

PLUCK

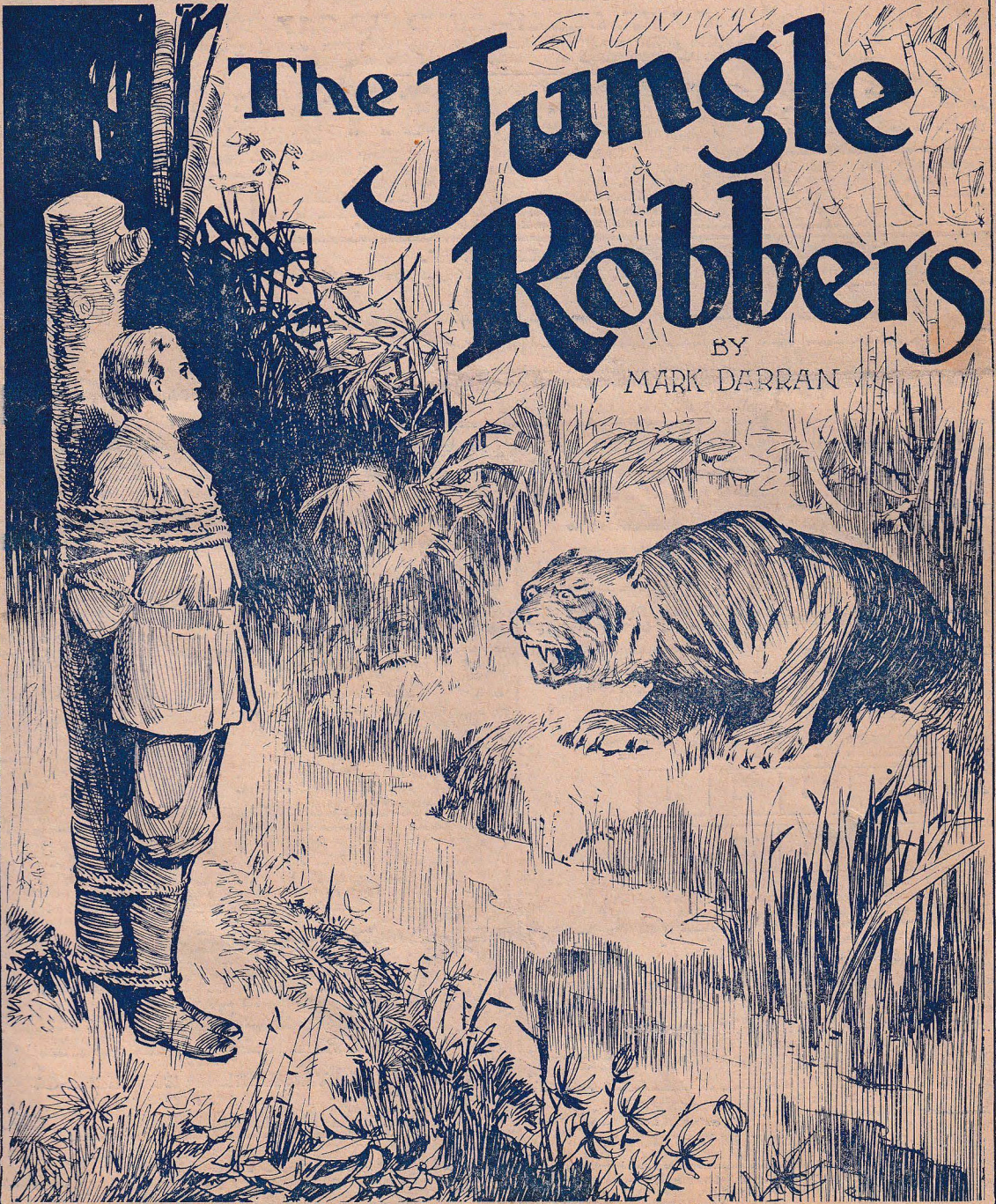
TWO THRILLING

1^d

ADVENTURE STORIES.

