

Now on Sale! No. 2 of "THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE"!

No. 144. Vol. 6.

Week Ending February 11th, 1922.

The School Friend

Every **2^d** Thursday.



SCORNFUL FOR EARNING HER LIVING!

An incident from "The Schoolgirl Waitress!" the magnificent long complete story of the Girls of Cliff House School, contained in this issue.

Also in this issue:

"JOAN HAVILAND'S SILENCE!"

A Great New School Serial. By JOY PHILLIPS.

PICTURE PUZZLE COMPETITION RESULT!

(List of Prizewinners, continued from last week.)

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

Phyllis K. Pearce, Farm Cottage, Summerhill Park, Sion Hill, Bath; Nellie Payn, 82, Ensbury Park Road, Winton, Bournemouth; Edith Robinson, 40, Bower Street, Higher Broughton, Manchester; Doris Valentine, 82, Iona Road, Glasnevin, Dublin; Phoebe Hill, 35, Angus Street, West Hartlepool, Co Durham; Elizabeth Ainsworth, 7, Cecil Street, off Wellington Road, Coppice, Oldham; Deborah Jarcover, 29, Emma Street, Llanelly, South Wales; Anna Berry, Long Lane Farm, Bickerstaffe, nr. Ormskirk; Rhoda E. Reed, Outfield Farm, Downside, Backwell, Somerset; Dora Hitchen, 38, Devonshire Road, Blackpool, Lancs.; Violet Richardson, 45, Stafford Street, Walsall; Mary G. Fowell, 11, Howick Terrace, Tweedmouth, Berwick-on-Tweed; Gladys Parkhouse, 5, Barbadoes Road, Kilmarnock, Scotland; Winnie McMahon, 54, Fernie Street, Maryhill, Glasgow; Gladys Dodd, 373, Ivydale Road, Peckham Rye, S.E. 15; Dorothy Kingshott, Moor Hill, Petockstowe, Dolton, Devon; Violet K. Montford, 52, Crowndale Road, Camden Town, N.W. 1; Bettie Parsons, 18, Rutland Street, Leicester; Ruth Hockenhill, 141, Honeywell Lane, Oldham; Rosa Thompson, 6, York Road, South Ealing, W. 5; Grace Grant, 36, West High Street, Inverurie; Gertrude Whyte, 25, Duff Street, Aberdeen; Lucy John, The Bungalow, Little Road, Cornelly, Pyle, Bridgend; Elsie Almond, Ivy Villa, 29, Pembroke Road, Erith, Kent; Marjorie E. Wood, 16, Cuthbert Road, Brighton; Clarice Blakeley, 4, Jackson's Row, Loxley, nr. Sheffield; Ivy Smith, 55, Lucien Road, Upper Tooting, S.W. 17; Miss B. Sainsbury, 6, The Pavement, Kingston Road, Teddington; Minnie David, Farlowe,

Algeron Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham; Evelyn Piercy, 7, Edwards Avenue, Holmes Street, Beech Street, Hull; Miss M. H. Willson, 5, St. Ann's Road, Westfield Road, Hornsey, N. 8; Alice Mary Twigg, 4, Granville Street, Peterborough; Doreen Baker, Stratford Knoll, Stratford Road, Salisbury; Winnie Leake, The Cottage, Sutton House, Sutton, nr. Hull; Jenny Boyle, 1276, Paisley Road West, Bellahouston, Glasgow; Penelope Whiteside, 28, Lower Belgrave Street, Eaton Square, S.W. 1; Margaret McConnochie, 27, Stuart Avenue, Scotstown, Glasgow; Elsie Chamberlain, Charles Street, Sibley, Leicestershire; Jean W. Ramsay, 37, Bellevue Crescent, Ayr, Scotland; Kathleen Broadbent, 21, Grove Street, Huddersfield; Minnie Ritson, 9, Lucknow Villas, Coach Road, Whitehaven; Phyllis Antrobus, 24, Peel Street, Prince's Park, Liverpool; Mary Pearson, 68, Gell Street, off Glossop Road, Sheffield; Ruby Wheeler, 36, Pellatt Road, East Dulwich, S.E. 22; Bessie Eaton, 3, Oakley Road, Shirley, Southampton; Josephine Johnstone, 134, Garvary Road, Custom House, E. 16; Gertie Chaplin, 2, Langford Road, Buckland, Portsmouth; Winifred Naucarrow, 23, Cambridge Road, Southend-on-Sea; Miss E. Cottrell, 95, Oxford Road, Lintborpe, Middlesbrough; J. Potter, 3, Penrhos Terrace, Miller Street, Birmingham; Elsie R. Flowers, Boar's Hill, nr. Oxford; Dorothy Wakefield, Forest Cottage, Bestwood Road, Bulwell, Nottingham; Miss N. Payne, 7, Ravensworth Road, Doncaster; Mary B. Thomas, 3, Buckley Terrace, Llanfairfechan, North Wales; Elsie Neale, 2b, Ashtree Avenue, Lewis Road, Mitcham; Doris M. Silvester, 2, The Cottages, Foxcombe Hill, nr. Oxford; Doris Pepin, 49, Richmond Park Road, Bourne-mouth; Mabel Nightingale, Aintree, Moorfield Road, Orpington, Kent; Norah Shoemith, Harwarton Farm, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells; Violet M. Gower, 93, Beres-

ford Road, Hornsey, N. 8; Miss E. Rider, 1a, Ferndale Road, Waterloo, nr. Liverpool; Clara M. Gunn, 6, Hubert Street, Hyson Green, Nottingham; Edie Alice Smith, 59, Sedgford Road, Shepherd's Bush, W. 12; Dorothy A. Boxall, Lausanne, 61, Rolle Road, Exmouth, Devon; Elsie Gilbert, Rose Farm, Kenton Lane, Harrow-Weald, Middlesex; Mabel G. Solly, 7, Wellington Road, Deal, Kent; Cissy Morse, 97, Chetwynd Road, Highgate Road, N.W. 5; Marjorie Apted, Radlett House, Southwood Lane, Highgate, N.; Edna Haydock, 76, Waids House Road, Nelson, Lancs.; Doris Stark, 11, Golden Dog Lane, Calvert Street, Norwich; Muriel Mitchell, 4, Windsor Street, Dundee; Jessie W. Cossar, 16, Butterburn Park, Hamilton, Scotland; Annie Williams, Clydfan, Newtown, Glynneath, Glamorgan; Mabel Adamson, Mossiel, Station Road, Hesse, E. Yorks.; Grace Lane, 33, College Place, Brighton; Winifred Martin, 12, Grant Street, Brighton; Ethel Child, 50, King's Avenue, Watford; Kathleen G. Orchard, 54, Sheridan Road, Manor Park, E. 12; Maisie Oldfield, 188, Lightwood's Hill, Warley, Birmingham; Dorothy Dawson, 304, Prestwood Road, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton; Therese Hawley, 31, Church Street, Upper Street, Islington, N.; Freda Chadwick, 16, Dudley Road, Sale, Cheshire; Joyce Pegg, The Beacon, Ockbrook, nr. Derby; Florence Higgs, 52, Chacefield Road, Tooting, S.W. 17; Christine F. Ludgater, 9, Windsor Road, Westcliff-on-Sea; Peggy McGirr, 584, Shettleston Road, Parkhead, Glasgow; Miss N. Stringfellow, 69, Shuttlewood Road, Bolsover, nr. Chesterfield; Winifred Barry, 35, McCurtain Street, Cork; Kathleen Jagger, 183, Frederick Street, Oldham; Ruth Harding, 29, Staunton Street, Lincoln; Louisa Crawford, Dame Margaret's Home, Washington, Co. Durham; Doris M. Forbes, 49, Balfour Street, Kettering.

(A further list of prizewinners, with correct solutions, will be published next week.)

FREE BOOK OF BARGAINS, 7½d to £6, Free & Post

Free-Watches 7/11 to 50/-. Clocks, Jewellery, Accordions, Useful Goods, Novelties, Toys, Etc.

A Big Novelty -

Pocket Cinema

and 100 Real

Cinema Film

Pictures 1/.

Postage 2d.

Delights or

Money Back.

Fain's Presents

House, Dept. 14P, Hastings.



2/- MONTHLY.

Costumes, Suits, Winter Coats, Children's Clothing, Household Linen, Footwear, Jewellery, Catalogues Free. Easy Terms.—CASTLE SUPPLY CO., Dept. S.F., NORWICH.

STARTING IN THIS WEEK'S SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN.



By GERTRUDE NELSON.

CUT THIS OUT

* School Friend. PEN COUPON. Value 2d.

Send 15 of these coupons with only 2/9 direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4. You will receive by return a Splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6 (Fine, Medium, or Broad Nib). If only 1 coupon is sent, the price is 4/9, 2d. being allowed for each extra coupon up to 12. (Pocket Clip, 4d. extra.) This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the SCHOOL FRIEND readers. Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. Foreign post extra.

Lever Self-Filling Model, with Safety Cap, 2/- extra.



Preserve Your Youth and Beauty

In all weathers the skin and complexion can be kept wonderfully clear and soft—thus preserving youth and beauty—by the regular use of Icilma Cream, the world's best known All-British toilet cream. Foamy, fragrant, non-greasy—vanishes better than vanishing cream.

Even the first application soothes a wind-burned skin (try it for cracked lips too).

Icilma Cream

Price 1/3; large pot 2/-, everywhere. Flesh-tinted Cream, 1/9 per pot. Icilma Bouquet Face Powder (two tints—Naturaelle and Creme), 2/6 per box.

Use it daily and look your best

Two nice Shampoos for the Hair.

A Shampoo with an Icilma Shampoo Sachet (WET) is far and away the nicest way to wash the Hair. It cleanses—preserves—beautifies. Then between times, or when inconvenient, have a dry Shampoo with Icilma Hair Powder (DRY). Both sold in 3d. packets.

The Schoolgirl Waitress!



Loyal to Augusta!

PASS the soap!" "Lend me the scrubber!" "Does this look clean?" "Yoooooon! It's hot!" The last exclamation, which came from Bessie Bunter, quite drowned all the other utterances.

The dance that Bessie Bunter executed, as she waved her fat, wet hands in the air, was a most unsuitable dance for such a tiny place as the room known as the "Wash Up" at Cliff House.

"Bessie! Stand still!" gasped Barbara Redfern.

"But my hands——"

"Bother your hands!"

"But I've burnt them!"

"We know it," said Clara Trevlyn, laying a strong but wet hand on Bessie's sleeve. "And if you dance any more I shall jolly well sit you in that tub of hot water! Savvy?"

Bessie Bunter evidently "savvied," and stopped jumping about.

Even with Bessie still, however, it was a most extraordinary sight.

This was Wednesday afternoon at Cliff House. It was fine and warm, and the sun shone bravely from the sky with an early promise of spring. It was the sort of day that should have lured every girl out of doors on such a beautiful "halfer." It had failed, however, to lure twelve members of the Fourth Form.

Far from going out, they had stayed to convert the "Wash Up" into a miniature laundry. There were tubs of hot water, and rubbing-boards, and soap of all kinds.

Clara Trevlyn wrung out a garment with lusty vigour, shook it out again, and held it up. It proved itself to be one of the familiar Cliff House cookery aprons.

"Is it clean, Annabel?" she asked.

Annabel Hichens, soapy up to her elbows, but with a very pleased and satisfied expression on her homely face, gravely regarded the garment.

This was Annabel's day!

Annabel, the old-fashioned girl of the Fourth, had come into her own with a vengeance. For long she had sung the song of the happy home (maintaining that woman's place was in the home, and nowhere else) to deaf ears. To-day, Annabel was in supreme and absolute charge. She was the director of washing, and everything had got to be done in Annabel's way, and satisfy Annabel's critical eye.

"Very much better than last time, Clara!" said Annabel gravely. "Yes, it is quite clean now, and—— Oh, you clumsy girl! You've dragged it on the

floor! Now it will have to be washed again!"

Clara grimaced, and seemed to be on the point of saying something contradictory. But she did not. With a rueful grin she returned the apron to the water.

Clara knew, quite well, that she was not a domesticated girl; Annabel had often told her that. Washing clothes was a new art to Clara, as it was to most of them; they certainly did not do their own laundering at Cliff House as a rule. The special reason for this extraordinary "stunt" made Clara continue with her labours with quite a good heart.

Rub, rub, rub!

Splash, splash!

"Pass the soap, Marjorie!"

It was Peggy Preston who paused suddenly, and sighed.

"We're doing our best," she said. "I do hope we're in time. Mrs. Pickles has offered to dry them all in front of the fire for us, and we can iron them this evening. That ought to satisfy Miss Primrose until the others turn up."

"Do you really think they will come, Peggy?" asked Vivienne Leigh quietly.

"They must—they must!" Peggy answered. "Oh, Viv, I can't believe that those fifty aprons that Augusta had made can disappear for long. If Judy Grigg

took them, as we believe she did, they must have been put somewhere!"

And there, in a few words, Peggy Preston had explained the meaning of this extraordinary scene.

Augusta Anstruther-Browne had been expelled from Cliff House just a week to-day. Attempted theft had been the charge brought against her, but there was hardly a girl in the Fourth who had not believed that the story Augusta told was true, and that she was innocent of the charge.

More, Augusta had acted in just the way that they would only expect a guiltless girl to act. She had gone to live with her aunt, who kept the little drapery shop in Courtfield, refusing to leave the neighbourhood. Too proud to live on charity, she had, with Peggy Preston's help, secured a contract to make fifty cookery aprons, to replace some that had been accidentally destroyed at the laundry.

Fifty! It had been a gigantic task for a girl so little accustomed to using the needle, but sheer will power had made Augusta finish the stupendous undertaking. She had packed the aprons to come to Cliff House, but—— They had never arrived! It was a hamper of old clothes, and papers, and oddments, that had turned up at the school, and poor Augusta's tiring week's work had utterly vanished.

That disaster had happened that morning.

That was Peggy Preston's nimble brain that had seen the only way of giving Augusta a respite in which to find out who had taken the aprons, and where they were, and she had soon found eleven volunteers ready to give up part of their half-holiday to help Augusta in her hour of need.

The girls had come over here with their soap and their tubs just as soon as dinner was over. From the Model Kitchen they had fetched the soiled set of aprons already overdue for the laundry, and they were washing them. That accounted for all the activity and unaccustomed toil in the "Wash Up."

"They must be found soon!" Peggy Preston went on again, after a silence. "If only that girl, Judy Grigg, could be found we ought to find out for certain where they are!"

"And the five-pound note, too—the one that Augusta says Judy stole from her aunt!" put in Dolly Jobling, who had managed, in her usual clumsy way, to smother herself with soapsuds and splashes.

"The one that Judy Grigg has got!" stated Peggy. "I've never had any doubt that Augusta spoke the truth when she explained it to us. Judy stole the

The Welsh Girl of the Fourth Form.



LUCY MORGAN.

Next Portrait:

THE THINNEST GIRL IN THE FOURTH FORM.

note from Augusta's aunt when she needed it most, and nearly ruined her. Augusta guessed that she had it; and by following her saw her hide it in a book in Hetty Hendon's study. And all through trying to be merciful she attempted to shield Judy, let her get away again, and then made that mistake of taking a note that Hetty herself had hidden, thinking that it was the one that her aunt had lost."

"It was a great mistake," nodded Barbara Redfern. "Of course, Miss Primrose had to take the official view, I suppose, especially as no second five-pound note could be found to prove Augusta's statement."

"No, Judy Grigg didn't really hide the note there at all—she must have changed her mind, or have seen that Augusta knew what she was doing," added Marjorie Hazeldene. "And she's so artful, too!"

"Artful!" exclaimed Clara, squelching a fresh pinafore into the water. "Artful isn't the word! Until last night Judy was here as a servant at the school. She's had to meet us in the daytime, and Augusta at night, because she lives over the shop where Augusta's living. For a whole week she didn't give us a chance to prove anything against her, although she must have had that stolen note in her possession all the time."

"She did!" broke in Babs, turning from her tub for a moment's respite.

"We know now that Judy had it, because she tried to change it with Uncle Clegg last night, then lost her nerve and stuck to it. If we'd had a bit of luck we would have caught her with it—"

"But we had no luck," went on Mabel Lynn dejectedly. "Just fancy! We saw her trying to hide it, and let her escape. Then we found her again, but we'd given her time to trick us. Although we accused her, and although the matron searched her, the note couldn't be found—she'd had time to hide it somewhere. And so she got away from the school."

"Yes—to work that trick on Augusta last night, and hide the aprons," said Peggy Preston bitterly. "And now, where is Judy? Staying away from the school, because she dare not come again and face us!"

"But Augusta's bound to be able to find her, I should think!" said Phyllis Howell. "Judy really cannot have gone far. And I should think that she can't have done anything more than hide those aprons!"

"Let's hope not!" said Babs; and the vigour of her scrubbing showed how she felt.

Scrub, scrub!

Splash! Bubble, bubble!

"Now, then, Bessie Bunter!" exclaimed Clara Trevlyn, looking over her shoulder. "You're not doing any work! Buckle into it!"

"I—I'm waiting for the water to cool

down!" said Bessie. "After jolly well scalding my hands once—"

"Don't talk so much, Fatima!" advised Clara. "You do overwork your chin, you know. It would be much better if you used all that energy and did something!"

"I ain't going to burn my hands for anyone!"

"I'll rub my soapy ones on your face in a minute!" threatened Clara.

Bessie Bunter retreated backwards.

"Don't you dare to— Yarooooop!"

It was a shriek of alarm that Bessie Bunter gave, and it was followed by a terrific splash.

Flop! It sounded as though a tidal wave had suddenly smitten the floor.

"What the—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" burst out Clara. "Girls! Just look at her! She's sitting in the rinsing water!"

The girls turned to look at Bessie, and they pealed with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!—Help! Oh dear!" gasped Bessie Bunter. "I say, there's nothing to grin about! Ooooo! What ever shall I do? I'm soaked—absolutely soaked!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Annabel Hichens was the only one not laughing; but Annabel had not much sense of humour, especially on washing-day.

"Come you out of there!" she exclaimed.

"Eh?" gasped Bessie.

"That's rinsing water, and you've spilt it all on the floor—"

"Oh, I say!" gasped Bessie, lumbering to her feet. "Of all the ingratitude—"

"Goodness gracious!"

That exclamation, in a severe and familiar voice, put an end to even Bessie Bunter's speech, wrathful as it might have been.

Miss Primrose, the headmistress of the school, was gazing at them!

"This— Really, this most extraordinary scene—"

"We're washing the cookery aprons, Miss Primrose," Babs put in quickly.

"Washing them?" repeated Miss Primrose. "But—but surely—"

"It is because of that horrid trick played upon Augusta this morning," Babs rushed on to explain; and then she told exactly what they had taken on themselves to do, so that there would be no immediate necessity for new aprons to be obtained.

Miss Primrose's face was a study as she listened to Babs.

"You have certainly made a great splashing in here, girls," she said. "But—well, under the circumstances, I can pardon that. I have never known such a thing as this to be done at Cliff House before, but now that you have got so far, I will not try and stop you. Do you hope to finish the work this afternoon?"

"We've nearly finished now, Miss Primrose," Babs exclaimed. She hesitated for a moment. "When we had done we were coming to you to ask you if you would give Augusta a few days in which to try and find those missing aprons before ordering new ones elsewhere—"

"Do you girls really feel certain that Augusta did make fifty aprons?" asked the headmistress slowly.

"Yes, Miss Primrose!" answered Peggy eagerly. "And for her to lose them, after so much work, would be an awfully serious loss—"

"For herself and her aunt—yes, I quite understand that!" Miss Primrose nodded.

"I gave the order, and I do not wish to go back upon my word. I only want to see the garments found and brought here, and I will willingly grant time for that now that you have all been so busy.



MY REMINISCENCES!

By MISS PRIMROSE'S CAT.

Assisted by KATIE SMITH (Fourth Form.)

AM I surprised to be stopped and asked to tell my story? (asked the cat). Not a bit, Katie Smith—not a bit! I'm known to be a fellow who has a very taking way with him!

No, I'm not going to apologise for calling you Katie, because I'm Miss Primrose's cat, you see. That gives me privileges that you wouldn't tolerate from that tabby fellow in the kitchen. In fact, I feel so important and dignified at times that I don't even stop to be petted, as you probably know. I never do when Dolly Jobling's about, because she's always so clumsy that she's sure to stand on my feet as much as she does on her own! As for Clara Trevlyn—well, Clara says she has a "short way with cats," and I know it! No, I don't like Clara a bit—especially since she caught me sitting on her best hat!

Reminiscences, did you repeat? Well, you can take that one of Clara's for a start. I love sitting on hats, especially nice clean and new ones that won't soil my fur. I've often been to Connie Jackson's study, because she has such nice soft things, and I got on one of her hats once. But I was offended when Connie started to beat me, and someone looked in the door and said "Two of them!" It made me so furious that I gave Connie an awful scratch, and managed to get away.

