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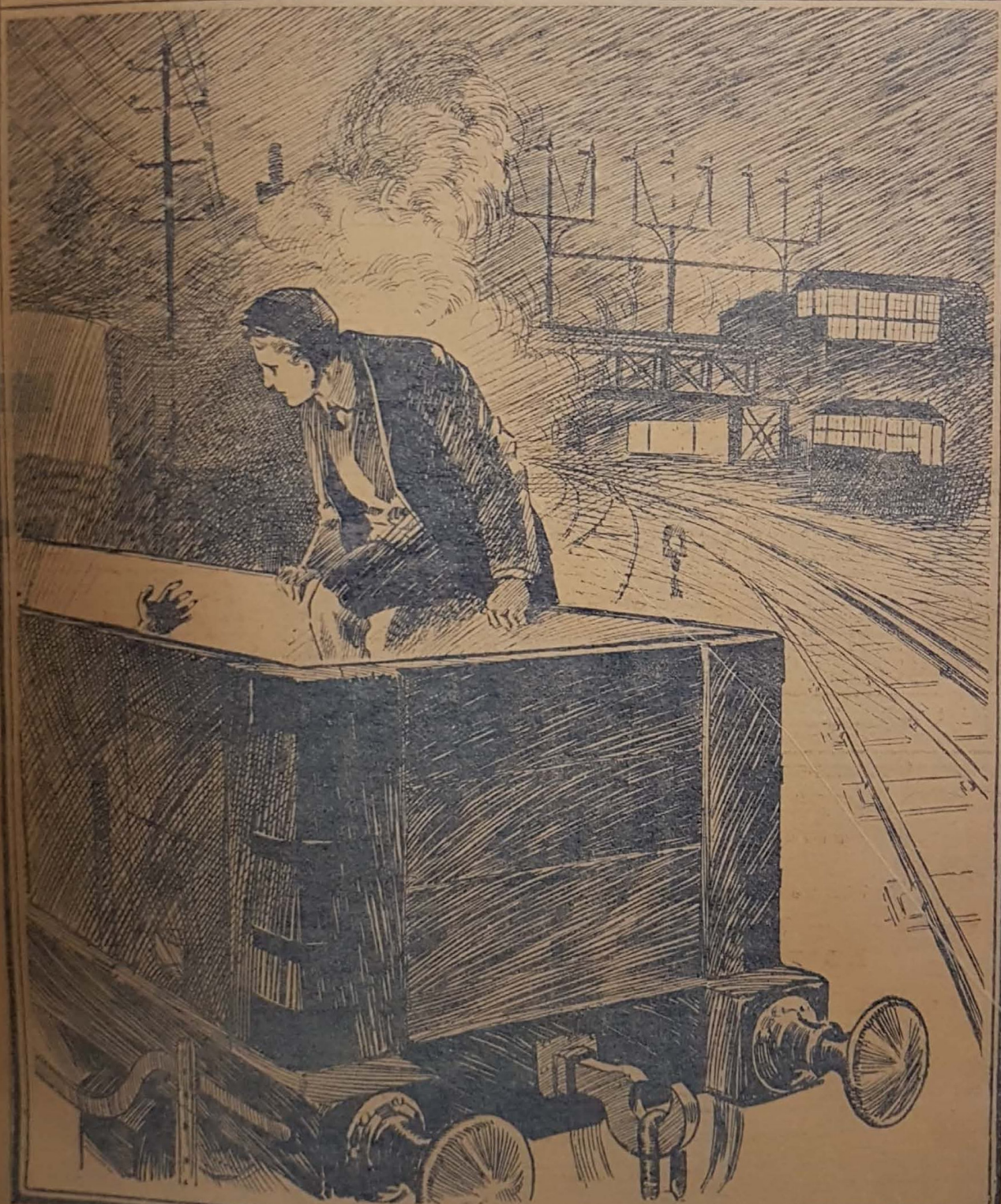
SCHOOL AND ADVENTURE STORIES.

PLUCK

THE RUNAWAY.

