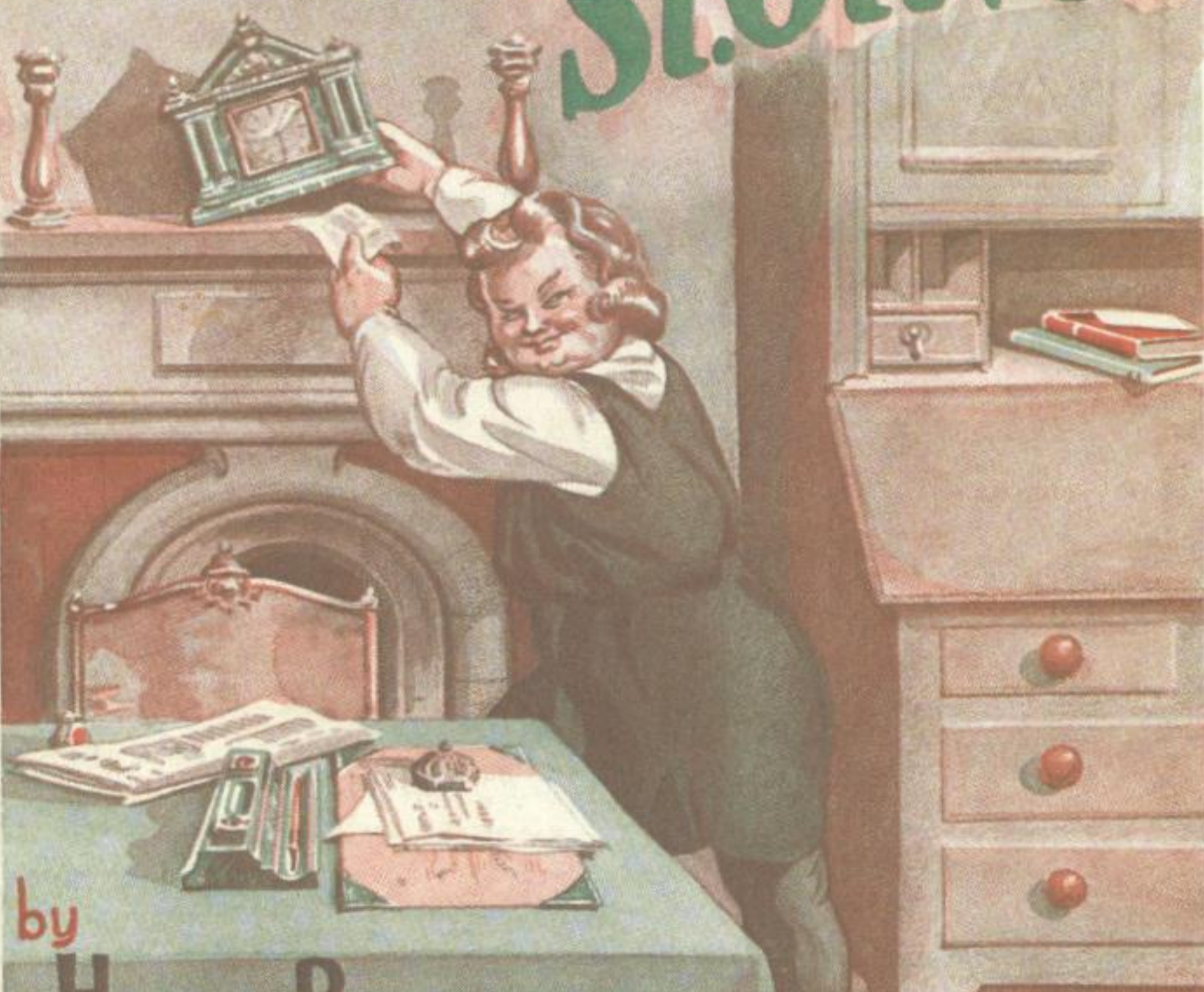


Mascot

SCHOOLGIRL SERIES No. 1

Pamela of St. Olive's



by

HILDA RICHARDS

(Authoress of

BESSIE BUNTER

A COMPLETE 'PAM DUNCAN & CO.' STORY

4½^D/₂

MASCOT SCHOOLGIRL SERIES No. 1.

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by

Hilda Richards

Author of
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Published by

JOHN MATTHEW (PUBLISHERS) LIMITED
FINSBURY HOUSE, BLOMFIELD ST., LONDON, E.C.2

CHAPTER I.

A SPOT OF BOTHER IN CLASS!

"MARGERY!"

No answer.

"Margery!"

Still no answer.

The silence of the French class-room at St. Olive's was broken by a faint ripple of laughter. The St. Olive's Fourth seemed to be amused.

But Mademoiselle Monceau was not amused. She was annoyed. Mamzelle had a sharp tongue, and a sharp nose, and a sharp temper. But she had not a sharp eye—she peered owlshly through big glasses. She could not see what caused that ripple of merriment among the junior girls: neither could she guess why Peg Pipping did not answer to her name.

The Fourth Form of St. Olive's were up to Mamzelle for French. It was never a pleasant change from Miss Ducat, the kindly mistress of the Fourth, to the tart Mamzelle. Peg Pipping, the laziest girl at St. Olive's or anywhere else, liked it least of all. But even the plump Peg was not too lazy to answer to her name when called. It was surprising and annoying—
to Mamzelle.

"Peg!" whispered Pamela Duncan.

"Peg!" breathed May Carhew. "You duffer, wake up."

It was a warm summer's afternoon. The class-room seemed stuffy to all the girls—and so did Mamzelle and French. Even attentive pupils like Pamela Duncan felt a little drowsy. Peg was not an attentive pupil. She loathed French with almost as deep a loathing as she loathed Latin. Mamzelle's voice seemed to most of the young ears a tiresome drone. Peg Pipping had not intended to go to sleep in class. She had nodded off without intending it.

But there was no doubt that she had nodded off. Her eyes were shut, and her mouth was open. The girls near her expected, every moment, to hear a snore rumble forth—for generally when Peg slept, she snored. That would have apprised Mademoiselle Monceau of the true state of affairs. But as yet Peg had not snored.

"Margery!" Mamzelle almost shrieked.

But Peg was a good sleeper. In that line Rip Van Winkle had nothing on Peg of the Fourth. She did not hear Pamela's whisper—she did not hear Mamzelle's squeak. Lorna Desmond gave her a poke. Even that did not awaken Margery Pippin. But it seemed to set going the musical effects that generally accompanied Peg's slumbers.

Snore!

There was a trill of laughter among the girls. They could not help it. That snore reverberated through the class-room. It put Mamzelle wise.

"Mon Dieu!" ejaculated Mademoiselle Monceau. "On dorme, n'est-ce-pas! Zat Margery sleep! She shall go to sleep viz herself in class!"

