

In this issue:

"THE LITTLE STOWAWAY!"

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of the Girls of Cliff House School, featuring Suzanne, the little stowaway.

"THE CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY"

in a New and Enlarged Form, consisting of Eight Pages, and containing an Enthralling New Serial, entitled, "The Signalman's Daughter!" by Gertrude Nelson.

No. 151. Vol. 6.

Week Ending April 1st, 1922.

The School Friend

Every **2** Thursday.



THE FRENCH GIRL'S EMOTION!

WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

A dramatic incident from the magnificent new long complete story of the girls of Cliff House School, contained in this issue.

G. M. Daitshon



Your Editor's Corner



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

My Dear Reader.—How do you like Suzanne, the French girl, now that you have made her acquaintance? I am sure you must admire her for her pluck and determination. Suzanne is just the kind of girl one likes to read about. For grit and firmness of purpose she ranks amongst such of our favourites as Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, Augusta Anstruther-Browne, and others of the leading Fourth Formers.

In next week's magnificent new long complete story of the girls of Cliff House, entitled:

"THE SECRET OF THE WRECK!"

By Hilda Richards,

you will see how Suzanne fares in her gallant struggle to regain the stolen jewels. How long can her hiding-place in the caves remain a secret? And who will be the first to gain access to the cabin? A certain Monsieur Furet, a French detective, makes a sudden appearance in next week's story. In what way will he affect the developments? Will his coming help Suzanne, or hinder her?

And Mademoiselle Lupin, she is well to the fore in our next story. How will she act when she learns that Suzanne is so near? She is so excitable—is there any risk that she will cause Suzanne's proximity to become known, and thereby lead to her arrest? In regard to this last question, there is certainly the risk. And this fact causes Babs & Co. a good deal of anxiety. If Suzanne can only regain the jewels before Monsieur and Madame Volde—well, I have suggested enough to show the possibilities of next week's story. I can rely on you all not to miss it.

The first number of the New and Enlarged

CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY

is now before you. I think you will agree with me that the new arrangement has made the "Weekly" brighter and more attractive than ever it has been in the past. I shall be very glad indeed to learn your opinions of it. You will find No. 2 of the new series to be simply overflowing with varied features, and you will thoroughly appreciate them all.

Was I not correct in saying that

"THE SIGNALMAN'S DAUGHTER!"

By Gertrude Nelson.

would meet with your instant approval?

This story is quite as excellent as any previous SCHOOL FRIEND serial, and I do not doubt that you have already become as attached to Olive Walters as you were to Joan Haviland. Make sure of not missing next week's instalment by ordering your copy in advance.

BRIEF REPLIES.

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

"Francaise" (Edinburgh).—The birthdays of the Fourth-Formers may be published in a future number of the SCHOOL FRIEND.

Miss Patton.—Plates of the girls you suggest may be presented later. It is very probable that an Australian girl will be introduced into the stories later. Both Lorna Grey and Lilian Stanley are English girls. Barbara Redfern is fourteen years of age.

"Skinflint."—Barbara Redfern was already at Cliff House when the SCHOOL FRIEND stories commenced.

"An Admirer of Mabs" (Norwood).—Mabel Lynn has taken a leading part in recent stories. Vivienne Leigh will probably be prominent in a coming series of stories. The matter of an "Annual" is under consideration. It must be left to the future to show whether or not Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell will ever reform.

"Vivienne Redfern" (Scotland).—The answer to your first question is—No. I am entirely of your high opinion concerning Freda Foote. I am afraid I cannot promise a plate of her yet, however. The matter of an "Annual" is under consideration.

"The Kid" (Essex).—The birthdays of the girls may be published in a future number of the SCHOOL FRIEND. Clara Trevlyn is certain to take the leading part in a story before very long.

Miss Joyce Heather (Croydon).—I will see if Phyllis Howell and Philippa Derwent cannot take the leading parts in coming stories. Your wish regarding Gwen Cook has just been realised.

"Princess Zelig" (Wallasey).—Your questions have already been answered by the recent series of stories of Augusta Anstruther-Browne.

"Two Admirers."—The answer to your first question is—No. Very pleased

to learn which characters are your favourites.

"Four Australian Readers" (Brisbane).—No, Miss Richards is in no way related to the writer you name. Augusta Anstruther-Browne is the eldest girl in the Fourth Form at Cliff House. She is fifteen years of age. Marjorie Hazeldene has a brother at the school you mention.

"Bookworm" (Thurlston).—At your age—fourteen—you would be placed in the Fourth Form at Cliff House.

"Mutt and Jeff" (Dublin).—The answer to your first question is—No. I cannot promise that what you ask for will come about. Barbara Redfern is in no way related to the boy you mention. The handwriting of both of you is quite clear.

"Jubilo."—I will see if Princess Zelig cannot again play a part in the stories. The matter of an "Annual" is under consideration. No, Miss Richards is in no way related to the writer you mention. I have passed on your high compliments to Mr. Dodshon.

Your Sincere Friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

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The Little Stowaway!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of the Girls of Cliff House, featuring Suzanne, the little stowaway.

By HILDA RICHARDS.

Bound for England!

THE quays of the French seaport town were bustling with life, in spite of the steady rain that fell from the low-lying, black skies. Sailors in greasy jerseys and baggy trousers hurried hither and thither; cranes added to the din a dismal wail of their own. Orders were followed quickly by the creaking of blocks, while men hauled on straining ropes. L'Hirondelle, the little steamer at the end of the quay, was getting ready to put out to sea; was shortly to face the leaden seas that fought, in masses of white foam, beyond the harbour mouth.

"Are all the passengers on board yet?" called the captain in French to a steward who stood upon the quayside.

"Four, monsieur le capitaine," the man answered. "But there are two yet to come!"

The captain muttered beneath his breath, and strode away. The cranes sang their last dismal song as the hatches were clamped upon the hold. The dock workers shuffled off, drawing on oilskins to protect them from the rain that drove more pitilessly than ever. Steam began to hiss impatiently from the steamer's funnel. All was ready, save for those two passengers.

The steward watched for them with a growing impatience.

And, unbeknown to everyone else, two other eyes watched as well!

Beneath the tarpaulin that covered some perishable cargo on the end of the quay there was a figure that no one suspected. Hers were the eyes that watched for those last two passengers for the trip that L'Hirondelle was to make.

She was but a young girl—fifteen at the most—perhaps less, for her jet black hair and dark brows made her look older than she really was. She moved stiffly, as though cramped by long waiting, during which she had been afraid of revealing her presence. But her large, wonderful dark blue eyes never wavered in their earnest gaze.

"Ah!"

She gave a little gasp, and her gaze was arrested at last. She appeared to be looking at the dim figures of a man and woman who could at last be discerned hurrying along the cobbled street that led to the quay.

The steward seemed to see them at the same moment, and moved forward. It was like a signal to the girl. She suddenly moved the tarpaulin to one side, and emerged into the open. Almost at once, however, she darted to a fresh cover, from which point she could at last gaze down on the now deserted decks of the Hirondelle.

Had there been any onlooker, they would have been more astonished than

ever on seeing the girl in the full light. The blue cape that she drew closer over her head did not nearly cover the dainty dress that she wore. The rain lashed pitilessly through her fine silk stockings and pitted the mud that had already gathered on her flimsy, high-heeled shoes.

Why was this elegantly dressed French girl hiding here, of all places, in such a furtive manner?

Her brief scrutiny of the vessel was soon finished, and now voices came to her ears, evidently those of the two absent passengers.

The girl darted about hither and thither, as though completely bewildered by some terrifying doubt. Then she ran to the end of the quay and peered over.

The rusty iron ladder that she saw seemed to give her an idea at last.

Still shut off from sight of the two passengers by the covered merchandise, the girl dropped suddenly to her knees. She fumbled at, and then gripped the rusty ladder. Her delicate white hands trembled as she commenced the descent, evidently something to which she was quite unaccustomed.

She was near to the sea at last, and here a huge, barnacled bulk of timber ran around the quay-side to act as a fender for ships coming alongside. She scrambled on to it, made her way to the corner of the stonework, and peered around. There was a further beam along which she could run. She had started when voices right above her head made her shrink back against the green-covered stonework.

"We will wait here until the baggage arrives," a man was saying in French. "Not more than two minutes longer—La! I see Henri now!"

The girl trembled at hearing the words. Those two for whose arrival she had waited were above her now!

L'Hirondelle swayed lazily at its mooring-ropes just opposite to her. Now its sides seemed high indeed—too high and too difficult to climb. But her fevered mind saw just one way in which she could get on board.

There was a sort of narrow platform running round the vessel's stern, just a foot or so above the water-line. At its nearest point it was four feet from her. But there was a hand-hold that she could see, evidently provided for those using the little platform.

Dare she jump?

She tried. Her hand just grasped that hold, but her feet slipped. Her dainty shoes trailed in the water, and she all but followed them. But a furious scramble, in which her already soiled clothes were further damaged, brought her knees to the platform. She rose, trembling, to her

feet, expecting at any moment a cry of discovery from above. But it did not come. Feeling slightly reassured, she crept around that platform to the farther side of the ship.

And now what was she to do?

Fortunately, she came upon hand holds that would allow her to drag herself up the ship's side. She started to climb, and came upon a porthole that had not yet been closed. Exerting all her strength, the girl crawled through, and was on board the ship at last.

As a stowaway!

Yes, her next actions showed that. For she darted for the darkest passage that she could see, and only seemed to breathe again when she found herself in a little compartment filled with big but empty lockers.

She could hide in those if anyone came that way.

Voices reached her from above. Then came the alighting of the gangway, and shouts. The deck suddenly started to throb beneath her feet.

Only just in time, after all! They were moving already! Through a porthole she suddenly saw a grey beam that dragged slowly past, and an immense desolation seemed to come to the girl who had reached the ship so furtively.

She climbed on a locker, and gazed through the thick green glass. Yes, they were off! She could see the town, clad in its grey mist of driving rain, seeming to float away from her with a gentle, rocking motion. She was to leave it—leave her native land for a strange country!

Tears gathered suddenly on those big blue eyes—tears she could not suppress.

"La belle France—oh, ma belle, belle France!" she muttered, an agony of desolation in her voice.

Friendless! A stowaway! Hiding here because she had some desperate mission that she could only accomplish herself. Sharp, heavy sobs shook her young frame. The thin light that shone through the port showed a drawn and wistful, oval face, whose creamy, delicate skin was devoid of colour.

And then, as though realising where she was now bound to go, she muttered to herself in a pretty, broken English:

"I mus' go—yes, I mus'!" she muttered. "Eet is my only hope I 'ave left. If I don't—"

She stopped and clutched at a beam for support as the vessel quivered and rocked in the first grip of the furious Channel seas.

They were outside the harbour, heading for England at last!

The Rescue!

"THERE'S going to be a fearful storm!" muttered Barbara Redfern.

"I think we ought to be going back!" said Bessie Bunter, peering up fearfully at the scurrying clouds overhead. "It'll rain in a minute, and the lightning's sure to strike my umbrella!"

"Rum-m-m-ble!"

"That's distant thunder, anyway!" said Mabel Lynn, the third of the party. "Babs, Bessie's quite right. We'd better get back to Cliff House as soon as possible!"

"I don't know what possessed us to come out at all when it looked so black!" smiled Barbara Redfern. "I know we felt that we simply must have a breath of fresh air. And there is something awfully grand and majestic in a storm—"

Rumble! R-r-r-r! muttered the distant thunder again.

"It's all right when you're jolly well under cover!" gasped Bessie, breaking into a run. "I don't think it's grand to be soaked through at all! It's jolly uncomfortable, I can tell you! Oh, listen to that!"

Bang!

Babs had to smile at the fat girl's scared expression.

"Why, Bessie, fancy you thinking it was thunder!" she exclaimed. "Someone banged the door of that house just a bit farther along the lane, the house where Mademoiselle Lupin visits so much. Why, good gracious! It is mademoiselle!"

All three of them stopped still and stared.

Without doubt it was the French mistress who had whirled suddenly out of the front gate of the house just ahead of them. They knew her smart, elegant figure instantly. But what was the matter with her? Never before had they seen mademoiselle tearing along a road as fast as she could run, high-heeled shoes and all.

"Mademoiselle!" gasped Babs. The French mistress pulled up abruptly, and they all saw how pale her face was, and how violently she was trembling.

"Oh! 'Ow you scare me!" mademoiselle gasped at them. "But now I see that it is Babs and Mabs, and Bessie who—"

"Yes. But is something the matter, mademoiselle?" Babs cried.

"Maitaire? Oh, eet is terrible—terrible!" came the agitated reply. "Out to sea there is a poor ship full of my countrymen. He send out signals of distress—"

"A ship? But how ever do you know?" cried Babs, in amazement. "We have seen no rockets—"

"It 'as come through by ze wireless!" gasped the French mistress. "This 'ouse where I stay, the leetle boy 'as a wireless receiver. 'E 'as just receive a signal to say ze engines in zis ship 'ave all gone wrong, and they are 'elpless. Oh, queek! I rush myself to Pegg to tell zem that they put out ze lifeboat!"

Just that explanation, and even for that they had had to trot along at the mistress's side. Now she was running again as hard as she could, straight for the little fishing village of Pegg.

Babs, Mabs, and Bessie—especially Bessie—had really to exert themselves to keep up with her.

"Won't they be told at Pegg? Won't they know already?" Babs gasped.

"Zey all tell me zat, but zey may 'ave no wireless," mademoiselle answered them. "Eet is a French ship, too."

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Per'aps at Pegg they do not understand. Oh, I am desolate to think of my poor countrymen! Zey must 'ave some help!"

Even Bessie seemed to have forgotten the approaching storm now.

"We'll come with you, mademoiselle," said Babs. "You are quite right. A poor ship in distress on such a night as this—no, it is not a warning to neglect."

"Oh, 'ow kind you are!" exclaimed the warm-hearted mistress. "I am touch to the 'eart! Eet is a little French ship I have once seen myself. They call 'im L'Hirondelle, the bird you call in English a— a gulp!"

"A gulp? Oh, you mean swallow!" said Babs.

"Yes, that is eet. I am so 'orrify. I forget what I say!"

They ran on silently after that. Blacker than ever were the clouds overhead. It was almost pitch dark, although it should still have been quite light. Crossing the rough footpath, they had to go a little slower.

"Oh!"

The cry came from all of them involuntarily. A vivid flash of lightning lit up the whole countryside like day. And then:

Crash! R-r-r-r! Crash!

It was a most deafening peal of thunder that followed.

"Did you see—did you see 'im?" shrieked mademoiselle.

"See who?"

"Ze ship!" was her agitated answer. "Zere is a leetle ship! Oh, I am sure I 'ave seen L'Hirondelle. 'E is not far out to sea."

Another flash, and Babs herself gave a shout.

"Yes, mademoiselle, there is something!" she cried. "I saw it myself. Oh, let us be quick!"

Swi-i-ish!

The rain came swirling down at that very moment with tropical violence.

The girls, fortunately, had come out with macintoshes and fairly waterproof hats. Mademoiselle had not even a coat.

"I—I say, have my broly—" panted Bessie Bunter.

But mademoiselle did not even seem to notice the rain. The lights of Pegg had appeared at last. She seemed to gain a fresh energy from the sight.

"Joe Latter, we'll see him!" panted Babs. "That's his cottage with the green blind. He's coxswain of the lifeboat, and a rare good fellow."

In another minute they were beating on his door. The honest fisherman answered almost immediately.

"Queek! A poor ship! 'E will sink!" gasped poor mademoiselle. "I 'ave run 'ere to tell you!"

"A ship in distress? You have seen rockets?" cried the sailorman instantly alert.

"It's come through by wireless," Babs explained breathlessly. "And we think we've seen the ship, too."

Joe Latter was tugging on his oilskins in a moment.

"Oh, my brave sailor! 'Ow kind you are!" cried mademoiselle, bursting into tears. "You are ready to risk your life for my poor countrymen you 'ave nevaire seen!"

"They're all good, honest men, miss," said Joe gruffly. He ran out to the rain-swept beach, a horn trumpet in his hand.

Toot! Toooooot!

It seemed almost magical to see the doors open at most of the cottages, and see the fine, burly men who appeared in the lighted apertures.

"Ship in distress reported!" Joe bellowed above the storm. "Stand by the lifeboat, lads!"

Crack! Clatter, clatter!

The flash of lightning showed quite half a dozen figures running for the shed where the lifeboat was housed.

The rain hissed down with greater violence than ever. The lightning was more frequent, the thunder almost overhead. The mist of rain partly obscured the sea, but, at least, once they were all certain that they saw that black shadow tossing out on the troubled waters.

And then—

Whi-ir!

With an almost sickening shock they heard the sudden scream of a rocket. It burst amidst the storm clouds in a shower of sparks.

"Oh, zey 'ave blown up!" sobbed mademoiselle.

"No, miss; that's a signal rocket. They want help, that's all," said Joe Latter. "Mates, what do you make of her? Too near in?"

"Ay, ay, Joe!" came an almost unanimous answer.

Another rocket stabbed the sky.

"Throw up an answer, George!" Joe Latter cried. "Abandon the boat, mates! She's driving right in. I can see it now. Get out the rocket apparatus. It's the only thing."

Mademoiselle clung to his arm in a paroxysm of fear.

"You do not go in ze boat, after all?"

"The wind's driving them right in here, miss."

"And ze sheep will be wrecked?"

"Not very likely. But we'll get them all off, miss. You depend on that!"

Babs took her place at mademoiselle's side, and begged her to be calm. She pointed to the signal light that hissed into the night sky, telling that there were eager hands on shore to render what assistance they might. Joe Latter was already with the others, helping to lug an anchor and a huge box, and beams, almost to the water's edge.

Faintly through the pall of rain that swished about them came a sudden red glow from seawards.

"Oh, look! Eet is terrible! Now zey are on fire!" gasped mademoiselle.

"It's a flare, I think!" Babs answered quickly. "Yes, that's right. It's so that we can see where they are. My word, aren't they near now? Mademoiselle, you must pull yourself together, and we'll see if we can help!"

"I will do anything to help them!" promised the French mistress, making a tremendous effort to calm herself. "As long as zey are all saved I care nozzing else!"

Down the beach they went running, Bessie Bunter included. The life crew were gazing anxiously at the oncoming light that glowed so eerily through the darkness.

"Yes—she's got the drift now, mates, and the wind is holding!" cried Joe Latter suddenly. "This is the very spot. Mount the gear as quickly as possible." He turned and saw Babs. "Can you run to my cottage and light the red lantern, miss? Bring it down here covered up—we'll want it."

Babs darted off instantly. When she returned the flare was very much nearer, faintly illuminating the upper works of a ship. Even as she went to report herself she heard a scraping sound, then a thud, and the flare wavered to the accompaniment of an uncanny clattering and clanging.

"Grounded!" announced Joe Latter.

"Now, lads, are you ready? Show them the signal—smartly does it!"

A lamp gleamed for a second.

Then there was a sputtering noise. A report followed, and the huge rocket they had lighted sped out to sea, leaving a faint trail of sparks.

The Voice They Heard!

OH, will zey be rescued now?" cried Mademoiselle Lupin distractedly, the only one to break the silence.

