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The School Friend

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THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 134



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OUR SPLENDID NEW SERIAL!



DOREEN the Circus Star.

By JOAN INGLESANT.

There, in the sunny land of South America, you will read how Fate decreed that Doreen Harcourt should once more become the Star Dancer of Barkomb's Famous Circus.

CHARACTERS YOU MUST KNOW!

DOREEN HARCOURT, a beautiful, fair-haired girl, formerly a dancer in Barkomb's Mammoth Circus. She, with her younger sister Margie, is on a visit to South America with
LADY GRAYLING, the wife of Sir Peter, their uncle and guardian.
NATALIA VORSKA, a spiteful, hot-tempered girl, formerly Doreen's rival at Barkomb's Mammoth Circus.
DON RAMON DA LOPEZ, a Spaniard, whom Sir Peter places in charge of his estate in South America.

Lady Grayling, Doreen, and little Margie go to sunny South America; but Sir Peter, unfortunately, is unable to accompany the party. Doreen has no time to enjoy the picturesque, romantic town of Rio de Sancta, and the Estancia Flores, her guardian's home, for she quickly has reason to believe that Don Ramon is working some scheme for his own interests.

Doreen shortly afterwards meets with Septimus Barkomb, her old master who treated her so well, lately arrived in South America with his circus, Natalia Vorska, whom he has re-engaged, has suddenly deserted the circus, leaving him without a star dancer. Doreen fills the breach, and proves a huge success.

Natalia has joined forces with Don Ramon, and plots against Doreen. They endeavour to separate Doreen from her younger sister Margie, but fail. Shortly afterwards a Mrs. Lanchester, who is in league with Natalia, traps Doreen in her house. But Doreen escapes, and returns straight to the circus, to find the whole tent on fire. She performs some brave rescue work, but, after the fire, a photograph is published in the daily paper showing Doreen apparently in the act of starting the conflagration.

(Read on from here.)

Before the Mayor!

"IT was that girl—that girl who fired the circus!" shrilled Natalia, as she swung round on the crowd.

The paper fell from Doreen's hand, and she stepped backward as she saw what obvious hostility lay in the eyes of the surging crowd, every minute growing in numbers.

In their strange language they were crying things at Doreen.

The girl's brain was awl with amazement! How had that photograph been taken? Who had taken it? What treacherous hand had borne it to the newspaper office and seen to it that it was published?

Now she fought for words—fought for the courage to defend herself against these vile taunts and this false and cruel accusation.

But those deafening sounds dinned in her ears. She placed her hands over them, seeking to shut out the volume of sound; but louder they cried, and now an ugly forward rush was made.

Doreen stepped back up the stairs of her caravan, and her face was livid with apprehension and the tension of the moment.

And now she was speaking. She hardly knew what she said, but she was denying this charge—denying it, little realising that her words could not be understood by this angry mob of people.

Nor was Natalia giving her a chance. Natalia knew the language of the country. Her shrill voice was raised, and she seemed to be urging them to some desperate extremity.

Now there rose on the air the one cry: "El Presedentio—el Presedentio!"

Doreen trembled. She could see Hercules, Clicquot, and Mr. Barkomb doing their best to fight through the great crowd that thronged the circus enclosure.

"We are coming—we are coming, Doreen!" cried Mr. Barkomb.

Doreen heard his voice above the cries of the crowd, and her heart lifted with hope, and hope came into her eyes.

She watched that fight through the sea of people, she saw them as though they were drowning men. One moment they were above the heads of the people, the next moment they were beaten back.

Could they win through to her side—could they reach her?

She clasped her hands as denser became the crowd, and as the crowd deepened so farther away those helping friends seemed.

Now they were lost to view altogether, their cries had died away, and a new sound had come—a new and troubling sound.

The roll of drums, the insistent tapper of drums—loud and angry drums that startled the ears and brought wonderment to the eyes of Doreen as she heard them come closer and closer; and now—now she saw a startling thing!

Wheeling from the road, and led by four drummers, was a small body of men.

They were soldiers—men dressed in the picturesque uniform of the army of Rio de Sancta.

Why were they coming here—why?

Doreen met Natalia's eyes, and saw the triumph that lay in them.

Somehow an instinctive thought came into Doreen's mind that these troubling and rolling drums were connected with her—that the coming of these soldiers had significance as regarded herself.

She almost stumbled as the crowd surged against her!

Doreen nearly cried out as she heard a sharp command, saw the crowd melt away, and the men pass through the line of quivering and excited humanity.

The lane through which they were coming led in her direction.

She was white to the lips.

Only dimly, for tears obscured good vision, could she see these marching men; and now a cry came to her lips.

"Mr. Barkomb! Margie!"

But Mr. Barkomb was nowhere to be seen, and Margie was mercifully prevented by absence from seeing this frightening sight.

And now those drums ceased their reverberations; there came a deathly silence.

The soldiers had come to attention just below Doreen's caravan, and she watched them, fascinated, frightened as she was at what their presence here portended!

Now she saw an officer come forward. Held in his right hand was a white paper with a seal attached to it. It fluttered in the wind, and now slowly, and seemingly conscious of his position, he began to read what it contained.

It was short and evidently to the point, for it aroused excitement in the crowd.

The officer looked upwards at Doreen, and curtly beckoned to her to come down the steps of her caravan.

She paused irresolute, and now he beckoned more angrily, and she realised that there was no ignoring this command.

With quiet dignity she stepped downwards, and when she came to the ground four soldiers took up position on either side of her.

About her the crowd were crying a jargon of words that she could not understand.

But she realised why these soldiers had come now. It was so plain now—so very obvious.

She was under armed arrest!

Now Doreen almost smiled. It was a smile of bitterness, for she was remembering how she had done all she could,



All Doreen saw were hostile eyes and all she heard was the sullen and angry murmuring of the people who were convinced she had set fire to the circus.

even had risked her life to save those who were in the circus. She it was who had given the warning of the fire. And now—

If only she knew whose hand had taken that photograph!

But she could guess.

When Fate had thrown Natalia Vorska across her path again it was the token of trouble to come; and trouble had come! She was being marched off, and there was no friend to accompany her.

