

**"The Triumph of the Fourth!"**

A MAGNIFICENT LONG COMPLETE STORY  
OF THE GIRLS OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL.

**"Joan Haviland's Silence!"**

THE SECOND INSTALMENT OF AN ENTHRALLING  
NEW SERIAL OF SCHOOLGIRL LIFE.

Numerous Extracts from the "Cliff House Weekly!"

No. 141. Vol. 6.

Week Ending January 21st, 1922.

# The School Friend

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday



## **THE BURNING COSTUME!**

(An incident from the magnificent long complete story of the Girls of Cliff House, contained in this issue.)



# Your Editor's Corner.



Write to me as often as you like and let me know what you think of "The School Friend." All readers who write me, and enclose a stamped envelope, may be sure of receiving a prompt reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, "The School Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Readers,—A story every reader, I am sure, will be most eager to read is due to appear next week. It is very seldom indeed that readers find any cause for complaint in the "School Friend" stories. But quite a number have expressed their disappointment in the fact that Augusta Anstruther-Browne has not been given a prominent part of late. Well, in next week's magnificent long complete story of the Girls of Cliff House school, entitled

## "The Order of Expulsion!"

By Hilda Richards,

this will be amply remedied. No girl has played a more striking part in her time than Augusta. Augusta it was who was directly responsible for the barring-out against Mrs. Grampin, and for getting the order of expulsion passed upon Barbara Redfern. But Augusta endeared herself to the hearts of Cliff House girls and readers alike when, a reformed girl, she returned to the school as Olive Wayne. Ever since she has been a firm favourite. Never once has she relapsed into her old spendthrift, reckless ways. But now—What happens now? Can Augusta, after making good and building up an ideal reputation for herself for so long, doing good wherever she could, revert to her old deplorable ways? There are girls who have regarded Augusta as playing the hypocrite all along. They have openly said that she would drop the pose sooner or later.

"Olive Wayne can't last for ever!" has been a phrase between Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell. Can it be that they have been right, whilst Barbara Redfern & Co. have given their trust in vain? Next Thursday's story will show.

Again I have found room for a few words on the subject of

## "THE CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY."

In her "Reminiscences" of inanimate but none the less important objects, Katie Smith "assists" the Common-room Cupboard to hold forth. And the Common-room Cupboard has some very amusing things to relate.

## "THINGS NO ONE CAN ANSWER!"

is an "outburst" by Minnie Jerome, the little Third-Former who is always asking questions. "What I Hear!" consists of "jottings and blottings," by Bessie Bunter. Suffice to say, Bessie hears a good deal.

## "A CLIFF HOUSE SCRAP-BOOK!"

is compiled by Peggy Preston. Peggy's scrap-book is very interesting indeed, chiefly on account of the wide range of the things dealt with in such a small compass. Here we find the beginning of a novel by Frances Barrett, a few weird calculations by Elsie Branc, of the Third Form, a reminiscence of Piper, the porter, an account of a jape on Angelica Jelly, of the Fifth, and a few remarks concerning Bessie Bunter's fountain-pen.

"The Cliff House Weekly" also contains "Advertisements Not Yet Published," "Frances Barrett At The Ball!" "Things We

Could Do Without," "In The Cosy Corner," and many other interesting features. The third instalment of

## "JOAN HAVILAND'S SILENCE!"

will appear next Thursday. The interest of this enthralling serial increases with each instalment, and, much as you have enjoyed the first two, you must like the next still more.

## BRIEF REPLIES.

(Owing to the fact that we go to press considerably in advance of publication, readers should bear in mind that letters cannot be answered on this page within six weeks from the date of receipt.)

"Olga" (St. Leonards).—Cora Grandways is fifteen years of age. Her sister Judith is fourteen. I am afraid your suggestion regarding Clara Trevlyn is quite impracticable. Clara Trevlyn and Dolly Jobling are each fourteen years of age.

"Maggie" (Lancaster).—Glad you like the Companion Papers so much. I thank your mother for her high compliments. The matter of an Annual is under consideration. I have noted the type of stories which most appeal to you.

"Oooh-la-la!" (Inverness).—I will bear in mind your suggestions. Mr. Dodshon considers your drawings to be rather good.

"A Fond Reader" (Sandgate).—The art plates did not represent Cliff House girls.

Miss D. Watchurst (South Africa).—A competition suitable for South African readers to enter may be run in the "School Friend" later. Thanks for your good work in obtaining new readers.

"A Reader."—Doris Redfern is eleven years of age. Bluebell Clancy is thirteen, and Beatrice Barlow ten. Flora Cann is sixteen.

"Bobbed Hair" (Edinburgh).—It is extremely doubtful that Babs will ever have her hair bobbed. Few of my readers would welcome the change.

"Mabs" (a Dudley schoolgirl). I cannot promise that boys will ever play a prominent part in the stories. It must be left to the future to decide whether or not Grace Kelywn will return to Cliff House as a pupil. A Dancesford Hall story has just appeared. I cannot promise that a story in which Babs and Mabs quarrel will ever be published.

Miss M. Sadler. Glad to learn you are such a keen reader. At your age, eleven, you would most probably be placed in the Third Form at Cliff House.

"Topsy" (Queenstown).—The matter of an Annual is under consideration. The plates do not represent Cliff House characters. The matter of a Fourpenny Library is also under consideration. The answer to your last question is—No.

"Maisie and Jean" (Belfast).—I regret that I cannot answer your first question. Philippa Derwent and Phyllis Howell are about the same age.

Miss Audrey McKay (Cheshire).—As your letter has been returned marked "Address not known," I am obliged to reply to you here. It is by pure coincidence that some of the Christian and surnames of the Fourth

Form girls at Moreove School are alliterative—for example, Betty Barton, Dolly Delane, Madge Minden, etc. The matter of an Annual is under consideration.

"Win."—I cannot promise plates of the girls you mention. The girl you indicate in the sketch you enclose is Annabel Hichens.

Marjorie G. (Doncaster).—Brothers of the girls will be introduced into the Cliff House stories from time to time. No, Bunter Court does not really exist. Stella Stone is nearly eighteen years of age. I will bear in mind your suggestion. I will see that Shireen al Raschid is given mention in coming stories.

E. T. S. (Edinburgh).—Glad you like Bessie Bunter so much.

"The Trio" (Northampton).—Sheba Stanton has left Cliff House.

Miss S. Eybers (Riversdale).—I will see if a South African girl cannot be introduced into the stories later. Katie Smith is just fourteen. I am afraid I cannot promise a plate of Miss Richards.

"Pip" (Bucks).—Very interested to learn which characters are your favourites. Philippa Derwent will most probably take the leading part in a future story.

"Two Belgian Readers" (Belgium).—I will see if a competition, suitable for readers abroad to enter cannot be run later.

"Babs' and Mabs' Secret Chum."—I cannot promise a story in which Babs falls in love. At your age, twelve years, you would most probably be placed in the Third Form at Cliff House.

"A Dane" (Grange Park).—I will bear in mind your first suggestion. Your second question has already been answered. Bessie Bunter has no younger sister. It is extremely doubtful if Princess Zelle will ever come to Cliff House as a scholar. The future alone must show whether or not the girls of Cliff House and the girls of Moreove School will ever meet.

Miss R. Caraway. Very glad to learn that all the features in both Companion Papers make such a strong appeal to you.

"Grey Eyes."—I regret that I cannot promise to introduce a character of the name and type you suggest, on account of the number of similar requests that are made to me. The result of the competition will be announced very shortly.

Miss J. Barrett (Tilbury).—I will bear in mind your suggestion regarding the Needlework and Cookery features.

"Small Feet."—I will bear in mind your suggestion. Babs takes a somewhat larger size. "Duchess."—Instructions on how to use a camera may be published in the "School Friend" later.

"Bobbed Hair" (Partick).—Only the future can show whether or not the Grandways sisters will ever reform.

"Shamrock" (Chester).—I am unable to say when, if ever, another serial introducing the characters you mention will be published in the "School Friend."

"Cherry Makotte."—Yes, in many opinions Vivienne Leigh is as pretty as Peggy Preston. I cannot promise to make use of your suggestion. Yes, Freda Foote is decidedly pretty.

Your Sincere Friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

## CUT THIS OUT

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# The Triumph of the Fourth!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of the Girls of Cliff House School, introducing the Fourth Form Parliament.

By HILDA RICHARDS.

## Two Slackers!

**T**ICK me off, Babs!" "Certainly, Mabs!" Barbara Redfern added a pencil note to the list that hung on the notice-board in the Fourth Form passage at Cliff House, and turned towards Study No. 4.

"I think it's as well that we've started this," Mabel Lynn observed.

Babs nodded. "Yes; it lets us see just how we stand," she said. "It's less responsibility on the members of the parliament, too, and on poor Clara Trevlyn."

"Clara, our energetic usher," smiled Mabs. "Yes, she had got too much to do before we started this prep list."

Babs glanced back at the list on the board.

It gave the name of every Fourth Form girl, and against each name were two spaces. One bore a heading that showed that it was an entry of the time at which each girl started her evening's preparation; the other was to be filled in with the time at which she finished.

"Not more than half a dozen who haven't started yet," Babs said, with some satisfaction.

"We'll just give it a glance a bit later," Mabs nodded. "Marcia and Nancy are amongst the slackers, of course?"

"They would be!" said Babs, but refrained from saying more.

There was a reason for that list, and for the attention being given to it by Babs and Mabs.

Barbara Redfern was president of the newly-constituted Fourth Form parliament, a daring innovation at Cliff House School.

In brief, the Fourth-Formers had been placed, for a trial period, beyond the supervision of mistresses and monitresses out of school hours. They worked when it suited them. They "took themselves" to bed at night, and "got themselves up" in the morning. Their parliament, consisting of a president and six administrators, could even give special passes to be absent from the school.

Such a scheme was without precedent, at any rate at Cliff House.

It had been taken up with great enthusiasm by the lucky members of the chosen Form, and it was only during the last few days that self-government had fallen in public esteem after its brilliant start.

That they had had reverses was a matter for which the Fourth knew that they were not actually to blame. But they had been unable to clear themselves in the eyes of their headmistress. It was as a greater safeguard that Babs had decided that each girl should sign personally to the amount of preparation that she did.

"Everyone working, Babs?" asked a cheerful voice.

Clara Trevlyn came strolling along the passage.

"I notice that Clara isn't, for one!" smiled Mabel Lynn.

"No; I've just been down in the quadrangle," admitted Clara. "The fog seems to be coming on worse than ever! It's fearful! Hallo! Marcia and Nancy haven't signed on yet! I'll shake them up!"

"Give them another few minutes, Clara," suggested Babs. "I know they're willing to take advantage whenever they can, but they have the right to do their prep when they like."

"Right-ho, president!" grinned Clara.

Babs and Mabs went into Study No. 4, where Bessie Bunter, the fat girl, was sitting at the table. Bessie's forehead was puckered as though in thought, and her nose and her fingers were somewhat inky—sure signs that Bessie was trying to work.

"I say," said Bessie discontentedly, "I can't work out this silly sum at all, Babs. I make the length of the fish 475 yards!"

"Four point seven five is nearer, I think," laughed Babs.

"Oh, bother the old point!" grumbled Bessie. "I knew I'd forgotten it somewhere. I say, do you think a man could be fifteen feet high?"

"Fifteen what?" gasped Mabs.

"That's the answer I get to the second one, anyway!"

"You've multiplied by three somewhere, dear!" laughed Barbara. "Ah! There it is! You've turned it from yards into feet twice. See?"

"Oh dear!"

Bessie Bunter was not "strong" on arithmetic.

More than that, she positively hated figures in any shape or form.

But the fact that even Bessie was making such serious efforts to cope with her "prep" showed that there was something in the way that everyone had realised that she was on her honour to work just as though the mistresses were still supervising them.

And yet that was the very accusation that circumstances had caused Miss Primrose to bring against them.

She had had to believe them guilty of the mean trick of getting to know the very questions that were to be asked at an important history examination to take place on the following afternoon, Tuesday.

Babs, Mabs, and Bessie took their seats at the table, and opened their books. An hour's preparation was essential by the school rules. They meant to do that hour at once, so that the evening would be free for other things.

"Busy?"

It was the voice of Peggy Preston that started them suddenly from their labours.

"Come in, Peggy!" smiled Babs. "I only looked in to say that Marcia and Nancy seem to be roaming about without much regard for the time. Hope I haven't interrupted you?"

"Not at all, Peggy. We'll have to speak to them," said Babs. "Thanks for the tip!"

"It isn't nice of them, when they know all that's happened," said Peggy. "Sorry if I've stopped you. Ta-ta!"

Babs shook her head as the door closed.

"It won't do," she said. "Peggy is the last one who would complain about anyone. Isn't she, Mabs?"

"The very last," Mabs nodded. "It's only because Marcia and Nancy have been working against us."

They went on with their prep again, the same thought in both minds. It was unpleasant to have to think of it, but they knew it was true. The two discontented members of the Fourth did not care what happened to self-government as long as they had their own way!

It was always like that with Marcia and Nancy.

"Babs!"

It was Annabel Hichens who broke the silence a quarter of an hour later—homely Annabel from Study No. 1.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 141.



Next Portrait:  
THE YOUNGEST GIRL IN THE  
FOURTH FORM.

"Yes, dear?" said Babs, startled suddenly from a problem that had completely baffled Bessie.

"Marcia and Nancy—those two girls are really too bad to me!" said Annabel Hichens. "In spite of everything I do, they make the study worse than ever every day."

"You must make them tidy it up, Annabel, said Babs. "You're an administrator, and we'll all back you up. Every other girl keeps her study tidy because we simply must do it. We're trusted to look after things like that."

"Make them get on with it now," said Babs.

"How can I, when they're both out?" said Annabel helplessly.

"Both out?" repeated Babs. "My word! I'd forgotten that. Haven't they started prep yet?"

"They never do much preparation," said Annabel indignantly. "But that study—I won't tidy it again. Here they keep me picking up their litter, and just laugh at me for my trouble. I never have time to do anything now. I was much better off when the mistresses had charge of us!"

"Don't touch it again. I'll see they tidy it, Annabel," promised Babs. "I wish you'd spoken sooner!"

Mabel Lynn dug her pen into the ink-pot with quite unnecessary force as the door closed.

"Annabel's a jolly good sort at heart—sound!" she said. "I know she works for those two in Study No. 1 as no one else ever would. They sneer at her for it. I'm almost sorry that she was made an administrator, because she takes it all with such deadly seriousness. It's really worrying poor old Annabel to think of the responsibility she has!"

They went on with their preparation again, and fortunately there were no more interruptions. The hour expired, and the three chums sat for several more minutes putting the finishing touches to their work. Then Babs rose, and the others followed their example.

There was quite a crowd clustered round the notice-board in the passage as they went along.

"Just signing off!" laughed Phyllis Howell, as she put the time and her initials against her name. "Come on, Agnes, write yours. We'll know then that you've worked, even if you do go and forget it all by to-morrow morning."

"Done your problems, Bessie?" chuckled Freda Foote, as she waited to initial her name. "Got them right?"

"Rather!" said Bessie proudly. "I expect it took you a jolly long while to guess that that man was five yards high!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Five feet, I mean!" said Bessie hastily. "I say, move out of the way some of you, and let me sign my name!"

"Certainly!" said Marjorie Hazeldene, moving back, and giving Bessie one of her gentle smiles. "I think this is a gorgeous idea of yours, Babs, and I'm sure we get through our prep better than under the old system. Hallo! Whose are the blank names?"

"I'll read them," said Dolly Jobling—Dolly, Marjorie, and Clara were the three chums of famous Study No. 7. "Gwen Cook, Lucy Morgan, and Bridget O'Toole have another ten minutes to go. Cissy Clare has another half-hour. Marcia and Nancy—Why, girls, they haven't even started, according to this list!"

"He, he, he!"

The sound of a chuckle, only too familiar in the Fourth, made everyone spin round. And there they saw the two girls in question, each of them wearing a very "don't-care" sort of grin.

"No, we haven't started!" said Marcia Loftus. "Any complaints?"

"Yes," said Barbara Redfern quietly. "Ah! The president speaks to us!" said Nancy mockingly. "Stand to attention, Nancy!"

"He, he, he!" giggled Nancy. "My hat! You'll get it in a minute, Marcia!" muttered Clara.

"We have got a complaint, Marcia," said Babs, in an even tone, "and it is simply this. You know, as well as I do, that we're on our honour to get on with our work in the same way as we should have done before. You two choose to slack about. It can't go on any longer!"

"Because your word is law?" sneered Marcia.

"No," said Babs. "Because if you two let us down the whole Form will have to suffer. It isn't only prep. Annabel says that you keep on making the study untidy. You'll have to clear that up as well."

"And supposing we refuse to obey the orders of a conceited president and a clique of friends?" asked Marcia.

"You'll have to obey!"

It was with one voice that the members of the Fourth spoke—just those words. Most of them went on to add other things. All of them were indignant. They all spoke their minds. It really did not confirm Marcia's hint that Babs was trying to be autocratic!

"It's no good talking to them!" cried Clara Trevlyn, in great vexation. "We've done all that before. Grab them, girls, and we'll make them clear up Study No. 1, and get on with their prep!"

"Don't touch me!" cried Marcia.

"My hat! I shall!"

"You daren't! I'll shriek if you do!" "Carry on! If anyone comes we'll tell them just how you've been going on!" said Clara. "I've been elected usher, and the usher's a sort of policeman. I'm going to take you two in my charge. You were late getting up this morning. You were nearly late to breakfast. You cheeked the Bull out of class, knowing that it would make her furious. You—Oh, I can't repeat it all! Kim on!"

"D-d-don't touch me!" panted Marcia. "But they did, Clara, as an usher, was forceful and effective. She had plenty of helpers. If Marcia and Nancy could not be persuaded by words to play the game they must be helped in another way!"

Straight to Study No. 1 they were rushed and put inside.

"There, just look at the litter you two have left about!" said Clara. "Chocolate-papers over the carpet, an old jumper on the chair, books everywhere, the mantelpiece full of all sorts of old rubbish! Clear it up, and then get on with prep!"

Marcia objected. So did Nancy. They were fruitless objections—Clara saw to that. And, much as they disliked it, Marcia and Nancy had to tackle the task of straightening Study No. 1.

"And now for prep!"

"Think you can make us work?" panted Marcia Loftus.

"Difficult, I admit, as you hate it so much!" said Clara. "We'll see you make a start anyway!"