I can't say, Katie, that I'm really fond of your French mistress, Mademoiselle Lupin. You see, she's got such excitible ways. When she talks to me in French I can never understand what she means. Fancy calling a nice piece of meat "du viand"! And she calls me "Poosee"—a name I can't stand! I'm not a Poosee at all—I'm a Persian!

Then I don't forget that awful affair that happened in the class-room one day. Mademoiselle carried me in to give a lesson on "le chat"—another name she's got for me. I'll admit that it's nicer to be called a Shar than a Poosee, but I don't like it. Well, she said such a lot of stupid things that I got quite scared, and bolted. There was a chase for me, of course. Being mademoiselle, they all took advantage of the fact, and joined in the chase. You never saw such a scene in your life—about twenty-three people chasing one poor cat, and mademoiselle shrieking to me, and shrieking to the others to sit down, and all that sort of thing. I thought I'd better get out of it, so I bolted up the chimney, never realising what a sooty place it was!

Soot! Phew! It absolutely spoiled my coat for weeks after that! I struggled and scratched, and fell—right on mademoiselle! Yes, in her stupid French way she was looking up to see if I had got to the top or not. I fell right on her—thud! She did look black about it, and there were no more French lessons that morning.

Do I like Piper, you ask? No, I don't! I consider that Piper is a disagreeable fellow. In fact, ever since we had a little disagreement over a breakfast bloater that I borrowed from his plate for a few minutes, we haven't been on speaking terms.

Yes, Katie, I love my mistress. Cats are not always supposed to be affectionate, but I know that I should pine if I were separated from Miss Primrose. I'm absolutely a confidant of hers, and I could tell you heaps of things if it wasn't for the fact that I absolutely refuse to give away secrets. But I've sat on her lap and looked up at her, and she's been looking at me, her kindly eyes full of tears, and murmuring: "Can I do anything? Is it possible for me to take any other course? Can I not try to save the girl somehow from the consequences of her action?" And at such times I rise, and arch my back, and just give her hand one lick, and I know that she always understands.

I believe Augusta accused that girl Judy of having tampered with them?"

"Yes, she did, Miss Primrose," said Peggy. "And it must have been Judy, too!"

"It is rash to make such a statement, Peggy," Miss Primrose answered, with just a touch of dignity. "At the same time, I realise how you feel. You know the evidence on which Augusta was expelled from this school, and you know that I was angry with you for having anything more to do with her. Augusta's story seemed impossible to believe at the time, but I have been reflecting upon it all the morning."

"And you have changed your mind —" Peggy began with trembling eagerness.

"No, Peggy!" the headmistress put in. "The evidence remains the same, except that I at last have fairly definite proof that Judy has had a five-pound note in her possession—a statement that I could not believe before. What that means I cannot tell, but I will say this much: I want to see that girl Judy and interrogate her. If you can find out where she is you may rest assured that I shall do all in my power to find out the truth in all these conflicting statements. That is all I can say at present. I want you to see that this place is cleaned up when you have finished."

With that, Miss Primrose closed the door and vanished. But there was a light of hope in Peggy Preston's eyes that had not been there since first the blow had fallen and torn Augusta from their midst.

"You heard that, Babs?" she cried. "You know what that means? Miss Primrose hasn't spoken like that before! Cunning as Judy has been, I believe she's given herself away at last. If only we can find her, and get her to Miss Primrose somehow— Oh, I'm certain that she'll be made to speak the truth!" She gripped Babs' shoulders, heedless of the soapy condition of her hands. "It means, Babs, that we're going to win—that we'll still prove that Augusta is not a thief!"

Out of the Past!

WHERE was Augusta Anstruther-Browne whilst all this was taking place?

Miserable and downhearted after her days and nights of unremitting toil, Augusta sat in the living-room behind her aunt's little shop in Courtfield.

She had not traced Judy Grigg.

She had made all sorts of inquiries that morning. She had searched everywhere. No one could tell her anything except that Judy had left Cliff House without giving notice, and gone to some place to "live in."

Almost as upset as Augusta, Mrs. Sarah Browne, her aunt, had gone to the top of the house and conducted a search of what had been Judy's room, but never a sight of one of the missing pinafores had she found.

They were gone—and with them went the price that Augusta should have been paid for her week's hard work, and her aunt's profit, and the money to pay for special material they had bought!

Her aunt's business was a very small one, and the takings only sufficient to support one person. For a week Augusta had thought that she was earning her living well, but that was all gone now.

There were, of course, girls at Cliff House who would still willingly lend her money. She thought instantly of Peggy Preston. Peggy, whose kindness and trust in the hours of crisis, had so encouraged her, would lend her everything



"WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAD A MAGIC WAND?"

The replies received to Freda Foote's Amazing Question.

MARJORIE HAZELDENE.—Wave it over Dolly Jobling's frying-pan, so that it grew so big that she could not lift it on to the fire without the assistance of ten other girls. (And Dolly would never find ten to help her!)

CLARA TREVLYN.—Flourish it over my wardrobe, and speak these words: "Turn into beautiful clothes that will please Marjorie and will also please me, will not tear or soil, or go into holes, will not pick up spots of grease left by Dolly Jobling after her cookery sessions, and will always change their shape and colour whenever necessary!" I'm afraid the magic wand would burst under the strain!

DOLLY JOBLING (after listening to the above).—Wave it over Marjorie, so that she was strong enough to lift the frying-pan whenever necessary; then wave it over Clara's feet, so that they shrank to average size, and did not kick things lying on the floor.

BARBARA REDFERN (busy preparing the "Weekly").—I should turn you into a puff of wind, Freda, and then open the door and the window. Savvy?

MABEL LYNN.—I should turn Bessie Bunter into the same size as her parrot, and then we could put her into the cage, and leave her there when she made herself such a nuisance as she proved this evening!

BESSIE BUNTER (with dignity).—I should not be at all spiteful. I should wave it over the Fourth Form, so that everyone got as good a figure as I have got, and then wave it over the tuckshop, so that there was always plenty of food to support such a fine crowd of girls. (Too awful to contemplate!—F. F.)

MEG LENNOX.—Wave it over Miss Bullivant, so that she was suddenly transformed into a lady dressed in the height of fashion. It would be such a relief to all of us who are careful about dress, I'm sure!

KATIE SMITH.—A magical wand? Whew! I should turn the ground for half a mile around Cliff House into an island, and I should make Friardale and Courtfield two other islands, one of them inhabited by savages. We should have heaps of fun then!

FRANCES BARRETT (Sixth).—Don't ask me such foolish questions! (Which leaves the answer to me. Frances, I expect, would smash all the electric light fittings while waving the wand, and then trip over it in the dark! It's the sort of thing that Frances usually does!—F. F.)

MARCIA LOFTUS (with great sarcasm).—I should turn dear Barbara and all her beautiful chums into fairies, as I know they consider themselves next door to fairies at present, and then they could be quite happy sitting on toadstools and picking buttercups, and Cliff House would be better off without them.

NANCY BELL.—Imitate Sleeping Beauty, and go to sleep until it was time for me to leave Cliff House.

LADY HETTY HENDON.—I am most surprised to hear you a-talking about magic wands, and I really wish you would have a little more sense, Freda! There is no such thing as magic wands, but if there was I should try and turn some of you into ladies like myself.

PHYLLIS HOWELL.—Give you a tap with it, Freda, so that instead of perpetrating all your jokes on us you would prefer to write them out instead—with invisible ink, so that no one could read them!

ANNABEL HICHENS.—Get you away! I am really surprised that you haven't something better to do than to ask such nonsensical questions, especially when you see I am busy cleaning out. What? Abolish dust and cleaning? Stupid! Woman wouldn't have a place in the home then!

PHILIPPA DERWENT.—A magic wand? Easy! I should simply bring Tasmania over to this side of the world, so that one could row from Pegg to Tasmania, my home, in about half an hour!

she had, and write home for more. But Augusta's stubborn pride would never allow her to accept what she could not pay back—what would only be charity.

What was she to do now? She must work, or starve, or go to those relations who could afford to keep her. Go to them as a girl expelled for stealing!

"I can never think of leaving Courtfield—never!" she muttered. "I'd do anything before that! If I stop here I shall catch Judy Grigg sooner or later. She is the girl who can prove my innocence—who can produce those aprons that she has stolen as well!"

Always was that fierce determination, kindled afresh by the shabby trick played on her by Judy, with Augusta. But always it was followed by the other haunting thought—how was she to live? She must earn her living some way—she must!

There was a lot of unemployment in Courtfield. Who would want an expelled girl? Who would take her on trust?

"Augusta, dear!" She looked up suddenly as she heard her aunt's voice, and saw the wrinkled face of the woman who had treated her with such kindness and consideration.

"Yes, aunt?" "I want to go out for five minutes," said Aunt Sarah. "If it would not be troubling you in—in any way—"

"To keep an eye on the shop, aunt?"

"Yes, Augusta—if you don't mind."

"Oh, I don't mind!" responded Augusta. "I shall be pleased to do my best to serve anyone, aunt."

"Thanks very much, Augusta. I shan't be long."

But she was immersed again in her troubles almost immediately. It was in a kind of dream that she suddenly heard the sound of a coin being tapped on the makeshift shop counter.

"A customer!" she breathed, and rose to her feet.

She walked into the shop, not giving the elegantly dressed girl a second glance as she passed behind the counter. It was a gasp from the customer that suddenly brought Augusta to herself. She looked up, and her heart seemed to miss a beat.

"Augusta!" breathed a cooing, startled voice.

Augusta gazed at a smiling, familiar face, with tinted cheeks and coloured lips.

"Sybil Spender!" she muttered.

A delicate white hand appeared on the counter, but Augusta did not offer to take it. Nor did she deign a smile of greeting. She knew Sybil well, for in the days when she had been the richest girl in the school Sybil had been her closest friend. But when poverty had descended upon Augusta, she had been quickly snubbed by the girl from Spender

Court. Sybil was selfish, idle, snobbish, ready to stop at little in her quest for pleasure, and Augusta could think of no girl whom she could have met less willingly than this girl who had this instant suddenly re-entered her life.

"It is Augusta, I suppose?" said Sybil, in a puzzled voice.

"Yes," said Augusta.

"Then, why not shake hands at this fortunate meeting?"

"I'd rather not, if it's all the same to you!" said Augusta.

Sybil stared for a moment, then broke into a sudden peal of laughter.

"Dear me!" she said mincingly. "Her ladyship is on her dignity to-day. She is not at home to those drestle people from Spender Court!" She dropped the banter suddenly, by no means perturbed by Augusta's distant manner. "But what are you doing here, Augusta? Is this some colossal jape you're working, serving behind a counter?"

"It is no jape," said Augusta quietly.

"I am very sorry," said Augusta, "and that is why I am staying in the district. I hope to be able to prove my innocence, and return to Cliff House!"

"What? Return?" repeated Sybil. "Phew! I shouldn't have any more to do with them, after treating me like that! If you've got a way of proving they made a mistake I should do that, of course. But—"

She stopped, looking away. Her fingers drummed on the counter as though she was meditating deeply on some thought that had suddenly come to her. Evidently it crystallised, for Sybil looked up all at once, and gave an excited exclamation.

"Listen! Just the very idea!" she said quickly. "I'm giving a little party soon to some new chums I've found, Kiki Barbour and some of her friends. Do you know them? You've heard of them? Well, they're ripping girls! I hope to see quite a lot of them. But—but, well, as a matter of fact, I don't

you were rather clever, but not too much of it, you know! Catch on?"

Augusta's head swam. It was a dazzling offer. It sounded magnificently generous. She knew all the glories of Spender Court; she knew all it meant. Laughter and song, gaiety and good food!

The sudden impulse that came to Augusta was almost overwhelming—the impulse to accept. After all the drudgery, toil, misery, and suspicion, who could blame her? Then she thought. Oddly enough, she thought, first of all, of Peggy Preston.

Peggy, the quiet but sterling girl she had once despised—Peggy, who she now knew to be worth a hundred Sybil Spenders—Peggy, who had risked so much to cheer her up in the first and blackest hours after her expulsion! Sybil wouldn't have come just because she trusted her!

And that pulled Augusta to herself. She looked at Sybil, and she remembered. She knew the real character concealed by that easy manner. They had become seemingly bosom chums, but Sybil had cut her dead when it had suited her. Life at Spender Court, with its sham, its affectation, and empty flavour, would be unendurable to Augusta now.

"No!" she said. A long pause followed. "No, Sybil!" she said again.

"What?" Sybil gaped at her. "Look here, Augusta, I'm not joking. I—I offered you a salary because I—I thought you'd like it. I'll increase it, if you couldn't rub along on a fiver a week. I want you to come along as my companion. We'd all treat you just like a guest. Just a bit of singing and playing, you know—"

"Don't say any more, please!" said Augusta, in a hard voice.

Sybil's eyes glimmered.

"Well, why not? Why do you refuse!" she exclaimed.

"Because I'm different now to when we were friends," said Augusta. "In the past I thought of nothing but pleasure and enjoyment. It taught me a lesson. I won't say any more about it. What is it you want in here?"

And in that way Augusta flung the seemingly golden chance away with not the least quiver of regret in her voice. Sybil should not know that she was desperate about getting employment of some sort.

Sybil seated herself on a chair with great deliberation.

"White elastic!" she said.

Augusta nodded, and fetched the drawer.

With elaborate care Sybil examined piece after piece mincingly, mockingly, perhaps rather humorously. Augusta watched, but not a trace of a smile showed on her face. It baffled Sybil. She was amazed that Augusta, who in the past simply jumped at the chance of visiting Spender Court, should reject the offer.

Sybil frowned as she watched Augusta wrap her choice in a little parcel, and take the money. But as she was gathering up her change the girl from Spender Court made a last attempt to persuade her one-time friend to accept her offer.

"Look here, Augusta," she exclaimed, "you're trying to fool me! I've made a perfectly friendly offer—and a good one, too! I know you haven't got the money you used to have. You called me a snob once. I'll prove that I'm not. You shall be treated just as one of us—"

"I've given you your answer," said Augusta. "You cut me once. You were a false friend. You like to get your pleasure at other people's expense, and that's enough. I never want to see Spender Court again!"

Sybil rose. She looked like giving



UNUSUAL LABOUR! The Cliff House girls were hard at work washing and scrubbing. "We're doing our best," Peggy Preston said. "I do hope we're in time!"

"I've left school, and I'm earning my own living—or trying to!"

"Left?"

"Yes, expelled!" said Augusta, her voice hard and bitter.

Sybil stared at her, wide-eyed, for a moment. Then she burst into a ripple of simpering laughter.

"Expelled! Ha, ha ha! I knew it would come, sooner or later! I knew this 'reformation' that I heard about wasn't going to last for long!"

Augusta's teeth set.

"You think it amusing?"

"Well, yes!" nodded Sybil, who was still chuckling. "Why look so horrified about it? I've told you that I was expelled from school myself! Don't be so gloomy about it! What did they expel you for?"

"I was accused of stealing!" said Augusta quietly.

"Stealing?" repeated Sybil, frowning.

"Yes."

"My word!" exclaimed Sybil. "So that is why that fusty old crowd has thrown you out? Well, aren't you jolly glad to be away, whatever they think?"

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 144.

quite know how I'm going to keep my own end up. I'm all on my own at Spender Court, you see."

"I don't see why you should tell me this," said Augusta. "I'm not very interested."

"But you will be," said Sybil. "Look here, Augusta, I've always had a liking for you. I know I—I misunderstood you once. I've always regretted it since. We could easily have remained chums, and I want to be chummy with you again. I'm going to make you an offer. Why not come to Spender Court as my companion?"

"What?" gasped Augusta.

"You catch on?" said Sybil anxiously. "If you don't mind me saying so, you don't look any too well off, and it must be awful serving behind a counter. I want a companion, and dad would shell out at once. Just until my party is over, you know—or longer, if you liked it! I'd pay you a salary—three, four, five pounds a week—we shouldn't quarrel about that. See? You could have the run of my wardrobe, too. And I should just want you to back me up a bit, and play your old violin so that they thought

went to a sudden burst of wounded pride, but she checked the impulse.

"I'll get you yet!" she said; and, though her face was smiling, there was a singular threat in her tone. "You know I usually get my own way, don't you? And I'll have you as my companion, Augusta—I will!"

"That's the door," said Augusta, very quietly.

"Thanks!" Sybil reached the door, and stared back at Augusta. The smile that came to her lips was forced. She was angry with Augusta, yet strangely fascinated. To be rebuffed only made her more determined. "You're coming to me, and it'll be pretty soon, too!" she added, and went.

Augusta stood behind the counter, perfectly still.

Her aunt came back to the shop, and found her still staring.

"Any customers, Augusta?" she asked.

"One," said Augusta. "Just half a yard of elastic, aunt. I—I'd like to go out for a walk, if you don't mind."

"Do," said Aunt Sarah. "Why, my dear, you look paler than ever!"

Sybil Will Not Help!

THE voice of the tempter was drumming in Augusta's ears as she walked along. Five pounds a week, perhaps more! An easy, indolent life, pretty dresses—anything she wanted. And Sybil had sounded so genuine, so honestly eager.

It might not have been a temptation to Babs, or Mabs, or Peggy. It was a temptation to Augusta, who had once known and loved that life of luxury, whose aristocratic ways, and her undoubted cleverness at music drew such applause from the folk who frequented the Spenders' drawing-room.

"But I couldn't!" Augusta muttered. "I still regard myself as a Cliff House girl. It wouldn't be fair to those who trust me, and who are still trying to help me. I couldn't go back to Sybil, either. No, what I want is work, until I can find Judy, and force the truth from her."

She walked on quickly, and presently her mind began to clear. Just a temptation, of course! The determination and obstinacy that had always been Augusta's were helping her now. She had refused Sybil's offer, and she could easily stick to her word.

Yes, forget that offer, just as though it had never been made, and find work of some sort.

Might luck aid her to come suddenly on Judy now! If Judy could be found perhaps everything would be righted at once. Judy had at last betrayed that she had a five-pound note. Peggy's message told her that. She had stolen the aprons, and they were bulky, and not easily hidden. Yes, Judy had done too much to be able to hide much longer.

Augusta could hardly be blamed for forgetting that it was Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday at the school.

It was only when she had walked right through the town, and was almost out in the country, that she realised how far she had walked in her abstraction.

She started back for the town again. In the public library there would be the local papers, containing the advertisements of vacant situations. There might be one to suit Augusta, of course.

But something else occurred before she reached the library.

Outside the magnificent premises of the Courtfield Creameries, the smartest tea-shop in the town, Augusta pulled up, and caught sight of a neat little card attached to the window.

Augusta read it, her heart suddenly beating more rapidly.

"WAITRESS WANTED."

"A smart girl, of good appearance and address, required as junior waitress. One just left school preferred. Good salary.—Apply to Manageress."

Augusta walked on. A waitress at the Courtfield Creameries! She thought that it was an impossible idea, at first. But was anything impossible? She would meet Cliff House girls in there, she knew, but could she afford to study mere pride?

She was still turning it over in her mind as she walked on. She might have turned back at once but for a figure ahead of her that suddenly held her whole attention.

A small, slovenly figure! She knew it, surely! And suddenly suspicion became certain as a small, pinched face was turned round, and Augusta's eyes met those of the girl in front of her.

tracks, for, though Augusta ran this way and that, she became utterly lost. Bitterly disappointed, but baffled, Augusta drew up at last, and stood panting in the path where her wandering footsteps had led her to the open country.

"Done!" Augusta muttered.

She was furious to have been baffled so easily, and in no mood to return to the maze of streets that had confused her so. So she walked on.

Suddenly, as she looked up, she saw ahead of her an imposing mansion that reared up arrogantly amongst the trees, a tree-lined drive, a sheltered terrace with marble balustrade. She recognised it instantly—Spender Court!

In another moment Augusta would have turned away, but something caught her attention. She saw a small, moving figure in the fields, and a green scarf of vivid hue. She knew it. It took her mind back to the previous night. She had found a green scarf then.

Judy Grigg again!



AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE! "What are you doing here, Augusta?" exclaimed Sybil Spender. "Is this some colossal jape you're working—serving behind a counter?"

Her heart bounded. She leapt forward, even as a cry rose unconsciously to her lips.

"Judy Grigg!"

But Judy had recognised her, too! She rushed forward at the very same moment, and turned a corner. And when Augusta arrived there she had disappeared.

The road was full of turnings.

"Did you see a girl running?" Augusta panted to the nearest pedestrian.

"Yes," came the answer. "She went round that corner."

"Thanks!"

Augusta tore on. Judy! She had seen her! If only she could catch her she would force her to speak the truth. She went round the corner, but Judy was out of sight. Augusta ran on. This was the poor quarter of the town, full of narrow alleys and twisting passages. Judy would probably follow the narrowest and most twisting of all, Augusta guessed.