Her frightened eyes looked at the angry mob that surged to right and left of her.

She knew by their cries that their tempers were heated, and that had it not been for the presence of the soldiers it might have gone ill with her.

But then she remembered a thing she was like to forget in the turmoil and the frightening proximity of imprisonment. She was British—British!

Her head was raised proudly, and now a smile of courage stilled the angry cries of some of those who crowded at the sides of the little procession.

Doreen had not the vaguest idea whither she was being taken.

She fancied that it must be to prison, and although the thought filled her with dread, she had determined that it was due to her own countrypeople that she should not show fear before these foreigners.

Therefore she kept a calm demeanour as the crowd and herself flooded out of the circus enclosure and into the Avenida Cathedral.

Here the streets were lined with curious-eyed people, and the burden of their cries came to Doreen's ears.

She had lost sight of Natalia in the throng, and although she had sought frantically about her for traces of some of her friends, she did not see one of them.

All she saw were hostile eyes, and all she heard was that sullen and angry murmuring of a people who were convinced that she had set fire to the circus in order to injure the President and his staff.

And the hand that had worked this wrong against her?

She had fancied that it must be Natalia, but now she began to wonder if this was one of the machinations of Ramon da Lopez.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 184.

Doreen had a faint idea that, if she were found guilty of this trumped-up charge, they would transport her back to England. She fancied that the legal word was "extradite"—she had read about extradition cases.

And now some of her courage left her, for she was thinking of Margie.

In this event Margie would have to be left behind—left at the circus, and, with Lady Grayling lying ill, that outlook for Margie frightened Doreen excessively.

Through the broad Avenida the procession marched and now—now they were coming to the great white building that, so General Diaz had told her, was the seat of government in Rio de Sancta.

The sight of this building made her lift up her heart. When they paused before it, she realised that to no gloomy prison was to be her lot for the moment, but that she was to be judged here.

She knew now that she was to be tried in this great place that had a happier prospect, and was more hopeful in appearance than any prison could possibly be.

Now the crowd were being kept back by soldiers, and she was led up the broad steps.

The doors were flung wide open, and, with the soldiers to either side of her, she passed into the great hall of this large and sumptuous building.

She was conscious of a hum of excitement about her, and, the next moment, Doreen was brought to a halt by the appearance of a pompous-looking individual.

The coming of this gold-braided figure was the occasion of much saluting and ceremony.

He eyed Doreen keenly, and then, heading the procession, it re-formed and marched towards two big doors on the right of the entrance-hall.

They were opened by two flunkeys, and Doreen marched into a big council chamber.

She recoiled momentarily as her surprised eyes alighted on a well-known figure.

There was a peculiar smile in the eyes of Don Ramon da Lopez, as he looked at Doreen.

Doreen turned away, and a sob of thankfulness came into her cry as she

turned, and, seeing General Diaz, the President, extended her hands to him.

But the next moment she was drawn forward to where, seated on a high-backed ceremonial chair, sat the Mayor of Rio de Sancta.

"Miss Doreen Harcourt!" he said, in perfect English.

Doreen flushed.

"Why have I been brought here?" she asked calmly.

He frowned.

"Reason enough!" he answered; and, turning, looked at Don Ramon da Lopez.

The Don stepped forward.

"Yes!" he cried. "Reason enough; with my own eyes I saw you—saw you set light to the circus!"

Doreen's hands were clenched.

"That is not true!" she cried.

"It is true!" he thundered.

"I deny it!"

"There is photographic proof!"

"That is not proof!"

The Mayor held up his hand.

"Silence, Doreen Harcourt!" he said. "There is evidence against you—condemning evidence, and I have only one course to adopt. Were you older you would be tried and sent back to your own country in custody, but, as it is, I shall spare you that—"

Doreen staggered back, her hands had crept to her heart.

What was coming now—what frightful punishment?

"Doreen Harcourt," said the Mayor, with slow precision, "you cannot stay in this city—you must go back to England!"

He paused.

"Arrangements will be made!"

Doreen's face was livid; she was trembling with fear. As she had feared, she would be parted from Margie.

"No! No! Not that!" she implored.

"I have spoken!" he said, with finality in his tones.

There were tears in Doreen's eyes. She looked wildly about her. Was there no friend—no one to help her.

"Yes!" she whispered.

General Diaz had come nearer to the Mayor, and now in his own language and very impressively, he was telling the Mayor of all that Doreen had done—how she had fought to keep the crowd in check, had stopped a panic, saved a woman and child. He told of how she had rescued him and had saved his own child, and it was visibly obvious that the Mayor was impressed.

And, as General Diaz finished his speech, suddenly the doors were flung open, and an old man appeared in the council chamber.

Doreen turned, and, as she saw who the newcomer was, her eyes lit up.

"Manuel Doria!" she murmured, hardly believing that it was the old man.

Manuel Doria it was, and with him was his daughter.

He hurried forward.

Smiling at Doreen, he paused before the Mayor, and now he began to speak, and he indicated his daughter and pointed to Doreen.

"That girl is not guilty!" cried Manuel. "I can swear to her innocence, for with mine own eyes I saw another girl firing the circus, and I saw La Belle Doreen come up afterwards, saw the girl who had really fired the circus. She was taking a photograph of Doreen. It was that lie that made this charge possible!"

Doreen was watching the Mayor's face. "Have you no other proof?"

"Yes!" cried Manuel Doria. "Here is a letter—a letter planning the whole

affair, and it is signed by the girl who fired the circus!"

"Her name?"

"Natalia Vorska!" came the answer, as Manuel placed the letter in the Mayor's hand.

Now Manuel was speaking in Spanish, and suddenly, as Manuel Doria continued, Doreen saw that Don Ramon had fallen back, as though in fear, and that those in the room were gasping with surprise.

Then a most amazing thing happened.

The Mayor rose and actually smiled.

Doreen looked at him in amazement. Could she—dared she believe that there was hope?

Had some miracle happened? Was she dreaming?

No! Her eyes did not deceive her. The Mayor was smiling and looking down at her.

