

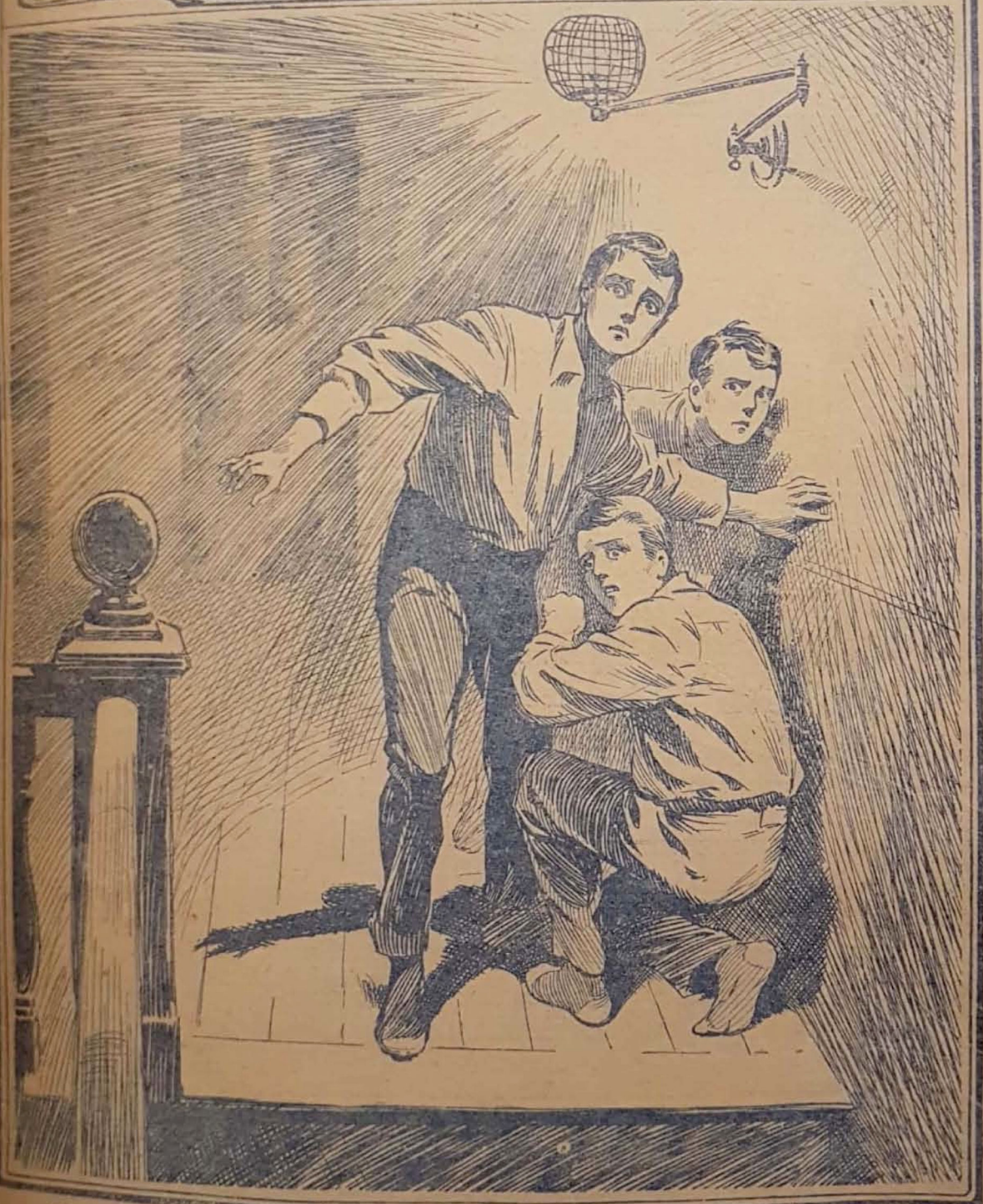
Second to None!

PLUCK

GRAND SCHOOL TALE.

1

THRILLING DETECTIVE STORY.



TAFFY ADMITTED AFTERWARDS THAT HE FELT INCLINED TO CUT AND RUN.
NO. 181. NEW SERIES.

read as they fit on the address, but after a little hesitation he pushed the note back, saying:

"You've made a mistake, Mr. Vance. This is for a Mr. Wallace, not for me."

"How stupid of me!" said Vance, taking back the note, which he knew only contained a blank sheet of paper.