No one spoke. The seconds that followed seemed like hours. The mistress was wringing her hands in her anxiety. And then—

A blue glow came from the darkness. "Hurrah!" roared Joe Latter. "The first rocket has reached them! They've got the line! Show them that red lamp for a few seconds!"

Babs showed it on the instant, waved it from side to side, then covered it again. "Good! They understand! See, there goes the tail-block and line!"

The girls saw a huge wooden block, through which was a double line, dragged down the beach and disappear into the sea. The French sailors were pulling that!

Again there was suspense. Two or three minutes passed, perhaps. Then, once more, they saw that blue signal light.

"The block's in position!" cried Joe. "Haul on the hawser now, lads! We'll have them off in a brace of shakes!"

The practised life crew did their work after that without a hitch. A stout hawser was dragged to the distressed ship. Its safe arrival was signalled. They braced it to the anchor set on the shore, and with a glad cry sent the breeches-buoy skimming across to the ship.

A light—and Joe gave the signal to haul. Mademoiselle gave a frantic yell of joy as she peered into the darkness.

"A lady—she is saved! Oh, I shriek!"

Before they could stop her, she had rushed to the water's-edge. Heedless of the chilly sea, she grabbed at the figure in the seat of the apparatus, dragged her to dry land, and helped to release her. A torrent of French words poured from her lips as she hugged and kissed the first one to be saved.

"I am French myself—" Babs could understand that. "I will look after you! It is wonderful—"

Then came the second passenger—a man. The girls heard him shouting and yelling even as he was being pulled to the beach. Then the light shone on his grey, twitching face as Joe Latter went to release him—a curiously foxy and unpleasant face it looked, even at first glimpse. Babs muttered something to that effect.

"Yes, he is not much of a man to shriek like that!" Mabs nodded. "But perhaps he is terrified. We mustn't judge him so quickly after such an ordeal."

The rocket apparatus was now in proper working order, and going without a hitch. One after another they came—four young men who were obviously passengers, and then the crew. Last of all came a bearded man, who seemed the calmest of any.

"Monsieur le capitaine—e come last of all! Ze brave man!" cried Mademoiselle Lupin. "But eet is Meester Joseph Latter, so brave and so cleavaire, who have save everybody. Oh, Meester Latter, 'ow I zank you!"

"You'd better see after the lady, mam'selle—you're both wet through," said Joe Latter briskly. "We'll look after the men."

The last words were hardly necessary. The crowd on the beach were "fraternising" with the Frenchmen at once. By dumb show and broken words of the foreign tongue, they conveyed their invitations quite well. But it wasn't

enough for Mademoiselle Lupin. She had to rush from one excited couple to another to "interpret," and every moment her English got more and more difficult to understand!

"Ah!" muttered Joe Latter, watching them move away. "What a night for them! Wrecked, friendless in a foreign land, nowhere to go! How glad they must be to meet such a one as your mistress!"

"She's sweet!" said Babs huskily. "In summer she screams if she gets her feet wet. To-night she didn't even think of it. And I really thought one of those breakers would carry her away!"

"And she insisted on bringing the alarm, too!" said Mabs. "Nothing would stop her. She was sure that the poor Hirondelle— Good gracious! Did you see that?"

They stared at Mabs as she gave that wild, excited cry. With a trembling hand, she was pointing right out to sea.

"What's the matter, Mabs?"

"In that flash of lightning," breathed Mabs, "I saw a figure on the wreck—I'm

let us go to the wreck to look for ourselves!"

"I certainly can't allow that," the fisherman answered. "But I will go myself!"

"Oh, can't we go, too?"

He gazed at their earnest, beseeching faces.

"One of you can come with me in the breeches-buoy," he said. "No, don't argue, please. I'll choose Miss Redfern. It won't bear more than two of us!"

Mabs was bitterly disappointed, but accepted his ruling. It was a very tight squeeze in the buoy as it was.

Across the raging seas the two of them were dragged to the wreck that was now firmly embedded in the sand. It was an eerie experience. But Babs, gazing ahead, thought less of herself than of that faint cry she was positive she had heard.

They were over the ship at last. No figure rushed to meet them as they clambered from the buoy and slid down the rigging. Babs looked everywhere about her.



IN THE CRIP OF THE BREAKERS! "Oh will zey be rescued?" cried Mademoiselle Lupin, distractedly. A blue glow came from the darkness. "Hurrah!" roared Joe. "The first rocket has reached them!"

almost sure! It looked like a girl, waving her arms!"

"But they're all off!" Babs protested. "The captain mustered them here to make certain!"

"I'm certain I saw someone!"

"Listen!" Babs cried, in her turn.

"Can you hear anything?"

"Nothing at all but the shriek of the wind," said Joe Latter.

Babs was trembling as she gripped his arm.

"But I believe I heard something myself!" she cried. "I have very keen hearing. It sounded like a faint cry in French: 'A moi! A moi! Au secours!' It means: 'Help!'"

Joe Latter stared anxiously at them.

"It can't be true!" he muttered.

"The captain would never desert anyone on his ship—least of all a girl!"

"He might not know she was there!" said Babs desperately. "There might be a stowaway—anything. Oh, Mr. Latter, I am certain that I heard something besides the wind!"

"And I—I did not imagine it!" added Mabs earnestly. "Oh, Mr. Latter, please

"Where are you?" she cried. "We are here to save you! Nous sommes ici!"

Joe Latter came to her side, and bellowed in a voice that must have carried to every part of the ship.

"Perhaps she's fallen and been injured!" said Babs, in a trembling voice.

Joe Latter snatched up a hurricane-lamp, and, holding Babs' hand, led the way around the treacherous, sloping deck. They saw not a sign of anyone!

"Has she gone below, thinking she couldn't make anyone hear?" speculated Babs, more anxious than ever.

The interior of the ship was explored in the same way. They went everywhere, making their search as thorough as they could under those conditions. It was the same hopeless quest.

"I fear the poor thing is beyond our aid now," Joe muttered. "A big sea must have washed her overboard. But I don't want to believe that. Perhaps you were mistaken."

"I don't think I could have imagined

that cry," said Babs, her face drawn and anxious.

The fisherman said that they had better return to the shore, and so, with one final look round, they departed.

Mabel Lynn, horrified at the news, wanted to be hauled across to the ship to search for herself. Even Bessie Bunter made inquiries as to whether the line would bear her weight.

"No one else is going; it's too dangerous," said Joe Latter, shaking his head. "I know how you feel. You think it's a girl just like yourselves. You're willing to take any risk for her sake. But we've searched the ship. The only thing is to look along the shore now, to see whether anyone has been cast up by the waves and still lives. Are you willing, mates?"

"Ay, ay, Joe!" was the gruff reply of those who had rescued the crew of the Frenchman.

So they set off along the beach with lanterns, going in both directions. Here and there white flares were fired. They lit up the foaming waste of waters, but never a sign of anything else did they show. The search lasted for nearly half an hour.

"It's no use going on," said Joe Latter at last. "Even if there was anyone there, we can hope for nothing now!"

Babs shook his hand silently, and then took her chum's arm. Bessie Bunter sniffed loudly, and dabbed at her eyes.

Tragedy it seemed! The figure—the foreign voice that cried so pitifully for help—and nothing more! What had happened? Who was the girl?

Alone!

THE storm had not spent itself, and the *Hirondelle* was still rocking uneasily, when a faint sigh came from the interior of a locker in one of the stern compartments. It was repeated, then the lid slowly raised. Two eyes peered vacantly around from a girl's face that was as white as chalk, its pallor increased by her black hair and brows.

At first she seemed utterly at a loss to know what to do. She gazed from the open locker at the sloping deck and slanting bulkheads. The first faint flush of dawn crept through the port-hole, illuminating the place with a pale but convincing light.

Yes; she was still in the ship. And now it was still—so very still! Gone was that motion that had made her feel so terribly ill, as they battled with the gale in the Channel. But why was the ship at such an angle? Why didn't it right itself? And why was there no sound—no pulsing engines, not even a murmur of the shrieking wind she remembered so vividly?

"Ah! *Je comprends!*" the girl muttered suddenly, and shuddered.

It had all come back to her now. Yes; they had been wrecked somewhere. She guessed that from the half-remembered shouts she had heard. England, was it? She believed that they said that they had reached England, but she couldn't be sure.

All that part had been a nightmare to the girl stowaway. She had been too ill and too frightened to reveal her presence. At first she had not realised her peril. It had only dawned gradually on her.

But at last—yes, she shuddered again as she thought of that.

Desperate, gripped by a panicky fear, she had rushed to the deck. No one anywhere! She had shouted:

"A moi! A moi! Au secours!"

She remembered her cries now, and then the utter despair that gripped her as

the seas came breaking over the doomed craft more furiously than ever.

Hopeless, she had staggered back to the only place she knew on board. She had clambered into the locker. And after that—yes, it must have been a sort of swoon that had carried her into merciful unconsciousness while the storm spent itself on that poor plaything cast on the foreign beach.

But now—

What was she to do now? She still lived, although she had never expected to see the light of day again.

"Courage, Suzanne—courage!" she whispered to herself.

She rose and scrambled unsteadily from the locker, stretching her cramped limbs. She went to the door, listening intently. Not a sound anywhere!

One by one Suzanne mounted the steps of the ladder that led on deck. Here she saw the wreckage and disorder that the storm had left. The rails on one side were battered almost flat. Scattered ropes, broken spars, a stove in boat. She saw them all at once. But her eyes went farther. She looked at chalky cliffs and a village that nestled in a hollow. Large enamelled signs bearing English words caught her eye. Yes; this was England, without doubt!

England! And she had come as a stow-away! What would they do with her? Would she be arrested? The nameless dread of arrest under such circumstances made her full red lip quiver.

Arrest! And not only in England—

But that thought inspired another one in her mind. She had come for a desperate purpose. Now she recalled a scrap of conversation that she had heard just when the boat was leaving France. No. 4 cabin had been mentioned by a voice that she could never forget. The ship had been abandoned in a hurry. A dazzling thought struck her. Might she, by searching No. 4 cabin, accomplish her purpose, after all?

She was hurrying forward, when she stopped in sudden horror. There was a huge hole in the deck. Something lashed above must have carried loose in the storm, and crashed right through. What ever could have made such a gap?

But there wasn't time to think of that. She had that purpose in her mind, and it made her move on. And now, as she went, she was muttering to herself:

"*Les bijoux! Les bijoux!*"

Jewels!

She clambered down a gangway to a dark passage. Here were the cabins, as she expected. One—two—three—And then she stopped again, with a hoarse cry of amazement and alarm.

No wonder the place had suddenly become so light again! She was standing right underneath that yawning hole in the deck above. Now she saw the cause. It was a huge anchor that had crashed through. Here she saw the anchor itself, wedged right between the frames of the doorway of No. 4 cabin!

The very cabin she wanted to search.

For a moment her emotional frame was filled with a wild dismay. Then the power of action returned to her. She tried the door-handle. No; the door would not open outwards because of that huge object that was wedged so solidly in front of it. She grasped the anchor, and scrambled to where a shattered fanlight enabled her to see inside the cabin.

It was empty, as she had expected. The bedding had been thrown everywhere. There was baggage, too, but she could not see on it the name she kept muttering to herself—"Mons. Pierre Volde!"

But, for all that, she knew it was the cabin she wanted.

She darted into the cabin on each side,

hoping that there might be some other way in. She even went on deck, and tried to climb down to the narrow port-hole before she realised that it was too small to admit her.

Her lower lip was quivering as she paced up and down the deck.

"I don't know what to do now!" she muttered in her own tongue. "I believe they are there. I heard him say to his wife that they were in No. 4 cabin. Are they still there, after all? That anchor! I am sure now that I heard it crash when we were at sea! Yes; it is more than possible that they are still there!"

She walked to the side of the ship and looked down. The sea had subsided so much that the forepart of the vessel was now on firm sand.

What was she to do?

She was aware suddenly that she was very hungry. She made her way to the cook's galley, and, stepping over the wreckage of broken saucepans and cooking implements, found a cupboard still intact. Inside she found some rolls, a small ham, and a bottle of milk that, by some miraculous chance had not been broken.

Suzanne ate almost ravenously. Luxury had been her lot in her own land, but never had food tasted sweeter than this dry bread and crudely-cut ham.

She was not to do it without interruption, however.

The sound of voices on shore caused her suddenly to drop the roll she held and dart on deck. Here she stood, with palpitating heart, peering cautiously at three men who stood not a dozen yards from the ship.

"Coastguard'll be down presently," one of them said.

"Ay, Jim. She's not battered about like what I expected," another said. "Mebbe she'll float again on the flood-tide."

"Too deep in the sand, mate," the first one responded. "But they'll get her off again, with two or three good tugs to pull her. Past the flood when she stranded, fortunately. Better make a line fast to her in case any heavy seas move her—eh?"

"Ay, ay!" said the third man. "We'll get a line now."

Suzanne watched them go, a new terror in her heart.

What would they do next? Board the vessel, of course! They would find her then. Friendless as she was in a foreign land, she did not know what would happen. Dreadful penalties occurred to her mind.

She was terrified of being caught on the vessel. She must hide—anywhere—until she had had time to think! Yet she must watch the vessel, too, for now she was more sure than ever that it still held the secret that had made her undertake this adventurous trip.

Running to the fore part of the ship, she paused for a moment, then jumped. It was a big jump, and she fell all of a heap in the wet sand. In a moment, however, Suzanne was up again, and running. Luckily, the sand was still so wet that it covered her footprints almost as soon as she had left them.

In the distance she heard those voices again. Where could she hide out of their sight?

She looked at the white cliffs. A black, yawning hole caught her eye. It was a cave!

Up the shingle Suzanne panted, and in another moment she was crawling into that cave.

There she lay, trembling, knowing that she had gone still one step farther with her adventure and introduced another complication. But she did not know what else she could have done. Not a

friend to advise her in this country, save the one she felt that she could never hope to meet when she needed her most. She must come to every decision herself—and only Suzanne understood what was going to rest on those decisions!

The men went out to L'Hirondelle and climbed on board. They were absent for a long while, evidently searching everywhere. Suzanne watched every movement that she could see. But it was not for those men that she was looking so anxiously. She expected a man and woman to appear—the same couple that she had seen on the quay in France. And when they did appear—well, Suzanne couldn't decide what she was going to do then.

Tears gathered suddenly in her big, dark blue eyes and trickled down her pallid cheeks.

"Gaby! Oh, my dear Gaby!" she muttered in French. "Gaby, why are you not here to help me now? Oh, Gaby!"

What Babs Discovered!

DINNER was over at Cliff House School on that Wednesday afternoon, when a message came to Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, and Bessie Bunter that Mademoiselle Lupin wanted to see them in her study.

"All right, Boker," said Babs in a rather toneless voice.

The three of them exchanged glances. They had found lessons very dismal and depressing that morning, but every one had made allowances for them. No one had guessed that Miss Steel, so strict as a rule, could be half as thoughtful as she had proved for the three chums of Study No. 4.

The story of their adventure was not yet public property in the school. The girls knew that they had returned to Cliff House, dripping wet, after helping in a sea rescue at Pegg. Those who were most intimate with them guessed that there was something more, but they did not know what.

Even Bessie Bunter had been strangely disinclined for talk to-day. Bessie could talk freely upon most subjects; but the tragedy that they thought they had witnessed was enough to tongue-tie even the fat girl. Something had gone wrong; that was all the school could assume, and they did not like to press Babs until Babs was ready to tell them.

"I suppose we must go," said Babs.

"We must," nodded Mabs. "But not a word about what we think we saw last night. Joe Lattor did all that was possible. But if mademoiselle thought that there had been still one more—"

"Oh, I wouldn't breathe a word!" said Babs. "Bessie, be very careful what you say!"

They hurried off along the passage and tapped at the door of mademoiselle's room. Excited French voices died down at once, and a voice bade them enter.

"My dear Barbaraire and Mabel and Bessie!" cried Mademoiselle Gabrielle Lupin. "Come in queekly, and make yourselves quite at 'ome, please. You 'elp so much last night that I want to introduce you at once to the two new frien's that I make."

Babs was conscious that she nearly gave a gasp of dismay as she looked at the two visitors.

One was a short, rather swarthy Frenchwoman of forty or so.

The other was the corpulent, foxy-looking man who had screamed like an arrant coward while he was being rescued.

"Meester Pierre Volde!" mademoiselle exclaimed, making the introduction.

"Thees is Meeses Pierre Volde, Barbaraire. Zey do not speak such good English as I speak."

"It do me a ver' great honour to meet you!" said Monsieur Volde gutturally. "Mademoiselle Lupin ver' kind to poor shipwrecked sailor, is not it?"

"I spik none English at all, nevaire," said madame, apparently proving that she did not exaggerate much.

Babs, Mabs, and Bessie shook hands with the two strangers.

"Your so very kind mistress tell us what cleaveira things you do," pursued Monsieur Volde. "Eet is great honour to poor—ow you say?—un'appy Frenchman shipwrecked to 'ave good frien's."

"We only did what any other girls would have done, monsieur," said Babs politely.

But it was an effort to be polite—a real effort! She could not explain her feelings, but for some unaccountable reason she felt already that she disliked the man intensely. Perhaps it was his wheedling, flattering way of address.

feel, Babs. They are the very last pair that you would have liked to see mademoiselle chum up with."

"That's just it!" said Barbara. "That man has such an awfully cunning look! I'm sure I couldn't trust him. I believe he's only sponging on mademoiselle. I sha'n't forget how he kept on looking at me out of the corners of his eyes."

"And the woman was nearly as bad!" declared Bessie Bunter. "I believe she jolly well understood every word we said!"

"So do I, for that matter!" agreed Barbara. "And do you know, I shouldn't be surprised if mademoiselle really feels the same as we do about it!"

"Only she's so kind-hearted that she can't be anything but sympathetic!" nodded Mabel Lynn. "They're her own countrywomen, and she wants to do everything she can for them. But why should they deceive her, as I'm certain they're doing?"

"Give it up, dear," said Mabs. "I'm not going to see them again if I can



RESCUED! "A lady—she is saved! Oh, I shreek with joy!" cried Mademoiselle, and rushed to meet the rescued woman, a torrent of French words pouring from her lips.

Perhaps, too, his eyes were veiled and cunning, and his face in the full light was very foxy indeed.

"We shall nevaire want for frien's with three of such pretty English girls of the school!" monsieur declared.

Mademoiselle Lupin was still gay and smiling.

"Zis poor lady and gentleman, zey 'ave nozzing at all until some money come to them from France," she explained. "So they stay at my lodging. Perhaps you three come and see us one night, please?"

"We shall be delighted, mademoiselle," said Babs, forcing herself to be polite.

"I know you come now!" declared Mademoiselle Lupin. "Perhaps soon my un'appy friends have good news."

It was not until they had made their escape from the study and were at the end of the passage that any of the three girls ventured to put their feelings into words.

"I—I must admit that I don't like monsieur," Babs said. "I did try to, because it isn't nice to be horrid to people in such a position."

"I can't forget how he yelled last night!" said Mabs. "I know what you

jolly well get out of it. Oh, let's put on our hats and coats and go out! I feel so miserable to-day."

They were nearly ready to start when Babs made a remark.

"Boker says that ship hasn't broken up yet," she said. "It's managed to survive the storm. It was high and dry when he was at Pegg this morning."

Mabs sighed.

"Yes, I heard that. Oh, Babs, if—only someone had known that it would not sink!"