"La Belle Doreen!" he said. "You are free; this matter has been explained. This man Doria here actually saw the circus being fired, he actually saw a girl taking a photograph of you as you were examining the petrol tin to see if that had been the agency by which the disaster had been caused!"

"Free—free!"

As Doreen exclaimed the words, he raised his hand.

"There is more!" he added. "Doria's daughter has a description of Natalia Vorska, the girl who was seen carrying the petrol towards the circus, and we have every reason for believing that her act was one of vengeance and conspiracy!"

Now the Mayor looked coldly at Don Ramon da Lopez.

"Your charge against this girl has failed!" he said sternly. "No doubt you will make inquiries to bring the real girl to justice. I shall take it upon myself to have all the papers informed of this false charge against Miss Harcourt, and no doubt the paper that you control will pay her a sufficient sum to make up for the pain and worry she has had to experience."

Don Ramon lowered his eyes, raised them once to flash a challenge at Doreen, and then hurried from the council chamber as General Diaz came towards Doreen with outstretched hand.

Doreen took it and held it, whilst she extended her other hand to Manuel Doria—old Doria who had saved her.

She saw how downcast he seemed.

"You are sad, and yet you have saved me, why are you sad?" she asked quickly.

Manuel Doria smiled faintly.

"I depend on Don Ramon for my livelihood!" he said. "Now—now I have lost all hope of retaining my post—now that I have foiled his scheme he will turn me adrift!"

General Diaz smiled down at the old man.

"There is work for you to do in my household!" he said softly. "You can come with me Manuel Doria—come as my servant, for I shall need you!"

Now Doreen was thronged about by people wishing to congratulate her on the turn that things had taken.

Just as quick as these people had been to condemn, so as speedily they could turn to flattery and enthusiasm.

The news had spread beyond the State buildings, and now the crowd knew.

Even now they could be heard hooting Don Ramon da Lopez as his motor bore him away.

But what a different sound awaited Doreen when at last, after a final hand-shake from the President, she walked out of the great building.

One mighty swelling cheer greeted her. It rang out again and again, and soldiers

had to hold back the crowd as she was driven back to the circus in the car of the President.

He had insisted on placing it at her disposal—he could not be polite enough, apologetic enough. There had been a mistake—amends would be made.

But Doreen cared not for that. She was not to be sent back to England—not to be parted from Margie—that was all that mattered.

She could still be the star of the circus—Barkomb's star!

To Discover Don Ramon's Secret!

THE news of Doreen's arrest, her release and the apology that was in all the papers, had made her name and Barkomb's Circus the one topic of conversation on the boulevards.

Already eager and willing hands had helped to restore the devastating work done by the fire, and, some few hours after the conflagration, the new tents reared their proud heads towards the blue skies of Rio de Sancta.

Hardly a trace of the fire remained!

Assistance had been forthcoming from every part of the city.

An injustice had been done, and, so the authorities had declared, Rio de Sancta would make amends.

It was living up to his words, for seats and canvas had been found, and the employers of labour in the city had sent gangs to assist and would not take a cent for the labour that those men did.

Septimus Barkomb was looking at Doreen as though she had worked a miracle, when, with the last flag tacked to the poles of the circus, he spoke of the wonders that had been worked in such a short space of time.

"I shall never forget my fears!" he murmured. "It hardly seemed possible that you could get out of that terrible trap into which you had stepped through no fault of your own!"

Doreen laughed.

"A lucky star seems to watch over Barkomb's Mammoth Circus!" she answered, with a smile.

Septimus Barkomb laid his hand on her shoulder.

"You are that star!" he whispered. "Your courage and your art of making good friends served you in good stead, Doreen. It was that that worked the miracle!"

Now Septimus Barkomb looked grave. "But you have made one bad enemy," he added. "This Don Ramon da Lopez, despite his high-sounding name and his bold bearing, is an out and out scoundrel and a dangerous one at that!"

Doreen was serious now.

She nodded.

"I know," she said softly. "But he cannot always hold sway in this city if he acts like this; already he is getting to be distrusted. I saw the look on the President's face. It conveyed worlds. You should have seen the Don slink out of that council room!"

Septimus Barkomb rubbed his hands.

"I would have given anything to have seen that!" he said. "It served him right. I heard the crowd howling at him. It was music to my ears, Doreen!"

"Bah!" he exclaimed. "Fancy a grown man like that formulating such cruel and treacherous schemes against you, the sweetest little girl in all the world!"

Doreen flushed.

"You'll make me conceited soon!" she answered.

Mr. Barkomb laughed.

"No, I sha'n't; but the audience will!" he cried. "There goes the bell, Doreen. Your turn and everything ready, despite the fire, and Don Ramon!"

Doreen tripped away and, as to the last crashing notes of the orchestra, she ran on to the tan, a roar of enthusiasm and welcome greeted her.

The place was packed, and for five minutes Doreen, flushing and bowing, had to wait whilst the audience stood and cheered her to the echo.

How different now to what had been!

As she heard these cries of welcome, she remembered the other cries—those frightening cries that had fallen on her ears as she had walked through the Avenida, ringed about by soldiers.

It seemed like some distant nightmare



"Why are you sad?" Doreen asked old Manuel as she grasped his hand. "I depend on Don Ramon for my living," he replied. "And now that I have foiled his scheme he will turn me adrift."

as she danced before that great and enthusiastic audience.

And how she performed!

Their welcome and her own happy heart made her do wonders. She had to dance again and again, and she ended her turn by singing the national air of the land in their own language!

The effect of this was magical. They took up the strain with her, and, when she had finished, they dashed into the arena, and, lifting her shoulder high, bore her around the circus to the cheers that almost lifted the roof of the tent off!

Doreen, flushed and happy, was almost glad when it was all over, and she was hurrying towards her caravan.

Still in her mind was a memory of the wonderful reception she had had, and it was as though from a dream that she was brought back to the present by the touch of a hand on her arm.

Doreen started, paused and turned round to see a pair of old eyes looking into her own.

She was surprised and amazed, filled with wonderment. What had happened? Suddenly she felt a little fear as that figure came closer. Was he the bearer of bad news?

"Manuel Doria!"

As she spoke his name the old man bowed.