"Yes, here is yours," Mr. Charles Hayward said. "The address was on the same hand as that of the note to Wallace. Hayward saw it, and paled. But words must fall to describe his appearance when he opened the note and read as follows:

"Dear old Charley.—The game's up, and I'm clearin' out of the rotten show. I didn't know that dismal Jemmy was no ruder than his untried nills Wendell Vance, or else I would have cleared out before I come in. Vance knows the whole blessed show. Bless'd if he don't seem to know more about it than you do. Sure if all the things we ought to have done, and all the things we ought not to have done, have done, and all the things we ought to do, and I'm takin' anyhow, he's givin' me the chance to clear, and I'm takin' it. He gave me a flea in the ear about my little wheeze Mr. Jarvis and his pretty muffer, and I expect he'll soon be givin' you two or three of the same for the rest of the show. My straight tip is, cave in and come out—"

The reader fell back in his chair like a corpse. Bransome sprang up in intense alarm, but Vance pulled him back.

"It's all right," said the detective. "It's all right, and it's all over. The case is finished. I have found the Gladsdown goalkeeper."

"But where is he?" gasped Bransome, who was perfectly bewildered by the strange scene that had just passed.

"If Mr. Charles Hayward will be good enough to act upon his correspondent's advice," said Vance, "and cave in and come out from behind his whiskers, as Saul expresses it, you will find that Jemmy Hayward is nothing other than his Australian brother minus a beard."

"What? Is that true?" cried Bransome.

Suddenly the man he questioned rose to his feet, tore off the beard, and stood revealed as the missing Gladsdown goalkeeper.

"Yes," he said, "it's true. What a fool I've been! What a mess I've made of it! I'm sorry I thought of it at all, but I never dreamed that Wendell Vance would be asked to trace me."

"Bransome," said Vance shortly, "you might leave me alone with Hayward for a few minutes. I wish to talk to him about the past and the future."

Vance began his straight talk in his old, sarcastic vein: "I believe you deserve all the praises bestowed upon your prowess as an actor. I believe also that you might make some stir as an actor. That little bit of melodrama at the station was really effective. I noticed that a couple of porters were deeply touched by it. But if you will take my advice, Mr. Hayward, you will not dabble in crime any more. You are a bit too rash ever to be a successful criminal."

But soon Vance's real feelings came to the surface, and he concluded his speech in a very different tone:

"This matter will be kept dark, and I trust you will do your best to wipe out all memory of it. Be true to yourself as a man. As a player, be true to the club whose members think so much of you, and are only wanting some reason to think still more. In short, have done with spite and envy, have done with all hole-and-corner, stab-in-the-dark work. Be a sportsman and an Englishman."

"I will," was the Gladsdown goalkeeper's fervent reply—"I will! From this day onward I will always play the game."

And Jemmy Hayward stretched out his hand, which Vance clasped right heartily. As he looked into Vance's big, lustrous eyes, and felt the inspiring grip of his sinewy hand, Hayward recognized once for all that a detective may be a good deal more than a mere human bloodhound.

It only remains to say that the Gladsdown goalkeeper kept his promise, and thereforward played the game. He did his part well on the day of the Cup-tie, and though Burtley looked to use Motley's words, with the strength of a hundred mules, the ball and the Gladsdown net remained strangers throughout the match.

Meanwhile, with the eyes of his bride elect upon him, Coleman worked wonders, scoring three amid uproarious cheering. And in London, as soon as the "Football Evening News" came out, Tommy Stott called upon his friend Pip Digges, and gathered in his lively bobble. Tommy never guessed that he really owed that shilling to the efforts of his chief, Wendell Vance.

THE END.

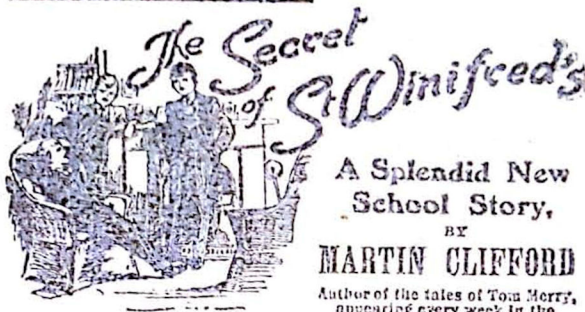
Two long, complete stories again next Saturday, entitled "A Fight to a Finish," a splendid school tale of Brian Donoghue; and "The New Partner," a story of Martin Stern, Detective.

Please order your copy of "Pluck" in advance. Price 1d.

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AND THE NEW PARTNER. A Thrilling Complete Tale of Martin Stern, Detective.

IN "PLUCK," 1P.



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.

