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RIVAL VENTRILOQUISTS!

PLUCK

A GRAND STORY

1^d

BY H. CLARKE HOOK.

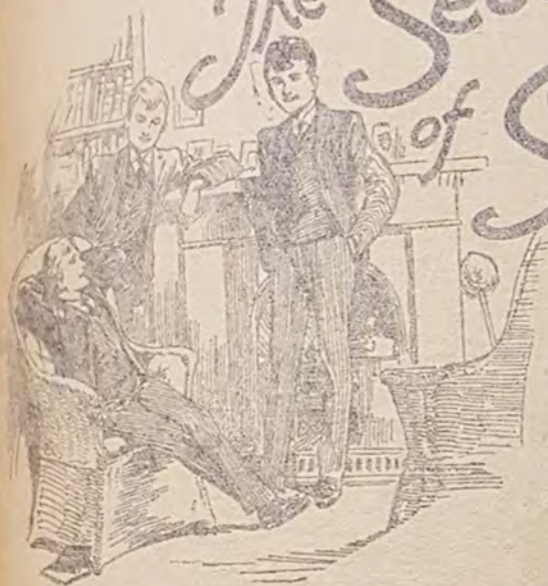


New School Tale.

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 Stessel, the German master at St. Winifred's. Clive returns to the School, and the next day quarrels with Fisher. The two agree to meet in a glove fight, and Clive knocks Fisher out. Fisher then calls a meeting of the Fourth Form, and resigns the captaincy of the Form. An election follows, the fellows divide, and it is apparent that Clive's supporters are more numerous than Fisher's.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Fifth Anticipate Trouble.

"There you are!" exclaimed Sugden. "Do you challenge a count of heads, Fisher, or do you admit that Lawrence has it?"

Fisher grinned. "I can see that Lawrence has it, without a count of heads," he replied. "He has it, and he's welcome to it."

"Bravo!"

"That's all very well," said Pye; "but as captain of the Form—"

"Oh, shut up, Pye!"

"I'm not going to shut up! As captain of this Form, I know this giddy election, and I tell you—"

But Pye was bowled down. The Fourth Form at St. Winifred's gave a rousing cheer for the new captain of the Form, that drowned the voice of the recalcitrant Pye.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!" shouted Locke.

And the whole Form joined in, those who had followed the former captain joining in the cheering, too, when they saw that Fisher did so.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The Form-room rang with the shouts.

"Shoulder-high!" exclaimed Fisher. "Shoulder-high, and down the Fifth-Form passage, to show those rotters how much we care for them!"

"Bravo!"

"Here, chuck it!" said Clive Lawrence, as Fisher and Locke and Sugden raised him on their shoulders. "Chuck it!"

"Rate! Come along!"

"But I say—"

"Oh, come on! Unlock the door!"

"Right you are!"

"Under the circumstances," said Pye, "I'm willing to waive my rights as—"

"Oh, shut up, Pye!"

"I tell you that, under the circumstances, I am willing to waive my rights of—"

"Oh, choose it!"

"I'm willing to waive—"

"Come on—march!"

The juniors, laughing and cheering, crowded out of the Form-room, Clive Lawrence shoulder-high in their midst.

Right down the Fifth-Form passage they went, and the fellows who happened to be in their studies came to their doors to see what the terrific din was about, and were greeted with hisses and yells and catcalls.

"My only hat!" gasped Kendal. "The fearful cheek! In our passage! Go for 'em, kids, and wipe up the scum with them."

But the Fifth were in the minority. Only a few of the scum were indoors, and the whole of the Fourth was there.

Kendal and Keene were hurled back into their study, and

the juniors marched on in triumph, and then down the stairs they went, and out into the sunny Close.

"Well, my only Aunt Sarah Jane!" gasped Keene, as he picked himself up from under the table.

"My—my hat!" panted Kendal. "The cheek of it!"

The shouts of the Fourth-Formers died away below. Kendal and Keene looked at one another.

"It's a Form election," said Keene.

"I suppose so."

"And that means that Clive Lawrence is captain of the Fourth Form."

"And that," said Kendal—"that, my son, means that we are going to have our hands full in the future."

And Kendal was right.

Captain of the Fourth

Right into the sunny Close the excited Fourth-Formers marched, with Clive Lawrence borne high on the shoulders of Fisher, Locke, and Sugden, and the whole Form cheering and waving their caps round him.

Clive was half laughing. Anything in the nature of display was repugnant to his nature, but he had no choice in the matter in the present case. Courtney of the Sixth was coming in at the gates with his friend Carne, and he stopped to stare at the excited procession of juniors.

The bully of the Sixth could not neglect an opportunity of ragging the youngsters, especially as the object of their hero-worship was the new junior, to whom he had taken such an intense dislike. He planted himself in the path of the juniors, and they had to stop.

"What's all this about?" he asked roughly.

"Me," said Clive Lawrence calmly.

The Sixth-Formers glared at him.

"You cheeky young whelp—"

"You're blocking the way, Courtney. You seem to be always getting in the way. Will you stand aside?"

"No, certainly not!"