Just once she did catch a glimpse of Judy ahead of her, but only once. After that the girl must have doubled on her

Augusta broke into the field and ran. This time Judy did not see her. Augusta was puzzled as to where the girl was going, but not alarmed when she disappeared behind some trees. Here, in the open country, she could not lose her!

Clang!

The closing of a metal gate startled Augusta. She passed the trees, and looked. Judy was not in the field. But a green patch that appeared just for a moment beyond the iron gate told Augusta everything.

The girl she was chasing had entered Spender Court by the servants' gate.

Augusta stopped, a hoarse cry rising to her lips.

So this was where Judy was! This was her new job! She had come to Spender Court as one of their many maids. This was where the five-pound note that would clear her name must now be hidden. Perhaps Judy had hidden the aprons here as well!

Augusta paced round to the front of the house. Already a decision had come to her. If Sybil was back she would see

her and tell her all. Sybil would surely help her!

A stately butler answered her ring. He was new since Augusta's last visit, but no servants stayed long with the Spenders.

"Miss Sybil Spender, please?" asked Augusta.

The butler returned after being absent a couple of minutes.

"Will you come this way, please?" he said.

Augusta followed up the thickly carpeted stairs. The place looked richer and grander than ever. Everything was tastefully but magnificently done. Augusta knew Sybil's "den" long before the butler opened its inlaid door and announced:

"Miss Anstruther-Browne!"

Sybil Spender, all smiles, came running forward to meet her.

"Ha, ha! So the stony heart has thawed already!" she cried, and would have embraced Augusta.

"I'm sorry! I haven't changed my mind at all," said Augusta, drawing back. "I have come to you, Sybil, to appeal to your sense of fair play. I hope that you'll help me."

And then she told the rest of her story to Sybil's ears. Her voice trembled with earnestness. She spoke of what Judy had done, and the suspicions that had become certainties. She told of the five-pound note and the aprons she had made and lost, and the latter disclosure drew a mocking smile from Sybil's face.

"So you want me to have this new servant girl's room searched?" asked Sybil, when Augusta had finished at last.

"Yes," said Augusta, "please."

"But supposing I won't?" asked Sybil.

"You can't be so mean if you profess to have any regard for me at all!" Augusta cried bitterly.

Sybil shrugged.

"There may be a girl Judy here. I don't chum with the maids," she said airily. "But I'm bothered if I'm going to accuse one of them of being a thief!"

"You'll let a thief stay in the place?" Augusta asked hoarsely, disbelievingly.

"Why, your own safety demands—"

"There are plenty of people at the Court to watch her!" said Sybil, taking up the delicate cigarette that she had left smouldering in an ash tray.

"Look here, Sybil—"

"No, I won't!" said Sybil, tossing the cigarette lightly to the cosy fire. "I'm going to be candid with you, Augusta. I'm not at all interested in Judy Grigg, and I'm not going to start throwing about charges as you seem to want me to. Are you coming here as my companion?"

Augusta set her teeth.

"You've had my answer, Sybil," she said. "I haven't changed my mind. But if you've any sense of fair play—"

"Oh, don't start that again!" said Sybil. "Kiki & Co. came here this afternoon while I was out. They'll be dropping in any time now. They're awfully smart kids, and I want to make Spender Court interesting. You can do it. You're heaps cleverer than I am. I want you here as my companion, and I think it's a perfectly priceless idea, especially under the circumstances."

"I've said no!" repeated Augusta.

"Yes," Sybil lounged on the arm of a huge armchair, and tapped her foot pettishly. "But why? Why, for goodness' sake? There's no sense in it. You've just admitted that you're desperately hard up and want those aprons. I don't want to rub it in, but surely I'm making you a good offer? I won't accuse Judy of being a thief, and I tell you so. But if you come here you'll have the run of the house, and you can catch her out just

whenever you like. Doesn't that tempt you?"

It did. Not only money now, but the chance of regaining her good name at school! But at a price! What would her friends think—resuming her friendship with Sybil Spender? Augusta steeled her heart.

"I won't come as your companion," she said. "That's absolutely final. You know I stick to my word as a rule. Now, Sybil, play the game with me!"

"You really refuse my offer, after all? Thank!"

"I have thought, and I refuse!"

Then just for a moment the real Sybil peeped out from under the languorous pose. She gave back to Augusta the words and the very intonation that Augusta had given her in the shop.

"That is the door!"

A silvery bell trilled in the passage. The impassive butler appeared.



THIS WEEK'S VISITOR AT CLIFF HOUSE.

Ruth Preston.

Peggy Preston's younger sister, and a charming girl, aged about eleven. She was entertained to tea in Study No. 4 by Babs and Mabs and as many other Fourth-Formers as possible squeezed in. Ruth was immensely taken with Cliff House, and said in her shy way that it was an even bigger and finer place than she had imagined. There was only one incident to mar the visit, and that was a plot—as might be expected!—on the part of Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell. After tea Ruth was suddenly found to be missing; a search was made for her everywhere, and she was at last discovered walking in one of the corridors, her hands tied behind her back, and a placard on her which read: "This will grow into a Scholarship Girl one day!" Peggy Preston was furious at the insult upon her sister, and although Ruth did not want to say any more about it, we insisted on a description of the girls who had done it. It was difficult to find Marcia and Nancy, but they were discovered at length, forced to apologise, and then each decorated with a placard even as Ruth had been treated. On Marcia's was the legend: "I'm horrid, and meaner than Nancy!" On Nancy was the counter-notice: "I'm mean, and more horrid than Marcia!" It caused quite a lot of interest and speculation in the school, and Marcia and Nancy are not likely to repeat their insult. Ruth herself quickly forgot the affront, and had a thoroughly good time.

"Miss Anstruther-Browne has to hurry away, Farrington!" said Sybil.

The butler bowed.

"Very good, miss."

Augusta went without a word. She walked down the drive, baffled, defeated. She returned to the shop in a kind of haze, a dream. Sybil had sought to make terms, after all, and the terms were impossible—unthinkable!

"Augusta, what a pity that you were gone so long!" Aunt Sarah exclaimed. "Peggy and all those jolly girls have been in to see you, and they waited about for more than half an hour. They've spent more than two pounds with me, buying all kinds of things—cloths, curtains, and all sorts of oddments."

"Two pounds!" repeated Augusta dully.

And then the lump suddenly rose in her throat, and she could say no more. She gulped, and turned away to hide the tears that swam in her eyes.

To help her! And Sybil wouldn't help! Sybil wanted to make terms over her misfortune. She didn't know whether to laugh or cry in earnest.

These were chums—real chums! She realised it as she had never before. She saw the contrast between the cheery, sport-loving, but unaffected Fourth-Formers, and the vain and idle girl who thought only of her own amusement.

"So nice and hopeful they were, too, Augusta!" went on Aunt Sarah softly. "I'm sure it would have cheered you up. And what do you think they have been doing? They've had a washing-day of all the cookery aprons, and Miss Primrose says that if you find Judy and get the others back they'll be in plenty of time."

Augusta mastered herself with all the will-power she possessed.

"I—I'm going out again, aunt!" she murmured.

Aunt Sarah smiled, and Augusta went out. Her eyes were swimming again, and the street all blurred and misty to her gaze. Real chums! Real friends—"who would stand by your side, with the whole round world agen you!" Augusta understood. It touched the tender chords so deep in her nature.

But she was rather glad, now, that she had missed the girls, after all. They had done so much for her. It rather touched her pride to think that they were still trying to help her by this indirect means. She knew something else, too—there was now a week in which to find the aprons.

A week—and she could afford to be independent of Sybil. In a week she could watch for Judy and force her in some manner to confess. All that was proud and resolute in Augusta had come to the surface.

A week—and she could not allow herself to feel that, by word or by action, she was causing her Cliff House chums to feel that they must still "try and do something for her." She knew how willingly they would help, and come with still fresh orders. She did not want them to spend all their pocket-money on things she knew they really did not require. Better for her to get work at once. And now, the more widely it became known, the better!

She paused at the Courtfield Creameries, and read the notice again. Then, with a perfectly firm step she went into the building to ask for the manageress.

Augusta had, indeed, made her choice—had resolved to apply for the vacant position as waitress!

An Invitation for the Fourth!

"HAVE you seen anything, Gwen?" asked Barbara Redfern.

"Excluding ghosts, of course!" Clara Trevelyn interposed, somewhat flippantly.

It was quite a common conclave that all the Fourth-Formers found when they returned to Cliff House that evening, and looked into the Fourth Form Common-room.

Gwendoline Cook was the latest arrival, and she looked rather surprised at first at the serious expressions on the faces of Babs, Mabs, Peggy, and the others. But the light of understanding soon dawned in Gwen's eyes.

"You mean, have I seen anything of Judy?" she asked. "Cissy and I had a long walk, and we looked everywhere. I don't think Judy could have been out this afternoon."

"That's what we're beginning to think," said Babs moodily. "You see, everyone is coming back with the same report. Judy knows, of course, that Wednesday is a halfer for us. Perhaps it was expecting too much to hope that she would show herself somewhere."

"Perhaps she's really left the neighbourhood," speculated Vivienne Leigh.

"I hope she hasn't done that!" said

Babs, in a worried voice. "I suppose you haven't seen Augusta either?"

Gwen shook her head.

"No. But haven't you?" she ejaculated. "When you were collecting those orders this morning, you said—"

"I know," said Babs. "We called at the shop this afternoon, and waited about, but Augusta was out. That's how we missed seeing her. But what a pity that everyone else seems to have had the same back luck that we've had! If only—"

Babs broke off in amazement as a peal of mocking laughter came from the passage.

The door opened again to admit three girls.

"But I saw her, Lucy—Lady Hetty and I both saw her!" Marcia Loftus's voice was exclaiming. "We're positive!"

"You must have made some mistake!" Lucy Morgan protested.

"Mistake, indeed!" chimed in Lady Hetty Hendon, who was the third of the newcomers. "Do you think as we should make a mistake when we was so near?"

"I don't believe Augusta would go there!" said Lucy Morgan disbelievingly.

"Hallo!" spoke up Clara Trevlyn. "So you've seen Augusta, have you, Marcia? Come back with some giddy invention, I suppose, to tell the Form?"

Marcia Loftus threw back her head and laughed triumphantly.

"Ha, ha, ha! We know where Augusta's been to-day!" she exclaimed.

"And what is the great joke?" inquired Babs coldly.

"I'll give you three guesses!" sniggered Marcia.

"We're not guessing!" said Babs.

"All right!" Marcia knew that the silence was electric enough for her dramatic announcement. "I'll tell you! Spender Court!"

"What?"

"Augusta been to Spender Court?" ejaculated Clara disbelievingly.

"Oh, I say!" squeaked Bessie Bunter.

"Spender Court!" Lady Hetty and I both saw her, wearing that shabby old coat that she discarded a year ago!"

Marcia explained. "We weren't a hundred yards away, and we saw her go right up the drive to the front door and ring—"

"I don't believe it!" said Barbara Redfern.

Marcia chuckled.

"It's easy to say that," she said. "Doesn't matter to me whether you believe it or not. There were three of us, and if you care to ask Augusta herself she won't be able to deny it—not if she's going to speak the truth."

"Spender Court!" muttered Gwendoline Cook, in an amazed voice. "Well, I'm bothered! And I was only saying to Cissy this afternoon—"

"Spender Court? Yes!" struck in the voice of Peggy Preston, so calm that it created quite a sensation. "I don't see why we shouldn't believe you, Marcia, in this!"

Marcia sneered. "Just a minute!" interposed Peggy, as calmly as ever. "Girls, it's so perfectly absurd that I don't see why we should be at all startled because Marcia tells us this. We know that Augusta has already been to other big houses—Melham Towers, for instance, the home of Mrs. Colley. Why?"

"Parties, and all that!" said Marcia. "Not at all!" retorted Peggy. "Some of you thought that at first, but we know differently. Augusta went there to get orders for her aunt. If she's been to Spender Court, it must have been for the very same purpose, and I admire her courage for going!"

"Bravo, Peggy!" cried Babs. "Of course, that's what it means!"

"Rather!"

Marcia's face was twisted in a sneer.

"A very pretty explanation," she said. "But one I don't believe. Augusta went there to-day for the same reason that she went to Melham Towers—I'll believe that! But it wasn't to get orders! I'm sick and tired of this silly sentiment in the Form about her being misjudged, and I don't believe a word of it! I hope she never comes back to Cliff House!"

"Day after day, it's always the same old story—it's a mistake, Augusta's been wrongly accused—"

"Marcia!"

"I've said it, and I mean it!" said Marcia Loftus. "Augusta was rightly expelled, and you'll all realise it in time. I finished with the girl long ago—"

"When she cut you!" said Babs.



OUR EXCHANGE COLUMN.

Its First and Last Appearance!

WANTED.—Some bright novelties for amusing a baby boy. Freda Foote need not apply with any joke-books—he's above them!—Apply Barbara Redfern, Study No. 4.

EXCHANGE.—Boy's "stage" overcoat, bowler hat, three false moustaches, and walking-stick, for something useful to present to a dear old aunt who lives by herself and loves cats. (Aforementioned articles no good to her.)—Apply Mabel Lynn, as above.

SELL.—Panama hat, only worn once, in good condition, and with original elastic. Will exchange for scrubbing-brush.—Apply Annabel Hichens, Study No. 1.

EXCHANGE.—Pair of gloves (one with six fingers), half-packet of bird seed, two cooking tins, pair of gym shoes (slightly burst), an original poem refused by the "Weekly," and two French grammar books (very little used) for a present suitable for my dear Aunt Rebecca.—Apply to Bessie Bunter, No. 4.

SELL.—Ten grand adventure stories, very cheaply. Kettle-holders, hair-tidies, etc., might be taken in part payment.—Apply Katie Smith.

EXCHANGE.—A book on ghosts (guaranteed to make the hair curl) for a set of hair curlers (guaranteed to do it more lastingly).—Apply Gwendoline Cook, Study No. 6.

EXCHANGE.—Ten pairs of stockings (slightly in need of repair) for five (or less number) of repaired or new stockings, as case may be. The Old Firm—no need to ask questions! (We sha'n't, Clara!)

WANTED.—Suggestions for a present to a brother who has enough collars, socks, ties, handkerchiefs, knives, tiepins, etc., etc., to last him for three years.—Apply to Dolly Jobling, Study No. 7.

"I—I wasn't cut!" said Marcia, flushing. "Anyway, what I've told you is the truth, and it only means one thing. Augusta's gone back to her old reckless ways, and the next time you see her she'll be arm-in-arm with Sybil Spender. That's the girl you're helping, by collecting orders all over the school, and spending all your pocket-money that may be needed for other—"

"Entirely our concern, I think!" said Peggy Preston.

"No! You girls ought to be made to understand!" exclaimed Marcia. "I'm going to tell everyone about what I've seen. I don't believe Augusta has been to any big houses for orders. She'd started her old ways, as you all know, before she tried to steal the note!"

"She hadn't, and you sha'n't say it!" cried Babs angrily. "We all know the explanation of the things that puzzled us so much. Augusta was trying to help

her aunt's business, instead of getting commission out of it, as some girls said—"

"Trying to help!" sneered Marcia. "Do you think Augusta ever cared for relations, especially an aunt by marriage? She used to treat them like dirt, when she had plenty of money, and she still would! I don't deny that it's her aunt there in Courtfield, but to my mind that would only make it easier for Augusta to get commission on sales, to spend just as she wanted to!"

"You're talking out of your boot!" Dolly Jobling said hotly. "You're the girl who accused Augusta of selling her best coat to her aunt, to raise money on that. Now we know that Augusta put out a fire by using her coat, and ruined it in that manner. Anita Colley saw her."

"You think the fire was accidental!" asked Marcia, and suddenly sniggered.

"Accidental?" gasped Dolly. "Why, of course! How could it possibly—"

"Don't you think it would have paid Augusta to burn her coat on purpose, and get the insurance money?"

There was dead silence in the Common-room at that, and it lasted for several seconds. Peggy Preston was the one to break it. She strode forward, her cheeks flaming with anger.

"You cowardly girl!" she cried, confronting Marcia. "To make such a suggestion, when Augusta was so brave; when she put up with losing her coat, and never breathed a word to any of us!"

Marcia quailed before the other's fierce indignation.

"You haven't got much reason for sticking up for Augusta!" she muttered.

"I have!" retorted Peggy. "I know her now. She's a fine girl; a girl worth a hundred of you!" She turned, and faced the others in the Common-room. "Girls, you've heard Marcia, and you know the sort of girl she is! Has she turned you against Augusta?"

It was a bold challenge. The answer was so spontaneous that it brought a lump to Peggy's throat.

"No!"

"Let's turn them out!" said Clara Trevlyn.

"Yes; we don't want to hear any more from Marcia!"

Marcia backed towards the door. Lady Hetty would have stayed to argue. But she was not given the chance.

"You can think what you like!" Marcia sneered. "You'll find out differently some day, and— Oh, look out!"

It was at the sight of a whirling cushion that Marcia gave that shrill ejaculation.

There was no need for Marcia to be alarmed, however. Clara's throw was wild. The cushion went wide of Marcia, and hit Hetty Hendon. 'Er Ladyship of the Fourth shrieked.

"Clara, your boisterosity— Ow!"

A second cushion caused Lady Hetty to throw dignity to the winds and bolt for the door. Marcia followed. The door slammed on them.

"Cheek!" breathed Babs, her cheeks pink.

"But no one believes that Augusta has gone back to her old pleasure-loving ways, even if she has been to Spender Court!" sighed Peggy Preston gratefully. "We know she wouldn't—we know it, don't we girls?"

"Augusta knows we believe in her, and she'd never let us down!" nodded Freda Foote, voicing the general sentiment. "Of course, it wouldn't be

playing the game for her to chum up with Sybil again—"

There was a tap at the door, and Clara balanced the cushion again. But it was Boker who looked in, to say that Babs was wanted by the headmistress. And that broke the tension.

Babs went at once, pondering on the reason for the summons. Had Miss Primrose found out that they were still trying to support Augusta's aunt's shop? If she had, would she try and stop them? Or was her change of feeling sufficient

"That better, Clara?" she chaffed. "No; I ought to be excited, I know, only I—I was thinking of other things. It wasn't about Augusta that Miss Primrose wanted to see me. The fact of the matter, girls, is that we're all invited out for Friday night!" "Invited out!" repeated Mabel Lynn. "Yes; to a private dance!" Babs said. "There! Isn't it jolly good news? Miss Primrose has excused prep for the night, and we're all to go over in a private bus. It'll be great fun!"

"Yes; there's no denying that!" Clara Trevlyn exclaimed.

"If only Augusta's name could be cleared before Friday night!" breathed Peggy.

"Yes; that's what we must hope, girls!" Babs exclaimed. "And now the question: What are we going to wear?"

That started a buzz of conversation, of course! It was really a most important subject. But it was not surprising that, after a few minutes, Augusta's name was mentioned again.

Peggy Preston's nimble mind was discovering the many little things that they would need if they were making alterations to their party frocks—things that could be obtained at Mrs. Sarah Browne's shop!

"I don't want to urge anyone to spend more than she can afford!" Peggy reminded them, when her suggestion was received so enthusiastically. "But there are some things that we simply must have. If you'll make a list out we'll get a pass, and go down to see Augusta to-morrow night."

"Yes, that's the idea!" echoed Babs. "And perhaps by then Augusta may really be in a position to prove something at last!"

At the Mercy of the Enemies!

A WAITRESS—of nearly twenty-four hours' experience!

Augusta Anstruther-Browne, clad in the dress that denoted her new station in life, was waiting in the Courtfield Creameries for the tea-time rush to commence on the Thursday evening. She was only a 'prentice hand here, of course, but she would have to serve as busily as anyone in a few minutes' time.

Those six tables between the Japanese screens were to be under her special care. Those six—and that seat in the corner, near to the fire, had once been her own special chair! Yes, they had reserved it for her every Wednesday. In the days of wealth and luxury she had lounged over there, and given her haughty orders to the waitress!

Perhaps someone as haughty and as wealthy would sit there to-day, and give her orders to Augusta!

Augusta set her teeth, and tried to show no tell-tale signs on her face of what her inmost feelings were at that moment.

She was lucky, of course, to have obtained the job, for it took one worry from her mind.

Lucky? Yes. The manageress of the creameries had known her, of course. She must have guessed why Augusta was in Courtfield, and why she wanted to earn her living. It was kind of her to remember the trade that Augusta had once brought to the place. But how her manner had changed! It was not, "Certainly, Miss Anstruther-Browne, with pleasure!" now. A very different voice said, "Augusta, do this, or that!"

Of course, it had to be. Augusta knew that. But it had hurt her pride at first; it had brought her position home to her.