Snore!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Taisez-vous! Zat you be silent! Zis is no matter for the laff," exclaimed Mamzelle, angrily, "Margery! Zat you vake!"

Mamzelle picked up her pointer, and banged it on the blackboard. On that blackboard was chalked French that the St. Olive's girls had to translate. Mamzelle had turned the "Raven" into French, and her pupils had to turn it back into English. It was Peg's turn to translate a line—but Peg Pipping, in the mists and shadows of sleep, was oblivious of French.

Bang! bang! rang the pointer on the blackboard: and it awakened even

Peg. The plumpest and most obtuse member of the Fourth Form at St. Olive's started, and awoke, and yawned, and stared. She blinked round at smiling faces, rubbed her eyes, and blinked at the frowning face of Mademoiselle Monceau. Then she realised what she had done.

"Oh!" gasped Peg, "I wasn't asleep!"

"You sleep viz yourself in class!" hooted Mamzelle.

"Oh! No! I—I heard everything you were saying, Mamzelle!" gasped Peg. "I—I was just listening with my eyes shut. I—I haven't missed a word. I—I—I'm all ears, Mamzelle."

"Nearly all, perhaps!" murmured May Carhew, and Pamela laughed. It was a fact that Peg's ears were not small.

"Silence! Margery, if you close you ze eye vunce more, I give you one detention. Now you vill translate."

Mamzelle pointed to the line with the pointer. Peg Pipping stared at it, still sleepy. But if she had been as wide awake as possible, that line would have beaten her. It was quite an easy line: and Peg must have come across every word in it at least a score of times: but knowledge did not stick in Peg's head. She had a simple system of forgetting everything almost as fast as she learned it, which did not make her popular with instructors.

"Dit le corbeau, jamais plus!" hooted Mamzelle. "Now zan you shall translate, you stupid Margery."

"Quoth the Raven—!" whispered May.

"May Carhew, you speak, isn't it? Zat you speak not in class! If you speak vunce more I give you detention."

"Oh! Yes, Mamselle!" gasped May.

"Now sat you translate, Margery—"

"Quoth the Raven—!" began Margery. Then she stopped. "Jamais plus" beat her. She cast an appealing glance round.

But May Carhew dared not whisper again. Mamzelle's fiery eye was on her. Margery Pipping gave Pamela a beseeching look.

"Tell me what jamais means," she breathed.

"Never!" breathed Pamela.

"Oh, you cat!" gasped Peg.

"I mean——!"

"Cat! I'd tell you, wouldn't I? Cat!" hissed Peg.

"Zat you translate!" shrieked Mademoiselle Monceau.

"Oh! Yes! I'm just going to!" gasped Peg. "Jamais plus—more jam!" It was a wild shot at a venture, "Quoth the Raven, more jam!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was almost a howl of merriment from the class. Peg's howlers often added to the gaiety of existence at St. Olive's. But this was beyond even Peg's limit. This was a record. This was priceless.

"Silence!" squeaked Mademoiselle Monceau. "Je dis, taisez-vous. Margery, vat is it zat you say? More cham! Ciel! You know nozzing! You hear not vun vord zat is to speak in zis lesson. Non! More cham, mon Dieu!"

"Is——is——isn't that right?" stammered Peg Pipping.

"Jamais plus—never more!" hooted Mamzelle. "Dit le corbeau, jamais plus!—quoth ze Raven, never more! Now shall you understand?"

"Oh!" gasped Peg. "D—d—does Jamais mean never? Oh!" She realised that she had misjudged Pamela. The reply she had taken for a refusal was the translation she wanted! But she realised that rather too late.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mais, silence!" hooted Mademoiselle Monceau. "Zis is not to laff!"

Margery, you hear nozzings—you go to sleep viz yourself in ze class—you are more stupid zan never vas. Regardez! You vill write out ze whole lesson, and bring him to my study after tea.”

“Oh, scissors!” ejaculated Peg, in dismay.

“Assez! Zat is enoff! Taisez-vous!”

“Cat!” murmured Peg: but not loud enough for Mademoiselle Monceau to hear her. And she sat with a frowning fat brow while the French lesson droned on to its welcome end.

* * * *

CHAPTER II.

LOST BALL.

Pamela Duncan picked up a tennis racket from the window-seat in Second Study. May Carhew hunted for a tennis ball. Sunlight and fresh air streamed in at the window of the study, and the two girls, free at last of Mamzelle and French, were eager to get out to the tennis court. And neither had a welcoming look when a fat junior, with a spot of ink on her nose, and smears of the same on her fat fingers, appeared in the doorway. Nobody at St. Olive's ever smiled a smile of welcome when Peg Pipping blew in. Peg could not help being a duffer. But she had other failings that she could have helped. And their name was Legion. She would read others girls' letters. She would peep into their diaries. She was nicknamed “Peg Pry.” And she was generally a spot of bother.

Second Study was a very pleasant room. It had a window on the quadrangle of St. Olive's, and a view of the playing-fields, with the blue sea in the distance beyond. It had pretty curtains, and some nice pictures, and was always neat and tidy. Two beds by night were ottomans by day, with pretty chintz covers. Pamela and May were very pleased with their study. But when Peg appeared in the doorway, their chief desire was to get to the furthest possible distance from Second Study in the shortest possible time.

“Come on, May!” said Pamela.

“I haven't found that pernicious ball!” said May Carhew. “We've got only one, and where did you put it?”

“I say—!” began Peg.

“I didn't put it anywhere,” said Pamela, laughing. “You did.”

“Well, if I did, where did I?”

Pamela looked over the window-seat. May looked over the armchair. Peg Pipping stared at them, and then grinned, as she spotted a tennis ball lying on the ottoman nearest the door. Promptly she rolled into the study and sat on the ottoman—covering the tennis ball with her frock. Pam and May were not likely to find it now—till Peg moved.

“I say—!” repeated Peg, in her squeaky voice.

“Don't!” said May.

“Eh! Don't what?” demanded Peg.

“Don't say! You're always saying something! You say too many things. Instead of saying, just help us look for that tennis ball.”

“Cat!” said Peg.

“Where is that beastly ball?” exclaimed May.

“O where and O where can it be?” sang Pamela.

“Dry up! We shan't have time for a set before tea, at this rate. I know I put it somewhere!” said May crossly. “But where?”

“I say—!” said Miss Pipping, for the third time. “I say, you heard what Froggie told us in class. I've got to write out all that putrid French. I've got to take it to her study after tea.”

“Well, go and get on with it.” suggested May.

"That's why I've come here," explained Peg. "I want you two girls to help me. It's a fearfully long beast of a thing. But we shall easily get it done before tea, all three of us together. See?"

Pamela and May did not seem to "see." They gazed at the cheerful Peg. They were going to play tennis—as soon as they found that elusive ball. They were not disposed to sit indoors and write French instead. That idea did not attract them in the very least.

"What about it?" asked Peg, apparently surprised at receiving no answer.