Marcia's eyes flashed greenishly. "And this is self-government! Oppression I call it!" she exclaimed. "Nancy and I can be bullied just as much as you like! We must ask you for passes before

## PLACES OF INTEREST AT CLIFF HOUSE.



### This Week: THE NEEDLEWORK-ROOM.

The needlework-room is a place, naturally enough, that appeals to some girls and repels others. Not all visitors have a glimpse of the rather crowded little room. Clara Trevlyn's people, through Clara's astuteness, do not even know that it exists. Mothers and aunts are those usually privileged to gaze inside—and wonder! Fathers and brothers, not being interested, are led straight past.

Considering the limited space, the needlework-room has really been very skillfully arranged. It is used by all Forms at least once a week, and contains all the special garments to make and cannot get on with them in their Common-rooms or studies. Annabel Hichens is, perhaps, the most frequent visitor to the place. Clara sometimes goes there—for cuttings! Clara sometimes does make things for those special aunts who demand a home-made present from a girl, but her efforts are usually limited to pincushions and such-like articles.

In the needlework-room there is a large box, in which all cuttings are placed when the instructions are over, and any girl can help herself. Much as Clara dislikes the room, she likes to search through that box when the birthday of an aunt is drawing near. Aunts who have Clara for a niece can never complain that they have nowhere to put pins!

In the centre of the room are three good cutting-out tables, equipped with measures, tailors' chalk in a little box, scissors, and shears. There is also a cloth-guillotine, but, as this is seldom needed, it is kept padlocked.

Ironing-boards, sleeve-boards, etc., are kept in a cupboard, and are quite sufficient to meet the general needs. There are two electric irons for pressing, and other minor but useful contrivances. Three sewing-machines to do special work are fixed to a bench at one end.

The walls are hung with a series of charts of quite exceptional value. They demonstrate clearly the important points to be studied in dressmaking and home tailoring, and for a girl who is clever with her needle they are lessons in themselves.

Instruction in needlework is given, in the Lower School, by Miss Bullivant, who has a rather humorous reputation for doing so much of her own dressmaking. Miss Bellew used to instruct the Upper School, but since her departure the work has fallen to Miss Bland of the Fifth. Miss Scott, the Second Form mistress, is the dressmaking expert for the whole school.

The needlework-room is the headquarters of at least one society, but does not witness many meetings. Marjorie Hazeldene is the founder and president of the Fourth Form Needlework Guild, and is content to hold occasional meetings. It must be admitted, however, that the guild is a very live thing when necessity arises; when some Form effort is required, such as the making of articles for a charity bazaar, it comes quickly to life, and the needlework-room provides a very convenient place for getting on quickly and successfully with the work.

Next Week: The Fourth Form Common-Room.

we go out. We must kow-tow to President Babs here and there and every-where! We can't even have our own opinions; it's always supposed to be against the precious parliament! I'm fed up with all this nonsense! I wish it had never started! I'd be jolly glad to see it all done away with!"

"We know you would," said Babs drily. "As the rest of the Form think it's a jolly good idea, you'll have to fall into our ways, or take the consequences! Come on girls, let's get to the Common-room now and leave these grumblers alone! There are several things we want to talk about!"

Marcia and Nancy were left to themselves.

"I'll tell you really why I want to have a meeting of as many as possible, and it'll be just as well without that pair!" Babs exclaimed, when they were gathering in the Common-room. "The Fourth had the worst slur possible over those history books, didn't we?"

"When Mrs. Primrose found the very answers to the questions marked in nine of our books?" said Vivienne Leigh.

"Yes," said Babs, and it was unnecessary for her to point out how that had seemed to indicate that at least one of their number must have got to know the questions to be set. "Miss Primrose is setting fresh questions, and the exam is to-morrow. In the meantime, the marked books have all been put in her study. But I've been thinking, girls. I looked at the marks in my book rather carefully."

"So did I!" said Peggy.  
"Did you notice anything queer?"  
"It was a copying-pencil of rather a peculiar hue."

"Exactly!" nodded Babs. "I've been thinking that particular colour is very familiar. What is more, it was only a very, very thin line—just the sort drawn by someone we all know!"

"Connie Jackson!" cried Clara Trevlyn. "That's right, Babs! And we've suspected her all the time of plotting—"

"Hsssssh!" said Babs. "I'm not sure yet. It's just an idea. But, girls, see what it means! If only we could prove that we were innocent of marking those books, it would give the parliament an absolutely fresh start again!"

### The Plotters!

**A** GIRL who had been listening outside the closed door of the Common-room straightened up, and tiptoed to Study No. 1.

She entered softly, and closed the door carefully, and it was only then that a grin overspread the face of Nancy Bell.

Nancy had been eavesdropping! But it was really nothing very new for Nancy Bell.

"Find out anything?" inquired Marcia Loftus, who was lounging in an easy-chair.

Nancy seemed so pleased with herself that she did not answer the question at once.

"You don't look as though you're doing much prep!" she chuckled.

"As though I should!" said Marcia moodily. "I'm not going to be compelled to work by that precious clique! Prep's a nuisance that I don't care to indulge in unless I'm forced. But what are you grinning about?"

Nancy explained herself at last. She said that she had caught the drift of a conversation that might interest them. It concerned history-books and Connie Jackson. There was a very clever suspicion in the minds of Babs & Co., so Nancy said,



# STATUES WE SHOULD LIKE TO SEE!

By CLARA TREVLIN (Fourth Form).

**C**LIFF HOUSE is really out of the fashion as regards statues, and no one seems to have noticed it before.

I want to call attention to the matter now. I think that it should be seriously considered.

Most schools have their statues commemorating the famous people who have lived there. Why shouldn't Cliff House?

There's no reason at all—you must admit that. And in the years to come I'm sure that there will never be replicas of some of the girls we have with us at present. I think their images should be committed to cold stone, so that future generations could pause, and admire, and wonder what Cliff House was like in the year 1922.

Of course, one would have little difficulties, I know. Bessie Bunter would be one.

If hers wasn't done in a small size, they would charge so much for the granite that it might be impossible to pay; even if it was, they might not be able to get a piece of granite big enough, especially if it showed her in her greatcoat. But everything can be got over. They could do half of Bessie, and place it up against the wall, so that it looked as though the other half had been built over. Or if two were done together, they could do Bessie and Agnes White, and that would just about even up matters.

A very tasteful piece of statuary could be erected just inside the entrance-gates. I suggest something typical of school life, showing the three things we indulge in most—study, sport, and slumber. As there is no reason why it shouldn't be novel in design, three well-known characters at Cliff House might suitably be selected to "pose."

Miss Bullivant, reading the immortal Cicero, would represent Study in a splendid manner. Mademoiselle Lupin, waving a hockey-stick, and shrieking for someone to "It 'im in, 'ardly!" would make a very powerful representation of Sport. As for Slumber—well, what better can you imagine than Piper "on duty"?

The way that Connie Jackson has carried out her duties in that wonderful position of "quadrangle supervisor" certainly should be remembered. A figure of Connie holding, with immense scorn, a small piece of chocolate paper, would look very fine indeed. Of course, the sculptor would have to alter the dress occasionally; we could never allow the "fashion plate" to become old-fashioned.

There are numerous other suggestions that will occur to everyone at once. I will name just a few of them.

**EFFORT:** Dolly Jobling and her famous smoking frying-pan.

**PREPAREDNESS:** Representatives of the school fire-brigade rushing to Dolly Jobling's assistance.

**SOLID VALUE** (outside tuckshop): Mrs. Pickles breaking open a cake (with a hammer) to show its contents. Marble would be a very suitable and realistic medium for the cake.

**INDUSTRY:** Myself with—but I'm sure you know that one!

**HOMELINESS:** Annabel Hichens with her famous collection of household utensils. Dozens of other ideas are bound to come to you, if only you give the subject serious thought.

I will leave it at this, and recommend it to the consideration of the powers that be. I hope that they will give my idea all the consideration that it deserves.

(Considering that we found this MS. in the wastepaper-basket, it seems that someone has already taken Clara at her word!—Editress, "Cliff House Weekly.")

"Well?" inquired Marcia Loftus. "I don't see why you're so happy about anything. We know, as well as anyone, that Connie must have been at the bottom of that thing, and got the whole Form blamed."

"And you don't see?"

"No. We helped Connie before—in the fog. She told us that Babs and Mabs had seen us changing the Bull's hat for a fake one, and were going to checkmate us, so we changed the hats back. It helped Connie, who hates Barbara as much as we do. But it didn't do much good for us. We were hit with pillows for our trouble by that interfering Clara!"

"Well?"

"What's the good of helping Connie?" inquired Marcia, in her discontented voice. "She's got no power in the school now, as far as we're concerned. She can't do anything for us! Let her look after herself, I say!"

"Connie might have power again?"

"Eh?"

"If this scheme failed! If self-government ended Connie would be a monitress, with power over the Fourth. Look what a fine thing it would be for us to be in her good books then!"

Marcia brightened.

"But how? What are you driving at?"

"They've nearly got a way of proving

that it was Connie's marking in those books," Nancy whispered. "I heard them! There are some old exam-papers that Connie once marked in the same way, and with the same pencil, when she was acting as a temporary mistress. If they can only find a specimen they might prove that Connie did that trick, after all!"

"Oh!" said Marcia.

She sat bolt upright in the chair, interested at last. Marcia, used to scheming, could usually scheme to good advantage. She did then. It was not long before she gave a triumphant exclamation, and rose to her feet.

"We'll go along, Nancy," she said.

"Barbara will be angry when she finds we're not doing prep!" said Nancy, in a tone that could be taken either as serious or mocking.

"Bother Barbara!" said Marcia. And that settled Nancy's doubts.

Supremely indifferent to the fact that they had, as yet, made no attempt to do their preparation, Marcia and Nancy made their way to the Sixth Form passage.

Any doubts they might have entertained as to how they were to broach their thoughts were solved in a surprisingly simple manner.

Connie Jackson met them, and her

face lit up in what seemed quite a genuine smile of welcome.

"Good-evening, Marcia! Did you want to speak to me?"

Marcia was artful enough to see her advantage.

"Not really," she said. "I was coming to see Stella, and I just thought that—"

"Can you spare a few minutes?" Connie interrupted, her tone friendlier than ever. "I should like to have a chat with you two."

"Well, if you wish it, Connie," said Marcia.

"Come into Study No. 9, please—both of you."

They followed Connie to her "den." Two other girls who were sitting inside made a movement as though to rise, but Connie flashed a swift look at them. Marcia and Nancy nodded to them almost patronisingly; they stood in no fear of monitresses these days!

The two others in Study No. 9 were

you realise that all is not gold that glitters, after all! You were happier before, weren't you?"

"Yes," said Marcia.

"It's all silly nonsense, and it's most humiliating for us!" broke in Iris Bentley. "We can't say a word to any girl who is in the Fourth Form now. They do what they like, and they can laugh at us. It affects the rest of the school. They're all getting out of hand through this stupid experiment!"

"Miss Primrose should never have started such an idea!" said Violet Cutter.

Connie Jackson nodded slowly. She was a clever girl in her own deceitful way. She knew that she was mistress of the situation here. The other four thought the same as she did, if the matter could only be put tactfully.

"I should like to see something happen that caused Miss Primrose to see the other side of the picture—what they really are doing!" said Connie artfully.

"The very reverse may happen, as

"How?" asked Marcia.

"Monitresses have power," said Connie. "We can excuse you from many things. We can give late passes for cinemas. And—well, I can promise you both that if you help us, Marcia and Nancy, you shall not have a single line to write for us for the rest of the term!" She sought to justify that be a subtle suggestion. "You two have never had justice with the others. It wants someone to take your parts!"

"You mean that?" said Marcia in an eager whisper.

"I do," nodded Connie.

Iris Bentley and Violet Cutter looked a little shamefaced at being in what was nothing less than a conspiracy, but they said nothing.

"Then the sooner this self-government is over the better I shall be pleased!" Marcia exclaimed. "Now I'll tell you what they're supposed to be trying to do about those history books."

Marcia told. Connie listened without speaking, but her face was paler than ever. Evidently she understood. It was clear to her that a Fourth Form vindication would mean her own ruin and disgrace. If they could prove that Connie had already plotted against them in so grave a matter, would Connie ever be believed again?

"That's their idea, anyway," Marcia said, when she rose at length.

"Thank you for telling me," said Connie, with no further pretence about the matter. "Thank you. I shan't forget this. That promise I made—I'll keep it as soon as ever this self-government is finished. I promise that. You'll help us again if we want it?"

"Certainly!" said Marcia readily.

Iris Bentley and Violet Cutter said not a word until the door had closed on the two Fourth Form girls. Then they sprang to their feet as by a common impulse.

"You've got us involved in this by your clumsiness!" cried Iris. "Oh, it's too much! I'm not going—"

"Ssssh!" Connie entreated them. "You promised to help me. You're as keen as I am on seeing the end of this Fourth Form nonsense. I'm not going to be caught out by Miss Primrose—I can see a way already. That marking might be recognised as mine if I didn't know about it. But it won't now!"

"Why not?"

"I'm going to change it at the first opportunity!"

"But—but how?"

"It's a thin line, and I didn't make many marks. The books are in Miss Primrose's study. I can easily get at them. With one of Miss Primrose's pencils I can cover everything. I tell you I'll do it, too—I must!"

Violet still demurred.

"But that dress that you're having made in Courtfield—the very image of that dress used by Barbara as president of their parliament—"

"That will come in very useful if this fog lasts, as I think it will," Connie interrupted. "You said it was a good idea before, and I'm prepared to take the risk of wearing it. I know the dress-maker won't say a word; I pay her too well. It'll come to-night—"

Tap, tap!

The door opened to reveal Marcia and Nancy again. They seemed simply convulsed with merriment.

"Something you'll love to hear—the first fall of the parliament!" Marcia chuckled. "We've just seen them. You know that we're all allowed to do our prep without supervision? Well, Miss Primrose is so wild about that business of the history books that she's announced that they are to do an hour's special



**KATIE SMITH'S DISCOVERY!** One by one Katie took several written papers from the volume. A dozen cries came at the same moment from the girls around her. "They're the same!"

Iris Bentley and Violet Cutter, both girls after Connie Jackson's stamp.

"Sit down, please," said Connie. "There's room for both of you on the settee. You're in no hurry to go, are you?"

"Oh, no, Connie!" said Marcia, making herself at home at once.

Connie nodded, and chose a stool for herself.

Connie did not allow the pause to be a long one.

"You look as though you're feeling fed-up, Marcia?" she asked, smiling.

"Yes, I am!" admitted Marcia. Then she went on, feeling sure of her ground already: "It's this stupid self-government that is nothing more than bullying for Nancy and me! I shall be jolly glad when it finishes!"

"If it ever does," said Connie subtly. Marcia started.

"Isn't it bound to after three weeks?"

"If Miss Primrose should decide to keep it on, she can!" Connie laughed.

"You girls used to grumble about the old system, but I can see that some of

things stand!" Marcia could not help putting in.

"How do you mean?" All three monitresses asked the question.

"It may be possible for Barbara to prove that it wasn't a Fourth Form girl who marked the history books," said Marcia, with faint triumph.

"I don't know what you are driving at," said Connie in an unsteady voice.

Marcia just chuckled.

"Even—even if such a thing did happen," Connie had to go on, "it wouldn't do you much good. Supposing self-government became permanent? There'll be a nice position for you and Nancy for the rest of the term!"

Marcia became serious again.

"Yes, I know that," she said.

"But—"

"We've been most unjustly treated!" Connie broke in. "Miss Primrose has taken away all our power for no reason at all. But—well, there are ways, as you know. There's no need to say any more. But if we had any real friends in the Fourth Form—well, we shouldn't forget!"

history preparation in the class-room—under her! That's a fine blow for them, isn't it?"

"You're sure?"

"Yes! But we must go now, or we shall be late, and they may talk!" said Marcia, and she disappeared as abruptly as she had come.

Connie's eyes were sparkling as she turned from the closed door.

"Miss Primrose—out of her study!" she breathed. "It gives me the very chance I want!"

Marcia and Nancy, meanwhile, had sped on. They moved subtly and with cunning. It did not prove difficult for them to mingle with the crowd of Fourth Form girls going in the direction of the Fourth Form class-room.

And what indignation there was on every side!

That morning, as on Friday and Saturday, they had risen early for the special purpose of "swotting" history before breakfast. They had hurried with their preparation that evening, before girls in other Forms had even started, so that at the end of the day they would be free to do what they liked.

Now came this order that they were to assemble in the Form-room for an hour to work at history! It wasn't self-government at all!

"Don't say too much about it, girls—it's only for this one night, after all," Babs was trying to explain as diplomatically as possible. "Miss Primrose wants us to do well at the exam—"

"We shall!" answered Gwendoline Cook mutinously. "We've done more work than any other Form! If this is self-government, give me the old system!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You ought to explain, Babs! You ought to tell Miss Prim that it isn't fair!"

"No—let this pass!" Babs answered. "It will only strengthen the other case when we see Miss Primrose! Don't forget that!"

The procession went on again, but not without grumbling. They had nearly reached the door of the Fourth Form class-room, when a cheerful crowd of Third Form girls appeared.

"Hallo! Meetings in the class-room now?" exclaimed Madge Stevens.

"No, it isn't a meeting; it's horrid old compulsory prep!" said Bessie Bunter tactlessly, but indignantly. "Don't stand grinning there!"

"Prep! And they've been swanking that they never did prep under supervision now!" ejaculated Fanny Tibbits.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a shriek of laughter from the other Third-Formers.

"How are the mighty fallen!"

"Poor old Fourth!"

"Going to prep in the class-room after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Clara Trevlyn made a spring.

"I'll give you something to grin about!" she muttered.

But the Third-Formers did not wait. They removed themselves to a safer distance, and then turned to make further bright remarks. It was to the accompaniment of those bright and helpful remarks that the members of the Fourth turned into their class-room to concentrate for an hour on history.

### The Boldness of Connie!

THE Fourth-Formers were not happy.

Miss Primrose, who sat at the mistress's table, had been quite nice about it, but unwilling to listen to any arguments.

She said that she had been compelled to lose confidence in them on account of the marked history books. The examination to take place on the morrow was important—very important. She had not placed a mistress or monitress in charge of them, but was taking them herself. She wanted to forget what had happened, and the dissatisfaction she had felt, but grumbling on their part would not help matters.

It would have been all very well if the girls had felt that one of their number really had been guilty of that mean action of getting to know the original questions set for the examination.

But they were guiltless. They more than suspected Connie. They felt that they knew!

All their efforts and all their work that day had been quite in vain. Their early rising for study, the punctual appearance at breakfast, their orderliness at table, the skilful way in which they had sandwiched in prep with the other important Form matters—all those things did not count now.

So they did as bid. But it was only delaying the storm. One hour of bottled indignation had to find some outlet!

"Unjust!"

