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No. 143. Vol. 6.

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The School Friend

Every **2^D** Thursday

EARNING HER LIVING!

A Grand School Story

BY

HILDA RICHARDS



THE EXPELLED GIRL'S TASK!

The task of making the Cliff House aprons had proved a bigger one than Augusta had anticipated, and only her strong will power and fierce determination to earn her own living, kept her at her arduous labours.

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

Also in this issue:

"JOAN HAVILAND'S SILENCE!"

A Great School Serial. By JOY PHILLIPS.

RESULT OF "SCHOOL FRIEND" PICTURE PUZZLE COMPETITION.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution of all the pictures. The First Prize of £100 has therefore been divided among the following seven competitors, whose solutions came nearest to correct with two errors each:

Elsie Barker, 4, Paisley Street, Anlaby Road, Hull.
Lilian G. Dunnett, 30, Ashfield Road, Aighurth, Liverpool.
Cissie Gordon, 8, Worsley Grove, Levenshulme, Manchester.
Annie S. Anderson, 551, Duke Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
Kathleen Murphy, 13, Turville Road, Birchfield, Birmingham.
Nessie Anderson, 561, Duke Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
Lily Dryden, 5, Bernard Street, Glasgow, E.

The Second Prize of £20, and the Third Prize of £5, have been divided among the following forty-six competitors whose solutions contained three errors each:

Miss B. Simpson, 10, Brandon Grove, Sandyford, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
Dorothy Pope, Lock House, Canal Side, Rodbourne, Swindon.
Sophia Campbell, 1, Parkview Gardens, Tollcross, Glasgow.
Betty Humphreys, 70, Beaufort Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.
Muriel Coles, 2, The Pavement, Taylor's Lane, Willesden, N.W.
Jemima Wright, 68, Beech Avenue, Garden Village, Hull.
Janet W. Stewart, 57, Fordneuk Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow.
Sybil Shrew, 11, Bertram Road, Enfield, Middlesex.
Dorothy Sharp, 208, Gipsy Road, West Norwood, S.E. 27.
Mabel Richard, 271, West Derby Road, Liverpool.
Mary Platt, 13, Sumner Street, Birkenhead.
Constance Olley, The Gardens, Checkendon Court, near Reading.

Sylvia H. Montgomery, Fernain, Castle Hill, Maidenhead.
Ida Forster, 48, Hood Lane, Great Sankey, Winifred Hasted, 16, Farnham Royal, Upper Kennington Lane, S.E. 11.
Winifred Wagg, Station Road, Deoking, King's Lynn.
Doreen Davies, 54, Pantou Road, Hoole, by Chester.
Ethel Dyte, 11, Barnstaple Street, South Molton, Devon.
Gladys Cleaver, 2, Fleetwood Road, Leicester.
May Hallam, 51, Station Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire.
Irene Manley, 115a, Astbury Street, Congleton, Cheshire.
Morfa Evans, 23, College Road Bromley, Kent.
Dorothy Miles, 5, St. James' Gardens, Muswell Hill, N.
Olive Rutherford, Spring House, Menhaden, Alston, Cumberland.
Iris Halder, 25, Cranbrook Avenue, Hull.
Winnie Sherrett, 112, Arden Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham.
Alice Giles, 1, Phoenix Street, Stonehouse, Plymouth.
Ruby S. Browne, 62, Ashmead Road, St. John's, S.E. 8.
Edna, Orwin, 165, Balmoral Road, Chillingham, Kent.
Kittie West, 45, Limes Grove, Lewisham, S.E. 13.
Alice R. Gard, 5, Ganna Park Road, Pevench, Plymouth.
Laura A. Breen, 6, Brunswick Road, Pepliar, E. 14.
Ena Hitchings, National Reserve Club, London Road, Derby.
Miss B. Kingsberry, 1, Park View, Paisley, Scotland.
Sadie Roper, 232, Manor Street, Belfast.
Molly Buck, 5, Stanley Park Road, Wallington, Surrey.
Nellie Penman, Bath Street, Keltly.
Hilda Pitts, 1, Allington Road, Southville, Bristol.
Leonore Howard, 5, South Gate Avenue, Ashford Road, Feltham, Middlesex.
Miss G. Bowden, 28, Oxford Place, Plymouth.
Gladys L. Herring, 23, Drury Street, Darlington, Durham.
Elsie Bellamy, 2, Hamoaze Place, Devonport.
Mary Murray, 18, Allan Street, Aberdeen.
Dorothy Andrews, 3, Chapel Green, Long Melford, Suffolk.
Phæbe Buckley, 7, Well Street, Hanley, Staffs.
Winnie de Thier, 19, Park Avenue, Moss Side, Manchester.

Two hundred and fifty-one competitors divide the eighty prizes of ten shillings each, whose solutions contained four errors each:

Kathlyn Keating, 14, First Avenue, Seville, Place, Dublin; Marjorie Line, Carlton Villa, Silver Street, Newport Pagnell, Bucks; Alice Davison, 77, Leacroft Road, Derby; Rosa Estro, 45, Shuttle Street, Glasgow; Marion Betts, Frarbrook, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent; Sylvia Haigh, 27, Ripon Road, Harrogate; Marjorie Cree, Ardwin, 4, Ellis Street, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire; Miss B. M. Graham, Fintona, Rowth Summit, Co. Dublin; Ellie Forster, 86, Botchergate, Carlisle; Agnes Parish, 64, Gladstone Street, Norwich; Elsie Peacock, 51, Valkyrie Road, Wallasey, Cheshire; Clarice M. Morgan, 7, Glossop Terrace, Morton, Falsworth, Manchester; Grace M. Hoade, 49, Warwick Street, Old Lenton, Nottingham; Grace Varley, 215, Fosse Road, nr. Leicester; Miss A. Blount, 28, Bath Street, St. Helier's, Jersey, C. I.; Nora Hunt, 48, High Street, Wootton Bassett, Wilts.; Edith Holmes, Chantilly, Eye Bank Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester; Lily Scanes, 33, Farnham Road, Seven Kings, Essex; Hilda Simmonds, 77, Toronto Road, Buckland, Portsmouth; Florence Royles, 6, Top-y-Sein, Broughton, nr. Wrexham; Augusta Padley, 41, Dempster Road, East Hill, Wandsworth, S.W. 18; Ada Hughes, 63, Pretoria Road, Leytonstone, E. 11; May Gunn, 15, Waverley Park, Edinburgh; Chrissa Davies, Mindrow, Water Street, Pembroke Dock; Madeline Wood, 9, Margaret Street, Everton, Liverpool; Winnie Allen, 49, North Valley Road, Colne, Lancs.; Elizabeth H. Nicholson, 137, Helmsley Road, Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Olive Ellis, 118, Seymour Avenue, Bruce Grove, Tottenham, N. 17; Marjorie Walker, Ebernoe, Woodbridge Hill, Guildford; Marjorie Cook, 19, Mill Road, Cleethorpes, Lincs.; Grace Harrod, 9, Farringham Road, Jarvis Brook, Sussex; Mary Groves, 28, Chester Place, Gateshead-on-Tyne; Ruth Ruston, Mandale Mill House, Thornaby-on-Tees; Edith Harrison, 33, Earl Street, Grimsby; Alice Nicklin, 12, Mayfair, Frindsbury, Rochester, Kent; Millicent Newbon, 29, Belgrave Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent; Gladys Lewis, 32, Stratford Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey; Bertha White, Mount Pleasant, Jarvis Brook, Sussex.

A further list of prizewinners, together with correct solutions, will be published in a subsequent issue.

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Earning Her Living!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of the Girls of Cliff House School, introducing Augusta Anstruther-Browne, the girl who was expelled. By HILDA RICHARDS.

Augusta's Resolve!

TAP, tap!
"Come in!" called the voice of Miss Penelope Primrose.

Seven Fourth Form girls entered her study in answer to the invitation.

Barbara Redfern, Form captain, led them. Mabel Lynn, the three chums of Study No. 7, and Peggy Preston, followed. Bessie Bunter brought up the rear.

Even on Bessie Bunter's face there was reflected the same sadness and the same fear and anxiety that the others showed.

It was a deputation.
As though guessing its meaning without asking, the headmistress rose to her feet.

"So you have come again—"
"Please, Miss Primrose, you must hear us this time!" Babs burst out at once. "We are a deputation representing practically the whole Form. We wish to speak to you about Augusta-Anstruther-Brown."

Again Miss Primrose would have checked them, but Babs rushed on.

"We know that you are taking a very serious view of what has happened, Miss Primrose. Augusta was away from us all yesterday afternoon and evening, and we know that she slept in the punishment room. But, if we can say nothing else, Miss Primrose, we want to beg you to be merciful."

Peggy Preston, the other appointed spokesman, went on.

"We know that Augusta's old record is not a very good one, Miss Primrose," she said. "We know that there was a time when she was reckless and defiant. But all that has changed. The things that have been thought about Augusta cannot be true. We know—"

Miss Primrose interrupted at last. "I am sorry that I cannot receive another deputation about Augusta," she said, a curiously steely tone in her voice.

"But, Miss Primrose—"
"Enough! I have already given you my reasons, girls. Unfortunately, there can be no sentiment in such a matter. The case was quite clear—"

"But won't you listen to the pleading of the whole Form, Miss Primrose?" broke out Babs.

"Unfortunately, it is not possible."
"But it is not fair, Miss Primrose," said Babs rocklessly. "After all Augusta has done, after the way she has tried, it is not right that such harsh treatment—"

"Not fair! Harsh treatment!" repeated the headmistress sharply.

"In view of the circumstances—"
"Barbara! I will not have you say such things!" Miss Primrose exclaimed. "Listen to me! Augusta was accused

by Hetty Hendon of stealing a £5 note from her study. At the very time of the accusation she was endeavouring to get a pass to leave the school. In two more minutes she would have been away. At the direct accusation she produced a five-pound note reluctantly. The note was examined and proved, beyond doubt, to be Hetty's."

Miss Primrose regarded their flushed faces sternly.

"Some of this may be news to you, but it is the evidence upon which I have judged Augusta. You have tried to tell me before that you did not believe that Augusta had gone back to her old ways. Personally, I have come to a vastly different conclusion. I believe that it was that sad lapse that has led to this most regrettable ending. However that may be, Augusta has been proved guilty of attempted theft, and of trying to bluff her way out of the school in a manner that few other girls would attempt."

The silence, as Miss Primrose finished speaking, was intense.

But somehow, even Miss Primrose's logic did not convince the girls who had come to know the new Augusta after she had dropped behind her those old, unlikeable ways.

"Miss Primrose!" said Babs.

"Yes, Barbara!"

"At least you will grant us permission to speak to Augusta?" Babs asked.

"She is our friend—we ought to be

allowed that privilege. Perhaps she might tell us—"

"It is impossible, Barbara!"
"Impossible! But—"

Miss Primrose spoke very slowly. "Augusta has left the school already—she went during breakfast-time!"

There was an audible gasp of amazement and dismay in the study. Babs recoiled like one dazed.

"Gone?" she said hoarsely. "Sent from the school—expelled?"

"Yes, Barbara," nodded Miss Primrose, her lips set. "To save the disgrace of a public expulsion I arranged that she should leave early—"

"And we never had a chance to speak to her; although she is our chum!" Babs exclaimed, the colour coming to her cheeks.

"I wished no girls to have any more to do with a girl convicted of such a contemptible theft!" said Miss Primrose sternly.

"But she wasn't! There was a doubt! There must have been—"

"Barbara! I have already reprimanded you for mentioning such words as unfairness and harshness—"

"But why didn't we know, Miss Primrose?" Babs protested, indignation welling up in her heart afresh. "We might have been able to help her! It isn't right—"

"Barbara! Not another word!" cried Miss Primrose. "It is a very painful subject for all of us, and I regret that I have had to act as I have done, but there was no other course open to me. You had all better go now, as there is no use in prolonging this interview. I shall make the announcement to the school after morning prayers."

They gathered in the passage outside the closed study door.

"Expelled!" muttered Peggy Preston in a choking voice. "Augusta expelled—like this! Yesterday, at this time, nothing had happened. Now she has gone. Oh, it's not right—it's not."

The hot tears were welling to her eyes. "Augusta's expelled! I can't believe it's true!" muttered Clara Trevelyn. "It's a mistake, anyway. She didn't steal—she was too jolly straight for that. Augusta was a brick."

Babs was at Peggy's side, trying to comfort the girl for whom this news must come as a heavier blow than for anyone else. The lives of Peggy and Augusta had been strangely intertwined. They had not always been friends. But that was all forgiven and forgotten by the girl who had come to Cliff House as a scholarship girl.

They went along the passage, dazed by the news. Augusta had gone! They had been given no opportunity of seeing her. How had she taken it all? Would



Next Portrait:

The Welsh Girl of the Fourth.

the believe that the whole school had turned against her?

Poor Augusta! They knew what she had had to fight against. They knew the repentance that had brought her back to the school to atone for the past, to leave an honoured name after all. She had atoned! She had won the respect and affection of all. And now—a convicted thief, an outcast, an expelled girl! Could they be blamed for wondering even now that she could be really gone.

Raised voices at the foot of the stairs leading from the Fourth Form passage suddenly recalled them to themselves.

"I won't carry her bags—it's not my job!" a voice protested. "That's the porter's work. I won't carry bags or do anything for a girl who said such wicked things about me!"

Babs looked up to see that they had come on two of the school maids, Jane Lord was the taller one, the other was Judy Grigg, a daily maid, and a newcomer to the school.

"I've told you to carry Miss Augusta's bags, and I will be obeyed!" Jane exclaimed, not seeing the girls. "Now do you hear?"

"Augusta's bags!" retorted Judy, a malicious look on her cunning face. "I say I won't carry them! She told a wicked story about me! She said that I had stolen a note from her aunt, and she saw me hiding it in a book—the wicked girl! Tried to get me sacked—"

Babs strode suddenly forward. "You will excuse me!" she said. "If there is any question about poor Augusta's baggage being sent from the school, we will see to it, Judy! But

what is this that you are saying about Augusta?"

Judy looked up, mingled fear and defiance in her eyes.

"I was talking to Jane," she said.

"Yes—but about Augusta!" Babs rapped back. "You were saying that she tried to blame you for something. Let me tell you that I'd take her word before yours, any day! Don't you dare to say anything against her unless it is perfectly true, or I'll report you immediately!"

Judy cowered back.

"But it is true!" she said. "She tried to make out that I stole a note and put it in a book, and that's how she came to have one on her. She said she hadn't said anything to me because she was merciful to me—her being merciful!" Judy sneered. "As though she's the sort ever to show mercy—"

"Enough of that! You have no right to be so horrid!" Babs cried. "I don't care what has happened, and my chums don't! We think there's a mistake. And you, Judy—don't you dare to utter another word against Augusta in this school! Now clear off!"

Jane lingered, although Judy slouched away.

"It's all right, Jane! We'll get Piper to take these down to the station," Babs said, giving the servant a kindly nod. "It's the least we can do for poor Augusta. But I had to speak to Judy like that—"

"Oh, I think she's a horrid girl!" Jane burst out. "You did right, Miss Barbara. And I want to tell you that Miss Augusta was always very kind to me, and helpful, too, and I don't believe that she's done any wrong, and I'll say it, even if I lose my place over it!"

"That's jolly good of you, Jane!" said Babs impulsively. "We're all sure that Augusta has been wronged!"

Peggy Preston stared at Augusta's baggage as the maid went away, and the tears came afresh to her eyes.

"Augusta—she's really gone!" she muttered. "See, the matron's addressed it all to her sister's home! But—but—oh, Babs, you know what Judy said!"

"She's a horrid girl," said Babs, with a shake in her voice, "to speak so maliciously about a poor girl who has been sent away—to refuse even to handle her bags—"

"She sneered about Augusta being merciful!" Peggy put in, with a gulp. "It's made me think, Babs. I believe that is how this mistake must have happened. It was Augusta all over. She's changed; but—but she's always had a sort of sympathetic feeling for a girl who was doing wrong. She was merciful, Babs—always!"

"A brick!" said Clara gruffly. "If I hear that little cat Judy say another word about her, I'll give her the shaking of her life, anyway!"

Then they all looked up as the door from the quadrangle opened to admit Miss Steel, the Fourth Form mistress. From the expression on her face they could guess instantly the mission that had taken her from the school so early in the day.

Before any of them could speak, however, a second figure appeared. It was the headmistress herself, this time.

"You are back quickly, Miss Steel," she said.

"Yes, Miss Primrose," answered the other. "I have to report that I have not carried out your orders exactly as you gave them to me."

"What? Augusta has not caught her train, to be met by my friend in London?" said Miss Primrose sharply.

"No. I have sent a telegram instead," answered the mistress. "When Augusta reached Courtfield she refused to go by train. She said that she would choose, instead, to go to her aunt, who keeps the drapery business in Courtfield. I endeavoured to persuade her to go to her sister and her other relations, but she was absolutely stubborn. As she was going to a relation, and her parents are not in England, I had no power to do anything else."

Miss Primrose hardly seemed to observe the eagerness of the girls at that statement; in fact, she seemed hardly to have noticed them at all.

"It is a pity that Augusta has not left the neighbourhood," she said. "I must see that these bags are freshly addressed. But—"

"There is something else that I ought to report, Miss Primrose," said Miss Steel. "It is a remark that Augusta made to me when I left her. She declared that she had not had justice, but was fair enough to ask me to tell you that the headmistress and other mistresses had shown her every consideration under the circumstances. She said that she still hoped to prove that she was an innocent girl!"

"Hurrah!" burst out Babs wildly. "Good old Augusta!" cheered Clara Trevlyn.

Miss Primrose frowned heavily. "What is the meaning of this?" she cried. "What are you doing here at all? You cheer a last defiant message—"

"It isn't defiant, Miss Primrose!" Babs had to say.