"Nothing about it," retorted May. "Less than nothing, if possible. For one thing, Mamzelle would know our hands, and that would mean a row."

"You can make your writing like mine," said Peg. "That's all right. Look here, I've just got to have help with this beastly paper, see? I've asked Lorna, and Vera, and Lizzie, and Elfrida, and some other girls, and they all let me down. Never saw such a lazy lot."

"I'll tell you what," exclaimed May, as if struck by a sudden bright idea. "If you want a paper in hand-writing like yours——"

"Yes, that's it."

"Well, catch a spider——"

"A spider!" repeated Peg, blankly. "What's the good of a spider?"

"And dip it in the ink——"

"In the ink?"

"Yes—and set it crawling over the paper. When it's finished crawling, the paper will look exactly as if you had written it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" trilled Pamela.

"Why, you—you—you idiot!" gasped Peg. "Look here, I didn't come here for silly jokes. You help me with my paper, and I'll find your tennis ball for you. There!"

"Oh, run away and play!" said May Carhew: and she continued to root round the study for the missing ball. Pamela joined her in the hunt. But there was no sign to be seen of that ball.

Peg Pipping sat and watched them. She had none too much time to get her French paper done before tea, and the minutes were passing. But she was not going to move—and reveal that tennis ball. She found it quite amusing to watch the two girls rooting about the study, in all sorts of possible and impossible places, for the ball that was hidden under her frock.

"Well, this beats it!" exclaimed May, at last. "It must be somewhere, but it seems to be nowhere."

"Let's see if we can borrow one along the passage," suggested Pamela.

"I say, I'll find it for you, if you'll help me with my paper!" said Peg Pipping. "You're just wasting time."

May gave a little start, and fixed a very suspicious look on the plumpest junior at St. Olive's. She and Pam had searched every spot in the study, with the exception of the spot where Peg sat.

"And how will you find it, when we can't?" she demanded.

"Well, I've got more sense than you!" explained Peg. "You're rather a duffer, you know. I'll find it all right, if you'll do my paper——"

May came across the study to the ottoman.

"Get up!" she commanded.

"What for?"

"I believe you're sitting on that tennis ball."

"Oh!" exclaimed Pamela. "Is that it? You mischievous little monkey, Peg."

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Peg. "You're suspicious, May Carhew. A girl shouldn't be suspicious. It's unladylike."

"Get up!" rapped May.

"Shan't!" retorted Peg.

"If Miss Ducat heard you say shan't, you'd get a detention," said Pamela Duncan. "Anyhow, get up."

Peg Pipping sniffed, and sat tight. She was not going to reveal the lost tennis ball—except for a "quid pro quo." She did not stir.

"Hand me that racket, Pamela!" exclaimed May, exasperated. Pamela handed over the racket, and May Carhew flourished it, within an inch of Peg's fat little nose. Peg Pipping started back with a squeak of alarm, and a tennis ball rolled from beneath her and bounced on the study carpet.

"There it is!" exclaimed Pamela. She caught up the ball.

"That little fat image was sitting on it all the time!" breathed May, "and telling whoppers! Now you hold her by the ears, Pam, while I swipe her with this racket. There's plenty of room to catch hold."

May Carhew flourished the racket in a perfectly ferocious manner. Pamela stepped forward with outstretched hand. Peg Pipping bounced up from the ottoman faster than the tennis ball had bounced from the carpet.

Certainly, Pamela had not the slightest intention of holding her by her extensive ears, neither had May of swiping her with the tennis racket. But that simple fact did not dawn on Peg's solid brain. In dire alarm, she bounced up from the ottoman, and another wild bounce took her through the study doorway into the passage.

"Ow! Oh! Keep off! Cats!" squeaked Peg, as she fled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash! It was just ill-luck that Gwendoline Page and Pauline Poole were coming out of First Study, as Peg Pipping bolted frantically out of Second Study and raced down the passage.

"Oh" gasped Gwendoline.

"Ooooooh!" spluttered Pauline.

They were scattered right and left under the charge. A charge with Peg Pipping's weight behind it was no light matter. Peg staggered from the shock, and then rushed on for the stairs, leaving two astonished girls sitting in the passage and staring after her blankly.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Gwendoline. "What's the matter with her—is she off her nut?"

"Is she ever on it?" asked May. "Come on, Pam."

And Pamela and May went to play tennis, leaving Gwendoline and Pauline to sort themselves breathlessly out. Peg Pipping had vanished into space—and May and Pam completely forgot her uninteresting and unimportant existence.

But they were reminded of her when they came in. On the blotter on the study table, scrawled in ink in large capital letters, was a message, at which they stared, and then chuckled.

PARE OF CATTS.

There was no signature. But they did not need to be told who had dropped into the study and left that polite message. The spelling was an unmistakable clue to Peg.

CHAPTER III.

TIT FOR TAT!

"CAT!" murmured Peg Pipping.

She had tapped at the door of Mademoiselle Monceau's study, and opened it—rolled in, only to discover that the study was vacant. She stared round the room with her greenish eyes, frowning.

Mamzelle had told her to bring her French paper to the study after tea. Mamzelle ought to have been there. Apparently Mamzelle, who had her tea in the Staff Room, had not finished yet—or she was lingering to

chat with other members of the Staff.

Anyhow she was not in her study. It was very annoying to Peg. Had she brought her French paper with her, it would not have mattered: she would only have had to place it on the table, and leave it there for Mamzelle to find when she came. But Peg hadn't brought her French paper. She had brought an excuse instead. In class Peg was not very bright: but in the manufacture of excuses she had few equals at St. Olive's. She had thought out quite a good one—not being tramelled by any particular regard for the truth. She was going to tell Mamzelle that she had hurt her thumb, falling down in the Fourth-form passage after that collision with Gwendoline and Pauline. She had wound lint round the thumb by way of proof, and was prepared to put on an expression of unlimited agony. This was a pretty good excuse, had Mamzelle been there. But Peg couldn't lay it on the table for Mamzelle to find when she came in!

So she sniffed angrily. The only thing to be done was to wait till the French mistress came—and screw up an agonized expression on her fat face as soon as she heard a footstep. Any girl in the St. Olive's Fourth, excepting Peg, would have stood by the window waiting: or at the most, would have sat down to wait. But Peg's manners and customs differed from those of the rest of the Fourth Form. The nickname of "Peg Pry" had been given her with reason. Peg was as mischievous as a monkey, and as inquisitive as a jackdaw. She was always prepared to mind anybody's business but her own. Without the slightest scruple, she proceeded to look over the papers on Mamzelle's table: and particularly at a partly-written letter that lay on the blotting-pad.