Ah, customers at last! Three or four were coming in and seating themselves at the tables. And now the commissionaire swung open the door to admit quite a party of tall girls—tall girls, who wore a familiar hatband.

Augusta stared at them, standing like one rooted to the spot.

She knew the leading girl at once—it was unnecessary to have a second look.

Connie Jackson was that girl, and she was entering with such an assumed air of pleasantness and merriment! Connie,



By BESSIE BUNTER (Fourth Form).

IT was at Barberer's request that I went round and interviewed a lot of people on this most important subject. I had been pointing out how really necessary it is to have a good snack in the middle of the day, and at last she said: "You go and rite an artical about it, Bessie!" So that is why I have ritten this most important artical.

I first went to Clair Trevelin, and I really had no idear that she was such a greedy gerl. She said that she liked a little bit of mutton, beef, and pork, with some potatoes, cabbidge, sprints, turnips, carritts, and beartroot, some stuffing, appel sauce, and melted butter, and then after that she would like about three helpings of suet pudding. I told Clair that she was a very greedy gerl, and althow Marjery said that she was pulling my leg, I strongly doubt it.

Agniss Wite made me feel quite sorry for her, becuse she is such a thin gerl, and when I asked my queschon she said that she liked a littel bit of mutton and a few harrykoh beans. I had to stop and tell her that she would never get fat like that.

Ladey Hetty Henden said that she was a very sooperior gerl, and did not like eeting the common food provided at Cliff Howse, and I told her that she was a silly snob, and wouldnt lissen any more.

I found out that Phillis Howel likes plum-duff, and Filiper Derwint is also very fond of the same thing, and suet pudding with treacle. Mabel Lin told me that she likes a little bit of cold mutton, with some nice sallad, and fruit and cream to follow, and I don't think she is at all a bad judge; but, of course, it wants something more substanshal as well.

Briggitt Oh Toole said she liked Irish stew better than anything else; but, of course she would say that, being Irish herself, and I think Lucey Morgan was pulling my leg when she said that she liked a speshul kind of seaweed, becous I can't imagin any gerl eating seaweed, and saying she liked it.

I couldnt find out anything about Katey Smith becous she was being so childish. When I went to her studdy she was pretending that she was a cannibal, and when I asked her what her favorite dinner was she said humen beans, and rushed at me. I was not at all allarmed, but I ran rown the table just to be frendly with Katey, and I happened to fall over the werkbarsket, and Katie jumped on top of me, and pretended to start eeting my sholder. It is quite untrew to say that I screemed for help, becous I was only pretending the same as Katey, but I really think that Katey ort to be kept under more restraint.

I went to the Sixth Fourn Passage, but I was not really very successfull. I spoke to Shereane all Rashedd, but she has got such a confeswing way of talking that I really couldnt make out what she ment, and I felt a little bit huffey when she called me "Oh Daughter of Demolishment," and I diddent ask her any more. Frances Barret said I was a greedy gerl, and being so obstint wouldnt lissen to my explanayshon that I was riting an imporent artical, and Marey Paterson, being orfully deaf, thort I was asking if I could have her dinner that day, and before I could explane she tried to boxe my eers. Steller Stoane was really the most reasonable one of all, and she told me that she had a very queer taste, and really liked roast beef and treacle together; but the uthers all seemed to think she was making Jokes, becous they could not see her strate face, and I coulddent get them to say anything but nonsense.

Miss Bullervint was very unreasonabe, and in a very bad temper. Before I went to see her someone told me she liked fat things, so as she wouldnt give me any reply to my queschon I made a few suggestions like crumpitts swiming in butter, and a nice fat gooce, and roast pork with plenty of krakling. I think it was simply horred of her to push me out of her studdy, and give me two hundrid lines to rite for what she called impertinnense, becous I diddent know that she was suffering from a billious attack at the time, and diddent like people talking about fat meat. I was so indigent about the whole affare that I told Barberer that I shouldent rite any more of this artical, and, as you will see, I havvent.

to cause her to turn her head, as it were, the other way?

The girls waited in not a little suspense. But when Babs returned, after ten minutes, she did not look worried, although she was unsmiling.

"I've got jolly good news for you, girls!" said Babs.

"Jolly good, did you say?" ejaculated Clara Trevlyn. "Are you pulling our legs?"

"No!"

"Well, you don't look very excited, anyway!" said Clara bluntly.

Babs smiled in rather a forced manner.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 144.

There was a buzz of excitement in the Common-room.

"Who's invited us, Babs?"

"It's Mrs. Colley, of Melsham Towers," said Babs. "She's a friend of Miss Primrose's, you know."

"Mrs. Colley!" breathed Marjorie Hazeldene.

"Yes. It was her daughter, Anita, who brought Augusta back in her car on that Saturday night," Babs went on. "That's really why I wasn't as excited as I ought to have been. You see, I've been thinking how pleased Augusta would have been to come with us—if only she had still been here!"

of the Sixth Form at Cliff House—the girl who had been reduced from the position of mistress through her spiteful plotting! Connie, who had always hated Augusta!

The new waitress looked at the others with Connie. She knew them, too. Iris Bentley and Violet Cutter were mistresses very much after Connie's persuasion. Then came Daisy Worrall and Mildred Tamplin, both of the Fifth Form, and three other girls—snobs all of them.

Augusta watched them walk across the shop, and her heart bounded. Towards her tables! Would they get there? It looked like it! But—but surely one of them would speak at the last moment and suggest some cosier spot?

No one spoke! Connie was the leader—they were all kow-towing to Connie, of course! Augusta watched them sitting down—the eight of them—around three of her tables that they had pushed together.

A hand nudged her. "Your tables—you're wanted!" said the voice of the head-waitress. "Be quick about it, and don't forget what they say!"

Augusta went forward, seeming to drag one foot after the other.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Connie Jackson.

It was the worst moment that Augusta had known for a long time. She stood there, perfectly rigid, and looked into Connie's eyes. She could not speak just then. But she watched the ex-mistress's face, and saw her first amazement and wonder slowly changing to a malicious pleasure.

"What's the matter?" murmured Iris Bentley, who, with the others, was still consulting the menu.

"There's a new waitress!" explained Connie.

The sneer in her tone made them all look up at once. Seven pairs of eyes fell on Augusta. Seven audible gasps came from the table.

"Good gracious!" "Never! Who would have believed it!"

"He, he, he!" sniggered Mildred.

Augusta stood there, a touch of colour in her pale cheeks. Her lips were set in a thin line.

"Looks nice—eh, girls?" commented Connie. "Suits the young lady, too, doesn't it? Regularly built for the job! Ha, ha, ha!"

And now they were all smiling and chucking among themselves. Augusta faced them, and drew a deep breath, fighting to retain her self-control. She did so sufficiently to ask:

"What can I get for you, please?"

But Connie, too pleased with this amazing discovery, ignored her question.

"A special attraction for us—eh, girls?" she exclaimed. "Very nice and thoughtful of the manageress to get a girl who knows our ways! We must really thank her for this pleasure, and we'll come again!"

And they all chuckled at that malicious and cruel speech, because they were girls after Connie's own heart, and callously indifferent to Augusta's sufferings.

More of that chatter had to follow before Connie would even condescend to give her order, and then how they tried to confuse Augusta! When she came with her loaded tray piled so high that the things were nearly falling off, they declared that she had muddled everything up.

"I didn't order these crumpets!" exclaimed Connie.

"Oh, you did!" Augusta retorted, forgetting herself.

"What! You, a waitress, dare to talk like that to me?" Connie answered,

the gleam in her eye betraying her malicious joy. "I'll report you if you're impudent again!"

"And take these cakes back, and bring me plain ones!" put in Mildred Tamplin. Almost in a chorus the others complained as well.

Augusta listened dazedly. These girls were her mistresses! She must obey whatever they said! She could not argue!

Back to the service-room she had to run, to exchange muffins for crumpets and rolls for scones.

Then the jam wasn't right, and the cups were smeary, they said. Every one had to be polished before their eyes.

And even that did not finish their malicious pleasure. More hot water was

"They were from Cliff House, Augusta?" she asked.

Augusta had to admit that her first customers were from the school.

"I saw," nodded the manageress.

"Don't think I am unsympathetic—I know what was going on. But this is a business. Other customers were commenting on it. I can't allow things to happen that will make this place unpopular, and those girls are usually much better customers than they were to-day."

Augusta went on, her heart thumping. Was that remark just one that was to precede her dismissal? It sounded like it!

She staggered with her loaded tray into the service-room.

"Here! Mind what you're doing!"



Our Cookery Corner

By DOLLY JOBLING (Fourth Form.)

RICE PUDDING.

Have you ever made a really good rice pudding?

In any case, I'm sure that you could manage the following recipe:

Required.—Half a cupful of rice, 2 cupfuls of milk, 1 egg, 2 dessertspoonfuls of sugar, 2 ozs. of raisins, a little grated nutmeg, and a few drops of vanilla, or other flavourings.

Wash the rice, put it into a saucepan, cover it with cold water, bring it to the boil, and simmer until the rice is quite tender. Stir occasionally to prevent the rice from burning to the saucepan.

Strain away the water, and put the rice into a piedish. Stone the raisins, and boil them in a little water for 15 minutes. Pour the milk over the rice, and add the beaten egg, sugar, raisins, and a few drops of flavouring. Stir the pudding, sprinkle over the top a little grated nutmeg, and bake in a cool oven until it is set.

If you happen to burn the pudding, remove it from the oven, take off the blackened skin, pour in a little more milk, add some nutmeg, and re-bake for a few minutes.

MASHED POTATOES.

The following is a delicious way of serving potatoes:

Required.—Potatoes, salt, pepper, a little cold milk, a small piece of butter, chopped parsley, and a little grated nutmeg.

Peel and boil the potatoes in slightly salted water. Strain away the water, and dry them thoroughly.

Mash the potatoes while they are still in the saucepan, add the butter, pepper, nutmeg, and a little cold milk, and beat for a few minutes with a wooden spoon.

Turn the potatoes into a hot vegetable-dish, mark with a fork, and sprinkle over the top of them a little chopped parsley. Be very careful not to add too much milk, or the potatoes will be spoiled.

HOT SCONES.

Have you ever tried your hand at making scones?

If not, just try the following recipe. You are sure to like it. These scones are inexpensive, and make a welcome change from the richer varieties of cake.

Required.—4 ozs. of flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ an oz. of castor sugar, 1 oz. of butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ a gill of warm milk, and $\frac{1}{2}$ a teaspoonful of baking-powder.

Put the flour into a basin, add the sugar, and stir well.

Cut the butter into small pieces, and rub it into the flour until no lumps remain. Add the baking-powder, and mix into a stiff dough with the warm milk. Flour a paste-board, and roll the paste out into a strip half an inch thick.

Cut the paste into rounds, put them on to a greased baking-sheet a few inches apart, and bake in a hot oven until they are a golden brown.

When the scones are baked, cut them through, spread with butter, press the two pieces together again, and place in the oven to keep hot.

If you wish the scones to taste their best, you must serve them really hot.

CURRENT SCONES.

If you want to make currant scones, proceed as for plain scones, and before mixing, add 2 ozs. of currants. Be sure that you don't forget to pick, wash, and dry the fruit before adding it to the scones.

wanted, and the great splash of tea that they made on the cloth was not done accidentally. And yet somehow she kept her self-control, because she knew that she must!

Over at last—yes, the spiteful fun had to have some ending. The Cliff House girls quibbled over the bill, but Augusta had made no mistake. A whisper from Connie gave them a last idea, and they all left her a tip.

Tips! Yes, Augusta gathered them up because she had to clear the table ready for more customers. And what tips they were! Eight in number, certainly, and each was a tiny coin. There were five halfpennies and three farthings—the very smallest things they had had in their purses!

The manageress stopped Augusta as she was carrying away her piled-up tray of dirty crockery.

exclaimed the voice of the girl who was washing up. "Don't forget that I know all about you and your stuck-up ways! Just hold them things till I'm ready for you, and don't try and act as though you own the place!"

Augusta obeyed dumbly. She was sick at heart when she went back into the shop. Nothing was right for anyone, although she had tried so hard. It wasn't her fault! Connie Jackson and her spiteful cronies were to blame. If only—

"Augusta!" breathed a startled voice. The appearance of the smartly dressed girl who came running forward utterly took away Augusta's breath.

It was Sybil Spender, the girl from Spender Court!

"Augusta! You! Here?" Sybil's voice was more amazed at every word



"WAITRESS WANTED!" Augusta pulled up outside the Court-field Creameries, and her heart beat faster as she read the little notice in the window.

that she uttered. Her hand gripped Augusta's arm with an almost painful pressure. "Why are you dressed like this? Are you mad?"

Augusta pulled herself together with an effort.

"No, not mad," she said. "I am earning my living." A touch of her old dignity came back to her as she remembered. "Is there any reason why you should object and get so excited?"

"Any reason?" gasped Sybil. "Oh, don't be so idiotic! When I've offered you to come as my companion, and then you go and do a stupid thing like this! A common waitress! Ah, you make me furious with you, you idiot!"

"Why?" Augusta was quite calm now.

"Why? Oh, don't be so mad!" Sybil panted. "You're coming as my companion—I've decided on it! I've told Kiki and the others that an old friend of mine is coming to stay with me. You'll have to now, and—and—" She threw a sudden glance over her shoulder as she heard voices at the entrance to the shop. "Hide, you idiot—hide!" rasped Sybil.

"Hide?" Augusta repeated. "But why? I can't. I'm employed here to serve people. And I've said I'm not coming as your companion, and—"

"You are! You must!" Sybil cut in. "I'm determined! Oh, get behind a screen—anywhere! My chums are here! I can't let them see you as a waitress, and then introduce you as my friend another day!"

"I'm not going to hide!" said Augusta resolutely. "I'm not—"

She said no more, for Sybil, after just one furious look at her, had turned, and was hurrying back. And now Augusta saw her sailing up, with open arms, to the four elegantly dressed girls who had just come into the shop.

"Changed my mind, Kiki—changed it! So sorry!" she heard Sybil exclaiming. "We'll come here next time! I want to go to Carson's Cafe and taste that special coffee they've been roasting this afternoon. It's gorgeous, as a rule!"

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 144.

"What a wearyin' turn-coat you are, Sybil!" said a gay, laughing little voice. "Must we really fag all the way to Carson's?"

"Yes—just to please me!" said Sybil; and Augusta saw them turning.

Augusta was staring after the retreating girls, when a tall figure moved, and the manageress stood before her. There was no commiserating look on her face now.

"Are you mad, Augusta?" she exclaimed.

"Mad?" repeated the girl faintly.

"Don't you see what you've done? Driven away Miss Spender and Miss Barbour and Miss Clayton and their two friends—five of our very best customers! Let me tell you, my girl, that you won't stay here long if this sort of upset is going to happen all the time!"

Augusta went dully back to her tables, and served the people waiting for her. She went to the service-room to fetch their orders. It was when she was loading her tray that the manageress appeared.

"Augusta, stay in here, please!" she exclaimed. "There are more Cliff House girls coming, and I'm not going to have any more scenes! You can help with the washing-up. I will tell Jane to carry on at your tables."

Washing-up! Augusta took off her cap and apron and rolled up her sleeves, and two minutes later she was helping Jennie at the lowliest task of all.

Once she thought that she heard pleasantly familiar voices, but she could not go into the shop now. So she went on with her work, and tried to forget the torment in her mind.

The dirty crockery that was brought to be cleansed grew rapidly less, and Augusta knew that the shop was emptying at last. When seven o'clock had chimed, a peep showed her that the shop had almost emptied. The manageress came to tell her that she could dry her reddened hands and go home.

"I nearly made up my mind to dismiss you this evening, Augusta," she said. "You have proved most unsatisfactory,

although it is not all your fault. It is quite clear to me that you cannot work here in the cafe without causing trouble. But I've had another idea. I know that you're a ladylike girl, and would work well under good conditions. Tomorrow I am going to give you a chance to go to a private house to serve refreshments at a little dance. That will be more in your line."

"Thank you—madam!" Augusta said, with real gratitude. "I—I quite understand what you mean. Yes, I—I think I shall do much better at that, thanks."

And Augusta reflected, as she walked along to the cash trading-store that her Aunt Sarah kept, that perhaps luck was going to aid her at last. It had certainly been a hopeless evening in the cafe—she could not disguise that fact. What a fear there had been in her heart while she washed up—the fear of losing this employment! From the conversation of the other waitresses she already knew that she had managed to obtain almost the only job to be secured in Courtfield!

Supposing she had been dismissed after only one day!

She approached the shop, preparing herself to meet the reproaches of Aunt Sarah because she was insisting on earning her living. But Aunt Sarah was smiling as she entered.

"Have you seen your chums, Augusta?" she exclaimed.

"My chums?" said Augusta, puzzled.

"Yes—Peggy Preston, and Babs and Mabs, and Marjorie—"

"Where?" said Augusta blankly.

"You didn't see them?" cried Aunt Sarah. "Why, they came here again, and I sent them along to the Creameries, thinking—"

"I—I haven't been waiting at table all the evening," said Augusta faintly.

"I—I must have missed them when I was out of the shop."

"You haven't seen them?" repeated Aunt Sarah. "Oh, what a pity! And they had so much to say to you, I know! They wanted to ask you so many questions!"

Augusta felt the lump in her throat again. Peggy and the others—more shopping! Was it a mythical party? Was this a fresh attempt on their part to buck up the business—for her sake? But how she would have liked to have seen them, to explain her position, and the pride that had taken her from the shop! How they would have cheered her up.

And now she understood the bitterness of it all! It must have been at the sight of Babs and Mabs and the others that the manageress had sent her from the shop, fearing a further scene. It must have been their pleasant voices that she had heard.

Augusta had missed them once more! A helpless anger began to take possession of her. Everything was against her. Deeper and deeper in her troubles and misfortunes; and she had done nothing as yet to clear her name at the school!

Almost immediately Augusta strode from the shop.

Straight for the open country she made, and then to the spot where Spender Court blazed its lavish lights into the darkness around. And there she stood, staring. Somewhere inside there was Judy Grigg. Had she already destroyed the evidence of the five-pound note? Was she burning the cookery aprons one by one?

She did not know. Sybil's offer, if she had accepted it, might have enabled her to prove by now that she was an innocent girl! She could have watched Judy and probably have caught her. She was further than ever from that now. Had her chance passed?

Had she done rightly in refusing Sybil's proposal?

The tears gathered in Augusta's eyes, strong-minded though she was.

"I don't know—oh, I don't!" she muttered. "I—I don't want to go to that girl. I don't want to help her or encourage her, by any action of mine. I don't want to take her money! And yet—oh, what can I do?"

She paced up and down in the lane, then hung about the servants' entrance. People came and went, but never a sight of Judy did she have. And suddenly she turned and made her way back to Courtfield, miserable and dejected.

Off to the Dance!

"SHALL I look all right?"

"Do come and tie this ribbon, Marjorie!"

"Bother! My shoe-lace has broken! Anyone got a new one?"

There was tremendous excitement in the Fourth Form passage, now that Friday evening had come at last.

In another few minutes they must all be ready for the motor-omnibus that was going to take them to Mrs. Colley's home, Melsham Towers, for the dance. Only another few minutes!

Marjorie Hazeldene tied Bessie Bunter's ribbon, and Barbara Redfern supplied Dolly Jobling with a new lace, and then they were ready—and with a few minutes to spare! It was while they were waiting about in the passage that Peggy Preston at last had the chance to have a few words with Babs.

"If only Augusta was coming with us to-night, Babs!" she said in a low voice. "I can't forget her, somehow! I've been hoping so much that she would have managed to clear herself!"

Babs took Peggy's arm. She had noticed the absent look in her eyes all day. Peggy was not going to enjoy herself to-night, she knew. She was worrying too much about the girl who was still away from the school.

"Cheer up, Peggy!" Babs whispered. "I know how you feel. It's awfully disappointing for all of us—"

"Yes. We—we wanted Augusta to stay at the shop, but now she's taken this job as—a waitress!" said Peggy wretchedly. "Oh, Babs, she'll have no time to hunt for Judy now; and, supposing that girl Judy isn't found, and she destroys all the evidence—"

Peggy was nearly in tears at the very thought.

It was only the arrival at that moment of a breathless band of Fourth-Formers who had just completed changing in the dormitory that interrupted the conversation and prevented her from breaking down completely.

And then Clara's shout:

"The bus, girls! It's just arrived, and it's outside now! Come on! Now, Dolly Jobling—this way! We're not going to have you missing it!"

The girls were already running down the stairs, and Miss Primrose was waiting at the gates to see them off. The bus would take them from door to door, so they were to go unaccompanied.

"Come back in good time, girls!" she said, when they were all in the vehicle at last. "Give my kind regards to Mrs. Colley, and have a thoroughly good time! Good-bye!"

