

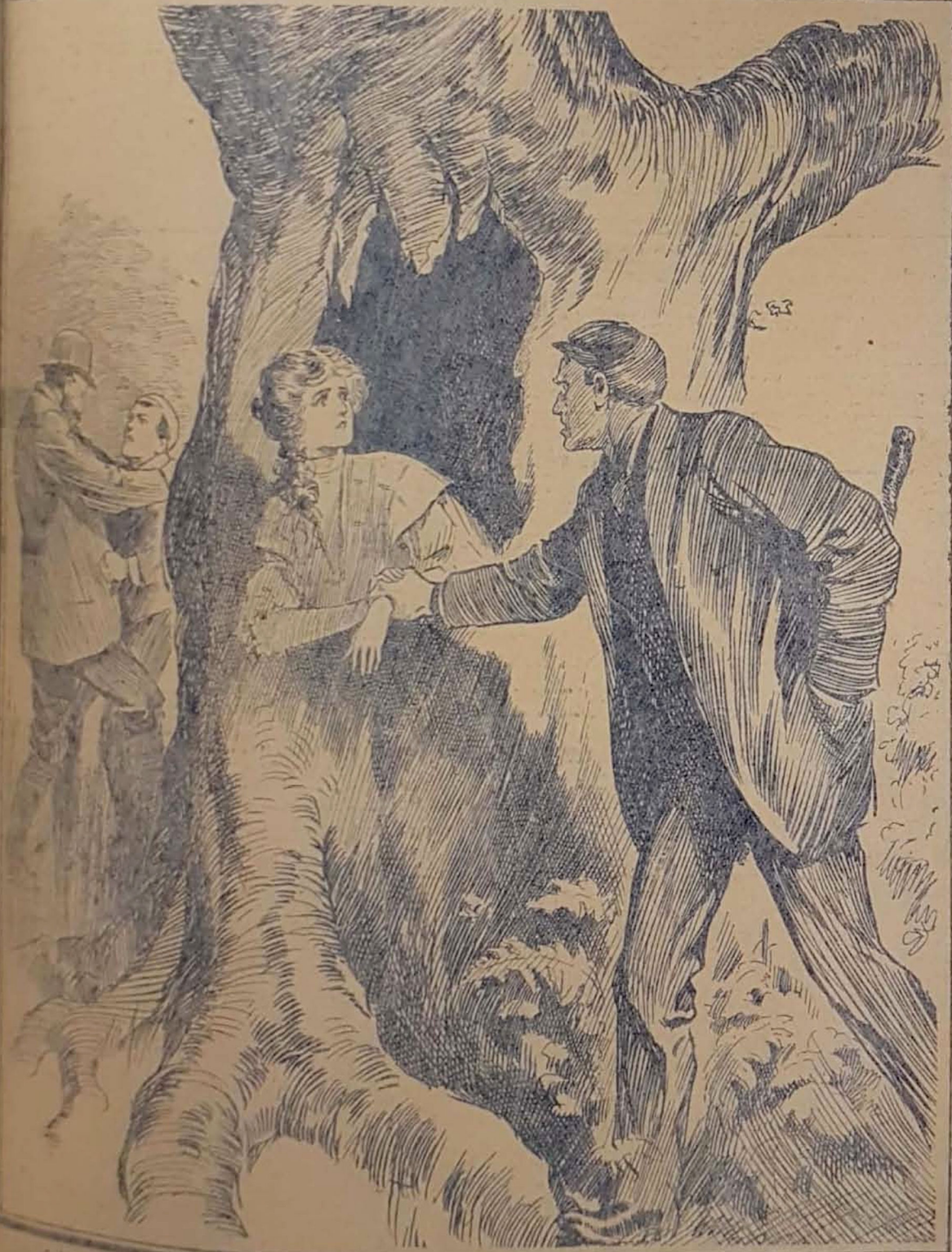
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The Secret of St. Winifred's



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 Kendall 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. Early the next morning Clive encounters Herr Stessel near the Penwyn Rocks. This appears to annoy the German, who attempts to "rag" Clive in class that day. Clive, however, defies him; and Herr Stessel, to the surprise of all, allows the matter to drop. (Now go on with the story.)

