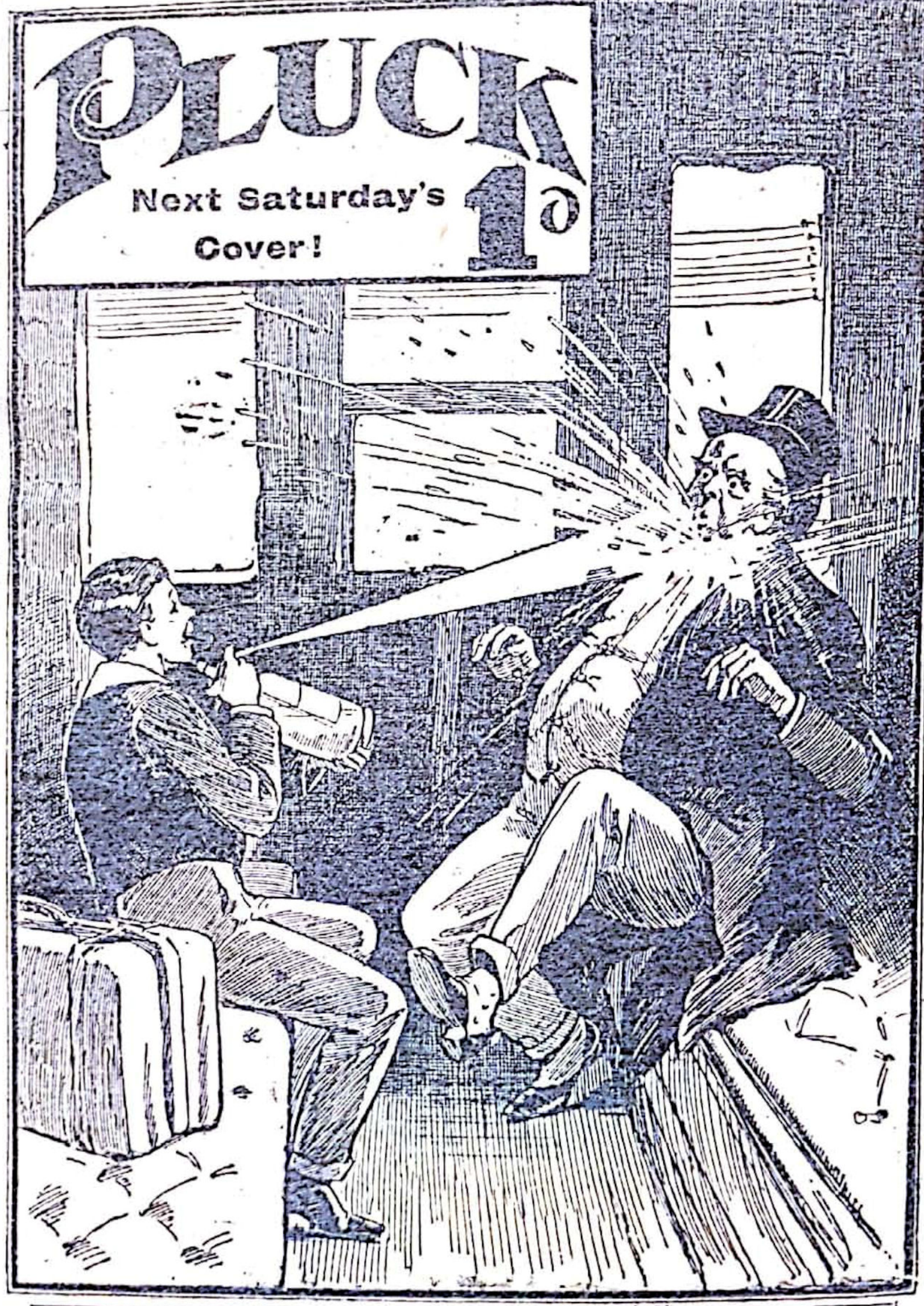
a thrilling tale of Nelson Lee, detective, and the Great Unknown, by Maxwell Scott.

And No. 25 "PETE, DETECTIVE."

a new, original, and laughable story of Jack, Sam, and Pete, by S. Clarke Hook.

NEXT SATURDAY'S COVER.

Now, the old request to candid critics. Please let me know what you think of the two long, complete stories in this issue. YOUR EDITOR.



This picture depicts an amusing incident in "Sixteen of Them," by Jack North, one of the two complete tales in next Saturday's PLUCK. Price 1d.