"But we shall have to walk over you if you don't," said Fisher, who was too excited at the moment to care for the fact that he was addressing a prefect.

"Oh, get on one side!"

"I want you to fag for me, Lawrence," said Courtney, taking advantage of the fact that Clive was, according to the rules of the school, his fag, and could be called upon for his service at any moment.

"Sorry!" said Lawrence.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm not lagging for anybody just at present. I'm busy!"

"Come into the House instantly!"

Clive Lawrence clicked his teeth. He did not intend to be bullied by Courtney while he had a trump card in his hand. He looked steadily at the bully of the Sixth.

NEXT SATURDAY:

"SPECS' TRIUMPH."

A Splendid Tale of Space, by H. Clarke Heath.

"THE MAN IN BLUE."

AND A Thrilling Tale of a Constable's Bravery, by Lewis Mackay.

IN "PLUCK," 1D.

"If you want me to go down to the Jolly Seaman," he said.

Courtney turned pale. He could only glare at the good junior, and the other Fourth-Formers looked at one another. Courtney had not dreamed that Clive Lawrence would dare to bring the matter out into the daylight like that, and he was at a loss for words.

"If not, you can do without me for a bit," said Clive. "Get out of the way, will you?"

Courtney hesitated, but Carne linked an arm in his and pulled him aside. The Fourth-Form crowd passed on triumphantly, and the two Sixth-Formers were left alone. Courtney gritted his teeth.

"You heard what he said, Carne?"

Carne nodded.

"Yes; but you might have expected it, Courtney. He's a bit of a different cut from the usual juniors. You've placed a certain amount of power in his hands by sending him down to the Jolly Seaman—"

"I never thought he would dare—"

"He seems to have nerve enough for anything."

"I'll make him suffer for it yet," said Courtney, walking moodily away.

The Fourth-Formers were still shouting and cheering. They did not quite understand why it was that Courtney of the Sixth had taken Clive's defiance so tamely, but there

was no doubt about the fact that the Sixth-Form bully had given in; and that fact increased Clive Lawrence's prestige immensely.

"What is all this noise?"

Herr Franz Stessel, the German master, had come out of the House, and, in crossing to the gates, he came right upon the procession.

He frowned darkly at the sight of Clive Lawrence.

"What is all this nonsense?" he exclaimed. "Why are you carrying this boy about in this ridiculous manner?"

The German master seemed to possess a happy faculty of getting the boys' backs up when he addressed them. None of the juniors cared to hear their proceedings characterised as nonsense, and there were gleaming eyes among the Fourth-Formers as they looked at the interfering German.

"If you please, sir," said Fisher respectfully, "we've just had a Form election—"

"A what?"

"A Form election."

"Nonsense!"

"We've elected Clive Lawrence captain of the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's."

"Nonsense!"

"If you please, sir, it isn't nonsense. It's a regular custom at St. Winifred's to

elect a captain to each Form," said Fisher. "Of course, I suppose you don't know much about it, sir."

The German gritted his teeth.

"Get down at once, Lawrence!"

Clive Lawrence hesitated. But he could not disobey a master, though the uncalld-for and ill-natured interference made his blood boil. He slid down from the shoulders of the juniors who were carrying him.

"You will keep more quiet, or you will be dismissed," said the German; and, with a last frowning look at the boys, he passed out of the gates.

"Best!" said Fisher.

"Rotter!" said Locke.

"Skunk!" said Pye.

"Let's go on with the procession," said Suzden. "Just to show the rotter that we don't care a rap for him."

Clive Lawrence shook his head.

"No; but we'll cheer so long as he can hear us. Stand in the gates and yell."

The juniors laughed, and crowded out of the gateway. There they let off a hurrah that could have been heard down on the pebble-ridge at Penwyn.

The German, who was following the lane that led past the Jolly Seaman Inn to the seashore, turned his head. He saw the juniors crowded at the gate, cheering for all they were worth, and his sallow face went pink with rage.

He clenched his hands hard, and muttered something in his own tongue as he stared back at the Fourth-Formers. He knew that that cheering was open disrespect to himself, and yet it was scarcely possible for him to pick fault with the juniors for cheering on a half-holiday. They had a right to cheer if they liked. After a moment's savage thought, he turned away again, and strode on towards the sea. The Fourth-Formers cheered as long as he remained in sight, and then sent a last tremendous yell after his disappearing form.

Clive Lawrence laughed.

"That rotter is up against the Fourth all the time," he observed. "He's the only master at St. Winifred's who won't let us respect him. He's started the war, and I fancy we shall be able to give as good as we got. Hallo!" he added, as he looked at his watch.

"Tea-time!"

The Fourth-Formers, laughing and chatting, passed in at the gates; but Clive Lawrence remained where he was, with a thoughtful expression upon his face. Fisher and Locke paused behind the others, and looked round, as Clive did not enter the gateway. (Another long instalment next week.)



Next Saturday's two long, complete stories: "Specs' Triumph," a splendid tale of Specs & Co.; and "The Man in Blue," the story of a policeman's bravery. Please order your copy of "Pluck" in advance. Price One Penny.