That letter was written in English, being addressed to some firm of London tradesmen, and being, in fact, an order for some article advertised in the newspapers. It was of no interest whatever, even to the inquisitive Peg: but she read it, and found a spot of interest in one line, which ran "Enclosed postal-order for one pound." Mamzelle had not finished writing the letter, evidently having been called away by the tea-bell—that was why it lay open on the blotter. And having read it, as far as it went, Peg noticed that a postal-order for £1 lay partly covered by a paper-weight near at hand.

Then her green eyes glimmered.

Mamzelle was well known to be close with money. She had the thrifty instincts of her race highly developed. Once she had dropped a sixpence: and there had been great hilarity at St. Olive's over the endless search that had been made for that small coin. It had never been found—but Mamzelle had looked for it, again and again and again, up and down and round about the school. It had been said in the junior forms that Mamzelle had never slept soundly since she had lost that sixpence, that it haunted her in her dreams, and that the loss had aged her! That, no doubt, was an exaggeration. Nevertheless, it was indubitable that Mademoiselle Monceau was excessively thrifty, not to call it stingy.

If sixpence had worried Mamzelle so much, what would the loss—or the supposed loss—of a pound do? That was the happy thought in Peg's fat mind.

Mamzelle had ragged her in class, given her a beastly paper to write out—and was quite likely not to believe in the damaged thumb! Altogether, she was obnoxious, and deserved punishment. Anyone who disturbed Peg Pipping's fat comfort deserved punishment—it was the most serious of sins.

Fat fingers shifted the paper-weight, and drew out the postal-order. Grinning, Peg looked round the study for a hiding-place for it. Even Peg had sense enough not to take it out of the study—it might cause sus-

picion of theft. She was going to put it safely out of sight—and Mamzelle could hunt for it, as she had hunted for the celebrated sixpence.

On the mantelpiece was a little marble clock. Peg lifted it, laid the postal order underneath and replaced the clock.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Peg. "Tit for tat! He, he, he."

The postal-order was completely hidden. Nobody was likely to move the clock: and unless the clock was moved, it would never be seen. Peg's expansive grin spread almost from one large ear to the other, as she thought of Mamzelle, wild with excitement, rooting all over the place for the missing postal-order—within a few feet of her all the time.

Having played that little trick, Peg realised that the sooner she was off the scene the better. If Mamzelle found her in the study, she would be at no loss to guess who had moved the postal-order from under the paper-weight. Excuses had to be deferred till later. Mademoiselle Monceau must never learn that Peg Pry had been in the study at all.

The plump junior peered out of the doorway. Nobody was in sight. She scuttled out of the study. Two or three minutes later, she was in her own study in the Fourth—Ninth Study, at the end of the passage. There were nine studies in all in the St. Olive's Fourth, most of them "two-bedders"; two or three of the larger rooms "three-bedders." Peg's was a "two-bedder," which she shared with Millicent Wade.

Millicent was in Ninth Study when Peg rolled in. Millicent was busy with an algebra paper for Miss Moon, the maths mistress, her brows wrinkled over it. Peg gave her a sarcastic glance.

"Still swotting over that paper?" she asked.

"Yes!" answered Millicent, without looking up.

"I could do it on my head," said Peg. "Look here, you help me with my French paper—say fifty-fifty—and I'll help you with your algebra afterwards."

"Help me with my algebra first!" suggested Millicent.

That suggestion elicited only a sniff from Peg. She sat down at the table, realising that it would be only prudent to begin that French paper, at least, if only as a proof that she hadn't been to Mamzelle's study with an excuse for not having written it!

But laziness supervened, and having got so far as dipping the pen in the ink, she laid the pen down, and crossed to the rocker by the window, where she sat down with a plump and a creak.

"Pamela's a cat!" she remarked, by way of light and genial conversation.

No reply from Millicent.

"May's a cat!" continued Peg.

"Dry up!" Millicent was driven to speech. "How can I work at algebra with your chin wagging? I've got to take this paper to Moon."

"Moon's a cat!" said Peg. Indeed, according to Peg Pipping, St. Olive's had an almost entirely feline population. Almost every person in that establishment was a "cat"—excepting Peg!

Having failed to draw conversation from Millicent, Peg gazed from the window, and grinned when she saw Pamela and May coming back from the tennis courts, remembering the message she had left on the blotter in their study. That would show them what somebody thought of them, and it would be all the more perturbing because they could never guess who had done it!

Millicent finished her paper at last, and left the study. But a few minutes later steps came up to the doorway.

"Look here, now you've taken your paper to Moon, you can jolly well help me with my French paper!" said Peg, without looking round, taking

it for granted that it was Millicent Wade coming back. "That cat Mamzelle will report me to the Duck, very likely——"

"Margery!"

"Oh, scissors!" ejaculated Peg, fairly bounding from the rocker, and staring at Miss Ducat, form-mistress of the Fourth, standing in the doorway. "I—I wasn't asking Milly to help me with my French paper, Miss Ducat—I—I wouldn't—I—I should have written my thumb, only I've hurt my paper—I mean, I should have papered my hurt—I mean, hurt my paper—that is——"

"Did I hear you apply an opprobrious epithet to Mademoiselle Monceau, Margery?" demanded Miss Ducat, sternly. Miss Ducat may have known that she was called the "Duck" by her form, and perhaps she did not mind. But "cat" was quite a different matter.

"I—I—I—I!" babbled Peg.

"Mademoiselle Monceau has reported to me that you were given a paper to write, to be taken to her study after tea, and that you have not written it," said Miss Ducat.

"I—I've hurt my thumb, and—and——"

"Have you been to the Matron about it?"

"Oh! No."

"Go at once, and if Matron reports that you are unable to write, you will be excused. If not——"

"It—it—it's much better now," gasped Peg. "In—in fact, I—I think it—it—it's quite well again, please, Miss Ducat."

"I thought so!" said Miss Ducat, grimly. "Margery, you are the most untruthful girl at St. Olive's, as well as the idlest. You will be given a detention for Wednesday afternoon, and I shall request Mademoiselle Monceau to set you a detention task in French. You will not leave the form-room till you have completed it."

Miss Ducat rustled away, leaving Peg breathing deep wrath.

She unrolled the lint from her thumb—that, evidently, was no good! A detention task on a half-holiday—she might as well have written that beastly French paper, and have had done with it! But there was one gleam of comfort—one spot of balm in Gilead, as it were—the missing postal-order! Peg thought of Mamzelle rooting wildly round her study, growing more and more exasperated and excited as she failed to find it—and was consoled!

CHAPTER IV.

THEFT!

"PAMELA!"

"Yes, Miss Buss!"

After tea, Pamela Duncan was going out with May Carhew, for a walk on the beach till the bell rang for lock-ups. But she stopped at once at the voice of Miss Buss, head-mistress of St. Olive's. Miss Buss, tall and stately, was coming in as the two juniors were going out.

"Please go to Mademoiselle Monceau and tell her that I shall be glad to see her in my study at half-past six."

"Yes, Miss Buss."

The Head-Mistress swept on, and disappeared into her study. May Carhew gave a little shake of her graceful shoulders.