"There have been no traces of anyone, as yet," said Babs jerkily. "I don't feel like going to look at the ship yet myself, but we'll have a peep before we come back."

Bessie Bunter muttered an optimistic remark in a voice so pessimistic that it quite lost all effect. They left Study No. 4 and started on their walk—a long one and lonely, the best antidote they could think of with such troubled minds.

Whiffs of fog were dragging about in the fields when they at last turned their steps in the direction of Pegg. As they descended the fog grew rapidly thicker.

Pegg itself, little higher than the sea-level, was almost entirely wrapped in the white sea mist that had drifted along behind the storm.

They met Joe Latter quite near to his cottage.

"Nothing's been found, Miss Redfern," he said, as he touched his cap. "I've had a chat with the Frenchy captain, and he says he's positive that there could have been no one else on board."

She looked up.

"Is L'Hirondelle still all right?"

"Ay, miss, and will be floated again, too," said the fisherman. "She's high and dry at present, the tide being so low."

"Do you think we could have a look over her?" said Babs eagerly.

"Seeing that I know you, there's no reason why you shouldn't," smiled Latter. "There's no one on the vessel."

"Thanks awfully, Mr. Latter."

They were right out of his sight before the black bulk of the French vessel loomed dimly before them. Cast high and dry she looked a pitiful sight as her outline grew dimly in the mist.

"Climb up here, girls!" Babs suggested. "Someone's very kindly dropped the rope ladder for us. Bessie, you come next. Mabs, just see she doesn't fall."

But Bessie nearly did fall! Bessie was not strong on rope ladders that swayed, and crinkled, and wobbled at every step that she took! She accomplished the ascent at last, however, and stood on the sloping deck of the leaning vessel.

"My hat! What's that?" breathed Mabs, before they had taken three paces away from the spot.

They stood, listening tensely.

"Voices!" gasped Babs.

"Oh, I say!" shivered Bessie Bunter. "Perhaps there are some horrid old gig-gig-ghosts—"

"Ssssh! Don't be silly!" muttered Babs. "These are human voices—a man and a woman, it sounds! Queer, isn't it, when Latter told us there was no one on board. Whatever can it mean?"

"It's French that they're speaking," said Mabs.

"Yes; and it seems to come up through that great hole in the deck there," said Babs. "Carefully, girls! We'll creep down that companion-ladder there and see what is happening!"

Bessie Bunter, torn between apprehension and curiosity, allowed the latter to win and followed her chums.

They found themselves in a dark passage, made still more gloomy by the mist. As they turned a corner, however, a lighted patch appeared. In that patch were two figures that they could see although they themselves were hidden.

Two figures; and the three girls nearly gave a unanimous gasp of amazement that would have betrayed their presence there!

They saw Monsieur and Madame Pierre Volde!

"Those two—here!" gasped Babs.

"Whatever is he doing?" whispered Mabs excitedly.

They stared amazedly.

It was beneath the hole in the deck, and consequently in the light, that the French couple stood. Babs and Mabs could see that there was some immense iron obstruction, shaped like an anchor, wedged in front of a cabin door. It was at that anchor that Monsieur Volde was tugging until the perspiration stood on his brow.

"Vite! Plus vite!" muttered his wife. Quicker! At the words monsieur suddenly abandoned his task and whirled round. The cunning mask of politeness

was gone from his face now. His lips twitched with anger.

"Imbecile! Imbecile!" they heard him hiss through his teeth.

"The horrid brute!" Babs began, and then checked herself.

Madame seemed equal to the occasion. She had stepped forward and was reeling off a string of French, of which the girls could make nothing at all. And it seemed to calm the Frenchman. His savage look went. He spread his hands, and shrugged his shoulders hopeless.

"Mais, c'est impossible!" he protested.

For answer his wife whirled open the door of the cabin numbered "5" and pointed to the woodwork.

"Une hache, imbecile!" she hissed.

"An axe!" gasped Babs. She was suddenly very alert as she turned to her chums. "I say, these two can't have any right on this ship like this, trying to use an axe!"

"They can't," Mabs nodded quickly.

"I know! You leave it to me!"

A pause. And then—

"Hallo!" cried Mabs, in a really manly voice. "What's the meaning of this?"

The effect of the cry was electrical.

The woman gave one shriek and bolted.

The man looked round, gave a frightened gasp, and went blundering blindly after his wife.

"He, he, he!" giggled Bessie Bunter irrepressibly.

It really was funny. But Babs saw something deeper in it at once.

"Scared; no right to be here at all, that's evident, Mabs!" she breathed.

"Monsieur and Madame Volde trying to get in that cabin; and running like that! They've got guilty consciences, depend upon it! I wonder what they were here for!"

"Shall we follow them?" asked Mabs.

"It would be a jolly good idea!"

They stopped to ask themselves no more questions, but ran up the steps of the nearest companion-ladder. Here they were just in time to hear a slithering sound, and then a thud. Footsteps were heard softly on the sand.

"They've bolted!"

"But we'll follow!" said Babs. "Over this side of the ship, girls. It's an easy jump!"

Babs and Mabs accomplished it with great ease, but Bessie funked it three times, and then fell—flat! They helped her up, however, without waiting to hear about broken bones, and started running.

"Look!"

Figures loomed momentarily in the fog, and as quickly disappeared.

Babs & Co. set in instant pursuit, but they were gone. They ran this way and that for five or ten minutes, but it seemed that they had seen the last of the mysterious monsieur and his wife.

"Gone!" ejaculated Babs, pulling up at length. "We've lost them, after all! But what an extraordinary thing it was! I wonder why they climbed there in the fog, and were so terrified when you challenged them!"

"Trying to get something they shouldn't have, in my opinion!" said Mabs frankly.

They walked on along the beach, listening to the particular theories that Bessie Bunter was formulating on the subject, each one wilder than the last.

Suddenly two figures appeared right in front of them. They stopped instantly; one of them half-turned. Then there came a guttural peal of laughter—the laughter of Monsieur Volde.

"Why, eet is ze brave girls of ze Cliff 'Ouse School!" he exclaimed.

"You 'ave yourselves a leetle walk, is eet not?"

Babs stared at the man, feeling sure that he must be trying to bluff.

"Yes, monsieur," she said quietly.

"We thought we'd like to come down again and have a look at L'Hirondelle."

Instead of showing any signs of guilty fear the man spread his hands in a gesture of entreaty.

"Oh, not zat poor sheep—do not even speak of 'im to me again!" he implored. "I 'ave saffaire so on 'im zat I not never go on 'im again if you pay me—no, not if you pay me feefy pounds!"

"Or one 'undred!" added his wife, and stopped short at a really sharp look from monsieur.

"And don't you go near 'im, either!" begged Monsieur Volde. "'E is 'orrible ship. I wish you all compliments of ze afternoon, young demoi-selles!"

He gave a most elaborate bow, and walked on with his wife.

Babs was trembling with excitement. "He hasn't any idea that we saw them on board!" she breathed. "My word, it gets queerer and queerer!"

"But why must the man tell such wicked falsehoods?" said Mabel Lynn hotly. "Said he wouldn't dare to go near—and he's just been on board! And his wife—she understood every word he said by chiming in as she did! He saw that she was likely to give herself away."

"They're a very mysterious pair, and they want watching!" Babs declared. Suddenly she broke off. "What was that?" she ejaculated.

"What was that?" cried Mabs, startled at her chum's tone.

Babs was pointing through the fog with a hand that trembled.

"I thought I saw a figure—like a young girl—run through the fog there!" she answered. "I just caught a glimpse—that was all. But—but—"

"Yes?"

"She looked extraordinary. Not like a Cliff House girl—not like one of the Pegg girls, either. In—in fact, she—she looked French!"

"Wh-wh-what!" stammered Bessie Bunter.

"French, did you say?" ejaculated Mabel. Her voice shook. "Oh, Babs, think! After all we have feared and suffered—to raise a false hope, dear—"

Babs had gone running forward. Now she gave a sudden yell and dropped to her knees.

"Footprints! Look!" was the amazing cry that she gave.

Face to Face!

MABEL LYNN and Bessie Bunter stood speechless for the moment at the side of their chum, Barbara Redfern.

Footprints, indeed!

Clear and sharp they were in the firm, half-dried sand. The elegant, pointed sole of a dainty shoe, and a heel, small and very high—those comprised the tracks they saw.

What an extraordinary thing to see on the beach at Pegg!

"Mabs, you were right!" muttered Mabel Lynn, her voice trembling.

"Yes, someone made these, and not a moment ago. The water still oozes up there!" Babs said, in thrilling tones. "And the shoe—look at the shape of it! No English girl wears a shoe just like that! Such high heels—"

"It wouldn't be Madame Volde?"

"Oh, impossible! She has quite big shoes. This is so small and dainty, Mabs. But can it be possible—"

"I—I sus-sus-say," stammered Bessie
(Continued on page 17.)



THE CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY



No. 1 (New Series).

Week ending April 1st, 1922.

My Dear Readers,
—Eight whole pages
—and four of them
filled by the first
instalment of a
grand new serial!
This is the first
issue of the "Cliff
House Weekly" in
its new and enlarged
form, and could you
say you really expected it to prove so bright
and attractive?

You can't imagine how proud we feel just
now of our little—I should say, our big—
paper. When the editor of the "School
Friend" hinted that his next serial might
appear within our pages instead of in the
"School Friend"—well, we did not rest
until we had secured that serial for the
"Cliff House Weekly."

Then came the question—"How were we
to get it in? Would our own little articles
have to be sacrificed, as had to be the case
when Peggy Preston wrote her 'Minstrel
Girl'?" But the editor of the "School
Friend" came to our rescue, and allowed the
"Weekly" four additional pages, so that our
own little features can be as many and
varied as ever.

Great was the excitement that prevailed
among all of us connected with the
"Weekly" when it was learned definitely
that the new serial was to be ours. Bessie
Bunter, perhaps, was the most excited of all.
Seizing an armful of writing materials, she
moved to the door and paused there
importantly to say:

EDITORIAL.

By Barbara Redfern.

"Four pages of the 'Weekly' for the
serial, Babs?"

"That's right, Bessie," I answered, sur-
prised.

Our fat chum nodded in business-like
fashion and disappeared. I had not quite
followed what she was driving at, but did
not trouble my head about it. Four hours
later she reappeared, and handed me a
thick pad of paper bearing her large, sprawl-
ing handwriting.

In some weird manner of her own she had
got the idea that she was to write the
"Weekly" serial. Its title was, "Troo to
Her Parritt," and it began: "It was a dark
and stormy nite, and the moon shon britely
down from the clear skie—"

As gently as I could I informed Bessie
that the present serial would unavoidably
have to be somebody else's, but the one
after, or the one after that, or the one after
that, might be Bessie's—and might not!

I have had a vast amount of matter from
which to select our short features for this
number. It has been a worrying business
for me as to whose articles I should favour.

I have taken what
I know you will
agree is the best
course, and used the
work of those girls
who have been
regular and reliable
contributors in the
past.

Study No. 7 is
fully represented.

Mabs and myself, of Study No. 4, are both
included, but I have been obliged to leave
Bessie out for the simple, though surpris-
ing reason that she has not submitted any
of her weirdly-spelt articles lately. But
Bessie will feature again before long, never
fear!

Freda Foote has always been a welcome
contributor, and Katie Smith made herself
quite famous with her "Reminiscences."
Annabel Hitchens has, without intending any-
thing of the kind, brought many a hearty
laugh to readers of the "Weekly," whilst
Bunny, Pip, and Teddy Bear of the Second
have surprised us rather by favouring us
with so many of their efforts recently.

As to such popular figures in the
"Weekly" as Frances Barrett and Angelica
Jelly, there are plenty of articles by—and,
better still, about—them coming along.

You cannot do better than write to the
editor of the "School Friend," and let him
know exactly what you think of the new and
enlarged "Cliff House Weekly."—Your
sincere friend,

BARBARA REDFERN.

CLIFF HOUSE LIMERICKS!

By CLARA TREVLYN.

(Fourth Form.)



Our matron is called Mrs. Towle,
She's really as wise as an owl;
If you're ill she's just splendid,
But those who've pretended
Have quickly come back with a scowl!



You'll know that the lady who owns
The tuckshop is called Auntie Jones;
In shelves and in fixtures
She's wonderful mixtures,
Like custard and pickles and scones!



Mrs. Pickles is cook (so collective!)
Her eyesight seems rather defective;
To find fruit in her cake
Called "sultana" would take
A skilful and thorough detective!



Old Piper, our porter believes
They're wonderful feats he achieves;
In somnolent state
He props up the gate,
And saves us from burglars and thieves!



There is a young pageboy named Boker,
Who fancied himself as a joker;
He piled up the fire
To make us perspire;
We liked it, so now he's chief stoker!



By DOLLY JOBLING (Fourth Form.)

"WELL, I must say that's obliging of Piper!" remarked Clara Trevlyn. And Marjorie Hazeldene and I had to admit that it was just what Piper's usual style.

We were approaching the school gates, and the weather was fiercely gusty—so windy, in fact, that the top-hat of a red-faced, bad-tempered looking old gentleman passing us blew off his head, and went bowling past the gates.

We were about to run to rescue the hat for the gentleman, when out of the gates dashed Piper, the porter. He made a frantic grab at the hat, which eluded him, and then set off after it straight down the lane.

It was, indeed, remarkable for Piper to put himself out so much in somebody else's service. Hence our comments. So we left it to Piper to retrieve the hat, whilst the owner continued to hobble after him, and entered the gates.

"Hallo! What's this?" Clara paused, and stared at something that had lodged behind one of the open gates. "My hat! It's—it's Piper's battered top-hat!"

She manoeuvred round the gate, took up the well-known hat, and regarded it curiously. Then she burst into a sudden peal of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! My giddy hat, girls!" she exclaimed. "Don't you see? Piper's hat blew off, and lodged here. He thought it had gone out of the gates, dashed out in the

way we saw, and now is chasing the wrong hat!"

"My word!"

"Come on, my sisters!" Clara chuckled. "Let's follow with the hat at a respectable distance, and see what happens!"

We sallied forth again into the lane. The hat was still fugitive, and Piper and the real owner were sprinting bravely along the lane in the distance. The three of us brought up the rear at a gentle trot.

The hat at last came to rest—beneath a hawk's barrow of fruit. As Piper crawled underneath to get it, the owner of the barrow emerged from the gate entrance of a house. It was unfortunate that, just as he let out a roar of righteous rage and astonishment, another puff of wind should catch the hat and set it in motion again!

The effect of both upon Piper was to make him straighten his back with a jerk. The barrow tilted with a crash, and apples, oranges, lemons, grapes, and tomatoes streamed in a rapid procession into the gutter.

"Wot—ow—which—" stuttered their owner helplessly.

Piper did not even heed. The hat sprinted in fine style, reached the bank of the River Sark, and then toppled into the water. Piper let out a roar, and fished out the sinking hat, which was simply soaked with water. He looked at it in disgust. In its flight it had become almost as battered as Piper's own,

and the porter, as he surveyed it disgustfully, clearly did not recognise it as any other.

Whack! The hand of the old gentleman descended heavily upon his shoulder.

"Thief!" roared that red-faced person.

"Ere! What d'yer think—"

"Daylight robbery—nothing less!" fumed the old gentleman. "Running after my hat—"

"Your 'at! That there's my 'at!" exclaimed Piper indignantly. "Ere I've been a-runnin' after it—"

"Bah!"

The old gentleman snatched the hat, and simply gulped as he saw its condition.

"Where's a policeman? I'll give you in charge!" he exclaimed, turning round wildly.

"Excuse us!" said Clara Trevlyn, trotting gently up with Piper's hat under her arm. "This is your hat, Piper! It really is this gentleman's you've been chasing!"

"Well, my hey!" whistled Piper, taking his hat in a dazed sort of fashion.

The old gentleman waved his hat excitedly in the air.

"What about this—look at the state of this, I say," he bellowed. "But for this old idiot—"

"Ole idiot!" stuttered Piper.

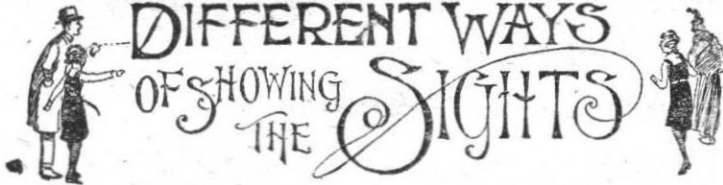
"Excuse me!" put in Marjorie Hazeldene. "The hat would have gone into the river whether Piper had chased it or not! It was not the fault of anybody."

The old gentleman grunted, and stomped away with the almost ruined hat clenched furiously in his hand.

Piper walked back to Cliff House, with his hat perched upon his head. He looked anything but a cheerful Piper, for he had run farther during the last few minutes than in many years previously. And Piper did not like running.

"I wish I'd a known that weren't my hat!" he muttered, again and again.

But we laughed—laughed every time we thought of Piper's athletic performance. It was really funny.



By MABEL LYNN (Fourth Form.)

Madge Stevens. (Third Form).—Here it is, dad! Here's the Lodge! This is where Piper, our funny old porter, lives! You'll hardly believe the number of japes we've played on him! Ha, ha, ha! We're crossing the quadrangle now. There's Violet Cutter, showing her aunt round. Violet's the worst-tempered girl in the Sixth, dad, and she's quadrangle supervisor just lately. Watch her face when I throw this paper down. There! Ha, ha, ha! Look at her scowl, dad! See how she mutters! Now look across there, dad. That's the old tower. Oh, I can remember all kinds of japes in connection with that old place! Once we dressed as ghosts, and made Gwen Cook think it was haunted. Gwen's a Fourth-Former, and thinks of nothing but ghosts, you know. Now we're nearing our Common-room. Here it is! We're always playing or planning some jape or other-in here! Listen, dad, while I tell you some of our latest!

Violet Cutter (Sixth Form).—Yes, aunt, this is the place—the good old place! Everything runs as smoothly as can be! Pardon? Oh, yes, of course! I'm always ready to give a sister-pupil a helping hand—always ready to do a good turn, you know! But this has brought its own reward. I am positively honoured and respected by all the junior Forms. Do you notice the reverential way those little girls yonder are all regarding me? You don't aunt? H'm! They don't like to appear rude, I suppose, that's why. H'm! But I can assure you, aunt, that I receive the deepest regard from all the younger Forms. They wouldn't dream of doing anything to offend me. They keep the quadrangle as clear as a new pin! That's—oh, that young mix! H'm! That young dear, Madge Stevens, has just dropped some paper! She's forgotten for the moment how I disapprove of that. Her face shows how sorry

she is! And now to my study—No. 5. Here we are—cosy, what, aunt? Over—over furnished, you think? Ahem! Still, tastes must differ. Ha, ha! What—er—what are these cigarettes doing here, aunt? I—h'm—I've bought them as a present for your, aunt—I should say, for Uncle Geoffrey, of course! I—I opened them to—er—to—er—to see that their contents were—er—contained, of course!