"What? You consider—"

"We think everything's been against Augusta!" Babs rushed on. "But if she could prove that there had been a mistake, Miss Primrose, surely you would be as glad as anyone!"

PLACES OF INTEREST AT CLIFF HOUSE.

This Week: THE COMMERCIAL ROOM



THIS is the room that proves of most interest to those parents whose daughters are approaching the age when they will soon have to leave school, and who are destined for a business career.

Everything has been done to make the Commercial-room at Cliff House complete and practical. Miss Primrose is an ardent believer in education being as modern and up-to-date as possible, and has spared no pains in equipping the room well.

The room itself has no claim to being pretty or historic. It is in the most modern part of the building, is lofty and spacious, and contains twelve desks. Miss Scott is the instructress.

Business subjects, such as shorthand, typewriting, economics, banking management and languages are taught to those girls who attend for instruction. On the long bench at the end of the room are the appliances specially provided, and they include a small adding machine, two typewriters, and two duplicators. There are other less important things as well.

It should be said here that there were two typewriters. At the present time there is one typewriter, and nearly all the parts for making another one. And it is all Frances Barrett's fault!

Frances is a "Commercialite." She claims to have a special aptitude for all the subjects taught, as her father is alleged to be an influential business man in the City. Whether her father is such a good business man is doubtful; his daughter certainly does not seem to have inherited such qualities. But Frances does love tinkering with a typewriter!

The Fourth may be exaggerating a little when they say that Frances breaks the keys of every machine she touches, but there is no doubt that she is responsible for the unfortunate condition of the machine out of order. One of the letters was out of order when Frances, in a fit of zeal, discovered that, and decided to remedy it. With a screwdriver and spanner she took the machine to pieces—every little bit of it. She cleaned all those little bits and oiled them. All that redounds to Frances' credit. The unfortunate part is that Frances can't make a typewriter out of all the little bits that she has got. The "machine" that she did build up was a sight to see and marvel at!

Most girls in the school have a peep into the Commercial-room at times, if only out of curiosity. The most persistent visitors, however, are Bunny, Pip, and Teddy Bear, of the Second. They are always wanting to be taught to "typewrite." When they brought out an issue of the "Second Form Magazine," they took it to the Commercial-room, hoping that they would find some obliging girl who would print them a hundred copies of it. So far, they haven't been able to find such a girl in the school.

The Commercial-room is not the subject of "japes." For the simple reason that the machines provided are delicate, and very serious damage might be easily done to them. Rather is it a studious place where girls make strange shorthand signs, and nimble fingers click the typewriter keys, and Frances Barrett works out huge sums that prove (according to her working) that Cliff House is thousands and thousands of pounds in debt. But Frances still has much to learn!

"I should, indeed!" Miss Primrose answered in a very different voice. "If I could think— But, no! It is impossible! Augusta's guilt has been proved—there is no doubt about it. It will be better for all of us when she has left Courtfield. I should like to speak to you, Miss Steel."

"They walked away together, and just at that moment a mellow, booming bell began to toll.

"Morning prayers—and then the announcement to the whole school!" Babs murmured. "But, girls, Augusta isn't going to give in without a struggle!"

"And because she's resolved to stay in Courtfield. Why, I consider that that proves her innocence more than anything!" Peggy Preston added. "Oh, if only there was something we could do to help Augusta, I'm sure we'd all do it!"

"We would!" said Clara.

"Little did they think, as they went up the stairs to Great Hall, how soon that chance was to come to them!

Her Back to the Wall!

EXPELLED from Cliff House!

Cast out as a thief! Not fit to mingle with other girls in the school she had loved, the school for whose fair name she had worked so hard!

The thoughts drummed in Augusta Anstruther-Browne's mind in a dull, relentless manner as she walked away from Courtfield Station after refusing to go by train.

Her head was held high, and her mouth was set and firm, but she was very near to tears.

"Never to return!" She could hear the words even now. And she had loved Cliff House! When ruin had overtaken her father she had realised that love for the first time. She had understood what she had not known before, and the resolution had come to her. As Olive Wayne she had paid for the past, and secured pardon. There had been impulses to have just one day of the old gay life, but she had suppressed them all.

Now, after all, she was expelled.

She knew why; she understood perfectly. Every word that she had told Miss Primrose had been the plain, unvarnished truth. Judy Grigg was the guilty girl. She had stolen the note that belonged to her aunt. Augusta knew that she had intended to hide it in one of Hetty Hendon's books—she had actually watched. Mercy had made her try to save the girl from exposure as a thief.

But Judy at the last moment had not hidden the note. She had changed her mind. Augusta had blundered in consequence. She had taken a note belonging to Hetty Hendon, and had been caught with it when trying to leave the school. No, Miss Primrose could not under the circumstances be blamed for calling her a thief!

But it was Judy Grigg's fault. Judy had lied when Augusta had made the accusation against her. She had denied going near the study. Rather than admit her own wrong, she had allowed Augusta to be expelled from the school.

Expelled through trying to give an erring girl a chance!

Many times a mist seemed to swim before her eyes. She tried to shut out memories of the black horror of the night she had spent in the punishment-room before being sent away in this summary manner.

She could not.

And Miss Ballantine, the generous lady who was paying her expenses at school—what would she think? Her charity had been wasted on a thief! Augusta had repaid her by stealing!



SHOULD GAMES BE COMPULSORY?

A Lively Debate with the Girls of Danesford Hall.

Reported by MABEL LYNN (Fourth Form).

AN interesting debate was held on Monday, in the Lower Hall, on the subject: "Should Games be Compulsory?" Miss Philippa Derwent opened with the proposition that they should not be compulsory, and was seconded by Miss Phyllis Howell. Miss Gertrude Thomas opposed the motion, and was seconded by Miss Marguerite Carr. Miss Barbara Redfern was in the chair.

After the visitors had been introduced:

Miss Derwent opened the proceedings with a brilliant speech, in which she contended that schoolgirls never should be slaves, and although it was wise for all girls to take sufficient exercise, it was not necessary to compel them to have it at games that might be distasteful. "Here at Cliff House," she concluded, "games are optional. At Danesford Hall they are compulsory. Let us judge on results. Need I say more?"

Miss Phyllis Howell ably seconded.

Miss Thomas then voiced the views of the opposition. She said that there were always slackers at every school, and they needed something to "shake them up." A girl should study the honour of her school, and if she would not do it voluntarily she should do it compulsorily. "We are a smaller school!" Miss Thomas finished dramatically. "I contend that if we were the same size we should beat you every time at every game!"

Miss Marguerite Carr was just as confident in seconding, and the debate was then declared open.

The Misses Annabel Hichens, Yang Li Wen, Bessie Bunter, and Dolly Jobling then rose, and proceeded to talk at once. Order was restored at length for Miss Hichens.

"Ladies," she said, "I have come here, not to speak at all." (Cries of: "What are you doing now? Humming?") "I have come here to make a protest. I consider that sports should not be compulsory or encouraged. They should be entirely cut out at a girls' school, and the domestic arts substituted in place." (Great disorder.) "Which would a man rather have as a wife, do you think? A girl who could make runs, or make a stew?" (Annabel endeavoured to proceed, but there was such an uproar that she at length sat down in disgust.)

Miss Bessie Bunter spoke next, having a louder voice than Yang Li Wen.

Miss Bunter: "Ladies and fellow-sportswomen, I do not need to tell you that I have never been compelled to play a game. Sometimes they compel me to keep away!" (Laughter, and cries of, "We believe it!") "Oh, really, I haven't made a joke, so don't you grieve at me like that, you little Chinese!" (Loud cries of "Order!") "Well, she jolly well is, and she doesn't know anything about it! As I said, I am kept down through jealousy, and I consider that games should be compulsory to give me a chance!" (Loud and prolonged cheers from the Danes.) "Oh, really! I forgot you were taking that side! I consider that games shouldn't be compulsory, for—the same reason!" (Loud laughter.) "I'll tell you when I'm making jokes!" (A voice: "There's no need! You're always doing it!" and further laughter.) "All right!" said Miss Bessie. "You jolly well get on with the horrid old debate yourselves!"

Miss Yang Li Wen then spoke in the pidgin English. She was called to order for saying that compulsory games would make the silly "fat turnip" into a "thin turnip," and was threatened with reprisals by Bessie Bunter when she did it a second time. Many of her arguments were quaint, but very amusing, and she kept her audience pleasantly interested.

The final speeches by the Misses Jobling, Trevlyn, Preston, and Leigh, of Cliff House, and M. and D. Lambert, Minter, and Stanley, of Danesford Hall were excellent.

After the replies of proposer and opposer had been made, the matter was put to the vote. The voting was not confined to two determined camps at all. Both Cliff House girls and visitors voted freely upon what they had heard at the debate, and the result was an equal number of votes for each side, the Chairman refusing to give a casting vote.

Afterwards the visitors were entertained to a light and very cheery supper before returning to Danesford Hall, and the Misses Yang Li Wen and Bessie Bunter became almost friendly again!

She felt that it would be repugnant to stay in the very neighbourhood—to see all the old faces. The story would spread. They would all know that she was an expelled girl.

She gritted her teeth.

"But I'm going to stay!" she muttered. "Judy must still have that note. It may yet be found. And it shall be. It will prove that I told the truth, after all. And I will prove it somehow—I will!"

Her voice choked. She had just thought of the other tragedy that this occurrence had helped to obscure. Her aunt had been robbed of the five-pound note in her hour of direst need. The furniture firm had threatened to foreclose and take the shop fittings!

She hurried on, too bewildered to think collectively of anything. A shop came in sight at last. She recognised the name of it, "The Cash Trading Stores," instantly. But what was the matter? The shop door was closed. The window looked disordered, a mere jumble of scattered goods.

Augusta started suddenly to run. Worse and worse! A dreadful fear clutched at her heart.

Through the glass door she caught a glimpse of the shop. There was no counter, no chairs. The glass-fronted stands were gone, and merchandise was piled everywhere. The sight seemed to fill her with a dull horror.

The shop furniture had been taken away after all!

Already the hand of ruin was tracing its grim message over the luckless business of her aunt, Mrs. Sarah Browne.

Augusta darted to the side-door that gave admission to the private part. It was open. She went through, and hurried along the passage to her aunt's living-room.

The tear-stained face of the woman sitting at the table was averted listlessly as she entered.

"Augusta!" said a husky, startled voice.

Augusta steeled her heart. She understood instantly. Her aunt had given in, overwhelmed by the buffets of a seemingly cruel fate. She was despairing at last. Something must be done.

"Aunt, why isn't the shop open?"

Augusta exclaimed.

"Open!" came the pathetic response.

"Oh, how can I open, when everything has gone, and I am ruined? But you, Augusta—"

"You're not ruined! And listen! There's a customer tapping outside!" Augusta cried. "She must be served!"

"But what is the use?" came the broken cry of the other.

Augusta clenched her hands as she heard another impatient tap, tap on the door.

Her aunt was in no state to see a customer, even if she could be urged to open the door.

She hesitated for perhaps two seconds—no more. Then she had taken her resolution. She ran through the shop, unlocked the door, and opened it.

"Come inside, please, madam!" she exclaimed to the customer outside. "My aunt is a little poorly, but I am sure that I can serve you!"

"Oh, thank you, miss!" said the woman, charmed by Augusta's manner. "I want some sheets—something that will cost about—"

you!" she said, as she accompanied her customer to the door.

But the smile on her face was frozen; it could never be real. It faded entirely as she turned back to survey the shop.

What a dreadful ruin it looked! She wondered now that the first customer had even stayed to be served. The men who had taken away the furniture had cared about nothing except getting back the goods on which the next instalment could not be paid.

She paced back through the shop, and came to the living-room. Her aunt's face was buried in her hands. She was weeping afresh. Augusta set her teeth.

"I've served the customer!" she announced.

Augusta dropped several silver coins on the table as she spoke.

Aunt Sarah looked up dazedly.

"You—you have, Augusta? But—but"—she seemed to try to grapple with things—"but why are you here so early? What does it mean? After—

on, nor can you. So we've got to start it again, see?"

Aunt Sarah could only moan feebly. "But we can't—we can't! It is the end!"

"What? If we can serve one customer we can serve twenty, or two hundred. We're going to, too! I'm determined, aunt! I've got to do this as much for myself as for you! First we want a counter—we must have one. This table will have to do, draped with a piece of stuff."

She whirled back into the shop, not even giving her aunt time for a single feeble protest. The scattered rolls of material she piled quickly to one side. When there was a clear path for the table she returned.

"Now, aunt! If you will help me, please!"

"But—"

Augusta was perfectly firm. She compelled her aunt. Her back was to the wall, and she knew it. If only the whisper got about that the shop was in such a condition they could say good-bye to everything.

With the protesting assistance of Aunt Sarah, the table was dragged into the shop. It was very short. Augusta immediately suggested that the other one from the far room should be added to it. It was—because she saw to it. The two put together made a very fair apology for a counter when draped with pretty material.

"Now chairs—all you have downstairs here, aunt!" Augusta explained. "You can set them to the counter, and a rug or two will make it look more comfortable. We can't let the window stay as it is!"

Five minutes later Augusta was in the shop window, trying to repair the damage caused by the hasty withdrawal of the stands and other fixtures taken the previous evening.

Window-dressing was a new art to her, but fortunately she had an artistic eye. With the aid of a couple of chairs and odd boxes that she found in the shop she gradually made the place look more presentable.

"That's better!" Augusta commented, after surveying it from the street. "We can make alterations when we have time, but it doesn't look as though we've given up business. Now we want to make the shop look better. Serve any customers if they come in—I shan't be away long."

She was true to her word. In ten minutes she returned, followed by a boy. Between them they lugged half a dozen orange boxes.

"More camouflage!" Augusta commented. "We haven't got stands, but we're going to disguise these with pretty cretonne. They'll do until we get something better!"

And so the morning went on—the morning of the first day of Augusta's expulsion from school! It was very tiring work, but in a way she was grateful for it. For it kept her from brooding on what had happened.

They snatched a hasty lunch of the few eatables in the house, and then Augusta went out again. She returned this time even to be followed by a glass-fronted cabinet that two men placed on the temporary counter.

"It isn't really a show-case, but it will serve as one," Augusta explained. "I've often seen it in the second-hand shop, and wondered if it would ever sell. They're going to hire it to us for half a crown a week, and we can buy it if we like, aunt."

It was another improvement, and Augusta saw that it was quickly filled. Then she went upstairs to her aunt's other rooms, and found a second cabinet. That was introduced to the shop, and a



THE SERVANT'S REFUSAL!

"I won't carry her bags—it's not my job!" Judy Grigg protested. "That's the porter's work. I won't carry bags or do anything for a girl who said such things about me!"

Augusta listened, trying to still the raging bewilderment of her mind and attend to what was wanted.

Expelled! Disgraced! Her aunt believing she was ruined! The wickedness of Judy! All those things on her mind to worry her, and yet she must concentrate on serving a customer who was bringing the money they were to be so sorely in need of.

"Why, where's your counter gone, miss?" came the woman's startled ejaculation.

"Counter? Oh, making changes, you know!" said Augusta evasively. "Here—here are some very good sheets."

She selected them quickly from one of the few fixtures left, and showed them to her customer. She talked, trying to recall all she had ever heard a shop-assistant say. It needed a supreme effort of will, but Augusta was equal to the occasion.

She sold a pair of sheets, took the money, and wrapped up the parcel. It was the first time she had ever sold anything in her life.

"Good-morning, madam, and thank

after all those questions your head-mistress asked me yesterday, and the blundering replies—"

Augusta told her the truth.

Her voice was calm, almost hard. There was need for one of them to be strong. She had the mastery of herself now. The look in her eyes was almost the look of the old Augusta, who had scorned tears and sentiment. It was necessary now.

"Expelled!" gasped poor Aunt Sarah, and again the tears came rushing to her eyes. "Oh, Augusta—"

"It isn't finished—I'm resolved on that!" said Augusta.

"But, my dear, I—I am responsible for this. You were trying to help me. And—and I didn't know the truth, I pretended you had never been here—"

"Nothing could have saved me, in view of the evidence," Augusta said.

"But—"

"No. It's no time for crying for either of us, aunt," said the girl firmly, almost sharply, it sounded. "We've got to make the best of a bad job. I've come here to live with you, Aunt Sarah. I can't live if the business isn't going

nest of drawers followed it. Augusta draped them with cretonne to take away the "furniture look."

"Looks a bit queer, but they can still see it's a shop, aunt!" she commented, as she surveyed the place from the doorway. "I know what! I'll write a ticket to explain the changes—'The Art Store!'"

Augusta laboured with ticket, ink, and pen for nearly half an hour. The customers who were now coming into the shop more frequently, all had appreciative comments to make on the change.

Poor Mrs. Browne was trembling when the shop emptied again.

"Augusta! You've started things again!" she breathed. "I thought it was hopeless. But you—in such a terrible plight, dear—"

"Don't speak of that to-day, aunt, at any rate!" Augusta said. "Let us work and get things going again. Can you manage now for a little while? I want to have a look at the books."

But that was not Augusta's real reason for escaping from the shop.

In action she had sought relief from the crowding worries on her mind, but now it was over. She had started her aunt again—it was one load off her mind. But only one!

Business was not really brisk to-day. Was she going to prove a drag on her aunt, after all? Already Augusta was forgetting that she had helped to right matters so signally. Her proud nature demanded that she should be worthy of her keep. One was quite sufficient in the shop.

"But I must stay!" Augusta muttered. "Judy Grigg lives here! I am certain that she still has that note. She will probably keep it. A poor girl has a difficulty in passing a £5 note without arousing comment. I may still get it if—"

Then her thoughts went to Cliff House. It was a half-holiday. Would any of them come in?

No one had visited her in the punishment-room after the dreadful charge. Augusta did not know that they had been kept away. Perhaps they had all turned against her? She could not blame them if they had. The evidence was overwhelming.

"Augusta!" called her aunt's voice. She rose, thinking she must be needed to help with the serving, and walked forward with heavy, listless steps. But in the doorway of the shop she paused dead.