Foes!

Fisher tapped Clive Lawrence on the shoulder as the Fourth Form crowded down the passage.
"How young shaver!" he exclaimed.
Clive turned and looked at him.
"Well, what is it?" he asked.
"What does it mean?"
"It's all the new boy at St. Winifred's, apparently comprehending."
"What does it mean?"
"You know very well what I'm driving at!" exclaimed Fisher sharply. "What was it made the German master put in so suddenly in that way? No fellow in the Fourth has ever got the better of Stessel before, and I want to know how you did it."
"I don't know the whole of the Form," suggested Locke. "I have an idea what it means, Fisher, and Lawrence won't be telling you. Come up to the study."
"Oh, all right!" said Fisher rather ungraciously.
The three punners were seen in Study No. 7. Locke and Clive were seen, and Fisher turned towards Clive Lawrence.
"Well, young shaver, explain yourself," he said brusquely.
"I don't know that it's any business of yours, old fellow," said Clive coolly. "And as a matter of absolute fact, I am not in the habit of being catechised in this way."
Fisher made a threatening gesture.
"I've warned you before," he said impressively, "to keep your place, or else you'll find yourself in hot water at St. Winifred's."
"I think I remember your making a remark to that effect," said Clive Lawrence, with an air of reflection. "In fact, I think I remember your making it a good many times. To tell you the exact truth, I'm getting tired of it, and I wish you would start something a bit more original."
Clive burst into a cackle, which ceased at once as Fisher looked at him.
"What are you cackling about, Locke?"
"The nothing," said Locke.
"You can see anything funny in this new kid's cheek, can't you, Fisher?" said Fisher angrily.
"I don't see less a fellow is to keep his temper, between talking and the young rotter's nerve," said Fisher.
"Like his cheek, of course!"
"Like his cheek, of course!" said Clive. "Fancy a fellow having the nerve to do anything without consulting the head of the Fourth!"
"I'll thrash something quite wrong with your works, and you must make funny noises like that, I wish

to goodness you'd go outside the study to do it!" he exclaimed.
Locke turned red.
"I suppose a fellow can laugh if he likes," he said.
"Not if he makes a row like a hungry hyena."
"Look here, Fisher—" began Locke warmly.
"Oh, don't mind him!" said Clive. "He's ratty, and he can't help it. If you've finished your catechism, Fisher, I'll clear out—"
"But I haven't!" exclaimed Fisher. "I want to know what it was made the German master back down like that. I'm head of this Form, and I'm not going to have any beastly secrets kept—from me, at any rate."
"Oh, I don't mind telling you, but I don't want it to become the talk of the Form!"
"I suppose a fellow in my position is not likely to go chattering secrets about among the fags," said Fisher, with the importance naturally belonging to the head of the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's.
"Well, I hope you won't," said Clive. "This is how the matter stands. Locke knows, so I don't see why you shouldn't. Stessel was afraid I should tell the Head that he was at the Jolly Seaman last night, talking on chummy terms there with a chap named Napper—an awful black-guard."
Fisher gave a whistle.
"And that's why he picked on you to-day—eh?"
"That's why."
"And he was afraid of being given away. Well, it was like your cheek to think of such a thing; anyway, without consulting me—"
"Oh, rats to that!" said Clive cheerfully. "I'm not in the habit of putting my brain-work out to be done, you know. I usually think things out for myself."
"Perhaps that may lead to your getting a swelled head," suggested Fisher. "A fellow in the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's with a swelled head is likely to have a really rough old time."
"Is that so?" said Clive sympathetically. "You must have been through a lot during your stay here, I suppose?"
Fisher glared, and Locke cackled.
"What do you mean by that, you cheeky young rotter?"
"Hold on! Better language, please!"
"I shall use what language I like to a fag."
"Not if I'm the fag!"
"I tell you—"
"Here, don't quarrel, you two!" exclaimed Locke, beginning to look alarmed. "He had long played the peace-maker, but affairs seemed to be getting beyond his control now. What would be the good of ragging one another? If you must rag somebody, rag the Fifth."
"I'm not going to be called a rotter by anybody."
"I'll call you a rotter, or anything else I choose, as often

Condition
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as I like, and keep it up as long as I like," said Fisher. "I'll make a song of it, and sing it to you if I choose."