Gwen Cook (Fourth Form).—There's no doubt about it, uncle—not a shred! Cliff House is haunted, I tell you! Here are the gates. I've often seen an undefined form hovering about here at just about dusk. And there's the old tower. I almost proved that that was haunted a week or two ago, but it turned out to be a girl in hiding there. One cannot expect a ghost to make itself seen where there is a girl fooling about all the time, can one? Now we're in the school. Here's one of the lower box-rooms. I'm positive that's haunted—that box there in particular! I've often heard strange squeaking sounds come from there whilst I've been investigating. And now we're in Study No. 6. I hope you won't be surprised or afraid, uncle, when I tell you outright that this study is haunted!

Angelica Jelly (Fifth Form).—This is the Lodge, Cousin Percival—the home of the laziest school porter in Kent. It used to be one of my hobbies, Percival, to try and find out exactly what he does in the way of work each day. But like many other of my hobbies, Percival, I've given it up as hopeless. This is the Great Hall, Percival, where I have delivered some of my greatest speeches. I am afraid, however, that they have none of them met with quite the reception they—h'm—merited, Percival!

Burny (Second Form).—Yes, mum, this is the Lodge, where our funny old porter lives. He's a scream, is our porter! And that's the

old tower over there. Oh, it's simply full of secrets, mum, and we know lots of secrets about it that nobody else knows! This is one of the lower box-rooms, mum! Shush! You see that box, mum? Well, that's one of our secrets! I won't tell you—yes, I will! We keep white mice in there! And oh, what a great jape! A girl in the Fourth Form thinks there's a ghost in there! Ha, ha, ha! Now you're in our Common-room, mum. This room is simply full of our secrets, and we're never going to tell anybody anything about them, but—well, yes, I'll tell you some, mum! Listen—

Bessie Bunter (Fourth Form).—Come right in, Aunt Rebecca—come right in! I'll show you all the sights, beginning at the most important first! Here's the chief sight—the tuckshop! Wha-at, Aunt Rebecca? Rur-rur-rubbish? Oh, really, it isn't rubbish at all, Aunt Rubbish—I mean, Aunt Rebecca! What's this place? Oh, that's only the silly old lodge, where Piper lodges. I must say it's jolly handy to be so near the tuckshop, though! That, aunt? That's the old tower, built by Napoleon to celebrate the Battle of Hastings, or something like that! We've had plenty of secret feeds in here, aunt—with grub from the tuckshop! Have I mentioned the tuckshop, aunt? I'll take you— Oh, dear! Those old things? They're the elms, aunt. Not bad for having an al fresco feast under—better than the woods, anyway, I think, because then you've to walk so far to get to a shop when you've eaten all your grub! But the elms are nice and near the tuckshop, aunt, aren't they? I'll take you to the tuckshop— Oh, all right, Aunt Rebecca! But you know our study well enough, already! Anyway, here it is. See what a nice view we've got of the tuckshop! But it's nothing to the view we get of here from the tuckshop, aunt!

Elsie Brane (Third Form).—Indeed, these are the school gates, father. I have calculated that there are fifteen hundred and sixty-three passages through them per day. And this is the lodge. I calculate that it will last one hundred and thirty-six years without needing serious repair. Yonder is the old tower. From an examination of the stonework, I calculate that it is fully one hundred and seventy-five years older than it is generally considered to be. As to the clock, I calculate that it gains two and three-eighths of a minute per hour during the night, and loses that during the day.



The SIGNALMAN'S DAUGHTER



The first instalment of a magnificent new
Serial of Railway, Home, and School Life.
By **GERTRUDE NELSON.**
(Author of "The Ivory Seekers," "The
Island Feud," etc., etc.)



In the Signal-Box!

"SHE—she is not going to die, doctor?" There was a stifled sob of anxiety in Olive Walters' voice as she asked the question.

The grave-faced doctor waved her to silence with professional brusqueness—he did not intend to be unkind—and stooped over the grievously sick woman in the bed.

Mrs. Walters, Olive's mother, had fallen a victim to the influenza epidemic which had recently swept the country, and, in spite of the efforts of clever old Dr. Jarvis, pneumonia had set in.

The doctor pursed his lips, as he noted the waxen hue of his patient's care-worn face, and the sharp, significant indrawing of her nostrils with every laboured breath.

Olive watched him in an agony of suspense, her hands clasped convulsively, and her pretty girlish face almost as white as that of the sufferer—watched and waited until she could stand the strain no longer.

With a sob she could not keep back, she turned, and, in dull misery, stared out of the cottage window, to where, beside the railway-line, her father—bluff and honest Tom Walters—was on duty in his signal-box.

The box was known as "Gosbridge Box," and was situated just outside an unimportant station on a branch line near a never-sleeping city of giant works and furnaces.

For twenty years Olive's father had presided over its levers, and faithfully looked to the safety of the passing trains.

"Where is your father?"
"Olive turned with a start as she heard the doctor's voice.

A faint cry broke from her, as she realised how serious was his expression, and made a guess at what had prompted his question.

"He is on duty in his signal-box," the girl answered, in a low, unsteady tone. "Doctor, won't you tell me the truth?" she pleaded impulsively. "Is—is my mother going to die?"

The medic shook his grizzled head. "That is a question it is impossible to answer at the moment, child," he replied.

"In pneumonia there is always a point where the patient goes one way or the other—a crisis. With your mother that crisis is on the point of reaching its climax, and in half an hour we shall know the best—or the worst. You are but a child, but, since you have been nursing your mother, Olive, you have proved to me that you possess wonderful courage, and, therefore, I have been frank with you. I do not attempt to disguise how grave is your mother's condition, and, if it is possible, I think that you should run and fetch your father."

"But he is on duty, and must not leave his box!" Olive protested, surprised that Dr. Jarvis should not have understood as much.

"Pooh! I know the time of the trains that pass here almost as well as your father does," the medic returned, with a touch of impatience. "There is nothing passing either way for almost two hours, and—well, it may mean that your father will never again see your mother alive unless he comes home. I will stay here—shall be staying, in fact, until the crisis is over. Go and explain the position to him, and see what he says."

Olive nodded dumbly.
She could not trust herself to speak

further. Though the doctor had said that they would know the best or the worst within half an hour, his manner suggested to the stricken girl that it was the worst he anticipated.

Olive ran downstairs and stepped out into the slight fog which had been gathering during the morning.

She made her way, a forlorn and dejected little figure, towards the signal-box, which lay some fifty to sixty yards distant beside the permanent-way.

Her small, well-shaped head, with its wealth of pretty red-gold hair, was bowed, and tears trembled like jewels upon her long dark lashes.

In her fourteen years of life no trouble so great as that which now weighed upon her had come to her. Her eyes—uncommon and violet-hued they were—were full of an aching misery and anxiety, and her red bow of a mouth was pathetically a-quiver.

She was an only child, and she and her mother had always been all-in-all to one another, and the thought that she might never see her mother's patient smile or hear her loving voice again filled Olive with a grief such as no pen could adequately describe.

Olive loved her father, too, but, somehow, in a different way. If her mother died, there could never be anyone who could fill her place.

Olive drew near to the steps of her father's box, and through the mist, which seemed to be growing thicker, she could hear the sound which was going on just beyond it in the sidings and pits of an important granite company, which lay quite near to the line.

From the company's pits issued the lines of a light railway. They ran parallel with the permanent way for a few yards, then curved sharply, and continued up a steep incline facing the railway-track, and ended at the yards of the works buildings erected upon the higher ground.

So intent was Olive upon her errand that she failed to notice the blurred figure of a man who backed quickly out of sight behind the farther end of the box as she reached the steps.

The girl ran up the steps, and knocked upon the door of the signal-box. Almost instantly she found her father's bearded face peering anxiously through its window.

With unsteady fingers Tom Walters unlocked the door.

"She's worse, lass?" he asked huskily. And the haggard lines which had recently come to his face deepened.

"Not exactly worse, daddy," faltered Olive. "But Dr. Jarvis says that she is nearing the most critical stage of her illness, and—and—"

She could not go on for the moment. Grief and anxiety choked her utterance.

Tom Walters' hands fell upon her slender shoulders, gripping them with nervous strength that hurt her.

"He—he doesn't hold out any hope?" he hoarsely asked.

"He says that it is impossible to be sure which way mother will turn, but—but I believe he fears the worst!" Olive answered, with a catch in her voice. "He says you ought to come to her, daddy—that it might make all the difference as to whether you see her again alive!"

Tom Walters allowed his hands to drop from his daughter's shoulders, and turned away with something very like a choking sob.

"How can I leave my box?" he said wretchedly. "It's my duty to remain here, come what may!"

"But there are no trains for a long time—no trains either way, daddy," Olive said. "And long before you would be really needed back here the crisis the doctor speaks of would be over!"

But her father shook his head. "In the ordinary way there would not be any trains for almost two hours, lass," he answered. "But to-day it is different. I have just received warning that a 'special' will be passing within the next three-quarters of an hour. It is on its way now, and is coming from Benton Burn, roughly, twenty-five miles away. It is bound for the North."

"You could come to mother, and be back in time, father," Olive ventured.

And the signalman's love for his wife and his sense of duty waged a fierce conflict within him.

He began to pace his cabin, while his daughter watched him in anxious sympathy, understanding how he longed to hurry to the bedside of the sorely sick woman in the nearby cottage, yet was held back by conscientious principles.

"Go back home, Olive," he said, suddenly halting. "I might follow you; I do not know. There could surely be no harm, and yet it would mean a lapse such as I have not been guilty of in all my twenty years' service!"

The girl turned, and made her way slowly down the steps.

She paused, and looked back at the windows of the box, after turning her steps towards her parents' cottage. She glimpsed at the tall, rather gaunt figure of her father as he again paced to and fro. Would he come after her, or would his sense of loyalty to the great railway company who employed him forbid such a course?

The girl quickened her steps, and hastened back to the cottage, where the doctor was seated by Mrs. Walters' bed, his glance fixed upon the white face which lay framed in a cluster of dark hair beginning to silver at the temples.

Olive moved silently to a chair, and seated herself. She, too, watched the face of her mother, whose eyes were closed, and who seemed unconscious.

Meanwhile, Fate was weaving together a web of circumstances and coincidences which were destined greatly to affect the lives of Olive, her father, and also members of another and differently placed family.

Olive was a studious and clever girl, and she had won a scholarship a few months before which had enabled her to say "good-bye" to the Council school which had previously known her, and to continue her education at "St. Mildred's College for Young Ladies," a boarding-school, which also accepted daily pupils, situated a mile away across the meadows.

And there, one of her fellow-scholars was a girl named Sybil Duke, who was the daughter of the very man who was now rushing towards Gosbridge in the special train of which Olive's father had told her.

Sybil's father, Mr. Theodore Duke, was a large ironworks owner. He was rich, and, as
THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 151.



"What are you doing in my father's signal box?" exclaimed Olive Walters, as she sent the door of the cabin back upon its hinges.

well as owning big engineering works, he dabbled extensively in high finance.

That is to say, he dealt largely in stocks and shares upon the Stock Exchange, and, like most financiers, he had made enemies. Mr. Duke, just before being called away to Benton Burn on business, had loaded himself with large stocks in a certain ship-building firm, and he had done so with a dual reason.

The firm contracted with him for all its iron and steel work, which meant to him large profits every year. From inside knowledge in his possession, Theodore Duke had learned that the ship-building firm was "shaky," but that, if it could weather the next few months, it could right itself and once again become flourishing. That was why he had extensively bought its shares.

For he was known as a keen and clever business man, and it had only to become known that he was buying shares in a certain concern for those shares to soar up in value.

At first, these ship-building shares had "boomed," and Theodore Duke had felt that he had saved the firm and the yearly profits he obtained from his contract with it, also that later on he would be able quietly to resell his shares in the concern at a comfortable profit. But then had come the bombshell!

A business rival, who hated Theodore Duke, and who would profit heavily if he could break him, had started adverse rumours regarding it, which had stopped the boom and brought the shares toppling down from two pounds ten apiece to eighteen shillings, threatening both the total extinction of the firm, and at least the partial ruin of the financier.

It was for these reasons Mr. Duke had chartered the "special," his idea being to get back at the earliest possible moment, in order that he might personally deal with the situation, and endeavour to avert the disaster.

In his signal-box, Olive's father still paced agitatedly up and down. A bell tinkled sharply, telling Tom Walters that the special was about to pass out of the section of the signalman whose box stood roughly ten miles distant, to pass out of this man's section, and enter his.

Tom Walters pulled up. His brow was pearly with perspiration, and he was deathly pale. His mental struggle had been a hard one, how hard only he knew.

His wife might be dying—might even now be dead, and duty tied him here—tied him here without any real need, he told himself.

There was a perfectly clear line, and it would be at least a quarter of an hour before the special passed his box. What harm could there possibly be in his slipping away to his cottage for just two or three minutes, to learn the best or the worst?

His hand went to one of the levers, and he had made up his mind. He would have time to run home, and be back minutes before the special approached the box.

He was about to clear the line, when he

drew back his hand. No! It was best to leave both the "home" and "distant" signals up, or, in other words, at "danger," as they stood now. No harm could possibly come to the special with the signals against it.

Tom Walters little dreamed that a pair of very interested eyes watched him as he stepped out on to the sort of landing, and locked the door of his cabin.

The man who had watched Olive go to the box was standing in the thickening fog below, and he caught in his breath in excitement as he saw the signalman quitting his cabin.

The fellow dodged out of sight behind the angle of the box, as Olive's father hastened down the wooden stairs, then started away at a run towards his cottage.

The watcher was roughly dressed, and of unprepossessing appearance, and he was in the pay of Theodore Duke's enemies. The latter had learned of Mr. Duke's chartering of the special, and this man, who lingered now near the lonely signal-box, had been promised fifty pounds if he could stop or delay the train.

Tom Walters reached his cottage, passed within, and tiptoed up the stairs. Still treading softly, he entered the sick room, to find Olive and the doctor standing by the bed.

The signalman caught and held his breath, and waited. Doctor Jarvis had not turned upon his entry, and the medico's keen, kindly eyes remained fixed upon the sick woman.

Olive was biting her lip, her girlish face now even more white and strained, if that were possible. Tom Walters passed his handkerchief over his brow, then clenched his hands. In the most intense suspense, father and daughter continued to await the doctor's verdict.

The signalman realised that the moment was near when they would know if their dear one was to live, or if she was to be taken from them. Surely at such a moment as this Olive's father was to be forgiven for temporarily forgetting that the time he had to spare before hurrying back to his box was growing short.

Suddenly Dr. Jarvis turned, and, as Olive's father saw the smile that was upon the medico's lips, he uttered a cry of relief and joy.

"She is going to pull through, doctor?" he said huskily; and Dr. Jarvis nodded.

"Yes, she's taken the right turning, Walters," he answered. "It is only a matter of time and careful nursing now, and we'll have her well and strong again."

"Ah," the signalman breathed. And next instant he was upon his knees beside the bed, and sobbing like a child. His terrible suspense over, reaction was making him weak.

Her father's convulsive weeping told Olive how keenly he had suffered, and each sob cut her to the heart. She slipped from the room and the cottage, and, not knowing quite why, she took that direction, she moved away towards the signal-box.

She came to within twenty yards of it.

Then the girl uttered a low cry of surprise and alarm, as she chanced to look upwards, and, through the fog, dimly made out the figure of a man standing before the door of the cabin at the top of the steps. It was, of course, the hireling of Theodore Duke's enemy, and, even as Olive caught sight of him, the fellow had succeeded in picking the lock on the door of the box, and had thrust it open.

The man disappeared into the cabin, and Olive stood like one spellbound, wondering what could be his errand, until the signals fell with a crash, and she realised that he intended to interfere with the special train, which must now almost be due.

Olive swung round upon her heels, and stared back towards the cottage. The fog almost hid it from view, and there was no sign as yet of her father. What should she do, she wondered, her small hands clenching in agitation.

In a trice she had made up her mind. She did not lack pluck, and she would challenge the man who had entered the box.

She wheeled again, rushed to the steps, and went up them at a run. Next moment she had sent the door of the cabin thudding back upon its hinges, and—

"What are you doing in my father's signal-box?" she cried indignantly to the rough-looking intruder, who was making an inspection of the row of levers.

The Collision!

THE man turned with a startled gasp. Having signalled "line clear," he had been looking for the lever which would switch the special on to a siding connected with the granite company. This, the ruffian had calculated, would at least appreciably delay it, and when shares are toppling down, as were those of the ship-building firm in which Mr. Theodore Duke was interested, from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour wasted could easily mean the loss of thousands of pounds.

The fellow made no remark. He simply sprang at Olive, and, flinging an arm about her shoulders, he clapped his other hand over her mouth, so that she could not cry for help.

She struggled and fought in a manner that surprised him, and as the man and the girl reeled this way and that, from the windows of the cabin Olive witnessed a sight which chilled her with horror.

Four trucks, fully loaded with granite destined to be hewn into sets and kerbs, were being dragged up the hillside from the quarry by a snorting little engine, and, with startling suddenness, a curious accident had occurred.

There came a sound like the crack of a rifle; followed almost at once by another, and a workman who had been sprawling on the end truck gave a terrified yell, and jumped for safety. The couplings attaching this truck to the others had snapped. The engine and the other three waggons of stone had jerked forward at a suddenly increased pace, while the freed truck had gone rushing backwards down the line, its speed quickening with every revolution of its wheels.

And when it had reached the point where, as already described, the lines of the light railway curved sharply, the truck had jumped the metals, flown off at a tangent, and hurtled over the edge of the bank, to crash on its side on the permanent way beneath, completely blocking that set of metals over which the special would pass.

A shrill whistle from the distance proclaimed the fact, too, that the train was rapidly approaching.

Olive struggled madly with her attacker.

"Let me go!" she gasped, as she jerked her lips free of his silencing hand. "Let me put the signals at danger! There is a train coming, and it will be wrecked!"

"Let it!" the ruffian sneered; and, with brutal violence, he hurled her from him into a corner of the cabin, then spun round to make his escape.

Out of the signal-box and down the staircase rushed the employee of Theodore Duke's enemy. He commenced to run in the direction of the Walters' cottage, and suddenly found the figure of Tom Walters looming out of the fog before him, as the signalman was hurrying back to his cabin.

Seeing his uniform and recognising him, Olive's attacker acted like lightning. He sprang at the signalman, and struck him a heavy blow between the eyes that stretched him, semi-stunned, upon the grass. Then, with a triumphant chuckle, the scoundrel vanished into the fog.

Meanwhile, Olive lay half-dazed in the

corner of the cabin where the man had flung her, for she had struck her forehead heavily against one of the cabin's supports as she had fallen.

She stirred, then opened her eyes. She passed a hand shakily over her throbbing brow. Her brain was whirling madly, but recollection of the special's danger was not blotted out by her dizziness, and she staggered unsteadily to her feet.

Though a mist was swimming before her eyes, Olive reeled towards the levers, intending to thrust back that which would send the signals to "danger."

But she was too late.

Even as her hand was outstretched to grasp the lever, from beneath the box the rumbling of wheels sounded. The special train had reached and was passing it!

The special consisted of an engine, a saloon, and a guard's van, and Mr. Theodore Duke was at the moment peering anxiously from the saloon window in an endeavour to determine how far the train yet remained from his destination.

Because of the fog, the lights were on in the signal-box, and, chancing to glance upwards, Theodore Duke glimpsed Olive's white and horrified face through the cabin window. The next instant the work-owner realised that the driver of the train was hurriedly clapping on the brakes. Then there was a terrific crash, the splintering of wood, and the jingling of broken glass, as the farther end of the saloon was partially telescoped, and the special came to a dead stop with a terrible jarring shock.