The Jungle Robbers

BY
MARK DARRAN



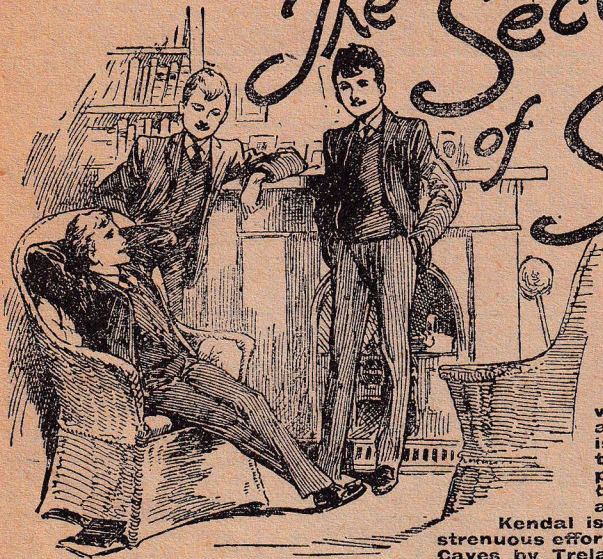
THE TIGER CROUCHED TO SPRING. ONE MOMENT MORE AND —!
NO. 200. NEW SERIES.

New School Tale.

A SPLENDID SCHOOL TALE

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, Author of
THE TALES OF TOM MERRY
appearing in "The Gem" Library

The Secret of St Winifred's

**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 Kendal and Keene. Courtney, a bully, takes Clive for "fag," 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 overhears a plot between Napper and a German, whom he afterwards recognises as Herr Stossel, the German master at St. Winifred's. There is a Form election, and Clive is elected Captain of the Fourth. The Form celebrate the occasion and capture Kendal and Keene. In playful revenge Clive decides to let his followers toss their captives in the blanket. Kendal loses his temper and challenges Clive. The fight takes place, and Kendal is beaten. Finding that Herr Stossel is making strenuous efforts to discover some old treasure hidden in Penwyn Caves by Trelawny's ancestors, Clive Lawrence, with Fisher and Locke, set out one afternoon to forestall him. (Now go on with the story.)

A Hand to Hand Encounter

It was evidently the only thing to be done. The Fifth-Formers lay quiet in the fern, waiting. Kendal and Keene were determined, and the others were ready to follow their lead.

They waited for the footsteps of the captain of St. Winifred's, as the two ruffians nearer the footpath were waiting. Kendal gave a sudden start, and tapped Keene on the arm. "He's coming."

From the direction of St. Winifred's came a rustle in the wood, and the sound of swift and steady footsteps on the fallen leaves of the path.

Trelawny was coming! Kendal gritted his teeth. "Come on, chaps!"

He sprang to his feet. Careless of danger to himself, he went plunging through the underwood towards the path, to warn Trelawny. There was a yell of surprise and rage, as he ran into a crouching form. The next moment he rolled over on the ground, with a savage grip on his throat.

"Help!" shrieked Kendal, as his senses swam under that fierce grip.

Trelawny came in sight a second later. He started in blank amazement as he saw Kendal struggling frantically in the furious grip of Herr Stossel. The German seemed to have lost all his presence of mind in his rage. Trelawny sprang upon him, and dragged him from the Fifth-Former. At the same moment, Mr. Napper sprang from the thicket, with a cudgel whirling aloft.

"Look out, Trelawny!" shrieked Keene.

But Trelawny was looking out.

He avoided the sharper's clumsy blow, and drove out with his right, sending Mr. Napper crashing into the thicket, where he lay sick and dazed.

The rascal did not move again, except to squeeze himself further away through the bushes.

Herr Stossel stood erect, panting.