"Self-government's only going to become a farce if we get ordered about like that!" said Gwen Cook. "It's half-past eight now. If we'd started prep at the usual time we should have been much better off. It doesn't seem any good working on our own when Miss Primrose springs such things on us!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It's all right, girls!" said Babs quickly. "I'm not going to take it lying down! Miss Primrose believes that thing against us, but she's not going to much longer. We'll prove to her that we didn't mark the history books."

"If we can!"

Babs chuckled.

"We can; that's the best of it! I had an idea just before we left that room. There are some old papers corrected by Connie in the cupboard in this very room."

"Where?" came a startled gasp.

"In that big needlework book!" said



**AN UNEXPECTED "RAID"!** Just one cry came from Madge Stevens, and then the cushions were hurled at the Fourth-Formers.

This extra hour of work would rob them of all the time they had saved by good management, and be a great joke for the rest of the school.

How Connie must be chuckling to think that already Miss Primrose had taken away one of their greatest privileges, because of her spiteful action!

That thought worried them more than anything else when they thought of it. Connie had scored, as they knew she had been trying to do all the time. This was the result!

"I hope you are concentrating on memorising last term's history," said Miss Primrose once. "I see two or three girls are apparently not reading very diligently. I do not wish to speak again!"

But one or two came in for censure even after that.

Babs was very relieved, indeed, when Miss Primrose rose at last and announced that the preparation could be considered finished.

"Ssssh! Let's get to the Common-room," Babs said, when the storm threatened to burst as soon as they were outside,

Babs triumphantly. "We used them to mark certain pages. Don't you remember, Marjorie? I'm sure they've never been taken out!"

"I'll look!" cried Katie Smith.

She whirled open the bookcase door, and took a heavy volume from inside. Babs was not the only one who rushed forward to witness her search.

"There's one!"

"And another!"

It was true! One by one, Katie took several written papers from the volume. On each paper there were marks and corrections made by a copying-ink pencil. The hue of it was rather unusual. The lines were thin and slightly wavy. A dozen cries came at the same moment.

"The same!"

"Yes, it is, Babs!" cried Peggy Preston, her eyes shining. "We know that Connie marked those papers. She can't deny that! And I'm positive that she must have used the same pencil when she marked those books!"

"So am I!"

"And I!"

Babs was almost trembling with excitement.

"All the members of the administration—are we all prepared to say that we recognise the marking?"

"Positive!"

"But there's no need even for that!" said Clara delightedly. "Miss Primrose has the books in her study. She can see for herself, and—"

Crash!

The door opened with an alarming bang at that very moment, and a very breathless and frightened-looking Bessie Bunter rushed into the room.

"Help!"

"What's the matter, Bessie?" exclaimed Babs.

Bessie executed a strategic movement behind the table.

"That cat Connie Jackson's after mum-mum-me!" panted Bessie. "It—it's all through an accident, too! A—dud-dud-dress-box came for her, and—"

there is something that we should like to show you."

"I'm not interested in what you have to show me! Bessie—"

"You will be in this! It concerns the history books!"

Every eye was on Connie.

They saw her look up and face Babs. They saw the curious gleam in her eyes. It was a tense moment for everyone. No one was likely to notice that Marcia and Nancy were smiling to themselves.

"Repeat that!" said Connie.

"Certainly!" said Babs. She took up one of the sheets that they had found and handed it to the Sixth Form girl. "We're thinking of the marking on that sheet! We've seen just the same marking somewhere else!"

Connie's voice was icily calm as she replied.

"Possibly. It is my marking," she said. "But you said something about history books."

Don't bluff, or try to! We don't mind going with you!"

"Then come at once!" snapped Connie. "Do you hear that? I order you! My word, I'll make you sorry for saying such a thing about me!"

"We'll come willingly!" said Clara, quite undaunted. "Come on, girls, and take Connie at her word! Babs, all the administrators, Bessie, and myself—we're the ones who suffered! Come on!"

"She's only bluffing!" said Phyllis Howell disbelievingly.

"Bluffing, am I?" sneered Connie. "You'll see who's bluffing in a minute! Now, come on! Don't hang about any longer, or I'll bring Miss Primrose to you!"

Connie led the way, and they followed, greatly wondering. They expected that Connie would climb down quickly, and at any moment, But Connie didn't. Right to the headmistress' door she went, and then tapped. Astonished beyond measure, they followed her into the room.

"Well, Connie?" said the headmistress, looking up. "What is it?"

Connie explained, while Babs & Co. waited. It was a very indignant explanation, but it did not daunt the Fourth-Formers. They were certain of what they had guessed. They waited eagerly for their turn to speak.

Miss Primrose rose to her feet at the breathless recital of all that the members of the Fourth Form parliament had said.

"And you are accused—actually accused of tampering with these history books, Constance?" gasped the headmistress.

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"Barbara, what have you to say?"

Babs explained her own side of the question. She finished by producing a bundle of the papers marked by that pencil.

"You say that that marking bears an unmistakable resemblance to that of which I complained?" said Miss Primrose, studying the papers handed to her. "This is a very serious matter indeed. Please bring me the nine books concerned. They are lying on that table over there."

"Certainly, Miss Primrose."

Babs brought them as requested, and waited expectantly. She had no fear. This was going to prove their case and exonerate them, and Connie had brought it on herself. Perhaps her heart was fluttering slightly, but that was only natural. In a second or two Miss Primrose—

Babs gasped.

She heard at the same moment the sharp sound of Clara's indrawn breath. She blinked her eyes, and it seemed that her heart would almost stop beating. She knew that she had gone pale to the lips.

Without a word Miss Primrose was going through the books.

It was unnecessary for her even to compare the markings.

Those in the books were totally different from the specimens of Connie's marking that had been produced!

Flutter, flutter, went the pages.

Stern and sterner was becoming the light in Miss Primrose's eyes as she went on. After the examination of the second book she stopped suddenly and looked up.

"I do not think I need to go further with this!" said the headmistress.

### Discontent!

**B**ARBARA REDFERN forced herself to speak.

"There is some mistake, Miss Primrose!" she said, licking her lips. "We were all here, and—and



## ANGELICA JELLY'S SPEECH!

By MABEL LYNN.

### 1.—The Speech She Intended to Make.

**A**NGELICA JELLY, the duffer of the Fifth Form, has a great belief in her own powers, amongst them that of oratory. Probably you know this, but it will serve to explain her speech.

It all happened like this. We of the Fourth Form were meeting the Fifth at debate on the subject: "Should Girls Have Hobbies?" Angelica, who is an enthusiastic hobbyist, came prepared to take the meeting by storm with her speech. So confident was she that she wrote out her speech beforehand, and even indicated how the audience would take it. This is the copy she handed to me, "to save me the trouble of making notes":

"Ladies, I have very great pleasure in rising to talk on this subject. I think I can claim, with all modesty, to know my subject well. (Hear, hear.) I have in my time become more or less of an expert at most of the more commonly-known hobbies. (Hear, hear.)

"Undoubtedly I consider that a girl should have some interest in life apart from her school work. To collect foreign stamps develops one's knowledge of geography. To make baskets makes one nimble-fingered. Every hobby has its purpose. Every hobby, pursued with determination and grit, with courage and resourcefulness, has its reward; the idle hours are not wasted. When visitors ask how you pass your hours of leisure, you may proudly point to your collection, and say: 'See! See what I have done!' (Applause.)

"Touching with a light hand on the humorous side, I may say that even Alexander of old was a collector. (Cries of 'What did he collect?') Why, he collected countries! (Laughter.) Julius Caesar resembled the small boy of to-day inasmuch as he collected galleys, and the small boy collects galley-pots. (Renewed laughter.) Can you not imagine the Ancient Britons withdrawing before the sound of foreign stamps? (Loud laughter and applause.)

"But we must be serious again, my friends. I have only scorn for the girl who is content to sit down, to twiddle her thumbs, and spend her time in idleness. (Applause.) Now is the time to be up and doing! Let us all have our hobbies, and work well and truly at them! (Hear, hear.) One glorious hour of crowded life is worth an age without an aim! (Cheers, and loud applause as Miss Jelly sat down.)

and I only happened to touch it, thinking it might be for me. She jumped at me, and—and pulled my hair like anything! Ow-wow-wow!"

"Connie did?" breathed Babs.

"Yes. I—I hadn't even tried to peep into the box, either! I—I was j-j-just looking at it, and she jumped on me as though she was furious!"

"My hat! Connie again—"

Clara broke off as a quick step sounded in the passage. A tall figure appeared in the doorway. It was Connie Jackson herself.

There was a sudden tension.

"Well?" said Babs.

"I want Bessie Bunter!" said Connie sharply. "She ran away from me. Where is she? I won't have her quizzing into everything that comes for me, any more than I will stand interference of any sort!"

"I'm afraid you've come to the wrong place to start bullying," said Babs evenly. "But while you're here, Connie, THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—NO. 141.

"You know perfectly well what we mean!" broke in Clara, in her outspoken way. "We've seen that marking before in those history books that had the answers underscored. Now do you understand?"

Connie took a step back. Every eye was turned on her in triumph. Surely this was the checkmating of Connie?

"I see!" Connie's voice was low, and there was a slight tremor in it. "You accuse me—me!—of tampering with examination papers and getting the Form blamed for something? Which girls accuse me?"

"All of us who had the books marked, I think!" said Clara.

"Let me see you all!"

The girls clustered together willingly.

"Right!" Connie's mouth set in a thin, hard line, and her eyes gleamed. But surely it was a gleam of triumph?

"Right! That is a definite charge! You will come with me to Miss Primrose and repeat that!"

Clara laughed outright.

"Why, you'll never dare to do it!



although the marks are not the same now, we—we still feel—"

"They're not the same marks that I saw, Miss Primrose!" blurted out Clara.

"What?" Miss Primrose's tone was freezing. "You—you dare to suggest that someone has tampered with these books in my study?"

"It looks—"

"Monstrous—absolutely monstrous!" Miss Primrose cried. "Silence! I will not hear a word! There is no similarity whatever between the two markings! I consider that a most disgraceful accusation has been brought against a monitress, and but for the clumsiness of it I should punish it very severely indeed!"

The Fourth-Formers were too thunder-struck to make more than feeble protests.

"This most regrettable affair was brought home to you. I was astonished and hurt, but I tried to think that it was a lapse—that it was a mistake. For you to scheme together to try and prove that it was someone outside the Form—and a monitress, of all people—is really disgraceful! It makes your own blame greater. But for the fact that there have been unpleasant passages between Constance and the Fourth Form in days gone by I should hardly know what to think. As it is, I must say that I am heartily ashamed of you all, and I consider that I have given you privileges that you have no right to have!"

"But, Miss Primrose, please—"

"Say nothing—it can only aggravate matters! Barbara, you will convey to your parliament my strong displeasure over this reckless charge that you have thought fit to bring. I am very angry indeed with you! I would try to think that you had acted thoughtlessly, but I remember that you have already spoken amongst yourselves of attaching blame to Constance. If anything like this ever happens again it will be the end of the Fourth Form parliament. Now you may go!"

"May I speak, Miss Primrose?" put in Connie deferentially.

"Certainly, Constance."

"Thank you, Miss Primrose. It is simply this. To—to protect myself I think that I should know what is being said about me at the Fourth Form parliament. This is not the first time I have had to complain."

"I am reluctant to agree to that, Constance, but I fear that I must," said Miss Primrose. "You have good grounds for making your request. Yes, Constance, you may attend Fourth Form meetings—we will say in the capacity of a guest. After all, there is no reason why you should not. You understand that, Barbara?"

Babs, feeling quite thunderstruck, was just able to nod her head.

"Very well. You may now dismiss. I am very disappointed at the way in which self-government has been carried on so far. I do not wish to speak again."

The Fourth-Formers went.

They tried to express their feelings as they traversed the passage. Clara was positively explosive. Bessie Bunter was full of protests. Phyllis Howell was evidently in the mood for "ragging" Connie and risking the consequences.

To explain to the rest of the Form was even more difficult than to argue the matter amongst themselves.

"So you made a mistake—you made fools of yourselves?" was Gwen Cook's question, more coherent than most of the other remarks.

"No, we didn't! Connie tricked us!" said Clara bitterly.

"But how—"

"She got there first, and must have altered all the markings! I'm sure they

weren't like that when we saw the books last!"

It was difficult for the others, apparently, to realise how utterly dumfounded their representatives had been. Gwen Cook didn't even seem to be making the effort to realise.

"Fine lot of idiots you've made us look, anyway!" she said discontentedly.

Babs turned to her.

"For goodness' sake don't start that sort of talk, Gwen!" she cried. "Don't you think that we feel wild? To have Connie given the power of attending our meetings whenever she likes—that's worse than ever! But if we quarrel now we shall only fail altogether!"

"I don't think much of self-government so far!" said Gwen candidly.

"Precious little you've done for it!" retorted Clara.

"Oh, look here—"

There might have been a quarrel then but for a quite unexpected interruption.

"Rally, girls! We'll teach them—Oh!"

It was as far as Clara got.

The Third-Formers stopped at one dreadful whisper from Madge Stevens. Order came suddenly out of chaos.

Miss Bullivant was standing in the doorway!

"A little—ah!—um!—skirmish, we may call it, I suppose?" said the mistress in a most sarcastic voice. "Very elevating, no doubt! Unfortunately, the school rules do not permit this sort of thing!"

The despair in Babs' mind was greater than ever at this fresh disaster.

What could she say? Nothing! And yet she knew full well the reason for the mistress' bitterness and sarcasm.

"I realise, of course, that I have no control over what the members of the Fourth Form care to do out of school hours," resumed the Bull. "You Third Form girls will each write one hundred



## ANGELICA JELLY'S SPEECH!

By MABEL LYNN.

### 2.—The Speech She Made.

"LADIES, I have great pleasure in rising to talk—(hear, hear)—on this subject. Anyway, I can claim to know my subject well. (Groans.) I have in my time become more or less an expert at most of the more commonly-known hobbies. (Derisive laughter.)

"Undoubtedly hobbies provide an interest in life, apart from school work. To collect foreign stamps makes one nimble-fingered—(laughter)—I mean, to make baskets develops one's knowledge of geography. (Further laughter.) Anyway, you know what I mean. (A voice: "Do you?") Every hobby, pursued with determination, grit, courage, and resourcefulness, has its reward. When visitors ask how you pass your hours of leisure, you can point proudly to your collection, and say: 'See! See what I have done!' (A voice: "See what I have done in!" and loud laughter.)

"Touching with a light hand on the humorous side, I say that Alexander of old was a collector. (A pause.) I say he was a collector. (A voice: "He wasn't!") Yes, he was! He collected countries! He, he, he! (Groans.) Julius Caesar resembled the small boy of to-day, because he collected galley-pots—(loud laughter)—I mean, he collected galleys, and the small boy collects galley-pots—that is, galley-pots. (Groans, and a voice: "Put her outside for making feeble puns!") Can you not imagine the Ancient Britons withdrawing before the sound of foreign camps—I mean, stamps? (Derisive laughter.)

"But we must be serious again, my friends. (A voice: "Now for some real jokes!") I have only scorn for the girl who is content to sit down and twiddle her thumbs, and spend her time in idleness. She wants shaking up! (A voice: "So her thumbs, and spend her time in idleness. She wants shaking up!") I mean, finish do you!" and laughter.) Will you let me spinish my feech—(laughter)—I mean, finish my speech? (A voice: "Yes, do!") Now is the time to be up and doing! Now, I say, is the time to be dup and oing! ("You said it right first time, Angelica!") Up and doing! Let us all have our hobbies, and work well and truly at them! (Groans.) One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name—I mean, an aim! See, an a-i-m! (Cries of "No more silly puns!") I said, an age without an aim! ("We know you did!" followed by groans.) It's quite true, too! (A voice: "Do get on with the speech!") That's all! I've made my speech. Now I've finished!" (The whole audience rose and cheered, and escorted Angelica to the door!)

The door opened. Six figures appeared. Each of those figures gripped what appeared to be an armful of cushions. Just one cry came from Madge Stevens, and then those cushions began to move.

Towards the Fourth-Formers!

Whi-i-i-z!

"What the—"

Whiz! Thud, thud! Whiz, thud!

The air was suddenly thick with flying cushions.

"It's a raid!" gasped Clara Trevlyn.

"It's a crowd of Third-Formers come to—Ow!"

"Yarooooop!" yelled Bessie Bunter.

Taken completely off their guard, the Fourth-Formers dodged at first in all directions to escape the flying missiles. The attacking Third Form party continued to pelt them, with great glee.

"Good shot, Doris!" said Madge Stevens. "Now, girls, see how many you can hit! We'll teach them!"

Whiz, whiz!

Clara gave a yell and commenced to gather fallen cushions.

lines for being concerned in this riotous scene!" Barbara!"

"Yes, Miss Bullivant?" muttered Babs.

"The very least that you might have done would have been to have prevented the occurrence of such a scene as this! You are supposed to have a sense of responsibility. If I witness anything of this nature again I shall report it to the headmistress. You had better understand that. The generous scheme of self-government accorded to you is not supposed to cover this sort of thing!"

Miss Bullivant nodded very grimly, and turned from the room.

Mabel Lynn broke the silence.

"More blame!" she said. "It's all the fault of these little duffers, too! What ever's the matter with you, Madge Stevens?"

"I like that!" said Madge Stevens. "Especially when we've got a hundred lines and you've got off! You started it!"

"S-s-started it!" repeated Babs.

"Yes. I suppose you're not going to deny that all these cushions were thrown

through the open door of our Common-room at us when we were cooking?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Say that again!" said Clara dazedly.

"They're Fourth Form cushions, anyway! We recognise all of them!" said Madge. "Now perhaps you won't deny it!"

The unfortunate self-governing members of the Fourth gazed at the cushions, and saw that Madge spoke truly. Undoubtedly, now they came to look, they were regarding their own property.

"Has anyone been downstairs whilst

you thought that we daren't come and rag you in return!"

"Let's go back to the Third!" said Madge.

"Rather!"

The Third Form contingent departed in a very annoyed and ruffled state of mind.

"Who did it, if it wasn't anyone in the Fourth?" Gwen Cook asked, seemingly of the world in general.

"Someone who wanted to get one against the Fourth. One of Connie Jackson's friends, I expect!" said Clara.

"And there goes supper-bell, look

The self-governing Fourth-Formers were not so happy and contented as they had been!

### The Artfulness of Marcia!

"D O buck up, some of you!" It was the slackest morning for turning out that the Fourth Form had ever witnessed since the start of the experiment of self-government.

Clara Trevlyn had not the usual easy task of rousing just one or two heavy sleepers. With the exception of the members of the administration very few of the others seemed to be inclined to leave their beds.