Theodore Duke was hurled from one side of the carriage to the other. He struck his head heavily against the saloon's framework, collapsed to the floor, and remembered no more.

Out on the line all was chaos.

Fortunately, because of the fog, the train had not been travelling so rapidly as might otherwise have been the case. Again, most fortunately, the engine-driver had sighted the overturned truck and granite which blocked the line, and applied the brakes. But even then the engine had collided with the obstruction with sufficient force to detail it, and the saloon and the guard's van, which had escaped any serious injury, had also been thrown from the metals.

Though they had been flung in a confused heap to the floor of their cab, the engine-driver and fireman had escaped serious injury, and they quickly tumbled out on to the track, and were joined by the guard and some score of men from the granite quarry who had witnessed the collision.

Their voices partially drowned by the hiss of escaping steam from the locomotive, everyone seemed to be asking questions at once, and at first no one seemed to notice Olive, as, having hurried from the box, she loomed out of the fog and joined the excited crowd.

"The passenger! Where's our passenger?" cried the guard; and a move was made to the sadly-damaged saloon. "It's to be hoped he's not badly hurt or killed!"

The guard sprang on to the footboard and wrenched open the nearer door. A cry broke from him as he hurriedly entered the carriage, and saw Mr. Theodore Duke lying face downwards upon its floor.

Followed by the driver and fireman, the guard hurried over to the motionless figure, and dropped upon one knee.

"Thank goodness!" he exclaimed, as he gently rolled Mr. Duke over and satisfied himself, to the best of his belief, that he was not seriously injured, and merely stunned.

"This is a rummy business!" the fireman growled, as the guard lifted the financier in his strong arms and prepared to carry him from the saloon. "The signals showed a clear line. Where was the signalman that he didn't see the line was blocked?"

"Asleep, I should think!" the driver returned, in indignation. "I'll give him a piece of my mind, as will others later on. We might have been killed through his carelessness."

"That's a fact we might, mate!" agreed the guard. "He'll be for it for this, mark my words!"

"Where is he, I wonder?" asked the fireman, as Theodore Duke was carried from the saloon and laid upon the grass beside the track. "There's no sign of him. He's not come from his box. Say, does anyone know where we can find a doctor? Perhaps one had better have a look at our passenger, though he only seems to be knocked out for a bit."

The workers from the granite quarry had

crowded round, but it was Olive who answered the man's inquiry.

"A doctor was at our cottage a short while ago, and I expect he is still there," she volunteered. "I will run and see."

If any of the men noticed her pallor and the somewhat breathless manner in which she spoke, they probably put it down to the shock of witnessing the railway smash. They little guessed that she was the daughter of the signalman against whom the three other railway employees had made their recent indignant outcry, and that the girl was filled with alarm and dismay on his behalf.

What could have happened to detain him so long? Olive was asking herself, as she started to run towards the cottage. Why had he not returned to his box before the special had passed? The girl felt certain he would get into grave trouble because of his absence, now that this serious collision had occurred.

Olive passed within a few yards of her father, as he lay stretched upon the grass, where the blow of the escaping malefactor had flung him, but the fog was now even more rapidly thickening, and he was invisible to her.

The girl found that a neighbour from a cottage some short distance away was now with her mother, and Dr. Jarvis was on the point of taking his departure.

"There has been an accident on the line, doctor, and a gentleman is injured!" Olive panted, as she rushed up to him. "Will you please come down to the track at once?"

"An accident!" Dr. Jarvis exclaimed. "Yes, of course I'll come, child! Bother this fog! Just where is he?"

"By my father's box," Olive replied. "And where is my father, doctor? Is he still in the house?"

"No; he left quite a while ago, Olive," the old medico told her, to her mystification.

By this time he was hurrying after her as she led the way towards the scene of the disaster.

Arrived there, Dr. Jarvis fell upon his knees beside the unconscious Theodore Duke, and Olive and the others, who looked on, saw that his expression was grave as he concluded his examination.

"Humph! He has received a nasty blow on the head, and he will be lucky if he escapes concussion," the doctor commented, rising to his feet. "Do any of you know whom he is?"

"Yes, sir; at least, I heard that he was Mr. Duke, the big work-owner," said the guard; and Olive gave a start of surprise.

Dr. Jarvis felt in the unconscious man's inner breast-pocket, and produced a card-case and several letters, a glance at which proved to him that the guard's information was correct.

"Some of you chaps carry him to my car. I have left it on the road just across the fields," he said, pointing in the direction of

the Walters' cottage. "I have his address here, and will drive him to his home, where his own medical man can attend to him."

A couple of the burliest of the quarrymen readily stepped forward, and, as gently as possible, raised the injured work-owner between them. As they moved away, with the doctor walking a little ahead to guide them to his car, a figure came from out of the mist and walked unsteadily towards the line.

Olive uttered a cry of concern as she saw that it was her father, and noted the ugly bruise between his eyes. But Tom Walters seemed oblivious to the girl's presence, and stood like a man in a trance, his gaze upon the scene of wreckage and disaster upon the permanent way.

"The signalman!" the guard cried, and he and the driver and fireman approached Olive's father.

"What were you thinking of not to put the signals against us?" the driver demanded, an angry light in his eyes. "You must have seen the overturned truck on the line and have known we should crash into it."

Olive caught in her breath, her frightened eyes fixed upon her father's face. For a long moment he seemed stunned, dazed with horror at the thing that had happened and not to understand that the guard and the driver had addressed him. Then, with a groan, he shook his head.

"I was not in my box," he confessed hoarsely. "But my signals must have been tampered with—altered by a man who sprang out of the fog and knocked me down as I was returning to my box, after running home for a few minutes. I left them against your train!"

"That'll do for a tale, but whether it's believed or not is another matter!" the guard sneered. "What should anyone want to meddle with your signals for? It strikes me that was a rather convenient man of yours, mate, and—"

"How dare you!" Olive sprang before her father, and was facing the guard with indignantly flashing eyes. "My father speaks the truth! There was a man here, and he tampered with the signals!" she cried. "I saw him go into the box, and when I followed him and asked him what he was doing there, he attacked me. I tried to save the train, but he had flung me down, and I had lain half-stunned, and I was too late! The train was passing, as I put out my hand to throw the signals at 'danger!'"

Her words were received in significant silence, and, as poor Olive looked from face to face, she had to realise that none of her hearers believed her.

Her heart sank, and her fears for her father were intensified a hundredfold. The railway employees and the quarrymen thought she was speaking falsely—inventing a tale to shield her father—and when it came to the official inquiry, those who sat in judgment upon him might think likewise.



"I have wanted to see you, Olive Walters," said Sybil Duke, "to tell you that, whether your father is exonerated or not, I will be even with you!"

Sybil Duke's Vow!

THE clock in the ivy-clad tower over St. Mildred's School began to strike four, and studies were over for the day.

With a few seconds of the various mistresses giving the signal to dismiss, the staircases and corridors were crowded with girls, their voices and laughter forming a positive uproar as they threw off the restraint of the last two hours.

Ensued the usual hurry and scramble. Some made for their studies, some for the playing-fields. The day boarders moved towards the main exit, and with them was Olive Walters.

"Olive!"

As she reached the quad the signalman's daughter heard her name called, and, halting and turning, she found a dark and pretty girl of a few months her senior running towards her.

This was Winnie Norris of Olive's Form, the Fifth, and a resident boarder at the school, her home being in London. A mutual liking had sprung up between the two girls from the moment her scholarship had given Olive entry into St. Mildred's, and they were now the firmest of friends.

"I ran after you, as I did not want you to make for home just yet, dear," Winnie explained. "I have been trying all the afternoon to get a note to you, but Squibs"—she referred to the headmistress, who had been taking them in mathematics—"has hardly taken her eagle eye off me." Dora Davies, Rose Phillips, a few more, and myself are going to have a feed in my study. We've a ripping cake, some tinned lobster, lemonade, and chocolates. You'll come, Olive, won't you?"

But Olive shook her head.

"I am afraid not, Winnie," she protested, and suddenly her eyes brimmed with tears. "I feel too worried, and must hurry home. Yesterday my father was before the Board of Inquiry about the collision of last week, and he will know the verdict to-day," she added, in a low voice. "I am simply weighed down with suspense to know what the result will be. Have you heard how Sybil Duke's father is to-day?"

"His memory still remains a blank," Winnie answered, her usually happy and laughing face grave and full of sympathy; and a lump rose in her throat as she looked into the pathetically drawn, white face of her chum.

She felt that she could make a shrewd guess at the result of the inquiry board's sitting. Olive's father would be dismissed in disgrace from the service of the railway company. His absence from his box, despite the extenuating circumstances, would hardly be forgiven, especially as the result of the collision had been so serious for the father of their school-fellow, Sybil Duke.

The works owner had remained unconscious for twenty-four hours after the smash, and when he had come to his memory had completely gone. He had failed to recognise even his wife and daughter, was not even aware of his own name, recalled nothing of what had happened prior to the blow on the head he had received.

His wife had hoped that this condition was but temporary, but the opinions of both Mr. Duke's own medical man and a specialist who was called in were far from reassuring. When pressed for frankness, they admitted that they thought Theodore Duke's mind would continue to be a blank as to the past, that he would remain little more than just the husk of a man for an indefinite period, though another shock might restore his memory as speedily as the first shock had robbed him of it.

"I am sorry, dear! I hope the news, when you reach home, will be good," Winnie Norris murmured, as she affectionately pressed her friend's hand. "I am sure your father was not really to blame."

Impulsively, she drew Olive to her and kissed her cheek. "Then, with a 'See you in the morning!'" she hurried back into the school building.

With her head bowed and an air of dejection which had not left her since her father had been suspended from duty pending the inquiry, Olive crossed the quad and made for the tall iron gates opening into the road. Then, as she drew near them, she pulled up. A tall and rather haughty-looking girl, with pale golden hair and a disdainful mouth, had detached herself from a knot of others and stepped into Olive's path.

"Oh, Sybil, I have so often wished I could meet you and tell you how sorry I am about

your father!" Olive said quickly, for the golden-haired girl was Theodore Duke's daughter. "But, having had to nurse my mother, who has been very ill, I have been away from school until to-day. I tried to save the train, but—"

"Did you?" Sybil Duke's face was white to the lips with ill-suppressed passion. "How well you invent falsehoods," she sneered. "Do you think I, or, for that matter, anyone else, believed a word of the story you told at the inquiry yesterday?" She laughed. "It was clever, but a little too far-fetched!"

Olive recoiled a step, her cheeks flaming. Sybil Duke, with her eyes ablaze, moved quickly after her and seized her wrist.

"My father is a wreck—a stricken man—and because he did not reach his offices that day, he lost many thousands of pounds—and all through your father's neglect of his duty!" she hissed fiercely. "I have wanted to see you, Olive Walters, to tell you that, whether your father is exonerated or not, I will be even with him through you! I have always disliked the idea of having to associate with an upstart from a council school, and I mean before long to put you back in your place!"

Again she laughed spitefully, freed Olive's arm, and walked away; and, as Olive, on her journey to the gates, passed the other girls with whom Sybil Duke had been, she noticed they were coldly turning their backs upon her.

In a flash she understood the full meaning of Sybil's threats. She was inducing other

girls in the school to disbelieve her story of what had happened in the signal-box, belittling her because she had come from a board school and her parents were in a humble position in life.

Once more the blood rushed into her cheeks, this time in hot anger at the injustice of it all.

Sybil Duke was aiming at getting her shunned and sneered at by her school-fellows—aiming at making her life at St. Mildred's unbearable—so that she would be driven from the school and lose the advantages of her hard-won scholarship!

The heavy clouds of misfortune seem to be gathering around our brave little heroine. If only Mr. Duke could recover his memory and relate what he saw a second before the accident occurred, then Olive's evidence could be proved, and her father exonerated. But as things now are, the authorities may find it difficult to credit the story of the strange man who entered the signal-box.

And Olive's enemy, Sybil Duke? She is evidently the sort of girl who is not too scrupulous in her methods. It is in her power to make things very hard for Olive at St. Mildred's School; and this power, as you will see in next week's long instalment of this splendid serial, she does not neglect to exercise.

Be sure and tell all your friends about "The Signalman's Daughter," and see that they order their copies of the SCHOOL FRIEND in advance.



The Exploits of Freda Foote, Gwendoline Cook, and Agnes White, of Study No. 6.

BARBARA REDFERN told me that she wanted a really funny feature for the "Weekly." She went on to observe, in an indignant sort of way, that an account of life in Study No. 6 must be most laughter-provoking. Would I undertake to write up a day in our life?

All I can say is, some editresses could do with a few lessons in tact! But let me deal with that time of day when one has partaken of cups of tea, and has entered into a peaceful, tranquil state of mind. Gwen was reclining in the armchair, thinking dreamily about ghosts. I was still sitting at the table, lazily diverting puns. And Agnes was standing, with wrinkled brow, trying to remember where she had recently put down the butter.

She suddenly remembered. She had put it down in the armchair, where Gwen was sitting! Gwen leapt up with an angry howl. Fortunately there proved to be no butter there. Agnes had mis-remembered! Gwen grunted, and plumped herself into the other armchair. As she did so, Agnes remembered again. She had left the butter in the other armchair!

Gwen jumped up with a second angry howl, and whizzed round. As ill-luck would have it, Agnes was right this time. The back of Gwen's dress was in a woefully buttery state.

Warm words passed between Gwen and Agnes, and Gwen finally stamped away to change.

When she returned she grunted something about taking her lines to the Bull. She began to search for them. Her search grew quite frantic. They were not in her drawer, and she began to search mine. Then Agnes remembered. Babs had given her a batch of "Weekly" copy to take to the printer the previous day. Agnes, just before setting off, had put the copy down on the table on top of Gwen's lines. Then she had picked up the whole lot, copy and lines, and taken them to the printer!

Off we rushed to Miss Steel's room. We explained what had happened, and begged to use the telephone. I got on to the printer, and he informed me that the "Weekly" matter was already set up in print, and no alterations could be made now!

It was calamitous! The sentence: "I must not talk rubbish about ghosts!" might look very nice and neat on a page of the "Weekly," but how many readers would welcome the feature?

Even while we stood there in blank dismay, the bell of the 'phone rang. It was the printer again. He said that he had just found that the second batch of the "Weekly" matter had not yet been received. If it did not reach him within the half-hour it would be too late!

The second batch! That was the lot Agnes had been given to take! Then Agnes remembered. It was still in her drawer! Thither we rushed, and the MSS. were found and dragged out—my page of "Cycling Tips" being torn right across in the process. Surely enough, Gwen's lines were underneath.

Gwen had to take her lines to the Bull. I had to paste my page of "Cycling Tips"! So we took the risk, and sent off Agnes ahead of us with the copy, minus my own page. Gwen was back with me by the time I had finished with the paste. We were both a trifle quicker than expected.

We set off full pelt after Agnes. Nearing the gates, we heard loud cries of cheering and laughter from the hockey enthusiasts on the playing-fields. Glancing across, we nearly fell down with surprise to see Agnes White, brandishing a hockey-stick, taking part in a scratch game of hockey! We bounded across to her, and dragged her away, almost by the scruff of the neck.

It seems that she had stuffed the copy in her dress pocket on leaving the building, and promptly forgot her mission, and wondered what had brought her out into the open. Then she remembered that she had promised someone that she would take part in a scratch game of hockey, and thus we found her there!

The remainder of that peaceful hour of our routine we spent scorching to the printers. Fortunately, we reached there just in time!



GAMES AS THEY OUGHT TO BE PLAYED!

By ANNABEL HICHENS
(The Old-Fashioned Girl of the Fourth Form)

I AM, as I have repeatedly stated, strongly averse to girls taking part in any form of sport. A woman's place is in the home, not gallivanting about a field making runs at hockey, and scoring tries at netball, and suchlike rubbish.

However, as my remarks have had no visible effect upon the continuance of these rough and boisterous games, I must solace myself by here making suggestions for the reform of such games. I strongly urge girls who persist in playing games to abide by the rules I have set out below.

HOCKEY.—Hockey should not be played with a hard stick, as at present. It should be played with an instrument which has not yet been invented, but which I have in mind, and shall suggest later to all the leading sports outfitters. Suffice to say, the bottom of this stick, instead of being hard and broad and dangerous, consists simply of an inflated rubber tube, which can be blown up before the game like a bicycle tyre. A knock from such an instrument would not hurt the tenderest girl.

The ball which is used in hockey should be far larger than it is, and made of rubber. This would be far less likely to hurt anyone than the other, and it would have the additional advantage of being able to be seen and to be hit. Personally, on the few occasions when I have been enticed on to the hockey field, I have been able neither to see nor to hit the ridiculously small ball. But I have felt it, I do not hesitate to say, and usually upon my shins, and on one occasion, I do declare, upon my nose!

CRICKET.—This game is equally as useless and childish as hockey, and I do not hesitate to set down the ways in which it might be reformed. There, again, the ball is most dangerously hard, and is five times too small. A ball of a sensible size, like the one used in netball, should replace the other, and the bats, instead of being solid and narrow, should be broad and hollow, and therefore light. The goals appear to me to be too wide, and give the bowler too great a chance of scoring. Either the goals should be narrower, or else two batsmen should be allowed to take their positions in front of the same goal. No running should be allowed in this game, and no hard hitting on the part of the batsmen, and no hard bowling on the part of the bowler. The bowler, however, may be allowed to use a little more force when taking a penalty, if the infringement causing it is serious.

NETBALL.—This game is perhaps the best—or should I say least worst?—game of all that are popular among schoolgirls to-day. It is played with a nice big soft ball, and there is nothing hard with which to hit it. It's great fault is that there is far, far too much physical exertion in the form of running about.

TENNIS.—Another game which has a tendency to be quite violent and boisterous. The only possible domestic value of this game lies in the use of the racquet, which might help to practice one in the art of carpet-beating. I am pleased to see, however, that a soft ball is employed here, although it is, as usual, far too small. Having taken part in a game once or twice myself, I can vouch for it that both the racquet and the ball are far too much on the small side. Instead of a rubber ball, I suggest that an ordinary toy balloon should be used, and the racquet should be, say, three times the usual size. These alterations would make the game very interesting to watch. (They would!—Ed.) The nets might, with advantage, be much lower than they are, or even abolished, as I found when I played the game that on the rare occasions when I hit the ball, it rolled slowly along the ground, and was stopped by the net. I think this is as much as I need say on the subject.



SOME OF OUR TOYS!

By BUNNY, PIP, and TEDDY BEAR
(Second Form.)

OF course, now that we are getting old (we are nearly ten) we do not trouble ourselves much about toys. We leave that to the young people. But there is a large room near the box-rooms, marked:

TOY-ROOM,

and that is where we keep a lot of our old toys.

Of course, it would not give any of us any pleasure to play with them nowadays, but we sometimes bring a toy or so down into the Common-room just to revive memories of the far gone past, and think of what we once used to like, and that kind of thing.

The most exciting part about our toys is that they have all had an adventure. Our rocking-horse, for instance. Teddy Bear suggested that we should "have a go" on that, and we carried it down from the toy-room, and placed it in our Common-room just inside the door.