"Then I'll jolly soon give you something else to sing!"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, go and eat cake!" said Clive, turning away to leave the study. A strong grasp on his shoulder swung him back.

He looked coolly into Fisher's threatening face and gleaming eyes.

"I say, keep your temper, Fishy," urged Locke. "The new fellow is a decent sort, and he doesn't mean any harm."

"That's all very well, Locke—"

"Let go my shoulder, please," said Clive Lawrence quietly.

"I shall let go your shoulder when I choose, and not before," said Fisher loftily. "I'd like to see the captain of the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's taking orders from a new kid—I don't think."

"Let me go, I tell you."

"Shan't, till I like!"

Clive's eyes were gleaming. But Locke the peacemaker came between again.

"Now, look here, Fishy, don't you start being a beastly bully," he said, in a tone of remonstrance. "You know we've set up to put down bullying in the Fourth Form, so don't you start it yourself with the new kid."

Fisher turned very red.

"Who says I'm bullying?" he exclaimed.

"Well, what do you call it then?"

"I'm just explaining things to this cheeky rotter, and putting him in his place, that's all. Call that bullying!"

"Well, why don't you let him alone, anyway? He's done no harm, and there's no reason why we should not live comfy here in peace and quietness—"

"He's got to know his place—"

"Oh, rats!"

"If you say rats to me, Locke—"

"Oh, keep your wool on! You are getting excited. Come out for a stroll."

"I shan't do anything of the kind. This kid has checked the captain of the Fourth. I don't want to be hard upon him, though you call me a beastly bully," said Fisher sarcastically. "So I—"

"I didn't call you anything of the sort."

"Oh, shut up and let me finish! I say I don't want to be hard on him. But he's got to apologise and promise to keep his place."

Clive Lawrence laughed.

"I've got to apologise for being called a rotter!" he asked.

Fisher looked a little uncomfortable.

"Well, no. Lemme see—you've got to apologise for being a rotter—"

"But I'm not one."

"I say you are, and as captain of the Fourth my word goes. I haven't asked you for your opinion on the subject. Now, are you going to apologise?"

"Certainly not!"

"Are you going to promise to keep your place, and treat your Form captain with humble respect?"

"Not if I know it."

"Now, look here, Lawrence, I don't want to quarrel with you—"

"You'll quarrel with me, whether you want to or not, if you don't take your hand off my shoulder," said Clive coolly.

"Why, you cheeky young scoundrel—"

"Better language, please."

"I'll better language you!" roared Fisher, who had quite lost his temper by this time; and he made a wild drive at Clive's face.

The new boy at St. Winifred's easily parried the blow, and Fisher almost lost his balance, so much force had he thrown into the drive, which went by Clive's head without touching him. He was at the mercy of the new boy, but Clive Lawrence did not hit out.

He put his hands down at his sides, smiling. Fisher recovered himself, and seemed about to hurl himself to the attack, but Locke pulled him back.

"Now, shut up, Fishy!" urged Locke. "Don't be a silly ass, old fellow!"

"Lemme get at him!"

"Oh, he won't be happy till he gets it," laughed Clive. "I'll tell you what, Fisher, I'm ready for you; but a scrap in a study is no good, and it would bring some prefect down upon us. If you want a row, let us go into the gym, after school, and have it out with the gloves on."

"Good wheeze!" said Locke heartily.

The captain of the Fourth hesitated.

"You don't mean to say you funk it!" exclaimed Clive.

"Funk it!" roared Fisher. "You—you wormal! I was

thinking that it would be low-down to do it in the study."

"My dear chap, never mind that. It's a matter of fact, you're not half such an impressive person as you think you are."

"Let go my arm, Locke!"

"Oh, keep cool! Leave your fists in the gym, and if you lick me I won't count it. It's not having the gloves on, or I wouldn't have said that."

"Afraid of getting hurt, I suppose?"

"Oh, no. Only afraid of hurting you, my dear fellow,"

plained Clive.

