

SPECS, The Ventriloquist, at the FRANCO-BRITISH.

PLUCK

1^d

A GRAND TALE

BY H. CLARKE HOOK.



"PENNY, PLEASE! PENNY, PLEASE!" WAS THE CHORUS; AND BY THE TIME SPECS GOT FREE HE HAD DISTRIBUTED EVERY SINGLE COPPER COIN
NO. 194. NEW SERIES.

The inspector stared at him. He would have scouted the idea as ridiculous from any other man than Long-headed Latimer. "He writ them with his dyin' hand, crawlin' from the place where he fell to do it," said Mr. Latimer, speaking as though he were recalling a scene he had actually witnessed. "I seed the marks on the grass where he'd dragged hisself along.

The inspector gasped. Why didn't he see these things? "But G A R, Gar—what name can it mean, if it does mean a name?" queried Inspector Sharp. "Wait a bit!" said Mr. Latimer. He was listening. Strange thudding sounds came from the shop. He stole softly to the glass door and peered over the curtain. Master Dinky had abandoned his work and was making murderous stabs at the chopping-block with a knife.

Mr. Latimer opened the door and crept softly into the shop. It was wonderful how softly this big man did things like this.

"Drop that, Dinky!" he said. "You'll break the knife!" Dinky started, then growled out: "Well, it ain't your knife, it's mine!" But Mr. Latimer was already aware of this. A second glance had told him that it was not one of his professional implements; but it interested him all the same. And by an adroit movement he transferred it from Dinky's hand to his own.

A moment of close scrutiny. Then, by an equally adroit movement, and with the aid of his steel hook inserted neatly in that surprised youth's collar, he transferred Dinky to the shop-parlour and closed the door. The inspector looked up in amazement; he was still studying the scrawl upon that palette.

"Where did you find this knife?" asked Mr. Latimer. "Speak out, Dinky. You've got nothin' to be afear'd of, unless you tell a lie."

Dinky looked scared at first. But with that promise he knew he was safe. For Mr. Latimer never broke his word.

Thereupon he told the whole story of his morning excursion to Collingham Park, and the finding of that enchanting knife. The inspector listened impatiently, or hardly listened at all. He was inclined to regard the whole affair as a needless and frivolous interruption of a much graver matter.

"Never mind about that now, Latimer," he said testily. "What about these three letters?" pointing to the palette, which he held in his hand.

"You'll find 'em all here—and the rest of 'em," said Long-headed Latimer, handing the knife to him. "Look at the handle."

Inspector Sharp did look, and his eyes opened very wide indeed. For there, carved upon the horn handle of the knife, were not only those three letters but a complete name, "Manuel Garcia."

"Manuel Garcia!" he repeated the name aloud, with a puzzled expression on his face. Then suddenly a light seemed to dawn upon him, and he exclaimed, "Manuel Garcia! There is an extradition warrant out for that man! A convict escaped from the Spanish galleys, and believed to have come to England!"

Mr. Latimer removed his top-hat and let down his apron.

"Well, he did come to England," he said wearily. "He came to kill Sir Charles Collingham, an' he's done it. He meant to use that knife—an' I reckon it wouldn't a' been its first job o' that kind. But Sir Charles made a grab for Mark Brooks' gun, which Mark had left with him jest as he said, an' I reckon it was done in the struggle for the gun. That's all about it."

"But—" began the inspector. "As for this 'ere Garcia, you'll find him up at the gipsy camp in the woods, if you want him," continued Mr. Latimer, with the same wearied air. "Only you'd better look sharp, 'cos they've got orders to clear out to-day."

The inspector did look sharp, for he was out of the shop and on his way to the station for a squad of men in a few moments.

It turned out much according to Mr. Latimer's forecast. Manuel Garcia was found at the gipsy camp in the woods, having made not the slightest attempt to escape after his crime, of which he made a full confession—nay, even a proud boast. He suffered the full penalty in due course.

We need add but little more beyond a passing mention of a little supper, consisting chiefly of pork and string beans, which was held one night a week or so later in Mr. Latimer's shop parlour.

