

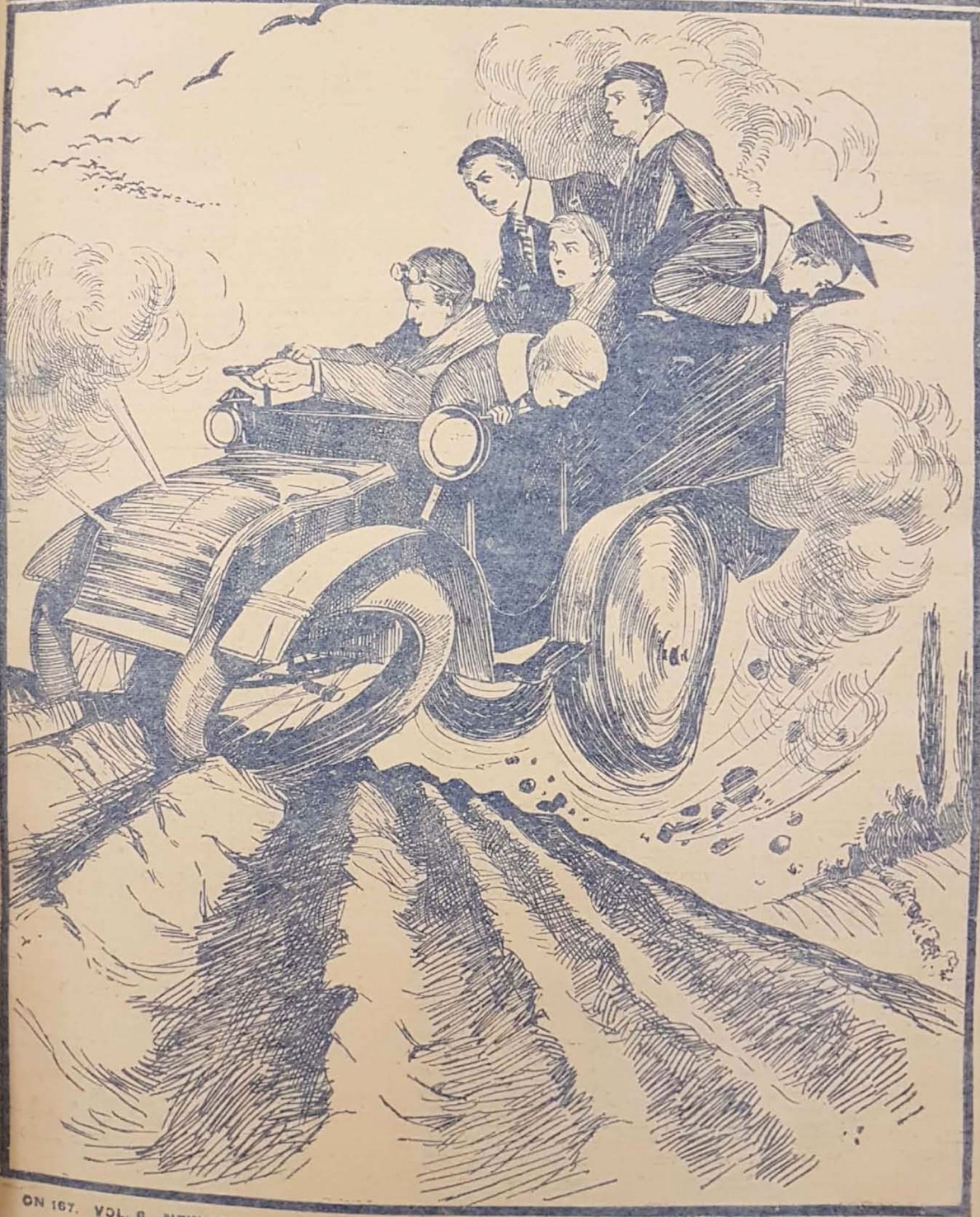
SCHOOL & ADVENTURE TALES BY LEWIS HOCKLEY & H. CLARKE HOOK.

PLUCK

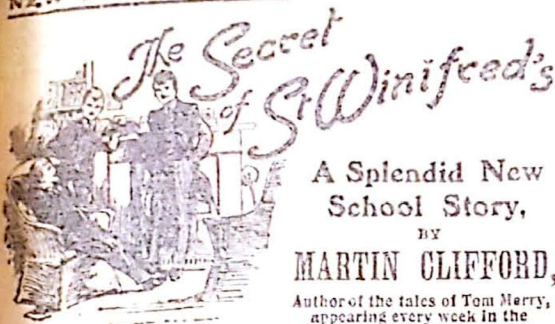
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BRIAN'S MOTOR TRIP.
A Splendid Complete School Tale.
By LEWIS HOCKLEY.