"Bother!" she said. "Hurry up, Pam—I'll walk slowly, and you'll catch me up."

Pamela nodded, and ran into the House again. Pam was always willing to oblige—not that there was any choice about obliging the Head! She

hurried to Mamzelle's study, tapped at the door, opened it, and stepped inside.

"Please, Mamselle——" she began. Then she stopped. Like Peg before her, she found the study unoccupied. Mamzelle was still in the Staff Room.

"Bother!" murmured Pam. And she left the study again, and closed the door, turning up the passage in the direction of the Staff Room. As she did so, Mademoiselle Monceau appeared in sight at the upper corner of the passage, and her eyes and spectacles fixed on Pamela.

The junior girl hurried towards her.

"Vat is it?" asked Mademoiselle Monceau. "You go to my study to speak viz me, isn't it?"

"Yes, Mamzelle," answered Pam, and she delivered the Head's message.

"Zank you," said Mademoiselle Monceau: and Pamela hurried away, to join May Carhew in the quadrangle, and walk down to the beach.

Antoinette Monceau walked on to her study. It was hardly six yet, so she was not due with the Head for half-an-hour. In her study she glanced over the table for Peg Pipping's French paper—naturally without finding it there.

Her black brows came together in a tight line over her spectacles. Obviously, the plumpest and laziest member of the Fourth Form had not written her paper, and the matter had to be passed on to her form-mistress. Mamzelle went along to Miss Ducat's study to report: after which, the "Duck" went up to see Peg, and the French mistress returned to her own quarters—with time to finish her letter to the London stores before going to Miss Buss.

She sat down at her writing-table and finished the letter. Then she stretched out a hand to take the postal-order from under the paper-weight.

Then she jumped!

"Mon Dieu!" ejaculated Mamzelle.

She lifted the paper-weight, and stared at the blank space beneath. The postal-order was not there! Mademoiselle stared at the spot for a long minute—her lips setting hard, her black eyes glinting through her spectacles. That postal-order for £1 had vanished. Obviously it could not have moved of its own accord—a draught could not have shifted it from under a paper-weight. It had been deliberately removed.

"Mon Dieu!" repeated Mamzelle.

She did not, as the fat and fatuous Peg anticipated, begin rooting round the room in search of that missing postal-order. She did not suppose that the postal-order was "lost"—for it was quite impossible for it to be lost. It had been taken away!

"Mon Dieu!" said Mamzelle, for the third time.

She sat, staring, clenching her bony hands. Her feelings were an unpleasant mixture of horror, anger, and apprehension. Apprehension, perhaps, was the strongest of the three—the dread of losing money. The postal-order was gone—it had been taken away—in brief, it had been purloined—and would she ever see it again?

Who had done this? Someone—obviously some St. Olive's girl—had come to her study during her absence, seen the postal-order on the table, and taken it. Instantly she remembered Pamela, whom she had seen leaving the study as she came from the Staff Room.

"Pamela!" breathed Mademoiselle Monceau.

Pamela Duncan had been in the study—there was no reason to suppose that anyone else had. Was it Pamela who had taken the postal-order? That pretty, fair-haired girl, with her innocent blue eyes—was she a thief? Someone was—and Pamela had been there!

Mamzelle jumped to her feet. This could not be investigated too soon—not a moment was to be lost.

Already it was more than twenty minutes since she had seen Pamela Duncan leaving that study—with the postal-order in her pocket, she could not doubt. It might already be too late to recover it—it was not yet lock-ups, and the girl might have gone out of the school——

Antoinette Monceau fairly tore down the passage to Miss Ducat's study. She almost hurled the door open, and burst in.

Miss Ducat was not alone. Anemone Rance and Irene Dace, two prefects of the Sixth Form, were with her. All three gazed round in surprise as the excited Gallic lady burst in. Miss Ducat raised her eyebrows slightly—Anemone Rance closed one eye at Irene Dace, who smiled. Mamzelle's face was crimson with excitement—her nose reddest of all: Mamzelle's rather prominent nose always glowed when she was excited—as she often was!

“Mees Ducat—!” gasped Mamzelle.

“What is it, please?” asked Miss Ducat, in her calmest tone. The form-mistress of the Fourth had little use for foreign excitability.

“I am rob!” gasped Mademoiselle Monceau. “Zere is a teef.”

“What?”

“A teef—une voleuse—I am rob—I am stole! I am teefed by a teef!” spluttered Mamzelle. “One teef has teefed in my study.”

“A thief!” exclaimed Miss Ducat, blankly. “Nonsense!”

“C'est vrai—he go, zat postal-order!” shrieked Mamzelle. “Zere is one teef, and my postal-order is teefed.”

“If you have lost a postal-order, Mademoiselle Monceau——”

“I lose him not!” shrieked Mamzelle. “I tell you, mees, it is teefed. I plant him under ze paper-veight—how he lose himself? Mais non, pour cela, non! One teef go and teef him.”

Miss Ducat rose to her feet, stern and grim. The two prefects exchanged glances. Mademoiselle was waving both hands, and nodding her head violently—gesticulating with almost all her limbs together.

“If this is correct, it is a terribly serious matter,” said Miss Ducat. “But why do you come to me, instead of going to the Head?”

“Pourquoi? It is vun of ze girls in your form, Mees, zat I see leave my study——”

“One of the girls in my form! Her name?”

“Pamela Duncan, Mees Ducat. I come to you in ze haste—I run—I fly—zat zat girl may be catch before she make him to go vere we never find him. He las! Zat a teef sall take a pound——”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Miss Ducat. “Pamela is quite incapable of anything of the kind. I cannot believe it for one moment. Anemone, will you find Pamela as quickly as possible, and bring her to this study.”

“Certainly, Miss Ducat.”

Anemone Rance and Irene Dace hurried from the study. Miss Ducat with a knitted brow, sat down again, and pointed to a chair.

“Sit down, please, and calm yourself, and tell me all the circumstances!” she snapped.

Mademoiselle sat down: but she did not calm herself—that was beyond her—but she related all the circumstances, over and over again, in mixed English and French, in an excited squeak that went on and on and on.

Miss Ducat's face darkened as she listened. It was clear that the postal-order must have been deliberately taken from where the French mistress had left it—and what could that mean but theft? But Pamela—fair-haired, kind-hearted Pamela, the sweetest-natured girl in the Fourth Form—the

most popular junior at St. Olive's—that was impossible. Yet she had been on the spot—and it remained to be discovered whether anyone else had! The "Duck" waited in deep anxiety for Pamela to appear.

* * * *

CHAPTER V. UNDER SUSPICION!

Pamela Duncan tapped at Miss Ducat's door, and entered. Why she had been sent for she did not know. Anemone Rance had found her on the beach with May, and bidden her hurry back to the school: that was all. But as she entered her form-mistress's study, she realised that something serious was the matter. The "Duck's" face was darkly clouded: and Mademoiselle Monceau was there, as red as a turkey-cock, hardly able to keep still—and she gave the junior a terrifying glare as she came in, that quite astonished poor Pamela.