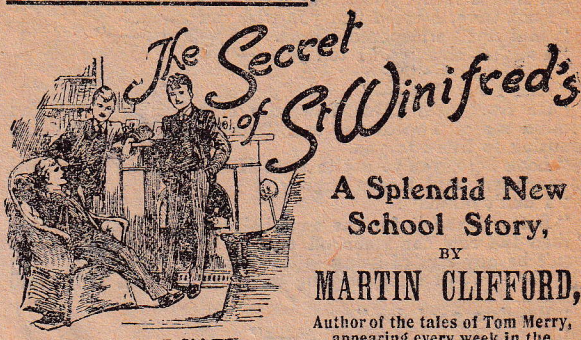
Long-headed Latimer took the chair. Captain Kidd perched upon his shoulder. Facing him, at the foot of the table, was Mrs. Milger, the housekeeper from the Turrets, hoping in her heart of hearts to one day become the housekeeper of Mr. Latimer's own abode. Upon his left sat Inspector Sharp and Dinky—there as a special favour. Upon his right sat Mark Brooks and his bride that is to be, Mary Ingram.

Long-headed Latimer proposed a sentiment: "The wust thing ain't so bad when you're well out of it!"

THE END.

(Two splendid long, complete stories again next Saturday. Order your copy of PLUCK in advance.)

NEW SCHOOL TALE.



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 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 overhears a plot between Napper and a German, whom he afterwards recognises as Herr Stossel, 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. Ultimately 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, and then make them run the gauntlet.

(Now go on with the Story.)

Kendal's Challenge.

Keene was through in a few moments, and was grinning when he came out at the end of the row. There was a sound of grumbling among the juniors.

"I say, he ought to be made to go through again," exclaimed Carker.

"Yes, rather! I didn't touch him."

"Nor I."

"Oh, fair's fair!" exclaimed Clive Lawrence. "If he dodged the whacks, he's entitled to the benefit. He's been put through it, and that's enough."

"That's all very well—" began Carker.

"Exactly. Shut up!"

Kendal staggered to his feet, with the assistance of his legs exhausted chum. He glared at Clive Lawrence.

"You young rotter—"

"Hallo," said Clive cheerily, "do you want some more?"

"I'm going to lick you—"

"Don't be an ass, Kendy!" muttered Keene. "You couldn't lick a baby now."

"Who says I couldn't?"

"I do. Don't be an ass!"

"Well, I'm going to lick him."

"You can challenge him to meet you behind the chapel, then. I'm not going to let you go for him now, and that's settled," said Keene sturdily.

"Perhaps you're right," said Kendal slowly.

"Of course I am. Do you think I'm going to risk our Form captain getting licked by a kid out of the Fourth?"

"He couldn't lick one side of me."

"H'm!"

"If you start h'ming at me I'll lick you, you ass!" grunted Kendal. "That kid couldn't touch me, and you know it."

"Well, challenge him, anyway. I know you can lick him in a fair fight, and that's all we want."

Kendal strode towards Clive Lawrence. The new captain of the Fourth looked coolly at the dishevelled and red-faced Fifth-Former.

"I'm going to lick you, Lawrence."

"Go ahead."

"Of course, I know it's rather below the dignity of a Fifth-Former to meet a kid in the Fourth," said Kendal loftily, "but—"

"But I suppose it will be further still below the dignity of a Fifth-Former to be licked by a kid in the Fourth,"

suggested Clive Lawrence. "I'm afraid the dignity of the Fifth is in a rather dangerous position, Kenny, old man."

"Look here, I could lick you with one hand."

"Shut up!" whispered Keene. "I tell you—"

"I sha'n't shut up. I tell you—"

"I tell you—"

"And I say that—"

"Go on!" said Clive Lawrence encouragingly. "You remind me of Tweedledee and Tweedledum, and it's quite amusing to listen to you."

"Look here, you've got to meet Kendal behind the chapel to-morrow," said Keene angrily.

"I don't mind."

"Better leave it for the next half-holiday," said Fisher; "then the row can come off outside the school, and there won't be any risk of being interrupted."

"Oh, it won't take me long to polish off that kid," said Kendal.

"Brag's a good dog."

"If you think I'm bragging—"

"I know you are."

"I'll lick you, Fisher, after I've licked Lawrence."

"I feel pretty safe, then," grinned Fisher.

"It's a good idea," said Keene. "I'm Kendal's second, and I'm arranging this. You can shut up, Kendal. You are going to meet Lawrence on Wednesday afternoon in the wood, where we can have a regular mill without danger of being stopped. All you kids can come if you like."

"Thank you for nothing," said Pye. "We're coming, anyway."