There was only one person in the shop—a girl of her own age.

Augusta knew her at once. Her heart seemed to miss a beat. She stood for a moment, painfully irresolute, the colour coming slowly to her cheeks. Then all her reserve suddenly deserted her, and the tears started unashamedly to her eyes.

With a strangled cry of joy Augusta rushed forward to grip the hand of smiling Peggy Preston!

Peggy Preston's Mission!

"PEGGY!"

"I have come as soon as possible, Augusta," said Peggy softly. "I felt I must. Oh, don't cry, dear, like that!"

Augusta had broken down completely. The tears were coursing down her cheeks. Her emotion seemed too great to permit her to speak.

It was a wonderful moment. Peggy knew it. It was something very strange and very touching in Augusta, whose manner had so often caused girls who did not know her to say that she was dignified and aloof. Peggy understood the

depth of feeling that brought those hot tears to Augusta's eyes.

"We couldn't see you yesterday after you were taken from us, Augusta, or we would have done then!" Peggy whispered.

Augusta was clinging to her with a grip that was almost painful.

"You couldn't?" She licked her lips, and tried to steady herself. "You were not allowed?" she said hoarsely.

"Yes," answered Peggy.

Again a silence. Augusta forced herself to go on.

"But you have come now, as soon as possible, Peggy. Why?"

"I had to," replied Peggy simply, "to hear the truth from your own lips. We—we all believe in you, Augusta."

Augusta caught her breath.

"You believe me, Peggy?"

"As though we could do anything else, Augusta," answered Peggy.

"Oh, Peggy!" gasped Augusta.

She had broken down again. She clung to Peggy and kissed her passionately. And in that moment, when her restraint was so utterly gone, Peggy

"And you, Peggy? You've come—you've risked everything!" she said. "I suppose that, because I have stayed, this shop is placed out of bounds?"

"Not really. But—"

"But there would be a fuss if you were caught coming here?"

"As though I care about that, Augusta!" Peggy answered simply. "I had to come. The others will come to see you, too, as soon as they can. Augusta, we know why you're staying, and we want to help you, too."

It was easy then for Augusta to tell her story, and she did so.

Peggy Preston listened with wide-open eyes, saying not a word. But she nodded as Augusta explained away so many of the things that had first caused the Fourth Form girls to think she was returning to her old ways.

Then she went on to speak of Judy Grigg charging her of stealing that five-pound note, whose disappearance led to her own tragic mistake.

"And that is why I am staying—to watch Judy," Augusta finished. "It is



DESPAIR! "Aunt, why isn't the shop open?" Augusta exclaimed. "How can I open the shop," came the pathetic reply, "when everything has gone, and I am ruined?"

came nearer to understanding the expelled girl than she had ever been before.

It was only after the sympathetic Aunt Sarah had urged them both into the living-room, and she had closed the door on them, that Augusta was able to find words again. She was still holding Peggy's hand, still staring into her blue eyes with that strange intensity.

"Peggy, I can't thank you for this; I won't even try!" she said, in a low voice. "I know you understand. The fact that you have come is enough. You'll never know how you have strengthened me, what courage you have given me to fight on. And the others?"

"Babs and the others would have come, too, if they had been able," Peggy answered quickly. "But they are in detention, almost the whole Form, Augusta."

"Why?" was the swift question.

"Because—well, because we were all furious that we hadn't been allowed to see you, Augusta," Peggy answered. "Everyone was upset and disagreeable. The mistresses were in bad tempers. It's been nothing but scenes all the morning, and detention for nearly everyone."

Peggy saw that Augusta understood, although she did not comment on it.

my only hope of ever proving my innocence. I have got the number of the note at last, and I can give you a copy. But you see my position, Peggy. Only by Judy's confession can I be cleared."

Peggy Preston leaned forward eagerly.

"We had guessed that part," she said. "We already know what a horrid girl Judy is, by what she was saying this morning. Perhaps we can really help you, Augusta. We'll try; I promise that! The girl must still have the note, of course! If only we could catch her with it—"

Peggy became almost excited.

Some of her hopes, Augusta knew, were too sanguine to be probable. But it was the spirit of what she said that affected Augusta. Peggy believed implicitly. Probably the others would as well.

"But there's one thing, Augusta," Peggy exclaimed, showing a sudden diffidence. "You've made this fine resolution to stay near the school, but in—in this little business—I don't quite know how to put it—"

"You are thinking of money?" said Augusta.

"Yes," Peggy hesitated again. "I

don't want you to take what I am going to say in the wrong way at all. Until things are better, until you can find your feet or we prove your innocence, I wonder if you would let some of us make that five pounds loss good—"

Augusta laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"No, thanks, Peggy!"

"But, Augusta, you know—"

"I'm sorry. I know you want to help me," said Augusta quietly. "I couldn't think of it, Peggy. I've been thrown out, and I've chosen this. I'm going to work for my living until I can come back. If I can't—well, I must go on working. I've already decided that."

She rose to her feet

"And now, Peggy, I can't let myself keep you any longer," she said. "I'd love you to stay all day. But I can't help feeling that you've risked more to come here than you've told me."

Peggy was still worrying.

"But, Augusta, what sort of work? In times like these—"

"Shop work, Peggy," Augusta said, with assumed lightness. "Fortunately, Miss Primrose insists on all of us learning something that might get our living if necessary, and I've chosen needlework. I'm not half as bad at it as I used to be. I can get enough sewing to keep myself."

She accompanied Peggy to the door, self-sacrificingly insistent. Peggy knew that Augusta would have liked her to stay; that nothing would have pleased her better. But she was thinking of Peggy, not of herself.

"There's no one about, and your bike's still there, Peggy," she said, after a look up and down the street. "I can't thank you enough for coming and cheering me up like this." Her lips quivered, and she knew that she had lost her self-control again. "Good-bye!" she said huskily.

Peggy Preston rode away on her bicycle. There was a lump in her throat. She tried to blink the misty tears from her eyes.

Augusta was innocent! She knew it as an absolute truth that nothing could ever shake now. And she was suffering. Only Peggy had been permitted to have a real glimpse of the depth of the proud girl's feeling.

"And we'll do something for her—we must!" Peggy vowed to herself. "Perhaps some work could be put in her way. Augusta would do that. I know how proud she is about money. She'd starve—actually starve—rather than accept charity. And we'll watch that horrid girl Judy. We'll convict her—"

She drove so savagely at the pedals that the machine leapt suddenly forward. It was proof of the intensity of her own feeling.

Peggy was in the country lanes at last, but now she did not relax the fierce energy with which she was riding. Another reason for haste had come to her, and she knew that it would be unwise to dally any longer. For, as Augusta had half-guessed, Peggy had done a very reckless thing in coming to see the expelled girl.

She had broken detention!

Yes, that was what Peggy had omitted to say when she said that the others were confined to the detention-room. She should have been there with them for an hour that afternoon.

But she did not regret, even now, the impulse that had made her ride from the school in defiance of Miss Steel's orders of the morning. She had been amply repaid by seeing Augusta.

Augusta was innocent! She could tell the school.

She reached Cliff House at last, and
THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 143.

descended from her machine. Piper, being in an obliging mood, took it from her and wheeled it to the shed. Peggy went breathlessly into the school, and encountered Miss Steel almost immediately.

"Peggy Preston!"

"Yes, Miss Steel?" said Peggy, knowing that she looked guilty.

"Where have you been?"

"Out—on my bicycle, Miss Steel," said Peggy lamely.

"Where?"

Peggy gave no answer.

"You are apparently still in a disaffected mood, as you were when I

Gwen Cook, and homely but stubborn Annabel Hichens.

Marcia, Nancy, and Lady Hetty were very prominent amongst their number.

Silence then until Miss Steel had closed the door. And that was the signal for an outburst from a wondering chorus.

"Peggy! Wherever have you been?" "Why did you cut detention, Peggy? What did Miss Steel say?"

Peggy looked round, and knew that she could trust all of those still in detention, for obvious reasons. They were the very girls whose indignation had earned them the longest punishments.

She told all where she had been, and most of what Augusta had said to her. She told them that Augusta was innocent, and that the real thief was Judy Grigg, the school maid.

Barbara Redfern's arm rested affectionately on her shoulder as she finished.

"Peggy, you're a brick!" she declared. "Fancy bolting from detention like that and going to see Augusta! How you must have cheered her up! I think it's ripping of you!"

"And we know for certain now!" said Clara Trevelyan. "Augusta's been wrongly condemned. 'Oh, why can't we convince Miss Prim?'"

"We know," said Babs, "because we understand Augusta, and are willing to take her word. If only we could get hold of that five-pound note that Judy must have stolen—"

"Yes," chimed in Mabs. "Miss Primrose said that that was what made it blackest of all. No one has ever set eyes on that note that Augusta claimed, except Judy!"

They fell into an eager discussion that quite made them forget any detention tasks that had been set.

Some of them were for going to Judy Grigg and trying to compel her to own up. But Babs did not believe it possible.

"Augusta accused the girl," she said. "What happened? She wasn't believed. Nor should we be, because we're only acting on her word. But if we let things go the girl is certain to betray herself sooner or later."

They had to admit that that was true, little as they wanted to, and it brought another problem to the fore. How was Augusta going to live in the meanwhile.

"Miss Primrose has practically put the shop out of bounds," Babs said dejectedly. "We can run the risk and shop there, of course. But we can't get others to go. And we know now that the business can't be going very well."

"Why?"

"Because Augusta has recently been trying to help her aunt—getting us to buy things, taking those parcels there last Friday night, and perplexing us so. Is there any way in which we can help her to show that we still trust her?"

They couldn't think of anything then. Detention was over, and Babs, Mabs, and Bessie were sitting at a not very cheerful tea, when Peggy at last had an idea, and came rushing to them.

"Cookery aprons!" she cried, even as she entered the door. "I mean, perhaps Augusta could make some. Listen! You know we all had the soiled ones this morning, don't you?"

"Yes," nodded Babs quickly. "The clean ones weren't there."

"Well, you know why?" Peggy rushed on. "There's been an accident at the laundry with some strong chemicals, or something, and all our aprons that were at the wash have been spoilt. Miss Primrose usually orders them from London—"



THIRD FORM NOTES!

Compiled by
MADGE STEVENS
(Third Form.)

Angelica Jelly, of the Fifth, has this week been made a "Beatrice in the Bag" by herself. It is a Third-Form punishment, as you probably know, awarded to those who cannot behave themselves in our Common-room. Someone started the stupid rumour that we had been to Angelica's study and borrowed one of those ridiculous baskets that she makes, and she came down to see us in a dreadful frame of mind. After her head had been securely tied in the bag for a few minutes, however, she was frightfully repentant!

The Brownies are doing exceedingly well just as present. We challenged the Danesford Hall Brownies to some games last Saturday, and beat them easily. It was really awfully funny about Elsie Brane. Elsie always wants to be so nice, and always wants to be teaching us something. She wouldn't play the games properly, but stopped at all the ponds she saw, and kept on talking about a "jawcrack," or something like that. Judge our amusement when she overbalanced and fell into one of the ponds, and came up with an awfully funny-looking thing sticking to her dress! We pretended that we thought it was a jawcrack, and we all kept on thanking her for going in to get it for us, and I believe she really thought that we believed that she had jumped in on purpose. Elsie was so confused that she could hardly say anything—and that's something for Elsie!

Jessie Squire is at present very annoyed with us. Jessie, as you doubtless know, is very dignified, and down on japing. Recently she called us barbarians. To prove to her exactly what we should be like if we really were barbarians, we acted the part for twenty-four hours. Jessie was treated to a crowd of "savages" at bedtime, and after breakfast, and whenever she appeared in the Common-room. It was great to see Doris Redfern as the Chief Gobble-Gobble. I can tell you, and she acted the part rippingly! Although Jessie is still hardly on speaking terms with us at present, I think she realises that we are not as bad as we might be!

sentenced you to detention!" Miss Steel exclaimed. "You are three-quarters of an hour late. You will go to the detention-room, Peggy, and remain there until the end of the time, and write two hundred lines this evening. Perhaps that will impress something on your mind. Come with me!"

Miss Steel led the way to the detention-room, and opened the door.

"Those girls in here for one hour may rise and leave!" Miss Steel announced. "There are ten of you, I believe. The rest are in for full time. Now, Peggy, to your seat!"

There was a general scuffling as ten girls rose eagerly to their feet. They were those who had not felt so strongly in their belief in Augusta, and included

"And gets a stupid, skinny thing for me!" ejaculated Bessie.

"Yes. But what do you think of this, Babs? Supposing Miss Primrose gave permission for Augusta to make a fresh supply? At least twenty-five would be wanted, and the laundry have got to pay for them."

"It would be work. Just what Augusta wants!" breathed Mabs.

"But Miss Primrose would never give work to Augusta—an expelled girl!" said Babs in dismay.

"I think there's a way of getting over that, Babs. Anyway, I'm going to have a try!"

With that excited remark, Peggy Preston had sped away from the study, leaving Babs and Mabs staring at each other with mingled excitement and dismay.

"It would be fine if—only it were possible!" breathed Mabs.

"Yes. Things are often wanted in the school. Only last week new gymnasium dresses were got for the Third," Babs nodded. "I'd never thought of that sort of thing before. But what can Peggy say? How can she convince Miss Primrose?"

They hardly touched their tea in the ten minutes that followed. Then came a sudden patter of steps, a glad shout, and Peggy whirled into the study again.

"I've done it!" she cried.

"What?" echoed Babs and Mabs, springing to their feet.

"Miss Primrose says, I can get a specimen apron made," was Peggy's delighted explanation. "If it's good, she'll order fifty of them!"

"Never!"

"But—but Augusta——" Babs began, in amazement.

"I didn't have to mention Augusta's name, thank goodness!" said Peggy happily. "I told Miss Primrose it was a friend of mine, and I'd rather not mention any names, and—and she never guessed at all. Hurrah! I've got permission to go down to-night and have the specimen apron made!"

"Well done, Peggy!"

"Bravo!"

Babs and Mabs joined Peggy, and started a triumphal dance—of a sort—in Study No. 4.

With Peggy's Help!

TEA was over at the Cash Drapery Stores, and Mrs. Browne had gone back into the shop.

Augusta Anstruther-Browne still sat on one of the rickety chairs that had not been good enough to take into the shop. They had had to hold their cups and stand the teapot on the floor. The meal had been very frugal, and hardly satisfying. But Augusta was thinking of none of those things as she sat staring blankly across the room.

She was meditating again on the helplessness of her position. Most of all, she was thinking about Judy—Judy Grigg, who alone could clear her name.

Supposing Judy refused to speak! Supposing the trade was poor, and there was not enough money to support the two of them! Supposing she couldn't get the work that would enable her to earn her own living!

She caught her breath at the thought. Her staring eyes were resting on the door. Then she became aware of something suddenly that she had not noticed before.

The door was being opened very slowly and carefully.

Without making a sound, Augusta rose to her feet and took a step forward.

A hand appeared. Augusta seized it,

and jerked it strongly. The figure of a girl was whirled into the room.

"Oh!" she gasped.

It was Judy Grigg, the very girl she had been thinking about!

"Yes—I expected you!" said Augusta grimly. "You didn't know I was here, I suppose!"

The girl was gazing at her with terrified eyes. It was a complete and utter surprise for Judy, who had made sure that Mrs. Browne was in the shop.

"I—I—"

"Are you going to confess everything?" demanded Augusta.

She stepped closer, and her burning



SECOND FORM NOTES!

Compiled by
BUNNY, PIP and TEDDY BEAR.
(Second Form.)

We're so glad that Barbara has asked us to rite a little artical for the "Weekly," because we've had a most exsiting week of it.

First of all, Frances Barritt, of the Sixth, has been trying to take us in hand again, and you know what a silly old duffer Frances is! She got permission to take us for one of our usual walks, and started off by being awfully stern. We pretended to be very fritened, but after a little while Bunny got very thirsty, and we had to stop for her to have a drink at a cottage. Then Pip suddenly fell over, and couldn't walk any more, and Frances diddnt know what to do, and started to carry her. Then two or three others got stones in their boots, and had to stop to get them out, and all the time Pip kept groaning, and telling Frances not to hold her so tight.

Of course, it was all a joke, really. We weren't thirsty, and we diddnt have stones in our shoes, and Pip fell over purposely, and wassent hurt at all. But we didn't tell Frances until she got us all back to Cliff House, and then she was so hot and out of breff that she simply cooldnt run after us at all!

Miss Scott's mother (Miss Scott is our mistress, you know) has been rather ill, and we collected up and managed to send her a nice bunch of grapes. Miss Scott was awfully puzzled to find out who had sent them, but she finely reckgned Trixie Forte's riting. She was so pleased that she let us all off our impositions. But we diddnt do it for that, of course.

Someone said the other day that Bessie Bunter was such an awful dunse that she might be put in the Second Form, and ever since then we've had a ripping game called "Bessie in the Second." One of us put a lot of cushions under her dress, and then blows out her cheeks, and puts on an old pair of glasses, and pretends to be Bessie, and we have a simply fine time. It would be funny if Bessie really was put in the Second! (But not for Bessie, I'm afraid!—Editress, "C. H. Weekly.")

eyes peered into those of the other. Judy shrank back from her, and covered against the wall.

"I don't know what you mean," she quavered.

"Yes, you do! I mean that you stole a five-pound note from here!" Augusta retorted. "You took it to Cliff House, and tried to hide it in a book. I saw you! You can't deny it to me!"

"I—I do!" muttered Judy.

"What!"

"I—I have denied it all the time," Judy went on, forcing the words. "I—I didn't know you were here. But you sha'n't talk to me like that, anyway—you, a girl expelled for stealing!"

Augusta's eyes blazed. She leapt forward in a sudden passion, and gripped the girl's arm.

"Help! Oh, help!" shrieked Judy. Aunt Sarah came running from the shop.