"Even Doria!" he whispered.

Doreen, recovered from her momentary surprise, smiled into his face.

"Why have you come? Is there anything wrong?" she asked quickly.

He shook his head.

"Nothing wrong," he whispered, "save that I have severed my connection with Don Ramon da Lopez!"

Doreen nodded.

"You predicted that?" she whispered. Manuel Doria spread out his hands in an expressive gesture.

"It was all that could be expected!" he answered. "Don Ramon da Lopez is a hard man; he never forgives, and he generally wreaks vengeance on those who cross him—I came to tell you!"

"To warn me?" murmured Doreen.

The old man nodded sagely.

"Even so!" he answered. "To bid you be on your guard against him. His is a nature that cannot bear defeat. He is not an honourable enemy who shows mercy in victory and courage in defeat; his is the secret revenge, the cruel plan in the dark—that is Don Ramon da Lopez!"

Doreen shivered.

What Manuel was saying so fitted in with her own opinion of the Don, and, as the breeze swayed the palm-fronds to and fro, she looked about her fearing that those dark shadows beneath the trees might conceal the lurking figure of the man who had determined to be her enemy.

"And President Diaz?" asked Doreen quickly. "He has given you a new post?"

There was a soft expression in the old man's eyes.

"He has been very kind!" he whispered. "And to-morrow I start with him!"

Doreen smiled.

"Then you are happy?" she whispered. Old Doria sighed.

"For myself, yes!" she answered. "But for the sake of Sir Peter Grayling, no!"

"What do you mean?"

"Many things," he answered. "First, that I can no longer have so close a watch on his interests; secondly, that I am not so near the great secret."

Doreen's eyes lit up, her hand fell on the old man's arm.

"The great secret! What great secret?" she asked breathlessly.

Manuel Doria laughed.

"There, there!" he whispered. "You would know all too quickly."

"Yes, yes!" said Doreen quickly.

"You speak of a secret connected with Don Ramon, and I also know a secret!"

Doria looked at her sharply, eagerly.

"The hill—the hill in the Estancia Flores?" he questioned.

"Yes, yes!" breathed Doreen. "The hill and the mysterious steps, the caves beneath, the jewels—that is what I know!"

Manuel Doria clasped her hands.

"You know—you know!" he cried.

"Know a thing that I have dreamed of all my life? You have been down—down those steps?"

The old man looked at her with amazed eyes.

"Yes," answered Doreen. "And I explored, but not far; I was trapped there. Only escaped in time!"

Old Manuel was a prey to excitement now.

"Once I fancied it to be only a legend," he said quickly. "I was a boy, then, before Sir Peter made me one of his men. I had heard the story of a buried city—a cave-city beneath Rio de Sancta. Some believed it, most laughed at it. I determined to find it."

"Year after year I sought for it," he said quickly. "It eluded me, and then one day—one day I found some strange paper in the bottom of an old well that I had been set to clean. It was in a sealed jar, and I broke the jar with my spade. I took the paper to Don Ramon; he told me that it was nothing. I forgot about the paper, and then—then I saw the secret work on the hill, and I could not help but wonder if that paper I had found had guided him to the secret I had tried to fathom for years."

He caught Doreen's hand fast in his.

"To-night I must explore that buried city!" he cried. "For to-night I am free—to-morrow I start with General Diaz!"

He was trembling with excitement.

"There is another reason!" he cried quickly. "Don Ramon da Lopez has this day sent the men who guarded the hill into the interior. They did not want to go, but he sent them, and they had to; he saw that they went."

Manuel sighed.

"Few return from the interior. They know too much, and he has dismissed them."

He looked keenly at Doreen.

"To-night there is no guard there," he whispered. "To-night we could try without hindrance, when to-morrow it will be too late, because the new men come on duty."

Doreen stepped back.

"You mean—you mean—" she gasped.

"I mean that we will plumb this mystery this very night," he whispered. "You will come?"

Doreen did not speak.

She was remembering the last occasion when she went to that hill, descended to the caves of the jewels. Was it safe to go? Would she be trapped again?"

Manuel Doria was old, and if it came to a fight with the Don's men he would be of little use.

"You will come?" he asked anxiously.

Suddenly an idea had come into Doreen's mind. She would not risk things a second time. She would take

friends with her; it were better to be a larger party than two.

"Yes, I will come!" she answered quickly. "But with friends—trustworthy people whom I can vouch for. Hercules, our strong man, and Mrs. Barkomb, my friend. They will be of service to us."

Manuel Doria nodded.

"It is well," he said. "They shall come. We shall be more sure of success. You can absolutely vouch for them?"

He looked keenly into Doreen's face.

"Absolutely!" she answered.

"I will go now!" she added quickly. "I will find both of them. Wait for me here."

Doreen darted away, and actually cannoned into Mrs. Barkomb in the darkness.

Breathlessly she told her the scheme and bade her help find Hercules, and then, returning to her caravan, she asked old Doria to wait whilst she changed from her circus things.

Anxiety to be abroad on the adventure gave speed to her dressing, and it was not long before she was ready and hurrying down the steps.

Three vague shapes came through the gloom towards her, and she discerned Doria, Mrs. Barkomb, and Hercules.

"Ah, Doreen!"

Mrs. Barkomb had come forward, and now the four held a hasty council of war.

"Doreen must lead us, that is evident," said Hercules.

"Ay, Doreen must act as guide," said Mrs. Barkomb.

Manuel Doria smiled.

"And I will show you a secret way into the Estancia Flores grounds," he said.

"There is a way none use at night, and thither will I take you."

They did not wait now, but, hurrying from the circus enclosure, made their way out into the streets, and through a multitude of devious turnings old Doria took them, until at last, well beyond the city, they struck down towards the Estancia from the North.

From the heights they could see the Estancia itself. Little red lights were throwing their points of radiance from the many windows of the big house, and as they entered the fragrant grounds there was no sound to disturb the silence of the night, no sound save the crack of a twig and the deep breathing of these four who were bent on a great adventure.

The place seemed strangely quiet, and as they came to the stockade that ringed the hill around they paused, fearing an ambushade.

But all was still as death.