Trelawny was turning towards him again, and the Fifth-Formers were gathering round to cut off his escape.

The German gritted his teeth. The game was up! The odds were too heavy, and he has lost everything on that last desperate throw of the dice.

He made a sudden spring into the wood, and vanished among the trees. The crashing of the undergrowths came back, telling of his rapid flight.

"After him!" yelled Kendal.

But Trelawny held him back.

"Hold on, lads!"

"The rotter ought to be run in, Trelawny!"

"Never mind; let him go."

"But—"

"He will have to leave St. Winifred's now."

"By Jove, so he will! Jolly good thing, too!"

"Yes, rather," said Stott.

"Now tell me what all this means," said Trelawny quietly. "How did you boys come here; and how did you know this attack was to be made upon me?"

Kendal explained.

The Captain of St. Winifred's listened with a knitted brow.

"Thank you, my lads," he said. "You have saved me from injury, and saved something very precious to me. You two—Kendal and Keene—had better come back to the school with me. This matter must be reported to the Head at once."

The excitement of being the heroes of such an amazing occurrence compensated the Fifth-Formers for the loss of their expedition against the heroes of the Fourth. The whole party willingly turned their steps back to the school—Trelawny, Kendal, and Keene to explain to the Head, and the others to relate the adventure to various interested and thrilled groups in the quadrangle and the Fifth-Form room.

Clive's Capture.

"Who is there?"

Clive Lawrence's voice rang through the darkness of the cave as the footstep ground upon the sand, and the light flashed from the cave.

A muttered word in German answered.

The chums of the Fourth drew quickly back. It was as they had surmised.

The unseen explorer of the Penwyn caves was the German master at St. Winifred's.

The light flashed to and fro, and flared at last upon the three juniors. There was no escaping detection now. But they had done no wrong, and they faced the light and the keen eyes of the German unflinchingly, albeit, their hearts were beating a little faster.

But it was a changed German master who was looking at them now. Franz Stossel's clothes were rent and torn, his hair dishevelled, his face dirty, his collar rumpled.

He looked as if he had just been through a desperate struggle—as indeed he had, only a short time before.

The German master knew that after what had happened it was impossible for him to return to St. Winifred's.

If the authorities there chose to make a fuss about the matter, he could be arrested for his murderous attack on Trelawny if he stayed in the neighbourhood. And he was making a last attempt to discover the long-sought treasure ere he quitted the vicinity of Penwyn Bay.

He was surprised and pleased to see the St. Winifred's juniors in the cave.

The boy he hated was before him!

It was to Clive Lawrence that he traced all the misfortunes that had befallen him in the course of his quest of

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IN "PLUCK," 1st.

the treasure. But for Lawrence he would never have been driven to the desperate expedient which had ended in utter ruin for him.

His eyes glistened savagely as he looked at the juniors in the glare of the lantern.

"Lawrence!"

He hissed out the name.

Startled as they were by the strange, and to them, inexplicable aspect of the German, the juniors did not lose their coolness.

Clive Lawrence faced his old enemy fearlessly.

"Yes, sir; it is I."

He scanned the German closely. In the left hand of Franz Stossel was the fragment of parchment Clive had seen in his grasp before. There was no doubt that the German had come to the cave in quest of the lost gold of the Spanish galleon.

"So you are here?"

"Yes, sir."

"You do not know what has happened, then?"

"Has anything happened?"

"Yes," said the German, with slow deliberation: "much has happened. I have left St. Winifred's—I am liable to arrest at any moment."

Clive Lawrence started.

"I don't see why you should tell me this, sir."

"I can afford to feed now the grudge I bear you," said Franz Stossel, with a sardonic smile. "A ruined man has nothing to fear."

Clive understood.

He drew back a pace, and his fists clenched hard.

Fisher and Locke understood, too, and though they went slightly pale, they did not flinch from his side.