"This is the thief who stole the note, aunt!" Augusta said, her voice trembling. "This is the girl who could clear my name if she would only confess! And I'll make her——"

"Oh, Mrs. Browne, stop her!" cried Judy fearfully.

Poor Aunt Sarah was shaking like a jelly.

"Augusta, we must be reasonable about this. You have alarmed Judy——"

"I caught her creeping in here, perhaps to steal something else!" said Augusta triumphantly.

"I wasn't! I was coming to help Mrs. Browne!" Judy retorted, seeing her chance at last. "She's often asked me to come down and give her a hand. This is how I am treated, and—there!"

The heavy tread that came from the passage caused an utter change in the girl. She gave a sudden wrench, and tore her hand free. In another moment she had jerked open the door and fled.

Augusta heard her trembling voice reciting her woes to some stranger outside.

"I'll see her," said a gruff voice.

Steps came back along the passage, and the door was opened. A coarse, burly man, whom Augusta had already been told was Judy's step-father, stood gazing at her.

"So you've been accusing my daughter of bein' a thief?" he asked, in an ugly tone.

"She is!" retorted Augusta.

"What?"

Augusta stood her ground, and returned look for look—with interest. She could do it! And this was no ordinary quarrel. It was all a very terrible business for Augusta.

"You better not say it agin!" blustered the man.

"It's the truth!" said Augusta doggedly.

The man stamped his foot in a fury.

"It isn't the truth!" he shouted.

"More'n that, I won't have such words agin my daughter—especially from a girl wot's been expelled from her school! Don't you never let me 'ear you sayin' such things agin!"

"And what can you do to stop me?" said Augusta coldly. "I know. I saw, too! That girl cannot look you in the face and say——"

The man stamped his foot again. Augusta's boldness only drove him to a greater, if impotent, anger.

"I'll 'ave you arrested if you says it agin—that's what I'll do!" he roared.

"It's libel—deferation of carricket! You sha'n't say such things against my dorter to try and make yourself look innocent—so there!"

He brought one huge fist into the open palm of his other hand with a resounding smack. "What's more, I'll see this shop is shut up, and both of you bundled into the street!"

Oh, yes, I could do it if I liked. I'm a builder, and I know a thing or two. I could get this place condemned as unsafe and un'althy if I only tried!"

"Oh!" moaned Aunt Sarah at that.

"There—now you understands!" exclaimed the rough man. "You've insulted my dorter, and you won't do it agin! Don't you never let me 'ear you utter another word aginst her!"

Saying that, he slammed the door, and Augusta heard him stamping away along the passage.

"Oh, poor Augusta!" muttered Mrs. Browne.

Augusta turned.

"You believe me, aunt, don't you? You know that Judy was the thief?"

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A GUIDE FOR SHOPPERS!

By Freda Foote.

BUTCHER.—A man who wears a blue apron, keeps on sharpening a knife, shouts out, "Buy, buy, buy!" and sells you meat if you want any.

Steer Bessie quickly past this shop, or she will want you to buy three of those nice little chops over there, as she could cook a very tasty supper if she had them.

PASTRYCOOK.—The gentleman who usually places his wife or daughters to serve in the cold shop, and stops in the warm kitchen himself. He places far more delightful things on view than you are ever likely to be able to buy. Bessie, having an artistic eye, likes the pretty colours in his window. (This is the nicest way I can put it.) There are six pastrycooks in Courtfield, and when you are out with Bessie you will find that there are six too many.

GROCER.—A man who keeps a shop, and sells sultanas, raisins, currants, candied peel, suet, flour, pickles and chutney, tinned sausages, tongues in glasses, and many other things that Bessie Bunter feels she "simply must have."

POST-OFFICE.—In Friardale this is a little place presided over by two young ladies. In Courtfield there are four of them, and a tired gentleman who weighs parcels with an aristocratic air, and sometimes manages to hurl them into a basket, four yards distant, at the third or fourth attempt.

At the post office you can buy stamps with very pretty colours, but you will find it expensive if you like other colours than green, red, and brown. Stamp paper can be obtained gratis (if you are lucky!) for use on cuts and scratches.

Bessie Bunter will have to linger some time whilst she makes inquiries concerning a remittance that has been held up in the post.

GREENGROCER.—A tradesman who sells fruit and nuts, and vegetables of all sizes, shapes, and colours. Bessie can always tell you the name of the particular apples (usually the largest and most expensive) that can be eaten at the rate of one a day to keep the doctor away, and you will be allowed, if you desire, to buy a week's supply for two people.

CHEMIST.—A gentleman who has large and pretty coloured bottles in his window. Bessie Bunter often develops a hacking cough when near a chemist, and can tell you that the best and most reliable remedy will be found in black-currant jujubes.

DRAPER'S SHOP.—The home of the gentleman who sells all sorts of the clothing that you wish you could afford, and displays it tantalisingly in his window. Bessie Bunter will pause here to admire all the largest and most vivid hats, and will pass on to the dresses, and point to each in turn, and say: "How should I look in that one?" Clara usually answers: "Dreadful!" or "Worse than ever!" But this grows monotonous in time. You want to think of something fresh.

POLICE-STATION.—A charming and highly desirable brick-built residence, which has a notice-board outside, on which are posted the details of all the things that careless people have lost, and the amounts of money that they are willing to pay for their recovery. Bessie Bunter will immediately become very keen on helping the careless people, and insist on searching the pavement outside the police-station. All the way home she will be pointing to everything that she sees, and exclaiming: "I say, is that a gold watch or a piece of orange peel?" and that sort of thing.

"I do—oh, I do!" quavered Mrs. Browne. "I suspected her at once. But I was trying to warn you. I know how she always runs to her father, and what a dreadful, bullying fellow he is. He has bullied me before when I have complained about Judy."

Augusta sank into a chair in black despair.

Judy had the whip-hand—unless she gave herself away now. Not a shred of proof against her, except that she lived in the house from whence the money was stolen! More than that, her step-father could make threats about closing the business; threats that Aunt Sarah believed he could carry out.

She trembled slightly.

Could she ever hope to prove her innocence, after all?

Another thought came. She had still to get work.

If she could not earn her living in Courtfield, she might have to leave the district, after all. Work or starve—there was nothing else to Augusta's mind, no other course!

"Augusta, my dear!" called her aunt's voice.

She rose listlessly, and went to the door. The sound of a voice started her instantly from her preoccupation. She ran forward eagerly to meet, for the second time, Peggy Preston!

"Peggy! Again?" Augusta breathed. "Oh, what are you risking to come like this?"

"Nothing at all this time, Augusta!" said Peggy cheerfully. "I've got some news that will please you, I think. You

said that you wouldn't mind working for money, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Augusta doubtfully; "but—"

"Listen, and I'll tell you," said Peggy; and then she explained.

Neither Augusta nor her aunt spoke a word until she had explained and unpacked a parcel. On the counter that consisted of tables and "camouflage," she spread out a cookery-apron that she had brought with her.

"There! Fifty like that is what Miss Primrose is willing to buy," Peggy finished. "She must buy them somewhere, because the laundry pay compensation in money. She said that I could place the contract if she approved the sample; it's simply ripping of her to have given me a free hand without asking questions. Something a bit daintier than this, she said." Peggy looked up at Augusta. "So I wondered if you would care—"

"Care!" ejaculated Augusta. "Oh, Peggy, it's just what I want to do!"

She was grateful and enthusiastic, and so her was her aunt, except that she thought it was rather a lot to try to do in a week. But Augusta laughed at that.

"We can do it—I can do it myself!" Augusta vowed. "There's nothing like trying. You want a sample, Peggy? Could you, by any chance—"

"Wait for it?" Peggy exclaimed. "Oh, rather, Augusta! I can show her a sample to-night!"

"Casement-cloth was found, and Aunt Sarah recollected that a piece of the very same material had been offered her

at a remarkably cheap price that morning. She would be able to see the traveller on the morrow, and obtain it on short credit—perhaps a fortnight.

"And that'll be ample!" Augusta exclaimed, busily working out figures. "Why, I'm sure we can make these special aprons much cheaper than they are in the shops if we only try!"

The pattern was very quickly cut out, and the machine got ready. Augusta turned the handle with a skill that she could never have showed in the old days, but her dressmaking apprenticeship for a short period in London had not been wasted on her.

Peggy tried the apron on when it was finished at last, and capered delightedly.

"Miss Primrose will love it!" she exclaimed. "Pack it up, Augusta, and I'll run back with it at once! I'll see if I can send you word to-night. Could I telephone you in any way?"

"Yes," said Augusta. "To the call-box at the station. I will wait there between eight and nine."

"Another thing, Augusta," said Peggy, in low tones, "we're all going to watch Judy, and we feel that we'll be able to do something, sooner or later, for you. Good-bye!"

Augusta felt the lump rise in her throat again. She muttered her thanks as she gripped Peggy's hand. Still trusted by all!

It seemed ages to eight o'clock. Well before the time Augusta was lingering outside the call-box at Courtfield Station. The specimen apron must now be in Miss Primrose's hands. Would she approve it? Would she ask further questions that would bring to light the identity of the person who was offering to make them?

Augusta could only wait.

Tr-r-r-ring!

It was the telephone-bell at last!

Augusta leapt into the box, clapped the door shut behind her, and snatched the receiver eagerly to her ear.

"Yes, yes? Who is that, please?"

"It is Peggy speaking. Who is that?"

"Augusta, Peggy! Can you hear me?"

"Yes. Miss Primrose has approved the specimen, and thinks they are awfully cheap. She wants fifty of them made. A week's time will do—"

Augusta was suddenly dizzy. Fifty! She had the order, after all—thanks to Peggy. She could earn her living—yes, and be doing something for all those who had been her chums in the Fourth at Cliff House. Her head seemed to swim. She hardly knew what grateful words she poured into the mouthpiece.

Then back to the shop again, like a girl walking on air!

Considering that she was but a girl, it would be a splendid week's work. The profit accruing to them would be a handsome one if only she put her back into it and worked hard. And perhaps other orders would follow! Expelled—yes; but still the same independent Augusta! She would have to rely on no one's charity. She could still support herself!

There was enough stuff in the shop for a start to be made. Augusta did not waste a minute. She had kept a paper pattern of the approved garment, and, with that as a guide, she could cut out all the others.

Ten o'clock—eleven—midnight!

Working at one of the tables dragged into the living-room as soon as the shop was closed, Augusta was still busily stitching, regardless of the hour.

Past twelve o'clock now—and a figure lingered, unseen and unsuspected, in the darkened passage outside Augusta's work-room. If the expelled girl had chanced

to open the door she would have recognised the cunning, thin-featured face at once.

But Judy Grigg, listening to the droning song of the hand machine, did not fear discovery. She tried to peep through the keyhole, and she listened outside the door. But it did not satisfy her curiosity. And at last, tired and growing chilly, she tiptoed back to the stairs that led to her own room.

"I wonder what!" Judy was muttering to herself. "What ever can it be that she is doing? I ought to know. I—I— Oh, I'm afraid of that girl, I know! I'm in an awful muddle, and her being here, right in my house, is the worst of it! Oh, I only wish that she had gone right away! I should have felt so much safer then!"

Judy's Guilty Secret!

THE days that followed were memorable days for all concerned, but most of all were they memorable for Judy Grigg.

She was a thief, and she knew it. The knowledge was always with her to fill her mind with the dread of discovery. She could never forget her guilt and the recollection of what she had done.

Now that there was that five-pound note in her possession she realised, at last, the enormity of what she had done.

Eavesdropping, aroused by curiosity at Augusta's late visit to the shop on the Monday night, had provided the temptation to Judy.

She had reflected what she could do with such an enormous sum as five pounds—hats, dresses, moving pictures. Greed and selfishness had proved too much for her. She had taken it!

To be suspected at once!

Since then she had not known a moment's peace of mind. She had not expected the falsehoods that she told to Miss Primrose to be believed; but they were. Eager to hide, terrified lest the knowledge should become public property, she had hidden behind a lie, and had allowed Augusta to be expelled.

And now what was her position?

Augusta, who lived in the same house, knew for certain that she was a guilty girl. Thanks to her father's threats, Augusta had said no more to her. But it did not banish the burning look in Augusta's eyes whenever they met, a look that scared Judy more thoroughly every time she saw it.

And at Cliff House School, where she worked by day?

It was as bad there! Nearly all the girls in the Fourth Form seemed to believe in Augusta. She could gather that from the chance conversations that she overheard. She knew that they were all hoping that Augusta's innocence might yet be proved.

By her own capture!

And how easy that capture might be, after all! She still had the five-pound note—a difficult thing for a poor girl to try and change. First she had hidden it in the little attic room used by the maids, only to find Bessie Bunter there the same day, prying into everything!

She had hidden it next in her own room at home, but to what purpose? Augusta was there—determined Augusta. Not knowing the expelled girl's character, Judy had feared that the very first thing Augusta must do would be to search her room and discover it. So worried and anxious had she been that day that she had nearly been dismissed for negligent work by the indignant matron.

Since then she had carried the tell-tale money hidden in her dress, but she could not banish knowledge. Sometimes she

seemed to hear the crinkly paper rustle as she walked. Would the others hear it, too, and spring on her with the sudden accusation that they knew where it was?

And she was being watched by everyone—she knew it!

Jane, the maid, who was her immediate supervisor, seemed always on her heels. In desperation she had tried to hide the note somewhere in the garden, to wait there until the hue-and-cry should be passed. It did not seem at all strange that Babs and Mabs should stroll up at the very moment that she got there, putting her to guilty flight.

She hid the note in a cupboard, after that, fearing that Babs and Mabs might follow and accuse her. Babs and Mabs did nothing; but Boker, routing in the cupboard a few minutes later, all but found the missing money.

What had she done next? Judy shuddered often as she recalled that. She had thought of the desperate expedient of trying to change the note at Courtfield post-office at the busy hour, when they would be little likely to remember who had paid it in. She had been on the point of producing it when the face of Augusta appeared outside the window. Her trembling hand had bought a penny stamp instead!

A thief!

And it seemed to Judy that there was some fate that mocked her and thwarted her at every turn. That note, if found

on her, would yet prove Augusta's innocence, and she could not get rid of the note! Was her discovery just being delayed?

Most of all she feared Augusta, the girl whom she had to meet so frequently. In the days that had passed Augusta had been working with a feverish energy that almost appalled her. No matter how late she went to bed, she could hear the drone of the sewing-machine. Early though she had to rise to get to Cliff House for her day's work, the sewing-machine was going as soon as she awoke.

And Augusta was changed already.

Her face was pale and thinner, due, Judy knew, to overwork. Augusta was finding her task a heavy one to her unaccustomed hands. But it told Judy something else as well. It spoke of a relentless determination on Augusta's part to do something that Judy could not yet fathom. A relentless determination! And how it still showed in Augusta's eyes whenever they met!

"It's her—it's her that I fear so much!" Judy muttered on the Sunday night, when they come into contact more than ever that day. "If she'd only been sent home the others would have forgotten about her, and it would have been all right. But she's stayed here, at this very house!"

She tossed restlessly on her bed.

"They don't forget her at the school, either!" she went on. "All those girls

The QUEEREST THINGS AT CLIFF HOUSE

By MARJORIE HAZELDENE.

AS I intend to write about some of the things only known to very few, I must necessarily be guarded in what I say. I hope, therefore, that if I do not satisfy your curiosity on every point, you will understand why.

From all the queer but little-known things at Cliff House, I think that the queerest thing of all is probably a book called "The Head Monitress' Journal."

Very few girls in the school know that such a thing even exists; but it does. I myself have been permitted to gaze on the cover, but no more! Even monitresses may not peep inside! Many girls have been longing to know what its secrets are, but they have never found out.

The book was started eighteen years ago by one of the earliest head monitresses at Cliff House, and her first entry in the book records a mystery clinging round some foreigners who appeared in the neighbourhood at the time, and whose strange actions cannot be accounted for even now. From that the idea grew.

Each head monitress has entered in it, at the end of her term of office, the most amazing, the most mysterious, and the most unusual happenings that have come to her notice. She writes with perfect frankness about everything that she has seen or heard. Ghosts, and rumours of ghosts, figure quite largely in the book. Secrets there are, too, which will never become public property.

Even mistresses have no right to examine this journal, for ten years ago Miss Primrose officially recognised its existence, and passed a rule concerning its custody.

Stella Stone, its present owner, would only tell me one thing about it, and that is that in due course the names of Augusta Anstruther-Browne and Grace Kelwyn will figure in its pages.

Something of quite a different character is the old "Cliff House Key" that now hangs in Miss Primrose's study. This, a few years ago, caused a great sensation in the school when it was discovered in a dusty old drawer. And no wonder! This is the curious legend engraved in tiny characters on the heavy piece of metal:

"Whoso shall find ye one lock for which I was constructed and fashioned shall indeed be richer in bodye and mynde, and shall solve ye secret to which a loyal man did spend hys whole lyfe."

There have been heaps of guesses as to what this secret may be. Some people now think that it is only a gigantic bluff on the part of someone who once lived at Cliff House. Others believe that there is some secret about the key itself—that it could only be unscrewed in some way it would be found to contain a parchment chart, and I must say that the key has a very hollow ring about it.

There are also some mysterious Chinese characters engraved on a certain part of the wall in the vaults, but as yet they have not been translated. I wonder what they will mean?

Lastly there is the "Sixth Form Private Museum."

Most girls at Cliff House know of the existence of a locked cupboard in the monitress' Common-room. There is no real secret about it, but the monitresses themselves, and their especial friends and near relations, peep inside.

I can tell you, however, that if you were allowed to have a look you would see a most extraordinary collection of things, and would think that most of them were jokes. But they are not! They are the things that have been made from time to time by girls of Cliff House—things adjudged to be so humorous that they deserved a special place at the school!

who were her friends—why, they still believe in her! They come down here to see her, although it's forbidden. I tried to drop a hint to that Miss Steel about them, but she nearly boxed my ears. And—and I'm sure that Augusta even went up to the school the other night after I saw her putting that inch tape in her pocket. She's with them, still telling that story about me! They're more sure than ever. Oh, I must get rid of the money somehow! If I don't—"

She trembled in her bed, and was a long while before fresh thoughts came to her.