Then they were off; and the private bus hummed rapidly along the roads in the direction of Courtfield.

Those who had forgotten about Augusta in all the bustle remembered her now, and there were many sympathetic remarks passed, and many inquiries as to whether any more had been heard

about her. But Peggy now was curiously silent.

She heard them saying how they would have liked Augusta to have come with them, and knew that their disappointment was genuine. She listened to the few discordant utterances that came from Marcia Loftus and Lady Hetty Hendon and Nancy Bell, and realised what a small minority they were.

But it was such a big thing to Peggy that she could hardly speak of it. She had resolved to do all in her power to help Augusta, being positive in her heart that she was an innocent girl. Almost everything had seemed to fail. It was a bitter disappointment to Peggy—very bitter!

The bus slowed at last, turned between huge stone pillars, and ran up a drive darkened by the laurels that lined it. Then brilliant lights appeared, and the girls knew that they were at Melsham Towers. They alighted, and a pretty girl came to meet them at once—a pretty girl, whom Babs recognised at once as Anita Colley, their hostess's daughter.

Babs introduced them all when they were in the spacious and magnificent hall, and Anita was so charming and gracious that she quickly thawed any shyness on the part of the visitors. They took off their hats and coats, and were then led to the ball-room to be introduced to other guests.

Bessie Bunter, blinking in wonder through her thick, round glasses, pressed after Babs, and suddenly squeezed her arm.

"Hallo, Bessie!" said Babs cheerily.

Bessie Bunter was evidently greatly impressed. The throaty whisper that she gave Babs showed that.

"I say! I suppose we'll get some ripping refreshments—eh?" she asked.

Babs had to smile.

"Bessie, we've come to dance, not to feed!" she said, in a tone of gentle reproof. "Really, dear—"

"I—I thought I saw a room downstairs with a lot of cakes in!" confided Bessie. "I—I missed half my tea through getting ready so quickly!"

"You must wait and see, Bessie!" was all Babs would answer.

But Bessie Bunter found waiting very difficult. Within two minutes she was tugging at Barbara's arm again.

"I say! Shall we have any strawberry ices, do you think?" whispered Bessie throatily.

"Ssssh!"

"But I love strawberry ices, especially when I've been dancing—"

"Do wait!"

"And vanilla one's aren't bad, either! I say, Babs! Could you ask Anita if we're going to have ices?"

But Babs certainly did not intend to do anything as impolite as that. It fell to her lot, as Form captain of the visiting girls, to make many introductions, a task that kept her very busy indeed. She did not think again of the fat girl until Mabel Lynn suddenly drew her attention to the fact that Bessie was nowhere to be seen.

"Not here!" gasped Babs. "Oh, I say, Mabs! I—I wonder— Oh dear! You know, the silly duffer's been thinking of nothing but refreshments ever since she arrived—"

"My word!" ejaculated Mabel. "Refreshments! That's where Bessie must have gone, for a certainty! Oh, the awful little duffer!"

The news that Bessie was missing passed very quickly round. Clara and several others grinned; for, although Bessie was not as greedy as she had once been, she was still very partial to refreshments. Others, like Meg Lennox, who studied etiquette, looked pained and horrified.

But it was not to be a long wait.

Within a minute of her absence being discovered, Bessie Bunter appeared, and came sailing across the ball-room floor to Babs. There was a most excited gleam in her eyes—a gleam that Babs would certainly have seen if she had not been feeling a little annoyed.

"Bessie! Where ever had you been?" she exclaimed, as Bessie rolled up to her.

"Been?" gasped Bessie. "Oh, really! It doesn't matter now that I felt a bit



AT THE DANCE! Every girl was happy and light-hearted. Babs and Peggy were dancing gracefully, whilst Bessie Bunter was dancing in her own particular way.

faint, and thought it as well to be on the safe side—"

"Faint!" ejaculated Babs. "Bessie, you—"

"But I haven't had anything—I haven't, really!" said Bessie, in a perfectly thrilling voice. "Oh dear! You don't know what an awful surprise I've had, or you wouldn't look at me like that! My goodness! Guess who I saw in the refreshment-room!"

"If there was a mirror there, you probably saw a greedy, fat duffer!" suggested Clara Trevlyn.

Bessie Bunter did not heed the uncomplimentary surmise.

"Give it up?" she exclaimed. "I knew you would! I—I just peeped inside, but I knew the girl at once. Girls, the girl behind the counter was—was Augusta!"

"What?"

"Augusta here?" gasped Babs, in amazement. "Oh, Bessie, you've made some mistake! It isn't possible—"

"She is! She's downstairs serving refreshments!" said Bessie, in quite a squeak. "There! I knew you wouldn't believe it! But she's here, after all!"

"But, Bessie—"

"And she wasn't alone!" concluded Bessie, with the most dramatic news of all. "There's someone else here whom you know—Sybil Spender!"

"Augusta's old friend!" said Marcia, in a triumphant whisper.

"Sybil—Sybil Spender?" Babs said, more disbelievingly than ever.

"Yes. And they were talking and whispering like anything over something," Bessie explained. "I didn't hear what they were saying, of course. I didn't try, not being that sort of girl, and—"

"Oh!"

Bessie Bunter broke off. The conversa-

tion came to a sudden and entire stop, for there was an interruption. Anita Colley had come up to introduce their hostess, her mother.

That, of course, effectually stopped any further remarks being made just then. But some of the Fourth-Formers looked a little absent as they shook hands with Mrs. Colley. For Bessie Bunter's item of news had given them a good deal of food for thought!

AUGUSTA ANSTRUTHER-BROWNE it was. Bessie Bunter had made no mistake!

Nor had she mistaken anyone else for Sybil Spender. Sybil was the girl who was in the refreshment-room, talking to Augusta in such a low and eager whisper!

But it was very difficult for Augusta to listen to the girl from Spender Court. She could hardly concentrate on anything.

Last night, when the manageress had told her of the change in her duties, she had been glad and almost excited.

Only now did Augusta realise that she had jumped from the frying-pan to the fire.

She had discovered the position in a series of bewildering shocks. First, she had realised that she was to come to Melsham Towers—and she knew Anita! Then she had heard the Fourth-Formers arrive—not only her chums, but the whole of the Form! Now there was Sybil Spender here! Could she have been in a more difficult position?

But everything seemed to go like this for Augusta. She was getting almost used to it. Things did not upset her as much as they did at first. She was trying to pull herself together and listen to the urgent, whispered words that Sybil was saying.

"You see the position, Augusta? You see the fix you're in? Well, I can get you out of it even now, if you'll do what I want. And I don't see why you shouldn't. I want you to come as my companion. Will you say 'Yes'?"

Augusta could only stare in a dazed kind of way.

"Anita's bound to recognise you when she sees you—bound to!" Sybil went on, seeing that Augusta did not answer. "Goodness knows what she'll say, or think, and what she'll tell her mother. And I don't know whether you want to wait on the others. But I can get you out of it, if I try. Your manageress is here, isn't she?"

"Yes," preparing things in the kitchen," Augusta muttered.

Sybil nodded.

"Well, I can get her to do anything for me—money talks!" she said confidently. "I'll explain that you want to get out of the way, and she'll come and serve here until we've phoned to the Creameries for someone to take your place. I promise that I'll do it if you'll come as my companion. I don't want you to be seen here like this. Now, for goodness' sake, Augusta, don't let's have any more of this foolery when I've made you such a good offer!"

She stared anxiously at Augusta.

"I don't want to be your companion, Sybil!" said Augusta, after a pause.

"Don't be so silly!" cried Sybil, stamping her elegantly-shod foot in vexation.

"I've said no, and I mean no!" Augusta went on, her determination stronger.

"Oh, I don't know how I keep my patience with you!" exclaimed Sybil Spender, but she seemed to be trying to

ALL WRITTEN IN THE DETENTION ROOM!

Certain Efforts to while away the Idle Hours.

GREAT THOUGHTS. By Freda Foots.

How I can sit here, and think of Robert Bruce, the gentleman who watched a spider!

I can see one just above me now. He's trying to get across to the opposite beam. The one that Robert Bruce watched had nine tries, I think. This one can't be any relation at all. He's the clumsiest spider I've ever seen. He's had at least ninety-nine tries, and hasn't done it yet, and he's so slow, too!

I hope he does get there soon, because I'm tired of watching him.

Ah, me! What a room! What sublime fancies it does inspire in one's mind! Here's one, written on the desk just in front of me:

"Cheer up! Each passing hour, I'd mention,

Is one hour less of your detention!"

Perhaps the girl who wrote that may be famous one day—at anything but poetry! Oh, bother the old spider! He's fallen off the ceiling right on to my desk! I wonder what Robert Bruce would have done. Would he have put him back on the ceiling again?

ESSAY. By Madge Stevens (Third Form).

Subject: "Why Girls Need Correction!"

This is a subject on which I have great pleasure in writing.

Miss Drake put me here, and her reason for sentencing me to detention was this: She was describing a certain young lady in history, who is said, in our textbooks, to be a fair charmer. Miss Drake got just a bit muddled up, and said that she was a chair farmer.

Of course, I laughed! I told Doris Redfern that I'd love to see a farmer growing chairs!

And that's why I'm in detention!

Perhaps I laughed rather loudly and rather long, and doubtless I annoyed Miss Drake. So she just administered a little "correction" to stop my mirth!

A LETTER HOME. By Bessie Bunter.

Dear Muther and Farther, I am most unjustly put in detenshon, and I am riting you these few lines to tell you all about it.

Dear muther, you know how drowsy we all get in the cold wether, don't you? I remember once that you went to sleep with a cup of tea in your hand, and spilt it all over your Sunday dress. I had just the same feeling come over me in class when Miss Bullervint was saying a lot of stoopid things in Latin, and I just dozed off for a few minnits so that I could get up my strenkth to attend to her; but she caught me, and was very unreesenable about it.

Dear farther, I know you often tell us that you were a bit of a terror when you were at skool yourself, and I must have inherited it from you. I was feeling very bright after Miss Bullervint had put me in detenshon, becos I am not easily depressed, as you know, and I thort I would throw a pease of payper at Marshar Lofftus. Just as I was throwing it, Miss Steal came into the room, and she distracted my attenshon, and unforchennly I threw the payper badly, and it hit her on the nose; but qwite by an axident, dear farther, I tride to explaine, but she dumbled my detenshon.

Dear farther and muther, sitting still in this horrible detenshon-room is a grate trial, and it needs a lot of Will Power, and it makes a growing gerl get very hungrey. I often have to sit in the detenshon-room becos I am such a misunderstoo gerl at this skool, and I don't like it at all, and I am shure that it is not good for me.

Dear muther and farther, I am certain that you will understand how I feel, and you will realise that I need something to keep up my strenkth, and if you will please send that hamper as soon as possible it will enabel me to keep up my spirits in detenshon.

Hopping you are as well as this levees me at present,

Your loving dorter,

BESSIE.

P.S.—Miss Primrows says that my speling is much better than it used to be, so please don't take out a cake for evvery word that you think is rong, becos speling is always changing.

do so. "I don't want you to keep on with this horrid waitress business, and then come to Spender Court!"

"I'm not coming! I've chosen to earn my living this way." Augusta suddenly looked round at the choice delicacies piled on the little tables in the impromptu refreshment-room. "And why shouldn't I? Even if Anita does know me—"

"You idiot—you idiot!" stormed Sybil. "Oh, but I'm as bad as you to keep on giving you such chances! Mrs. Colley will soon know who you are, and it will be impossible—"

"This way, girls!" exclaimed a pleasant voice at that moment.

Sybil started away from the counter, and Augusta suddenly stiffened. Yes, the chance had gone. It was Mrs. Colley who was coming into the room, and behind her came Anita, and all the Cliff House girls!

"Come right in! I insist on your having a few refreshments before the dancing starts!" Mrs. Colley laughed. "I was a girl myself, once, and I know those scamped teas! Make yourselves quite at— Why, goodness gracious! Anita, what is the matter?"

The crisis had been precipitated immediately.

Anita was staring at Augusta as though she saw a ghost.

"I—I know you, don't I?" she gasped, rather than asked.

The Cliff House girls, to whom this was no surprise meeting now, saw the tightening of Augusta's mouth. They wondered at her cool voice.

"Yes, miss," she said, with perfect deference. "I am Augusta Anstruther-Browne."

"The girl who—who—" Anita pulled herself together suddenly. "Mother, this is Augusta, the girl who put out that fire so pluckily!"

Mrs. Colley was staring now, as amazed as her daughter.

"Augusta?" she repeated. "The girl who was at Cliff House? The girl who—"

And then her ready tact came to the rescue, just when the situation had become almost impossible.

"But, of course—yes, I was talking to Miss Primrose only this morning!" said Mrs. Colley, in that sweet, bland voice for which she was famous. "Yes, Augusta, Anita and I know perfectly well what has happened, but it is only right to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Besides, we know of your bravery, and the plucky way in which you have been earning your living since—since certain things occurred!"

"And, mother—what Miss Primrose was telling us!" Anita put in, for she was an excitable but very generous-minded girl. "You know she was saying that there is so much mystery that she is dreadfully perplexed—"

"Ssssh, dear!" warned Mrs. Colley, who saw that Anita was on the point of making a very tactless speech indeed—perhaps almost betraying confidences in her eagerness to get over this awkward situation. "There are facts that make what has happened at Cliff House no business of ours at all. Augusta, I am delighted to meet you! Yes, and pleased to know that such a brave girl is in my house!"

And Peggy Preston, whose heart had been fluttering wildly at all that had happened, nearly burst into a cheer as Mrs. Colley stepped forward, and shook Augusta's hand.

"And—why, here is Sybil!" Mrs. Colley exclaimed, a moment later, as that girl came up. "Sybil, how rude you must think me not to have seen



LATEST NEWS FROM THE FOURTH FORM STUDIES!

STUDY No. 1. (Shared by Annabel Hichens, Marcia Loftus, and Nancy Bell).—A difference in taste between these three has just had an extraordinary climax. All had agreed that their study needed repapering, but their tastes are widely divergent. Annabel brought in some rolls of paper strongly resembling brown paper, whilst Marcia and Nancy's purchase was positively vivid. No amount of persuasion or argument from Marcia and Nancy had any effect upon the old-fashioned Annabel. Annabel was firm. Setting to work with paste and brush, she soon had the study walls covered with her sombre paper. But then came the turn of the other two. At their first opportunity they pasted their own choice of paper over Annabel's, with the result that the study walls, after looking depressing, suddenly became startling with their vividness. Annabel, after her first shock, was not to be outdone, however. She again got to work with what of her murky-looking paper she had left, and pasted it over Marcia and Nancy's. Her last yard of it just completed the re-re-papering of the study. And now came Marcia and Nancy's turn again. Once more waiting their opportunity, they pasted more of their gaudy paper over Annabel's. But alas! When they'd finished the second wall, they found they'd finished the paper, too! And thus appears Study No. 1 at the present moment—one half vividly papered, the other half covered with drab brown paper!

STUDY No. 2. (Shared by Katie Smith and Cissy Clare).—Things are in a somewhat peculiar state here. Katie's numerous books of adventure are neglected—by Katie, that is. Katie spends nearly the whole of her time, nowadays, on grand "proessional" schemes for the Fourth—a little habit she contracted during the days of the Parliament. Cissy Clare, on the other hand, is evidently rather stimulated by the adventure-loving Katie's keenness, and is often to be seen in the armchair, reading Katie's adventure stories. Thus, what with Katie sitting at the table with pen and paper, and Cissy reading the adventure stories, there is an appearance—a very superficial one, of course!—of these two girls having changed natures!

STUDY No. 3. (Occupied by Lady Hetty Hendon).—Hetty, at present, is without a study-mate. This apartment has, since her advent, come to be better known as the "hoodwah." Hetty's latest "At-Home" has just come to a close. She intended it to be a grand affair, and, in her pompous way, had special invitation cards prepared—"Lady Hetty Hendon, At Home, Wednesday Next, Four to Six." Unfortunately, a certain paper got access to these and the specified times on each two cards were altered. Pretty nearly the whole Form had been invited, and we were all in the know. Hetty's first pair arrived at twelve-thirty, with cards marked "Twelve-Thirty to One." As hostess, Hetty simply had to make special tea for them, and then help them to sandwiches and cakes. The next pair of guests arrived at one, with cards marked "One to One-Thirty." More tea had to be made, to the chagrin of Hetty. Thus the guests continued to arrive in pairs at regular intervals of half an hour, fresh tea having to be made each time. Each pair of girls gravely impressed upon Hetty the fact that, though some error had evidently been made, it was her duty to see to the comfort of her guests. Right until seven o'clock Hetty lasted out. But the next pair to arrive found the door locked, and the study dark! Lady though she was, and hostess, too, Hetty had at last deserted her post!

STUDY No. 4. (Shared by Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, and Bessie Bunter).—Though the Fourth Form have finished with the Parliament, they have not yet finished with Connie Jackson! Connie still jumps at every chance of getting the Fourth Form into ill-favour, as Barbara Redfern discovered in the nick of time. The copy for the "Cliff House Weekly"—rather late—was just about to be hurried off to the Courtfield printer. It suddenly struck Babs that she had omitted to "sub" the whole of her accompanying article, "Present Intentions of the Fourth Form." She immediately detached her manuscript from the rest, and hurriedly went through it. And there, pasted on over one of her type-written paragraphs, was a typed part of the same length. It was Connie's work indisputably. It was to the effect that the "present intentions" of the Form were to defy all the laws of the school, play secret japes on mistresses, and be impudent to mistresses! We pasted that little tit-bit on the inside of Connie's door, and Connie hasn't dared to say a word about it!

(Studies Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 will be dealt with next week.)

you before! Perhaps you were just having a chat with Augusta?"

"Oh, ye-es, Mrs. Colley!" said Sybil, with just the slightest trace of hesitation.

"Let me introduce you to our visitors—or, perhaps you know them already?"

"We have met," said Sybil, and now she was quite her own mistress.

She was smiling, but it was like a smiling mask! She knew what the Cliff House girls thought of her, and she was letting them see what she thought of them in return.

"There, there!" Mrs. Colley exclaimed. "Really, Sybil, you ought to know them all quite well, being so near to Cliff House! How fortunate that you have all met here! And now, girls, help yourselves to the refreshments, and have just what you like."

It was really an extraordinary position

for Augusta to be in, and no one realised it better. But she went about her duties very calmly and very quietly. Very few guessed the inmost thoughts in her mind. They knew, of course, that she was longing to have a word with some of them.

They little guessed, however, the effect that the gaiety of the place had already had on Augusta—how the sound of the orchestra tuning up in the room above was making her feet almost dance already! What a night of punishment it was to be for her!

"Ah! They are starting!" said Anita suddenly.

The orchestra had just commenced the haunting tune for the first dance.

"We must go up, or we shall keep everyone waiting!" laughed Mrs. Colley. "Come along, girls!"

Bessie Bunter was reluctant to leave

such a scene of lavish generosity, but Babs and Mabs saw to Bessie! Anita led the way to the ball-room; and the girls followed. Mrs. Colley found herself at Sybil's side as they went into the corridor, and they were alone.

"You are dancing, Sybil?" asked Mrs. Colley graciously.

"No, thanks," said Sybil. "I said I should probably miss the first two or three. I've left my fan at home, and they're sending one of the maids across with it. I must have it before I dance."

"Quite so!" Mrs. Colley turned to Sybil with sudden eagerness. "Then, Sybil, it gives me a chance to say something to you. I want to speak to you about Augusta. I could not say it before the others, because they are all at Cliff House, and it would be breaking a confidence, but I can tell you. You know that Augusta is really an expelled girl?"

Sybil nodded.

"Well, I should have had to send her away from here, but for one thing," Mrs. Colley went on, in little more than a whisper. "I was chatting with Miss Primrose this morning. The poor lady seems awfully perplexed. At the time of her expulsion Augusta told a story that seemed incredible. I agreed that it was. But there is a girl called Judy Grigg in the affair as well."

Sybil showed no sign of having heard that name before.

"Miss Primrose—well, to tell you in absolute confidence, it seems very possible that a mistake has been made. Sybil," rushed on Mrs. Colley. "You understand—and you will say nothing at present? This girl Judy, you see, has been missing for three days now, and she is wanted to explain two very serious matters. Her disappearance points to nothing but guilt, Miss Primrose says. Well, if Judy is guilty, Augusta is innocent!"

Her kindly face was radiating with pleasure.

Sybil diplomatically inclined her head, but did not speak.

"It has all been a most bewildering matter, Sybil," Mrs. Colley went on, "but I tell you this because of an idea I have in mind. I have a strong feeling that Augusta is very soon going to be given the benefit of the doubt, and allowed to return to Cliff House School! That is why I recognised her publicly. That, too, is what has given me my idea. I think that it must be dreadfully tantalising for her to be here to-night in such a menial position. Don't you think it would be jolly for her if we allowed her to have the last dance this evening?"