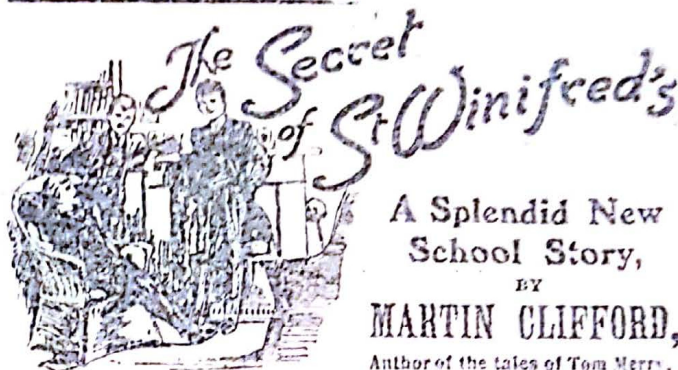
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THE COW-PUNCHER.



BRIAN HAS A STARTLING SURPRISE!

NO. 170. NEW SERIES.



The Secret of St. Winifred's

A Splendid New School Story,

BY
MARTIN CLIFFORD,

Author of the tales of Tom Merry,
appearing every week in the
"GEN" 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 Kendal and Keene. Courtney, a bully, takes Clive for "rag," and sends him on an errand to the Jolly Scaman, 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 Napper 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. Mr. Stossel, the German master, disturbed by the noise, gives each of the Fourth-Formers twenty lines. The boys show their resentment at being punished on the first night, and Mr. Stossel asks Fisher whether he has anything to say. (Now go on with the story.)

FRANZ STOSSEL.

"Yes," exclaimed Fisher, gathering encouragement from the murmurs and savage looks of his Form-fellows, "I have! We're never ragged on a first night—"

"That is quite enough."

"Our Form-master would never do anything of the sort."

"I tell you, that will do, Fisher!"

"I don't care!" said Fisher recklessly. "If you heard the row, sir, you know that we were not to blame for it."

"If others were to blame, you can give me their names, and I will see that they are adequately punished," said the German master, with a sneering curl to his lip.

Fisher's eyes blazed, as did a good many more round him.

To be asked to "sneak" was about the greatest insult that could have been levelled at the Form, and the indignation of the Fourth was too deep for words.

"Have you anything more to say, Fisher?"

"No, sir," said Fisher, without taking the trouble to conceal his disgust.

"Very well; you will take a hundred lines, instead of twenty, for impertinence," said Franz Stossel coldly. "I hope it will be a lesson to you. Now, put the dormitory tidy while I remain here, and be quick about it. I have no time to waste upon a set of unruly young savages!"

The juniors obeyed with sullen looks. Sullenness in a boy is a very bad quality, but a master like Franz Stossel was just the kind of man to cause it.

"My word," Locke muttered to Clive Lawrence; "he's in a regular tantrum to-night! He's always a beast, you know, but he's a beastlier beast now than I've seen him for a long time! Something must have happened to put him in such a rotten temper!"

"Who is he?" muttered Clive, in reply.

"Franz Stossel, our German master."

"Has he been long at the school?"

"He was here last term."

"Is he—is he all right? I mean, is he respected?"

"We don't respect him much; he's not just. He's careless of what goes on, you know, except when he's in a bad temper, and then he comes down heavily for the slightest fault. A chap like that won't get much respect."

"You don't like him?"

"Not much! We'd give him away with a pound of tea, with all the pleasure in the world! Lead me a hand with this bed, will you?"

There was no sign of a weapon. Lee ran outside, mistaking Legan's cartridge belt, grabbed the revolver that had fallen from his hand, and sprang back. A bullet cut the air behind him.

"See, they're closer than I reckoned," he laughed, as he handed the weapon to Alston. "They'll not try to rush us here. We'll have to see who they are."

Despite Alston's warnings, he went to the entrance and peered out, caught sight of three men, and slipped back.

"The birds are all here," he reported. "It's just panned out as I expected. Grinnell, Did Swisher, and Carlow is out as I expected."

"And have us neatly boxed up, too!" retorted the sheriff. "If they can't come in, we can't go out. I guess we sha'n't get 'em this journey."