"It might not be so dangerous if I could get a job away from Cliff House, and—and if Augusta had to leave the neighbourhood!" she murmured. "But I don't know whether it can be done. I don't! Oh, I don't know what I'm going to do!"

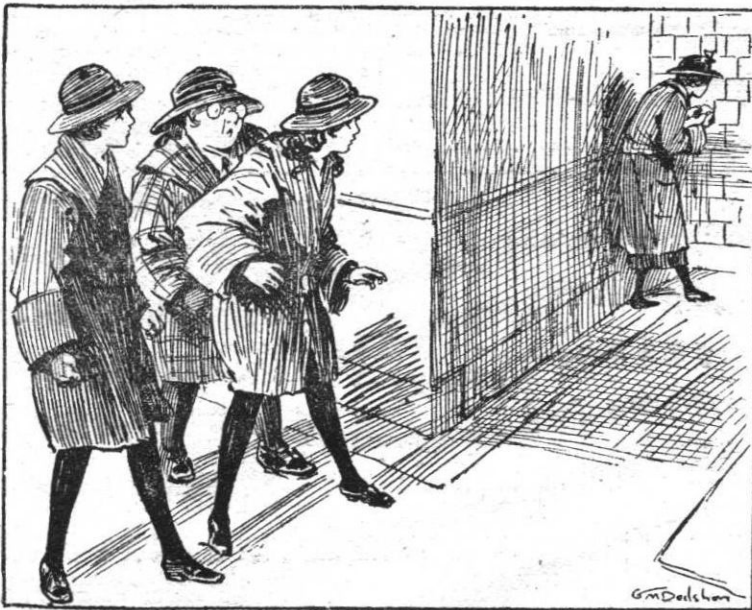
She was still groaning when she went to sleep, and all that night her active mind dreamed of discovery. It haunted her on Monday. She was late in rising on Tuesday morning, and late getting to

Connie was not a monitress these days. Disgrace had fallen on her, and she was robbed of the power that she had used so badly. Instead, she was trying to appear a very different girl, and constantly entertaining all those who would visit her, in an effort to win back the respect of the school. Judy went off eagerly on the errand at the end of her day's work, knowing that Connie tipped generously.

As she was hurrying for the village an idea came to her, an idea that caused her cunning face to shine with pleasure.

An opportunity to get rid of the note, after all!

She knew that "Miss Jackson" must be known to Uncle Clegg as a rich girl, and one to be studied. Supposing she passed over the five-pound note in payment of Connie's bill, mentioning her name at the same time? No questions would be asked at all, and Connie would never know. Nor would anyone else! And the Treasury notes that she received in exchange could be easily disposed of without arousing comment.



RUN TO EARTH! "There!" muttered Barbara Redfern, in a faint whisper. The girls could just see the back of Judy Grigg's figure. She seemed to be levering at the wall with a knife!

her work at the school. And after breakfast, what a shock it gave her to be suddenly stopped by Bessie Bunter in the passage!

"I say, Judy," Bessie said, "has Augusta sent me any message? I'm expecting to hear—"

But just at that moment Babs came up. "As though Augusta would send a message by Judy!" she exclaimed scornfully. She turned suddenly on the servant. "Have you decided yet that an innocent girl has suffered long enough, Judy? Because, you know quite well that—"

"I don't understand what you mean!" muttered Judy, with all the defiance she could assume, and she walked away, to meet Peggy Preston, whose eyes she could never face.

Scared and "jumpy" was Judy all day. It was a real relief for her when Connie Jackson, the rich girl of the Sixth, gave her a pound note at tea-time, and asked her, as a special favour, to go to Uncle Clegg's in the village and buy her some pastries and other dainties.

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She stopped instantly, and, after a searching look to see that there was no one who could watch her, drew into the shelter of the hedge. From the pocket of her skirt she withdrew the five-pound note, already soiled and crumpled from its frequent hidings.

Judy's heart beat faster as she hurried on to the village. At last—at last!

She came to the shop, and hesitated. Then she drew a deep breath, and, mustering all her courage, went inside. She forced herself to smile at the genial old tradesman, mentioned Connie Jackson's name, and started to give her order.

It was a big order, and came to well over ten shillings. Connie was not sparing money in these days. Those girls who could be wooed by extravagant and generous hospitality were being courted diligently by Connie Jackson of the Sixth.

"Twelve shillings, please!" said Uncle Clegg, tying up the cake-boxes at last.

Judy laid the five-pound note on the counter.

Uncle Clegg glanced at it in astonishment.

"A five-pound note!" he exclaimed. "Deary me, I never did like these things! So many forgeries about that one does have to be so careful."

"It's from Miss Jackson," said Judy hoarsely.

She felt an inward quivering. Was the blood coming to her face? She did not know where to look or what to say.

"A five-pound note!" mused Uncle Clegg, crinkling it between his fingers. "I'll give you a receipt for it, young lady, but you'll have to wait until I've cashed it at the bank to-morrow before I can give you the change. What is your name and address, please?"

The shop seemed to spin to Judy's startled eyes. To-morrow! The bank! Her name and address! Would the bank have been given the number of the missing note by Augusta? They must have it! And such a crumpled note would be suspected at once! Terror seized her. She almost ran from the shop. It was only dire necessity that gave her some semblance of calmness.

"Miss Jackson sent something s-s-smaller if—if you couldn't change that!" stammered Judy.

"Oh?" said Uncle Clegg. He seemed to give her a very severe look. "I'd rather not change it if she doesn't mind. What else have you got?"

"A pound note," whispered Judy, and placed it on the counter with a trembling hand.

"That's better," said Uncle Clegg, opening the till. "Eight shillings change for Miss Jackson. You'd better watch how you're carrying that five-pound note, miss. You'll lose it if you hold it like that!"

"It—it's all—all right!" stammered Judy. "I—I'll put it in my purse! Thank you very much!"

So agitated was she that she nearly went without the cake-boxes. And how she still trembled! She went through the shop door feeling that Uncle Clegg must have guessed her secret, to stop dead at three figures she saw!

Babs, Mabs, and Bessie were crossing the road, coming straight towards the shop.

Only for an instant Judy paused, it is true. But in that moment she knew that the blood had come to her face in a flush of guilt. Then she went hurrying on, not even looking at the chums of Study No. 4.

Straight along the lane and round the first corner. And then Judy, careless of what happened to the pastries in the boxes, heedless of the wrath to come from Connie Jackson, ran as she had never run before in her life.

"That silly old man will tell them I've tried to pass it!" she was muttering hoarsely. "They'll come after me—they may even search me! I must get back and hide it, anywhere! I must, or I'll be caught! Oh, why did I do such a silly thing?"

She remembered a loose tile that she had found that morning, whilst dusting in the corridor. She had seen at the time that it could be levered away from the corner, and that there was a space behind it. It was all she could think of. It was a hiding place. Yes, the five-pound note should be placed in there and left—she did not care how long!

Caught!

"GOOD evening, young ladies!" Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, and Bessie Bunter were in Uncle Clegg's shop, but they nodded rather absently in response to his greeting.

"Strange how scared that girl looked when she saw us!" Mabs was saying. "Yes, a real guilty look she had!" nodded Babs. "I wonder why?"

It was left to Bessie Bunter to give the order for the cake they had come to buy. Bessie Bunter was concerned about Augusta in a very sincere manner. No one could doubt that from the many mysterious and worried remarks that she had made from time to time. But Bessie never neglected matters appertaining to food; and a cake they had come to buy, and a cake they must obviously have for the well-being of Study No. 4.

So Bessie chose a very fruity-looking affair, and coughed discreetly for Babs to pay.

"Three-and-six, please," said Uncle Clegg.

Babs fished in her purse, causing a slight rustling sound before she found a ten-shilling note.

"Thank you, miss," beamed Uncle Clegg. "Do you know, miss, you gave me quite a shock then! I thought you were going to pull out another five-pound note."

"I don't understand," said Babs in surprise. "Another, did you say?"

Uncle Clegg grinned as he clicked open the cash desk.

"That young servant who was in here just before you, was buying for Miss Jackson, miss," he explained. "She had a five-pound note to pay for her things!"

"What?" said Babs and Mabs in one breath.

Uncle Clegg was busily counting the change and did not see their expressions.

"A lot for Miss Jackson to give to a young servant girl," he commented. "Of course, it's no business of mine, but she did seem so nervous at having such a lot of money that I was quite sorry for her! Fortunately, she had a pound note as well, and she paid with that."

"Oh, I say!" squeaked Bessie Bunter excitedly. "Why—Yaroooooop! Mabs, you jolly well stamped on my foot then. Ow—wow—wow!"

Babs was already taking her change, and thanking Uncle Clegg, and Mabs was piloting the still indignant Bessie to the door.

Between them they managed to get Bessie out of the shop before anything had been given away.

And then Babs and Mabs exchanged one glance that told immediately that from those few words they had guessed everything.

"Judy!" muttered Mabs.

"Yes," said Babs. She was beginning to tremble with excitement. "That's why she was looking so guilty! Oh Mabs, it sounds too good to be true! She's still got the five-pound note, and she's been trying to change it!"

"We've caught her at last!" was Mabel's exultant cry. "What was it Uncle Clegg said? That Connie Jackson had sent her to change it?"

"Yes, but Connie's too suspicious ever to trust a servant with so much—a pound is the limit!" Babs answered breathlessly. "She's gone back to the school, Mabs. If we hurry we can catch her!"

"Yes, and accuse her point blank!" said Mabel excitedly. "We will, this time! We'll demand a search! And if the note is found on her—"

"It will mean that Augusta can be cleared after all!"

"Let's run!"

"I say, wait for me!" puffed Bessie, who had been crowded right out of the conversation, conducted in such rapid remarks. "I—I can't run after—after a girl's stamped on my foot!"

But Bessie Bunter had to run if she wanted to keep up with Babs and Mabs, and she certainly intended to do that. They did go so fast that she would be left behind, but there was no lingering for the fat girl.

Running side by side Babs and Mabs led the way, and Bessie Bunter splashed along behind them, and squeaked with excitement and puffed with exertion.

They almost hoped to overtake Judy on the road, but there was no sight of her. It rather disappointed Babs and Mabs, but at the same time confirmed their suspicions. Judy had evidently run back to school herself. Why? There was only one reason.

They had to ease into a walk for Bessie Bunter's sake, but it was only a short walk. They ran again, and continued until they reached the gates and passed into the quadrangle.

"And now—careful!" said Babs warningly. "She's somewhere in the school. I don't suppose that she'll think that

"Stop her!" cried Babs.

Babs and Mabs raced in pursuit. Bessie Bunter panted behind. They rushed up the stairs and sped to the landing above. But there was no sight of Judy.

"Which way?" muttered Mabs.

"I'll go up, and you go along the passage," said Babs.

"Right!"

They were off again, leaving slower Bessie to go whichever way she chose.

It was a very short start that Judy had obtained, but it seemed enough.

Babs, running up the stairs to the second floor, encountered several girls, but none of them recalled seeing Judy go that way. Mabs, traversing the passage, came on Angelica Jelly and Clarice Swan, of the Fifth, who were talking. They were equally positive that no girl had passed them.

Retracing their steps, Babs and Mabs met at the spot where they had parted.



MISS STEEL INTERVENES! "What is the meaning of this commotion?" inquired Miss Steel, sternly. "They rushed at me!" exclaimed Judy Grigg, trembling.

we've found out so quickly. We want to come on her suddenly before she has time to hide that note anywhere!"

They tiptoed into the school expectantly, but even so, they did not expect to come so swiftly on the sight that caused fresh fluttering in their hearts.

"There!" muttered Babs in just a faint whisper, and that was all.

"Mmmmm!" buzzed Bessie, who was dying to speak but dare not.

They could see Judy.

It was the back of her figure that they could see just at the end if the corridor that they had approached so silently. She was doing something—levering at the wall with a knife, it seemed! There was something in her hand.

None of them remembered making a noise. But something startled Judy. She looked up suddenly—and saw them!

"Oh!"

"Catch her!" yelled Babs, no longer cautious.

She tore along the passage with Mabs at her side, but Judy had started. The kitchen knife clanged to the floor as she took to her heels and fled up the stairs.

"You haven't seen her?"

"No. Haven't you?"

"Not a sign!" said Babs, perplexed.

"She isn't hiding in any of these rooms!" puffed Bessie.

Babs gave a sudden exclamation.

"Oh, what duffers we are!" she cried.

"She must have darted into that dark recess at the half-landing, and given us the slip! Downstairs again, quickly! At least, we'll see she doesn't leave the building!"

They were furious at having been hoodwinked so simply. But now, as they ran back, they began to meet other Fourth-Formers. Peggy Preston was one of the first they saw.

She gathered the story from the breathless fragments they were able to give her.

"And Judy has got the note on her?"

Peggy said. Her eyes were shining. "If we can catch her we can clear Augusta? Then we will—we will!"

But Judy seemed to have made good use of that brief lead she had obtained.

Her wits had undoubtedly been sharpened by the dread of exposure. Her cunning brain was working as quickly as it had ever worked before. Confronted with almost certain exposure, she had achieved something of the coolness of despair.

But the girls did not know that as they hunted this way and that for the girl whom they were going to accuse openly just as soon as they could catch her.

Mabs was the first to see Judy again. She came to Babs, who was gazing into the darkened quadrangle for any sign of movement, and touched her shoulder lightly.

"Sssh! Not a word!"
"You've seen something?" whispered Babs eagerly. And Peggy was at her side at the same moment.

"It's almost uncanny, but it's true!" said Mabs breathlessly. "I just peeped

along the corridor, and I saw Judy, working at that wall again. It must be a loose tile."

"The same spot?" said Babs incredulously.

"The very same!"
"Then we won't miss her this time!"

They crept with quick but silent steps to the passage. Mabel's almost unbelievable statement was true. They could see Judy's back as they rounded the corner, and they could see that she was working at the tiles with a knife. In her disengaged hand she held something white.

They crept forward.
Judy went on with her work eagerly, quickly.

Step by step, and still she did not seem to hear them. Bessie Bunter made a slight scuffling noise, but it did not seem to disturb Judy. A few more yards, and then—

"Stop!" cried Peggy Preston.
Judy wheeled and faced them as they rushed forward on her in a body.

"Hold her!" Babs cried, and suited the action to the word. "Now, Mabs—"

"What are you doing? Why are you rushing on me like this?" rose Judy's shrill cry.

Other girls were beginning to appear as though by magic.

"I've got it!" yelled Bessie Bunter, brandishing an envelope that had dropped to the floor. "This is what she was trying to hide! I've got the five-pound note!"

"Let me alone! I won't be held like that!" Judy cried.

And then—a sudden silence from everyone except the cheering but short-sighted Bessie Bunter.

Bessie had not seen Miss Steel, who had so suddenly appeared.

"I've got it! I've jolly well got it!" cried Bessie, tearing at the flap of the envelope she held. "The fiver's inside here, girls! Jolly smart of me to see her drop it—eh? I said I'd solve the whole mystery, and now I've—"
"Bessie!"

Judy's Triumph!

"OH!" said Bessie Bunter, blinking up at Miss Steel. "I—I didn't see—I mean, I didn't know—that is—"

"What is the meaning of so much shouting, and this commotion?" inquired Miss Steel sternly. "And, Barbara, why are you holding that girl like that?"

"They rushed at me!" exclaimed Judy tremblingly.

"What is the meaning of this, Barbara?"

Babs was not loath to explain now. "We suspect Judy of having the five-pound note that Augusta spoke of in her defence, Miss Steel," she said. "We have an idea that she's been trying to change it in the village to-night. We surprised her just now trying to hide something—that envelope—behind the loose tile in the wall."

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Miss Steel.

"We've believed that Judy was a thief all along, Miss Steel. Now we've caught her making a second attempt—"

"Bessie, hand me that envelope," said Miss Steel. "This is a very serious matter indeed. I must examine the contents of that at once!"

Dead silence now as she tore open the flap.

Babs and Peggy were eager, triumphant. The others looked hardly less excited. They just wanted to see that creased and crinkling paper and then—

Barbara's heart seemed to miss a beat. There was an almost audible sensation.

Miss Steel had opened the envelope. She had drawn something out. But that something did not look like a banknote. It looked just like an ordinary sheet of paper.

The silence was electric. Eyes turned on Judy Grigg. They saw the faint outline of a mocking, cunning grin on her face. And only then did they begin to understand.

"This—goodness gracious!" ejaculated Miss Steel, staring blankly at the paper. "Surely this is a joke!"

"What is it, Miss Steel?" said Babs hoarsely.

"A message," said Miss Steel, "that reads: 'Ever been had?'"

"Who-a-at?"

"It—it—oh, it's a trick!" burst out Peggy Preston.



MY REMINISCENCES!

By PIPER'S SPADE.

With the kind assistance of Katie Smith (Fourth Form.)

"QUITE right, miss! Quite right!" said the spade. "I don't look badly treated, do I? No, I can't really grumble that I have a bad time at Piper's hands. He's a very good master is Piper!"

He shook a piece of earth from his blade as though it was rather distasteful to him, and settled himself more comfortably against the wall.

"You want me to talk about myself?" he continued. "Well, I don't mind doing that. Piper and I never object to talking about things. My most exciting experience you want?"

"Well, the worst experience that I remember—and you can take it from me that it was bad—was when the treasure-hunting craze came to Cliff House. Everyone wanted to dig for hidden treasure, and, of course, they must press me into service. Not that I wanted to go! I managed to make Dolly Jobling drop me on to Clara's toe, and I got between Marcia Loftus' feet and tripped her up; but it wasn't any good. I had to dig. Everyone had me in turn. Bessie Bunter left me out all night in the rain, and I nearly caught my death of cold through it.