"You sent for me, Miss Ducat!" said Pam.

"Yes, Pamela," said Miss Ducat, very gravely. "I am compelled to ask you some questions, my child. You went to Mademoiselle Monceau's study after tea?"

"Yes," said Pamela, in wonder. "The Head sent me with a message——"

"Zat is excuse!" interjected Mamzelle. "I am not in ze study—I am in ze Staff Room—it is zere zat you sould come——"

"Pamela can hardly have known that you had not returned to your study, so long after tea!" rapped Miss Ducat. "Kindly leave this to me."

"Ze pound—he go—I vill not lose zat pound—!" exclaimed Mademoiselle. "Pamela, you verre bad girl, vat is it you do viz zat pound?"

"I don't understand," said Pamela, bewildered. "What pound?"

"Zat pound zat you teefed——"

"Silence, please!" exclaimed Miss Ducat. "I will not allow this! Leave this to me! Pamela, how long did you stay in Mademoiselle's study?"

"Only a few moments, Miss Ducat—as soon as I saw that she was not there, I went out again at once. I only stepped inside——"

"Did you notice a postal-order on the table, under a paper-weight?"

"A postal-order!" repeated Pamela, blankly. "No, Miss Ducat. I never looked, of course. I never noticed anything that was on the table."

"Pas vrai! Zat postal-order, he go——"

"You did not touch anything in the study, Pamela?"

"Only the door-handle," answered Pamela.

"Pas vrai! Pas vrai—not true—. He vas under ze paper-veight, and he go——"

"Do you know whether anyone else went to the study?"

"Not that I know of, Miss Ducat."

"A very serious thing has occurred, Pamela. A postal-order for one pound has been taken from Mademoiselle Monceau's table. There appears to be no doubt that a theft has been committed."

"Oh!" gasped Pamela. She understood at last. Her face suddenly whitened, and she looked at her form-mistress with dilated, frightened eyes. "Oh, Miss Ducat! You cannot think—Mamzelle cannot think——"

"I do not think for one moment that you know anything whatever about the missing money, Pamela," said Miss Ducat.

"Oh, thank you, Miss Ducat!" gasped Pamela. "Of course I know nothing about it—Mamzelle cannot believe so—!" She turned almost beseeching eyes on the French mistress. "Mamzelle, you cannot—cannot think——"

"Zat pound, he go!" said Mademoiselle Monceau. "You vill not ask me to zink zat he valk away, n'est-ce-pas? Zat you give him back——!"

"How can I give back what I have never seen or touched!" exclaimed Pamela, indignantly. "I know nothing whatever about it."

"Pas vrai—pas vrai——!"

"Mademoiselle Monceau, I believe every word that Pamela has spoken," said Miss Ducat, firmly. "The thief, if there be a thief, must be looked for elsewhere. You had better place the matter before the Head."

Mamzelle jumped up like a jack-in-the-box.

"I go to ze Head at vunce!" she exclaimed. "I vill not be rob—I vill not be teefed—mon Dieu, zat I should be teefed!" And Mademoiselle bounced out of the study.

"You may go, Pamela," said Miss Ducat, quietly. "I have every faith in you, my dear girl, and have no doubt that this matter will be cleared up before long."

"Thank you, Miss Ducat!" said Pamela, with trembling lips: and she left her form-mistress's study.

Her face was white, as she went down the passage. May Carhew was waiting for her at the corner, and she gave her chum a very anxious look.

"For goodness sake, what is the matter, Pam?" she breathed. "You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"I—I—I—!" Pamela's voice faltered. "Oh, May, it's too horrid—there's a postal-order missing from Mamzelle's study, and she thinks—she thinks—!" Pam's voice broke, and in spite of herself, the tears came into her eyes.

"Pam!" May's voice was a gasp of horror. "She can't think you—you——"

"She does!" muttered Pam.

"The idiot!" said May. "The fathead! How dare she? She passed me a minute ago, like a thunderstorm. Is she mad? She thinks that you——"

"I went to her study, with the Head's message, and—and——"

"And I might have gone, and then I suppose she'd think that it was I," exclaimed May, her dark eyes ablaze with wrath. "I suppose she's lost it, as she did that sixpence, that was a standing joke for half a term——"

"No," whispered Pam. "It was under a paper-weight—someone must have moved the paper-weight and taken it——"

"Oh!" said May, blankly. "Pam! That means that there's a thief in the House—oh, Pam!" She caught her breath.

Pamela caught her by the arm.

"May! If you think that I—I—I—!" Her voice failed her.

"Don't be a chump, Pam!" snapped May. "I'd sooner think I'd done it than you. But—but who—who—there can't be a thief at St. Olive's! It's impossible! But—but if it was taken—someone must have taken it! For goodness sake, don't blub, Pam——"

"No! I—I won't! But—but——!" groaned Pamela.

"Come up to the study!" said May, drawing her chum's arm through hers: and Pam nodded, and they went up to the Fourth. On the upper landing they encountered Peg Pipping, with a fat grin on her fat face.

"I say," chuckled Peg. "I was looking over the banisters—I saw Mamzelle—he, he, he! Bit excited, what? He, he! What's the matter with Froggie?" Peg's fat face was full of mirth. "I say, has she lost another sixpence? He, he!"

May hurried on with Pamela without answering. But Peg, who had noticed the white, stricken look in Pamela's face, was curious to know the cause, and she rolled in pursuit.

"I say, what's up? What's the matter, Pam?"

Pamela made no answer—May hurried her into Second Study. Peg Pipping stared inquisitively into that study after them.

“I say—what—? Yooo-hooop!” spluttered Peg, as the door was slammed—and she jumped back just in time to save her little fat pimple of a nose. “Cats!” In great indignation, Peg bent her mop of tallowy hair to the key-hole, and bawled through that orifice. “Cats! C-A-double-T-S—cats! Yah!”

After which, Peg retired to the landing, and Second Study was left in peace. Three or four Fourth-form girls came up, in an excited bunch, a little later—Gwendoline Page, Pauline Poole, Lorna Desmond and Millicent Wade. Peg’s round green eyes gleamed with curiosity. Evidently, something was “up”—and Peg wanted to know what. Peg always wanted to know!

“I say, what’s on?” exclaimed Peg. “What—? Is it anything to do with Pamela? She was looking quite sea-sick. What—?”

“Orders for the whole school to assemble in hall!” said Gwendoline.

“Tain’t roll-call yet,” said Peg.

“Orders from the Head,” said Millicent. “Something’s happened in Mamzelle’s study—something awful——”

“He, he, he! chuckled Peg.

“It’s not a laughing matter,” exclaimed Pauline. “Somebody’s going to be expelled from St. Olive’s.”