"Gwen!" said Clara.

"Oh, go away!" muttered Gwen Cook. "I'm going to get up when I think I will!"

"You'll be late for brekker!"

"I sha'n't! There's no need to scurry about like we have been doing! No one appreciates it! I can still have ten more minutes and get down in time!"

"Don't be such a worry, Clara!" yawned Lucy Morgan sleepily, and Lady Hetty Hendon drawled another languid comment.

Clara drew a deep breath.

"All right! Play Connie's game if you like!" she said. "You'll know all about it if Connie doesn't have to apologise to the Form, and she gets all her old power back again!"

"You're worrying because you'll have to admit that you had that carriage-key and locked Connie in the train!" chuckled Nancy Bell from her bed.

"Ha, ha, ha! Of course she is!" tittered Marcia.

"I—I'll heave a wet sponge at you if you say that again!" said Clara explosively. "As though I care for Connie!"

But the spiteful comment had, as it were, taken all the wind out of Clara's sails. She went to the washstand without another word, and left the slackers alone.

"Jump up, girls!" called Babs cheerily. "Don't let's quarrel. We've all seen what a jolly good time we can have when looking after ourselves. Let's show that we can be trusted, even if things do go wrong sometimes. Connie's only waiting for some opportunity."

"Connie?" said the artful voice of Marcia Loftus. "There it is again, girls! Always Connie!"

"Well, you don't deny that Connie's at the bottom of all our set-backs, do you?" said Babs, astonished.

"It's easier to say that than admit you've bungled everything!" said Marcia.

"Eh? What was that?"

"Merely blaming Connie for everything, although you've never proved a single thing against her!" sneered Marcia. "All-powerful and wonderful Barbara couldn't admit that she'd been a failure as president, of course!"

It was very artfully put, and although it caused a great uproar in the dormitory, Marcia found herself by no means without supporters. Which was just what Marcia wanted.

What with one thing and another there was a real scramble for breakfast that morning, and the Fourth-Formers narrowly missed being shut out as late. One or two of them did come in after the closing of the door. Miss Bullivant's expression as she regarded them was not a very pleased one.

The mist that had enveloped the school for several days was lighter that morning, but showed few signs of dispelling. It cast a damper on everything. Phyllis Howell had been hoping that, with no



## PASSING REMARKS!

By Freda Foote (Fourth Form).

(Joke Sub-Editress of the "Cliff House Weekly.")

We have just heard that some of Bessie Bunter's relations went carol-singing at Christmas-time. As the Weights, of course!

If we liked the trimming on Connie Jackson's new hat, we should like the hat—that is, of course, if we liked its shape and colour!

Strange, isn't it, how some people's minds get obsessed with one idea? We were having a lesson the other day in which aviation was mentioned. Dolly Jobling, in a fit of abstraction, simply had to get up and say that Mr. So-and-so was a famous flying-pan. Of course, she meant flying-man!

Annabel Hichens is warmly enthusiastic over a film she saw in Friardale the other night. It was a Wild West picture, and bandits visited a lonely ranch. But the lady of the ranch, in putting them to flight in the usual way, did not use anything more formidable than a nice big broom! Annabel thought it was great!

From the number of cheap cigarettes that he still tackles, Boker, our page, seems to be under the impression that his name should be Smoker.

Minnie Jerome, the "questioner" of the Third, wants to know how long it should take to get from Cliff House to Canton, in China. We will willingly find out if she intends to go!

Clara Trevlyn's new fancy dress hasn't got past the fancying part yet.

Bessie Bunter has just been learning the fox-trot. "Stupid!" she declared, after being corrected on numerous occasions. "I don't believe a fox trots like that at all!" Not like Bessie's interpretation, anyway! He wouldn't get home until morning!

Take heed that your dancing-shoes fit you! Sometimes after the dancing comes the darning!

Some girls are naturally sarcastic; others acquire it, and use it well and effectively on occasion. Here is an example—a description of a certain hat that called for comment:

"So-and-so wears a hat with some trimming on it. If a green feather were placed on the hat, it is just possible that the green feather would look nice!" I will not say who gave the description.

Bessie has given up playing "hide and seek," because she says that the seeker always cheats and finds her first. There may be another explanation.

"Why is Annabel Hichens like a brick?" is a riddle that comes from the Second. I have been told that the answer is that neither can climb a tree, but, personally, I still hold that the answer has something to do with swimming.

"we've been away, Gwen?" asked Babs, in a bewildered voice.

"No," said Gwen decidedly. "You must have done it yourselves!"

Babs drew a deep breath.

"No one in the Fourth has been ragging you, Madge!" she exclaimed. "In any case, why should we?"

"Because we grinned at you when you were being taken to history prep!" said Madge. "It was some of you who pelted us, too! Jolly mean of you to try and throw all the blame on us, and say we made a mistake!"

"Especially when you can't be punished!" said Fanny Tibbits. "I call it taking a mean advantage! I suppose

you!" said Lucy Morgan discontentedly.

"What a nice day we've had! Extra prep under Miss Primrose after we'd done all our own, you've all been snubbed, Connie's scored off you again, and the Bull can say what she likes!"

"Oh, come down and have some supper!" said Clara Trevlyn sharply. "Don't argue!"

But many of them still did argue.

It would have taken a very buoyant spirit to have bore up when everything was going wrong. There were not too many of those buoyant spirits in the Fourth just now. A real attack of grumbling seemed to have set in, and it lasted until they reached the dormitory.

prep to worry them, they would have been able to get in an early-morning practice game of hockey, an innovation for Cliff House.

There was no possible hope of hockey on such a morning!

But the Fourth-Formers did rally a little under the chipping they received on every side.

To be told that they were absolute failures at looking after themselves, and always appearing bigger duffers at whatever they did, was enough to rouse even Gwendoline Cook out of her gloom.

There was more spirit in class than there had been before; and, as everything was going more smoothly Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell did not look quite as cheerful as they had done.

"We'll simply have to think of something!" Marcia muttered to her cronies during the interval. "I'm not forgetting what Connie promised us. To have her help for a whole term—why, we could do what we liked! And it would make Barbara and the others wild!"

Nancy's cunning eyes were shining. "We must keep it up now," she said. "If only they get discontented there are heaps of things we can do!"

Babs was thinking of other things. She announced one of her ideas when dinner was over.

"Who says an hour in the gymnasium, girls?" she said to the cluster of girls gathering in the passage.

"Gym! Why, it's a topping idea!" said Clara enthusiastically.

"But are we allowed?" said Gwen.

"You know—"

Babs laughed. "There you are, Gwen! You're denouncing self-government because you've no imagination! We can do what we like out of class, providing work doesn't suffer. Let's hurry off and change at once!"

"Right-ho!"

"Topping idea!"

Marcia and Nancy were the only ones who lingered as the Fourth-Formers sped off to change.

"It's the exam this afternoon," said Marcia.

"Yes, and I've an idea!" Nancy whispered. "There's still time!"

Marcia positively rubbed her hands as she listened.

"At once!" she said.

Babs had no idea that Marcia and Nancy had been there before them when she led the others into the gymnasium ten minutes later.

"Only ten to one, girls!" she exclaimed, glancing at the clock over the door. "Why, it's earlier than I thought! Anyone got a watch?"

"Who comes to gym with a wrist-watch?" laughed Flap Derwent.

"The clock's right!" said Clara confidently.

"Piper does it every morning. Huroooh! The exam isn't till half-past one, so we've a clear half-hour before we have to change again! Come on, girls!"

That half-hour made the most enjoyable break possible for the girls. It cheered up the grumblers wonderfully.

The efforts of Bessie "setting an exercise" on the parallel-bars made them shriek with laughter. They realised that, but for the fog and other circumstances, "looking after themselves" was a most desirable thing.

"Twenty past!" announced Babs suddenly. "We mustn't stay longer, as we've to change back into our other frocks. Come on, and—"

Clang-a-clang!

"Gracious! What's that?" gasped Marjorie Hazeldene.

"It's the bell—the bell for the exam to start!" cried Babs.

"But the time—Piper's ringing it early!"

Babs was already opening the door. "We must change as quickly as possible," she said. "Perhaps—perhaps the clock isn't right after all!"

"My hat!" said Clara.

And they realised, when they reached the dormitory, that the clock must have been wrong. All their watches said half-past one—all those that were reliable, of course. Bessie Bunter's said that it was ten to seven, but no one believed Bessie's timepiece.

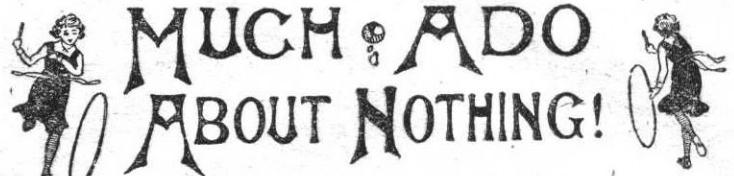
"Someone must have altered the

"That is no excuse! Go to your places at once, please!"

The fifteen Fourth-Formers went sheepishly to the vacant chairs, took up their pens, and gazed at the questions written on the blackboard.

Hardly the right sort of thing for self-governing girls! For them to be so late for the examination was sufficient justification for the obvious displeasure of Miss Primrose.

But they did their best with the questions, and most of their pens wrote fluently. The Fourth-Formers had done



Consisting of letters to the Editress of the "Cliff House Weekly"!

Dear Barbara,—I am very surprised to learn that Clara Trevlyn has been seen bowling a hoop round the quadrangle. Surely this is rather infra dig?  
STELLA STONE.

Barbara,—I am calling your attention to the conduct of Clara Trevlyn. She has been bowling an iron hoop in the quadrangle in an altogether reckless and dangerous manner. To my own knowledge, she very nearly ran down a party of young girls belonging to the Second Form.

I consider that this display of utter childishness should cease, and it is up to you to see that it does.  
FRANCES BARRETT.

Editress,—I really think that you have reached the limit by the latest exploit of a member of your staff. When I asked Clara Trevlyn why she was bowling a hoop, she replied: "For the 'Weekly.'" Unless the task of helping with a childish paper has got on her brain, I really cannot make sense of her answer. But I did think that there was more dignity in the Fourth.  
FLORA CANN.

Dear Barbara,—I am feeling quite ashamed to belong to such a Form as the Fourth, where you have such a childish girl as Clara. I think that for my sake, considering as I am a lady of title, you should tell Clara that such a practice ought to be stopped right away. I have told her myself, but she was merely impudent, and I emphatically refuse to speak to such a girl again.  
LADY BETTY HENDON.

Dear Babs,—Poor old Fourth! Here's Clara rushing about the quadrangle doing a thing that even a Third Form girl would scorn to do during interval—bowling a hoop! We really think it's the limit! Goodness knows what's the matter with Clara, but I think she must be losing her senses—if she ever had any! As for the rest of you—well, you're quite as bad to let her do it!  
DORIS REDFERN and MADGE STEVENS.

Barbara,—Take notice that if any of your girls take our hoops again we shall make a great jape on the Fourth Form. That girl Clara keeps on taking ours. We are very surprised to see her doing such a thing, and we hope that she will be stopped.  
BUNNY, PIP, and TEDDY BEAR.

Dear Barbara,—I have now spent an hour bowling a hoop about the quadrangle, as I said I would.

From all that has been said to me, I am sure that it will provide quite a novel column for the "Weekly," and you can publish all the letters you receive about me instead of calling on me for a contribution.

Further, will you please remind Dolly Jobling that she dared me to do it? Will you also now tell her that, as I have kept my part of the bargain, I expect her to darn six pairs of stockings, as she promised she would?

I'll try and think of some other stunt to make the school talk one of these fine days.—Ever yours,  
CLARA TREVLYN.

clock—I've never known it to lose before!" groaned Vivienne Leigh.

"It's our fault for not thinking of it!" muttered Clara. "Someone must have tampered with it. Let's hustle now!"

They did. But the precious minutes had to pass. There were no sounds in the school as they raced for Lower Hall. The doors were closed. All but about fifteen places at the examination tables were occupied by girls busily writing.

Miss Primrose held up her hand as she saw the girls, and came softly towards them.

"You are ten minutes late!" she said.

"The clock was wrong, Miss Primrose—"

their preparation seriously, and few of them were in difficulties.

The examination came to an end at last, and Miss Primrose collected the papers. She had a smiling word for most Forms, but with the Fourth she was very stiff and formal. No one could help seeing that the Fourth were not exactly in favour.

"No more work now, anyway!" said Clara, with determined optimism. "Miss Prim will soon forget about us being late, especially as we've probably done well. It'll be half an hour before tea is ready in here. What shall we do?"

"Why not go down and have tea at



**TROUBLE IN UNCLE CLEGG'S!** Marcia Loftus dabbed the hot spoon on the hand of Bessie Bunter, and at the same moment kicked swiftly at the opposite form.

Uncle Clegg's?" suggested Augusta Anstruther-Browne.

"Uncle Clegg's?" repeated Gwen Cook. "Are you wandering in your mind?"

"Of course not!" laughed Babs. "Yes—that'll be something quite novel, and it's quite within our rights. It's a good idea, Augusta!"

"Splendid!"

It certainly "caught on." There was a spice of adventure in sallying forth in the fog for tea in the cosy village shop. They were allowed to leave the school whenever they chose by the regulations that governed them now!

To a girl the Fourth-Formers sallied forth five minutes later, dressed to face the cold mist that awaited them.

They enjoyed the blundering trip to the village fully; there is always fun with a crowd in the fog. Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell seemed to appreciate the trip as much as anyone.

And Uncle Clegg, as luck would have it, had been baking that day. He was able to offer a quite exceptional tea to the girls. There were hot scones, sausage-rolls, and other delightful things straight from the oven. It was a most surprisingly jolly meal that he was able to prepare on short notice.

They had to sit closely to the little tables, and even then filled the shop. But no one minded that. The more the merrier, to-day!

But to two girls it was not a merry meal, although they took care not to show it. Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell did not like to see the Form "coming together" like this at all.

Now that they had such an incentive to work for their own ends, however, they were very careful not to wear their feelings on their sleeves. And everything might have gone well had it not been for just one accidental peep that Marcia took at the shop window.

It was at a rather merry moment towards the end of the meal. Clara was proposing a toast, to be drunk in tea, and was delivering a stump speech on the subject. Marcia, looking towards the window, saw that they were being watched—by Miss Bullivant!

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—NO. 141.

There was nothing alarming in that, of course, but it gave Marcia an idea.

Quickly as thought she acted on it, whilst all eyes were still turned on the amusing figure of Clara.

Taking the spoon from her cup of hot tea, she dabbed it on the hand of Bessie Bunter, who sat opposite.

At the same moment she kicked swiftly at the form on which the four girls opposite to her—Bessie included—were seated.

"Yarooooop!"

The effect was almost magical.

Bessie shrieked, and leapt to her feet just as the form tilted. It was too much for the form. Without further warning it went over backwards, and with it went Dolly Jobling, Vivienne Leigh, and Cissy Clare.

"Oh!"

"Help!"

Crash!

Bessie Bunter was sucking her fat hand and moaning. The other three were on the floor, trying to pick themselves up. Clara abandoned the stump speech and ran to their aid, and so did others. Marcia Loftus, who had acted too quickly for her actions to be observed, was not surprised at what happened.

She was watching for the door to open, and it did.

A tall, angular figure came into the shop. And then, above the bewildered cries of the Fourth-Formers, struggling to right the form, sounded a familiar and astonished voice:

"Bless my soul! Is this how you behave out of the school?"

### Keeping Up Their Spirits!

**D**OLLY JOBLING, Vivienne Leigh, and Cissy Clare, looking very dusty and very flushed, were the unfortunate three to have to face the Cliff House mistress.

"Is this how you consider that Cliff House girls should behave?" asked Miss Bullivant tartly. "If it is, I must confess that I cannot share your views."

"We—had an accident, Miss Bullivant," mumbled Dolly.

"Subbud joddy wedd burdt my had!" said Bessie, in a muffled voice, due to

the fact that she still had her hand to her mouth.

"An accident—one that I happened to watch through the window," said Miss Bullivant acridly. "If I saw it, other people could easily do the same. I consider this a most unwarrantable and unladylike manner for any girls to behave—least of all for you!"

"But it was just an accident, Miss Bullivant," protested Babs, with some indignation. "Nothing like it has happened before. You—you can't help things going wrong sometimes."

"It is strange that I should always witness something when I see this self-governing Form!" said the mistress, in a sarcastic tone.

Marcia could have added that it was not at all strange. But she was wise enough to keep to herself the knowledge that the mishap had been caused especially for Miss Bullivant's benefit.

"I have no power to prevent you from indulging in this kind of horseplay if you wish," said the mistress. "But I must remind you that you are expected to give the school a good name in the village. I shall have to report this to the headmistress. I am giving no second warnings!"

With that Miss Bullivant turned and flourished from the shop.

"Another bust-up!" groaned Gwendoline Cook. "Oh dear! It always happens! Now we'll probably be gated!"

"Someone burnt this silly, fat chump's hand!" said Dolly Jobling.

"Oh, really—"

"Was it you, Marcia?"

"Me!" said Marcia, in well-assumed astonishment. "I suppose you think you're safe in blaming me for anything? Doesn't it strike you that the silly duffer did it herself?"

"I didn't!" said Bessie indignantly.

"It was an accident, the form falling over, anyway," said Babs pacifically. "Don't worry about it, girls. Miss Primrose won't say much about a little thing like that. The Bull loves to make mountains out of molehills, but she'll be sorry one day!"

They cheered up considerably, but, for all that, the incident had cast a damper upon their outing. Uncle Clegg was paid, and the walk back to the school commenced. That again, however, was not so cheery as the previous one.

The members of the administration, however, were very optimistic in the main.

"It's prep next," Babs announced when they reached the Fourth Form passage at last. "Tick your names off on the new prep list, girls, and don't forget that there's a full meeting of the parliament at eight!"

"Unless Miss Primrose thinks she'll give us some more extra prep," said Gwendoline Cook moodily.

"Duffer! She won't!" cried Babs. "That was only for the exam, and now that's over."

"I think we might pass a rule to-night abolishing prep," said Bessie Bunter, struck by that bright thought.

"Duffer!"

"Eh! Oh, really—"

"You know it's out of the question!" "Well, sums, anyway," amended Bessie. "I know the old Bull piles on the prep because she doesn't like us."

Bessie was left to cherish that thought if it gave her comfort. The others realised the need for the evening's work, and went to their studies. Some—at least two names could be mentioned—certainly did not intend to work in earnest. But there are always slackers.

There was quite a wave of cheerfulness

in the Fourth when the news leaked out of what had happened in the dining-hall during their absence. The rest of the school seemed very fed up about things, so Clara said, when she looked into Study No. 4.