And that wasn't the worst of it, by any means. When the treasure seekers hadn't got me I fell into the hands of jaspers, who buried all sorts of funny things for the others to dig up. One was an old pair of Miss Bullivant's boots, and there was a fuss when Angelica found them!

"Don't mention treasure-hunting to me, please! It means too much hard work!"

"Yes, I help dig on the allotment when Piper feels so inclined. But we don't go in for deep digging, Piper and me! When he reads in his gardening book that for this or that you want to go down at least three feet, he looks across at me and winks, and I wink back, and Piper murmurs: 'No three-foot digging for Augustus!' And I'm with him all the time." (Here the spade suddenly broke into song.)

"We're real old Britons, Gus and me,
Yo, ho, ho! for the land of the free.
There's but one thing we always shirk—
That's the thing that folk call 'work'!"

"I feel better, having got that off my handle, so to speak. I know you thought I was going to say chest!"

"By the way, you remember the real old-fashioned pudding that Annabel and Agnes White once made for the school dinner, when there were no servants? All full of sugar and pepper and all sorts of things—that's the one! Two feet below the spot where you're standing at present lies that pudding. I helped to put it out of mischief. I don't suppose that, even now, there are any worms near it, and you won't see any snow remaining for long over this spot in winter!"

"I'm the fellow that Grace Woodfield, of the Fifth, had to carry when your friends japed the Fifth, and Mabs pretended that she was the dear old lady who liked going out and digging for fossils. You ask Grace if I'm not a good weight! Yes, I really did enjoy that day, because I was given a lovely ride on Grace's shoulder, and the expression on her face when she dug was simply delightful!"

"Now for a mystery, miss, before you have to go back to your prep. I'm only allowed to tell you the things you already know. I can't do any more speaking than that, so I can only tell you half this story.

"Once, about ten years ago, there was a very nice girl in the Fifth Form. It was when I was quite new to the school. Everyone liked her, until one day she was accused of stealing a little gold clock, and the evidence against her was simply dreadful. Someone had seen her rise at night, and someone else had seen her carrying it, and the next day she had sent off a parcel just the size of that clock. The evidence was so black that she asked to be withdrawn from the school, and left.

"Only when she had gone did people find out that she had developed that unpleasant habit of sleep-walking through overstudy. News came from London that she had met with quite an alarming accident while doing it. Those who had remained loyal to her remembered a lot of things then—how muddy her boots had been on the morning of her accusation, that the door of the tool-shed had been left open, and several other things. They guessed that their friend must really have risen in the night, and buried that clock somewhere in the grounds, not realising what she was doing.

"They dug and dug everywhere, hoping to find the clock and clear their friend's name; but they couldn't, and no one has been able to do so to this day.

"But they were on the right track, miss, for I can tell you this much: I'm the fellow who helped her bury that clock! I wish I could remember where she put it!"

"Yes, Judy has tricked us, Miss Steel!" Babs echoed. "We are certain—"

"Silence, Barbara!" said Miss Steel sternly. "Judy, did you write this message and put it in the envelope?"

"Yes, Miss Steel," said the day servant.

"For what reason?"

And then came the outburst that amazed and bewildered the listening girls.

"Because—oh, because I've had such horrid treatment at this school, and I wanted to get my own back," Judy exclaimed, the words tumbling from her lips. "Ever since that expelled girl, Augusta, brought that wicked charge against me there has been a plot to try and prove that I am a thief. I've been followed everywhere. They've pretended that I must always be trying to hide something; so I thought that I'd play them a trick, ma'am, and—and I've done this. Surely there is no harm in it, when they have made my life nothing but misery ever since I have been here!"

Babs stared open-mouthed at the girl who could tell such a monstrous falsehood.

"What have you to say in answer to that, Barbara?" asked Miss Steel.

"It's untrue! Oh, it's all a made-up story, Miss Steel!" cried Babs, coming back to herself. "Judy has tricked us now, but because she knew that we suspected her. We caught her here a few minutes ago—Mabs, Bessie, and I—and she ran away and gave us the slip. She wanted to put that envelope there to trick us. But she must have the note somewhere. She ought to be searched for it!"

"What Babs says is perfectly true, Miss Steel," put in Mabs, and Bessie gabbled assent.

"So you have been at this loose tile before, Judy?" said Miss Steel, turning to the maid. "For what reason?"

"The—same one," said Judy.

"You deny that you have a five-pound note in your possession?"

"I do—oh, I do, ma'am!"

"Nevertheless, your conduct is very strange, my girl!" said Miss Steel. "I must ask you to consent to be searched by the matron. It is either that or taking stronger action. Do you object?"

Judy seemed to see that it was useless to object, and the upshot of it was that the matron was summoned. The hopes of Babs and Peggy revived considerably.

Just for ten minutes!

The very expression on Judy's face as she returned at Mrs. Towle's side told the Fourth-Formers all they wanted to know.

"Nothing at all, Miss Steel," the matron announced. "Judy had only eight shillings on her, and she says that that is her change from an errand for Connie Jackson. Is that all, Miss Steel?"

"Yes, thank you, matron!"

Peggy could not help bursting out yet again.

"She's hidden it somewhere, Miss Steel!"

"What?"

"Yes, I'm sure—" Babs struck in.

"Silence, both of you!" cried the mistress sternly. "Your first accusation, that there was a note in that envelope, fell through. The second one has also proved groundless. On what evidence do you say that this girl has ever possessed such a note, disregarding what Augusta herself said?"

"Mr. Clegg told us this evening that she had tried to cash one at his shop!" said Babs desperately.

"I—I didn't!" exclaimed Judy.



WHAT I HEAR!

Jottings and Blottings by BESSIE BUNTER (Fourth Form).

I am told that Miss Bullervint had bought a lovely new hat, but I take this with a grane of salt, becoss I expect it will only be another puding-basen.

Miss Primrows informs me that I am very shortly going into the Fifth Form, which will be a serprise for a good many gersls. As some gersls may dowt this statement, I will give her actual words. She sed: "Reely, Bessie, I must say that you should not be in the Forth Fourm!"

I understand that Gwendolen Cooks has got hold of another tail of a ghost. I should like to be abel to pull that tail. (There is a joak in this.—B. B.)

In my larst letter from home my farther told me that our moater-cars are being fitted with speshul brite lights, so if you see a bewtiful car out at night with very brite lights on it, you will be abel to say to yourself at once: "Har! That is a moater from Bunter Court, Bessie Bunter's home!"

I beleave that Mrs. Pickels has now taken to cownting all the currents she puts in the puddings. I consider it very mean, and I see no RAISEN for it.

Claire Trevelin read my last fine storey about the pyrits and Jhon Browne, and sed that they ought not to allow loonerticks to get into a boat and call themselves pyrits; but I explaned to her that they were feroshus men, and she had made a mistake. It was one for Claire!

It is quite untrue that they were thinking of offering me a jobb at the circus (witch I should have indignently refewsed) becoss I have just fownd out that the fat lady was never ill at all.

I have just been reading a bewtiful book about Chiner, and it ses there that they have lovely banquits, at which there are about sixty corses, and you sit there and have to eat something of evverything. I should not mind if I had some advencher that took me to Chiner, just to see if it is reely true.

I was not offered any of the toffy that Dolley Jobbeling made last time, becoss she said that there was a slite axident; but I reely beleave that it was all full of sinders.

My dear parritt, Polley, is a moast intelligent berd. I saw him skratcing his head the other day, and I reely beleave that he thort that he was-coaming his hair like I do.

I am sorry that Barberer is a bit unreasonabe at times. I suggested the uther day that it would be nice to have a beehive in the studdey, so that we could always have some honey when we wanted it; but she did not seem to see the idear at all, although I willingly said that she and Mabs could get the honey, as I am not very fond of bees.

I understand that at the provision shops in Cortfeald there is going to be a very fine idea, called a Speshul Tasting Day. There are going to be free samples of cakes and jelleys and pams, and all sorts of things. Unforchermity it falls on a Friday, but I am still hoaping that Miss Primrows will proclame it a public holiday.

"That's a falsehood, ma'am. Miss Jackson gave me a pound note to pay for her purchases."

Miss Steel surveyed her Fourth-Formers grimly.

"So that is the position," she said. "It will not drop at this, of course."

Judy, I cannot detain you further. You are at liberty to go to your home. Barbara and Peggy, you have both joined in bringing a very serious charge against this girl. I shall see Mr. Clegg, and if he cannot confirm your statement concerning the note, you will be punished very severely indeed! That is all I can say at present."

She went, and Judy went as well. Peggy Preston was nearly crying with dismay. Babs herself was too upset to speak. What it would have meant for Augusta if they hadn't allowed themselves to be tricked so easily!

It was Lucy Morgan who broke the silence.

She snatched up the envelope that had fallen to the passage, and gave a cry of amazement.

"One of my envelopes!" she cried. "I've missed several from the study lately, as well as other little things. Judy must have been taking them!"

"Oh, why didn't you see that before?" groaned Clara Trevlyn.

"I—I didn't think!" said Lucy. "But can we see her now? At least, I could accuse her of pilfering!"

"Too late!" said Babs helplessly. "She'll be gone by now—running as hard as she can! We've failed. And perhaps now it may never be—be possible—"

Her voice trailed away to bitter silence, and no one else spoke. They understood without having to say so. It was failure, when the opportunity had been so nearly in their hands. Beaten, after all, by Judy Grigg!

What a black evening it was to be in the Fourth, after that! Black and despairing. Yet, if they had known it, they could still have done something.

Judy had not left the school yet. Even at that moment she was in the quadrangle, groping on the ground with muddy fingers. And suddenly her hand encountered something, and she snatched it up before she hurried for the gate at last, and disappeared into the lane.

Only by the light of the third street lamp that she came to did Judy snatch just a-peep at what she held. Then she

sighed with a sort of relief, but it was a palpitating sigh, for all that.

In her hand she held a muddy five-pound note, wrapped round a few coppers!

So she was away, after all—escaped from the tightest corner she had ever been in. Escaped for the time being!

Her ruse had worked better than she had even dared to hope. The Fourth-Formers had fallen into the trap as she expected, and it had put Miss Steel off the scent. She had managed to get away with the note, thrown so hastily out of the window with those coppers of her own to weight it.

But could she ever hope to change the money now, in such a dirty and creased state? She couldn't see how she could get anyone to take such a note without questions. It was still to haunt her, even though she had escaped detection to-night.

"And that Uncle Clegg!" she muttered, with a sudden tremor. "Of course, he'll say that I offered it to him when he's asked, and then the whole business will start over again. Oh, what ever am I going to do?"

Judy's triumph was not such a complete one as it had appeared to the Cliff House girls.

After she had passed Friardale and was heading for Courtfield the tears gathered in her eyes.

"I can't pass it! I'll never be able to now!" she muttered. "And to-morrow, when they've seen that man Clegg—oh, I don't know! I don't want to go to Cliff House any more. I want to get away from it. And I want to see that girl Augusta out of the neighbourhood. If I could do anything—"

Her mind worked on excuses and schemes and all manner of impossible expedients. It was the mind of a desperate girl—a girl ready to do almost anything!

Earning Her Living!

STITCH, stitch, stitch!

Augusta Anstruther-Browne, ignorant of the dramatic events at Cliff House, was at her seemingly endless task of making the Cliff House aprons.

It had proved a bigger week's work than she had anticipated. She had insisted on doing almost everything herself. Only her strong will-power and her fierce determination to support herself had kept her at her arduous labours.

Now she was pale, and looked ill from the strain.

Long after she went to bed that night she knew that the tantalising needle would still flicker before her strained eyes.

To some girls the task of making the aprons might have been easier. It had proved an ordeal for Augusta. She was not accustomed to doing much needle-work. She had never done so much before in her whole life. And the "finish" and little "extras" had only increased the magnitude of her task.

But she was nearing the end at last on this Tuesday evening.

There lay the fruits of her labours all around her. It looked a bewildering number now that they were finished, or nearly finished. But they did not confuse Augusta. She had lived with them and amongst them. In a way, it had been a labour of love, for every garment, excepting those ordered as spares, had been made to the measurements of the girl who was to wear it.

She laid the last completed one to one side, and took up a fresh one. She had to smile as her eyes fell upon its voluminous folds.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 143.

"For Bessie!" she murmured. "She won't have to grumble about this one hurting her arms when she's beating a batter! Now, it wants a pocket, I think!"

She started to cut out the pocket in the routine way; then, as another smile came to her pale face, she let the scissors run on a little further before she rounded the material.

"A big pocket for Bessie, of course!" she chuckled. "My word! Won't she be pleased when she finds that it's bigger than anyone else's? How she'll try to stuff something in it when Miss Plummy isn't looking! But she's not a bad old duffer at all when you know her!" she sighed. "I wonder if I'll ever hear her asking me if I want my breakfast bloater again?"

It was a strange thought, and yet oddly sentimental. It brought back rushing memories of the dear old school. Would she ever take part in those little scenes that made up the life of the school? Would she ever laugh again at Bessie's almost proverbial hunger?

A week had passed since her accusation. She had been an expelled girl for more than six days. Was she going to have justice as she had hoped and expected? Or was the opportunity gone? Judy seemed very cunning. Augusta did not know how near she had come to discovery that evening.

Her aunt appeared suddenly in the doorway.

"I have closed the shop, dear," she said.

Augusta gave her a welcoming smile. "And it has been a good day?"

"As good as we could expect on such a wet day," nodded Aunt Sarah. She gazed in sudden concern at Augusta, and hastened to her side. "But, my dear, you can't think of going out to-night! You must stop this endless work, or you will be ill!"

Augusta gave a grim laugh. "Give-up?" she repeated. Her mouth was still as firm as ever. "I'm not going to give up when I've nearly finished! Only those few to do, aunt, and they won't take more than an hour. Then I can send them up to Cliff House, and we shall be paid. After that—well, perhaps I can afford to rest for a day or so before I start something else."

"You've done a fortnight's work in a week, Augusta," said Aunt Sarah admiringly. "I never thought it was possible—and you only a schoolgirl still! I insist, now, on finishing them!"

Augusta smiled doggedly.

"It's no use insisting, aunt," she said. "I've done quite enough already! I'm going to finish them all on my own!"

Aunt Sarah sank to one of the rickety chairs.

"At least, you will rest for a little while, Augusta!" she begged. "It is humanly impossible to go on like this!"

Augusta ran her needle into the half-made pocket, and sighed.

"Well, perhaps I can, aunt," she said. "Hark! What was that?"

"Someone coming in from the street, dear!"

"Judy?" breathed Augusta.

"No, it wouldn't be she!" said Aunt Sarah, shaking her head. "She gets in before this, and never stirs out of the house again!"

But it was Judy, for she had reasons for being late to-night. More than that, she was in a state of mind that would have put Augusta instantly on the alert if she had known. But she did not know. After her arduous toil she was weary and too tired to worry about anything. She did not listen for steps going up the stairs. She did not know

that the person who had entered did not go up the stairs, but crept along the passage.

"Aunt, I've had wonderful luck, being able to make all these aprons like this!" Augusta exclaimed suddenly. "You know what it means for both of us! To-morrow we'll be paid, and then you can pay for the special material you bought. It will show you a handsome profit. But for me—well, it will be the first money I have ever earned!"

"I shall insist on you sharing the profit!" said Aunt Sarah.

"If I need it!" answered Augusta.

"But—"

"No, we can talk about that later, aunt!" Augusta sighed. "I don't mind; I only want to feel that I'm not proving a drag on anyone. Things are bound to come right if only I stay here. But I couldn't have stayed if I hadn't got work. If any hitch happened now, and Miss Primrose would not accept the aprons—"

"Oh, Augusta, don't say that!" cried Aunt Sarah.

"I only said 'If,' aunt!" Augusta smiled. "They'll be accepted and paid for within a day or two, I know. If they weren't—well, I ought not to have mentioned that! I can't even bear to think of it! It could only mean one thing—that we should both be deeply in debt, and I couldn't think of staying with you! And now—yes, I must go on and finish, or I shall get lazy. I want to get them off my hands!"

She went on again, her eyes very tired, forcing her nimble hands by sheer will-power alone. Augusta had done too much, and she knew it now. But she was not going to give in when she was within an ace of success.

Little did she guess then how her words had carried through the thin wooden door; how ears, tuned to a desperate sharpness, had heard everything. She did not know that those chance remarks had started fresh thoughts in the mind of Judy Grigg.

It was a full hour before Augusta was finished, although she worked at the last finishing touches with an almost feverish energy. But her task was completed at last. She laid the last garment on the table, and sank back in her chair, a queer, forced laugh coming to her throat.

"Done!"

"You've done amazingly well, Augusta!" breathed Aunt Sarah. "And now—perhaps I can urge you to go to bed and get some of the rest you need so badly?"

Augusta braced herself together.

"No. Not yet, aunt," she said. "You can help me fold them. The big hamper will hold the whole lot. We'll pack them now, and then I shan't even have to look at them again. If we're quick, I can get a telephone message through to Peggy, and Piper will bring a truck down in the morning and fetch the hamper."

Again she had her way. Augusta, careless of herself, set an example. The completion of that order had become the ruling impulse of her life. There was probably no girl in the Fourth who could have stuck to a resolve with greater determination than she had showed.

One by one the aprons went neatly into the hamper. Carefully folded, they did not make such a big pile after all. The last of all was laid on top, and tissue-paper tucked around. Augusta brought down the lid, and did up one of the straps. She hesitated as she held the other.

"I—I think I need a bit of fresh air, aunt," she said, rather faintly. "I'm

going to telephone now. We can cord the hamper when I come back."

Aunt Sarah looked at her closely. "You don't look very well, dear—I'll come with you," she said, with decision. Augusta smiled weakly, and the two left the house. The fresh air had the effect of reviving Augusta, and after walking a few yards she began to feel her old self.