"We won't, heh! You ain't noticed this cave much." He pointed to the cleft at the entrance which split the rock for quite forty feet. It was narrow and jagged, and without entrance. Jim Lee started to climb upwards.

For thirty feet Lee mounted, dragging himself up with his powerful hands, making use of every cranny or jutting piece of rock that would help him. Then he worked nearer the outer rock, and at last gained the point he had aimed for.

The three desperate men outside were watching the cave entrance like lynxes. They had missed once. Now they were ready they would be hardly likely to miss a second time.

Grinnell was biting his lip with rage to think that Lee had discovered his secret.

Neither Lee nor Alston must escape. He had not intended to kill the sheriff, but merely to keep him out of the way, so that he couldn't corroborate Jim Lee. He meant to have released him after Lee was hung, as he fully expected he would be, feeling certain that Alston had no proofs as to who was really engaged in the cattle-stealing. Now they must both die, and he cudgelled his brain how to get at them.

"Just elevate, sharp!" The voice, Jim Lee's, stern and deadly, seemed to come from over their heads.

Grinnell looked up wildly, raising his gun to shoot, saw the glint of the light on Lee's revolver, and fired.

The other two, also firing blindly, swung their horses round, and spurred away in a mad panic. Three shots followed each other in rapid succession. Carlow fell from the saddle, Swisher's horse rolled over, crushing its rider against the side of the cliff, to lie helpless there till released.

But Grinnell? Lee's first bullet, intentionally aimed to disable, but not to kill, broke his arm above the elbow.

"Euchred, Grinnell!" cried Lee. "Throw up your other hand, or take your gruel!"

Grinnell glared up with concentrated fury and despair, half raised his left hand, and brought it down with all his force on the bronco's head. At the same instant his huge Spanish spurs were driven deep into its side, and the animal shot forward like an arrow straight for the cave.

But at that moment Alston, not caring that Lee should have all the fighting, sprang out with levelled gun.

His sudden appearance was too much for the already startled horse, and, swerving suddenly, it leaped wildly out and over the edge of the path, and plunged with its rider out of sight into the abyss.

For a few seconds Jim Lee and Alston remained still and silent. Then Lee climbed down.

"He would have it, sher'f," he said slowly. "I giv' him all the chance a man c'd want. He never knew when he was beat!"

With this testimony to his enemy's undoubted courage, he left the cave and approached the other two men.

Carlow was badly hurt, but not fatally so, and Swisher's leg had been broken by the fall. But all the fight was knocked out of them, and it was only a question of getting them back to the ranch.

This was solved by the arrival of Dowell and the others, who, hearing the firing, had ridden hard to Lee's help.

It only remains to add that the wounded men later on made full confession, by which it was proved that Grinnell had organized the whole of the cattle thefts in which they had participated.

He had calculated that he would be the last one to be suspected, and had arranged everything so cleverly that, had it not been for Jim Lee, he might have carried on the game for a long time without discovery.

Needless to say, his guilty companions, including, of course, Tony Coyle and another, got their deserts, and the Two Spurs and Diamond Star Ranches enjoyed peace for many a long day.

Jim Lee for a time filled Grinnell's place at the Two Spurs, till his roving nature forced him away, to the great sorrow of everyone on the two ranches.

THE END.

(Two long, complete stories again next Saturday.)

NEXT SATURDAY:

"THE RACERS."

A Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Race, the Twins & Co., by H. Clarke Mack.

"QUONDONG, THE BUSHRANGER."

AND A Thrilling Story of Adventure in Australia.

IN "PLUCK," 1d.

NEXT SATURDAY:

"THE RAGGERS."
A Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of
Specs, the Twins & Co., by H. Clarke Hook.

"QUONDONG, THE BUSHRANGER."
A Thrilling Story of Adventure
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IN "PLUCK," 1d.