The German turned his savage glance upon the two Fourth-Formers. Then he made a gesture towards the mouth of the cave.

"You two can go," he said.

Fisher and Locke did not stir.

"Do you hear me?"

"We hear you, sir," said Fisher.

"Then go!"

"We won't go!"

The German master shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well; remain."

He set down the lantern on the ground. In spite of his deliberate, deadly calm movements, there was no doubt that he was intending to make a savage attack upon the boy he hated; and there was no telling to what length his fury might carry him.

It was not Clive's way to wait for an attack. He exchanged a quick glance with his chums, and, without waiting for the German to commence, he rushed at his enemy and forced the fighting.

The German was taken by surprise. As he straightened up, after setting the lantern down, Clive was upon him, hitting out furiously.

A blow caught Franz Stossel on the jaw, and another in the eye, and as he staggered, Fisher and Locke struck at his face.

The German grunted heavily, lost his footing, and crashed upon the rocky ground. The parchment dropped from his hand, and for a moment he lay dazed. His head had struck the rock with a hard thud.

"Let's get off," muttered Locke.

"Run, then!"

Clive snatched up the parchment, kicked over the lantern, and bolted after his chums into the outer cave.

It occupied the Fourth-Formers but a minute to escape from the cavern, and dash out upon the cliff path.

Not a sound had been heard from the German.

He had been unable to get near the juniors with his slower movements, and once they were out of the cave he had no chance of getting to close quarters again.

The juniors rushed down the cliff path at a reckless speed. But they reached the bottom in safety, and paused to take breath in the sunshine of the pebble ridge.

"Great Scott!" gasped Fisher. "That was a queer go!"

"And a narrow escape," said Locke.

"What have you got there, Lawrence?"

Clive gave a breathless laugh.

"I've made a capture!"

"What is it?"

"The parchment!"

"The what?"

"Look!"

Clive Lawrence held up the fragment of parchment, with its old, faded writing. The chums of the Fourth looked at it with wide eyes.

"We won't read it," said Clive. "It's not ours. But it undoubtedly belongs to Trelawny. Anyway, we will hand it

to him, and he can do with it as he thinks fit. One thing is pretty certain; it cannot belong to Franz Stossel."

"My hat! That's a capture, and no mistake!"

"Not that it's much good," Locke remarked. "If it hasn't helped the German to find the treasure, I don't see how it can help anybody else."

"Trelawny knows something already, and this parchment may contain just the little bit he needs to know."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Anyway, we'll give it to him. I think we're done with Stossel now."

"And a good riddance."

And the chums of the Fourth wended their way in high spirits to St. Winifred's.

The Secret at Last.

The three chums were in time for calling-over, and immediately afterwards Clive Lawrence went to the captain's study. Oswald Trelawny had just come in, and he gave the junior a cheery nod and a smile.

"Anything I can do for you, Lawrence?" he asked in his pleasant way.

Clive shook his head.

"No, thanks, Trelawny; but there's something I can do for you."

"Eh?"

"Look at that!"

Clive Lawrence handed Trelawny the fragment of parchment he had captured from the German master in the Penwyn caves.

The captain of St. Winifred's started violently.

"What is this?"

Clive laughed.

"A piece of parchment."

"Where did you get it?"

"From Herr Stossel."

"Good heavens!"

"If you think he ought to have it, you can send it to him; but if it is not his—"

"It is not his; it is mine!"

"Good!"

"It belonged to our family a very great time ago, and was stolen or lost," said Trelawny. "The parchment was cut into halves, and the halves kept in separate places, for security. Thus one half was stolen, while the other remained. At least, that is the story I heard when I was a child. This is mine."

"Then there you are!"

"And—and— Excuse me now, Lawrence, will you?"

"Certainly!" laughed Clive.

And he quitted the study.

Trelawny drew out the piece of parchment over which he had pored many a time, in the vain hope of discovering therefrom the secret of the hidden gold.