"That's settled, then," said Kendal. "I'm really sorry I shall have to hurt you, Lawrence, but you are so cheeky that there's nothing else to be done."

"Oh, don't worry about me!" said Clive. "You will need all your sympathy for yourself by the time I've done with you, I expect."

"And now kick them out," said Locke. "We've done with them."

And the two Fifth-Formers were accordingly marched out, and the door slammed behind them. They found their Form-fellows waiting for them in a state of mingled fury and indignation.

"Nice sort of a Form captain you are!" said Stott to Kendal. "The Fourth Form will crow over this for the rest of the term."

"I suppose I couldn't help it?"

"You ought to have helped it."

"Anyway, they will have to sing small when I lick Lawrence. I'm meeting him on Wednesday afternoon, and I am going to give him an awful hiding."

"Yes, if he doesn't give you one," said Stott scoffingly.

Kendal's patience was quite exhausted, and he was not inclined to take Stott's scoffing quietly. He did not waste words, but hit out from the shoulder, and Stott sat down in the passage with surprising suddenness. Then Kendal walked away with Keene, leaving Stott staring after him and rubbing his nose.

Trelawney Does Not Make Peace.

"What is this I hear about you and young Lawrence, Kendal?"

It was Trelawney, the captain of St. Winifred's, who spoke, as he met the Fifth-Former in the Close on Wednesday. Kendal stopped, colouring a little.

"I really don't know, Trelawney," he said. "We've had a row—"

"You are always having rows with the Fourth, I believe."

"Well, not exactly that. They are always having rows with us," said Kendal.

Trelawney smiled.

"Is it true that there is going to be a fight?" he asked abruptly.

"I dare say it is," replied Kendal evasively. "I think it's very likely."

"You ought to know, as I hear that you are to be one of the principals."

"Oh, the fellows will chatter anything, you know."

"Then it is not true?"

"Oh, no, I wouldn't say that."

"Is it true, then?"

"I suppose you may take it that it is," admitted Kendal. "But it's all right, Trelawney. I am going to put young Lawrence in his place, you know, and you must have noticed that he needs it badly."

"Suppose the reverse takes place?"

"I can't suppose for a moment that a kid out of the Fourth Form could lick me," said Kendal stiffly. "I can lick anybody in the Fifth."

"Clive Lawrence is a tough customer, all the same."

"He won't be too tough for me."

"As a matter of fact, Kendal, I think you ought to avoid this fight," said the captain of St. Winifred's seriously. "It seems to me that it is bound to have a bad effect. There is enough quarrelling between the Forms already."

"That's because the Fourth don't know their place, and won't keep in it," explained Kendal.

"They will keep in their place still less if by any chance Lawrence should get the upper hand, and lick the champion of the Fifth," said Trelawney.

Kendal coloured.

"I don't see why you want to harp on that," he exclaimed. "I'm not a baby. I suppose I can be depended upon to thrash a Fourth-Form kid?"

"H'm! I don't know that I should like that, either. From what I have seen, the aggression seems to be mainly on the side of the Fifth, though I admit that in these Form rows it is almost impossible to get at the facts. It is probably six of one and half a dozen of the other."

"The Fourth don't know their place, you know."

"In short, you are going on with this affair?"

"I don't see how I could stop it. I'd do anything to oblige you, Trelawney, but if I backed out the Fourth would think I was funking. If Lawrence liked to apologise, I would let him off."

"Well, I had better speak to Lawrence," said Trelawney.

"Good! You may be able to bring him to reason, and make him realise the difference between the Fourth Form and the Fifth in a school like this."

And Kendal walked away. The captain of St. Winifred's strolled on with a thoughtful brow. The well-being of the school was very dear to Oswald Trelawney, and he had sometimes been much exercised in his mind when the rivalry between Fourth and Fifth became peculiarly rampant. Lawrence, Fisher, and Locke were coming off the cricket field to go in to dinner, and the captain of St. Winifred's beckoned to them. They stopped dutifully.

"What is this I hear about you and Kendal?" asked Trelawney, putting to Clive Lawrence the same question that he had put to the chief of the Fifth.

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Clive.

Trelawney laughed.

"No, it isn't. It seems that you have accepted a fight with the captain of the Fifth Form—one of the toughest nuts to crack in the Middle School."

"Yes, that's so, Trelawney. I hope you don't mind."

"But I do mind. I don't approve of this row between the Fourth and the Fifth being carried too far, and I don't think this fight will do any good."