"You three stay here," whispered Hercules. "I am going to explore."

Doreen, Mrs. Barkomb, and Doria hung back in the shadows whilst Hercules stole quietly forward.

Into the stockade he went, to find not a soul there, and now he was signalling to them to tell his friends that the coast was clear.

One by one they crept forward, and when they had passed the stockade Doreen led the way to the mysterious entrance in the hill.

As she paused near to this only opening that was possible for them to enter by, she could see that the stone portal that reared itself on the summit of the hill had been excavated from the earth of the hill itself, and it looked as though the whole top of the hill had been sliced, as one takes the top off an egg.

Months and months of hard work had been put into this labour to get at the strange treasure that lay beneath the hill.

Doreen, as she crept through the entrance, sought for an electric-lamp, but all these had gone.

"Light—light!" she whispered. "We

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can't go on, the electric lamps are no longer here!"

Hercules laughed.

"I thought of that!" he murmured. "There were electric torches at the circus. I borrowed four!"

Doreen gave an exclamation of delight as she took the torch Hercules handed to her, and, as the four switched on their lights, they stole quietly down that long and gloomy staircase that seemed to go right down into the heart of the earth.

Hercules and Mrs. Barkomb were preys to amazement as lower and lower the party went.

"It gives me the 'creeps'!" said Hercules, but his gay laughter disproved the fact.

Manuel Doria did not laugh.

To him had returned all the thoughts of the years and years he had dreamed of this discovery.

Those who had said that the underground city was legendary were wrong—it existed!

Soon—soon they would be setting foot on the threshold of one of the wonders of the world—a treasure city of the past!

To discover what?

That was Manuel's thought.

At last they came to the foot of the stairs, and there, facing them, was that strange entrance with the head above the portal which seemed of Egyptian architecture.

"Cathupec—Cathupec—Cathupec!"

Manuel Doria spelt out the words above the door, and as he did so, the three watched him, for a strange look had come into his eyes.

"It is!" he whispered. "It is the gateway of which the legend spoke—the entrance to a city that holds so many secrets!"

There was evidence of mystery in Manuel Doria's tones, and now, with quiet dignity, he walked towards the great rock door!

Doreen had feared that it might be closed against their entrance, but it opened to Doria's touch, and into the strange place they went.

Slowly Manuel Doria closed the door behind them, and as Doreen looked about her at the familiar surroundings of this cave, she wondered how ever she had been able to escape through that tiny hole that led to the sky.

The four paused but a moment in this cave, for now Manuel Doria seemed a prey to great excitement.

"This cave is nothing!" he said. "The legend tells of caves that glow with jewels!"

He hurried into the next cave, and, although Hercules and Mrs. Barkomb were held spellbound by the glittering dome, he bade them hold their amazement for greater marvels.

Through passage after passage they hurried. From one cave into another cave, out of that and into far more passages.

Doreen's brain was in a whirl.

She hurried to Manuel Doria's side.

"Is it safe to venture so far away?" she said anxiously. "The return might be difficult!"

Manuel Doria laughed.

"There is something at the end of all this!" he said. "The legend tells of a cave as large as Rio de Sancta itself, and it is there that night is made day by gems.

Hercules looked anxiously at Doreen.

The great giant was wondering if the excitement of all this had turned the old man's brain. He looked so wild with intense desire to get to the end of the journey.

They resumed their progress through the passages, and now the passages became smaller and smaller, until it was a difficult matter to pass them.

The minutes came and went, but on trudged the four.

An hour—two hours.

Doreen was almost fainting with exhaustion, and Hercules called a halt.

Mrs. Barkomb's eyes were almost angry as they looked at Doria.

She was nervous on Doreen's account. And as they paused there came a cry from Hercules.

"Look! Look!" he cried, pointing to the wall near which they were leaning. "I made a mark—that mark there—an hour ago, or more!"

There was a great stabbing hole in the earth!

Mrs. Barkomb's eyes were wide with wonder.

"Don't you realise, Doria!" she cried. "We have been walking in a circle—a circle!"

And now, as Hercules faced the old man, he could see that there was fear in Doria's eyes.

"A circle!" he murmured. "A circle in these labyrinths! That can mean but one thing—one alone!"

"What is that?" asked Doreen, coming to the old man's side.

She saw how white his face was, saw how he trembled.

"Lost!" he murmured. "Lost, La Belle Doreen! Lost in the heart of the earth—that is what it means!"

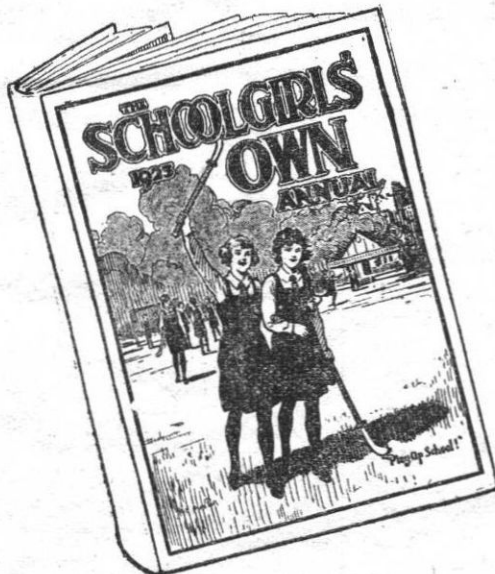
(Lost in the labyrinths of the underground city! What a terrible position for Doreen and her friends to be in! How can they find their way out again—all of them without knowledge of the uncanny place? But we may rest assured that these stout-hearted friends—most of all Doreen—will not give up hope, and in next Thursday's instalment of this fascinating serial you will read of the valiant attempt they make to once more regain their freedom. Don't miss it on any account!)

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The Photograph!

"I've finished the letter girls," said Barbara Redfern.

"Good!"

"And it's addressed to Bessie Bunter. It'll make her fearfully proud, and she'll be really on her dignity when she shows it to the others!" chuckled Babs. "Shall I read it out?"

"Yes, do!" said Clara Trevlyn, answering for them. "It's a good thing someone's energetic."

"Well, I thought they'd like to hear from us," said Babs. "I've been as brief as possible. This isn't really an ideal place for letter-writing."