Now at last he had hope.

The two pieces, placed together on the table, fitted perfectly. They were evidently parts of one whole.

The reader will probably remember the fragmentary information imparted by the parchment which had always been in Trelawny's possession:

"When the lord of Trelawny shall need ye gold . . .

"let him seek in ye cave by . . .

"there in ye sand . . .

"Spanish gold.

That was all; and the beginnings of the lines furnished no clue. But the other parchment contained the conclusions of the lines:

" . . . but not till that day,

" . . . Penwyn Point, and

" . . . close within ye seconde, the . . .

" . . . will be found."

Taken together, the two fragments formed a connected message from a dead and gone Trelawny to the last of his race, the captain of St. Winifred's.

"When the lord of Trelawny shall need ye gold, . . . till that day, let him seek in ye cave by Penwyn Point, and there in ye sand close within the seconde, the Spanish gold will be found."

Trelawny's eyes glittered.

It was the secret at last!

Well he knew the narrow neck which joined the outer cave of Penwyn cliffs to the inner one.

Within the second cave the treasure was buried, and not a mark had been left to indicate the spot.

Yet the feet of every treasure-seeker for centuries had passed over the sought-for gold, all unknowingly.

A hundred times or more had Trelawny himself passed that spot, lantern in hand, never dreaming that the galleon's gold lay hidden under his feet.

"Found!"

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Trelawny muttered the word in exultation.

It meant much to him. When the galleon's gold was discovered, and the Government's share in the treasure-trove had been taken, there would remain enough, he felt certain, to restore the fallen fortunes of his family.

The Trelawnys would raise their heads once more, and resume their old position in the county.

These thoughts were passing through Trelawny's mind when a tap came at his door. He hastily thrust the parchments into his pocket.

"Come in!"

It was Courtney, of the Sixth, who entered.

The prefect was strangely pale, and his eyes had a restless look. Trelawny gazed at him in surprise.

"Are you ill, Courtney?" he asked.

He had never liked Courtney, and Courtney had never liked him; but he forgot that now, as he saw the signs of trouble in the prefect's face.

Courtney shook his head.

"No. I am in trouble."

"I am sorry to hear it."

"I dare say you are surprised at my coming to you," said Courtney, forcing a smile. "But it concerns you, too."

Oswald Trelawny looked surprised.

"Concerns me?"

"Yes. Will you listen to me?"

"Sit down, old fellow, and explain!"

Courtney sank into a chair.

"You know, I dare say, that I have had dealings with that rascal Napper at the Jolly Seaman?" he began abruptly.

Trelawny nodded without speaking.

"I have been a fool—I have allowed him to make a fool of me! I'm not trying to excuse myself; but now I've got to pay for it."

And he gave a groan.

Trelawny looked really concerned.

"What is it? Can I help you?"

"I don't know."

"Tell me about it, anyway."

"Napper has papers of mine; I owe him money."

"For betting on horses?"

"Yes."

"The debt is nothing; he cannot claim it."

"I know; but he can show the papers to the Head, and get me expelled for gambling."

"The hound!"

"I don't believe I really owe him the money; I believe he has swindled me. But, in any case, I would pay up, only he won't give me the chance. I would raise the money in time, but that isn't what he wants."

Trelawny looked amazed.

"What on earth does he want, then?"

"He wants me to do him what he calls a service, and then he promises to give me my papers back."

"And the service?"

"To admit him and another man into the school to-night after lights-out."

Trelawny started.

"Who is the other man?"

"Franz Stossel."

"Good heavens!"

"Of course, I know all about the attack made upon you," said Courtney. "I know that Stossel wanted to rob you of something, and so when Napper told me this, I knew what he wanted. They want to get into the school to-night to rob you, and I am to be made a party to it!"

"And you—"

"I refused; and then Napper gave me the choice between that and ruin. I—I've come to you to ask your advice. What can I do?"