Clive Lawrence, a new boy at St. Winifred's, is put into the Fourth Form, which is at daggers drawn with the Fifth. The leaders of the Fourth are Fisher and Locke, Clive's study-mates, and those of the Fifth are Kendall and Courtney. Courtney, a bully, takes Clive for "rag," and sends him on an errand to the Jolly Seaman, a public-house in the village. Clive arrives at his destination, and is shown into a back room to wait for a Mr. Napper. He falls asleep before the fire, and is awakened by the sound of voices. Concealed as he is by the high-backed chair, he overhears a plot between Wapper and a German to get possession of the clue to a hidden treasure, which Trelawney, the Captain of St. Winifred's, holds. Having discharged his errand, Clive returns to the School. That evening the Fifth-Formers rush the Fourth dormitory, intending to "rag" Clive. However, they meet with defeat and are thrown out. The next morning Clive and Locke make an early excursion down to the sea shore. As the two chums near the Penwyn rocks, they are surprised to see Herr Stossel, the German master. (Now go on with the story.)

Franz Stossel Loses His Temp.

Clive Lawrence looked at Locke, and Locke looked at him. Both the juniors were surprised at the appearance of the German master at St. Winifred's among the Penwyn rocks at that early hour of the morning.

"My hat, he's an early riser!" said Locke at last. "He must have been up before us, as we saw nothing of him coming down to the beach."

"And he doesn't go to bed early, either," Clive remarked. "I wonder what he's doing here?" Locke said reflectively. "If he had come later than we did, I should think he was spying after us. He's that kind of a rotter. But that isn't the case now."

Clive did not reply, but there was a shade of thought on his brow.

He could guess what the German was doing among the caves of Penwyn at that early hour, as soon as he thought about it. The conversation he had accidentally overheard at the Jolly Seaman the previous night was sufficient to enlighten him.

Franz Stossel was in quest of a clue to the treasure of the wrecked Spanish galleon. There was no doubt upon that point in the mind of Clive Lawrence. The German fully believed in the treasure, and he was at St. Winifred's to seek for it. That was his purpose in leaving the school at sunrise.

"Well, it's no business of ours," Locke remarked, after a moment. "We'd better not run into him, or he'd want to know what we were doing out of bounds before the rising-bell. I say, we can't have that bath, or he'll see us from the cliffs."

"I suppose so," Clive Lawrence cast a regretful glance towards the pebbly ridge, upon which the waves were creaming. "Never mind," he exclaimed briskly; "come for a ramble on the rocks. I heard one of the fellows say there was a path up the cliffs from the beach."

Locke laughed. "So there is, but you need a nerve like a seagull to follow it."

"Well, show me where it is, at all events."

"Right-ho! Follow your leader." And Locke tramped off through the soft sand, and the juniors arrived at the precipitous foot of the cliffs.

Huge masses of time-worn rock towered above them for hundreds of feet, and amid the grey masses wound the

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clandestine path by which, in olden days, the smugglers of the Penryn had been wont to climb. Locke pointed out the beginning of the ascent to Clive, who was inclined to attempt the climb there and then. Locke caught him by the shoulder.

"You can't go now, Lawrence; you'd break your neck, for one thing. Not that that would matter much, of course, but I should be late for breakfast if I had to carry your body home, and so—"

Clive burst into a laugh. "I shall go up the cliffs some half-holiday," he exclaimed: "I suppose there's no time now. We— Hallo!"

He broke off as a figure appeared among the huge, weed-grown rocks by which they were surrounded—the figure of Franz Stessel.

The German started as he saw the boys, and a red flush of anger overspread his dark face, and his hand clenched hard.

The juniors were equally annoyed at the meeting. They had avoided the spot where they had seen the German, and his explorations among the rocks had unexpectedly brought him right upon them.

He halted for a moment in angry surprise, and then strode straight towards them, the cloud thickening on his dark brow.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed.

The boys were too startled to reply for a moment. Franz Stessel seized Clive by the shoulder and shook him roughly.

"You—you are spying upon me again, then?"

Clive flushed red, and shook himself free.

"I am not spying upon you," he exclaimed indignantly; "and I have never done so."

"You young scoundrel! Why are you here?"

Clive Lawrence set his teeth. He easily understood the suspicion that had darted into the German master's mind, but the accusation of playing the spy was too insulting for him to forgive it.

"Answer me!" cried the German angrily.

"I have nothing to say to a man who calls me a scoundrel," said Clive, his eyes flashing fire.

Locke gave a start of uneasiness, and looked anxiously at Clive. The boy's face was flushed with anger, and he certainly did not look afraid of the German master.

"Boy, do you know whom you are speaking to?" exclaimed Stessel, in a voice choked with rage. "Are you aware—"

"You have no right to apply such terms to me, or to anyone."

"Mein Gott, I will have you flogged!" cried the German master.

Clive stepped back. The fury in the German's face was so great that for a moment the boy thought of running about to attack him.

Locke looked amazed. There was no reason, as far as he could see, why Franz Stessel should fly into such a rage. He did not know of the incident at the Jolly Swallow.

But Stessel seemed to realize that his rage was futile, he made a tremendous effort to calm himself.