"Locke, you beast, let go my arm, and let me see that cheeky young rotter!" roared Fisher, fuming.

"Rats! Leave it till after school in the gym."

"I'll—"

"Trot!" said Clive, with a wave of the hand. "Later in the gym, Fisher." And the new boy at St. Winifred's walked out of the study.

Then Locke let his clam go, and Fisher gazed at the coolness of the new junior with a look of amazement.

"What do you mean by bringing on me, my dear fellow?"

Locke, confounded you, when I wanted to do up the new chap with that cheeky kid?" shouted Fisher.

"Better leave it till you have the gloves on, and let a decent chap not like a hooligan!" said Locke.

"I'm going to give him a fearful licking."

"It can wait a few hours, I suppose. It won't be anything by being kept."

Fisher looked at him suspiciously.

"Perhaps you think I can't lick that young rascal, do you?"

His clam made no reply, but the expression of his face bore out Fisher's suspicion. His colour deepened.

"Well, I'll show you later!" he exclaimed, moodily. "I didn't expect this of you, Locke, to go back on an errand for the sake of a new rotter—"

Locke coloured.

"Oh, don't pile it on, Fishy!" he exclaimed, vexedly.

"You know very well I haven't gone back on you, or anything of the sort. I can't help seeing that you're better on the new chap for nothing at all, and I can't quite stand it either. It's not like you. You were never a hooligan before."

"Thank you!" said Fisher sarcastically.

"I mean what I say. There's only one explanation I can think of, and—"

"And what is that?"

"Oh, never mind," said Locke evasively.

"Get it off your chest! I told you, I want to know. This is the precious explanation?" growled Fisher.

"Well, if you particularly want to know, my dear fellow, it seems to me that you can see the new chap is better stuff, and you've seen how he got the better of the Fourth, and you think he'll get ahead of you as a little of the Fourth."

Fisher turned scarlet. As a matter of fact, Locke had upon the exact truth, though the feeling had been more or less unconscious in Fisher's breast.

"Well, that's a nice thing to say to a chap," he exclaimed. "You'd better clam up with the scowling law, and leave me out—"

"I don't want to do anything of the sort."

"You think he'd make a better captain of the Fourth than I do, so don't deny it."

Locke did not deny it. He remained silent.

"All right," said Fisher, greatly increased in courage—and him! "I'll give your precious candidate a licking after school that his own mother would't know him."

And Fisher strode to the door.

"I say, Fishy—"

The captain of the Fourth did not answer. He walked out of the study, and banged the door behind him, leaving his clam alone, with a dismayed look upon his face.

With the Gloves On

Five o'clock boomed out from the clock-tower at St. Winifred's when Clive Lawrence walked out into the dusk with his hands in his pockets, and a cheery expression upon his face. The new boy at St. Winifred's was in high spirits, and the prospect of the coming encounter with Fisher in the gym, did not seem to oppress him in the smallest degree.

"Hallo, kid!"

Clive Lawrence glanced round as he was about to nodded coolly to Kendal and Keene of the Fifth Form, as they bore down upon him.

"Hallo, Kendy!" he exclaimed, in greeting. "Your kicking yet? When are you coming to see me again?"

"SPEECH DAY."

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boy had shown his quality already more than once during the brief time he had been at St. Winifred's. The judges expected to see a first class encounter, and they came eagerly to the sight. There were others besides Fourth-Formers there. Many of the Sixth, the new Higher Forms, had come in, as well as fellows in the Remove and the Third, to see the combat.

Fisher was stripped for the fray, his jacket and waistcoat off, and his braces tied round his waist, his sleeves rolled up, and the gloves on his hands. He was looking as determined as a bulldog, and it was evident to all present that he did not regard the contest lightly, though he would have been glad to have them think so.

"Hallo, Locke, have you found that kid?" he asked, looking round as the new arrivals crowded in.

"Yes, here he is."
"Are you ready, Lawrence?"
"I shall be in a jiffy," said Clive, beginning to take off his jacket.

"Got a second?"
"Yes, Pye."