That sudden suggestion, after the things that Sybil had been saying to Augusta, gave the girl a real shock! But she was artful enough not to show it.

"It is very thoughtful of you, Mrs. Colley," she said.

Mrs. Colley smiled more genially than ever.

"I am so glad you like the idea, Sybil," she said, "because I feel that you are just the very girl to get Augusta to enter this. For this special occasion I have arranged that the Cliff House girls shall have for their last dance a real, old-fashioned romp—the Lancers. Augusta shall don a fancy dress, and come to complete one of the sets. Only her special friends shall know. I feel somehow that the poor girl has known terrible hardships, and it will encourage her more than anything else could. Will you tell her, Sybil, and get her to enter into this? It must be done discreetly, of course. No. 18 is the

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 144.

Lancers—she must be ready in time, and I will see that her set is near the door."

But there was a very peculiar expression on Sybil Spender's face as she watched Mrs. Colley hurry away, after a last gracious smile.

It was the real Sybil that showed now!

"A dance—for Augusta!" she muttered. "And after what I said! I can't allow it—no, I can't! Kiki and the others are coming to Spender Court tomorrow night—yes, and I will have Augusta!"

She went back to the refreshment-room.

Augusta, who was moving silently about to the subdued strains of dance music, started round guiltily as she heard her footfall.

"Oh! So it's you?" Augusta exclaimed.

Sybil nodded. She had been very angry with Augusta a moment before, but now all the fascination and all the longing for Augusta's company had returned to her.

Look Out for this Cover
Next Week!

"Sybil Spender's Servant!"



Order your copy in advance.

"Yes," she said. "Augusta, you've got out of a very awkward scrape, but only because Mrs. Colley is such a simple old soul. Look here! Why keep up this foolery? Do drop it—for goodness' sake! Can't you see that you're in a hopeless position? Bother Cliff House—forget it, now they've treated you like they have! Or, if you prefer it the other way, come to Spender Court and watch Judy Grigg! Aren't you going to give up this stupid waiting business and see common-sense? If you will—why, I'll get you a dance this evening!"

"I don't intend to change my mind while I have any other means of earning my living!" answered Augusta doggedly.

"Oh!" Sybil bit her lower lip. "You'll see reason, soon—you always were obstinate like that!"

And with that she slammed out of the room and walked along the passage, having said no word about the message that Mrs. Colley had asked her to convey. But Sybil did not intend that Augusta should have it now!

"Your fan, miss!" said a timid voice. Sybil just glanced at a girl who was holding a feather fan in her hand—the

girl sent from Spender Court. She snatched the article without a word of thanks, and went on up the stairs. Sybil had not even given the girl one proper look; she certainly did not know that the girl was Judy Grigg!

But it was—Judy was the girl who had been sent on that errand from Spender Court!

Judy—the girl who had remained in hiding ever since Wednesday! Judy, who had such secrets on her mind. Judy, the girl who had started with peeping and prying, and had become a thief!

Peeping and prying! Yes, and she was still the same Judy, even now! She looked around her as Sybil went up the stairs, and suddenly realised that she was alone, and unwatched. And with that realisation, tremendous curiosity came over Judy! Supposing she just had a peep round this grand house before going away!

And Judy acted on that impulse at once, little realising where it was to lead. She looked into first one room, and then another. Their emptiness encouraged her, and she looked into a third, a third where—

Judy staggered away from that door, her thin face as white as a sheet. She thought she must have been seen, and she scuttled along the corridor, darted into a darkened room, and hid behind the door. There she waited for footsteps to follow her, and a hand to seize her shoulder.

Judy had seen Augusta—the girl she had dreaded so to meet!

It had unnerved her, absolutely scared her. If Augusta had come up then, Judy might have been frightened enough to blurt out the truth. She was trembling violently as she waited. But no footsteps were to be heard.

After two full minutes she began to breathe just a little more freely.

Perhaps she had not been seen, after all!

But Augusta here—here of all places! It still made her tremble. She remembered her scare when Augusta had chased her in Courtfield on Wednesday. It still made her shiver to think of her narrow escape. Oh, that curiosity of hers! What a dreadful thing—for her—it might have proved to-night!

Dreadful, yes! For Judy, contrary to Augusta's suspicions, had not yet destroyed the evidence against her! More than once she had held that muddy, crinkled five-pound note in her hand, and had been on the point of casting it to the flames, despairing of ever changing a note that was stopped at the banks. But she had hesitated. After all, it was money—five pounds! She could keep it, for a year if necessary, until the hue and cry had died down. Money—and greedy Judy, in spite of her terror, could not destroy money!

Then there were the cookery aprons, too! Judy had stolen them, and smuggled them in three parcels to Spender Court, taking them in as shopping. Now they were hidden in old, disused rooms at the top of the house, and Spender Court was really a fine hiding-place for them. But the knowledge of them was guilty knowledge to Judy. She wanted to destroy them—as soon as she had the nerve and the opportunity. She hadn't done it yet!

A footstep in the passage made her tremble afresh! She waited. It sounded measured, and came so far, then went back. After a little while she glanced out—and saw.

It wasn't Augusta. A powdered footman was patrolling at the bottom of the stairs. She couldn't escape now, without being seen and questioned! She was a prisoner, after all, in that darkened

room! She must stay there until some chance offered itself.

Judy Grigg became terribly scared now. Augusta, apparently, did not know that she was there, but anything might lead to her discovery! All the old terror, and all the old desperation, returned to her.

By stealing the aprons, she had hoped that Augusta would be compelled to leave the neighbourhood. The plot had failed so far. Would any other chance come Judy's way of making Augusta's position intolerable in Courtfield? She would not miss it if she did!

And so, in this mellow old house, filled with the alluring strains of the pretty dance music, the night began to pass. Gathered together by the strange workings of chance were all the actors in the strange drama that had centred round Augusta. Augusta herself, the girls of the Fourth, Sybil Spender, and last but not least, Judy Grigg!

What was going to happen before they all parted? Only the evening could show that!

Wrongly Accused!

"THE next dance!" whispered Peggy Preston.

"Yes—the next!" murmured Barbara Redfern in the same tone.

"17" was the number of the dance, indicated on the little board by the side of the orchestra, and the next would be the last for the Cliff House girls—the Lancers.

The last—but three of them knew the secret now!

Anita Colley had just been to Babs, Mabs, and Peggy, and had asked them to form a set close to the door. She had asked them to keep one side position vacant—for Augusta!

"Augusta?" the three of them had said blankly.

Anita, who was really a very charming girl, had explained excitedly. It was to be a secret, but her mother had arranged this special treat for Augusta, and she would appear at the right moment.

Augusta was to have a dance, after all! And a good dance, too!

"It's one that she loves better than all the new ones!" Peggy Preston whispered. "It's a long dance, too, and it's been specially put on for our benefit! Oh, Babs, it seems too good to be true!"

And all the dull look had gone from Peggy's eyes, and they were shining as they had not shone before.

"It's splendid of Mrs. Colley!" was Barbara's excited comment.

"And so kind!" breathed Mabs. "She couldn't have done anything nicer!"

They all looked around the ball-room with a new interest. It had been a pleasant evening, but Augusta's menial position downstairs had been the one thing to mar their pleasure. Not only had she had to wait on them, but it had given Marcia Loftus and Lady Hetty such a lot to talk about!

More than that, they had had no real opportunity to have a chat with Augusta, although they had darted to the refreshment-room almost as often as Bessie Bunter usually did! There had always been someone else there, and that had naturally put a restraint on their conversation.

But now Augusta was to have a long dance—the final dance—in their set!

They beamed on everyone and everything they saw. There was Bessie Bunter dragging an unfortunate partner round in her own special interpretation of a one-step; and Dolly Jobling passed them,

taking such care not to tread on her partner's toes! Clara was swinging past in really jolly style, and Marjorie danced as daintily as ever. Annabel Hichens, who only danced waltzes, and then in a most old-fashioned way, was sitting out with a luckless young gentleman, and asking him riddles—which was Annabel's idea of what a young lady should always do at a party!

But they did not mind sitting out themselves and missing any of the fun when they thought of what was to happen in a few minutes. How happy it was going to make Augusta!

Peggy Preston's eyes hardly left the door. Would Augusta come quickly? Or would she wait until they were ready to start before she made her entrance?

Nearly everyone was ready at last. The last set was made up. Now the orchestra prepared to strike up, only waiting for the signal from Mrs. Colley.

And Augusta was not there!

Peggy Preston frowned thoughtfully. Had anything happened? Had anything gone wrong? A minute passed—one of the longest minutes that the chums had ever known. Everyone was waiting, and wondering at the delay. It was really



NEEDLEWORK

By

NOTES

MARJORIE HAZELDENE.

HOW TO MAKE UP-TO-DATE NECK-WEAR FROM OLD HAT BANDS.

The wise girl, especially in these hard times, does not throw away anything which she can possibly use up in some other way.

Ribbon will nearly always serve a second turn. Recently I saw an old ribbon hat band converted into a most charming and dainty neck band. This is how it was done:

The band, which was black, was removed from the hat, brushed and ironed on the wrong side with a cool iron.

The parts of ribbon which had been damaged with the hatpins were cut out, and the good parts of the ribbon joined together.

The join in the ribbon was arranged to come in the centre of the neck band, and was skilfully concealed by chain stitch worked in embroidery silk.

Next, the raw ends of the ribbon were neatly hemmed, and fastenings made with small hooks, and loops worked in silk.

A narrow strip of fine white net, folded double, was sewn to the top of the collar to form a frill.

An eighth of an inch from the top of the frill small chain stitching in black embroidery was worked, which gave a charming finished effect to the collar.

For the girl with a long neck these collars are very becoming, and worn with a tailor-made costume are most smart.

Any colour ribbon can be used for the collar.

The frill can be made of lace or fine muslin, and the stitching worked the same colour as the ribbon.

These collars make dainty presents, and cost practically nothing to make.

HOW TO RENEW THE STRAP OF A WRISTLET WATCH.

Repairs run away with a considerable sum of money, and any little article which you can repair for yourself is a real saving.

You can quite easily make a new strap for your wristlet watch, and it need not look "home-made."

A ribbon strap is much daintier than one made of leather.

It may not be generally known, but a strong ribbon, specially made for watch straps, can be purchased from any large store for a trifling sum.

A quarter of a yard of ribbon is sufficient for one strap.

When making the strap, first remove the old one from the watch, cut off the buckle, and clean and polish the outside of the watch. Don't meddle with the works.

Cut the ribbon the same length as the old strap, thread it through the two slots at each side of the watch, and sew it securely in position. Fix the buckle to one end of the ribbon, and make a narrow hem on the other end.

Make small eyelet holes in the end of the ribbon which is hemmed, and work them in strong embroidery silk, or twist. Be very careful, and make your stitches very neat, otherwise the strap will look clumsy.

If you use the ribbon double—and this makes the strap very strong—stitch it together by a sewing-machine.

This little repair, carried out carefully, will look quite as well as if it had been done by an expert. And the saving to your pocket will be appreciable.



The music stopped at last, and now the three Fourth Form chums found a greater difficulty than ever in restraining themselves. When their partners came to claim them they whispered that they wanted a set by the door. As soon as the very first mention of Lancers was made, they were up and rushing across to take up their positions!

And then—yes, it was true! Mrs. Colley was speaking to her son Dolph, one of the best dancers in the room, and now he came across, smiled at them, and took the vacant side! Dolph Colley was to dance with Augusta; and Dolph was sportsman enough to understand and be glad!

too bad of Augusta to keep them so long, when they were so eager.

Ah, a step at last; and Peggy knew that it was Augusta's immediately. The door opened, and a girl entered. And then Peggy fell back, quite unable to restrain the gasp of absolute dismay that rose to her pallid lips.

It was Augusta—but not Augusta dressed for the dance!

The girl who came in was dressed in cap and apron, and she carried a trayful of ices!

"My goodness!" said Babs hoarsely. Augusta herself became conscious of the startled and utter silence that

followed her entry. A touch of colour came to her cheeks, and she looked confused.

"I—I am so sorry," she stammered. "I did not know, when I received the order, that this dance—"

Mrs. Colley came hurrying across the floor.

"Surely you understood, Augusta?" she whispered.

And then Peggy, so upset, was at Augusta's side as well. She held her arm, and looked into her eyes.

"Oh, Augusta, don't—don't you want to dance?" she gasped.

Augusta, not understanding the meaning of her question, stared at Peggy, and wondered how to reply. In her heart she had been longing to join the others all the evening. But how tactless it seemed of Peggy to ask such a question when she was just a servant here!

"Dance?" she said. "Oh, Peggy, of course not! No, I don't want to dance, thanks! I'm leaving that to you!"

Peggy fell back, hardly believing her hearing. There was a different expression on Mrs. Colley's kindly face, too.

"It is a pity that you did not say so sooner, as we have held the dance back!" she said, with a touch of sternness. "We do not want those eyes now, of course. I will find another girl to take your place, Augusta, so that the dance can commence."

She hurried away; and Peggy, Babs, and Mabs, gazing at Augusta, realised the truth at last. They saw from the very expression in her eyes, that there had been some mistake. Just a slight quivering at the corners of her mouth—and it told them that Augusta, too, had suddenly understood, and a bitter disappointment had seized her.

Augusta had not disappointed them intentionally! She could not have known!

"Here is Annabel; she will dance with you, Dolph!" Mrs. Colley exclaimed as she returned, leading the reluctant Annabel. "Augusta, you had better hurry away now, please. Yes!" she added, and nodded to the leader of the orchestra.

The strains of music suddenly filled the room. Peggy, Babs, and Mabs had to bow to their partners and commence the dance. But they had just one vision—a vision of Augusta slowly fading through the door, with no one knew what thoughts in her heart!

The Lancers! Yes, but they had lost all their attraction now! The three girls could dance with no spirit. Annabel Hichens made every mistake imaginable, and was always in everyone's way. It was a real relief to hear the music finish as the first part concluded, and gave them a breathing time.

And then—

Bang! Crash, crash! Sma-a-ash!

It was an appalling din that came suddenly and unexpectedly, just as they were about to recommence. Banging and noise, and the sound of smashing crockery, and above it all sounded a loud, angry voice—the voice of Augusta Anstruther-Browne!

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Mrs. Colley, running for the door. "What ever can have happened? I must see at once!"

It was enough for the others. Peggy could not stay, and nor could Babs and Mabs. They went running after their hosts, and not a few others followed them—as well to see what could have created such a commotion.

Down the stairs they went, and then, quite suddenly, they came face to face with the flushed figure of Augusta, who

was darting about from side to side, her eyes flashing.

"I believe she went that way!" Augusta panted. "Stop her! She—"

"Augusta, what ever have you done?" a horrified voice cried; and this time the girls saw the manageress of the Courtfield Creameries come running forward and lay a hand on Augusta's shoulder. "You—you— Why, everything is ruined!"

"She went that way—"

"Please!" put in Mrs. Colley sternly. "I cannot have a scene like this! The dance has been interrupted; and I hear all this noise and commotion. Will you one of you please explain what has happened?"

The manageress was nearly in tears.

"Oh, madam, it is a terrible disaster!" she panted. "I have never had such a thing happen before. The table containing refreshments had been overturned, and so many things broken—"

"Judy did it! Judy Grigg was hiding under it!" Augusta broke in, making an effort to get free. "She went that way!"

"Then we'll find her!" cried Peggy; and, with Babs and Mabs at her heels, she rushed off.

They went along a corridor, and into another. Augusta's word they had taken implicitly. There was no time, even for astonishment at hearing that Judy was in the place. But they were to be doomed to disappointment. In three minutes they seemed to rush everywhere, and asked the same question of at least a dozen servants. But no one had seen a strange girl—no one at all!

Baffled and perplexed, they went running back to the refreshment-room. And there, indeed, there was a scene that almost baffled description.

The principal table was a wreck. Jellies, ices, cakes, and crockery were littered in an indescribable mess on the floor. Beside it all stood poor Augusta, the manageress still gripping her shoulder. Sybil Spender was there, too, and Sybil was speaking.

"I must take responsibility, Mrs. Colley—I must, really!" she was saying, with such artfully assumed earnestness that it sounded genuine. "I muddled up the numbers, and I was keeping it as a surprise for Augusta. I—I didn't tell her that you had arranged for her to have a dance, and I think it only natural that she should be so disappointed and upset. I—I insist on writing a cheque for all the damage that has been done."

The trembling voice of the horrified manageress struck in again.

"But, madam, I can never apologise for such a scene as this," she said earnestly. "For Augusta to have lost her temper in such a wicked manner—"

"I didn't lose my temper," protested Augusta, her voice shaking. "I came down here, and I saw Judy Grigg hiding under the table. Goodness knows how she got here! But I rushed at her. She upset the table, and escaped—"

"Here is Peggy, mother!" exclaimed Anita Colley's voice.

"Dear me, yes!" said Mrs. Colley, turning on the three breathless girls. "You ran in the direction that Augusta indicated. Have you seen anyone?"

And then Peggy, Babs, and Mabs had to admit that they had seen no one at all. They could only mumble, for they saw the ever-growing look of consternation on poor Augusta's face.

"It seems incredible that any girl could have got away unseen," said Mrs. Colley. "Of course, there was no alarm at the time—"

"I—I must take responsibility, madam," quavered the manageress, wringing her hands.

"How?" said Mrs. Colley.

"I trusted this girl, madam, and—and she has betrayed her trust. It is so evident that she must have given way to a fit of temper that I cannot deny it. It is impossible for any of us to believe that a girl named Judy Grigg has been here and—"

"But I saw her!" said Augusta desperately. Her appealing eyes were looking at Sybil, knowing that Sybil was the only girl who could even say that it was possible for Judy to have been there. But Sybil was saying not a word. "She was here. I have made no mistake," Augusta went on. "I vow that I haven't!"

"And we believe you," said Peggy Preston.

But it was just one echo in a room that was full of mistrust. Mrs. Colley had turned her back on Augusta, and her face was grave and very upset.

"You do not believe?" came Augusta's last, desperate question.

"We must go on with the dance, girls," said Mrs. Colley. "Let us all get back to the ball-room while this is being cleared away by the servants. I am sorry there has been such a scene as this to mar your evening's pleasure, but I was mistaken, after all. You, Sybil, are partly to blame, but only for a lapse of memory. I cannot overlook such wicked temper on Augusta's part!"

Peggy Preston started forward, and faced their hostess.

"Mrs. Colley, please—oh, please!" she begged. "Judy must have been here, and—and she has escaped! Oh, surely you cannot believe that Augusta lost her temper?"

"I am sorry!" said Mrs. Colley stiffly. "But it is such a serious thing!" Babs burst out. "We know Augusta too well to believe—"

"In view of the circumstances, I regret that I cannot even argue," said Mrs. Colley, in a tone that allowed no further protest. "We are keeping the others waiting. Come, let us return!"

And then they found themselves being shepherded back to the ball-room, to complete a dance in which they could have no more interest at all.

It was a relief to get it over.

Peggy, hurrying below first of any, was the one to make the dramatic discovery that Augusta had gone.

She had been packed off immediately, the manageress informed her.

So back to Cliff House they went, after parting with Mrs. Colley and Anita—back, in a melancholy and dejected crowd. They all knew now what had happened. Most of them trusted Augusta still; but trusting was not going to help the poor girl who had once been a Cliff House scholar. And now only one thought was uppermost in all their minds.

What would Augusta do next?

When it was Too Late!

MISS PRIMROSE made an appearance in the Fourth Form class-room the following morning. Her words fairly took the girls' breath away.

"I have been reconsidering Augusta's case, girls," Miss Primrose said.

There was not one who did not hang on every word then.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY PRICE 2

"On Wednesday morning," explained the headmistress, "my attitude towards Augusta, when she was in the school, may have seemed somewhat stern to you. But it was not known definitely then that Judy Grigg was coming to the school no more. Three days have elapsed since then, and nothing has been heard or seen of the girl."

Peggy Preston's eyes were glowing with a wonderful hope.

"Three days! It is a very significant period," said Miss Primrose. "And I must say that I have been considering facts very deeply in that time, and taking other advice on the matter. Your own trustful attitude has influenced me greatly as well. And I have come to a conclusion, girls, that I am sure will please all of you. I have decided to give Augusta Anstruther-Browne the benefit of the doubt!"

Just one second of breathless bewilderment, then Babs leapt to her feet and waved her hand.

"Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!" burst in a cheer from almost every throat; and the whole class stood now to acclaim their joy at such an announcement.

"Thank you—thank you!" said Miss Primrose. "Now you must sit down and hear me out. Had Augusta gone to her sister's home in the North it might have been a different matter, but she is a very strong-willed girl. By remaining here she has already suffered great hardships that in themselves do not indicate a guilty girl. Personally, I am now strongly coming to the conviction that Augusta has not had justice, through the circumstantial evidence being against her. As I have said before, I have decided to give Augusta the benefit of any doubt that may still exist, and Miss Steel has gone to Courtfield to fetch her. Within a little while— Why, here is Miss Steel!"

