

PLUCK

THE STORY OF A YOUNG **1st** BRITISHER'S PLUCK.



SPECS PLAYING ON DE OLE BANJO!!

Our School Serial Story.



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 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 Trolawney's ancestors, Clive Lawrence, with Fisher and Locke, set out one afternoon to forestall the German.

(Now go on with the story.)

Treasure Trove!

The St. Winifred's juniors climbed the cliff. Dangerous as the path was, it did not seem so dangerous to Clive Lawrence now as at the first climbing. The narrow ledges were traversed, and they reached the rocky plateau before the dark caverns.

"Light the lamp, Locke, old chap."

Locke struck a match and lighted the lantern. The three juniors plunged into the gloom of the cave.

Round them rose the walls of rough rock, irregularly arched over their heads, and under their feet were loose stones and sand.

The caves they had entered extended beyond the reach of the light, far into the heart of the vast Penwyn cliffs.

"Plenty of room here to hide any amount of treasure," grinned Fisher. "We've been some distance up this way before. Lead the way with that light."

"Follow the man from Cook's," said Locke; and, flashing the light of the lantern, ahead, he advanced into the cave.

The great cave narrowed further on, narrower and narrower, till the juniors were forced to proceed in single file, with the great rocks closing them in on either side.

Then suddenly it widened again, to an unknown extent, the light of the lantern failing to reach the sides of the dense gloom.

The air was still fresh, showing that somewhere at hand there were openings, though no light could penetrate through them. Clive Lawrence gazed round into the dense gloom in awe.

"By Jove, this is an uncanny place!" he said.

"You're right, it is!"

"Has anybody been past this point before?"

"I don't know," said Fisher. "We haven't, anyway. This narrow passage is known among the Penwyn folk; they call it the Neck. Blessed if I know anything further on!"

"We're going on, aren't we?"

"Yes, if you like."

"The treasure of the galleon may be lying quite handy now," grinned Locke. "Let's get on, and give it a chance, anyway."

The juniors went forward. The cavern was so large that there was danger of losing themselves, and at Clive's suggestion they followed the wall of rock on the left.

They followed it, taking care not to lose touch with it, and passed many an opening and rugged cleft on the way.

Then suddenly Clive stopped, and flashed the light of the

lantern upon a mark in the sank with which the floor of the cave was powdered.

"Look there!"

It was a foot-print!

"My hat," muttered Fisher, "somebody else is here! That's a new mark—not an hour old, at any rate—it's so clean cut!"

"Looks like a boy's boot," said Locke. "It's not a man's—not Herr Stossel's, at any rate."

Clive looked at the footprint with a puzzled expression, feeling a good deal as Crusoe must have done when he saw the footprint in the sand of his desert isle. Then suddenly the junior burst into a laugh. His laugh rang with strange and hollow echoes through the gloomy cave.

"What are you cackling at?" exclaimed Fisher. "Nothing funny in that footprint, is there?"

Clive laughed again.

"Yes, rather. I know whose it is."

"Whose, then?"

"My own!"

"What!"

"See, here are some more further on—three sizes," grinned Clive. "They're our own footmarks, and it means that we've got back to the place we started from."

"My hat!"

"We've been all round the cave, and this is where we started." Clive flashed the lantern upon a dark gap in the surrounding rocks. "That is the Neck."

"By Jove, so it is!"

"I say," murmured Locke anxiously, "that gap isn't unlike a score of others we've passed."

"No; but it is the Neck right enough—our footmarks here prove that."

"Yes, I know; but—but supposing we hadn't made any footmarks? We might have wandered round and round here for hours looking for the way out, and not finding it."

Clive Lawrence became very grave.

"By Jove, old man, you're right! We haven't shown much sense in the way we've done our exploring, and that's a fact. We ought to have made a mark here."

"I've got some chalk," said Fisher.

"Good! Hand it over!"

Fisher handed Clive a stub of chalk, and the latter, holding up the lantern, traced a huge chalked hand on the rough rock, with index finger pointing.

"There you are," he said. "No mistaking the way after that. We've been here about an hour, I suppose, and haven't discovered anything. It's a big job looking for a giddy treasure without a clue of any sort."

Fisher grinned.

"Bigger than you thought, old chap?"

"Well, yes," said Clive, laughing. "We don't give up yet, mind. But I think we may as well go out into the open air now."

"Right-ho!"

The three juniors entered the narrow neck, and suddenly Clive Lawrence blew out the lantern, and stopped.

"Hold on!" he muttered.

"What is it?" whispered Fisher.

(An Extra Long Instalment of this Story next Saturday. Please Order your copy of "PLUCK" in advance. Price 1d.)

THE EDITOR'S DEN.

This week I want to have a few moments' personal talk with my readers.

I was sitting in my office at work on PLUCK, when my office-boy entered and handed me a card. Glancing at it, I saw that it bore the name of a well-known writer of boys' stories—Mr. Ambrose Earle. I invited him to my room, and he told me, in his animated style, a story about a British lad's pluck, displayed in a mysterious case, relating to a huge diamond that had once formed the eye in the head of an Indian wooden god. I do not remember having been so thrilled before as I was upon this occasion, and I immediately asked Mr. Ambrose Earle to write the story out, so that my readers could have the benefit of it. Many of you have read some of his clever stories, and those of you who have not have certainly a treat in store in next Saturday's PLUCK. If you have a friend to whom you want to do a good turn, please tell him that "The Jalapoor Diamond," by Ambrose Earle, appears in next Saturday's PLUCK; and, to make sure of getting a copy, please place your order with a newsagent now.

Our second story will be called "The Wreck of the Gun Runners," by Firth Scott. It is a story of unparalleled bravery at sea—a story that no reader of mine can peruse without feeling a thrill of pride that he is a Britisher.

Specs & Co. will appear again in PLUCK the week after next.

THE EDITOR OF "PLUCK."