They reached the telephone-box, and managed to ring up the mistresses' room almost at once. After a short delay, Peggy Preston's voice answered. Augusta passed her message, and listened vaguely to Peggy's wondering answer, and her promise that Piper should certainly come the following morning. She returned a few words of thanks, and hung up the receiver. She did not refuse the unobtrusive assistance that her aunt gave her as they walked back to the shop.

Even as she entered, her head swam, and she fell, rather than sat, on one of the rickety chairs. She clutched at the table, feeling strangely dazed.

"Augusta! Oh, dear, whatever is the matter?" cried her aunt, holding her.

The girl was trembling violently. "I—I don't feel well. The room seems all funny, aunt!" she muttered. "It's—it's rest that I want. If you will help me, I—I'll get to bed at once!"

With the help of Aunt Sarah she staggered from the room.

Her Aunt Sarah helped her to bed. She was asleep almost before her head touched the pillow. And so Augusta lay through the night, hardly changing her position, dead to everything around her, sleeping the sleep of utter weariness.

Where is Judy?

WHERE was Judy? What was going to happen? Was there any possibility that even now something was going to happen to clear Augusta's name?

Those were the questions on every lip when interval-time came next morning, and the Fourth-Formers dispersed into the quadrangle.

The discussion would have gone on had it not been for an interruption. But in the middle of it Piper appeared between the school gates, pushing a small hand-truck, and resting on that truck was a light-coloured hamper.

"The aprons!" cried Peggy Preston. And she was off like a shot.

With one rush the girls went streaming after Peggy Preston. It was a heavy hamper that Piper had brought, but three or four of them soon dragged it, between them, into the school.

"What have you there, Peggy?" Peggy Preston looked up in astonishment to hear Miss Primrose's voice. But she quickly understood that she must have witnessed Piper's arrival, and explained.

"Oh!" said the headmistress. "So these are the aprons that your friend has been making, Peggy?" she exclaimed. "Uncord the hamper and I will inspect them now. Some of you can try them on to see whether they are satisfactory."

Peggy beamed as she started to uncord the hamper, the girls eagerly helping.

Eagerly they turned the hamper about as they pulled the cord from it. Only the two straps remained to be unfastened, and Peggy herself did those. Then she paused, rather dramatically, just for a second. The hush was complete, as it should be! Peggy smiled, took the lid in her hand, and flung it back with a triumphant gesture.

"There!" she said,

And then it seemed that an icy hand gripped at her heart.

She saw the sheer consternation on Miss Primrose's face. She heard the startled "Oh's" that came from all round her.

And no wonder! Peggy's bewildered and horrified eyes were not gazing upon trim aprons at all.

The hamper contained nothing but a jumble of old papers, clothes, and odds-and-ends! A scorched and blackened coat lay right on top. A sooty rug lay be-

"Augusta!" cried Miss Primrose.

"My—my friend, that is!" stammered Peggy, her face flushing. "She would never—"

"Augusta!" repeated Miss Primrose, with increasing sternness. "Peggy, you will not deny that your friend in need is the very girl I expelled from this school?"

Peggy hung her head, unable to deny that she had given away her secret in her dismay.

"I understand. I have been blind not



EXTRACTS FROM MISS CHANTREY'S AUTOGRAPH ALBUM.

From PEGGY PRESTON.

Hobbies come, and hobbies go;
Sport to-day; to-morrow—no!
When the stormy winds shall blow,
When the country's wreathed in snow,
Strike up music, off with woe!
Trip the light fantastic toe!

From DOLLY JOBLING.

In me, Miss Chantrey, you have found
A clumsy pupil, I'll be bound.
I must admit, to my disgrace,
I really haven't too much grace.
But still, I cheered these words to get
From one old partner that I met:
"Dolly," said he, "it's awfully sweet
To tread so seldom on my feet!"

From BARBARA REDFERN.

"Dancing, dancing's my delight!"
That's a motto truly trite.
Though I sit up half the night
Full of thoughts that I'd indite,
Nothing better can I write:
"Dancing, dancing's my delight!"

From KATIE SMITH.

When some most exciting adventure I read,
I find that my dancing is useful indeed.
Whenever the "villain" shall prance and rate,
I rise to my feet for a Dance of Hate.
Whenever they're fooled by the principal boy,
I jump and I skip in a Dance of Joy.
When plotting succeeds, and the world seems unfair,
I shuffle and sulk in a Dance of Despair.
When the hero has got into cunning society,
I jump and I stamp in a Dance of Anxiety.
But all will come right; when the end is in sight
I cheer and I leap in a Dance of Delight!

From BESSIE BUNTER.

Now that I do think that I have got
All the steps of the fox-trot.
I see how graceful that it is,
And what a treat non-dancers miss.
I understand why a fox is snappy,
And why he sometimes looks unhappy.
It is because that he can see
He'll never be graceful like you and me.
The animals can never dance, of course.
Pause a one-step by a horse!
If you tried to teach them they'd say, "Sha'n't try!"
That wouldn't be helpful, would it, Miss Chantrey?
Now graceful dancing I have seen,
I'm glad that I'm a human bean.

side it. It was the most indescribable muddle that could possibly be imagined.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Miss Primrose.

Peggy was still staring in speechless horror at the basket.

"Peggy!" said the headmistress, getting over her surprise. "Is this how your friend has rewarded my indulgence? To keep me waiting for a week, and then send this absurd and impractical joke?"

"No, no, Miss Primrose!" said Peggy huskily. "There's been some mistake made. It's a trick! I know the aprons are all finished. And Augusta isn't the girl—"

to see it before!" Miss Primrose went on. "I did not ask any questions at the time. But this—yes, I see it, now! I was misguided enough to give help unwittingly to such a girl as Augusta has proved. She keeps me waiting until the other aprons are very soiled indeed, and then sends this—this rubbish! It is scandalous!"

"Oh, Miss Primrose, that is not fair!" burst out Peggy. "Augusta has been tricked in some way the same as we have been! She would never do this. I will admit that I've been to see her several times, and when last I saw her the

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.

From the first Sybil Sardone & Co. were down on Joan, though Hilda Heathcote and her chums befriended the scholarship girl. It was on account of this that Hilda became accused by her enemies of favouritism, and rather a good number of the Fifth-Formers believed this accusation.

This was shown clearly when Hilda wanted players for a hockey match. Joan spoke to Ruby in private, with the intention of persuading her to fill a vacant place in the team. And as the sisters spoke, a girl stood outside the door, listening.

(Now read on.)

Sybil Knows the Game to Play.

IN one of the dim-lit dormitories occupied by the Fifth Form, Joan and Ruby stood facing each other.

For the first time since their coming to Greyhurst School they were alone together.

No fault of Joan's, that! If she had kept silent about the relationship, it was only at the earnest entreaty of Ruby.

The acute sadness felt by Joan that things should be like this expressed itself now in her lowered voice, whilst her pretty eyes also betrayed the emotion she was feeling.

"You are not cross with me, Ruby?"

"Cross? Oh, no!" was the rather dubious answer. "But I think you ought to be more careful! It is no use promising a thing unless you mean to carry it out!"

"This talk with you will not get me suspected of being your sister," asserted Joan gently. "Why should it? I called you by your full name just now in front of those other girls, just as if your family had no connection with mine."

"Yes; but I hope you are not always going to be running risks of this sort," grumbled Ruby. "What do you want to speak about?"

"A very simple thing, dear," Joan answered quickly. "Will you play for Hilda Heathcote in the hockey team next Saturday?"

"Play hockey! You know very well, Joan—"

"We are both practically strangers to the game, yes," assented Joan. "But, Ruby,

there is time to put in a lot of practice before Saturday! And if we play up for all we are worth it will help."

She added quickly:

"There must be positions on the field where even an inexperienced girl may be helpful. So do say you will play, Ruby!"

"Why should I?" pouted Ruby distastefully. "I don't feel keen on games."

"Ruby darling, the position is this," urged her sister. "Our Form captain, Hilda Heathcote, is being let down badly by a lot of the girls. It is all through me."

"What!"

"In a way, yes. Hilda has been standing up for me like a true, loyal friend—and this is the reward she has got! I am awfully sorry about it," gulped Joan, in great distress. "One hates to feel that girls are snobs, and yet—"

"Oh, you are too sensitive, Joan!"

"I feel it very much on Hilda's account—I can't help it," owned Joan. "I suppose it is partly because I am only a scholarship girl, and partly because I seem to have come out in a bad light ever since I set foot inside the school. Anyhow, Hilda has had to stand by me, and some of her old friends seem to—to resent it!"

Joan paused there.

She would not add that most of the mischief was due to Sybil Sardone's malicious twisting of facts and circumstances, so that Hilda was being suspected of favouritism. Joan was remembering—with what regret!—that Ruby was fond of Sybil.

"So there it is, dear," Joan went on, after a moment. "I have promised to play for all I'm worth on Saturday. Elsie will play, too. But Hilda is still one short for the team. And I—Ruby, I—I said to her just now that I would get a certain girl to play."

"Meaning me?"

"Yes, dear."

Ruby gave another of her little frowns.

"That was running another risk!" she complained. "For you to suggest to Hilda Heathcote that you could sort of influence me to play—it will only make the girl wonder what you and I are to each other! Considering we are in different camps, Joan—"

"Hilda is not the sort to be on the lookout for other people's secrets," said Joan. "She will only think I have approached you about playing because you are a new girl, just as I am."

"Well," said Ruby, "I don't think I can play."

"Oh, Ruby!"

"I don't think Sybil and my other friends will want me to play! It is giving one's support to—to the captain!"

"Ruby, it is only doing what one ought to do—playing up for the Form and the school!" Joan pleaded earnestly. "Do, do promise! If you have any love for me, dear—and, oh, I know you have, Ruby! I know that in your heart you still have a great love for me and mother! Well, then, do this for my sake, Ruby—won't you, dear?"

There was no answer, and at last Joan exclaimed softly:

"Treat it as a little thing, Ruby dear, done in return for my—my silence—"

"What! So you are going to start threatening me!"

"Oh, no—no!" protested Joan, in horror. "As if I could do such a thing as that, Ruby dear! Nothing will ever induce me to tell others that you are my sister if you don't want me to! I promised, after you had given me the reasons why it was best for you, that I should not be known as your sister. And when I promise a thing—"

"Well, you certainly seemed to be hinting—"

"I was only hinting, Ruby darling, that you might do this thing out of—yes, out of gratitude to me. I wouldn't ask anything for myself. But for the Form and the school, for the sake of Hilda Heathcote, who has been so good to me, your own sister—oh, won't you play on Saturday?"

Again there was a pause, a lengthy silence filled in by the soft music of Joyce Carroll's violin downstairs.

Ruby was pondering, with knitted brows, a sulky look marring the beauty of her face. Joan waited, almost holding her breath with suspense.

"I can't promise—no," Ruby said at last, with a shrug. "But if it is not going to upset Sybil Sardone and the rest of my friends, then I'll play on Saturday."

"Oh, Ruby, that is good of you!" exclaimed Joan, all radiant in a moment. "I will tell Hilda this evening, and you—as soon as you feel certain—"

"Sh! Hark!" broke in Ruby, with a sudden gesture of intense alarm.

Mute and still, she kept her head reared in a listening attitude.

"I—I thought I heard a sound!" she gasped, below her breath. "A sound outside the door as if—Joan, if anybody has been listening—oh, we are done for!"

"No, Ruby! Don't be afraid," Joan said soothingly. "I heard nothing—only Joyce's playing. But let us see!"

She stole swiftly to the closed door and opened it, Ruby following step for step.

No one!

The dormitory landing was deserted, and so were the stairs for as far as the two sisters could see down them.

"I must go back, anyhow," Ruby said, still agitated. "And remember, Joan, we—can't always be meeting for secret talks. It is too risky!"

With a gesture that said: "Stay there!" she herself went swiftly down the stairs.

When, a few minutes later, she entered the study which she shared with Sybil Sardone she found that girl lolling on a couch, book in hand. Tea was over, and Clarice Choane, Olive Courtney, and one or two other members of "the set" were upon the point of dispersing.

"Hallo, Ruby!" grinned Sybil, with an indolent sort of smile. "So you have not deserted us!"

"Sybil fancied, I'm afraid," said Clarice, "that that scholarship kid was playing recruiting sergeant for the worthy captain! Ha, ha, ha!"

"In a way, she was," Ruby said, forcing a smile. "Joan Haviland has been asking me if I'll play in the hockey team on Saturday."

There was a peal of derisive laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Clarice, the last

to end the merriment. "So the high-and-mighty Hilda has been losing supporters, has she! Syb darling, we are winning!"

"All along the line!" nodded Sybil exultantly. "Oh, it was a great day for us when that scholarship kid came to the school and Hilda Heathcote started fussing over her! Most of the girls simply won't stand it!"

"Ooh, noo!" agreed Olive Courtney, ready to drift away to her own den. "Rather too offly, even for some of the captain's greatest admirers!"

"And do you want to play, Ruby?" asked Sybil quite pleasantly.

"I—well, yes, Sybil dear, if—if you don't object," was the faltered answer.

A look passed between Clarice and Sybil. Then Clarice spoke in an offhand way, following Olive and the rest from the room.

"You had better discuss it with Syb, Ruby! What Syb says goes with all of us!"

After that the door closed, and Ruby and Sybil were alone together.

"Have a choc, dear," purred Sybil, reaching out a slender arm so that she could dip her taper hand into the box of confections.

"So you want to play on Saturday against Heathington School?"

"I don't know where the match is to be—" Ruby began; and then Sybil interrupted:

"It is against Heathington School over at Heathington, which is a fine town at least twelve miles from here. The team goes by train, of course, and it is a chance for other girls to see a bit of the town, on the strength of wanting to see the match!"

"Twig?" added Sybil, with a wink.

After a few short breaths she spoke desperately.

"In that case, Sybil, perhaps I had better not play? Really, I don't want to play, if—"

"You will play! I say you are to play, and you have got to play!" Sybil cut in sharply.

"Do you think I am going to throw away this chance of having a knock at Hilda? Now be quiet!"

Ruby held her breath again, and sat down. Watching Sybil, she saw that girl's lively face clear as swiftly as it had darkened.

The taper hand reached out for another chocolate, and then she stretched herself still more comfortably along the couch.

After eating the chocolate she put up her slender arms so as to clasp her hands behind her cushioned head.

"Come over here, Ruby!" she said. "You think I'm cross, don't you?"

"N-n-n-no, Sybil. Only sometimes you—sometimes you give me a turn!" faltered Ruby, standing beside the couch.

"That's what I love to do!" Sybil answered, smiling adorably. "But I'm a nice girl to you most times, aren't I, Ruby?"

There was a pom-pom beside the couch. Sybil gave Ruby a playful pull that made the girl sit down on the huge cushion. Then she lolled over, rubbing her cheek against Ruby's.

"And you do like doing things to please me, don't you, Ruby?"

"Yes, Sybil. I— Oh, you know how I love being your friend!"

"Very well, then. To please me you are going to play against your own side on Saturday. And that's that!"

of vivacity; so were Evelyn Gray and Hetty Wayne and the rest of the team. But the captain was a prey to misgivings, that was evident.

What wonder, either?

To-day's fixture was one of the big events of the term. Season after season a battle royal had been fought on one ground or another, between Greyhurst Fifth Form and Heathington girls of the same age.

The matches were of the kind that are talked about for a long time afterwards. Victory was a thing to be justly proud of; defeat was a reverse that the losing side could only vow to avenge when the next match came round.

There was a defeat to avenge to-day. And a nice sort of team was Hilda Heathcote at the head of this afternoon!

Fine hopes even the most optimistic could cherish of pulling off a win!

These chums of hers were an absolutely devoted lot, full of esprit de corps, as well of personal affection for the captain. Such count—they count tremendously. But such things would be found to-day in the ranks of the opposing team, plus the skill that many of the Greyhurst girls, through no fault of their own, were sadly lacking in!

Joan, for instance—poor Joan! Her spirit was willing, but could she reasonably expect to count for much on the field of battle?

Then there was Joyce Carroll. A girl can't be brilliant at everything. Joyce was keen on hockey, as she was keen on so many other things; but Hilda Heathcote would rather have seen Joyce fiddle-bow in hand any day than wielding the hockey-stick!

Altogether, out of the entire team, the captain could only count up five players of proved reliability.

Nor was Hilda able to ignore the fact that Sybil Sardone & Co. were only attending the match this afternoon, because it was such a poor team that was to do its level best for the school.

If there had been a good chance of winning, was it likely that Sybil Sardone and her cronies would have come along to help in the cheering? Hardly!

At Heathington—a big junction, serving quite an up-to-date provincial town—the girls from the first-class carriage carried on in boisterous fashion during the short walk to the playing-field.

Hilda stretched a point, and did not order the girls to walk two by two, as they were supposed to do when passing through any main streets. She merely asked them all to keep in fair order. Sybil and the rest wanted to show off, however. They talked at the top of their voices, and sent up peal after peal of loud laughter, attracting as much attention as possible.

At last Hilda felt she must put her foot down.

She turned back to where Sybil, Clarice, and the rest were chattering boisterously outside a shop window.

"Are you girls going to keep with the rest and be a little decent?" she asked quietly.

"Why, we rather thought of turning in here for a bit of light refreshment," grinned Sybil.

"We don't suppose you will win the match before we turn up!" added Clarice.

"Ooo, noo!" chimed in Olive. "We shall be in at the death, noo doot!"

"You'll come along with the team at once!" said Hilda flatly.

"More orders, is that it?" sneered Sybil, spoiling for a flare up. "And supposing we do as we please?"

"I shall report you," said Hilda steadily. "I have given everybody enough licence. If there is any more rowdiness, I will report you without the least hesitation!"

Then she walked on.

She had scored. Sybil & Co. knew that Hilda seldom talked of reporting girls. When she did talk that way, she meant it!

They went without their light refreshment, and were a rather subdued lot for the rest of the way.