"The meal was late," Clara explained. "The cook forgot to put the tea in the urns, and one of the tables collapsed. They got about half a slice each in the end. Cheeky, wasn't it?"

"Not quite as good as Uncle Clegg's," chuckled Babs. "Tell the others!"

"I'm going to," said Clara. And she went to tell them.

The merry laughter that came from study after study as Clara went the rounds showed that prep was being delayed, but in a very good cause.

Babs and Mabs worked on steadily, and Bessie Bunter droned geographical terms in a very annoying but thorough manner. Mabs had to touch her fat knuckles with the ruler on two occasions, or the drone would have become quite unbearable.

"Try and think it to yourself," said Mabs.

"I do," grumbled Bessie Bunter. "I always know the right answer, but Miss Steel's so suspicious if I don't say it!"

There was really no answer to a statement like that. Mabs didn't attempt one.

The door opened presently to admit a visitor who had tapped lightly. Babs smiled up at once as she recognised fair and winsome Pauline Wilson of the Sixth. Pauline was a favourite throughout the school.

"Good-evening, Babs!" said Pauline, in her winning way. "I've just come down to have a little chat with you. I understand the position, of course, but I don't think that you'll mind a few words of counsel from me?"

"Of course not!" said Babs readily.

"Well," said Pauline, her face becoming more serious, "I don't think you're going on quite the right way to make this experiment as successful as it should be. Japing monitresses isn't quite the thing."

"Japing monitresses!" repeated Babs, in amazement.

"Yes," said Pauline, as though there could be no doubt about the matter. And then she went on to explain.

Babs and Mabs sat as though doubting their hearing.

Fair-minded Pauline believed that while the monitresses' council had been sitting that evening, several of the studies had been visited by members of the Fourth. She explained what had happened. Cans and all such symbols of power had been burnt. "Lines" written by girls of other Forms had been scrawled on in a distinctly impudent manner. No serious damage had been done, but it was all of an aggravating character.

"But surely you don't believe that we've done this, Pauline?" Babs gasped, at last.

Pauline gave her a very searching glance.

"You have not had a hand in it, Babs?" she said.

"Of course not!" said Babs, still more astonished than anything else.

"I am glad to hear that. But it must have been Fourth Form girls—"

"Must? But why?"

Pauline's eyes opened.

"Because we know that every other Form was at preparation at the time, and someone would have seen them. Besides, it's a sort of skit on the power of monitresses. Some girls might think it rather a joke. I don't really mind myself. But Stella Stone is rather put out, although she hasn't said much. Stella

doesn't make trouble if she can help it. I've come down just to give you the tip."

"But—"

"Find out who did it, and see they don't do the same thing again," said Pauline, turning to the door. "I know you always like to play the game, Babs. That's why I came to you."

"Hallo! Here's a Sixth-Former!"

It was that cry that caused Babs to suddenly change her mind about speaking, and hurry to the passage. She knew the voice. She was not surprised to see Marcia Loftus standing outside.

"Yes?" said Pauline, in her pleasant way.

"The president having a chat with Sixth-Formers!" giggled Marcia, in her sneering manner. "I thought monitresses weren't allowed down here!"

"What are you hinting at, Marcia?" asked Pauline quietly.

"Hinting? Oh, I shouldn't hint," said Marcia airily. "I just take things as I find them. Anyway, I'm not afraid of you, Pauline, so you needn't stare at me like that! We're self-governing now!"

Pauline passed on with heightened colour, and said not a word.

Barbara's eyes were flashing as she faced Marcia.

"Why did you speak to Pauline at all?" she cried.

"I can if I like, can't I?" said Marcia easily.

"It was no business of yours!"

"I think differently," sneered Marcia.

"Self-government's going to end soon. I suppose you realise that yourself? But it's no reason why you should be toadying to monitresses—"

"I think you're a horrid, spiteful girl, Marcia!" cried Babs. And she swung back into Study No. 4, and slammed the door.

"Marcia's just trying to stir up a quarrel between us and the Sixth, talking like that!" said Mabel Lynn indignantly. "And to Pauline, of everyone! One of the nicest girls in the Sixth!"

Babs groaned.

"I know. She wants to see us defeated. If you ask me anything, she and Nancy are responsible for that horrid jape. But we can't bring it home to them. We can't do any good by going for Marcia unless we catch her in something."

"I tell you what," said Bessie Bunter. "You hold Marcia between you, and I'll pull her hair! We could make her speak the truth then. I can pull jolly hard when I'm roused!"

Peggy Preston darted into the study before Babs and Mabs were able to reply to Bessie's suggestion for the punishment of Marcia. Peggy bore dress-boxes with her, and looked quite excited.

"I've brought your dresses for the meeting of the parliament, Babs," she said. "It's due to assemble in a few minutes from now. The girls are quite keen on the idea, and there are all sorts of suggestions coming forward. We'll make it the best meeting we've had, after all!"

There were already sounds of movement in the passage. The girls were gathering for the grand muster.

"We'll clear the air to-night, Peggy," Babs nodded, as she quickly undid the box. "Everyone will be ready for a prompt start?"

"I believe so."

Babs started to don the dress that had been designed for the president of the Fourth Form parliament. It looked very pretty and very effective, and certainly suited her well. Mabel Lynn also had a dress to don—the dress of an administrator. It always made Bessie fidget to think that none of the finery of those outward symbols had come her way. She was not even director of cookery!

"I say!"

"Well, Bessie?" said Babs, as she was arranging the scarlet band across her forehead.

"Supposing I dress up in the tablecloth!" said Bessie.

"In the what?"

"Tablecloth! I—I could be the figure of vengeance, or something like that—"



**IS SHE GUILTY?** "I see!" Connie Jackson's voice was low and vibrant. "You accuse me—me!—of tampering with examination papers, and getting the Form blamed! Which girls accuse me?"

just to scare Marcia and Nancy, you know! If I gave them a fierce look—like this—they'd stop being so horrid! You see?"

"Bessie!"

"Mind the ink! Stop tugging at the cloth!" gasped Mabs. "You'll have everything on the floor!"

"Oh, really—"

"I think you'd better come as yourself for to-night, Bessie," said Babs tactfully. "Some—"

### The Unwanted Visitor!

IT really looked like being a great success from the start.

Those who were determined to make the doings of the parliament more "live" than ever lost no time in coming forward with their suggestions.

Mabel Lynn's plan that they should commence preparations for a new play was received with acclamation. The old difficulty of fitting in rehearsals would not worry them now. They could get up early if they liked; they could have

Form hat that would be used only by the Fourth? Miss Primrose would allow it if they were all the same, and they could make them far prettier than the existing hats.

Phyllis Howell talked on games. By the arrangements in force, she said, they had more time to themselves. Why shouldn't they get in a few practice games of lacrosse? All the sticks necessary were in the school and could easily be obtained, and, as Phyllis said, it would be jolly good sport to try their hands at a game so seldom played at the school.

The discussion that followed was not conducted under strictly parliamentary rules. Too many wanted to talk at once for that. But it did at least show keenness, and the administrators were as keen as anyone on the various schemes put forward.

Gwen Cook seemed the most forceful of the "objectors."

She had something to say against lacrosse, and something against the model kitchen. Clara Trevlyn, who was never merely lukewarm on any subject, turned suddenly to her.

"What is your objection to everything, Gwen?" she said bluntly.

Gwen shrugged her shoulders.

"Chiefly that it won't be carried out," she said.

"My hat! Of all the giddy nonsense—"

"Do you think it will, anyway?" put in Gwen rather heatedly. "It's all right to talk like this, but that isn't doing the things. What have we done so far? Everything that we've tried has gone wrong. Only to-day we've overdone the gym idea, and got into a row with the Bull in the village. There are bound to be more bothers if we start doing all these things, and it'll probably finish up with the whole Form being gated for about a month!"

Gwen's pessimistic utterance, listened to in an almost complete silence, aroused a storm of opposition.

Babs strove to make herself heard.

"Do listen for a minute, girls!" she cried. "We sha'n't get anywhere if we make such a commotion! There's a lot of truth in what Gwen says, but she only shows one side of the picture!"

"We sha'n't do anything at all if everyone looks at things from her point of view!" said Katie Smith indignantly.

"No," said Babs. "But we all know sufficient to be able to put our fingers on the trouble at once. We haven't had fair play over this, girls, and we sha'n't get it unless we're all very careful."

"Hear, hear!"

"There's at least one girl in the school who doesn't want to see this scheme succeed!" Babs went on. "There are at least two more in this very Form who have to be driven to everything, and would be delighted to see us beaten!"

Marcia Loftus tried to grin defiantly as so many eyes turned on her.

"I suppose you mean Nancy and me?" she asked.

"Of course I do!" said Babs. "You don't mind sharing in the fun of it, but you're always making yourselves horrid to other people. Only this evening you tried to insult Pauline in the passage outside here. There'll be a Form ragging for you two if you're not jolly careful! You're not going to upset everything just as you like!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And as for our real enemy—a girl we all know of old—"

The interruption that came at that moment could not have been more dramatic.

With just the faintest of preliminary



By the Poker in Study No. 4, assisted to speak by KATIE SMITH.

SORRY, miss! No offence! But I am rather "short" with people at times. It's the way I'm made (said the poker to me).

Yes, I'm old now; but I think I've done my duty faithfully in Study No. 4.

Bit curled at the end? Well, so would you be if you'd been left in the fire as many times as I have.

You want me to tell a bit of my life? Well, I'm very pleased to do so, I'm sure. Yes, considering everything, I have had an eventful time. Stella Stone was the first mistress I ever remember, and that was when she was in the Fourth Form; so it's some time ago that I started duty, as you'll guess.

I can easily recall my most dramatic memory if you'd like that. It is some time ago now when young Doris Redfern first came to the school. In her silly, thoughtless way she took me to help balance a booby trap over the door, never thinking, I suppose, that I should fall with the other things. Well, I did, and it was a very nasty blow that I had to give my old mistress, Babs. Perhaps you remember it? Yes, I don't like thinking about it myself. Fortunately, no serious damage was done, and I've never got into such disgrace since.

Anything funny? Oh, lots of them, miss! Heaps of them concern Bessie Bunter, of course.

I remember once that she said a splendid and quick way of warming a drink was to put a red-hot poker into it. She wouldn't listen to any argument, but stuck me in the fire at once. Unfortunately, she didn't notice that a lump of red-hot cinder stuck to me, but it did. With a sudden jerk, she pulled me out, and plunged me into her cocoa, and—Bang, bang! Sizzle! It did make a mess on the hearth, I can tell you. The cup broke, and the cocoa fizzed and sizzled, and Bessie shrieked for help. She hasn't tried that experiment since.

Another time I was made the means of a jape on Bessie when she was a newcomer to the school. They coated me with toffee and left me on the table, and I really think that I did look something like a bar of rock. Bessie found me, anyway, and spent quite ten minutes trying to bite through me. She was angry when she found she was biting the poker!

I have a bit of fun on my own sometimes, of course. At least once I've managed to get underneath Miss Bullivant's foot. And you know how we poker-fellows like to roll? Well, I rolled, and Miss Bullivant slipped over and fell in the armchair right on top of Bessie. Rather spiteful of me, perhaps, but I couldn't resist the opportunity.

I've been used for banging the table at meetings and breaking toffee, and if I hadn't been a very obliging sort of poker I should have gone on strike on my own long ago.

What did I do in the Great War? Oh, don't ask such silly questions, please! Don't you remember those placards, asking people to economise with coal, and saying, "Hide the poker!" Well, they hid me.

I think I've been in almost every study in the passage in my time, because pokers often disappear in a very mysterious manner. But Babs always manages to find me again; she knows me by that dent on my brass head.

The dent? Goodness gracious, fancy me forgetting to tell you about that! That's the place where I was once handed by a real live burglar. He used me for trying to smash open a window, but I'm glad to say that I managed to make such a noise that the fellow was put to flight. He was never caught, worse luck!

Don't talk to me about Percy! I can see it's on the tip of your tongue! Yes, Percy's that fellow in Annabel Hichens' study, and he's got a shiny brass head, and he's always so polished and so conceited about himself that I simply hate to go near the fellow. No; give me a few smears of toffee about the top of me, and I'm quite happy. No one picks me up a second time that evening. "I'm not going to touch the horrid poker until Bessie has washed it!" says Mabs. But do I care? Not likely! I have a lovely doze beside the fire, and I love it!

The door opened to reveal Clara in her "usher's jumper."

"Ready?"

"Quite!" said Babs.

The other administrators are ready, Mabs," said Clara. "Come on, and I'll announce you. Then Babs can make her giddy entrance and we'll get to work!"

The administrators went into the Common-room, and Babs followed them. The cry "Our President!" greeted her as she went to her seat. And then the business of the meeting commenced.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 141.

practices at night, in reason, that would be quite impossible for other Forms to achieve.

Then Dolly Jobling came forward with a suggestion concerning the confectionery club. If the whole Form wished it, she said, they would be allowed the use of the model kitchen whenever they liked. The guarantee of the president and administration that things were left in an orderly condition would be quite enough for Miss Primrose.

Marjorie Hazeldene was not silent on the subject of needlework. Why not have an approved design of Fourth

knocks, Connie Jackson, the very girl they were thinking of, opened the door and came into the room.

Babs broke off in dismay, and stared as though at an apparition.

Connie Jackson smiled that bitter smile they all knew so well.

"Good-evening!" she said. "I hope I am not interrupting you! Please go on!"

"My hat!" gasped Clara. "What do you want here, Connie?"

Connie's attitude was more lofty and more patronising than ever.

"Miss Bullivant has mentioned that the noise in here is worrying her very much," she said. "She asked me to mention the matter to you, as I have the right to attend these discussions of yours. Please go on—and do not make so much noise!"

The dumbfounded juniors could almost see the mistress glowing.

"You think we're jolly well going on with you in here?" gasped Babs.

"If you go on at all," said Connie. "I have come to protect my own interests. I have Miss Primrose's permission. There has been far too much plotting behind my back!"

"What?" cried Clara. "Why, you've done—"

Babs grasped her arm just in time and recalled Clara to herself. It was useless to say that sort of thing. Connie had been so artful that she had the headmistress on her side, thinking that she was the wronged party. They could prove nothing. Anything they said to Connie to her face might mean that they would be taken straight to the headmistress again to justify it—if they could!

A few remarks that Connie could take which ever way she liked were made, but that was all.

Babs herself could not think of going on with what she had been saying. Connie was there to "protect herself," as it was expressed, and well enough she would if she had the chance!

"This is Miss Primrose's idea of self-government!" muttered Gwen Cook.

Connie Jackson looked blandly round.

"Perhaps I interrupted a discussion about myself," she observed. "It is a good thing that I came when I did. Do go on talking. I am sure it must be very interesting."

Barbara Redfern's eyes were burning. "Are you going, Connie?" she asked, in a low voice.

"Not until your meeting has finished," said Connie.

"Then it's finished now, as far as we're concerned!" cried Babs. "You may have got permission to come here, but you're not going to find out everything we say! It's only through your artfulness that you're here at all!"

"You'd better be careful what you say!"

"I am when I'm dealing with you!" retorted Babs. "You know it's the truth, and you sha'n't come like this and spoil our meeting!"

"Push her outside again!" urged Clara.

"Go back to your own quarters, Connie!"

"We don't want you!"

A chorus of cries rose from every side. "Less noise!" cried Connie, in her authoritative voice.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I have already told you that you are interrupting Miss Bullivant!"

"Bother the Bull!"

"What did you say?"

"You've no power, Connie, to order us to make less noise!" cried Babs. "You know that!"

"Miss Primrose allowed me to come here to use my discretion, of course! She knows you want watching!" said Connie.

There was a louder chorus than ever at that.

"Girls, not so much noise, please!" Babs cried. "I see it now. Connie's only trying to stir up a quarrel with us, so that she can complain again. Let's leave her here and have our meeting somewhere else!"

"Hear, hear!"

They would get to know by following the others: but once Connie had been lost it would be possible to lock the door of the school tuckshop against her.

Looking quite jubilant, the Fourth-Formers followed Babs from the Common-room. Connie followed as well, of course. But the task of losing Connie, who could only follow, proved a highly-diverting one. At the top of the stairs they divided into two parties, and Connie could only follow one lot. That party divided again. At a further corridor they became still fewer in number, and in the end Connie was only following Babs, and doing even that at quite a breathless speed.



A Few that we suggest.

By PHYLLIS HOWELL (Fourth Form.)

**A**n enterprising tradesman having recently affixed a poster advertising costumes on one of the outer walls of the school, we put forward the following suggested advertisements as ones that would certainly command attention:

#### SPEEDQUICK BICYCLES.

They run so evenly that they almost go of their own free wheel.

SAFE! SILENT! STRONG! SURE!

The following points speak for themselves:

**STRENGTH.**—Miss Bessie Bunter rides one.

**RELIABILITY.**—Miss Frances Barrett has ridden hers five times to Courtfield without buckling the frame.

**LAST A LIFETIME.**—Miss Bullivant's cycle is a Speedquick.

Your friend in a hundred ditches,

THE SPEEDQUICK.

#### RELIABLE IRONMONGERY.

From the Tinware Stores, Ltd., of Courtfield.

Purveyors of Frying-pans to Miss Dolly Jobling, and Tin-openers to Miss

Bessie Bunter.

Piper bought a spade from us ten years ago, and has not been able to wear it out yet (perhaps because he has not been trying!).

Miss Annabel Hichens buys her brooms and brushes from us.

TINWARE STORES, COURTFIELD.

#### LYNEN & CALI CO., LTD.,

The Courtfield Drapers.

Anything from half a yard to half a mile always in stock.

Special new "Bessie Bunter" Model of our famous range of

BRIGHT BLOUSES FOR BUXOM BEAUTIES.

(NOTE.—No more patterns for making pincushions will be supplied to Miss Clara T.)

If your stockings go in LADDERS, take STEPS to get new ones from us. We shall then GO UP in your estimation.

#### ARE YOU DYING TO HAVE A NEW BLOUSE?

Why not try our method and transform the old blouses?

DIPPY DYES! DIPPY DYES! DIPPY DYES!

Miss Meg Lennox writes us to express her grateful thanks.

With our famous PINK dye she made a blouse a beautiful scarlet;

With a BLUE dye she achieved a most wonderful rainbow effect.

ONCE SEEN NEVER FORGOTTEN!

Call on Miss Lennox and see what can be done.

"I shall follow you!" said Connie.

But Babs was chuckling.