All three of us managed to get on to it, and we rocked and rocked, and cheered and cheered. Oh, it was scrumptious! In the middle of it all in came Miss Bullivant! She came in swiftly, with a thunderstorm brow, and she made ever such a funny remark. She said:

"Children, what ever is all this noise— Yarooough!"

Wasn't that a funny way of finishing a remark? Ha, ha, ha! And do you know why she spoke like that? She had placed her foot under one of the rockers! But don't think we got off lightly! We got off heavily, for the rocker overturned, and we floundered over on to the floor in a heap!

Our word, there was a commotion! Miss Bullivant hopped about for a long time, as if she were showing us one of her drill exercises, and then told us to take the rocking-horse back to the toy-room, and never remove it again. Well, we never used the rocking-horse again in the Common-room; but we used our cinematograph, instead.

Yes, we have a big cinematograph, better than any that they have in the picture palaces, we are sure! It was Pip's idea to have a cinematograph show in the Common-room. We stole one of the sheets from Ina Tinn's bed, and pinned it up on one wall of the Common-room, switched off the lights, and started with our cinematograph with the whole of the Second present, free of charge.

We knew that our cinematograph had a habit of smoking a little, and as the Common-room was pitch dark we couldn't be expected to see quite how much it was smoking. The first we knew of it was when Miss Scott and some of the senior girls came dashing in with fire extinguishers. We found then that the room was simply dense with smoke, and was pouring out into the passage. Since then we have not made further use of our cinematograph.

The most widely known of our toys is the kettledrum belonging to Ina Tinn. Ina said it wouldn't cause much of a disturbance to march about the passage playing it. We said it would, and we were right, for nearly every girl in the school had a complaint to make against Ina's kettledrum.

Trixie Forte has a whole army of soldiers, mounted and foot, which she sometimes arranges on the floor of the Common-room. On one occasion Bessie Bunter came in and walked straight through them, and fell down all amongst them! Oh, dear, she did yell! And we screamed with laughing—all except Trixie, who is a very serious girl sometimes.

We have a big clockwork engine, which once ran away along the corridors, and dashed into Miss Bullivant, and we have— Oh, we've heaps of splendid toys—far more than we can get into this column! I hope you have enjoyed hearing about them.



MARCH WINDS and CLIFF HOUSE!

The following is a faithful and unexaggerated report of the havoc wrought by the celebrated March winds in and about Cliff House. To ensure its being faithful and unexaggerated, we have engaged FRED A FOOTE to report it.

The gale blew with such terrific intensity that Frances Barrett passed through the gateway without so much as even grazing either post! She must, in seafaring language, have rested on the breeze!

An extraordinary thing happened within doors, and whilst classes were in progress. (Now for the long bow!—Ed.) The windows of both the Fourth and the Fifth Form classrooms were opened, when a sudden gust of wind swept through the building. Pages of work were whisked off the desks, and carried

along the passages before we knew what had happened. The same thing, too, occurred to the Fifth-Formers. The two armies of manuscripts joined forces, and finally came to a halt in a distant part of the building. By diverse routes Fourth-Formers and Fifth-Formers reached them at the same time, and heated arguments took place as to which form's work really laid there. Mistresses arrived on the scene, and the whole of that morning, was wasted in sorting out the sheets!

Auntie Jones has just thought of a new

excuse for her currant buns being, as usual, currantless. She says the March winds have blown them away!

Piper has now no need to clang the rising-bell every morning. The March winds do that for him!

Yesterday evening the electric lights failed throughout the school. Doesn't that show how strongly the March winds finished up their programme—blowing out the electricity?

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 151.



TURNING —THE— TABLES!



By MARJORIE HAZELDENE (Fourth Form.)

SPLASH!
"Don't do it!"
"Splash, splash!"
"Bessie, if you do— Oh! Right down my neck, you goose!"

Dolly Jobling emitted a shriek and dabbed at the back of her neck. Then she took a small mop from her washing-up water and dabbed at Bessie. Bessie Bunter retreated to the far end of the little room that we call the Wash Up.

"Oh, don't! Keep off! I didn't do it purposely!" protested Bessie.

"I told you not to splash," said Dolly. "Well, I couldn't help it. The washing-up water was too hot!"

"Then how about splashing it on my neck?" hooted Dolly.

Bessie Bunter and Dolly Jobling seldom hit it when they are side by side washing up tea things. They both have their own ways. The Wash Up is too small for them. In fact, it would puzzle one to build any place that would accommodate both of them without any disturbances at all.

"You're not hurt," said Bessie, eyeing Dolly Jobling and the mop warily. "Anyway, I'm sorry! I didn't do it purposely."

"You're not coming back until I've finished!" said Dolly.

"But my tea things—"

"Bother your tea things, Bessie Bunter!" cried Dolly. "You've splashed me, and now you'll jolly well have to wait my time! I won't lend you my frying-pan, either, for being so clumsy! Perhaps that will teach you a lesson!"

"But—"

"Squiggle, squiggle! went Dolly's tea things round the bowl, evidently showing that the argument was at an end.

Bessie Bunter made a movement to return to her washing-up, but Dolly saw her out of the corner of her eye. The mop appeared again in dangerous proximity to Bessie's nose, and Bessie shrieked and fled to the door again.

"Don't you dare to touch me with that horrid mop!" said Bessie.

"I shall if you come back here!" answered Dolly. (Squiggle, squiggle!) "You can't leave anyone in peace anywhere! Fancy dropping the teapot into scalding water in the way that you did! B-r-r-r-r!"

Bessie Bunter felt that she was repulsed, badly. And she wanted to get the washing-up done quickly—that was why she had dropped the things so quickly and so indiscriminately into the bowl. A debate was due to start in the Common-room, and Bessie had written a speech for the debate. She knew that if she waited until Dolly had finished she would be late, and would be excluded from the meeting.

Bessie does not like missing anything—especially debates. After all, it is rather letting the Form down if the best speaker stops away.

She was standing by the door, still musing on her unfortunate position, when someone paused outside. It was Marcia Loftus. But Bessie did not see Marcia, and did not even guess her presence. She did not know that a hand was coming forward and stealthily gripping her cable-like plait. But when the hand moved, she knew all about that.

Tug!
"Yaroooooh!" yelled Bessie. "Ow!"
"Crash!" echoed from the other end of the Wash Up.

Dolly Jobling gazed from a shivered sloop-basin to Bessie Bunter.

"You duffer! What do you mean by yelling out like that?" she cried. "Look what you've made me do! Our only sloop-basin!"

A peal of laughter came from the passage. "Ow! Oooooh! It was Marcia!" gasped Bessie, rubbing her head and glaring at the grinning figure in the passage. "Marcia, you cat—"

"Did it give you a surprise?" asked Marcia, greatly tickled. "Never mind, Bessie! You have a look at what Dolly's doing!"

Bessie, very injudiciously, did so. Marcia acted immediately. She took fresh hold, and then—

"Yaroooooh!" yelled Bessie. "You've pulled my hair again!"

Marcia leant back in the passage as though she was going into hysterics. She was simply pealing with merriment. It was a great joke—to Marcia!

"Why do you want to stand against the door, you silly duffer?" demanded Dolly, who had splashed herself over that second yell. "It's asking for someone to pull your plait!"

"You won't jolly well let me stand anywhere else!" answered Bessie hotly. "Oh dear! Ow! Oh, my head!"

"Don't make such a noise!" said Dolly crossly.

Bessie Bunter blinked from Dolly to Marcia. Marcia was walking away, chuckling. Bessie does not often have bright ideas, but she was so filled with indignation that she did have one then.

A really bright idea—for dealing with Marcia.

With a sudden grin she called upon the queerest gift she possesses.

"Marcia!" exclaimed a stern voice.

"Oh dear! Yes, Miss Bullivant?" said Marcia, staring along the passage in astonishment.

"I saw you, Marcia!" said the voice, seeming to come from the landing above. "You are a very spiteful girl, Marcia! I will not have you interfering with girls washing up their tea things!"

Marcia did not look at all happy at that.

"In fact, I will teach you a lesson!" went on the voice. "You will go into that room, Marcia, and wash up for all the girls in there—and do it carefully, too, Marcia! If there are any things broken I shall see that you pay for them! Quickly now! I do not wish to speak again!"

"But—but—" Marcia began, helplessly but furiously.

"Silence! Do not bandy words with me! At once!"

Marcia Loftus returned to the Wash Up like a girl in a dream.

She found Bessie Bunter grinning. And Dolly, who was drying her hands, was also looking very cheerful.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Dolly gaily. "What a ripping good sort the Bull is, Marcia! I heard what she said. I think it's perfectly sweet of her, don't you, Bessie? Fancy Marcia being told to wash up all our things!"

"I'll smash the lot!" gritted Marcia spitefully.

Dolly slipped her apron off. "Carry on!" she said. "We want a new set of things, and you've got to pay for everything you break! Come on, Bessie! She'll wash up yours a well!"

Dolly Jobling slipped her arm through that of the fat girl, quite friendly again, and led her to the door. Marcia started to don the apron. But Marcia donned it with very bad grace, and the look that she gave Dolly and Bessie and the tea things was really a most unpleasant look.

"Ta-ta!" said Bessie Bunter from the doorway. "I wish you'd do it every day!"

"If you don't go away I'll throw a cupful of water over you!" yelled Marcia.

Bessie Bunter closed the door, winked at Dolly and then went into a fit of giggling. Dolly stared at her, and only slowly comprehended.

"You—you don't mean—"

"He, he, he! I do!" chuckled Bessie.

"Me! I did it—threw my voice and made it sound like the Bull's! And I've made her finish your washing-up as well as mine—just because I splashed you, you know! Generous of me, eh? He, he, he!"

Dolly Jobling, to judge from her behaviour then, seemed to think that it was a very good joke indeed. And Bessie and Dolly were still laughing when they arrived just in time for the debate.

Marcia Loftus only discovered the truth when she had done all the work. It was too late for her to do anything then. But Bessie Bunter was observed to be giving her a very wide berth that evening, and no one wondered.



THE FIFTH FORM VENTRILOQUIST!

By Katie Smith.

(FOURTH FORM.)

From within Study Four came an ear-splitting sound:

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

And again, as I entered, and popped my head round:

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

"What's the matter, Angelica?" loudly I cried.

"A bone in your throat, or a stitch in your side?"

With a startling twist of her face she replied:

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

I fell back aghast as that noise rent the air:

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

What could have possessed her to make her declare

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

And she puffed, and she gasped, and she panted and blew,

With her features contorted, and purple in hue,

Then with jaw dislocated, she burst out anew:

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

There at last, in the midst of that ear-splitting row:

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

I arrived at its meaning—I still don't know how!

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

For this noise—which Angelica thought was so choice:

The sound in which none but herself could rejoice—

'Twas the Fifth Form Ventriloquist, throwing her voice!

"Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug! Gerr-rug-gug!"

THE LITTLE STOWAWAY!

(Continued from page 8.)

Bunter, "do—do you think it can be the French girl you saw last night?"

"We can only hope," said Babs tremulously. "Come, Bessie!"

She led the way quickly, for the footprints were easy to follow—first to one side, then to that, as though the person who had made them had veered uncertainly and nervously from side to side.

Then, all at once, they formed a sort of "V," and went in the opposite direction.

"Changed her course—must be a stranger, and lost in the fog!" whispered Babs. "This way now!"

And there she uttered a cry of absolute disappointment.

They had come to the shingle at last, and here the footprints naturally enough ended abruptly. Not a sign anywhere to direct them on their course now!

The stood, three startled and bitterly-disappointed girls, wondering what to do next.

"But I'm sure I saw her!" Babs muttered.

"And the footprints—they're a proof!" added Mabs. "No one but a French girl would ever wear such shoes—Meg Lennox is always taking us to task about these we wear."

Bessie Bunter glared this way and that through her thick, round spectacles.

"Wh-wh-where is she now?" was her hopeless question.

"Hiding somewhere—must be!" said Babs. "Yes, that is the only thing we can think, Mabs. No one has seen any sign of her before, or we should have heard. Mabs, I believe now that there was a stowaway on that vessel, after all, and she is safe and still a 'stowaway' on the shore. She must have run to the vessel for something when we saw her!"

"Let's have a search round!" said Mabs.

They did, hurrying up and down the beach, and calling in their very best French:

"Ave you lose someone—some friend?" asked a guttural voice.

They looked in dismay as they saw the figure of Monsieur Volde coming through the fog.

He smiled at them, but it was in an oddly sinister manner.

"Oh, no; we haven't lost anyone!" said Babs, with instant reserve.

"You 'ave been to see ze poor Hiron-delle?" asked the Frenchman.

"Well, we—we—" began Babs, and then broke off.

The man was looking at their shoes, each in turn.

"I understand parfaitement," he said. "You 'ave a leetle walk because you are brave girls that have so much love for the sea, n'est-ce-pas?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur," said Babs, quite at a loss to know what to do.

"I, too, 'ave a walk," smiled monsieur.

He doffed his hat and disappeared into the fog.

"More of his horrid flattery!" muttered Mabs.

"But did you see?" breathed her chum. "He was looking at our shoes! Oh, Mabs, we're not the only ones following that trail!"

"Good gracious! Now you mention—Oh, listen!"

Still as mice they stood at that junction.

Mabs' quick ears had evidently not deceived her. It was a soft fairy-like tread in the shingle that they heard.

Slowly a hazy figure came into view.

They stared, too startled to do anything else. They saw the figure of a crouching girl, dressed in a manner that was not English. She flitted from rock to rock, ever peering ahead with dark-blue eyes that shone from an oval face of striking beauty.

Bessie Bunter absolutely trembled with excitement.

This crouching figure—the ghostly shape that had sped past them in the fog—was now following monsieur.

"Ah!"

Some little movement caught her eyes. She turned and saw them at last. That single ejaculation escaped her lips, and then she stiffened from her crouching position, and started back, like a hunted animal suddenly at bay.

"I say—Oh!"

Babs had got no farther than that when the girl whirled around and started to run her hardest in the direction from which she had come!

"We must catch her!" breathed Babs. "Follow!"

The girl had disappeared, but they could follow more or less easily by sound. Babs and Mabs tore on, soon out-distancing the puffing Bessie Bunter.

"I say—do wait!" Bessie gasped. "You'll want an interpreter, you know! Oh dear! Both these horrid old rocks! I say—Oh!"

Bessie Bunter's heart seemed to jump about as she heard fresh steps coming behind her!

She snatched a glance over her shoulder, and saw the corpulent figure of monsieur.

"You follow someone—eh? Some friend?" he panted.

In the moment of fear and anxiety that followed Bessie Bunter had one of the most brilliant inspirations that she had had for some time.

"She's gone over there!" she cried, pointing. "Straight down there!"

And Bessie Bunter swerved, and set off in a new direction.

"There?" the Frenchman cried.

He turned his own steps, and ran at a speed Bessie had not believed possible. In a few seconds he had passed her. His corpulent figure disappeared into the fog.

Bessie Bunter pulled up, panting.

The Frenchman in pursuit as well! What did it mean? She must tell Babs and Mabs at once, and describe her cleverness; Bessie could be relied upon to do that! But where were Babs and Mabs?

The beach seemed suddenly so silent.

She went on, utterly lost in the fog. It was on the tip of her tongue to call out, when a voice spoke her name.

"Bessie!"

Bessie Bunter saw them at last. Babs and Mabs stood, perplexed and irresolute, in the mouth of one of the caves. Beside them was a trembling girl, dressed in a beautiful frock, stained with sea-water and splashed with mud. Her quivering red lips afforded the only colour to break the creamy pallor of her skin.

"So you 'ave caught me—at last!" the girl muttered, with a quiver that went right to Babs' heart. "Now, I suppose you take me to your policeman—"

"Oh, no—no!" Babs broke in. "We only wanted to know who you were, and that you were quite safe."

But the girl could not take reassurance so quickly.

"Oh, pity me, please!" she begged. "I know that I 'ave done great wrong. I come in this ship, and now I hide myself. But eet is because I 'ave no frien' to 'elp me—not one friend anywhere,

Oh, please be kind to me when I am so 'elpless!"

Her dark blue eyes glittered with unshed tears of misery and fear, and her slim white hands were clasped together.

"Please don't look at us in such a frightened way," said Babs softly. "We saw you on the ship last night, and we thought you must be lost. Now we are overjoyed to find, after all—"

"You saw me?"

"Yes, and we tried to rescue you, but you had disappeared."

The girl wrung her hands in an agony of despair.

"Then everyone know I am 'ere now?"

"No; we are the only ones who really know," Babs answered quickly. She took a step forward. "Oh, we understand how you feel, dear! Something terrible has made you come here and act like this. This is a foreign land for you, and you are all alone, as we can see. Won't you tell us why you are here? Won't you let us be your friends?"

The girl stood, still as a statue, for a moment. Then she gave a sudden cry, and burst into a torrent of tears.

"Frien's? Oh, no—eet is too good! It is une fantaisie—a dream! I will wake up—"

She quivered violently as she felt the touch of Babs' hand on her shoulders.

"But—but you are real!" she muttered. "You—you are standing here, and—"

"Yes and we want to be your friends—all of us!" said Babs, very gently. "Won't you trust us? Won't you let us be friendly?"

The unhappy girl gave a strangled cry, and hugged Babs to her breast. The tears streamed unrestrainedly down her cheeks.

"Friends? Like myself!" she sobbed. "Oh, ma cherie—ma cherie! Eet seems too wonderful to be true! I nevaire forget you are so kind to poor little Suzanne! I 'ave so much fear of what happen in thees so strange country. I am terrify! But now I 'ave frien's. Oh, I nevaire forget this—nevaire!"

She planted a burning kiss on Barbara's cheek, and it was returned with equal warmth.

"Suzanne—what a pretty name it is when you say it like that!" said Babs.

"I am called Babs at school, and this is Mabs, my chum. This is Bessie, my other chum."

Suzanne hugged them both in turn.

"Babs and Mabs—yes, I remember those name—I nevaire forget!" she murmured. "And Bessie—yes, I know that, too. Eet is short for Eleezabeth, is eet not?"

"That's right, dear," said Bessie, gulping. "Ahem! I—I'm just the one for you to meet, too. I—I'm a bit of an interpreter, you know. Je—je parle frongsays pluss—pluss mewks ker Babs and Mabs."

Suzanne regarded her with the first twitch of a smile on her delicate cheeks.

"You are—ow you say—comedi-enne?" she asked. "You make leetle jokes to make laughter?"

"Jokes? Oh, really—I was talking French then!" said Bessie, rather huffily. "And if it wasn't for me, Babs, that horrid old man would be here now!"

"Man?" gasped Suzanne, stiffening all over. "What man is this?"

"Fat, you know—grand!" said Bessie, still trying her French. "He's got a little pointed beard—chevewks. And his eyes—his oils, as you say—they're small—"

"E-e has a face like—like—comme un renard?"

"Just like a fox; that's the very thing we said!" gasped Babs.

Suzanne gazed round with hunted eyes.

"That man—oh, do not say that 'e is here—that he knows I am here!" she gasped. "He is very wicked man! He would give me to the policeman as soon as he see me!"

The Figure in the Fog!

AT that intense, pleading cry the three chums could only stare in amazement at the trembling little French girl.

"You see—'e ate me so," Suzanne explained, casting anxious glances around her. "If he think I am here—oh, he do anything to get me away!"