FRANK HEALY, INVENTOR.
A Thrilling Complete Adventure Story.
By H. CLARKE HOOK.



NEW SCHOOL TALE.



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 Ferrdale 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. 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 by the Fifth, who secure their brake and drive off. The Fourth, however, led by Clive Lawrence, capture the Sixth Form conveyance. (Now go on with the story.)

Study-Mates.

"The Head!"

Clive Lawrence did not know the reverend Head of St. Winifred's by sight, but the dismayed exclamations round him did not leave him long in the dark. Dismay had fallen upon the Fourth-Formers crammed into the Sixth Form brake, which had dashed into the close in such splendid style, skilfully "tooled" to a halt in front of the great door by the new boy at St. Winifred's.

Even Fisher and Locke, who were generally supposed to have nerve enough for a regiment, looked alarmed. Probably the only cool individual in the brake was the youthful driver, and he kept his head wonderfully well.

Dr. Esmond stared at the brake, at the foaming horses, at the crammed juniors, and last but not least at the boyish driver. He adjusted his gold-rimmed pince-nez, and stared again. It was evident that he was astonished.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "What—what does this mean? Where is the driver of this brake?"

"He got left behind at the station, sir," said Clive Lawrence, taking off his cap.

Fisher and Locke gave a simultaneous gasp at this cool explanation. The driver had indeed been left behind at the station, as the juniors had refused to allow him to get into the vehicle at all.

"Left behind?" said Dr. Esmond, with a sharp look at Clive, whose face was innocence itself. "That is very curious. Who are you, my boy? I do not know your face."

"Clive Lawrence."

"Ah! A new boy?"

"Yes, sir. I—I thought I had better take charge of the brake, sir, as the driver was left behind. I am used to driving, sir."

"It is very singular that the driver should have been left behind," said the Head. "Was the man—er—intoxicated?"

"No, sir; I don't think so," said Clive, who was not the fellow to throw blame upon anyone to save himself. "He—be looked all right."

"Then why did he not get on the brake?"

"I—I did not ask him, sir."

"Excessively careless of him—excessively. I shall reprimand him severely."

Clive Lawrence shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

"If—if you please, sir, it—it wasn't his fault."

"What do you mean, Lawrence?"

"We didn't wait for him, sir."

The doctor fixed a stern glance upon the new boy.

"Do you mean, Lawrence, that you deliberately took the brake off and left the driver at the station?"

"I can drive awfully well, sir, and—"

"Answer my question!"

"Well, yes, sir, I did," said Clive.

The doctor coughed. There was a frankness about Clive Lawrence that was rather taking. The doctor was inclined to smile, but he reflected that there might have been an accident, so he frowned instead.

"Ah, you will come into my study presently, Lawrence, and I shall have something to say to you," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Clive meekly.

"Oh, I say," broke out Fisher—"I—I say, sir, we were all in it! The new kid hadn't any more to do with it than we had."

"Just so, sir," said Locke.

"You may all three come into my study," said the Head gravely. "Biggs, you will take charge of the horses till the driver arrives."

And the Head of St. Winifred's strode into the house.

Clive Lawrence descended from his seat. The juniors swarmed out of the brake. Fisher gave Clive a hearty thump on the back.

"You stood that out well!" he exclaimed. "Bless me if I ever saw such a kid for coolness! I expected a fearful row."

"I'm sorry you fellows spoke," said Clive. "No good three getting ragged instead of one. But it was very decent of you to own up."

"Bound to," said Fisher. "Why, a nice captain of the Fourth Form I should make, if I left you to stand the racket alone."

"It won't be much of a row," said Locke, shaking his head sagely. "They are never down on us very hard for a little fun on the first day of term. I expect the Head will just give us a blowing-up, that's all."

"Well, we can stand that," said Clive comfortably. "I would take a dozen blowings-up without turning a hair. But I say, we've done the Fifth Form, kids."

"We have. And you've done well—very well—for a new kid," said Fisher condescendingly. "If you keep on, you'll very likely make yourself useful."

"Go hon," said Clive. "You don't say so!"

"But you'll have to keep your place," said Fisher, with emphasis. "It must not be forgotten that I am captain of the Form, and that you're a follower—mind, a follower."

"Oh, that's all right! I dare say I should make as good a captain as you do, if not rather a better one—"

"What?" yelled Fisher.

"Keep your wool on. I'm not casting a sheep's eye on your honourable post. I was just making a remark, that's all."