The door opened to admit Miss Steel. There was a complete hush. Heads craned forward to catch a first glimpse of the returning girl. Peggy's lips trembled to be the first to raise the glad shout that would welcome Augusta back to their midst. And— But what was that?

Miss Steel was closing the door after her. No one was following!

"Miss Steel! Have you not seen Augusta?" exclaimed the headmistress, as surprised as anyone.

"I have not, Miss Primrose," came the answer. "I regret to say that my mission has entirely failed."

"Failed?"

"There was a deep sensation in the class."

"Yes, Miss Primrose—unfortunately," said Miss Steel. "I will make my report now. I went to the drapery shop to fetch Augusta, but she was not there. She has left; she went early this morning. I saw Mrs. Brown, her aunt. It seems that Augusta was dismissed from some employment last night, and despaired of finding more. She has gone to live with a girl who offered several days ago to support her, and treat her as a friend and companion. That girl is named Sybil Spender, and she lives at Spender Court."

"Sybil Spender!" gasped Babs.

"Augusta has gone to that girl, Sybil Spender!" exclaimed Miss Primrose. "That girl was her friend once. It was largely on evidence that Augusta was returning to spendthrift ways that I believed her guilty of attempted theft. For her to go and live with Sybil—why, yes! That is proof that she has not lost her old tastes. It is proof that I was going to be too merciful, after all! Girls, you must forget what I said but a few minutes ago. There can be no forgiveness for Augusta, now that she has done this!"

Miss Primrose turned to go, but Peggy, at least, did not see her. Her eyes were swimming with tears, and they were coursing down her cheeks. This—this monstrous act on Augusta's part was the end of it all, when she had tried so hard for her. Yes, when her efforts, and the efforts of the others, had resulted in Miss Primrose's pardon! Augusta had thrown it all away; she had gone to Sybil Spender!

Augusta at Spender Court!

Yes, it was true. But Augusta was not so deeply to blame as some of them thought. A sleepless night had brought

her to her decision. No one had told her that Miss Primrose was relenting. There had been no hope for Augusta. She had missed Judy yet again; and even now it might be too late to prevent the servant-girl from destroying all the evidence that would at one time have proved Augusta's innocence.

It was the necessity for getting close to Judy that had brought Augusta to her resolve. It had been a bitter blow for her to have to acknowledge herself defeated—to have to give in to Sybil, and admit that she had won.

Most of all she dreaded to think what her Cliff House chums must think when they knew of it. It had needed real courage to go to Spender Court and accept Sybil Spender's terms, and it had been a struggle to muster up that courage. It was the only way that she could see still open for her to earn her own living. It was the only way that she could see of getting at Judy, after being an expelled girl for nearly a fortnight!

So she had taken the plunge. Now she was actually at Spender Court, changing her clothes. And Sybil Spender sat in her luxurious "den," the first feelings of victory past. A very different thought was coming into her brain as she waited for Augusta to come and start being her "companion."

"She's played me up; she's only taken it because she had to!" Sybil was muttering. "A fine dance she's led me! I'll have to pay for all those things broken last night." She toyed with an unlighted cigarette, and there were no smiles on her face now. "A fine bill—yes! I wanted Augusta, I know, but now I've got her. She's played me up, and I'm going to play her up in return! She won't find it such an easy job being companion to Sybil Spender!"

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

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

YOUR EDITOR'S CHAT.

My Dear Readers,—It is only natural that when the news of Augusta Anstruther-Browne being seen in Sybil Spender's company reached Cliff House, certain girls should suspect her of returning to her old ways. But every reader of the SCHOOL FRIEND, together with Babs and Mabs and their chums, know that there is no risk of this happening.

There was a time when Augusta longed for Sybil's company. In fact, she was then as proud, as selfish, and as snobbish as Sybil. Then she thought nothing of Cliff House, cared little for the honour of the school. If the Fourth Form won a hockey or cricket match Augusta had no desire to join in the rejoicings. If the match were lost it was certainly no matter of regret to her.

But since the day when Augusta's people lost their wealth Augusta has been a different girl. She realised the folly of her ways—realised, too, that the so-called friendship of Sybil Spender, a girl whose only aim in life was to have an enjoyable time, was not worth while.

Therefore it is quite understandable that when, in this week's story, Sybil offers to engage the expelled girl as her companion and pay her a good salary, Augusta declines to accept. She does not want to have anything more to do with Sybil. But Augusta has the tremendous task of proving her own innocence, and she knows that if only she

could spend a few days at Spender Court she would be near Judy Grigg, the very girl who is to blame for everything that had happened. And thus nobody can blame Augusta for at length accepting Sybil's offer.

But I wonder whether the title of next Thursday's magnificent long complete story of the girls of Cliff House school will arouse your curiosity? The title is:

"SYBIL SPENDER'S SERVANT!"
By Hilda Richards.

Sybil offered to engage Augusta as a companion. One could hardly term a companion a servant. And yet Augusta becomes Sybil's servant. Why? Does she do it willingly? And how does she get on at Spender Court? Does she really enjoy herself? Is she tempted to return to her old ways? All these questions will be answered in next Thursday's magnificent long complete story full of surprises.

There will be another enthralling long instalment of

"JOAN HAVILAND'S SILENCE!"
By Joy Phillips,

in our next number, an instalment which tells of all that happens at Greyhurst School on Founder's Day.

There will also be numerous extracts from **"THE CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY,"**

all of which will tell you more about the life at Cliff House School.

A GREAT NEW PAPER.

No. 2 of the "Girls' Favourite," the splendid new paper, is now on sale. With this week's number a superb coloured plate, entitled "Summer's Golden Day!" is given free. This is really a beautiful plate, and would brighten the walls of any room.

This new paper is bound to receive a tremendous reception, for it is simply packed with splendid stories and articles. There are no fewer than ten articles in the issue now on sale. For instance, there is a special article on dancing, one on sports, and one that gives useful hints for improving your own room. No. 2 of the "Girls' Favourite" contains a most interesting full-page article entitled "What to Wear and What to Make." There is much in this article to appeal to the girl who is handy with her needle, and for the crochet enthusiast there is a charming doyley design. In fact, it may be safely said that the articles in the "Girls' Favourite" appeal to girls of all tastes. The titles of the remaining articles in the issue now on sale are: "Misunderstandings," "Short or Tall," "When is Your Birthday?" and "The Posing Girl."

Your Sincere Friend,

YOUR EDITOR,
THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 144.

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 DANTON, 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 Danton, 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 many girls refused to play in the coming hockey match with Heathington.

However, an eleven, including Ruby Haviland, was formed, and Sybil Sardone and her friends journeyed with the team to Heathington. Ruby deliberately played badly in the match, and after it, when news of a breakdown on the line had been received, she and Sybil Sardone & Co. boldly set off to go to a theatre.

(Now read on.)

At The Theatre.

"**H**A, ha, ha!" It was a silvery laugh from Sybil Sardone as she and all the members of Greyhurst's "swell" set came away from the teashop. She turned about on the pavement, grinning.

"I think I stood up to our precious captain that time?" she chuckled. "That girl, to think she is going to spoil our chance of a spree! Come along, all!"

Then the speaker crossed the busy, narrow street of this provincial town and entered the dingy portals of the Royal Hotel.

By the time her companions joined her in the entrance-hall of this ancient, hostelry, Sybil was in conversation with the lady clerk. "Good-evening!" Sybil had begun haughtily. "We girls belong to Greyhurst School, and were in the town to-day to play a hockey match. Owing to the accident on the railway, we can't return until very late to-night, if at all."

"Yes, miss," said the girl book-keeper. "A lot of people are being put about by the accident on the line. What a fortunate thing, though, that nobody was hurt!"

Sybil kept to business. She was not greatly concerned about the accident.

"Can we have rooms, then?" she asked. "We will book them now, so as to make sure of having somewhere to sleep."

"But, miss, your people at the school—"

"Oh, don't you bother about that! We shall communicate with the school, of course," Sybil said airily. "Show me the rooms, please!"

The office-girl summoned one of the maids, and told her the numbers of the rooms which the stranded schoolgirls could occupy; and then Sybil & Co. all trooped up the twisty staircase and went along a narrow corridor to these bed-chambers.

They were not sumptuously furnished. "Um! Yes, these will do, I suppose. There is nothing better to be had, anyhow," Sybil said, with a grimace. "Tell them in the office that we will take Nos. 45, 47, and 49."

"The lady clerk will want a deposit, miss."

"I am quite aware of that!" Sybil snapped. "You can go!"

The curt dismissal sent the comely maid off the scene, and then Sybil flopped down, mirthfully, on the edge of one of the beds in No. 49.

"Did you ever see such a place?" she laughed. "Bad as Brick Row, London, I should think—where that kid of a Joan Haviland lived, you know! Never mind; we'll get some fun out of it—rather!"

This was the best of the three bed-rooms by far. It even had a fire burning in the grate, having been occupied by other guests up to middle-day.

Clarice stepped to the fireplace and shovelled on some coal, to the approval of Sybil.

"That's the idea, Clarice darling! You and I and Ruby will shake down in here. Olive and Phyllis shall have 45, and Edith White and Grace Everitt can be in the other room."

Edith White and Grace Everitt were the two girls who had been identifying themselves with Sybil's "swell" set during the last few days. Of all the girls who had more or less cooled towards the Form-captain, just lately, these two had given most effect to the unhappy change of feeling.

They were a couple of the Form's best hockey players. If they had played in the match to-day, victory would have been with their side. But they had held aloof from the game, and had been with Sybil & Co. as mere onlookers, when the scratch team lost by that one odd goal—thanks to Ruby's deliberate throwing away of an easy chance.

All the same, Sybil Sardone was not quite sure that her "new recruits" were hearty and soul with her.

They had made themselves parties to this intended "spree," but, studying their faces on the quiet, now and then, as Sybil had a way of studying all her companions' faces, she could read anything but genuine happiness there.

So she thought it a wise precaution to put the two girls together in Room 47.

Grace and Edith withdrew to that room; but Olive and Phyllis did not go to theirs. Instead, they drew up chairs to the fire which made this room so much more desirable than the one allotted to them.

"Cheek!" said Sybil, still sitting on the bed. "Are you as cold as all that, Olive dear?"

"Ooo, noo!" came the drawl from Olive Courtney. "But a fire is so offily jolly!"

"You'll be jolly enough, up to bed-time," Sybil assured them all. "In a moment I'm

going down to 'phone to the theatre for seats. We'll have a private box. Gracious, don't look so miserable, Ruby! Cheer up!"

Clarice Choane cast one of her languid, half-mocking glances at Ruby Haviland, who was standing over by the door.

"There are times, one fancies," said Clarice, "when our dear Ruby has a twinge of conscience—ha, ha, ha! Confess now, Ruby darling; you think we are going just a bit too far?"

"I—I shall be very sorry if we get into a row at the school to-morrow!" faltered Ruby. Sybil had sprawled back upon the bed; now she sat up with a jerk.

"Don't you worry, my dear!" she smiled across at Ruby. "We cannot possibly get into a row over this business. The head-mistress will agree that we were perfectly justified in securing accommodation for the night, directly we heard of the accident."

"No use leaving it until quite late, and then finding every room in the town booked!" said Clarice.

"Ooo, noo!" agreed Olive. "So now to get through to the theatre on the 'phone," rejoined Sybil, stepping across to the door. "I'll pay for the rooms, whilst I am down at the office."

She went downstairs, and it was full five minutes later before she came mincing back, looking rather disgusted.

"Here's a sickening business!" she grinned. "Those two girls, Edith White and Grace Everitt—"

"Well?"

"They've hopped off!"

"What, gone?" exclaimed Clarice and Olive. "Oh!"

"Yes; they went away almost at once, telling the girl-clerk they wouldn't want any room for the night," Sybil explained sulkily. "So I suppose they are in a funk!"

"Good riddance, then!" was Clarice's scornful comment. "Won't the Form-captain be delighted, though?"

"Never mind; they didn't play in the match!" exclaimed Sybil.

"What about the theatre?" asked Olive, still warming her shoe-tips at the fire.

Sybil's handsome face lit up. "Oh, I've got a box—yes, a first-tier box! So that's all right!"

She looked at her wrist-watch. "The performance starts at seven-forty-five. We have just time for a tidy-up and a bit of dinner downstairs, and then we'll stroll round."

So in a few minutes a very unusual scene took place in the low-ceilinged dining-room of the old-fashioned hotel.

At a moment when all the tables were filling up with people stranded in the town on account of the railway accident, five schoolgirls walked into the room, and were given seats by the head-waiter.

Amongst the other guests were bearded farmers, commercial travellers, and a few professional gentlemen with their wives. No doubt all these people understood the reason for the girls being here; still, some amazed glances were bestowed upon the youthful party.

"You young ladies would like a little cold beef, perhaps?" said the waiter, thinking a modest meal was all they had the means to command.

"Cold beef!" returned Sybil, with a look that made the waiter shrink. "We will take the dinner!"

And they did.
Soup, fish, poultry, roast beef, and delicious vegetables: they partook of each course in its turn, finishing with apple-tart and cream.

At half-past seven they all rose from the table, and went upstairs to put their things on.

Then they walked the short distance to the Theatre Royal, passing inside after the house had filled. Indeed, the curtain was just on the point of going up as they took their seats in the first-tier box.

A travelling operatic company had the theatre for a week, and to-night they were giving "Faust." From the augmented orchestra came the final strains of the grand overture, whilst the girls drew their chairs forward, and looked out into the dim-lit auditorium.

Sybil, Clarice, Phyllis, and Olive—they were laughing and chatting as they settled themselves. The provincial theatre, with its provincial audience, was "great fun" to them. But Ruby, she was really entranced.

There she sat, feeling gloriously happy at last. The glamour of the theatre forbade all uneasiness of mind, all worrying over the scruples that so often troubles her these days.

Her pleasure-loving nature revelled in stage performances, and, although this theatre was not to be compared with the magnificent places she had been to in London, it was none the less enjoyable. So she was feeling, whilst her companions indulged in their foolish ridicule.

And now the overture came to an end, and the curtains rustled apart, revealing the dim-lit stage. Old Faust, in his spacious study, began to sing, whilst he turned the pages of the book over which he was poring.

"Clarice darling, just look at that back-cloth!" Sybil chuckled, keeping up the banter. "Did you ever see a bit of Roman architecture in Faust's study before?"

"It's lovely!" giggled Clarice. "They've got the scenery for Faust mixed up with some other opera!"

"As bad as the Fifth Form Dramatic Society's 'Julius Cæsar' last term!" remarked Phyllis Franklin. "Do you remember how Joyce Carroll painted the scenery, and—"

"Sh—sh! Order, please!" some irritated opera-lover in the gallery called down.

"Gracious! Is that for us?" Sybil said, quite loudly, and with a scornful laugh. "How dare you make a noise, Clarice! You'll get us turned out!"

"What I want to know is," said Phyllis, "what's it all about? Is that fat fellow in the beard supposed to be singing?"

"Oo, noo!" said Olive Courtney. "He is only getting a bit of prep done for the morning! Declining some bit of Latin, I suppose."

"I thought it was French!" grinned Clarice. "Quiet down there, please!"

"Yes, order—order!" came from various parts of the house.

"Clarice darling, do behave!" said Sybil. "We—"

And there her foolish jesting ceased, whilst the wide grin on her face suddenly faded away.

The door at the back of the box had opened, and she, like the rest of the party, had looked round sharply.

One of the theatre attendants, come to request them to be more orderly?

No.

There, just inside the doorway, stood the Form captain!

Hilda Heathcote's Hour of Triumph!
HILDA HEATHCOTE closed the door of the box without a sound, and stepped nearer.

She made a sign to the girls to withdraw from the front of the box, so that any talk would not disturb the performance.

"Well, what do you want?" Sybil demanded resentfully, getting up from her chair.

"We can give you a free seat, Hilda!" grinned Clarice. "But you can't expect us to squeeze in all the rest of the girls. He, he, he!"

"Come away!" said Hilda, in her usual tone of quiet authority.

Sybil's eyes blazed then.

"Look here, Hilda, stop it! We have paid to see this piece, and we are not going to have our money wasted. You clear out!"

"You are to come away, and return with me to Greyhurst at once!"

"Nothing of the sort—"

"Immediately!" insisted Hilda, as quietly as before. "I have a motor-charabanc waiting to take the whole party back to the school."

"Bother your charabanc!" exclaimed Sybil fiercely. "We are not going back to the school to-night. We have booked rooms at the hotel!"

There was a moment whilst Hilda kept her lips tight shut. Then:

"Sybil Sardone," she said, "once again, you have got to do as you are asked, or else stand the racket!"

"Ah, more threats! You'll report me, will you?"

"Yes, I will—without the least hesitation!"

Never had Sybil Sardone, in the whole course of her bitter feud with the Form captain, eyed her as savagely as she did at this moment.

"I warned you," said Hilda, very softly. "If your taking rooms at the hotel and engaging this box at the theatre means a waste of money, you have only yourselves to blame. You should have stayed with me and the rest of the girls in the town."

"We didn't choose to!"

"You were not free to choose what you would do or would not do," Hilda reminded the rebel leader calmly. "When you got leave to attend the hockey match at this distance from the school, you came under my charge."

"That's all very well," said Sybil hotly. "But the railway accident altered everything!"

"No," said Hilda. "It only made our keeping together in the town all the more necessary. Any girl could see that, without needing to be told. But I am not going to argue; we shall only spoil people's enjoyment of the piece. Come away!"

"I refuse!" Sybil said, with a gesture of scorn.

"Ditto me," said Clarice.

"You don't intend to miss the piece, do you?" Phyllis turned to ask Olive Courtney.

"Oo, noo!" was the bland reply. "'Faust' is so offly good!"

"And Ruby—what does she say?" Sybil said, swishing round upon that girl.

"I—I don't know!" gulped Ruby. "It does seem a shame—unfair! You are a spoil-sport, Hilda!"

"A just remark," answered Hilda gently, "from the girl who spoilt the team's hope of tying to-day!"

And Ruby bit her lip.

"I would like to see 'Faust' as much as any of you," Hilda went on, "but I don't expect to do these things in term-time. You know what my plain duty was, when we first heard about the accident. I—"

"Oh, your duty—your everlasting duty!" sneered Sybil.

"I managed to get through on the 'phone to the school at last," the Form captain

pursued, ignoring the jeer. "I asked Miss Chessingham if I should bring you home by train, as soon as the service was restored, or find accommodation for you all in the town. She said I must bring you home to-night, either by train, or else by motor-cars. Somebody is to be at Greyhurst Station, in case we got there very late. As a matter of fact, I have managed to hire a charabanc!"

"Very kind of you, I'm sure!"

"The cars had all been snapped up, but the charabanc is outside now, with the other girls in it."

"Well, don't wait for us," shrugged Sybil. "We are not coming. We shall tell Miss Chessingham that we thought—"

"One moment," said Hilda impressively. "Don't imagine that I hinted to Miss Chessingham that you had acted on your own. She seems to have guessed, however, that some girls would give trouble."

"Well?"

"Miss Chessingham made it quite clear over the 'phone; any girl failing to return with me and the rest will be expelled!"

That word, so quietly spoken, and yet—how daunting it was to Sybil & Co.!

Expelled!

Sybil's handsome face flamed with the rage that burned within her.

If only she could accuse Hilda of having sought extra power from the headmistress! But there had been nothing like that, and it was nowise trying to make out that there had been.

From first to last, Hilda Heathcote had neither exceeded her normal authority as Form captain, nor sought to have that authority increased.

What she had just said was the indisputable truth. The headmistress, ignorant though she was of the trouble Hilda Heathcote was faced with, had strengthened that girl's hands by voicing the warning.

Those who failed to return to-night would be expelled!

No excuses would be listened to in the morning. If some of the girls could get home, then why could not the rest of them? That was the headmistress' very reasonable argument.

"So," said Hilda, after a little pause, during which all the music and singing had sounded temptingly in the rebels' hearing, "are you coming?"

It was, perhaps, the most exasperating moment Sybil Sardone had ever known.

She had got to give in—she knew it! But how to give in, and yet save her face?

The thing could not be done—and she knew that, too! Making a savage snatch at her gloves and other outdoor things, she swept from the theatre-box with as much dignity as possible, although her downcast eyes told of the humiliation she was feeling.

Hilda Heathcote might have been forgiven



"Your make-up when the time comes, Ruby!" Sybil said mirthfully.
"Clarice and I thought we'd get you to dress up as a charwoman!"

a smile of triumph. After all, she had had her moment of humiliation to-day—when the Form lost its hockey-match. And who had been the cause of that humiliation? Who else but Sybil Sardone? So this was only tit-for-tat.