"Well, he's a long way off now," said Bessie, getting over her amazement. "I've managed to trick him, you see. He'd have followed if it hadn't been for me!"

And then Bessie explained exactly what had happened. Babs patted her back with warm approval.

"Splendidly done, Bessie!" she cried. "He's gone running off in the wrong direction, Suzanne—thanks to Bessie!"

Suzanne hugged the fat girl in her excitement.

"You make him run away, Bessie?" she cried. "Oh, 'ow I love you for that!" Another thought seemed to strike her. "But how can he know that I am 'ere at all?"

"He may have heard the sailors say that we thought we saw you last night," Babs answered. "It's just aroused his suspicions, I expect. Then, perhaps, he saw your tracks this afternoon—foot-prints on the sand. But who is he? Why are you afraid of him?"

Suzanne beckoned them into the cave. "I will tell you everything about this Monsieur Volde and his wife," she said. "Then you will understand. They are wicked robbers, and they do not mind who suffer for their sake. You understand that?"

"Yes, perfectly."
"In France I hold very important situation," Suzanne went on. "I am trusted with much—with much valuable things, Bijoux!"

"Jewels?" breathed Babs and Mabs, disregarding Bessie's interpretation of "cabbages."

"Yes, jewels. I am young, but they trust me. They send me to take some vairy old and important jewels to rich people. On the way I am tricked by this Monsieur Volde and his wife. You see?"

"The wicked rascal: it's just what I'd expect of him!" muttered Babs.

"I cannot find all the words to explain 'ow 'e do it," sighed Suzanne. "But he make it look that I have thieve them—you see? Eet is impossible for me to say that he has them, and I—I lose the head, as you say in your language. But I know that he has them—I have seen!"

"Then we'll denounce him!" exclaimed Babs hotly.

"No, that is impossible; I do not know quite 'ow I best explain. But 'e is so artful—just like the fox that 'e looks. I come on thees boat, 'oping that I get back the jewels when 'e does not look, but that terrible storm opset me too much."

Babs and Mabs exchanged a glance of meaning. They remembered what they had seen monsieur and madame doing on board L'Hirondelle.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 151.

"Those jewels now—I believe they are in a cabine marked No. 4," Suzanne went on. "Eet is impossible for anyone to get in now, because a—a big—"

"Anchor?"

"What? You know already?"

"Yes," said Babs, and explained.

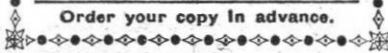
Suzanne's eyes opened wider than ever. She gave Babs another hug.

"Oh, you 'ave always been my frien'—even on the boat!" she cried. "You 'ave scare 'im away, and 'e only 'as one 'eart like a leetle chicken. I despise 'im! But now you understand why I am 'ere? I watch for that man always. He is in England to sell the jewels to some friend 'e know. I know now, from what you tell me, that 'e 'as lost them on the ship. Now I nevaire let him get them if I can help it. He is too frightened that he will be caught to do anything but try to take them in secret."

The three chums exchanged glances.



"THE SECRET OF THE WRECK!"



It was an amazing story, yet they found themselves believing every word. It was impossible to doubt Suzanne. As for Monsieur Volde—well, they had already come to the conclusion that he was not to be trusted for a moment.

"But must you really stay here, Suzanne?" asked Babs suddenly. "Couldn't you come with us to our school?"

"No, no—Oh, please!" begged Suzanne. "I must stay 'ere and watch. If that man escape me, per'aps they put me in the prison in my own country. You are all my frien's now, and you will not tell anyone, please—for my sake! You will promise me that?"

"Of course we'll promise, if you wish it!" answered Babs. "But, at least, we'll see that you're comfortable here. We must bring you down some food as soon as we can."

"That is too good of you!" said Suzanne gratefully. "Now I 'ave frien's—oh, I am sure that I soon get back those jewels in some way! But

I mus' stay 'ere—it mean everything to me!"

"Well, of course—"

And there Babs stopped, her heart throbbing. They had all heard the faint crunch of a step on the shingle outside!

Now they crouched back into the darkest part of the cave. They saw a rufest figure—without doubt, the figure of Monsieur Volde. His face was not smiling and bland now; he looked savage and cunning. Foxy was almost a mild word for him.

This way and that—then straight to the entrance of the cave he came and peered within.

The girls held their breath, hardly daring to hope. Surely he must see them now!

They saw his cunning, glittering eyes dart here and there, but they were vacant in expression. He muttered under his breath, and then turned away. They heard his steps recede slowly along the shingle.

"My goodness!" said Babs, in a shaking voice.

"E suspect that I am 'ere, after all!" quivered Suzanne fearfully.

"But he doesn't know where!" Babs answered, recovering her nerve. "And it can only be suspicion! He has never seen you! He doesn't know yet if it is you or another girl!"

"I nevaire think of that!" exclaimed Suzanne. "Oh, Babs, you are so cleavaire! You see everything! I am certain that you 'elp me now when the time come! 'E 'as gone now, you think?"

"Oh, yes, Suzanne!" Mabs assured the girl.

"Then I am safe to stop 'ere?"

"Well, if you insist on staying here, we'll at least see that you're quite comfy, Suzanne," said Babs. "You'll find this dreadfully cold for sleeping. Mabs, we're going to that ship to borrow two or three blankets for Suzanne!"

"Oh, if you will! I am terrify to go out again until this fog has gone!" said Suzanne.

"We'll be back soon!" Babs promised.

They walked very warily indeed across the shingle, even Bessie contriving to make hardly any noise, for Monsieur Volde might still be near. Once on the sand, Babs headed in quite the wrong direction for L'Hirondelle.

"I say!"

"Just to make confusing tracks, in case that ferret is still creeping about," Babs explained, "run about a bit, girls. That'll confuse him if he does try to follow!"

They got the tracks into a hopeless confusion, and then headed for the French ship. Luck then took them quickly to it, for the sea fog was still thick and heavy everywhere. They were able to clamber silently on board and find the necessary blankets in a deserted cabin.

"It's only borrowing," Babs said. "We'll replace them when Suzanne decides to leave that cave. Down again, girls!"

They leapt to the sand once more and hurried back to the cave.

"Oh, you have got my blankets!" cried Suzanne, coming forward to them. "Oh, eet is so kind that I nevaire be able to repay you for so much kindness when I was all alone."

They helped her to arrange everything to her satisfaction.

"And to-morrow I'll bring down a comb and a little mirror. I know you will like to have them," smiled Babs.

"For my toilette?" laughed Suzanne.

"Oh, yes, I do not forget that! Eet is so vairy necessaire, is eet not?"

The tears were swimming in Suzanne's eyes when she kissed them, and hugged them, before they departed. And after they had promised to come back as soon as they could, they walked silently along the beach for some distance. The fog was beginning to clear in places now.

"Oh, the poor kid!" Babs burst out at last. "It is rough for her, isn't it? And I quite understand how she feels. Those jewels mean everything to her! It's to save her name. I can quite understand why she won't leave that cave. But there must be some way out of it."

"I suppose that villain Volde really could denounce her and have her arrested as a stowaway?" muttered Mabs.

"Suzanne is positive of it!" nodded Babs. "I expect he's got some artful story ready, and his wife would back him up. And as soon as Suzanne was out of the way—remanded for inquiries—he would get those jewels somehow and bolt!"

"It beats me why he doesn't go openly and get them to break open No. 4 cabin!" muttered Mabs.

And they walked back to Cliff House, thinking of the promise they had given, and the strange responsibility that had descended upon them. There was a real tragedy, after all, but it was one in which they could help—one in which they could really show their sympathy. And the chums of Study No. 4 were going to do all that. Sweet little Suzanne should not call on them in vain for their help, whatever price it should cost them!

The Frenchman's Cunning!

SUZANNE! That was the thought in all the minds of the chums of Study No. 4 when they awoke the following morning.

They had managed, on the Wednesday evening, to run to the cave with provisions that they had bought in Friardale, but the lifting fog had made it too dangerous for them to stay long. The night now had passed, however; they had dreamed of Suzanne and her plight. They were wondering how she had fared. Was she still safe from the prying eyes of that couple?

"I hope she's still all right!" muttered Babs, as they went down to breakfast.

"So do I!" said Mabs. "She must feel awfully lonely in a foreign country. I wish we could go down now!"

"I say, I'm going to learn more French," declared Bessie Bunter at that moment. "She didn't really seem to understand all I said yesterday. Perhaps my accent is more Parisian than hers. Think so?"

"There's something wrong somewhere, Bessie," said Babs grimly.

It was Mabs who first saw Monsieur and Madame Volde after breakfast that morning. She came rushing up to Babs and Bessie in the passage.

"They're here—both of them!" Mabs gasped out. "Mademoiselle Lupin must have brought them up with her. They're in the quadrangle, talking to some of the girls!"

Babs looked alarmed on the instant. "That couple? Here already?" she exclaimed. "Oh, what can be their purpose, Mabs?"

"Let's find out," suggested Mabs briefly.

They went out into the quadrangle at once. It was quite true. Monsieur

Volde was there, waving his hands and talking excitedly. They saw the smile on his face, and the half-shut, cunning eyes.

Then Clara Trevlyn came up to them. "The Frenchman's here!" said Clara cheerfully. "Funny old chap, isn't he? Do you know what he's talking about?"

"What is it?" said Babs tensely.

"Why, he's got a daughter somewhere now," said Clara. "He thinks that she'd possibly stowed away on the boat that he came on—the one that got wrecked. He says that his daughter's a bit wrong in her mind—touched in the head, he said—and might have stowed away on board. He's asked all of us to keep a look-out in case there is a strange French girl in Pegg."

Babs had gone deathly pale. So this was monsieur's latest idea! Turn the whole school out to look for Suzanne!

"My hat, Babs!" gasped Clara. "What ever's the matter?"

"I—I think that Monsieur Volde's a horrid, scheming man; and I'm sure

they had to deal with—and they knew it now!

Through the good offices of Mademoiselle Lupin Mabs was granted a pass to take some things over to the shipwrecked crew at Pegg.

"And you'll call—" Babs muttered to her.

"Why, of course," was the instant answer. "I've got a brush and comb and a little mirror, Babs."

Babs and Bessie waited in a suspense that no others could share with them. They had given their promise, and it must be respected until Suzanne saw fit to release them from it. Babs would have liked to confide in Peggy, and Marjorie, and Augusta—in many, in fact. But she could not.

Mabs did not return until it was nearly time for afternoon lessons, but Babs gave a sigh of relief when her chum darted into the study at last. She saw by her expression that all was well.

"You saw her?"

"Yes," said Mabs breathlessly. "Quite cheerful and happy, too. She's



ALONE ON THE SHIP! Suzanne looked at the chalky cliffs and a village that nestled in a hollow. Large enamelled signs bearing English words caught her eye. Yes, this was England, without a doubt!

he's got some trick in his mind all the time!" Babs forced herself to say, truthfully enough.

"Then what's his object in starting such a story?" objected Clara.

"Oh, to get sympathy, perhaps!" said Babs evasively.

"Ah! I shouldn't wonder!" said Clara.

But when she had walked away, Babs, Mabs, and Bessie exchanged very apprehensive glances.

"He guesses!" muttered Babs. "And now—yes, he wants to turn the whole school loose, fishing about in the caves! Why? Only to catch Suzanne! Now he's telling these artful stories, no one will believe her if they catch her, will they? She'll be dragged away and put under restraint until inquiries are made—the slowest thing of all. And while she's shut up he'll be able to do what he likes."

What were the feelings the chums of No. 4 had as they sat in the class-room that morning! Like a fox, and as cunning as Renard! Yes, that was the man

been watching the boat all the morning. Monsieur was hanging round again, and Joe Latter chased him away. The coast-guard's on board now. But you won't guess what else I've discovered."

"What is it, dear?" asked Babs breathlessly.

"It's about monsieur!" Mabs answered, her eyes shining. "I know now why he's afraid to go on board. No. 4 isn't his own cabin at all."

"Good gracious!" gasped Babs. "How ever did you find that out?"

"I met one of the passengers in Pegg—a jolly nice young Frenchman," said Mabs rapidly. "He was dressed in all sorts of funny old clothes, and he told me that he couldn't get to his cabin because the anchor was there, and no one could move it!"

Babs leapt to her feet.

"That explains everything she cried. 'Hurrah! Well done, Babs! Monsieur Volde hid the things there in case there was any search of his things, I suppose—perhaps he found some secret

nook while the others were on deck. And it proves that Suzanne is doing the right thing in watching for the rascal. She'll know then whether he gets the jewels, and when that happens she can tell us!"

Bessie Bunter had contributed very few helpful suggestions to the day's conversation, but she was thinking a lot. Suzanne wanted someone really clever to help her—that was obvious! Why shouldn't Bessie be the clever one?

Those were her thoughts when, tea being just over, she strayed into the Fourth Form-passage. And there she came upon Monsieur Volde so suddenly that she nearly gave a cry of alarm.

"Ah! Eet is the brave leetle plump mademoiselle!" purred monsieur pleasantly. "You 'ave quite got over all your plucky doings, I hope?"

"Nearly," said Bessie, thinking rapidly. He really looked very simple! She might be able to find out something in a more tactful way than Babs and Mabs would employ—or so thought Bessie.

"I understand that you speaks the French language very beautiful!" commented the Frenchman.

"Oh—ah—oui, oui, mongsver!" said Bessie, greatly flattered. "Je parle le langue Frongsays come le—le native, you know—ahem! That is—"

"Per'aps you like to 'ave a leetle French conversation with me?" suggested the Frenchman. "I see that I soon make you speak come un natif!"

"Comme urn nattiv," said Bessie. "Ah, yes, that's the word! Delighted, I'm sure, mongsver—avec bewcoop de pleasure."

"Then shall we walk in your so beautiful quadrangle?"

"Oh, rather!" said Bessie, feeling quite confident of herself now. Easy enough to find out something from him, if you only knew the right way to pretend that you were unsuspecting!

"Like a fox!" Suzanne had said; and she was right. The cunning monsieur had found the weakest part in the armour of the three chums of Study No. 4—Bessie's love of flattery and Bessie's talkativeness!

"We will 'ave leetle conyairsation on—oh, just anything!" said monsieur pleasantly. "Supposing you tell me that you 'ave that leetle walk yesterday, eh? You tell me in French."

"Je—je walk—I mean, je marche bewcoop—"

"Non, non," said monsieur. "Je me promene sur la plage—I had a walk on the beach. And then what is eet you do?"

"Oh, je—walk on the sands and see—I say, what's the word for footprints, mongsver?" asked Bessie, so interested in her lesson that she forgot everything else.

Monsieur's eyes glittered with triumph. "Footprint? L'empreinte d'un pied. Yes, yes, very good!" He really did not seem very interested in the lesson. "And then you follow les empreintes de pieds?"

"Maize oui, mongsver," said Bessie proudly. "Et je discover—descouver—that—that—"

"Bessie!"

That shriek came from the open doorway, and Babs and Mabs came flying to the fat girl's side.

"Your Aunt Rebecca!" gasped Babs.

"My auntie here!" exclaimed Bessie.

"Oh, dear, I'll have to finish the lesson another time, mongsver!"

"Non, non!" cried monsieur, glaring at Babs and Mabs. "Eet is not polite to interrupt so. We will feenish the leetle lesson now—"

"Come on, Bessie!"

"Oh, really! Help! Oh, dear! Leggo my arms!" shrieked Bessie.

The unfortunate fat girl was between two fires. Babs and Mabs were pulling on one arm, and monsieur was holding the other. It was very painful for Bessie.

"Leggo!" she gasped. "If you don't—ow! Oooooo!"

"Then come with us!" panted Babs.

"See you later, mongsver!" panted Bessie. "My dear old auntie, you know—didn't expect her at all."

"But—but—"

Monsieur abandoned his hold reluctantly. The glance that he gave Babs and Mabs were not smug and friendly; it was like the look of a fox, baffled and at bay!

"Where's Aunt Rebecca, Babs?" Bessie gasped, as she was rushed into the school.

"Miles away, I expect," said Babs tersely.

"M-m-miles away? But I—I thought you said—"

"Think, Bessie! I didn't say she was here!" Babs answered. "Now, what was that man saying to you?"

"He was teaching me French! And you've lugged—"

"Tell us what he said?"

So Bessie, as near as she could remember. And as she told it the light of comprehension began to appear at last in her eyes.

"You silly duffer!" gasped Mabs. "It is, Babs, just the very thing we guessed. Oh, what a good thing that we looked out of the window when we did, and saw him!"

Bessie was trembling.

"Do—do you really think he was trying to find out what we did yesterday?" she stammered.

"Of course! He wasn't giving you a lesson at all! He wanted to find out who we met, and where she's hiding!" Babs replied. She ran to the door and looked steadily into the quadrangle.

"Ha, madame has joined him, and they're going out together. Mabs, we're going to follow Mister Fox and see what he does. What do you say?"

"At once!" said Mabs.

They raced for their hats, and three minutes later had left the school.

"Gaby! Oh, Gaby!"

GOOD GRACIOUS! There's Mademoiselle Lupin!"

It was Mabel Lynn who gave that exclamation of surprise, not unmingled with dismay.

It was certainly a case of the tracker tracked to-night. So far Babs, Mabs, and Bessie had kept monsieur and madame conveniently in sight without being seen themselves. Monsieur was an enemy, and not one to be trusted for a single moment.

Evidently, however, he had come to a rendezvous, for here was Mademoiselle Lupin, the charming French mistress, favouring the couple with that generous-hearted sympathy that she had for all "poor shipwrecked-mariners."

"Let's follow, dear," said Babs, as they saw the trio walking on towards the shore. "We'll go on the cliffs here, and then we can peep over the edge, and just see what they do!"

"Right-ho!"

They made their way on to the cliffs,

then dropped flat, and just peered over the edge. Bessie Bunter made certain of her ground before she did so, but Bessie was always like that!

Below them they saw the three people talking. Monsieur Volde seemed to be waxing eloquent. They saw him wave his hands, and smile in that cunning way that they already detested. He pointed and argued again. They saw him smile more than ever.

"Urging mademoiselle to do something that she doesn't really want to do!" commented Babs.

"Yes! What excitable people they are for waving their arms!" Mabs nodded. "You could almost guess what they're saying, couldn't you, Babs?"

"Mademoiselle's refused again!" nodded Babs, seeing in their guesswork quite an interesting pastime.

"But now he's urging her again, dear! Yes, that's right. See, it looks as though he says that he'll meet her there again!"

"And mademoiselle's practically agreed to do what he wants?"

"She nods. Yes, she has agreed."

"Now she's setting off to walk along the beach. He must want her to go and look at something."

And then Babs suddenly stiffened all over. Her voice lost its merely curious tone. When she spoke again it was in a hoarse whisper.

"Look! Mabs, Bessie, look at him! He's crouched down behind a rock! Now his wife's done the same thing! See, now he's darting to another!"

The three of them lay there, simply trembling with excitement.

It was true.

Monsieur Volde had urged Mademoiselle Lupin to go for that walk. Now, however, he was following as stealthily as possible.

Why?

The horrifying thought that there was something very deep in all this gripped the girls more with every second that passed. It looked as though man and wife were endeavouring to reach one big rock behind which they could both safely hide. But, again, why?