"Oh, I think you're mistaken there," said Clive eagerly.

"You see, the trouble really is this, that the Fifth don't know their place, and won't keep in it."

Trelawney laughed again.

"I think the same view is held by the Fifth about you youngsters."

"Yes, they are a set of unreasonable animals," agreed Clive. "There's no getting on with them without rows, is there, Fishy?"

"Hardly," said Fisher.

"Not at all," said Locke.

"I think this fight will very likely clear the air," went on Clive Lawrence. "I don't want to brag, Trelawney, but I think I have a good chance of licking Kendal."

Trelawney looked at the boy's deep chest, well-developed form, and bright, clear eyes, and thought so too.

"But that wouldn't do any good to the school," he said. "It is likely to make feeling worse between the Forms."

"Oh, I don't know. It seems to me that when the Fifth are put in their place, we shall pull together much better."

"So, I suppose you are determined to go on with this affair?"

"Can I help it?"

"Yes, I think you could if you liked."

"I don't see how. I can't have the Fifth thinking I'm afraid of their giddy champion, can I?"

"If Kendal apologised—" suggested Fisher.

"Good idea!" said Locke. "If Kendal apologises we can let him down lightly."

"Kendal has suggested Lawrence apologising."

"Oh, that's mere rot, you know!"

"I suppose you youngsters will have your way," said Trelawney, laughing. "If I stop you now it will break out again. But, mind, if I catch you fighting, you will find yourself in hot water."

"Oh, you won't catch us, Trelawney!" said Clive cheerfully.

The captain nodded warningly, and walked on. The chums of the Fourth Form grinned at one another.

"Jolly good sort, Trelawney," said Fisher. "We all like him. But, of course, he can't be expected to understand these matters."

"A licking is just what the Fifth want, to teach them

manners," said Locke. "Old Tre doesn't seem to see that."

"Well, we can't quite meet his wishes in this matter," Clive Lawrence remarked thoughtfully. "I'm sorry, for I like Trelawney, and I know he means well. Still, he can always depend on us to back him up."

"Yes, rather!"

"I'm going to hunt for that galleon's treasure, too, and help him there," said Clive. "It belongs to him, and it would be ripping to help him find it, wouldn't it?"

"Ripping!" agreed his chums.

"Are you chaps coming in to feed?" said Pye, joining them. "We've got to get off to the Sea-wood immediately after grub, Lawrence."

"I know that, Pie-crust."

"Feel pretty fit?"

"Right as rain. I'll show you how I can hit out from the shoulder, if you like. You stand just in front of me, and—"

"Oh, don't trouble!" said Pye, retreating hastily. "I'll take your word for it. Of course, I am backing you up in this affair."

"Thank you!"

"As captain of the Fourth—the real captain, I mean—I take you under my wing and support you with the weight of my authority—"

"First time I've heard of anybody being supported with a weight."

"That's a figure of speech. What I mean is—"

"What I mean is, to go in and have some grub," said Fisher. "Come on, Lawrence! Pye will go on talking all the afternoon if you let him."

"Look here, Fisher—"

But the chums walked in, and Pye followed with his remarks unfinished. There was a state of suppressed excitement among the Fourth Form at the dinner-table. All of them were thinking of the fight of the afternoon, and gleefully anticipating a mill that would be remarkable and memorable in the annals of the Lower School of St. Winifred's. Every eye was turned upon Clive Lawrence, and it was generally remarked how cool he was, and how absolutely unconcernedly he ate his dinner.

"He takes it as if this sort of thing happened every day," Sudgen remarked to Morgan. "I'm beginning to think that he will lick Kendal."

The wish was father to the thought, of course, but that opinion was growing among the Fourth-Formers.

The Hostile Meeting.

"Anybody coming?"

It was a rather unnecessary question. As a matter of fact, everybody was coming. There was hardly a fellow in the Fourth Form at St. Winifred's who hadn't made up his mind to see the great combat. A fight between a Fourth Form boy and a Fifth-Former did not take place every day, especially with any chance of success on the Fourth Form side. Such a combat was not to be missed, and the counter-attractions of the tuckshop and the cricket-field were disdainfully passed over.

When Clive Lawrence came out, walking between Fisher and Locke, the Form crowded round him, and Fisher's question was evidently superfluous.

Clive Lawrence stopped and glanced round.