"I should think not!" said Clara. "Just look at it now!"

The ten girls from the Fourth Form at Cliff House School gazed from the large stone balcony where they were seated, upon all the glories of Contreville.

They saw the wide, sweeping bay of placid, deep blue water. Yellow sands and a wide white promenade, thronged with fashionable visitors, followed its curve. Houses, set in gardens filled with rich and glorious flowers, were arrayed in orderly rows beneath them. There was the Casino, white and domed, on a raised stretch of neat, green turf. The public buildings were prominent and imposing. Hemming everything in were the blue and grey slopes of the Alps that stretched away to the north.

And this was November! Lucky indeed were these ten girls to be on an educational tour at the expense of Mrs. da Silva, once a scholar at their school. Still luckier were they to find themselves in this most glorious part of Southern France known as the Riviera.

"Oh dear! It's just lovely! I could look at it all day!" Babs sighed. "But let me see. I'll cut out the introduction. This is where the letter really starts. Are you listening, Dolly Jobling?"

"With one ear," said Dolly, with a sleepy smile. "Read on!"

Barbara took up the sheet of paper and commenced to read:

"You'll be surprised to know what an exciting time we've had. That map that Mrs. da Silva sent was forwarded in mistake. If we had had that telegram in time we should have guessed. But it got to Dieppe just too late. A girl had tricked us by then and stolen half of it. Her name was found to be— Let me see. I've got to put that in!"

"Carlota Vilarta!" prompted Peggy Preston.

"Thanks, of course!" said Babs, writing it in. "Carlota got away, and we couldn't catch her. On the train journey during the night an extraor-

inary and really horrid event occurred. The end coach containing Mabs, Clara, Augusta, Flap, Phyllis, and myself broke away from the rest of the train, and was stranded on the line. We managed to stop a train that was following, and got into a carriage with a certain Monsieur and Madame Conspare."

"Rascals, both!" commented Dolly Jobling.

"These two absolutely tricked us,"

Babs continued. "It was only afterwards that we found out that they were really the minds directing what Carlota had been doing. At the time we didn't suspect them, and they found it quite easy to imprison us in a bungalow. The man—by the way, I'm glad to say that he isn't really French—even duped Miss Steel as well, and stole our luggage in another motor-car."

She paused for a moment to alter a misspelling.

"All this time we had seen a very beautiful and mysterious girl hanging about. We couldn't make out who she was, but, to cut a long story short, she turned out to be none other than Eulalie da Silva. She proved an absolute brick. Not only did she get the map back, but she rescued us all from the bungalow. We escaped in a car which Eulalie drove, and I can tell you that I've never had a more exciting ride in all my life. Eulalie's an absolutely ripping good sport, and we're famous chums already."

"Hear, hear!" said Freda Foote. "That's very good, Babs. There's only one thing you haven't done. I think Bessie would like a fuller description of those Conspares. Madame, plump and with that deceitful grin; monsieur, small and shrivelled up, with a wizened face—"

"Not likely!" laughed Babs. "Bessie'd be sure to say she'd seen them in Friardale within half an hour!"

"Quite right, Babs," agreed Marjorie Hazeldene smilingly. "I think that explains it all very well. I should just add a reassuring note that we don't expect to see any more of the Conspares now that Mr. da Silva—I should say, the Don—has got the map."

"I will, Marjorie," said Babs. "Of course, Bessie will want to know what the map is about, but we can't tell her that it is a chart of the hiding-place of some valuable ivory carvings which it is the duty of Don da Silva to discover for his Government—"

"Quite so," nodded Mabs. "It's really a confidential business. Of course, I don't suppose there would be any harm now that the map has been recovered. But we want to be on the safe side."

Babs had sealed up the letter and was just addressing it, when Miss Steel joined them.

There was a respectful and attentive silence. Miss Steel was with them, and yet not one of them. It was the duty of the Fourth Form mistress to see that lessons were combined with their sight-seeing, and so far she had been managing very well.

"Well, girls," she said, "I have corrected the papers that you wrote last night, and they are good. You behaved excellently in our little class this morning. Under the circumstances, I shall only set you one more task for to-day, and that will be an essay on the Riviera. You can get your subject matter anywhere you like. Keep exclusively to Contreville if you desire. For this afternoon you will be quite free."

She had a few more words to say, and then left them. Clara Trevlyn gave a subdued cheer.

"Good old Miss Steel! Not such a bad sort, after all, is she?"

"Jolly nice!" declared Dolly Jobling.

"It's a bit of a bore having to do lessons, but Miss Steel makes it as easy as possible, and she hasn't given us any lines yet!"

"Lines! Oh dear! What a dreadful thought!" said a laughing voice.

They all looked round and laughed to see that their hostess, Donna da Silva, had joined them.

"Lines! It takes me right back to Cliff House, really!" explained their hostess. "To tell you the truth, I peeped into the room once or twice when you were having your lessons this morning, and I could almost believe that—that I was a naughty girl standing outside the door!"

The girls laughed heartily at that. "You should have joined us," said Babs jokingly.

"I really would have done for two pins," said Donna da Silva. "But I felt so sure that Miss Steel would drop on me at once and find out how fearfully ignorant I am. I think it's lovely to have you girls here. It makes me feel so young again. But I mustn't keep you now, for I believe Eulalie is waiting downstairs for you."

"Oh, good!" said Babs at once.

"She has been out with a fisherman this morning, I think. She is really such a young madcap," explained her mother. "Strolling about on the promenade isn't in her line at all. She always wants to be doing something. Ah, here she is!"

Eulalie bounded on to the veranda and embraced them in turn with whirlwind excitement. With the noble, finely-chiselled features of old Spain, dimpling soft brown cheeks, and flashing brown eyes, she looked lovely. There was no other word for it. But as she stood, laughing and talking so excitedly, she

was quite unconscious of her charm—the simple and unaffected girl they loved so much.

"You'll come out now?" she asked. "Oh, do! The air's glorious, and I'm simply dying for another dip. Never mind about your hats; you won't need them."