"I'm his second," said Pye, taking Clive's jacket. "As captain of the Fourth—"

"Oh, don't give us that old gag again, Pye?"
"As captain of the Fourth—"

"Cheese it!"
"Make a ring!" said Locke. "We've got to have this out in proper style. I'm Fisher's second, so we shall want somebody else for timekeeper and referee."

"An Upper Form fellow would be best," said Pye.

"I'll keep time, if you like," said a well-known voice; and Kendal, the captain of the Fifth, who had just come in with Keene, pushed forward.

The Fourth-Formers looked doubtfully at their old enemy.

"Rows are off," said Kendal, with a grin. "I'll keep time for you, and ref. the boxing-match in the proper style. Go ahead!"

"Oh, all right!" said Fisher. "I suppose you can behave yourself for a little while if we let you stay here?"

Kendal grinned.

"I'll manage this thing for you," he said. "Three-minute rounds, and one-minute rests; usual style. Are you ready, kids?"

"I am," said Fisher.

"And I," said Clive, as he put on the gloves.

"Good! Then toe the line."
The adversaries advanced and faced one another. Kendal took out a big silver watch. Clive held out his hand, and Fisher took it. There was nothing mean about Fisher. He shook hands with Clive before the contest began in the most whole-hearted way.

"Time!"

And there was an eager crowding of the juniors about the ring to see the combat start. They were disappointed with the beginning. Both the combatants were cautious, and neither evidently intended to give himself away. The first round commenced with cautious sparring, and after two minutes of it the Fourth Form began to giggle.

"Buck up!"

"Get a move on!"

"Is this the rest cure?"

"Yah! Go it!"

Such were the remarks of the irreverent Fourth, and Fisher flushed red as he heard them. Clive Lawrence took no notice of them whatever. In fact, he did not appear to hear them. At all events, he did not heed them. He remained as cool as an iceberg, thinking only of the matter in hand, which was the way to win.

But Fisher was growing excited, and he pushed the fight harder. The juniors cheered him as he rushed in, attacking hotly. There was something going on at last. But Fisher paid heavily for his rashness.

Clive retreated a little before his heavy attack, and then made a feint, and Fisher, in his haste, fell blindly into the trap, and the next moment Clive came through his guard, and his right clumped home on Fisher's chin like a lump of iron.

Fisher gave a gasp and staggered back, and in the same moment Clive's left smote upon his nose, and he staggered further. And it would have been a fall, but at that moment Kendal called time, and Locke caught his principal and helped him away.

The new boy had had decidedly the best of the first round, and there were many admiring remarks made among the spectators. Pye patted him almost affectionately on the shoulder.

"My dear kid, you know how to box!" he remarked.

"I know I do," said Clive coolly. "I have been through this sort of thing before, you see, and with tougher nuts to crack than Fisher is."

Pye laughed.

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with the

"Well, you'll pull out ahead, in my opinion," he said. "And I fancy Fishy is beginning to think so himself, too." A doubt of his ultimate success was indeed creeping into Fisher's mind, though he strove to disguise it. He remon- strated Clive's prowess in the train coming down to St. Winifred's, and realised that he had caught a tartar. But Fisher had plenty of pluck, and was as determined as a bulldog. He meant to go on.

Locke mopped his heated face with a wet sponge. Locke was looking serious. He naturally wanted his principal to pull off the victory, but he had strong doubts about it. The chams had made up their little difference of opinion, and Locke was backing up his leader for all he was worth. At the same time, he had a feeling that a boy like Clive Lawrence would make a better leader for the Fourth than Fisher made. There was no doubt that the Fifth Form had, as a rule, got the better of the little encounters which enlivened existence at St. Winifred's, and that Clive Lawrence had made a change in that respect already. But Locke was too considerate towards his friend to utter the thoughts that were in his mind.

"I believe I got rather the worst of that little bit," Fisher remarked diffidently. "Locke could not help grinning."

"Yes, I believe you did, Fishy," he said.

"Of course, it was a fluke."

"Of course!" assented Locke. "But there was something in his tone that made his cham look at him very sharply."

"Perhaps you think that the new kid can lick me, Locke," said Fisher, in his most aggressive manner.

"Time!" called out Kendal; and Locke was saved from the difficulty of answering that direct question.

"Go in and win, old chap!" was all he said.