Peg jumped almost clear of the landing.

“What?” she gasped. “Not—not—not because of—of—of something in Froggie’s study?” Peg’s fat knees knocked together.

“Just that,” said Millicent. “There’s been a theft——”

“Wh-a-at?” stuttered Peg.

“A postal-order stolen——”

“Ooooooooooh!”

“And Miss Buss is going to question everybody, to find out who went to Froggie’s study, so I hear——”

“Oh, scissors!” gasped Peg.

The excited girls ran on to spread the exciting news. They left Peg Pipping on the landing, with a fat face from which every spot of colour had gone. From the bottom of her podgy heart, Peg repented the trick she had played in Froggie’s study. But repentance, as so often happens, came too late!

CHAPTER VI. ASKING FOR IT!

Pamela held up her head proudly when she went into the form-room with the St. Olive’s Fourth the next morning.

May Carhew was by her side: several other girls seemed to cluster round her, as if to show all whom it might concern that they believed in Pamela. But there were others who gave her dubious glances, and some who carefully avoided meeting her eyes.

The shadow of suspicion lay darkly upon poor Pam.

For the searching investigation conducted by the Head had revealed nothing, the previous day, excepting that Pamela Duncan was the only person known to have visited Mamzelle’s study during Mamzelle’s absence in the afternoon.

The head-mistress, the form-mistresses, the prefects, had all done everything that was possible—and Matron had questioned and examined below stairs—and it all came back to the fact already known—that Pamela Duncan had gone to that study, and no one else had, so far as could be learned.

Someone else must have, in the belief of Pam's friends. But who? Nobody could have gone to the study intending to take the postal-order—for nobody could have known that it was there, unless already in the room for some other reason. That was the real difficulty. Someone, being in the study, had seen the postal-order on the table, and taken it. But nobody besides Pam, had any reason for being in that study at all—so far as was known.

Pam's face was pale, and there was a shadow under her eyes. Anyone could see that she had slept little during the night. But her face, though pale, was firm: her head held high. There was no sign of weakness about Pam of the Fourth.

Miss Ducat was particularly kind to her in form that morning. The "Duck" was standing by her, and her firm belief in Pam's innocence was a great comfort to the girl, and encouragement to her friends.

But it was a dismal morning to poor Pam. This blow had fallen upon her like a bolt from the blue. Nobody, perhaps, actually believed her guilty: but there was dark doubt and suspicion. That was inevitable. For the postal-order was still missing—it had been taken—and someone must have taken it. Everyone had to believe that there was a thief in the school. And the finger of suspicion pointed in only one direction.

Peg Pipping looked at Pam many times during lessons. The expression on Peg's fat face might have excited curiosity, if anyone had given the plump junior any attention—which no one did.

Peg was, as a rule, utterly and completely satisfied with herself. Others might not be so satisfied with her—but that was their fault. Peg was about as near perfection, as it was possibly to get—in Peg's own valuable opinion. But for once Peg was feeling a little uneasy.

Peg had a conscience—of sorts. It was, like its owner, lazy, and seldom worked! Still, there it was—such as it was!

The plump junior could not help feeling that this was tough on Pam. Her obtuseness being abysmal, it had never occurred to her solid brain that the missing postal-order might be supposed to have been stolen. She had had sense enough not to take it out of the study. But that was her limit. She had pictured Froggie rooting frantically all over her study for that postal-order. Instead of which—this!

So Peg Pipping felt sorry for Pamela—though not to the extent of owning up to what she had done with the postal-order.

That would have meant trouble for Peg—which was hardly to be considered seriously—by Peg!

Nevertheless, during form that morning, Peg thought a great deal about the matter. When the girls went out in break, May Carhew slipped her arm through Pam's: and Gwendoline, Lorna, Millicent, Betty Morgan, and several other girls gathered about her. And Peg Pipping joined the same little bunch in the quadrangle.

Mademoiselle Monceau, walking in the quad, gave Pamela an expressive look, her black brows knitted over her spectacles. Pam noticed it, and the colour flooded her face. She knew what Mamzelle believed.

But Peg did not notice Mamzelle. She pushed into Pam's circle of friends, and May Carhew gave her a frowning look.

"Hook it, Fatima!" said May: which was not lady-like, but expressive.

"I'm going to speak to Pam," said Peg. "I say, Pam, don't you worry! That silly postal-order will be found all right. I'll tell you what—tain't pinched at all—that old donkey Froggie has lost it, same as she did the sixpence—"

"Hush, hush," breathed Pamela, as she saw Mamzelle, in the offing, give

a little jump. Peg's voice had great carrying powers, and evidently Mademoiselle Monceau had heard her.

But Peg was not easily hushed.

"I mean to say, you know what an idiot Mamzelle is, and a cat, too!" she went on, cheerfully. "She'll find that postal-order all right. 'Member how she combed all St. Olive's for that sixpence, and how we all laughed! Well——"

Peg broke off, and stared at May Carhew, who was making frantic signals to her to be silent. Mamzelle was approaching!

"Wharrer you making faces at me for, May Carhew?" demanded Peg.

"Mamzelle——!" breathed May.

"Oh, bother Mamzelle," said Peg. "She's a cat——!"

"Moi, une chatte!" came an angry shrill squeak. "Mon Dieu! Zis is too mooch! You verre bad and disrespectful one——"

"Oh, scissors!" gasped Peg. She spun round, and stared at the angry French mistress. "Oh! I—I didn't see you, Mamzelle! I—I wasn't calling you a cat! I—I don't think you're a cat, like the other girls do, Mamzelle. I—I—I——"

"I take you to Mees Ducat! Come viz me!" Mademoiselle Monceau grasped a fat arm with bony fingers, and marched Peg off to the House.

"Poor Peg!" sighed Pamela.

"Little fat chump!" said May. "Does she ask for it? Still, it's decent of her to stand by you, Pam, and I'll stand her a currant bun when the Duck's finished scalping her."

"I say, you leago my arm—I say, I wasn't calling you a cat—besides I know you can't help it—I say——" Peg's voice died away in the distance, as Mamzelle marched her in to her form-mistress's study.

CHAPTER VII.

LIGHT AT LAST!

"Moi! Une chatte——!"

"Really, Mademoiselle Monceau——"

"Is it zat I am a cat? Is it zat I am one idiot? Is it zat I am donkey?" Mamzelle's voice was shrill with wrath. "Zis bad girl——!"

"Margery!" Miss Ducat rose to her feet, with a stern brow. "Margery Pipping, is it possible that you have applied such disrespectful epithets——?"

"Oh! No! I mean—I didn't mean——!" gasped Peg. "I—I never knew that Mamzelle was listening behind my back, and—and——" It was rather an unfortunate way of putting it, but Peg was too confused and terrified to choose her words with care.