The field where the great event was to be fought out was part of the sports ground adjoining Heathington School—a massive new red brick building, very imposing in its way; but Joan and Elsie, like other loyal Greyhurst girls, felt they preferred their own school, stately, grey-walled Greyhurst, lying right out in the open country, instead of on the outskirts of a big town.

Crowds were lining the field of play—score upon score of Heathington scholars, and at least a hundred or more folk of all ages from the town itself.



Ruby swung her stick about stupidly—with deliberate stupidity, some onlookers thought—and then muffed the shot

"You mean—"

"You will see what I mean when the day comes!" laughed Sybil. "Question is, do you really want to play?"

"Yes, Sybil. But only if—"

"Oh, you can play, dear—provided you don't play too well!"

Ruby gave a short laugh.

"I am not likely to do that, Syb. I've played very little hockey."

"How lovely!" smiled Sybil, punching a cushion to rights. "Then you must certainly play, Ruby! I shall be watching, mind, and so—"

She suddenly stopped punching the cushion, and looked full at Ruby.

"So don't let me see you playing too well!"

"But Sybil, if I play at all—"

"There is such a thing as playing to lose. It is good fun, Ruby. Try it!" Sybil nodded across to her. "I happen to know that Hilda Heathcote is jolly keen on beating the Heathington girls this term, just as they beat us last year! Well, I want to see Hilda—disappointed, shall I say?"

"You mean, Sybil, I—we—"

"Oh, you know what I mean!" was the sudden impatient exclamation. "No need to say more, Ruby. You are in my camp, and if Hilda chooses to play to you, that is her look-out! You may be in her team for the day, but you are under my orders always!"

This left Ruby very pale and frightened.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 143.

For the Form—and Against It!

HALF-PAST one on the following afternoon found quite a number of Fifth Form Greyhurst girls getting into the train at Greyhurst Station, Hilda Heathcote was in charge of the party.

According to custom, all girls intending to go to Heathington, either to play in the match or to watch it, had had to give in their names to Hilda, so that she could obtain a railway voucher for the entire party.

How bitterly Sybil Sardone & Co. resented this procedure can be imagined. But there was no evading it. The best those girls could do for themselves, to show their disloyalty to the captain and the school, was to seek a separate compartment for themselves.

This they did, proudly paying the excess which the train guard demanded, when he found the rebel section of the party in a first-class compartment. For Hilda had taken "thirds" for all.

There was no "swank" about Hilda.

Ruby was with Sybil and the rest of "the swell set" in that first-class compartment—the only one of them who was burdened with a hockey-stick. As for Joan and her cousin Elsie, they were, with the rest of the players, in a "third."

As the train now rattled them along, Joan and Elsie were aware of Hilda's mood being a rather subdued one. Joyce Carroll was full

The latter, doubtless, had a natural hope that the home team would win. All the same, the spirit of fair play was in the air.

As the rival teams took their places on the field the ringing cheers went up to hearten the one side just as much as the other.

"Show us a good game, and let the better side win!" That was the essence of all the preliminary applause.

But Hilda would have been happier if there had been no ironical cheers from a certain set of Greyhurst girls.

Play began, and within two minutes of the bully-oft there went up the first sharp cheer, proclaiming a goal.

Heathington had scored already! The townsfolk were delighted. So, needless to say, were all the Heathington School onlookers. Yet all their comments showed that they would have been still better pleased had that first goal been secured against keener opposition.

In other words, Greyhurst had already given itself away as being but a makeshift team.

Hilda was being put to as severe a testing now as any sports captain can know. Some girls in her position would have grown short-tempered, snappish. Hilda remained quite calm. No bitter reproaches when she saw a missed chance or a bit of deplorable play on the part of her team.

She just went on doing the best herself, confident that others were doing their best, too, and that it was not to their discredit if the outlook was hopeless. They should never have been playing in an event of this sort.

"Hurrah!"

Another of those sharp, loud shouts from all the onlookers. Heathington had scored again. They were simply running away with the match!

But a minute later with what a thrill of surprise did the crowd see the home goal suddenly in danger!

The thing had happened so suddenly, only the sharp-eyed watchers had seen. Hilda Heathcote and Elsie Dainton had, passing the ball from one to the other, carried it down the field, and now—now they had the ball close to the home goal, and—

"Look!"

"Goal!"

"Hurrah! Bravo, the visitors!" went up the exhilarating cry. "Well played there—well played!"

"Pip, pip, hooray!" shrilled Sybil and her friends, with mocking faintness.

Yet they need not have begrudged their side that one goal. All too soon the home team scored again, making victory for them seem as certain as ever.

Three—one!

Not a very decisive score at half-time in any ordinary match. But with teams so unequally opposed as were these, how could the second half of the match possibly enable Greyhurst to turn the tables?

In the moment when play was restarted Joan glanced appealingly at her sister, standing lackadaisically a few paces away.

"Do let's buck up, anyhow!" Joan implored her sister frantically. "I feel—Oh, how I wish I could play, that's all! It won't be like this next term, anyhow!"

"We are beaten!" shrugged Ruby. "What's the use of trying? We only make ourselves look all the more ridiculous!"

"No, Ruby—no—" Joan began, and then checked herself as she saw that the ball was in play again.

She was not the only member of her side who meant to fight on to a finish. Joyce, Evelyn, Hetty—those who owned to being some of the worst "duffers" were, at any rate, also the most spirited now.

Their play was not pretty to watch. It was deplorable beside the beautiful work of practised girls like Hilda and Elsie. But they were active; they, at least, tried to be wherever they should have been, instead of letting themselves get lost.

Suddenly applause broke out from the onlookers—applause that the Greyhurst girls deserved—for they had carried the ball skillfully towards their opponent's goal.

The attack, however, seemed to be frustrated. The ball was driven away from the home goal, still in play. Hilda and Elsie had not succeeded this time, and now—

"Oh, good! Well played, there! Why, it's a—"

"Goal!"

Yes, a goal for Greyhurst, after all! A goal scored by Joan Haviland!

How she had managed it Joan didn't know.

She even felt there must be some mistake about it all when she heard that glorious shout go up.

But no; it was a goal, right enough! And she laughed and blushed whilst she mopped her hair to rights, feeling Hilda's grateful glance upon her.

"Now," said Hilda softly, "if we play up for all we're worth we may make it a draw!" "We must—we will!" declared Joan below her breath. "Play up, Ruby Haviland!" "Me? I haven't touched the ball once yet!" grimaced Ruby.

Three—two now, and plenty of time yet! That last goal had rattled Heathington. They were feeling just a little less confident about winning.

"Steady!" was Hilda's one word to her team.

Perfectly steady was she herself as the ding-dong game went on again. So was Elsie Dainton.

For several minutes the game continued in a featureless manner, and suddenly there was talk amongst the onlookers that the last goal had been scored.

Heathington was losing more and more of its dash. Attempts to score were spasmodic, instead of being persistent. As for Greyhurst, one half of the team seemed unable to take more than a perfunctory interest in the game, whilst the rest were apparently thinking only of defence.

Then suddenly—with only another minute or so to go—Hilda, Elsie, and Evelyn were

upon Hilda, striving to intercept her rush to the home goal.

Hilda did the only thing; she saw one of her own players standing all alone in a dreamy fashion, and she sped the ball to her, crying:

"Now, you! Go on—go on!"

"Go on! Go on!" yelled the excited crowd. Whether this was to mean a goal against Heathington or not, it was thrilling play.

The girl who now had the ball was Ruby Haviland.

It was at her feet, as it were. She had only to make one stroke, perhaps, to send the ball slipping right into the home goal. Only one stroke—and there was yet time for her to make it a cool, decisive shot!

She swung her stick about stupidly—with deliberate stupidity, some onlookers thought—and then muffed the shot.

Next instant, with a pack of Heathington girls swooping towards her, a wild burst of cheering marked the end of the game.

Heathington had won by the odd goal!

If Ruby had only taken that shot instead of muffing it the result might very likely have been a tie. No defeat then for Greyhurst, but honours even, anyhow! But Ruby had failed; their side was beaten!

"Never mind," was Hilda Heathcote's only comment, as the players came rushing together.

Joan, however, was almost in tears. "Oh, Ruby, how could you!" she cried out tragically. "It was such a splendid chance!"



"Come on, Ruby!" said Sybil. "No, Ruby—no!" entreated Joan. "Stop—think! Oh, Ruby—don't go!"

seen to be rushing the ball up the field, when the home goal was almost bereft of defenders.

No fluke this time!

Hilda and Elsie had been artfully playing up for this, and at last their chance had come.

But how the Heathington team rallied in a moment!

Back they pelted from the part of the field to which they had been lured. Breathless after this last prolonged bit of play, they dashed to save their goal from disaster, all of them keenly alive to the way they had been taken by surprise.

"Now—now! That's right! Ah! Hurrah! Good!"

So the shouts went up from the excited crowd as the home goal was just saved and the ball was carried back to midfield.

"Now, Heathington! Another goal!" urged the excited Heathington onlookers. "Go on again!"

They came on, every one of them bent on getting the ball into the Greyhurst goal at this very last moment.

But no!

There was Joan. She hooked the ball out somehow, getting it across to Hilda. And up the field flashed the Greyhurst captain again, with hardly a Heathington girl to oppose her.

Then, with a desperate spurt, the Heathington captain and one or two others were

"Well, I missed it!" shrugged Ruby, starting to walk off the field. "And I don't much care, either! Didn't I say I couldn't play hockey?"

"Every girl can at least play her best!" said Elsie Dainton bitterly. "That is, if she wants to!"

Ruby went scarlet then, and walked on without saying another word.

What a Spree!

HERE was to be time for the Greyhurst party to have tea in the town before catching their return train at five-past six.

In a red-and-white tea-lounge at the back of the best pastrycook's shop the girls took their seats by-and-by, and it must have been easy for other patrons of the place to see that the scholars were divided into two separate camps.

There was the Hilda Heathcote section occupying two or three tables in one corner of the lounge; in another corner Sybil Sardone was queening it over her devoted followers.

And whereas the Hilda Heathcote section was duly moderate in its talk and laughter, the Sardone "rebels" were being as hilarious as they could.

The dainty tea was almost finished, when THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 143.

somebody came into the shop with news that caused quite a sensation.

Listening to what passed, the scholars gathered that there had been a big smash up on the railway line between Heathington and Greyhurst.

No one had been hurt, fortunately, for it was a goods-train that had come to grief. But the line was totally blocked; it would be hours before the "breakdown train" could arrive, and perhaps several hours after that before traffic would be resumed.

Sybil flashed round upon her equally excited cronies.

"Do you hear? What a spree!" she whispered gleefully. "We can stay the night in the town! Go to the theatre! You saw the piece the placards are advertising? Oh, how topping!"

The others were about to express delight at this glorious possibility, when Hilda Heathcote came across from the other corner.

"You have heard about the smash?" she said, addressing Sybil as being the recognised leader of the "rebels."

"Yes. We shall get rooms at the Royal Hotel across the way," said Sybil, with amazing audacity.

"You had better not do anything of the sort—at present, anyhow," Hilda rejoined quietly. "I shall go out and telegraph to the school, and then see what can be done."

Sybil stood up then, arranging her furs with elaborate dignity.

"This accident on the line is something out of the ordinary," she said insolently.

"I and my chums don't reckon ourselves to be under your wing now!"

"How do you mean?" asked Hilda, raising her brows. "I am in charge during—" "Piffle!" cut in Sybil. "They are saying it will be five or six hours at least before we can travel. Well, then, I am sure no one at the school—not even the headmistress—would expect us to be kept on a string by you all that time!"

"I am quite sure of my duty in this emergency," said Hilda very steadily. "It is to keep you all together."

"You are not going to keep us kicking our heels for five or six hours in a wretched waiting-room?" Sybil declared flatly. "We—my friends and I—mean to stop the night!"

"Sybil, I warn you—"

"Oh, you will report us, will you? Well, report away! And I and my friends will have our say when we all get back to Greyhurst in the morning!" Sybil exclaimed scornfully. "We shall always insist we were not flouting discipline, mind!"

"Ooh, noo!" put in Olive Courtney. "Five or six hours, you know, Hilda! Too offy trying!"

"I am not asking you to kick your heels in any waiting-room," Hilda answered. "Of course, if we cannot get on to-night we must all stop somewhere. But I am going to get the whole party home if it can be managed—and I think it can!"

Sybil simply ignored the captain then. She beckoned to the waitress, asking for the bill for herself and her cronies.

"Come on, Ruby—Clarice—all of you!"

she remarked, having received the docket. "Whist we are arguing we might be enjoying ourselves!"

Hilda took hold of her by the sleeve, and then, before all the other people in the shop, the two girls met each other's eyes.

"You mean to do this, Sybil?"

"Certainly! You will find me and my chums over at the Royal Hotel—either there or at the theatre!"

And, haughtily shaking her slender arm free from the Form captain's hand, she marched on to the pay-desk.

Clarice Choane minced after her, giving a little ripple of laughter. The others, too, were treating the whole thing as a "topping spree"—all save Ruby.

For her this was another of those moments when the "rebels" folly was her misery. She hung back, took a hesitant step at last, then halted again.

"Where is Ruby?" Sybil said out loud, at the shop doorway. "Come on, Ruby!"

"No, Ruby—no!" was the sudden whisper of entreaty from Joan. "Stop—think! Oh, Ruby, don't go!"

Ruby looked at her sister, hesitated, and then went. And all of a sudden Joan sank back in one of the basket-chairs, with the eyes of Hilda, Joyce, Evelyn, and all the rest upon her!

(Will Sybil and her reckless friends really carry out that daring idea of going to a theatre? Another fascinating, long instalment of this grand new school serial in next week's SCHOOL FRIEND. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)



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,—No doubt many of you remember the time when Augusta Anstruther-Browne, of the Fourth Form at Cliff House, was one of Sybil Spender's closest friends. In those days she cared little for the school and for the girls. She was purse-proud, vain, and reckless. At that time, she never gave a thought to earning her own living—she never thought for one moment that she would have to. Since then, however, Augusta's circumstances have changed, and she, too, has changed. She earns her living, as you will read in this week's story, and her action should cause you to admire her more than you have ever done before. Knowing in her own mind that she is innocent of the charge levelled against her, she is resolved to prove her innocence in the eyes of all Cliff House. That the task is by no means an easy one, you can see. But Augusta will not give in, and thus in next Thursday's story of the girls of Cliff House School, you will find that she is willing to do anything that will assist her to clear her name. The title of this story is

"THE SCHOOLGIRL WAITRESS!"

By Hilda Richards.

Of course, Augusta is the waitress, and she is employed at the Courtfield Creameries, the tea-rooms frequently visited by the girls of Cliff House. Can you imagine how Augusta is treated when Connie Jackson & Co. visit the Creameries, and are waited upon by the expelled girl.

A point of special interest in next week's narrative is the introduction of Sybil Spender, Augusta's friend in the old days. Many of you will remember Sybil, the spendthrift, the girl who thought of nothing but her own pleasures. Augusta completely broke off her friendship with Sybil. I wonder, therefore, whether you can guess what happens when in next week's story Sybil expresses the desire to renew the friendship. Well, I am not, of course, going to tell you here. This will come as a big surprise when you read the story.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 143.

There will be another magnificent instalment of

"JOAN HAVILAND'S SILENCE!"

By Joy Phillips

in our next issue. You have read enough of this story to know that there will not be a dull line in the next instalment.

More extracts from the

"CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY!"

will appear next week, and they will be as interesting and varied as usual.

THE GREAT NEW PAPER!

I must again draw your attention to the fact that No. 1 of a great new paper, the "Girls' Favourite," is out this week. Published yesterday, Wednesday, no doubt most of you have already procured a copy of this paper. I strongly advise the rest of you not to delay, or you are almost certain to be met by the chilly words: "Sold out!" You will find the list of contents of No. 1 on page 23 of this issue, and you will see that the new paper is simply crammed with splendid stories and articles. The stories are by writers who have long been established favourites, and the articles are of a kind to appeal to all girls. The competition is most attractive, and as to the superb coloured plate—well, I promise you you will not be satisfied until you have had it framed and hung up in your room!

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.)

"An Admirer of the School Friend" (Herne Bay).—I will see if Meg Lennox and Cissie Clare cannot each be given a prominent part

later. The Cliff House colours are red and white.

"An Enthusiastic Gymnast" (Bolton).—There is every probability that the Girls of Cliff House and Morcov schools will meet in the future. Bessie Bunter's weight is still a mystery. I will bear in mind your suggestion regarding a gymnastic display.

"A Sittingbourne Lassie" (Kent).—I cannot promise that a Correspondence Club will ever be run in connection with the "School Friend." The answer to your next two questions is—No. See reply to "An Enthusiastic Gymnast."

"Eileen" (Park Farm, Hinckley).—Very interested to learn which characters are your favourites. I quite agree with you that no girl is better able to fill the post of captain of the Fourth than Barbara Redfern. I cannot yet promise another art plate of Bessie Bunter. Bessie has two brothers—no sister. Doris Redfern and Madge Stevens will receive prominence time and again. Thanks for your keen appreciation of the "Cliff House Weekly." The result of the competition will be published very shortly.

"Iris and Pansy" (Watford).—Very pleased to learn that you have been readers of the "School Friend" ever since the commencement. I can assure you that many readers hold the same record.

"Cyril and Jack" (Antrim).—At your ages, thirteen and fourteen years, you would most probably be placed in the Upper Third and Fourth Forms respectively at Cliff House. Stella Stone has no brother.

"A Bookworm".—I will see what can be done in the way of a description of a dance at Cliff House. Augusta Anstruther-Browne's hair is now exactly the same in length and style as when she was introduced into the story. It is doubtful whether Sheba Stanton will ever return to Cliff House.

"Critique".—I am afraid I cannot quite see eye to eye with you in your criticism.

Your Sincere Friend

YOUR EDITOR.

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