"It's some horrid trick!" gasped Babs, after her startled silence. "A trick—and it must concern Suzanne! Goodness knows what it means, girls! But he's urged mademoiselle to go there for some very special reason."

Mabs rose, trembling to her feet.

"We must get to Suzanne somehow, Babs!" she exclaimed. "I feel that there's something awfully cunning in this. She will want us."

"But how shall we get to her?"

"Down the cliff path!" answered Mabs. "It leads right down close to her cave—I saw it. If we run, we may still be in time!"

They rose to their feet and tore off along the smooth turf without another word. Even seconds might count if they were to reach Suzanne before this plot—whatever it was—succeeded.

On and on—and they came at last to the steep path cut in the face of the chalky cliff. Bessie would not always tackle it, but she did so now, almost without protest. They went down at a positively dangerous speed, but reached the shingle still safe and sound.

"In there—that cave, quickly!" Babs gasped. "I hear steps just round the bend of the cliff!"

Bessie darted in first, and behind her came Babs and Mabs.

Suzanne would have greeted them with loud cries of joy, but she saw instantly from their expressions that something was wrong.

"Not a word, Suzanne—not a word!" Babs begged. "Look out of the mouth of the cave, but whatever you do, don't

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make a murmur! It's very serious indeed!"

The French girl listened, her eyes wide with wonder.

"I fear someone promenaded himself on the beach," she muttered. "Is it one of my enemies, or—?"

The figure of Mademoiselle Lupin appeared just outside the cave.

At that very same moment Suzanne seemed to become a different girl. She gave a half-cry before Babs checked it, and tried to leap forward.

"Oh, Suzanne!" begged Babs urgently.

"But—but—eet is! Oh—"

"Hold her!" said Babs hoarsely.

They did, and it needed the full-strength of Babs and Mabs to do it. Bessie Bunter held her hand on Suzanne's mouth, and so she was silenced.

Mademoiselle Lupin paused, right opposite the cave. Presently she started to move on again. Suzanne gave a last struggle, and became suddenly quiet.

Babs, gazing into her deep blue eyes, saw that they were swimming with tears!

"Suzanne, you must tell us in a minute!" she whispered, releasing her hold. "Stay here—you must! You know we wouldn't be unkind to you. Watch! Soon you will see someone else!"

Suzanne fought with a choking emotion that seemed to fill her.

More than a minute passed. Twice she seemed on the point of rising to leave the cave. Then at last fresh and more cautious steps were heard without. Another moment and two figures appeared.

Monsieur and Madame Volde!

It was enough at last. With a shuddering gasp of fear Suzanne shrunk away from the mouth of the cave.

But there was no need to hide, for this precious couple were not looking to the side at all.

"Oh, now I see what you have saved me from!" she sobbed.

She sat there on her blankets, her face buried in her hands.

Monsieur and madame had long since disappeared when Suzanne at last sat up and made a great effort to master her emotion.

"Per'aps—per'aps you think me great big baby to cry so, like this!" she muttered brokenly. "Eet is the awful trick that those people play. They creep like that because they think I rush from the cave, and then they see where I am hid. Oh, I know now! You are so wonderful, Babs, that you seem to know everything! You stop me from make—oh, such great fool of myself!"

Babs placed a tender, comforting arm about her shoulders, while Mabs and Bessie clustered about her as well.

"We were lucky in guessing what their trick was, Suzanne," Babs whispered. "But even now we do not know all. We do not know why—"

"You do not know who that was that walk first?" muttered Suzanne.

"No. Mademoiselle Lupin is some friend of yours, we guess. But—"

Suzanne broke into a fresh flood of tears.

"A friend—yes. The bes' friend I ever 'ave!" she sobbed. "That—that was Gaby, my—my sister!"

"Your sister?" gasped the three girls in an astounded chorus.

"Yes, Gaby—my dear, dear sister!" sobbed Suzanne. "That is—is why I want to rush out to embrace her! You speak of your kind French mistress, but I nevaire think that it can be my Gaby. You say she is great friend of these two people, and I do not think that is Gaby."

"Not really a friend, Suzanne," Babs explained. "But she has taken pity on them, because they told such a sad story. She does not understand."

"She is good—always life that, my sister!" choked Suzanne.

"Will you try and see her when they are not here?" breathed Babs.

But Suzanne shook her head instantly. "No—I nevaire see Gaby now until I find les bijoux—the jewels," she declared. "She 'as such big 'eart—she come rushing down here to see me. It is ee-possible, don't you think?"

"Those two are certainly watching her," nodded Babs.

"Yes. And if Gaby ever think that she make me fall into their hands, it break that big, big 'eart!" muttered Suzanne. "Besides, I know how worry she feel if she think policeman in France is after me. No!" She sighed deeply. "I have three ver' good frien's. You will promise me that you do not tell Gaby that I am 'ere? Oh, please!"

They gave that promise. After that there was a curious silence. Finally,

dear wife—she is poorly, too. They ask me to invite you and your two chums to go down and have tea with them this evening. I know that you will go?"

Babs, Mabs, and Bessie exchanged startled glances.

They suspected a trap instantly. Surely by now Monsieur Volde guessed pretty well that they were suspicious of him and of his movements? He might be a coward, but he did not lack intellect.

Babs suddenly made up her mind in a startling manner.

"Thanks very much for the invitation, mademoiselle," she said. "We'll go with pleasure."

"Oh, I am so pleased!" said mademoiselle gratefully. "I must be away myself this evening, but I know that you will give them what 'elp they require."

Beaming with pleasure, mademoiselle walked away.

"Of all the chumps, Babs!" cried Mabel Lynn explosively. "Fancy promising—and for Bessie and me, too!"



ON BOARD THE WRECKED SHIP! Two figures—the figures of Monsieur and Madame Volde—were at the further end of the passage! "Those two—here!" gasped Barbara Redfern.

they heard steps on the shingle. Mademoiselle Lupin returned, walking, talking, and laughing with Monsieur Volde and his wife on each side. Suzanne closed her ears and shut her eyes, but the tears came just the same.

It was only when the coast was clear that they suggested to Suzanne that it would be wise for her to change her cave.

"There is another one—a big one!" Babs said. "Do not go far into it, because some of our girls were once lost inside for hours. But it will be a splendid hiding-place for you."

So Suzanne moved, and as it was then growing dark the girls bade her good-bye and started off for Cliff House.

The Real Madame Volde!

IT was just after afternoon lessons had finished on the following day that Mademoiselle Lupin came, smiling, to the three chums of Study No. 4. "Monsieur Volde—'e 'as caught a little chill, and has had to stay indoors to-day, Babs," said the French mistress. "Is

Who wants to go down and grin at that artful old fox?"

Babs smiled.

"You'll never become a general, Mabs!" she laughed. "It's the first move on the part of the enemy, and it's supposed to be friendly. What does it mean?"

"I know that he hasn't caught a chill!" declared Mabs hotly. "No such luck!"

"I entirely agree!" said Babs. "But if mademoiselle allows kindness to make her as blind as a bat, we don't! Why not go and beard the lion in his den? If he's up to some further mischief, we stand far more chance of guessing it than by stopping away!"

"There's something in that," Mabs was forced to admit.

"I know what!" exclaimed Bessie eagerly. "You let me question him, and I'll soon find out what's in his mind!"

"If you ask any questions, you'll feel some very hot tea pouring down your neck, Bessie!" said Babs grimly. "You leave that to me, please! This wants

handling with tact, and, with all due respect, you haven't got any too much of that!"

So they dressed, and set out for the house in Friardale where Mademoiselle Lupin lodged, and where monsieur and Madame had taken up their abode.

But it was a very bland and smiling "Mr. Fox" who met them, and he was certainly wrapped up as though he had been suffering from a chill that day. Madame Volde, too, was her very politest, and there was a most appetising tea spread, and the odour of coffee.

"So ver' kind of you to visite— But I spik ver' leetle of English, you know," madame said brokenly. "My good 'osband—per'aps he tell."

Madame started to serve the tea. The talk that monsieur made after that was of the very lightest. Why were they invited? Babs asked herself again. Not to be "pumped," evidently.

Monsieur developed a hacking cough, and suddenly rose.

"You will excuse me—just one moment," he apologised. "I go to see the good pharmacien for some medicine, or I choke. I do not go away-long."

He went out, closing the door softly. And then some sound that was very faint and very tiny made Babs jump.

She looked at the door with wide, alert eyes.

"You 'ave leetle more cafe?" suggested madame.

Babs' reply was startling. She rose suddenly to her feet.

"What you want?" cried madame, as Babs started for the door.

"I think I heard a key turn!" Babs answered, through her teeth.

"Oh, eempossible—quite impossible!" madame cried. "No one do such a thing! You imagine it! You—"

Babs had seized the door-handle and was shaking it.

The door did not move!

"Gracious!" she cried, wheeling on her startled chums. "It is true, girls! We're locked in!"

"Locked in?" they repeated, in amazement and consternation.

"Eet is nothing!" cried madame. "That door—eet is so silly. Sometimes it stick dreadful. There is a leetle catch that falls, too—often we are imprisoned till someone come along."

Babs was breathing hard as she stood with her back to the door.

"Will you please open the door?" she cried.

"What do you mean?" said madame, facing her, a flush on her cheeks at last. "We ask you to tea here. It is not ver' polite—"

"Is it polite of you to pretend that you can't talk English, and you can say anything you want to?" blazed Babs.

"What?"

"You know what I mean!" Babs rushed on. "This is a trick! Your husband has gone out and left us here—locked in! I thought his cough didn't sound genuine! Let us out at once, or we'll shout for help!"

Madame gripped her arm.

"You don't go out yet—see?" she hissed.

"Oh, don't we?" struck in Mabel Lynn at that moment. "What about this fanlight up here? I'm going through it, anyway!"

"Come here!" shrieked Madame Volde.

She released Babs; but just at that very moment Babs gripped her, in her turn. And even Bessie Bunter took a hold then!

"Don't you dare—come here!" panted the Frenchwoman wildly. "You shan't go out! I will pull you back—ah!"

Her wild snatch failed. Now Mabs was on top of the cupboard. She swung open the fanlight and gazed into the passage.

"Hurrah! The key's in the door!" she exclaimed.

In another moment they heard her drop outside. Then the key whirled in the lock.

At the same moment the door sprang open, and Babs and Bessie leapt through into the passage.

"Stop! Stop! You shall not!" cried Madame Volde.

But they were already pelting down the stairs now.

Out into the street they ran, and then, three abreast, rushed through the village. Behind them buxom Madame Volde was panting along, a furious but defeated figure.

Through the village, across the fields, and then at last they struck the footpath. Bessie Bunter was getting very short-winded, but her chums helped her well.

And so at last they came, at the end of that wild chase, in sight of Pegg. Madame had kept to her running well. It must have been a great strain for her, but her determination added to the girls' alarm.

At first the village looked very quiet and peaceful. Their eyes travelled swiftly round, from cottage to cottage, along the cliffs, then to the beach.

"Oh, look!" said Barbara Redfern hoarsely.

The others saw at the same moment. The blood seemed to race more madly than ever through their veins. Monsieur Volde! He was here after all—they had guessed rightly. But monsieur was not alone!

"Tozer—I sus-sus-say, it's Tozer, the old policeman!" stuttered Bessie Bunter. It was!

There were two figures on the beach, walking in the direction of the caves. It was plump Monsieur Volde who waved his arms and gesticulated so excitedly. Beside him was the pompous, stolid village constable, Tozer! There could be no doubt about that.

"Some trick—yes, a meeting he's arranged!" muttered Babs hoarsely. "Oh, Mabs, I think I know what it is! Monsieur Volde has seen Suzanne at last, and he knows where she's hiding. He's going to take Tozer along to arrest her, so that she'll be sent back to France—that's what they do! Oh, whatever can we do now?"

"Can we rush along and warn Suzanne?" breathed Mabs.

"Too late!" groaned Babs. "If they heard us coming they'd run themselves and outdistance us— Oh, girls, there is just one chance for us! The house on the cliffs! You remember? When Princess Zelig came to England—those foreigners hid there. There is a secret stairway that leads down to the very cave where Suzanne is hiding. Oh, Mabs, if only we could do it in time we might still be able to warn the poor girl!"

"We'll try!" said Mabs grimly.

So off they went again, pelting along the cliff now as hard as they could. They saw the old house, still deserted and rapidly becoming a ruin, standing well back from the cliffs. They rushed towards it, and as they did so Madame Volde changed her course and puffed desperately in pursuit.

Babs was first. She swung open an iron gate and dashed through a weed-grown garden. Up to the front steps she rushed, and found the front door still on the jar. The old house was cobwebby and grimed with dirt, but Babs remembered just that one cupboard wherein was a hidden panel, and the passages below that would lead to the steps they wanted.

Desperation sharpened her mind. She made no mistake at all in leading them. They came to the old cupboard, and at a touch the panel creaked back. Into the darkness below they dropped, one after the other.

They followed Babs, through the dark, eerie passages.

They groped their way down, and turned a corner. Light, streaming through a fissure in the cliff, helped them at last, illuminating the roughly carved steps that led straight through the heart of the cliffs to the caves below. It became dark again, but by then they were nearly at their journey's end. When they reached level ground and turned another corner it was to find themselves in a cave faintly illuminated by light that shone in from the mouth of these caverns.

Suzanne Lupin stood with her back to a rock, trampling, with eyes strained to pierce the darkness.

"Ssssh! It's only us, Suzanne!" Babs whispered, as she ran to her side. "We've come down a secret passage to warn you. Oh, Suzanne, you are in dreadful peril! You have been seen. Monsieur Volde and a policeman are coming this way!"

Suzanne gave a low moan of horror, and fell, almost prostrate, on the blankets that formed her bed!

The Chase on the Shore!

OUT of the frying-pan into the fire! Yes, it almost seemed to be as bad as that, now that they had reached their goal at last. They were with the half-fainting, hysterical Suzanne, but what could they do?

Outside the cave monsieur and the policeman must be rapidly approaching. In the house at the top, baffled but desperate, Madame Volde would be creeping about, keeping guard. She did not know where the girls had gone, but she would quickly see them if they attempted to smuggle Suzanne out that way.

They had to think, and think keenly. Were they to be defeated like this, after all? No, there must be some way! They had managed to reach Suzanne, and they were at her side. Never should she be captured by that cunning man who was her enemy.

"I've got it!" ejaculated Mabel Lynn, in a tone that made them literally jump.

"What, dear? Oh, what?" cried Babs. Mabs turned to the frightened figure of little, hunted Suzanne.

"Suzanne—quickly!" she whispered. "Take off your dress and change with me. I know what to do—the very thing! We've still just got time. With your blue cloak over my head I can make myself look just like you. See? I'll rush out and lead those two wild-geese chase along the beach, and while they're away, Suzanne, you can move into the other big cave and hide there. They'll never find you then!"

"Oh, Mabs, how clever of you!" gasped Babs. "Yes, it's the very idea! Quickly, Suzanne!"

They almost had to take the dress from her. Mabs was ready to don it at once. She smoothed it down, and flung the blue cape over her head. Even as she did so, steps sounded outside.

"They're kik-kik-coming!" panted Bessie Bunter.

Mabs turned towards the entrance of the cave.

"Ta-ta, girls!" she whispered. "Give me a call to let me know where you are when it's all over. May luck help me now!"

She leapt into the open at last. At the very moment that she appeared, Monsieur Volde uttered a cry of wrath. "There—see, Meester Policeman!" he shrieked. "That girl I tell you about—she escape! Queek! She is stowaway! You arrest her!"

Mabs flew along the beach as for her life. Yes, they had taken her for Suzanne, and now—now she could lead them a fine dance along the beach!

She ran on, keeping them as far behind her as possible. A little farther, and then she knew that the decoy had lasted long enough. She stopped and faced about at last.

P.-c. Tozer gave a volcanic gasp. "What! Eh? My heye!" he puffed. "What's this—eh? Why, it's Miss Lynn of Cliff House!"

Mabs could almost have yelled with laughter at the baffled look on the Frenchman's expressive face. But she restrained herself—and just smiled.

"Hallo!" she said cheerily. "Why, it's Monsieur Volde! Is the cough better, monsieur?"

"A trick—a swindle!" he shrieked. "I 'ave been trick!" "Now, then—now, then!" ordered P.-c. Tozer, with ponderous dignity. "What's it all about—eh? What are you doing 'ere, Miss Lynn? We've come here to catch a French girl stowaway on that boat called the Hirrondale. Why are you dressed like her—eh?"

"Am I dressed like her?" asked Mabs blandly. "Why, of course—"

"Have you ever seen a French girl stowaway here?" said Mabs.

P.-c. Tozer gasped. "Not personally," he said. "But this 'ere gentleman was so sure as he saw her that I considered it my duty—"

"Perhaps Monsieur Volde imagines things!" said Mabs pleasantly. "He told us this evening that he's had an awful chill all day. I think the best thing would be to take him to hospital, constable, for having such a vivid imagination!"

"Take me to the 'ospital?" shrieked monsieur. "Bah! She trick me, I say!"

"And I say, constable," said Mabs evenly, "that this gentleman here locked three of us in his room this evening while he pretended to go out. Monsieur, supposing I tell the constable a few things about you? He might make a very good capture, I think, if he arrested you and just asked the French police if they wanted you for anything!"

Monsieur Volde's face went an ashen grey. "What does all this mean?" inquired P.-c. Tozer, mystified.

"She—she 'ave 'er leetle joke on me!" stuttered the Frenchman. "Eet is nozzing! Per'aps I make a mistake, after all, Meester Policeman. Yes, I think that eet is this Mees Mabel I see before, and I am so vairy excitable I think eet is something else. I am vairy sorry I give you so much trouble for nothing!"

"All a mistake?" hooted P.-c. Tozer. "Oh, is it, monsvar? Made me run for nothing? Pity I ever listened to you! I've a very good mind to arrest you on suspicion of trying to make fools of the officers of the Law! Just you clear off, and let me tell you that I shall keep a very sharp eye on you after this!"

Monsieur Volde slunk away, abject and humiliated. But Mabs saw his eyes just for a moment, and she knew then what was in the rascal's heart.

A quarter of an hour later, and Mabs was with her chums again! A cautious whistle had guided her to Suzanne's new retreat. Now the French girl was hugging and kissing her with all the passionate gratitude that was in her heart.

"You 'ave save me yet again! Oh, no one evair 'ave such real, true frien's!" Suzanne sobbed.

Mabel Lynn patted her shoulder gently. "Suzanne, we haven't finished yet," she said softly. "We believe your word—we are sure that there has been a terrible mistake made. You haven't got those jewels back yet. We're going to help you until you do, and from what I've seen of Monsieur Volde, you may still need our help!"

"Yes, that's a bargain, girls!" struck in Babs. "The three of us—we'll promise to do everything in our power to help you, Suzanne! Monsieur has been as cunning as possible, but we've managed to beat him so far. Mr. Fox isn't going to win if we know anything about it! Girls, we'll help Suzanne to prove her innocence—and before much longer, too!"

And little Suzanne Lupin could only sob again, for she knew no words to express the wonderful gratitude that filled her.

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

(Next Thursday's issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND will contain "The Secret of the Wreck!"—a magnificent new, long complete story of the girls of Cliff House, by Hilda Richards—and the second splendid number of the "New Cliff House Weekly," containing another grand, long instalment of "The Signalman's Daughter!")

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