They needed no second bidding to accompany Eulalie. Her excited chatter hardly ceased as they ran down the stairs. But as they were descending the stone steps from the front door, she suddenly lowered her voice and spoke in a different tone.

"Don't look up for the moment, girls," she said. "There's a man over the road, and I've seen him several times to-day—always quite near me. He's called Petro Mias, a fellow no one trusts. I wouldn't leave anything valuable about in case he sees it."

The girls glanced cautiously around and saw the man indicated.

He was short and swarthy, with a black and floppy hat and rather faded suit. He walked with his hands in his pockets, and generally wore a hangdog air. Close behind him came an elderly man.

He was bent, and walked with the aid of a stick. A thick beard covered his chin, and there were blue glasses over his eyes.

Babs was conscious of an odd sensation as the man passed.

"Do you know, Eulalie," she said, "I feel just as though I've met that man before somewhere!"

"In England?" said Eulalie.

Babs frowned.

"I couldn't say, I'm sure," she answered. "That's just what is puzzling me. I seem to know him, and yet I don't—"

Clara broke in with a whisper.

"He's turned, and is walking just behind us," she said. "I think he's quickened his pace. Let's hurry on a bit."

They did so, and the tapping stick grew more distant. Babs still looked vaguely puzzled, but she seemed to forget her thoughts when Eulalie suggested that they should sit for a few minutes close to where a really first-class band was playing.

"I am so fond of music," she confessed. "It is nice to listen for a little while, and we can talk of what we are going to do. The tide is too low for boating and bathing at present. But we must make the most of our time here before we go to my Spanish home. It is very mountainous there, and there is no sea like this. When my father's plans are ready he will tell us—"

Abruptly, as though she felt a presence she could not see, Babs turned in her seat.

Standing behind her, not a yard distant, was the bearded invalid!

Babs jumped. He had approached silently. She was positive that his stick had not tapped once. With indignant eyes she gazed at the blue lenses and the old man turned and limped away.

"What is the matter, Babs?" Eulalie asked.

Babs pointed significantly to the retreating figure.

"That fellow was listening to what we were saying, I'm sure!" she declared. "He's moved off now."

"He is what you call a Nosey Parker!" said Eulalie. "Ah, and there is that Petro Mias—he, too, has come this way, and they are passing."

"And if Petro didn't say some word to that old man I'm a Dutchman!" said Clara Trevlyn emphatically.

The girls exchanged mystified looks.

"Queer, isn't it?" said Babs, with an uncertain laugh. "We seem to be attracting any amount of attention here."

"It is often the way. I do not like this promenade," said Eulalie. "We will get out in a boat when the tide rises again, and from it we can bathe as well. That will be better than sitting here."

"And in the meanwhile," said Babs, struck by a sudden idea, "Mabs and I can go in search of the library."

"The library?" asked their Spanish friend. "What for?"

"We've got to write an essay for Miss Steel this evening," Babs explained. "You said there was an English library, didn't you, Eulalie? We can look up a few facts in half an hour, and it will help us this evening."

"How energetic!" laughed Eulalie. "But there, it is better to work when you must. You will soon find the library, it is along the front, and the second turning to the left. But do not be long."

"We'll promise that," smiled Babs, and she and her chum rose.

Clara accompanied them to help in gathering the facts that all of them would embody in their essays.

They found the building they sought with little difficulty. There was a small room devoted to reference books, and they were quickly seated in armchairs while Babs selected three of the most promising volumes.

"These will do, I think," she said. "We can easily—"

There she broke off as the door opened to admit a stranger.

With a start of real surprise she saw the Spaniard, Petro Mias!

"What the policeman—" muttered Clara.

Petro Mias did not glance in their direction. So studiously did he avoid doing so, however, that that in itself looked unusual. Instead, he went straight to a table at the other side, sat down, and picked up a volume and started to read.

"Queer!" commented Mabs under her breath. "We can't doubt that the fellow must have followed us, whether he knows it or not."

"But why?" whispered Clara.

They could not answer that.

"Suppose we get on with looking up the facts," said Babs in a more practical tone. "Here's a decent book, giving some historical dates. This other one deals with places just round here. And—Hullo! This is queer! I've made a mistake, and this red book is all about the heart of Spain!"

"Leave it now," Clara said. "We've got plenty to get on with."

They commenced to delve into the two books in search of the facts most likely to please and satisfy Miss Steel.

"He's watching us!" whispered Mabs under her breath.

"Petro Mias?" said Babs in the same tone.

"Yes. Ssssh! He looked again just then. He hasn't come to read at all. He doesn't know that I saw him staring this way. His eyes dropped as soon as I raised my head, but I could see his reflection in that polished counter over there."

"Wonder why!" mused Babs.

A chair scraped. Without glancing up they knew that Petro Mias had risen. Their hearts beat a little more quickly as he came towards them. Was he going to speak?

The Spaniard passed them without a word. Quickly taking a book from the shelf behind them, he returned to his desk and appeared to be reading deeply.

"I think we've got enough to be going

on with," said Babs, drawing a line beneath her notes. "It'll have to do, anyway, or we shall be late. Ready?"

"Ready, ay, ready!" said Clara cheerily.

Babs replaced the volumes on the shelf, and they went to the door. Out of the corners of their eyes they were watching the Spaniard, but not once did he glance in their direction. They closed the glass door, and took several steps through the public reading-room beyond. Then Babs pulled up, with a warning gesture to the others.

"Now," she whispered, "we'll just go back quietly and see what the game really is!"

They went very softly. As they approached the reference-room they were able to see through the glass of the door. Clara gave a thrilling whisper:

"He's not in his chair!"

"Then quietly," said Babs. "We'll see what he really is doing!"

Together they came to the door and peered through the glass. It just enabled them to see a stealthy figure that went to the shelves at the far side of the room.

It was the Spaniard.

Quickly, almost excitedly, his hand went to a book—a red book. They gave a simultaneous gasp as they recognised it.

"The book on Spain—the one we had by mistake!" murmured Mabs.

With no idea that he was watched, Petro Mias took it from the shelf. With quick fingers he turned the pages over.

"Whew! See what he's doing?" said Babs, thrilled. "We had it open towards the end. He's opening it at the very same place!"

