

Grand School and Adventure Stories.

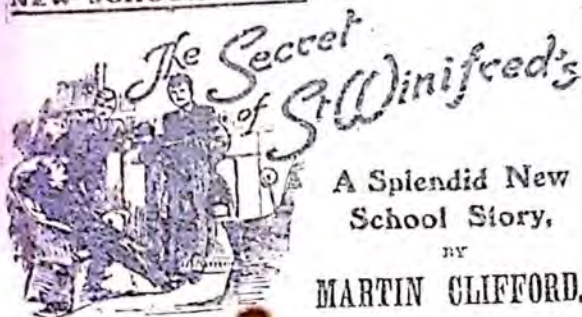
PLUCK

CANADA'S TRAPPER,
By LEWIS HOCKLEY,
and

THE COMMANDER'S BIRTHDAY. By JACK NORTH.



NEW SCHOOL TALE.



READ THIS FIRST.

The train containing the boys of St. Winifred's slowed down alongside Ferndale 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, captures the Sixth Form brake. (Now go on with the story.)

The Arrival of the Fourth.

Most of the Fourth Formers were crammed in the brake now. The timid ones held back, but that mattered little, as there was not possibly room for all.

The vehicle moved off, to the shouting of the excited juniors and the cracking of the whip. Fisher and Locke were entering into the spirit of the thing now, and their eyes were gleaming.

There was a shout from behind.

"Stop that brake, you young scoundrels! Stop at once!"

The juniors looked round. A tall, elegantly-dressed young fellow was waving a lavender kid-gloved hand to them frantically, his tall hat nearly falling off in his excitement. "That's Courtney!" said Fisher uneasily.

"Stop that brake!"

Courtney, of the Sixth, was running after them. A crowd of Sixth Formers were staring at the juniors in blank amazement. Trevelyan came out of the station.

He shouted to the youngsters, but they were too far off to hear his words. The brake was going at a good speed now, and Courtney dropped behind in the race and stopped running.

"Hurrah!" shouted Fisher.

"There's bound to be a frightful row over this," said Sugden.

"Who cares?" said Clive.

"Oh, none of us!" grinned Locke. "I don't! They can't expel the whole of the Fourth, and we'll all stand in together over it. They can't flog us all; but I fancy it will mean a caning all round and a long gating."

"Let it."

"Oh, let it, by all means," agreed Locke. "You're a thundering cool hand, Clive Lawrence, at all events."

The brake dashed gaily on. The juniors soon sighted the Fifth Form brake, going at a much more moderate pace, ahead.

"I say, can you drive, Lawrence?" asked Fisher.

"Like a fish," said Clive—"I mean, yes; I've driven four-in-hand at home, and I know how to handle a team. If I didn't, that wouldn't have made any difference on this occasion, though."

"Well, I'm jolly glad you can drive, anyway."

"Hallo, look at the Fifth; they've seen us!"

The Fifth-Formers were all looking back in amazement at the crowded brake rushing on after them. The juniors waved their caps and shouted as they came within hearing.

"My hat," exclaimed Kendal, "they're in the Sixth Form brake! The little asses will get into a fearful row over this."

"Never thought Fisher had such a nerve," said Keene.

"Neither did I."

"They're going to try to pass us, I verily believe."

"There's not room in the lane."

"Hi, there, you kids, keep your cattle in!" Clive cracked his whip.

"Rats! Get out of the way!"

"You can't pass!"

"That's a jay, because we're going to."

"I tell you there's no room!" shouted Kendal. "You've got a collision!"

"Get to one side."

"We can't, without going into the ditch."

"Go into the ditch, then," said Clive cheerfully.

The Fourth-Formers roared with laughter. The status of the Fifth was very real. The following brake was overtaking them, and there was certainly very barely room to pass in the narrow lane.

"Here, buck up, driver," shouted Kendal; "don't let those kids pass us!"

The driver looked round. He was a slow-witted villager, and his face became alarmed as he saw the pursuing brake rushing furiously down upon him.

"Hallo! Whoa, there!" he yelled. "They'll be into me!"

"Pull aside, then!" shouted Clive, cracking his whip.

"There's baint no room."

"Get aside!" roared the Fourth-Formers. "We're going to pass! Get out of the way!"

Everyone in the Fourth Form brake was now frantic with excitement. Half of them were on their feet, waving their caps and yelling like demons. The horses, startled by the terrific clamour, dashed on, and Clive would have had all his work out to pull them in now, if he had wanted to.

But he didn't want to. He was determined to pass the leading brake, and he was pretty certain that the driver would pull into the ditch, or anywhere, to escape a collision. If the wheels caught in passing, it would only be a question of damage to be paid for.

"Get on!" shouted Kendal. "If you let them pass us, driver, we'll boil you! Hurry up!"

The driver whipped up his horses. But Clive's team were dashing on furiously, and were already abreast of the leading brake.

"Get aside!" roared Clive.

The village driver gave one frightened look round, and then jerked on his left rein, and the horses scrambled in the wide, shallow ditch, which was half-full of fern and bracken, but fortunately dry. There was a terrific whoop from the Fifth-Formers as the brake lurched on the edge of the ditch, and one wheel went over the incline.

"Look out!"

With a fearful lurch the brake crashed against the hedge, the two near wheels being in the ditch. The vehicle did not upset, but lay with a "list to port," as a sailor would say, and the Fifth-Formers held on desperately.

A frenzied cheer rose from the other brake.

"Right away!" roared Fisher.

Clive had room to pass now, with about two inches to spare. He showed his skill and his nerve by taking the cattle past at full dash, not slackening in the least. In a flash the Fourth-Formers had passed, waving their caps and yelling at the Fifth.

On, and on, and on, with rattling hoofs and jingling harness, and cracking whip and exultant cheering.

"Hurrah! Down with the Fifth! Hurrah!"

The Fifth-Formers scrambled into the road. They made furious efforts to get the brake righted, but in vain. Kendal and Keene shook their fists furiously after the Fourth Form brake. But it dashed on in a cloud of dust, and vanished from their sight.

"My hat," exclaimed Fisher, "that was exciting! I lasted! We've done the Fifth, after all! We've done 'em done 'em brown! Ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"There's the school!"

"The gate is open. Take her right in, Lawrence, up to the giddy door."

"What-ho!" said Clive.

The brake slackened down a little, but was still going at a good speed when Clive turned his horses into the gate. Right on he dashed, right up to the old gray building with its masses of ivy, that had braved the storms of the Atlantic for many a hundred years. Then, with a flourish and a terrific cheer from the juniors, the brake came to a clattering halt.

The next moment the yelling died away, as an amazing figure, in cap and gown, appeared in the doorway.

"The Head!"

(To be continued next week.)

My readers should kindly note that the reproduction of our next Saturday's issue of PLUCK is on page iii. of the cover.