"I say, are all you chaps coming along with us?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!" said Sudgen. "There will be a lot of the Fifth there, too, and we want a crowd to see fair play."

"And to cheer," said Pye. "I shall lead the cheering. You fellows will wait for me to give the signal, and then—"

"Rats!"

"If you say rats to me, Murphy—"

"Sure and I do, then."

"Then you can go and eat coke."

"We're all coming," said Bruce. "We're not likely to miss a thing like this."

"Then you had better come a few at a time," said Clive, laughing. "The more the merrier, but we don't want the prefects to see what's up. Trelawney knows there is going to be a tussle, but he doesn't know where or when. If he saw the whole Form marching off to the Sea-wood, he would jolly soon jump to conclusions."

"Something in that."

"Quite right," said Fisher. "Better come in twos and threes, and dribble into the wood a few at a time."

"Right you are, Fisher."

"We'll go first. The fight isn't to take place till three o'clock, so there's plenty of time for you all to get there without breaking your necks."

"Good!"

Lawrence, Fisher, and Locke strolled away. As they neared the gates, a well-known form came down from the school buildings. It was Franz Stossel, the German master at St. Winifred's, wearing a Homburg hat as usual, and with a packet under his arm. He glanced quickly at the chums of the Fourth.

"Lawrence, where are you going?"

"Out, sir," said Clive meekly.

The German's eyes gleamed.

"Don't be impertinent, Lawrence! I know you are going out. I asked you where you were going."

"We are allowed to go anywhere within bounds on a half-holiday, sir," said Fisher.

"Possibly, but there are some lads who cannot be entrusted with as much freedom as others," said Herr Stossel spitefully. "I think it quite likely that you mean to run risks in climbing Penwyn cliffs, and in that case—"

"We are not going that way, sir."

"Mind, I forbid you to do so," said the German master. "You are to keep this side of the cliffs, or you will find yourselves in trouble."

Lawrence's face flushed with suppressed anger.

"The school bounds extend as far as the pebble-ridge, on a half-holiday!" he exclaimed.

"Don't answer me, Lawrence! You will obey my order, or you will suffer!"

And the German master passed through the gates, and strode away rapidly on the road past the Jolly Seaman, towards the sea.

Clive Lawrence knitted his brows.

"I know where he's going," he remarked. "He's exploring again this afternoon. That's a lantern in that packet under his arm."

"He sticks to it, doesn't he?" said Fisher.

"It's the same old game; he's looking for the treasure of the wrecked galleon, which belongs to Trelawney when it's found."

"Precious little Trelawney will see of it if Herr Stossel gets his fingers on it," said Fisher, with a grin.

"You're right. I wonder—" Clive paused.

"You wonder what, Clive?"

"I wonder whether I ought to tell Trelawney what I know about the matter—I mean, what I heard those rascals talking about at the Jolly Seaman, the night I came to St. Winifred's."

Clive Lawrence had taken his chums into his confidence on that matter, under a promise of secrecy. Fisher whistled doubtfully.

"You see, he might regard the whole story as a fairy-tale, or think you dreamed it when you were asleep," he remarked.

"I suppose he might."

"Yet he ought to be put on his guard, if it were possible. Stossel is a rotter, and I fancy he wouldn't be any too scrupulous in getting hold of Trelawney's clue to the wrecked galleon if he had a chance."

"I'm pretty certain of that. I shall think it over. Let's get on to the Sea-wood now. Come on!"

The chums followed the road for a short distance, and then turned into a narrow, rutty lane, which ended in a footpath leading into a deep, shady wood. On the other side of the wood the Atlantic boomed on the wave-worn rocks, the trees growing down to the shelving beach, and some of them broken and torn by the dash of the waves when the ocean was stirred by tempests. The footpath led through the Sea-wood to the beach, but the chums did not follow it so far.

As soon as the glimmer of the blue Atlantic through the last trees broke upon their view, Fisher and Locke halted.

"Here we are!"

They had stopped in a glade, thick with trees and undergrowth on one side, with thinner trees growing towards the beach on the other. Through openings of the trees the ocean gleamed in the distance. The glade was quiet and lonely, thickly grown with grass and nettles. Clive Lawrence looked round him, and thought that a more secure spot could not have been found for the coming fight. It was less than a quarter of a mile from the school, but far beyond the ken of masters or prefects.

"Hallo, there's Kendy and Keene!"