"Right you are!"
The German stood looking on with a sour face while the juniors tidied up. Clive and Locke gave the bed a heave, to put it straight, and crashed it against a washstand. A soap-dish rattled to the floor and broke.
"You clumsy young fools!" said Franz Stossell angrily. "Which boy did that?"
"It was my fault, sir," said Clive Lawrence quietly. "I pushed the bed too hard."
"Who are you? Why—"

The German master came two or three paces nearer, his eyes fixed upon Clive's face, his breath coming thick and fast.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed again.
"I am Clive Lawrence, sir," said the new boy at St. Winifred's, quietly. He knew that he was recognised as the visitor to the Jolly Seaman now.

"You—you— No matter; get to bed!"
The juniors obeyed. Locke and Fisher looked in amazed inquiry at Clive Lawrence. The new boy wore a rather worried look as he got into bed. He knew that he had made an enemy at St. Winifred's, and that Franz Stossell was an enemy whose ill-will was likely to make itself felt.

The German's dark brow had grown darker. He stood watching the juniors with a sourer face than ever as they got into bed, and then he extinguished the lights. With a last glance at Clive Lawrence, he turned and left the dormitory, and the door closed and cut off the glimmer of his lamp. His heavy footsteps died away down the passage.
"Nice man, eh?" said Pye. "Twenty lines each, and on the first night of the term! What do you think of that, kids?"

"Rotten!" said Locke. "The hound—the beast! He's in a bad temper about something, and he's put it on us, because we can't resist! I vote that we give Stossell a high old time this term. He's started the row, and we ought to get our own back somehow!"

"Right-ho," said Fisher. "and we will! But I say, you new kid, what's that between you and the German? He hasn't seen you here before, as I know for a fact, but he seemed to recognise you, and not in a very friendly way, either!"

"I suppose he has seen me somewhere," said Clive, evasively. He did not feel inclined to take the whole dormitory into his confidence as to the strange happenings at the Jolly Seaman.

"Well, he doesn't seem to like you, and, from his look, I imagine that

he'll have his knife into you," said Fisher. "Well, and by you, though, and back you up; that is, of course, if you learn to keep your place."
"Oh, keep off that subject!" said Clive.
"Eh? Do you want me to yank you out of bed, Clive Lawrence, and stick your head into a water-jug?" demanded Fisher wrathfully.

"Not particularly."
"Then not so much of your cheek! I can see that I shall have to give you a licking, sooner or later, to keep order in the Form!"

"I can't see you doing it, though," said Clive.
"Perhaps you mean that I couldn't?" suggested Fisher.

"Well, yes, something of the sort."
"By Jupiter," exclaimed Fisher, sitting up in bed, "I'll jolly soon show you!"

"Lie down, fathend!" said Pye. "Do you want to bring Stossell down on our necks again? Ain't a hundred lines enough for you, or do you want more?"

"Well, perhaps you're right; but that kid's cheek—"
"Rats! Why can't you let him alone?"
"He's got to learn to keep his place!"

"Well, his place seems to me to be at the head of the Form," said Pye. "It's a question between him and me, as a matter of fact; and you are dead out of it!"

"Oh, don't talk rot, Pye!"

"I'm not talking rot. You were going to knuckle under to the Fifth. It's time you took a back seat, Fishy, old man; you're no good."

NEXT WEEK! Specs, The Twins & Co.

PLUCK

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NEXT WEEK'S COVER! LOOK OUT FOR IT!

IMPORTANT SALE
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Note the Contents of Next Week's Issue.
I shall be glad if my friends and readers will kindly order their copies of "PLUCK" in advance.
Your Editor.

Fisher only replied with a grunt, and then turned over and went to sleep. But there were a good many fellows in the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's, who agreed with Pye's view of the case.

(An extra long installment next Saturday!)

Next Saturday, two long, complete stories: "The Raggars," a splendid school tale of Specs, the Twins & Co. and "Quondong the Bushranger," a thrilling story of adventure in Australia. Please order your copy of PLUCK in advance. Price 1d.

Printed and published weekly by the Proprietors, the Associated Press, Ltd., of 1, Carnarvon House, Carnarvon Street, London, England. Subscription, 6s. per annum. Saturday, April 4th, 1903.

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