She turned to whisper to Mabs, and Mabs passed the whisper on. It was impossible for Connie to hear, much as she evidently wanted to. And this was Babs' brilliant idea:

"Say anything to confuse Connie. We'll all scatter and meet in the tuckshop. It's still open, and Connie will never look there for us!"

When once the whisper had gone round they did "say anything." A loud whisper about the studio reached Connie more than once. But she heard the box-room and the cloak-room and other places mentioned as well. It was certainly confusing for Connie.

Marcia and Nancy, being noted friends of Connie's, were not told, of course.

And then Connie disappeared altogether!

Babs chuckled as she darted along a corridor, made so dim by the penetrating fog, and saw that Connie was following her no longer. She made one or two more false turns, and then headed for the quadrangle.

The others would be in the tuckshop by now, she reckoned. All of them had had an opportunity of getting out of the school in secret. Where Connie was, Babs did not really worry. Probably she was making a quick tour of all the possible rooms in the school, hoping to find them again in that manner.

It looked as though they had found the right way for dealing with Connie.

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## The Figure in the Fog!

"CONNIE will never guess where we are!" Barbara Redfern muttered, as she let herself out silently into the foggy quadrangle. "The fog that has helped her so much is going to help us now!"

Babs struck out in the direction that she guessed the tuckshop to be, but the excitement of the chase had confused her slightly. The school lights slowly faded, but other lights did not appear. Babs went on into still deeper blackness, fumbled, shuffled her feet, and only then did she realise that she had lost herself.

But—lost in the quadrangle! It seemed such a foolish idea that Babs struck a new direction, hoping that it would soon lead her to the tuckshop. She was smiling at her plight. The fog was thicker than she had thought, but she had certainly not anticipated such a position as this.

She went on, and suddenly her groping hands touched something hard and round.

It was a tree!

"My word! Right over by the elms!" Babs muttered, in surprise and dismay. "Well, I have done a stupid thing! Still, I'll soon find the others now!"

She turned and groped to another tree, and from that got her direction. She did not shout, for two reasons. One was that Connie would certainly have been made wiser; the other was that it really seemed so silly to get lost in the quadrangle, which was not a big place at all!

From the second tree she got a sense of direction at last, and struck out again. She had to go slowly until she was sure of herself, but the welcome lights appeared at last. Then she hurried on, to find all the others clustered outside the door of the little shop.

"Babs! Where ever have you been?" exclaimed Clara, hastening forward. "We wondered what had happened to you!"

"I lost myself for a bit!" Babs admitted, with a cheerful grin. "Confusing place, isn't it?"

Clara chuckled.

"You're amongst us now, anyway!" she said. "Unfortunately, although we've lost Connie, it's not going to help us much. Auntie Jones has got to shut up now and hurry off home!"

"So we can't use the tuckshop, after all!" said Babs disappointedly.

"Afraid not!" answered Clara.

"Well, there are heaps of rooms in the school," said Babs, cheering up. "Connie may not look in them a second time. We can even go back to the Common-room."

"Lead on, Macduff—if you're not going to lose us again!" said Clara.

Babs led the way. She was not likely to go astray a second time. Her steps led her almost directly to the school door.

A tall figure was standing at the door, waiting. At first Babs thought that it must be Connie, and she darted back again to dodge out of sight. But a voice disillusioned her at once.

"Come here, Barbara! I have seen you!"

"The Bull!" muttered Mabel Lynn, who was close behind. "Hope she's not going to start chatting about Uncle Clegg's again. The Bull can never forget anything!"

"You want me, Miss Bullivant?" said Babs, stepping forward.

"Want you?" repeated Miss Bullivant's voice. "Barbara, I wonder at your audacity in speaking to me in that tone of voice!"

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Babs stared.

"But I am not going to waste time by arguing with you, Barbara," the mistress went on. "I want an immediate apology for the stupid trick that you have just been playing on me!"

"Stupid trick?" repeated Babs. "But I—I don't understand—"

"Girl! Surely you will not deny it?"

"There's nothing to—deny!" said Babs, more puzzled than ever.

Miss Bullivant enlightened her.

"Barbara, I saw you distinctly!" she exclaimed. "You were outside my



## Have You Kept Your New Year Resolution?

BARBARA REDFERN.—Several of them—so far! I've mapped out a new plot for "The Taming of the Shrew," making it a man, and started rewriting it. I've renovated two hats, and washed and "touched up" a jumper and a blouse. But I don't know how long I shall keep on at this rate.

MABEL LYNN.—I've kept the "mending" part of my resolutions, and answered all my letters by return, but the effort is proving a big one.

AGNES WHITE.—I've forgotten what my New Year resolutions were!

CLARA TREVLYN.—I've broken the one about darning; I've allowed Dolly to cook toffee; I've let Marjorie lecture me for half an hour about needlework. The practical results of my resolutions are only visible to the very discerning eye.

DOLLY JOBLING.—My resolution to do successful cookery was well kept until yesterday, and it was only through Clara's clumsiness that the pan caught on fire. I'm going to start again on February 1st.

MARJORIE HAZELDENE.—I promised that I would check Clara's slangy expressions, but I really didn't understand what I was undertaking! I don't expect to succeed.

PHYLLIS HOWELL.—Yes, I'm remembering to alter the calendar every day, and I'm keeping the diary, and I've faithfully replied to all the letters about the sporting fixtures. But—yes, you're quite right! The cupboard isn't half as tidy as I said I'd keep it!

BRIDGET O'TOOLE.—I've been after keeping all those that I haven't dropped as yet!

FLAP DERWEST.—I didn't make any, but I'm helping Phyllis.

MARCIA LOFTUS.—New Year resolutions? More of your sarcasm—eh?

NANCY BELL.—Go away! I'm too tired to be worried with questions.

FREDA FOOTE.—I'm still keeping the book in which I write a new joke every day, but some of them are getting very strained!

BESSIE BUNTER.—I only wish Clara Trevlyn would let me break that one about getting up early, but she won't!

window not two minutes ago, endeavouring to poke things off the sill. When I saw you slammed the window, overturning my vases, and ran away. But I recognised you by that cloak you are wearing!"

"Miss Bullivant, you must be joking!" said Babs hotly. "To say such a thing, when I haven't been near your study this—"

"Barbara, you—you dare to deny this?" cried the mistress.

"Of course I do, Miss Bullivant!" said Babs indignantly.

"Then all I can say is that you are utterly lost to all sense of honour!" retorted the mistress. "It was a most

childish and annoying trick to play on anyone, but I should at least have thought that you would have owned up!"

"I've done nothing, Miss Bullivant!" Babs repeated, almost angrily. "You've made a mistake, and confused me for someone else!"

"When I distinctly saw you, Barbara?"

"You couldn't have seen me, Miss Bullivant!"

"I saw that cloak of yours, that absurd garment you are still wearing! I recognised the head-band and that veiling that is hanging down your back. Because we did not come face to face it does not excuse you!"

Mabs spoke up.

"Miss Bullivant, Babs wouldn't do such a thing as this," she said. "She's been with us nearly all the evening."

"Can you say that Barbara has been with you during the last five minutes—any of you?" exclaimed Miss Bullivant.

There was a sudden silence. Babs flushed suddenly as she realised where she had been during the last five minutes.

"No one can prove that I have been with them, Miss Bullivant," she said, rather lamely. "We all went outside, and I got lost in the fog. I went over towards the elms, and—"

"I do not think you had better go farther!" said the mistress icily. "I regard this as a deliberate affront, a stupid and childish joke in the worst possible taste! I shall not forget it, Barbara, nor shall I forget your denial! You will probably hear more of this later!"

The girls gazed in perplexity at Babs as Miss Bullivant vanished.

"Babs, what ever made you do it?" exclaimed Gwen Cook.

"Do what?" cried Babs.

"Why, fool about at the Bull's window!"

"I didn't do it! Gracious, I haven't got to tell you as well, have I?" cried Babs.

"But you were such a long while coming across in the fog—"

"I got lost, I tell you!" said Babs, getting really angry. "Bother you, Gwen! If you think I'd do a thing like that you'd better get on with it!"

"I remember that you said that the Bull would be sorry for snapping us up in Uncle Clegg's as she did," said Gwen slowly.

"I didn't mean this!" cried Babs.

"And it was the president, of all people!" sneered Marcia Loftus. "He, he, he! The president in all her robes! That's the girl who's blamed Connie for everything, girls!"

"You'll make such a hole in the fog in a minute, Marcia!" said Clara ominously.

"Can't I say what I like now?" asked Marcia impudently. "Why, it was probably Babs who marked the history books, being so keen on seeing the Form win. She's had heaps of opportunities of finding out the questions when she's taken her reports to Miss Primrose!"

Even Marcia realised that that was going a little too far, but she was not sorry that she had said it in the argument that followed. It had sown the seed of more discontent, and that was what Marcia wanted.

The meeting of the Fourth Form parliament seemed to have been effectively broken up, too. Although Connie did not appear again, no one went to the Common-room. The girls broke into little parties, and went to their studies, annoyed and exasperated with all the day's events.





Hetty had been asked to tell that story, just to oblige Marcia, so that they could "see some fun."

Babs was a long while gone.

Five minutes was lengthening into ten minutes as the Fourth-Formers waited about in the corridor, and she did not reappear.

"Oh, well, I suppose she's gone down to the quadrangle, as she said she would," said Clara Trevlyn. "Hark! That sounds like a motor-bus drawing up, doesn't it?"

"It is one," said Lucy Morgan.

"Then we'd better go downstairs and just have a peep outside," said Mabel Lynn. "I shouldn't like to think that Babs was still hunting for her dress and there was no one to meet them."

They went downstairs together. They had reached the lower passage, and were approaching the quadrangle, when a single, wild cry came to their ears.

"Help!"

"It's—it's Miss Potter!" gasped Phyllis Howell.

"Help!"

Again that wild cry rang out, whilst the girls stood rooted to the spot with surprise. Then Clara seemed to recover the power of action. She was the first to spring forward and dart through the swing doors.

"Something's the matter!" Clara cried over her shoulder. "We'd better see what it is."

The others followed her as one girl.

It was thick with fog in the quadrangle, and they could not see as far as the school gates. But now they heard other voices.

"Help!"

"Look out! It's on me now!"

"Help! It's a horrid monkey!"

Mabel Lynn was the first to head in the right direction and come on the startling scene that unfolded itself as she ran forward.

Miss Potter was there, with seven or eight of her pupils. Not one of them seemed to be keeping still. They hopped about, and they jumped. Miss Potter was hopping more anxiously than anyone, too.

Then Mabs saw the cause—the tiny figure of a monkey that was flitting about the ground.

"It's Tony!" gasped Mabel.

With another bound she was up to the group. Then she called authoritatively, and stretched out her hand.

"Tony! Tony! Come here! At once, Tony!"

The monkey obeyed at last, and came to her. At the same moment the other Fourth-Formers arrived in a breathless body. But there was a taller figure as well. It was that of Miss Primrose.

"Goodness gracious! Did I hear someone crying for help?" exclaimed the agitated voice of the headmistress.

Miss Potter, no longer dancing, turned to her.

"Miss Primrose, we have been insulted grossly insulted!" she exclaimed. "This—this monkey here, it has attacked us."

"Monkey!" said Miss Primrose, eyeing the marmoset in astonishment.

"Dear me! That is one of the school pets. It belongs to Barbara. It must have escaped—"

"It did not escape, Miss Primrose," interrupted the other headmistress. "Dear me! It was nothing of the sort. Some girl, dressed in a fantastic costume, deliberately set it on to us. We heard her say: 'Go for them!'"

"Miss Potter!" gasped the Cliff House headmistress.

"It is a—most insulting trick on the part of some girl!" said hot-tempered

Miss Potter. "The girl probably does not think we saw her, but we did, because she was dressed in such a bright costume. It was red and white, and there seemed to be a red band round her head, and a sort of veil—"

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Miss Primrose. "But that is Barbara Redfern's dress. Where is Barbara?"

At that very moment a breathless figure came running through the fog—the figure of none other than Babs. She wore no presidential costume.

"You want me, Miss Primrose?" she panted.

The headmistress gazed at her in astonishment.

"Yes, Barbara," she said. "Did you come to meet your guests, as arranged?"

"No, Miss Primrose," Babs hesitated. "I'm sorry I am late, but I couldn't find my dress—"

"You could not? Barbara, are you aware of what you are saying?" said Miss Primrose sternly. "Miss Potter has just described an appearance that you have made here not two minutes ago."

And then she went on to explain just what had happened, and just what the implied charge meant to Babs.

Babs went very, very pale as she listened.

"I—I hear what you say, Miss Primrose," she said. "But this—is this monstrous! I have not had my dress on at all. I have been unable to find it. It doesn't seem to be anywhere in the school. Someone else must have been wearing my dress if this has happened."

What Miss Primrose was about to reply was never known, for at that very moment one of the Danesford Hall girls gave an excited cry.

"Look! Look! There is a fire over there!"

"Bless my soul!" muttered Miss Potter.

They looked in the direction of the pointing finger. Red flames showed eerily through the pall of fog, flickering and leaping indistinctly. But something was certainly blazing, and not far from them.

Miss Primrose ran to the spot, followed by the others. They heard the amazed cry that left her lips, and then they stared at the most astonishing sight of all—the cause of the fire.

A red-and-white dress—without doubt—was consuming rapidly away before their very eyes.

"Barbara, just look!" gasped Miss Primrose.

Babs was too horrified to say a word.

"The evidence being destroyed," said Miss Potter, in a hard voice. "Miss Primrose, surely this sight can mean nothing else to you? The girl who played this wicked joke on us, realising, after all, that she had been seen in a tell-tale costume, has—has taken this means to destroy the evidence against herself."

"Barbara!" said Miss Primrose, in a voice like thunder.

Babs flung out her hands helplessly.

"Oh, Miss Primrose, you are making a great mistake!" she cried. "I haven't worn that dress to-day. I did not set fire to it there! I don't know how all this has happened. I have only just come from the school. I did not even know that Miss Potter was here."

Again a long and heavy silence. Miss Potter broke it.

"If you will excuse us, Miss Primrose?" she said, with icy politeness. "It would hardly be correct for me to allow my pupils to remain here to see an exhibition of self-government by the

members of a Form that has been capable of such a trick. I am very sorry!"

"Miss Potter, I apologise—" Miss Primrose began.

"Please do not, Miss Primrose! It is very kind of you to have invited us here, and this—you could have no possible control over this. I do not wish to seem offensive, but I think that it is best, under the circumstances, for us to go back to our school, so that you may investigate the whole matter."

Dumb with dismay, the Fourth-Formers watched their visitors accompany Miss Potter back in the direction of the gates. Miss Primrose stood and watched them, her face very sad and very heavy.

She spoke at last.

"You realise, of course, what this means? It is the end of self-government in the Fourth Form. After this happening, after the way in which the school has been disgraced by this reckless and cruel joke on visitors, I could not permit it to go on for another day." She suddenly raised her hand and pointed. "Back to the school! Back, all of you!"

"But, Miss Primrose—" Babs began.

"Silence, Barbara! Not a word!" said Miss Primrose sternly. "With you, most of all, am I most deeply disappointed. I have heard your denials, but it is impossible to believe them. That dress was yours. You can bring no evidence to support the story you tell. Even the little pet used to perpetrate this trick of yours. Back to the school, all of you! I will see you all later!"

The Fourth-Formers went, with the exception of one hard-faced, angry-looking girl, who melted into the fog and escaped their notice. They went without speaking. Inside the school they said hardly a word.

The end of self-government! They had heard the words spoken at last. And now they understood. Too late!

It was not for lost privileges that they mourned. They were as nothing compared with the other issues. Yes, the Fourth Form had failed, and they had the sickly feeling that they were believed guilty of betraying a trust. It affected the honour of the Form they held so dear. And now that it was too late they knew, almost without exception, the full and inner meaning of this great thing that they had had—and had seemed to throw away!

## Two Assemblies in Fall!

"GIRLS!" Miss Primrose broke the silence that had fallen over the great assembly in the Hall an hour later.

The Fourth-Formers sat in two lines, their faces flushed and hung with shame. Only one girl was unaccountably absent. It was Clara, who could not be found. It was the end—for them. Their disgrace was to be announced publicly. They knew it.

So did all the other girls gathered in Great Hall. But they looked very serious now. There were no titters, no chipping remarks. It was not an ordinary failure that the Fourth had made—it was a disgrace.

"Girls, I am very sorry that I have had to assemble you here for this purpose," Miss Primrose said, in a low but penetrating voice. "An interesting experiment started, with the best wishes, I am sure, of all of us. It has failed. It is the manner of its failure that is so sad. Barbara Redfern, stand up!"

Babs rose to her feet—innocent Babs, it is true, but not innocent to all the watching girls. She raised her head proudly, but she could not hide the flush on her cheeks.

"You, Barbara—I am more than sorry to think that it is through you that disgrace has fallen on the school," said Miss Primrose sternly. "But I must hold you responsible. You were elected to a position of honour. You were given privileges that were extravagantly liberal. I have had nothing but complaints—and now this!"

Again that silence that seemed almost worse than the angry words of the headmistress.

"I hope, Barbara, that you understand what we think of you and of the whole of the Fourth Form," went on Miss Primrose at last. "Ordinary failures we should not have minded. High-spirited fun might have caused the end of the experiment, but not in this manner. It is a record of meanness that I have before me—a stolen examination paper, insults to a mistress, plots against a mistress, an affront to the headmistress of a friendly school. I could not very well have a worse list!"

Babs spoke at last. Her voice was husky as she suddenly opened her lips and made the only declaration she could.

"Miss Primrose, you wrong us!" she said. "We have not done what you believe of us! It seems impossible for us to prove that. But I hope one day that we shall still vindicate ourselves!"

"Even now, Barbara," said Miss Primrose, "I would rather you made a clean breast of the whole matter. I do not like this implication that I am being unfair; it is not right of you to make it. The evidence I have had is sufficient for me. I can do nothing else."

She turned and slowly surveyed the whole school. Then she motioned for the members of the Fourth Form to rise. They did so in two straggling, uneasy lines, clumsily and blunderingly. They knew that the eyes of all their school-fellows were on them in their public disgrace.

"Now," said Miss Primrose, "I have to withdraw publicly what I gave you publicly. Girls of the Fourth Form, it is my sad duty to say—"

Crash!

"Oh, Miss Primrose—if I may interrupt!"

It was Miss Bullivant, more agitated than they had ever seen her, who burst through the swing-doors at that very moment.

"One moment, please, Miss Bullivant!" said the headmistress coldly.

But Miss Bullivant was rushing forward.

"A message has come by telephone for you, Miss Primrose. I really must tell you at once!" And Miss Bullivant went right to the platform and whispered.