Trelawny knitted his brows.

"There is only one thing to be done, Courtney—defy those scoundrels! In fact, you have no choice now, after telling me so much."

"I—I suppose not."

"And now, come with me to the Head!"

Courtney started violently.

"The Head?"

"Yes."

"He will expel me if he knows all."

"I think not. I will explain to him—I will point out that you have chosen to run this risk rather than follow a crooked course. Then if you promise to steer straight in future—"

"You don't think I'm likely to follow the same course again, after this lesson, do you?" said Courtney, with a haggard look.

"I should say not. I think—I hope—that Dr. Esmond will overlook what you have done. Anyhow, it is your only

chance, for Napper will certainly betray you as soon as he knows you have put me on my guard."

"I suppose so."

"When are you to see him again?"

"They will both be outside the hall window at twelve to-night. If I open it for them, well and good. If not, my papers will be in the Head's hands to-morrow morning."

"Your confession will be made to-night, and Napper will be forestalled. Come with me, Courtney."

The wretched senior rose to his feet.

"I'll take your advice, Trelawny."

Five minutes later the two Sixth-Formers were in Dr. Esmond's study, and the Head of St. Winifred's was listening to the miserable story of petty deceit and recklessness—listening with a stern brow, yet with a merciful mind.

(To be concluded.)

THE EDITOR'S DEN.

A WORD OF WARNING.

Don't forget to order your copy of **PLUCK** in good time next week. It will contain two grand, complete stories. "In the 'Bad Lands,'" a romance of the Wild West, is written by Mr. Clabon Glover. Mr. Glover's prowess as a story writer is already well known to you, and I feel sure that "In the 'Bad Lands'" will make him still more popular. The other complete yarn is entitled "Left Alone," and is from the pen of Mr. Percy Longhurst, another old favourite. It tells of the self-sacrifice of a London lad, and his efforts to support himself and his younger brothers and sisters, when their father deserts them. The scene is laid in London, and the events are such as might befall any British boy of grit.

OUR NEW SERIAL.

I have also a simply magnificent new serial coming along. It is a story of sea-life, and in it adventure follows on the heels of adventure. Most lads have a hankering after a sailor's life—at least, judging from their letters to me—but it is not given to everyone to fulfil his ambition. In our new serial, however, are recounted the doings and perils of a young Briton who feels the call of the ocean too strong for him, and, like many another has done before him, runs away to sea. But enough! You must judge of the story for yourself. I feel perfectly safe in leaving it to you. I prophesy that the general chorus will be "Ripping!"

LETTERS FROM MY READERS.

I have received lately a great number of letters from my readers—letters which come from every part of the world where the good old English language is spoken. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than opening these letters from those whom I regard as my chums all over the world. I reply to them all as quickly as I possibly can, and am happy to say that I have been able, in hundreds of cases, to give advice to my readers upon all kinds of matters—advice which, I have heard since, has in hundreds of cases been of very great use to them. I point this out because I want still more of my readers to write to me in their difficulties. If I cannot deal with the matter in this column, I will, when a stamp is enclosed, reply as quickly as possible through the post. If you are in difficulty about your future, or about any matter whatever, just drop me a line, and I will give you the best advice I can.

HOW TO BECOME A WHALER.

One of my Scotch readers, who signs himself "Pluckite," wants to join a ship engaged in the whaling industry. Now, Dundee is almost the only port in Scotland from which vessels leave regularly for the sealing and whaling industries. Apprenticeship is seldom served on these vessels, which are laid up for about five months out of the year, and continuous service is, therefore, impossible. However, a large proportion of boys is carried, and those who go forward early in the season, and apply to the masters of the whaling vessels, stand the best chance of being taken on. Lads should be of good physique, aged eighteen or nineteen. Having once started as a lad, the young whaler should in time endeavour to pass the examination of mate and master, and rise to be an officer.

THE EDITOR OF "PLUCK."