"Will you answer my question, boy?" he said, in a concentrated voice. "What are you doing here?"

"I came out for a ramble," said Clive calmly.

"How did you get out? The gates are not open at this hour."

"I got over the wall."

"Ah! You have broken bounds—for the second time during a stay of a day and a half at St. Winifred's."

Clive Lawrence was silent.

"Very well, Lawrence; I will see that you are adequately punished."

"It was not like breaking bounds," said Clive. "Any of the masters would have given me permission to come down to the beach if I had asked, but they were not up."

"But you did not obtain permission?"

"No, as the masters were in bed when I left."

"And you came simply for a ramble, not knowing that anybody belonging to the school was here before you?"

"I have said so."

"Don't answer me in that manner. But I suppose it is useless to expect the truth from you under the circumstances."

"You will get the truth or nothing from me, sir," said Clive sharply.

Locke pulled at his arm nervously.

"I say, shut up, Lawrence!" he whispered. "You're only—"

But Clive was not listening. The German master's eyes were fixed upon his face with a savage look. Franz Stessel seemed to be non-plussed. He spoke at last.

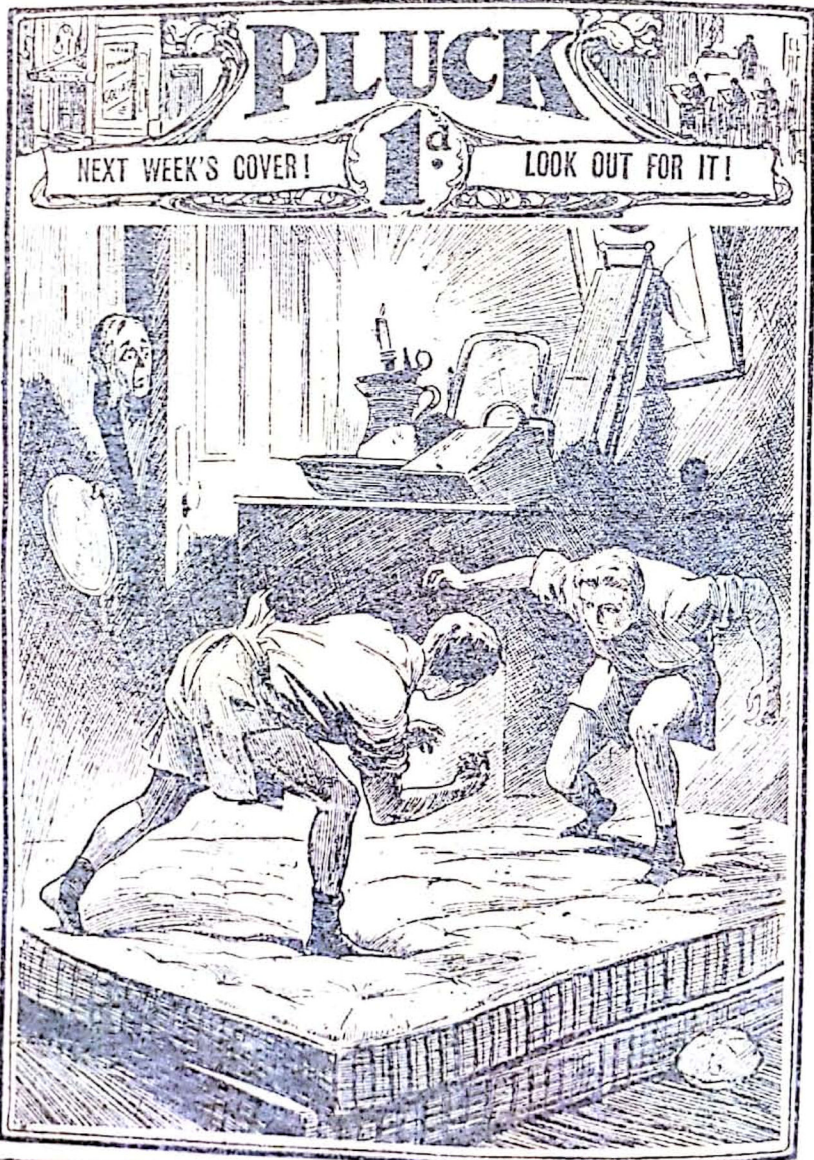
"Go back to the school instantly," he exclaimed.

"Upon second thoughts, I will overlook this transgression, as you are new to St. Winifred's; but mind you, it must not occur again."

"Go!"

The juniors turned away. The German master stood watching them with a frow as they walked up the beach, and then into the plantation. Clive's mind was dazed to the back, though he was curious to know the path through the plantation, and the silence for some time.

(An episode in the life of Clive Lawrence, next Saturday.)



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