"Of course I shall!" growled Fisher.

The adversaries toed the line again. Fisher was much more cautious this time, and did not allow the impatient urgings of the spectators to hurry him into rashness, as in the first round. Clive Lawrence played the same game as before, seeking to draw his enemy on; but Fisher was not to be drawn.

Then they came out a little stronger, and began attacking. Fisher's eyes gleamed; he thought that he had the new boy now. But he was terribly mistaken. It was the new boy who had him.

Fisher retreated a little, to draw Clive on, and Clive came on willingly enough. But Fisher's feints were all seen through, his tempting openings were passed over unregarded, and every blow he put in was stopped. And Clive feinted skillfully, and Fisher rushed in—

to his doom for his draw... played late... went down with a bump like a sack of flour.

He lay there dazed, and Clive stood ready for him to rise, but at his sides, evidently intending to be on his feet and able to be on his feet was not in a state to get on his feet.

"One, two, three, four—" There was a crashing of feet, and Clive of the Fourth. The terrible onslaught on him, and he lay on his back, blinking out a motion to rise.

"Buck up, Fishy!" exclaimed Locke.

But Fisher was evidently past bucking up.

"Five, six, seven, eight—" There was a buzz of deep-drawn breath.

reached ten without Fisher having risen and combat, according to the rules he was to acknowledge defeat.

"Nine—" counted Kendal.

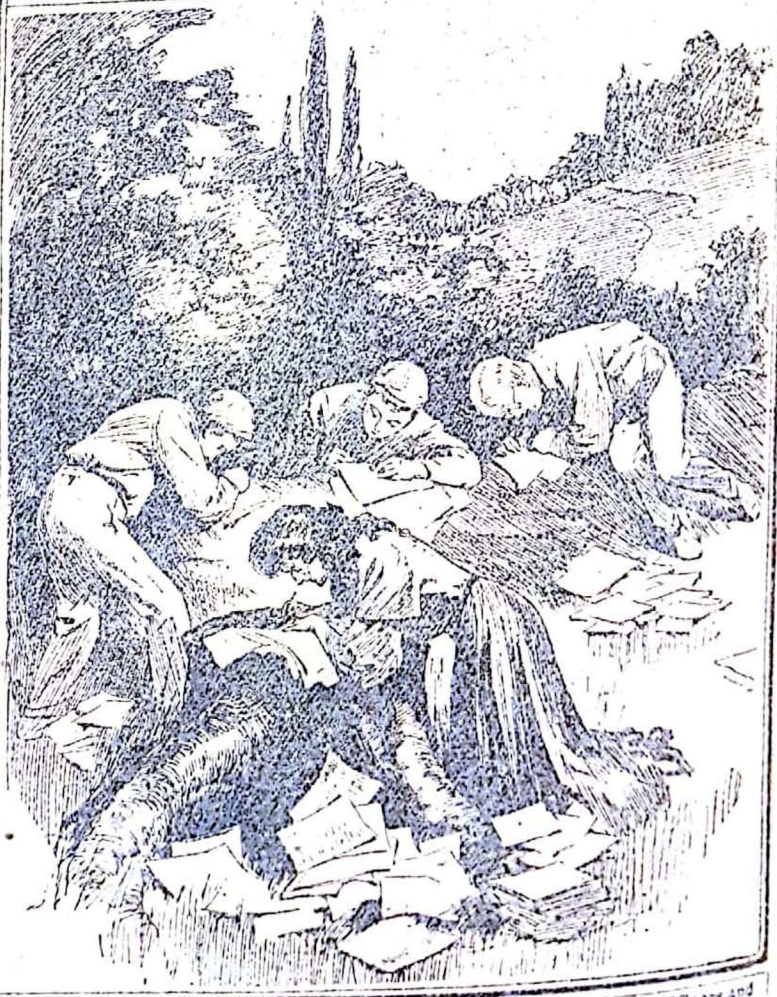
The buzz died into a breathless silence over? Was the redoubtable captain of the Fourth knocked out in the second round?

"Ten!" said Kendal, and snipped his mouth.

Fisher made a feeble movement, but did not rise.

PLUCK

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