But Hilda had no desire to glory in the way Sybil was being "paid out."

She, the Form captain, stood by with averted face whilst the other members of the party sneaked away, looking dreadfully crestfallen. Then she brought up the rear, following the girls across the pavement to where the motor-charabanc was waiting.

It was an enormous vehicle, with ample room for all. The hockeyists were in their seats, and so were Edith White and Grace Everitt.

The latter were having nothing to say to the captain's friends, such as Joan Haviland, Elsie Dainton, Joyce Carroll, and Evelyn Gray. On the other hand, they now had neither word nor look for Sybil and her companions.

Sybil was furious with the pair, and she let them see it. As she took her seat in the motor vehicle, she gave them a sideways glance of withering contempt.

Then the driver of the vehicle started up the engine, and away went the big party of schoolgirls on their twelve-mile ride across the night-bound countryside.

With the powerful head-lamps shedding their fans of light along the lonely highway, the charabanc boomed along at a comfortable twelve miles an hour, taking just the sixty minutes to reach Greyhurst School.

At the journey's end the party was still

"Oh, go to bed, the lot of you!" snapped Sybil at last. "I'm fed-up!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Very well, dear. You will be all right in the morning, I know. Feeling game for a nice little spree we can have when Founder's Day comes round next week!" The words meant little to Ruby, and it surprised her to see how Sybil suddenly turned about in her bed to show a brighter face to her friends.

"Founder's Day!" exclaimed Sybil. "You mean—"

"Yes, just that!" nodded Clarice, winking. "We shall have the usual troop of parents down for the day. And what a lark if the scholarship kid's mother comes along."

Ruby hoped that none of her friends noticed the turn this remark had given her.

"If that washerwoman does turn up," said Phyllis, "it is pretty certain she will be the means of our giving Hilda Heathcote a really terrible time!"

"I guess so," chuckled Clarice. "You know the wheeze, don't you, Syb?"

"I do!" was the answer, delivered with a smile of malice. "And Ruby shall help us. Do you hear, Ruby? You shall help us!"

There was no answer from Ruby. "She's nearly asleep," said Clarice.

But Ruby was not—anything but!

"What Ripping Friends Are We!"

FOUNDER'S DAY!

AN event that, now she had heard it talked about, Ruby must await with feelings of the greatest dismay.

For, was there the least doubt that, when

came. Ruby knew it. She could imagine what would happen in the course of the next day or so—Joan's slipping down to Kila Cottage and flinging both arms about mother's neck, to cry:

"Do come, mother! You must! Ruby and I are both Greyhurst girls, and so you must come—you, who have two girls of your own at the school!"

And how mother would long to come.

At present she did not know—oh, that was the worst of it!—she did not know that one of her own girls had made friends with others who knew nothing of her poor relations. Ah, what a tangle it all was! How sickening was this life of deception! That miserable thought passed across Ruby's mind but it left no compunction in its wake.

Once again she realised that not one jot of real happiness was she deriving from the course she had embarked upon. And yet she could not contemplate a fresh beginning. No; as she had begun, so she must go on!

It was too late now to make a fresh start. The secret must be kept. Somehow or other she must struggle along, her relationship to Joan and Joan's mother remaining all unsuspected by the girls.

For, if they found out now, what would life hold for her at Greyhurst School?

Sybil and her "set" would drop her. She—Ruby—would have to pass her schooldays with girls whose tastes were utterly different from hers—girls who were Joan's sort. And that was not what Ruby wanted.

How, then, to keep the wretched secret, in spite of Founder's Day and mother's inevitable visit?

It must have been long past one in the morning before an idea came to the deservedly miserable girl in her self-wrought distraction of mind.

On Founder's Day she must be out of everything—ill!

It was the only way. But it was a safe way—yes!

If she shammed illness on the morning of the day, she would be allowed to keep to her bed.

She might even be ordered to go over to the sanatorium, the headmistress wondering if the indisposition was the first symptom of an infectious illness.

Anyhow, she would be in bed all day, and it was a hundred chances to one that when mother sought her out—as mother was bound to do, of course—the meeting would not be witnessed by any of the girls.

Ruby closed her eyes at last, feeling that she would never have got to sleep to-night if that cunning idea had not come to her. What a relief it was to be to the selfish girl, too, during the next few days.

All over the school the talk was now of nothing else but Founder's Day. And again and again she had to listen to Sybil, Clarice, Phyllis, Olive—all four of them debating their great "scheme."

Again and again they showed by their talk how they were counting upon her help. She was to join with them in making fun of the "washerwoman, whose daughter, Joan Haviland, was a scholarship girl at Greyhurst." She—Ruby—was actually counted upon to make fun of her own mother in the presence of the great gathering!

Ruby was not going to do that. No, she was saying to herself, over and over again, she could not do a thing like that! But it would have been more to her credit if she had told Sybil so, and had told the reason why. Her courage, however,—if courage she had at all—failed her there.

Thursday of that week—the day before the great event—was a disturbed one in the school.

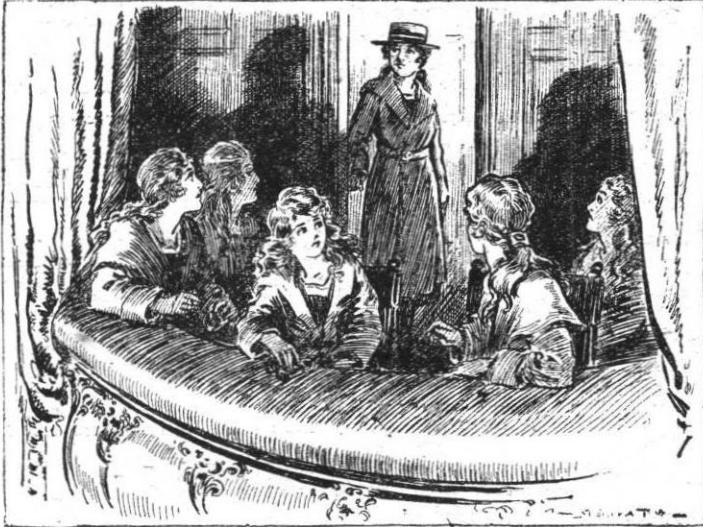
Classes in the morning were a mere make-believe of work. In the afternoon the girls were free and a little of the riot of the day before breaking-up was to be heard.

They may pretend otherwise, but girls are always anxious to see their parents again before they have been a fortnight or more at a boarding-school. And so it was with the girls of Greyhurst, now.

One scholar there was, we know, secretly miserable with the dread of to-morrow because of the false, foolish pride that filled her selfish heart. But the rest—how excited they were; how they were longing for the joy of their parents' visit on the morrow!

In one of the downstairs passages after prep came face to face, with no one else at hand.

"Ruby!" her scholarship sister exclaimed eagerly. "Oh, I have been so wanting to get a word with you on the quiet! I—"



The grins faded from the faces of the party as they looked round. For there, just inside the doorway at the back of the box, stood Hilda Heathcote!

just as subdued as it had been at the start, but, gathered behind Miss Chesingham and some of the other mistresses in the great porch, were scores of Greyhurst scholars, and these girls sent up loud cheers as the belated party alighted.

It was known that the school had been defeated to-day, and that was certainly no cause for jubilation. But the girls' safe return marked the happy conclusion to a certain amount of anxiety, and the headmistress and her colleagues were not the only persons to feel proud of Hilda Heathcote for the way she had "managed."

That night it was a sullen Sybil Sardone who was with her boon companions in the little annexe to the Fifth Form dormitory.

Clarice, Phyllis, and Olive—they tried to make a joke out of the way their "spree" had been spoiled. Sybil, however, was plainly sulking over the collapse of her plans for the evening's gaiety.

"Oh, cheer up!" pleaded Clarice, forcing a laugh. "I suppose Hilda Heathcote has scored over us, for once. But Sybil—I say, Sybil!"

"No answer came from the leader of the 'set.'"

"Come, Sybil darling!" Clarice persisted, going across to that girl's bed and giving her a shake. "Don't take it to heart like this!"

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 144.

the great event of the spring term came round, mother would pay a visit to the school—mother, from the little cottage down by the brickworks in Greyhurst village.

She would be one of the day's invited guests. The parents of every scholar in the school were asked to come from far and wide; and Ruby, although she was a new scholar, with no previous experience of Founder's Day, could imagine what a point the grown-ups made of attending the gathering.

Lying there in the dark dormitory, wide awake long after her friends had dropped off to sleep, she could imagine what a great social event the day was for Greyhurst.

In her mind's eye she saw motors and carriages teeming up the entrance drive, to discharge their fashionable occupants.

It would be a brilliant gathering, and into the heart of it mother would find her way—mother, looking so poor and shabby!

"Don't come—don't come, mother!" Ruby felt herself mentally crying out as she lay there, unable to sleep for the dismay that was upon her. "Don't come to the school and disgrace me! They don't know you are my mother, and I don't want them to know!"

But, all the time, she knew that mother was bound to come!

Yes, Joan would see to it that mother

"Sh! Be careful!" gestured Ruby imploringly. "If anybody overhears us, you know what they will guess!"
 Joan looked regretful. The promise she had made to her sister to keep the relationship secret was a promise she meant to keep. Never once, yet, had she let slip any word that might have jeopardised the secret. But to-night she was very excited, and her cry of greeting had been too demonstrative, as she now realised.

Remaining silent, she signed to Ruby to follow her to the dead-end of the passage, where they could speak with absolute security.

"Ruby darling, I—I wanted to tell you. This afternoon I slipped down to the village and saw mother. She is coming to-morrow."

"I knew it!" was the despairing comment. "Well, it can't be helped, I suppose. You couldn't ask her to stay away!"

"Ruby darling, how could I, indeed?" returned Joan, with intense sadness. "If you had been there, dear—if you had seen her pride at having two girls members of such a fine old school! You would have felt that it would be too cruel to hint that she would do better to stop away!"

"All the same, for her own sake, Joan—"

"No, Ruby! I don't see that at all!" Joan broke in spiritedly. "You can't say that mother would be better away from the school to-morrow for her own sake. She has nothing to be ashamed of. Poor—who can help being poor? They would be snobs who looked down on her; but no one will— Oh, I can't believe it!"

Ruby was silent, with her pallid face turned away.

"So, Ruby darling," came from Joan, after a pause, "it has left me sort of worried. For darling mother's sake, and mine, I'm longing to see her here. But—there's your, dear."

"Yes, I know. But I've thought of a way," gulped Ruby.

"With a— a bit of luck I can get through all right."
 In the darkness of the passage a gasp from Joan was audible. She could not conceal the pain it was to her to hear her sister talking of being able still to disown her mother—"with a bit of luck!"

"But, dear," the younger sister exclaimed, after another pause. "have you the heart to do it, even if there is a way? Oh, Ruby darling! Is it worth while?"

"I must, anyhow!" said Ruby hoarsely.

"Is it worth while—is it?" insisted Joan earnestly. "I am keeping the secret, Ruby, because I promised to. But what good are you gaining by it all? What are you not missing, Ruby, by going on like this. If only you would have done with all the deception to-morrow—to-morrow, when mother is here, Ruby. Oh, won't you let everybody see that she is your mother as well as mine? Won't you, dear?"

Ruby turned away, rubbing a hand across her knitted brows.

"You don't understand, Joan," she sighed miserably. "You are so different to me. You never did feel things as I feel them."

"What things, dear?"

"Oh, you know! Our being brought up as we were in Brick Row; mother always having to work for her living; her living down at Kiln Cottage now; you mayn't feel there is any disgrace in it—"

"I certainly do not!" cut in Joan gently. "It was never mother's fault."

"Oh, I know! But girls like Sybil and Clarice and—and others, they don't understand how anybody can be poor and be nice at the same time. They make fun about common people. I even hear them making fun about the scholarship girl's mother—"

"Your mother, Ruby! And yet you are still friendly with them. Oh, Ruby darling, how can you!" Joan exclaimed, on the verge of tears.

"Well, they don't know, do they?" snapped Ruby irritably. "They don't know that your mother is my mother. You. So you can't blame them, Joan. I won't hear a word said against Sybil and the others! They are my—my friends!"

"Friends!" echoed Joan. She had taken out her handkerchief, and was stealthily drying her eyes. "Friends, you call them!"

Then Ruby heaved one of her hard, desperate sighs, stamped a foot, and rushed away.

She heard her sister voice a beseeching word, but she ignored it, going up the stairs and along the Fifth Form corridor to her study.

Sybil, the fellow occupant of the den, was in there. A new frock had come down from Bond Street for to-morrow's great occasion, and the girl had tried it on.

"Rather fetching—what?" said Sybil, prouetting in front of the glass. "My people are not coming down. I think I told you, Ruby, dad is awfully bothered in the City. But I had to have a new frock in honour of the day. Think I look all right?"

She looked pretty—no question about that. The costly frock was not only prettily designed and perfectly made; the material was of a delicacy that made it "set" softly everywhere.

Sybil ran a hand caressingly about her hips; but that was not because the frock needed any smoothing down.

"May as well try the stockings to match," she said, dropping into a low chair.

And, kicking off her shoes, she slipped off the stockings she was wearing and started to draw on others that had come with the new frock.

"What is in the other box, Sybil?" Ruby asked, in a moment or so, catching sight of a more dilapidated-looking cardboard-box that was dumped on a chair.

"Oh, that!" Sybil leant back in her low seat to enjoy a silvery laugh. "That is a frock for you to wear, Ruby dear. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Me?"

Ruby darted across to the box and whipped away the loose lid.

Inside there was nothing but a collection of things only fit for the rag-heap.

"Your make-up, when the time comes, Ruby!" Sybil said mirthfully, still lolling in her chair. "That is the latest addition to our great scheme for to-morrow, dear. Clarice and I thought we'd get you to dress up as a washerwoman. You can wear a label—just for fun—saying your name is Haviland! Ha, ha, ha! Quite true, too, because you are a Haviland, aren't you?"

(Continued on page 24.)

A Record-breaking CORSET OFFER

ASTOUNDING BARGAIN.

14/11 Ambron Corsets for 8/11

SENT AT ONCE ON HOME APPROVAL FOR DEPOSIT OF ONE SHILLING.

THIS remarkable Corset Offer is unprecedented. 50,000 lady readers of SCHOOL FRIEND are being given the opportunity to benefit by a unique scheme for introducing quite a new Model of the Ambron Gold Medal Health Corset.

Make sure you secure one of these Models at almost half price, for fortunate indeed will those ladies be who participate in this record-breaking Corset Bargain Offer.

You have the assurance of the largest Mail Order Corset House in the World that a Corset of the quality of Ambron Model "A" is absolutely unpurchasable at any Draper's or even the largest Stores at a less figure than 14/11.

Just read the specification of this Corset, which appears under the illustration. The garment is made of Ambron Super Corset Cloth of exceptional fabric strength. A small piece of this material requires a strain of 240lbs. to break it. In the usual way a cloth that will stand a strain of 95lbs. is considered high. This is only one of the reasons why the Ambron Model "A" marks such a big advance in Corset manufacture.

So you have to-day an opportunity of securing really exceptional 14/11 Corset value for 8/11; in other words, you are being presented with a bonus of 6/- to induce you to give this beautiful model a trial.

GIGANTIC NATIONAL SCHEME OF "ON APPROVAL" PRIVATE FITTING AT HOME.

By this plan you are able to have one of these wonderful Corsets sent to your own home for a Private Fitting and absolutely on the Approval or Return Basis. You are not even asked to send the Bargain Price in the first instance. All you have to do is to send 1/-, and if, after the closest examination, you are not absolutely satisfied with the garment, you simply return it to us and the 1/- you have sent will be immediately refunded. If, however, you decide to keep it—as we have every confidence you will—then you have the additional advantage, if it suits your convenience to do so, of paying the balance in instalments of 1/- per week.

Fill in the coupon below, send it to-day, and as soon as the postman can bring it to you, you will be the happy recipient of the biggest Corset Bargain ever made.

HOW TO ORDER.



The new Model "A" Ambron Corset is made throughout in White Ambron Super Corset Cloth—the greatest improvement in Corset material for many years. The Bust is low, being cut two inches above waist line, thus following the prevailing popular vogue. Duplex rust-proof steels, cloth cased and specially reinforced at ends, wedge shape busk. Four adjustable woven lock suspenders which can be detached. The whole garment is washable without the trouble of removing trimming, busk, or supports.

COUPON Simply write your full name and address on a plain piece of paper, fill in your Corset measurements, cut out and pin coupon to the paper, and post at once. Cross P.O. thus: / /.

Please send me a Model "A" Ambron Gold Medal Health Corset on approval, size as follows:

Size of Waist..... Bust..... Hips.....
 Also full Catalogue. I enclose 1/-, together with 6d. to cover part postage, and if I do not immediately return Corset I will pay you the balance of 7/11 either in one sum or by weekly instalments of 1/- each. A SCHOOL FRIEND, 11/2/22. No. 126.

Post your order at once to AMBRON ROSE, LONDON, S.W.1, 126, ALLEN HOUSE, 70, VAUXHALL BRIDGE RD., WILSON, S.W.1.

The Largest Mail Order Corset House in the World.

**JOAN HAVILAND'S
SILENCE!**

(Continued from page 23.)

"I—I—"

Ruby felt that she could not speak. She stood there with one of the rags in her hand, simply staring at Sybil. Never had she expected such a spiteful scheme—even from the rouged lips of Sybil.

Sybil arched her brows as she glanced at Ruby.

"Yes—yes, of course, I'm a Haviland!" Ruby said desperately. "But—but—"

"Of course, you're no relation! Ha, ha, ha!" Sybil gave a peal of laughter. Every note of it struck a chill to Ruby Haviland's heart. "But what do you think of our great scheme, Ruby? My word, think of that charwoman's face when she sees you romp up to her—dressed in that! Oh, how gorgeous!"

Ruby's teeth bit into her bloodless lips. To be asked to act such a part—to play such a spiteful, cruel trick upon her own mother! Ah, thought Ruby, if Sybil but knew that this poor, despised woman was really her own mother! She shuddered at the very idea.

"You must learn the part you are to play, Ruby!" A queer exultation had crept into Sybil's voice. "We may never get such a chance again! And that scholarship kid—she'll never be able to lift up her head after it! It's the chance of our lifetime!"

Ruby's face was going red and white by turns. She replaced the lid of the box, and then stood mute and still.

"Here, come over, and do up my shoes for me, will you, dear?" Sybil broke out in sweet tones a few seconds later. "Then I'll see how I look!"

Slowly Ruby pulled herself together. Once again the feeling that she could not go on for a moment longer with this life of deception and secrecy passed away.

She crossed the room and dropped upon both knees in front of her friend. Sybil put out one little stockinged foot to have the shoe slipped on and fastened, and then the other.

"Thanks!" she said, when Ruby's hands had performed the little act of homage. "What ripping friends we are, aren't we, Ruby?"

"Yes!" faltered Ruby.

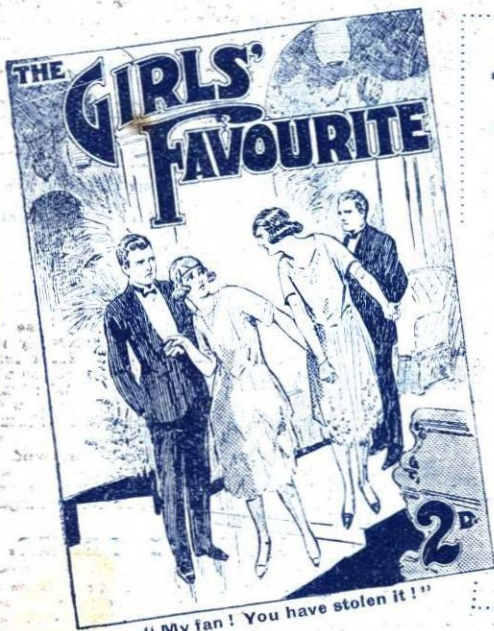
But, ah, how clearly she seemed to hear a voice exclaiming sorrowfully, even as she had heard it exclaiming in the passage downstairs—Joan's voice, giving such a world of meaning to her echoing of that one word:

"Friends!"

Friends! What, after this, can be Ruby's attitude towards these girls she has chosen for her "friends" at Greyhurst? Any girl of character would break away from them. But Ruby—what will she do? Is it inconceivable that she could possibly agree with Sybil's spiteful scheme, and play that cruel trick upon her mother! There will be another magnificent long instalment of "Joan Haviland's Silence!" next Thursday. Tell all your friends about this powerful story of Greyhurst School.

NOW ON SALE!

No. 2 OF THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE



4 GRAND STORIES
11 Splendid Articles

GIVEN FREE!

Superb
COLOURED PLATE:
"Summer's Golden Day!"

GRAND NEW COMPETITION!
First Prize, £100