Two Fifth-Formers had entered the glade from another part. They caught sight of the chums, and came towards them. A dozen more of the Fifth came out of the wood, and now the Fourth began to arrive by various paths. The lonely glade was soon alive.

"So you've come, Lawrence," Kendal remarked patronisingly.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Clive cheerfully.

"Well, it's like your cheek, in one way, but I like to see pluck in a youngster. By the way, Trelawney spoke to me

about this matter to-day, and I've been thinking it over. You've been awfully cheeky, but I don't want to lick you."

"Getting nervous?"

"Don't be an ass! If you like to climb down, and eat humble pie, and so forth, and keep in the proper place of a Fourth Form kid, I am willing to let you off."

"Thank you for nothing."

"You don't accept?"

"Not much."

"Well, I've given you a chance," said Kendal. "I thought I ought to give you a chance, out of regard for old Tre. I've done it."

"Well, one good turn deserves another," remarked Clive Lawrence. "If you like to take back all the rude things you've said, and promise to be a good little boy in the future, I will let you off."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"You don't accept?" grinned Clive.

"I'll knock your head off!"

"Well, I thought I ought to give you a chance, out of regard for Trelawney, but if you refuse it—"

"My hat! I'll give you a record licking, if only to stop your tongue!" said Kendal. "I never knew a new kid with so much to say for himself. Come on!"

"Aren't you going to peel?"

"Oh, that's not necessary to lick a kid like you!" said Kendal loftily.

Keene jerked him by the arm.

"Yes, it is, Kendy," he said. "You're not going to lose a chance in this fight, you ass! Lawrence won't be an easy nut to crack, in any case."

"I'm not going to make a big job of it."

"Oh, talk sense!" said Keene. "You're going to do your level best, or else you'll get licked. Take your jacket off!"

"I should say so," said Stott. "Take your jacket off, Kendal, and don't be a chump!"

"Oh, as you like!" "You can see the other party is taking the matter seriously."

"Well, he's only a kid!"

"Oh, rats! He will put up a good fight!"

Clive Lawrence was certainly taking the matter seriously. He was an active lad, and very well-grown and strong for his age, and he had a scientific knowledge of the noble art of self-defence. But he knew perfectly well that he was taking on a serious task in tackling a fellow belonging to a higher Form. He meant to take every precaution, and put every ounce of strength and knowledge he possessed into the fight, in order to "pull it off." He was going to beat Kendal, or know the reason why.

Keene had brought a small tin

basin with him, and Fisher had a sponge, and Stott another. The basin was filled with water from the beach, ready for use. The two combatants removed their jackets and vests, and rolled up their sleeves.

The sight of Clive's arms made Kendal rather open his eyes. They were a great deal more muscular than he had expected, and seemed as firm and hard as iron.

"He does look rather a strong beast for a kid," Kendal admitted.

"I should think he does!" said Keene. "You've got all your work cut out for you, old man!"

"Oh, rot!"

"I'm going to keep time," said Pye, taking out a big silver watch. "I'll ref., too, if you like. As captain of the Fourth Form—"

"Oh, cheese it, Pye!"

"Three-minute rounds, I suppose; and one-minute rests," said Pye, unheeding. "And keep on till one or the other cries off."

"Right-ho!"

"Now then! Are you ready?"

"Yes; rather!"

"Shake hands, then! Time!"

The adversaries faced one another; foot to foot, eye to eye, in the subdued light under the big trees. They shook hands, and the next moment the fight commenced.

The Fight!

"Time!"

The crowd was thickening in the lonely glade in the Sea-wood. Fellows belonging to the Fourth and Fifth Forms stood in a deep circle round the ring. They were looking on with intense interest.

Clive Lawrence was half a head shorter than his opponent, and naturally shorter in the reach. Kendal was a bigger fellow altogether, and was known as something of an athlete. As the two boys stood face to face it could be seen what a task Clive had taken upon himself.

Yet there was something in Clive's manner that inspired his friends with confidence. It was nothing like boastfulness; it was a quiet reliance upon himself, and a strong determination to see the thing through to the bitter end. It was pretty certain that, if Clive Lawrence were licked, he would not give in while he could stand upon his feet.

Kendal began the attack, pressing Clive hard with heavy blows from the start, his longer reach giving him a big advantage.

(Another long instalment of this splendid School Tale next Saturday. Please order your copy of PLUCK in advance.)



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