"Oh, pour cela, it is too mooch!" shrilled Mamzelle. "Ecoutez! You hear——" Mamzelle's face, and especially her nose, flamed with wrath. "You hear, isn't it? Zis bad girl she say to ze ozzers, she say, zat old donkey she lose zat postal-order, and he is not teefed at all—ze old donkey lose him——"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Miss Ducat, "I hardly know how to deal with you, Margery. How dare you say——?"

"I—I—I meant—oh, scissors!—I—I mean I—I think it was lost, Miss Ducat—I—I—I——!" babbled Peg.

"She say vat one idiot Mamzelle is—zat zat donkey—zat old donkey—lose him like she lose one sixpence!" shrieked Mademoiselle. "She say he is not teefed, but I lose him! She say I find him all right—she say——"

"One moment, Mademoiselle Monceau, Margery." Miss Ducat fixed searching eyes upon Peg. "It seems that you stated to other girls that the missing postal-order has not been stolen at all, and that it will be found."

"Oh! Yes! No! I—I mean—oh, lor'!"

"What do you know about the matter, Margery?"

"Oh! Nothing at all; I—I don't know anything about it," gasped Peg. "How could I? I—I mean—I—I shouldn't wonder if Mamzelle lost it—in—her study—it—it might be under something, and she never looked—I mean——"

"Under something!" repeated Miss Ducat.

"Oh! No! Not—not under anything, especially—especially a clock!" stuttered Peg. "I mean—oh, dear! C-c-can I go now, Miss Ducat?"

"No!" said Miss Ducat, grimly. "You may not go, Margery! You know something about this matter, and I command you to tell me at once. What do you know?"

"Oh, dear! Nothing at all!" groaned Peg. "I—I—I thought it might be lost in—in Mamzelle's study—I—I—I thought——"

"He is not lost—he is tooked," squeaked Mademoiselle. "He was under one paper-weight, and he is tooked——"

"The postal-order cannot have been lost, Margery. It was deliberately taken from its place," said Miss Ducat. "Yet it is clear to me that you believe it to be still in Mademoiselle Monceau's study. Did you go to that study yesterday?"

"Oh! No!" bleated Peg. "Certainly not! I hadn't done my French paper, and so I couldn't, could I? I certainly never went there to tell Mamzelle I had hurt my thumb—I never thought of such a thing—besides, I hadn't hurt it, so I never went to Matron. I didn't—I mean I wasn't—I—I—I——"

"I think I begin to understand," said Miss Ducat, grimly. "You went to Mademoiselle's study to make an excuse for not having written your paper——"

"Mon Dieu!" ejaculated Mademoiselle.

"Oh! No! Yes! I—I—I—I might have gone to the study to—to speak to Mamzelle, but—but I never saw the postal-order—it wasn't under the paper-weight and I—I never thought it would be a joke to hide it and make Mamzelle hunt for it like she did the sixpence—and—and—and I never put it anywhere, certainly not under a clock——"

"Bless my soul!" said Miss Ducat.

"Ciel!" ejaculated Mademoiselle Monceau, staring at Peg with all her eyes and spectacles. "Zat girl—is she mat? I zink she must be mat, for if she is sane, how can she be so head-of-a-pudding? Ciel! I zink she is mat!"

"Pray come with me to your study, Mademoiselle! Margery, come with me," rapped Miss Ducat. "We shall soon ascertain what truth there is in this."

"I—I—I wasn't—I—I didn't wasn't—I mean, I wasn't didn't——!!"

"Come!" rapped Miss Ducat.

And Peg, in the lowest of spirits, followed her form-mistress and Mademoiselle Monceau to the latter's study. Peg's powerful intellect did not realise how much she had given away, and she wondered whether the Duck would make any discovery in that study!

Miss Ducat marched in, and went directly to the mantelpiece. She lifted the little marble clock!

"Oh!" ejaculated Miss Ducat.

"Mon Dieu! He is zere viz himself!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Monceau. "C'est ca! Zen he is not teefed, he is to hide! Ciel!"

Peg's eyes popped at Miss Ducat. How and why the Duck had gone directly to the mantel-piece, lifted the clock, and revealed the missing

postal-order, Peg Pipping did not know! It seemed like magic to Peg!

"That is your postal-order, Mademoiselle?" rapped Miss Ducat.

"Mais oui! Zat is he! He is found! It is zat verre bad girl who hide him under ze clock, and make me to believe zat he is teefed——"

"A belief, Mademoiselle Monceau to which you came, in my opinion, with undue haste!" snapped Miss Ducat. "A girl in my Form has been placed under a very disagreeable suspicion. That, fortunately, is now at an end—the postal-order was not stolen at all. A foolish practical joke by an incredibly foolish girl—Margery, what have you to say now?"

"I—I—I'm so glad you found it, Miss Ducat! I—I wonder how it came under the clock? Perhaps Mamzelle put it there and—and forgot it——"

"Mon Dieu!"

"C-c-c-an I go now, Miss Ducat? The—the girls will be so glad to know that—that the postal-order's found, and wasn't pinched—I mean stolen—at all, only Mamzelle lost it just as I said——"

"Zat girl she is mat!" gasped Mademoiselle Monceau. "Mat—quite mat!"

"Margery!" thundered Miss Ducat. "You hid the postal-order under the clock, when you came to this study yesterday afternoon with an untruthful excuse for not having written your French paper!"

"Oh, scissors! Did you see me? Oh, lor! I never saw you——"

"Grant me patience!" gasped Miss Ducat. "Margery, I shall take you to your headmistress—Miss Buss will deal with you! Come."

Five minutes later, St. Olive's was assembled in Big Hall to hear an announcement by the Head.

"Oh, Pam!" breathed May Carhew.

She fairly hugged Pamela when the girls came out of hall. Pamela's face was merry and bright. Everyone crowded round her. All St. Olive's knew now that that wretched postal-order never had been taken from Mamzelle's study at all—that Peg Pipping had hidden it under the clock on the mantelpiece for a joke on Froggie—and that the Duck had somehow found it all out. Great was the rejoicing of Pamela and Co. of the Fourth.

Only one member of that form did not rejoice. Peg was quite perspiring after the Head had finished talking to her. That was not so bad, for a "jaw," howsoever long, had to come to an end at last. But added to a "royal jaw," Peg had detentions for four half-holidays, and a vast array of French irregular verbs to write out for Mamzelle: and it was safe to predict that never, never again would Peg play practical jokes in a mistress's study.

After tea that day, a fat lugubrious face looked into Second Study. Pamela and May gave it expressive looks.

"I say, I've got twelve irregular putrid French verbs to write out!" wailed Peg. "I say, how many are you going to do me, Pam?"

Pamela did not answer that. Neither did May answer—in words! She picked up a cushion, and took steady aim.

But Peg flew before the cushion flew.

"Cat!" floated back from the passage.

After which Peg, with inky fingers and worried brow, was busy with French irregular verbs.

THE END.