Dead silence, but for that faint buzz of whispering. It lasted for a full minute. The suspense was almost painful. And those who were watching Miss Primrose's face stared in amazement at the conflicting emotions she betrayed at the whispered message that was being given to her.

Again the suspense—utter silence. And then, at long last, Miss Primrose spoke.

"Girls," she exclaimed, a slight tremor in her voice, "Miss Bullivant has brought me a telephone message of a most amazing kind!"

They knew that, but it caused them to thrill.

"You have just heard a denial of the charges I have levelled against the

Fourth Form—a denial by Barbara Redfern herself. It hurt me to have to repudiate it. I did so. Now, girls, it is my duty and my privilege to withdraw the words I said—for the present, at any rate."

No one knew what to do at that! "Two girls were reported absent when this muster was completed," went on Miss Primrose. "Those girls were Clara Trevlyn and Constance Jackson. I have now heard news of both of them. Miss Potter has telephoned from Danesford Hall saying that, through the unexpected clearing of the fog, she has seen them both. Girls, I think that it is right of me even now to tell you just what Miss Potter saw. Constance Jackson was dressed in a red-and-white robe of the very same design as that worn by the President of the Fourth Form parliament!"

There was such a sensation at that, that it was like a great gasp in the Hall.

Be sure you get this week's issue of our companion paper.



Packed with fine stories.  
NOW ON SALE!

"Such a report is of such bewildering seriousness that I can say no more now!" Miss Primrose said. "It appears, I should say at present, that Clara must have been chasing Constance, and they have been thoroughly lost in the fog for more than an hour. Why Constance is wearing such a dress I cannot say; but she is returning to the school at once, and I shall hold a fresh investigation forthwith. The whole school will now dismiss!"

Then someone sprang up. No one knew really who the girl was. But she called for cheers—cheers for Babs and the Fourth. And suddenly every girl in the Hall was on her feet, joining in the cheers of relief that echoed and re-echoed through the building.

It was not a sign that Connie Jackson was popular!

Suspense reigned in the school after that.

When Clara Trevlyn was released after her long interview with Miss Primrose she came and joined the girls of the Fourth, who duly hugged her and squeezed her, and pressed her to tell them all that had happened and all that was going to happen.

But Clara could not tell much.

"Connie's still there, and she looks as sick as I've ever seen her!" Clara chuckled gaily. "Well, I'll tell you all I did. It wasn't much, except leaving the school without permission, girls. I had an idea that someone else must be impersonating Babs, so I waited for that someone to come in the school when all the row was over. She did, but I was clumsy and alarmed her. I guessed it was Connie, but couldn't prove it without catching her. My! We did have a chase! I lost her three times, and found her again, and she got so hopelessly mixed up in the end that she ran almost into Miss Potter's arms. I think it'll all come out!"

And so did the others when, while they were still hugging and feting Clara, there came a message that Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell were wanted by the headmistress.

Suspense, greater than ever, reigned when Marcia and Nancy Bell failed to return. The tea-hour came, but the meal was not laid. And then once more the clanging of the great bell that would summon them all to Great Hall.

With what expectation, now, the Fourth-Formers returned to face Miss Primrose! And as soon as they entered the Hall they saw a sight that told its own tale. On the platform were three girls, whose very expressions told what was in store for them. Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell were there, and the third one was Connie Jackson.

It was a complete and utter silence that fell as soon as Miss Primrose appeared and mounted the platform. There was no need for her to raise her voice. Ears everywhere would strain to catch every murmur that came from her lips at this second dramatic assembly.

She started to speak in a low and sad voice. But the girls in the school had almost guessed what was coming. It was a full confession that Connie and Marcia had made between them. Connie, it seemed, had quite accidentally betrayed Marcia when being questioned, and well Marcia had rewarded her by telling everything she knew.

Scheme by scheme, Miss Primrose was able to tell the assembled girls how she had been hoodwinked, and how unjustly the girls of the Fourth had been blamed. Connie admitted marking the history books, hiding reports, working with Marcia and Nancy to get the Form a black name. Miss Primrose did not tell all but there seemed little that she did not know now.

"And now, at last," Miss Primrose said, "we are at the end of a conspiracy, so cunning and so disgraceful that I have refused to believe that such a thing could be afoot when the evidence was put before me by the Fourth Form girls. I have misjudged a zealous and untiring Form through the cunning of a Sixth Form girl, and her helpers. I hardly know, even now, what to say."

Every eye was turned on the guilty three, who stood, trembling, on the platform.

"Perhaps, meanest of all," said Miss Primrose suddenly, "is the conduct of these two girls who were willing to see their Form suffer and in disgrace for their own selfish ends. Fortunately, they have done all in their power at

last by making full confession. Marcia, stand forward! Hold out your hand!"

Marcia shrieked at the two cuts with the cane that fell, one on each hand. And then Nancy Bell was punished in the same humiliating way.

"And now, Constance Jackson," said Miss Primrose, turning her flashing eyes on the tall conspirator who was so far unpunished. "But for two facts that I have considered, and your plea for mercy, I should send you from the school this very day. Firstly, however, you have admitted your guilt; secondly, I realise that I unwittingly gave you, a well-known, spiteful girl, too great an interest in self-government. It meant that you would have to apologise for reckless condemnation of the Fourth Form, and admit that you yourself dropped the railway-carriage key which Clara Trevlyn was accused of having dropped on the first day of term.

"As I say, I have considered all this. I shall not send you from the school, Constance, but you are utterly unworthy to be in any position of trust or responsibility. From now, until the end of the term, you will be no longer a monitress, Constance. For the benefit of those who may think that I am lenient with you, I may say that this punishment has never been inflicted on any girl before."

The storm of hisses that rose was checked by a quick gesture.

"I have now to speak of a more pleasant matter, girls," Miss Primrose exclaimed. "I am bringing the Fourth Form parliament to an end to-day, but not because of failure. I have had certain very logical objections from some of the school governors, who say that such a scheme should apply to the whole of the school, or not at all, and I agree. But I wish to say this!" Her voice suddenly rose. "Self-government at Cliff House, now that we know the truth, has been an unparalleled success!"

Cheers—loud cheers—greeted the statement.

"I have been deceived, as you know," Miss Primrose resumed. "But now that I review the period of this experiment, I see many things. Without any supervision, the girls of the Fourth Form have looked after themselves in a most commendable manner. The very high standard of the history papers they have written shows that they have worked, and worked hard, when left on their honour to do so—perhaps the greatest achievement of all. They have treated mistresses and monitresses with courtesy. Their preparation has given no cause for complaint. They have organised their games and their other amusements well and in a most able manner. Their studies have been kept neat and tidy. Given privileges of perhaps an almost staggering nature, they have not abused

them. There have been no complaints of slackness or noisiness in the dormitory. They have always risen in good time in the mornings—often for extra preparation for the school examination that was taken yesterday.

"Self-government is ending, but in recognition of what has happened I intend to grant the Fourth Form many privileges they have not known before. And now, girls, to celebrate their success, I declare that to-morrow shall be a full day's holiday for the whole school!"

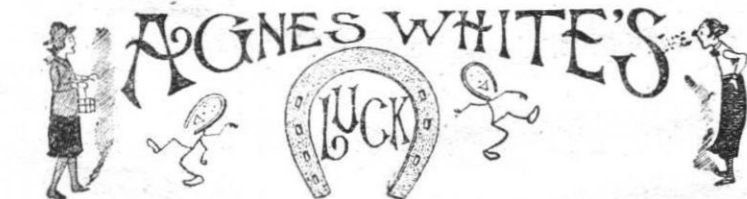
It was Stella Stone who leapt to her feet.

"Well done, Fourth!" she cried. "Girls, three cheers for them!"

And those cheers were given with a will, while almost the whole school rose to acclaim the Fourth. Only the members of the late parliament sat still and blushed. But it was with pleasure and gratification now—not with shame and disgrace!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

(Next Thursday's issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND will contain "The Order of Expulsion"—a magnificent new, long complete story of the girls of Cliff House, by Hilda Richards—a splendid instalment of "Joan Harland's Silence!" and numerous extracts from the "Cliff House Weekly." Order your copy at once!)



By Barbara Redfern.

"It is disgraceful! I wish to see Agnes White at once!"

Miss Bullivant was exceedingly annoyed. There could be no doubt about that. And the worst of it was that she had no means of placating her wrath. She wanted to make a capture; she wanted Agnes. We, and the world in general, were being asked to find the most forgetful of all the Fourth-Formers.

"I wish to see Agnes! Do you know where she is?"

We made noises to express the fact that we hadn't the vaguest or foggiest notion where Agnes could be.

"I sentenced her to detention this afternoon," said Miss Bullivant, evidently finding it quite impossible to keep her grievance to herself. "She was to come to my study at 2.15 to fetch a book for her detention task. What has happened? I find the book gone, and an inkwell overturned and soaking into my cloth! Whether intentional or accidental, I shall punish Agnes severely."

"Perhaps it wasn't Agnes, Miss Bullivant," ventured Marjorie Hazeldene. "You see, she forgets—"

"Forget! Ah! I will not take such excuses!" cried Miss Bullivant. "The book has been taken to the detention-room—I have just found it there. I was only absent from my study for a few minutes. It is impossible that there is any mistake. I wish to see Agnes as soon as she can be found!"

Miss Bullivant whirled away in a state of greater indignation than ever.

"Whew!" said Clara. "Agnes in the giddy wars again!"

"Clara!" was Marjorie's reproachful comment.

"Well, she is! What a prime duffer for forgetting things, too! Taken the book to the detention-room, and then strayed away again, probably forgetting that she was in detention!"

"The Bull looked very waxy!" said Dolly Jobling seriously.

"Well, Agnes could have tried to mop the

ink up, even if she did knock it over accidentally," said Cissy Clare.

"Perhaps she went to look for a piece of blotting-paper, and forgot about it," said Clara. "Just the sort of thing Agnes would do! You can't do anything for a girl who does such erratic things, can you?"

"Not very much!"

We looked for Agnes, but looked in vain. Nearly half an hour passed. We were forming all sorts of theories when Miss Bullivant appeared again.

"I have not seen Agnes yet!" she said, in a very grim voice.

"Ahem!" said Clara. "Nor have we—I mean—"

"Bless my soul! Is it possible that the girl has left the school?" cried Miss Bullivant. "After—after doing such damage, and—and— Agnes!"

She brought out the name with terrific emphasis.

We started with dismay.

Agnes White, with a very innocent and happy expression on her face, and dressed in her hat and coat, was coming towards us. We saw at once that she carried a parcel under her arm.

"Agnes!" cried Miss Bullivant again.

"Oh dear! Yes, Miss Bullivant!" said Agnes, in a most surprised sort of voice.

"Where have you been?" exclaimed the Bull dramatically.

"To the village, Miss Bullivant."

"For what purpose?"

"To buy some soap and some special cleaning powder for you!"

"Wha-a-at!" Miss Bullivant looked like becoming inarticulate. "You mean to say that, after doing that damage in my study, you have the effrontery—"

"I—I don't understand what you mean by damage, Miss Bullivant!" gasped Agnes.

Miss Bullivant came nearer than ever to becoming inarticulate. But she managed to explain. She told Agnes what she had discovered, and told her that it would be useless to deny. But Agnes denied, and in a most emphatic manner.

"I haven't been near the detention-room this afternoon, Miss Bullivant," she said.

"What! You deny that you took that book?"

"Yes, I—I— The fact is, Miss Bullivant, I forgot all about your placing me in detention. I didn't think another word about it. But I—I remembered, after dinner was over, that a few days ago I promised to get some things in the village for you—soap and cleaning powder—"

"You expect me to believe this story, Agnes?" rumbled the Bull.

"Well—"

"And not regard it as a deliberate affront?"

"I—I can prove that I was in the village at a quarter-past two, Miss Bullivant," said Agnes quickly. "I met Miss Chantrey, and had a few words with her. She will prove that!"

Miss Bullivant's face was a study in conflicting emotions.

"I—I do remember asking you to get me some things now—a present for an old woman in the village. But this story—if it is true—really—"

"Miss Chantrey will prove what I say, Miss Bullivant."

"Then—then I have been deceived, Agnes, and—and I am sorry that I have suspected you wrongly," said the Bull, in a very changed voice. "Someone else must have been to my study and upset that ink, and tried to throw the blame on to you by taking the book. It was a cowardly trick on the part of someone, who understood how thoughtless you are. Under the circumstances, however, in view of the fact that you have—ah!—made this journey for my benefit—"

"It was a pleasure, Miss Bullivant."

"I—I will excuse your detention, Agnes, on the understanding that you do not laugh in class again. I am very glad indeed that you have been able to clear your name in this manner. Er—how much do I owe you, Agnes, for these things?"

The real culprit was never discovered, although we were able to make several guesses.

"But there's something in being forgetful, after all—there really is!" said Clara. "If Agnes had been sitting in the detention-room when the Bull discovered that split ink, she wouldn't have been able to clear herself at all, and her time would probably have been doubled. As it is, she's got off with a warning—and had a trip to the village, into the bargain!"

And we had to admit that that was perfectly true.

# The Opening Chapters of a Magnificent New School Serial!



## JOAN HAVILAND'S SILENCE!

By JOY PHILLIPS

(Author of "The Girl Who Chose Riches!")



### THE LEADING CHARACTERS.

**JOAN HAVILAND**, a poor scholarship girl, who formerly lived in Brick Row, in a London suburb.

**RUBY HAVILAND**, her sister, whose sudden accession to riches completely spoiled her.

**ELSIE DAINTON**, the friend of Joan.

**HILDA HEATHCOTE**, an excellent girl, and captain of the Fifth Form at Greyhurst School.

**SYBIL SARDONE**, **CLARICE CHOANE**, **OLIVE COURTNEY**, and **PHYLLIS FRANKLIN**, four "cronies," who formed a "set" at Greyhurst, and were bitterly opposed to Hilda Heathcote and her friends.

Joan and Ruby Haviland arrived at Greyhurst School separately—Joan with Elsie Dainton, Ruby with Sybil Sardone. Ruby had previously pressed Joan to keep silent as to their relationship.

In the train Joan and Elsie became acquainted with a Miss Merrick, an old Greyhurst scholar. In the compartment the old lady lost her brooch, which actually became fixed to the back of Joan Haviland's coat.

Arrived at Greyhurst, Clarice Choane found the brooch, and secretly hid it in Joan's pocket. The result was that, when Miss Merrick arrived at the school, her property was discovered in Joan's possession, and Joan was accused of theft.

(Now read on.)

### Silent Still!

**B**ED-TIME had come for the girls of Greyhurst School.

Joan and cousin Elsie had been allotted neighbouring beds in a large dormitory, which accommodated most, but not all, of the Fifth Form.

There was a sort of annexe to this dormitory, and it was with mixed feelings the two girls found that Ruby had been given a bed in this "overflow" room.

In a way, it was a relief to both Joan and Elsie to find that Ruby would not be sleeping in their room. Joan would have liked to be with her sister always. No need to say that! But since Ruby had gone to every extremity to keep their relationship as sisters a close secret, it was perhaps as well that the pair of them would not be in contact. The unavoidable encounters were going to be painful enough.

How it disquieted Joan, however, to discover that Dormitory B—as the annexe was called—held Sybil Sardone and her coterie of kindred spirits!

Was it fateful destiny that had arranged things thus? Or had Sybil somehow managed to get Ruby allotted

to that room, even as she had contrived to have the girl placed in her—Sybil's—study?

In any case, it was all an extra reason for Joan's anxiety and sadness about the sister she loved as she began to undress in a big room holding a score of other scholars.

Hilda Heathcote was here, of course. So were Joyce Carroll, Evelyn Gray, Hetty Wayne, and all the other girls who were not in the Sardone set.

Some had been much nicer to Joan and Elsie than others, but the two new girls were going to be quite fair. They had never expected everybody to fall in love with them right away, as it were. If a few were just a bit distant it was only to be expected, especially after that horrid upset with the lost brooch. Joan was thinking ruefully.

Taken as a whole, they were a nice lot of girls—high-spirited schoolgirls of the best British type.

Being the first night of the new term the girls had a good deal to talk about, and whilst they undressed there was one continual buzz of voices.

But it was "lights-out" at last, and in the dark dormitory most of the girls were falling to sleep very quickly after their tiring day, when the door swung open, and a voice spoke into the darkness.

"Joan Haviland!"

Joan sat up with a leap of the heart. It was Sybil Sardone who was whispering across the room.

"Come across to our room, Joan Haviland, will you? One of the girls wants to see you."

Then Joan's heart beat faster than ever.

Was Ruby wanting her? Oh, was it possible that, at the very end of the first day at the great school, all Ruby's resolution had broken down?

Had she repented of her resolve to disclaim the sistership? Perhaps she had suddenly felt what a mistake it was, what a wrong thing, certain to cause pain to mother in the end, ever to have embarked upon such a life of deception?

These agitated thoughts took Joan, with quick, light steps, across the silent dormitory.

A few girls mumbly inquired what was the matter, but they were too sleepy to get very concerned. Joan crept out into the passage behind Sybil, and she almost blurted out the eager question:

"Is it my sister—is it Ruby who wants me?"

The door of Dormitory B almost faced that of the main room. Sybil drew Joan into the annexe, closed the door swiftly, and then the light of an electric-torch flashed forth.

Its brilliant glow revealed Clarice Choane, Olive Courtney, Phyllis Franklin, and Ruby, all in dressing-gowns.

Joan met Ruby's eyes, and once again the younger sister almost blurted out words that would have proclaimed the relationship.

She almost exclaimed eagerly:

"Yes, Ruby; what is it? Here I am, dear!"

But in an instant Joan got a double shock that left her with a sinking heart.

She saw Ruby looking at her with no wistfulness at all, no sign of wanting to own her as a sister before these other girls. At the same moment Sybil gave a chuckle of malicious triumph.

Joan flashed round upon that girl.

"You said somebody wanted me!"

"It is quite right. I wanted you, and I've got you!" laughed Sybil. "This being the first night of the new term, I thought it would be nice to initiate such a distinguished new scholar into certain ancient rites!"

With the others starting to grin, Joan made a quick dart back to the door, only to bring Sybil after her like a streak of lightning.

"No, you don't!" Sybil laughed, swooping and seizing Joan. "Back you come, young lady!"

Joan struggled. But of what avail were her most furious efforts to escape, when Clarice and Phyllis took a hand in overpowering her? It was three to one then!

"Extraordinary behaviour on the part of the Duchess of Brick Row!" tittered Clarice, as she and the other two dragged their still struggling captive to the centre of the room.

"Pardon me," smiled Olive Courtney. "That is an offly nice nightie you are wearing! Such a homely touch about it!"