"If you make any remarks of that kind," said Fisher darkly, "you'll find yourself in possession of a price thick ear, so I warn you."

"Hallo! Here come the Fifth!" exclaimed Locke, interrupting the other two, who were getting perilously near a row. "Look at them!"

The Fifth-Formers had evidently not been able to right their brake. Most of them had walked on to the school, and they were coming in at the gates now, looking decidedly cross. The Fourth greeted them with a shout.

"Hallo! Got out of the ditch, then?"

"Where have you been all this time?"

"Who won the race? Yah!"

The Fifth looked daggers at the juniors. They had had decidedly the worst of the encounter with the rival Form, that could not be denied. The Fourth-Formers had started the term with a victory, and the Fifth were very sore about it.

Kendal and Keene looked wrathful as they strode past the group of Fourth-Formers near the brake. The mocking looks of the juniors did not allay their wrath.

"We must be gentle with the Fifth this term," said Fisher, in a loud voice. "The poor little things can't take care of themselves, you know. They've got a blessed ass for a captain, and so it's natural they—"

Kendal swung round angrily towards the speaker.

"You little waster!" he exclaimed. "You'll get into a fearful row for collaring the Sixth Form brake, at all events."

"We beat you in the race," remarked Clive. "We licked you hollow. And you wouldn't have had the nerve to collar the Sixth Form brake, anyway, kid."

Kendal stared at him.

"Who may you happen to be?" he asked. "You've got a thundering lot to say for a new boy!"

"I'm Clive Lawrence."

"Well, Clive Lawrence, if you don't want your neck wrung, don't talk so much—"

"But I do want it wrung," said Clive, "if there's anybody in the Fifth Form at St. Winifred's who can wring it."

Kendal started forward angrily, apparently intending to take the new junior at his word. But Keene pulled him by the sleeve, and the captain of the Fifth swallowed his wrath and stepped back again.

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"I won't lick you now," he said loftily. "Courtesy of the Sixth will lam you for all he's worth, if 'Trelawney doesn't, and you'll have enough lickings for the first day of the term."

And Kendal strode on with his chum. "That's right enough," Fisher remarked thoughtfully. "Trelawney, our captain, is a splendid sort, and he may take the thing as a joke, but there's some of the Sixth will be wild about it, and I'm afraid you're booked for a high old time, Lawrence."

"I dare say I shall be able to stand it," said Clive carelessly. "Now, do you happen to know Mr. Neill's room? I've got to speak to him."

"Well, as he's our Form-master, I expect we do," grinned Fisher. "Come along, kids. We'll ask him about the study. We want to get the same one as we had last term. It's the biggest of all in the Fourth Form lot, and has a sunny window. A word from the Form-master is enough."

The three juniors entered the School House. Fisher tapped at a door, and a pleasant voice bade him come in. The boys went in, and found a handsome, athletic-looking fellow in his shirt-sleeves in the midst of bundles of books and other property, evidently up to his eyes in work.

"Ah, Fisher and Locke!" exclaimed Mr. Neill, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's. "I am glad to see you back again, and I hope you have turned over a new leaf."

"Ye-es, sir, I hope so," said Fisher. "We are going to work awfully hard this term, sir, and—see if we can't get into the Shell, sir. That's why we've come—"

"To tell me your good resolutions? That's kind of you, Fisher."

Fisher coloured.

"Not exactly, sir; but—but we shall be able to work ever so much harder if we have the same study as last term, sir—No. 7. Can we—"

Mr. Neill laughed heartily.

"Yes, certainly. I will make a note of it. You can put your traps in the same study. I will see later who is to have it with you."

"Milsom had it with us last term, sir. He left at the end of the term, and so we—we—"

"Well, what, Fisher?"

"We hoped we might have it to ourselves this term, sir."

The Form-master shook his head decidedly.

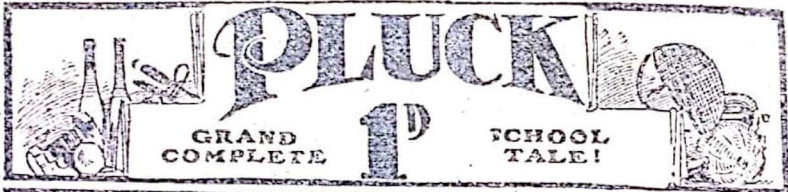
"Certainly not. There are several raw boys this term, Fisher, and it is quite possible that you will have four in No. 7."

Fisher's face fell, and so did Locke's.

"Four? Oh, sir!"

"Well, three, at least," said the Form-master. "Let me see—who is this? A new boy?"

(Another extra long instalment of this splendid new story next week.)



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