"Yes. What do you think of her home-mades?" grinned Sybil, addressing Ruby.

"Oh, let her go, please!" Ruby said, looking anything but amused. "It—is is so unfair, teasing her!"

That was the most she could do for her helpless sister—only plead weakly that it was unfair teasing.

"Ooo, noooo!" demurred Olive, sitting

upon the edge of a bed. "This is offly good sport!"

"It will annoy Hilda Heathcote & Co. if we send their precious scholarship kid back to them in the right get-up," said Sybil gleefully. "Sit down, your ladyship."

Joan stood as rigid as she could, and it took all the strength of Sybil and Phyllis to force her into the chair which Clarice placed for her.

Then began a most cruel persecution of the helpless victim, with Ruby all the time a silent, unhappy onlooker.

Joan was forced to submit to having her hair done. She had the most beautiful, luxuriant tresses, and she was simply choking with indignation as some softened soap was worked into the glossy hair to make it hopelessly matted.

Then a bit of sacking was produced, and this was draped and tied in such a manner around the scholarship girl that it became a kind of hideous overall.

"Ah!" exclaimed Hilda, after she had held her breath for a moment. "I thought, when you didn't come back, Joan, that it might be some trick. Sybil—"

"Get out of here!" burst in the leader of the swell set, in a choking voice.

She had got to that state of animosity against the Form captain, that, more often than not, she could only speak to her in a suffocated voice.

For answer, Hilda made a lightning spring across the room, Elsie and Joyce following up with just as great alacrity.

Sybil and her three cronies tried to get between their victim and the rescuers, whilst Ruby simply backed into the farthest corner. There was a sudden scene of silent but wild commotion, and then Joan was in friendly hands.

"Quick—quick! Slip back to your room!" urged Hilda, seeing Sybil & Co. gathering themselves together for a counter-attack.

"Ooo deah!"

Then, in a flash, Joan and her rescuers were out of the room.

There was no pursuit, and they stayed a minute in the passage, whilst Joan got rid of her sack overall, and did the best she could for herself.

"What a shame!" breathed Joyce Carroll indignantly. "I do think that new girl who is in with Sybil's set might have taken your part for once! But I suppose she is only their sort!"

"Never mind, Joan," said Hilda Heathcote soothingly. "You stuck it well, anyhow!"

"Oh, I—I don't mind!" panted Joan. "Only—"

How could she say the rest? How could she relieve her feelings by telling just what it was that had pained her most? Elsie knew, of course; but Hilda and Joyce little dreamed that Ruby Haviland in Dormitory B had been looking on at her own sister's humiliation!

In the darkness of the big room, just as they were all getting back to their beds, Joan felt a hand seize hers and press it.

That was Cousin Elsie, doing her best in secret to let Joan know how she understood, and even shared, all the anguish that it meant—this painful situation with its demand for heroic silence!

Poor Joan! Not enough that she must face life at Greyhurst School as a girl with none too much influence and backing. Day by day, there was to be the added trial of seeing her own sister in that rival camp; her own sister holding aloof from her always, never bending so much as a little finger on her behalf!

Not for her, but actually against her—actually ashamed to own her as a sister! For that was what it really amounted to.

Despicable selfishness! Cruel hardness for one sister to inflict upon another! Such bitter thoughts as these—bitter, and yet how well justified—were not Joan's. They were Elsie Dainton's.

And when another hour of the long night had passed, those were the thoughts which suddenly impelled Cousin Elsie to slip across to Joan's bedside, bend over her, and kiss her whilst she slept.

"I know, if others don't!" Elsie was saying to herself. "And, oh, may I never, never fail to be to you cousin and sister both!"



All of a tremble, Joan Haviland stood peering through the bars of the locked gates!

Joan had slipped on some stockings when she got out of bed to come to this dormitory. These were dragged off, Sybil trying her hardest to upset the victim on to the floor as she took hold of each stocking and pulled.

Then they stood Joan upon her feet, and a pitiful sight she looked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Clarice exploded softly, flopping back upon a bed. "What a guy!"

"Offly good!" agreed Olive Courtney. "So becoming!"

"Yes!" Sybil rejoined, with her exultant grin. "That's the way to make a new girl feel quite at home in a big school. Dress her as she used to dress at home!"

She took hold of one of Joan's spikes of soaped hair and pulled it.

"I like the way it sticks out! He, he, he! If only we had some flashlight-powder we could take a snapshot of her, for the school mag! Special plate, given free! The—"

And there the cruel jesting ended abruptly, for the door had flashed open.

On the threshold stood Hilda Heathcote, Elsie Dainton, and Joyce Carroll.

But Joan could not obey that order. There she stayed, and she it was who "went" for Sybil herself, sending that girl spinning backwards, to topple across a bed.

Clarice Choane, being flung backwards also, stepped by accident into a basin of water which was upon the floor.

Splash! went one of her bare legs in the ice-cold water, and nearly a yard high did she jump with the shock!

But Phyllis Franklin— She had got a firm hold of Elsie Dainton, and was having a rare tussle.

There was a moment when Elsie looked like being dragged to the basin and perhaps made to sit down in it. Just in time she got the better of her opponent, however, and now it was Phyllis who went reeling against a wall.

This left only Olive Courtney to be settled with.

Hilda Heathcote caught sight of a sopping sponge lying upon the floor. She whipped it up, and—

Whizz!

Plop!

Full in Olive's face it landed, causing that discomfited girl to give a gasping:

### Five Pounds Reward!

**A**BOUT half-past three the following afternoon, Joan Haviland came bursting into the study which she shared with Elsie

Dainton.

"Here's a go!" cried Joan ruefully. "I can't come with you down to the hockey practice, Elsie, as I meant to do."

"Oh!" exclaimed Elsie. She finished tying the lace to her stout boots, then stood up straight. "What is the trouble, then?"

"That horrid old brooch again!" sighed Joan, flopping into a chair. "The Form-mistress says the head-mistress has given orders that I'm to go to Miss Merrick's house, on the road to Greyhurst village, and see Miss Merrick about it!"

"About the brooch? Um!" grimaced Elsie. "All right; I'll come, too!"

"You won't!" declared Joan, bounding out of her chair. "No, Elsie; it's jolly good of you; but you must stay and show Hilda Heathcote what sort of a game you play. As for me, I've never touched a hockey-stick yet, so I shall only

be sparing the Fifth Form a very comic display, I know!"

Joan was fast getting back her usual bright spirits, after having them dashed by this order to "report" to the lady whose brooch it was had caused such an upset yesterday.

"Suppose I am to be cross-examined no end!" she remarked, jumping into her outdoor things. "Well, I don't care! I didn't steal the brooch, or want to stick to it even; that's all I can say, however many questions I'm asked!"

"Well, good luck, Joan!" Elsie said. "Half a second, though! I'm coming with you down to the gates!"

And the next few minutes saw the two chuns footing it down the long carriage-drive to the school gateway.

The playing-fields on both sides of the drive were teeming with scholars, now that afternoon school had ended. Hilda and a few other Fourth Form girls waved and called to Elsie Dainton; but she would not scamper off to join them until she had seen Joan hasten out on to the village road.

Miss Trotter, the Form-mistress, had told Joan to look out for a house called the Laurels, that being the name of Miss Merrick's residence, and ten minutes' sharp walking brought the girl to this house.

It was just a nice, old-fashioned house, standing back from the road in a couple of acres of lawns and shrubberies. A trim maid answered Joan's ring at the bell, and led her into the deserted drawing-room, saying that "mistress" would be down in a minute.

So Joan took a seat, and she tried not to feel miserable about the approaching interview. But, oh dear, it was an ugly bit of business, the finding of the lost brooch in her pocket yesterday evening; not fastened to her jacket by accident, but in her pocket! Could anything have looked more suspicious?

Suddenly the door opened, and Miss Merrick came in, very stately in her rustling black satin dress.

There was sudden joyous relief for Joan, even before the lady had said a word.

Only to see the pleasant smile upon Miss Merrick's face was to know that she was not going to make any insinuations of dishonesty over the affair of the brooch.

"Ah, I wanted to see you—yes!" she beamed, shaking hands with Joan, who had stood up. "Your headmistress returned me the brooch this morning, explaining that you found it in your coat, after all, and I was so glad!"

"I was glad, too, Miss Merrick, when I found it!" said Joan. "But—"

"Well?"

"I was horrified, too. It was in my pocket, you see, and—how did it get there, Miss Merrick? That's what I can't make out!" poor Joan could not help exclaiming bitterly.

"My dear, I am not going to bother about that. Rest assured, I acquit you of any base intentions in regard to the brooch. I am satisfied that you spoke about it the moment you came upon it."

"Yes, yes! And, oh, it's good of you to trust me—to accept my word!" Joan burst out quite emotionally.

After expecting a nasty cross-examination, such generous words from Miss Merrick were leaving the girl quite unstrung.

"But your headmistress trusts you," said Miss Merrick.

"She accepts my word, because it is her rule to trust a new girl—the first time," faltered Joan. "But I'm afraid she must have felt suspicious yesterday evening, I don't wonder—"

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"That is not the case now, at any rate!" broke in Miss Merrick soothingly. "In the note I had from your headmistress, along with the brooch, she says there is an alternative to her suspecting that you knowingly put the brooch in your pocket, and kept it there!"

"Oh!" gasped Joan.

"She says it has suddenly occurred to her somebody else might have put it there, to damage you in the eyes of other girls! And so you see, Joan Haviland, your headmistress is trying to be fair!"

"I thought—I knew—I tried to believe that she would be the last person in the world to judge me unfairly!" Joan gulped. "Greyhurst is such a fine school, and Miss Chessingham is the headmistress—"

"One you will grow to love and revere, my dear, as time goes on, even if you do find her a trifle stern at times!" was Miss Merrick's gentle rejoinder. "The spirit of Greyhurst; the wonderful name the school has earned for itself—they are the outcome of discipline, discipline always!"

She crossed to a small writing desk, raised the flap, and took out a purse.

she pleased. And by now, surely, mother had got to the lodgings she had arranged for in the village!

Mother, still as poor as in the old days of Brick Row; still fated to toil so hard for her means of subsistence, she was there in the village with perhaps only a shilling or two in her pocket!

Joan went decorously enough down the garden path of the Laurels, and out of the gateway. After that, however, away she went at full speed for the village.

Now, it seemed to her, she and mother were going to reap the first benefit of being near each other still.

Oh, it was simply fine, this plan of mother's, to live in the village so that they could see each other often.

Poor as ever they might be; but the roof of Greyhurst School was to shelter her, Joan, for a whole term and more; and mother, ah, how less irksome would the hard life be, out here in the glorious country!

It was a fair-sized village; the usual straggling street of houses and shops, with the railway station and its yard at one end and a green common at the



Roughly the girls rushed Joan to one of the wooden sheds. Into it they bundled her, Sybil Sardone sending her sprawling by a final push.

"And now, my dear," she resumed, coming back to Joan, "here is the real reason for my wanting to see you to-day. Just a small reward for restoring that very valuable brooch to me!"

"A small reward had she said? Five pounds! A crisp, new, five-pound note!"

"Miss Merrick, I—I—"

"I am sure you are not trying to say that you don't need it!" she laughed, in her kindly fashion. "Remember, I was in the train with you and your cousin yesterday. I heard your talk. I know that you are a scholarship girl, and that your mother is not rich!"

"But five pounds—"

"Put it away, my dear, and don't say anything more about it!" the lady cut in again, passing a hand over Joan's glossy head. "And now, I expect you want to rush away back to the school, in time for a game before the afternoon is ended!"

Miss Merrick was out in her reckoning there, however.

Back to school at once? No! Joan was thinking excitedly. She could do a better thing than that!

Five pounds, all her own, to do with as

other. Joan came to this latter just as the chimneys were ringing out from the village steeple. It was five o'clock and the daylight would soon be giving out now.

Breathless with running, the eager girl darted up a little side turning off the common, where there were some very humble cottages. Mother's lodgings were at No. 6, and that number Joan had to look for, because she had never been here before.

The last cottage in the row, all too close to a derelict brickworks that was now a rubbish heap.

Pushing open the rusty iron gate, Joan darted to the shabby porch and rattled the knocker.

No one came forward to answer the summons; but all at once a woman, picking greens on a near-by cabbage patch, sang out shrilly:

"What d'you want?"

"I want Mrs Haviland, if she has got here from London!" Joan called back. "But she doesn't seem to have arrived, although she was to come down to-day!"

"Are you 'er darter?"

"Yes!"

"Yet mother is 'ere, look 'ee; but she's about in the village some'er, mebbe doing a bit o' shopping! You go in! It's the front parlour!"

Joan accepted this invitation, passing into the tiny front room where her mother was to work, eat, and sleep.

Oh, a sad, drab lodging it was; but Joan knew that mother would soon transform it with those clever hands of hers.

She saw the sewing-machine already installed by the window, and a bundle of work lying there, ready to be started this very evening that was now closing in out of doors.

"How I wish, in my spare time up at school, I could do a little of the easy work for mother!" Joan said to herself wistfully. "It ought to be possible, and I shall suggest it. But, gracious! I musn't stop too long, talking with mother when she turns up. I ought to be indoors by now, I suppose!"

And her uneasiness speedily increased as the minutes crept by and her mother failed to appear.

"Not that Joan was beginning to fear that anything had happened to her mother. Very likely one of the shopkeepers had got into conversation with her, seeing she was a newcomer to the village, and was detaining her.

Almost in deep darkness Joan had to seize a sheet of paper at last and write a brief message:

"My dear mother," she scribbled, keeping the lines as straight as possible in the gloom. "I am so sorry I can't stay to welcome you to Greyhurst and give you fifty kisses! But I must get back to the school now, hoping to see you in a day or so.

"I will come again as soon as I can, and here is five pounds, mother, which please spend on yourself. A kind lady gave it to me for finding her brooch, so now you can take it easy with the sewing machine, can't you?"

"Good-bye, mother, until we meet soon!—Your loving, JOAN."

Putting this hasty message and the five-pound note in an envelope, Joan gummed down the flap and left the missive where her mother was bound to see it.

"And now," she said, coming away from the front room and shutting the door behind her, "I must simply fly, or I'll be getting myself gated for getting back late!"

### Out After Dark!

It was nearly dark and very misty when Joan left the cottage.

Getting out on to the main road she set off full pelt for the school, her hair flying behind her, such was the speed she made.

Nearly dark, yes; and how late for a Greyhurst scholar to be beyond bounds! What were the exact rules about such things? Joan wondered, whilst at the same time she felt sure that this sort of thing was not allowed, anyhow.

Pity she had made the impulsive journey to the cottage! Better to have waited until a better opportunity occurred; and yet— Well, there! Wouldn't any girl have wanted to rush off to her mother in the same circumstances?

"I'll have to give an exact account of myself, that's all!" was her resigned thought as she tore along. "Oh, I'm not going to make any mystery about mother being in the village! There may be some snobs in the school, but what do I care about them!"

But ere she had come within sight of the school's lighted windows there had been time for her to question the wisdom of letting her breach of rules become known, if by any chance she could get into the school without being caught.

For, with a sudden sinking of the heart, she began to realise what it would mean if some officious senior girl caught her, and refused to accept any excuses.

It might be within the power of such a senior to "gate" her straight away. All Joan knew was that the seniors did have quite a lot of authority. And supposing she was gated; then—oh, awful thought! How about seeing mother then?

She came to the massive iron gates of the school, and they were shut for the night!

All of a tremble, for a few moments she stood peering through the bars, then darted noiselessly away as she heard, or thought she heard, somebody coming out of the lodge.

A sense of guilt was upon her. What she had done was really excusable, she was sure; and yet, one had to look at these things in the light of the school rules; one had to think of that discipline without which the school could never maintain its fine standard.

More guilty still did she feel presently, scrambling through a gap in the boundary hedge. This furtive sneaking indoors—how she hated it! But, rightly or wrongly, she was feeling bound to try and get to her study without being caught.

Only let her escape the dread punishment of a "gating" this time, and there would be nothing like this again—ever!

Now she was through the hedge, and standing in the vast playing-field. The white mist dimmed the distant lighted windows to a mere yellow blur, so that there was nothing to aid her in her cautious peering this way and that. She

could only listen, to assure herself that she was quite alone.

And suddenly, as she listened, she heard the swish of light steps across the dewy grass coming nearer, nearer!

Joan was no coward when it was a case of sudden peril under creditable circumstances. But that horrid sense of guilt—a feeling she was not used to harbouring—it threw her into a sort of panic.

Wildly she gazed around, and the black bulk of some wooden sheds, dimly visible a dozen yards away, made her wonder whether she could hide there.

Holding her breath, she retreated to the hedge, then went along its inner side, hoping to reach the back of the sheds. Barely six steps had she taken, however, before a dry stick broke under her, making a snapping noise that seemed terribly loud.

It was heard, anyhow. Hard upon the snapping of the stick Joan was aware of several voices exchanging whispered exclamations of alarm.

They were girls who were speaking—and what right had they, any more than Joan, to be out here after dark?

So the unhappy girl asked herself; but again she was full of uncertainty. Perhaps they were seniors, with permits; perhaps they were even out here for the purpose of looking for her!

Then, suddenly, ending all Joan's miserable perplexity, two or three girlish figures rushed full at her in the misty darkness!

One swooped and held her fast, and Joan knew who it was in a flash.

Sybil Sardone!

Nor was Sybil slow to find out who it was she had swooped upon.

"Well, I never!" was her smothered cry, whilst she tightened her grip of the scholarship girl. "It's the scholarship kid!"

"Stick her in the lumber-shed," suggested Phyllis Franklin coolly. "That's the wheeze!"

"No, no!"

It was Ruby who was speaking now, as Joan realised with a throbb of anguish.

"Don't be stupid, Ruby!" Sybil Sardone said, with an impatient laugh. "Phyllis's suggestion is the very idea! Put the kid in the shed, and lock her up until we come back!"

Joan was listening, but only in a detached way. She was hardly concerned for herself, but only for Ruby.

Once again, here was Ruby forming one of the reckless set that simply gloried in mischief! And what was their motive in being out of doors at this hour?

Joan could not guess, and Sybil Sardone & Co. certainly were not going to tell her.

Roughly they rushed her, helpless as she was, to one of the wooden sheds. Into it she was bundled—sent sprawling in the groping darkness by a final push from Sybil.

Then—slam!—the stout door was dragged shut; a key was turned on the outer side; and poor Joan knew herself to be a helpless prisoner, with her persecutors chuckling softly as they scampered away, taking Ruby with them!

(Another exciting long instalment of this entralling new school serial in next week's SCHOOL FRIEND. Remember to tell all your chums about "Joan Haviland's Silence!" and persuade them to read it!)

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