She gave a fresh gasp. "See what it means? When he came across the room he must have glanced at the number of the page, and he wants to find out what we were looking up!"

"Yes, that must be it!" said Mabs. "But why? Why does the man want to know what we were reading? Why's he followed us here at all?"

Babs crept away from the door.

"I don't know," she said. "Anyway, we've found Mr. Mias out, and he doesn't know. He can't do much mischief looking at a book that we took by accident. Let's get back quickly and tell Eulalie. Then—Hullo! What's this?"

She stopped to pick up a scrap of white paper that was lying on the floor. As she turned it over she saw that it was a snipping from a photograph.

"My goodness!" Babs ejaculated, a second later. "Look—just look what it is!"

Clara and Mabs looked and gasped, and well they might!

For what Babs had picked up from the floor of the British library at Contreville was a small, smiling portrait of herself!

Wearing Blue Glasses!

EULALIE DA SILVA was as amazed as anyone to hear the extraordinary tale that Babs, Mabs, and Clara brought back.

"This Petro Mias—so you feel that he has been following you?" she asked, with flashing eyes. "Now he grows more interesting. He wanted to find out what you were reading. And you think he must have dropped that photograph?"

"He was the only other person in the library," Babs answered. "As for the photograph—well, we're practically certain that it wasn't on the floor when we passed through the public reading-room first."

"But where did he get the photograph?"

"I don't know," said Babs vaguely. "I've never seen it before. I didn't know I had one like it."

Eulalie stood by the three boats that she had hired in the absence of the others, pondering deeply.

"We ourselves have been looking for the old man with the blue glasses," she confessed. "He has disappeared. We wondered if he had gone off with Petro. But now that you tell us this— Clara, are you certain they spoke together?"

"Abso-giddy-lutely!" said Clara in her well-known way.

Eulalie laughed. "Then this gets more interesting!" she declared. "We must not forget. I will make inquiries about this Petro Mias, but the trouble is that many consider him out of his mind—a harmless lunatic, I think you would call him."

"It was certainly the action of a lunatic," Babs admitted. "And yet the photograph—that's what beats me. Why did he have it, and where did he get it?"

No one answered.

Metaphorically, they were up against a brick wall, and one of fairly solid proportions.

Eulalie made the most sensible suggestion.

"Supposing we go off in the boats with our bathing costumes and towels," she suggested. "We shall think more clearly when we are away from this fashionable promenade."

They considered it a good idea, and were soon tumbling into the boats. It was still gloriously warm and sunny. The town looked more delightful than ever as they rowed slowly out to sea and obtained a wider and more distant view of it.

The discussion on Petro Mias broke down after a few minutes, which was only to be expected.

Beyond deciding that they would give the gentleman as much attention as he seemed to wish to give them, they could do nothing.

In any case, it was the sort of afternoon to encourage peaceful thoughts. Eulalie suggested that they should race, and they did so, and Eulalie's boat won. She pulled as she did everything else—wholeheartedly. She could enter into the simplest enjoyment with mad excitement that was charmingly fresh. They had never met a girl quite like her before.

The day was so clear and warm that they felt tempted to remain out all the afternoon. Finally, however, they turned and started to row for Contreville.

"What is that along there?" cried Mabs, suddenly pointing.

They looked in the direction she indicated.

"My word! There's something moving against the cliff face!" cried Clara. "What is it?"

"It's a man!" exclaimed Marjorie Hazeldene. "The sea comes up right to that point. He's cut off, and the tide's rising. Oh, Eulalie, will it come much higher?"

"It will wash right round the cliffs!" said Eulalie. "It looks— Oh, there is

that cry: 'A moi! Au secours!' It is a Frenchman who shouts for help. You have very sharp ears, Babs. Let us row as quickly as we can!"

They could all see the gesticulating figure now. Faintly they heard cries. They bent to their work, and pulled every whit as hard as they had done in their races.

"He still cries out!" commented Eulalie da Silva.

"Yes. He can't have seen us!" murmured Babs. "Can you see clearly yet, Mabs?"

Mabs, who was steering, paused before replying.

"He's a little man," she said. "There's something queer about his face that I can't quite see. I think he's got a beard, and—and—oh, my hat!—blue glasses!"

"What?" said the girls, amazed.

"Yes, it is the very same!" yelled Mabs. "Oh, how funny! Girls, it's the man who was following us on the promenade and trying to listen to what we said!"

"Never!"

Eulalie broke into a merry laugh. "Ha, ha! Serve him right! We can afford to chuckle. He is in no danger now we are here!" she cried. "We will have him in the boat and ask him why a poor invalid should walk such a long way from Contreville in the same direction that we took?"

"My goodness! That's queer!" agreed Babs. "Yes, we will ask for an explanation. And we will speak of that fellow Petro, too, and see whether he shows any sign of knowing him."

The beseeching voice was more audible:

"A moi! A moi! Au secours!" "Where have I heard that voice?" Babs muttered.

"It seems to have a familiar ring to me!" said Clara in the same bewildered tone.

Mabs gave a cry.

"All together, girls! Let him know we're coming. He must be as blind as an owl. He hasn't seen us yet. One—two—three!"

"Hold on! We're coming!" cried the girls in chorus.

Mabs sat watching with open mouth. Suddenly she gave a fresh cry, and rose recklessly to her feet.

"Girls, he's heard, and he's bolting! He's in the water!"

"Never!"

"He is. You look for yourselves!"

Oars were rested as the girls turned to look. The sight they saw amazed them beyond measure.

What Mabs said was true.

It seemed that immediately he saw the boats, the bent old man plunged into the water as though he would wade around the point and reach safety without assistance.

"Give another shout!" said Marjorie, really agitated. "He can't have heard. Perhaps he's deaf."

They shouted again. But, if anything, the distant figure only plunged deeper.

"He must be mad!" said Babs. "Anyway, it's my belief that he's far from being deaf. He— Oh, he's fallen! He'll be swept away! Pull again, girls!"

But in a second Mabs was reassuring them.

"No, he's all right, and he's turned back for the shore. He'll have to wait for us."

Eulalie laughed gaily.

"And now he's all wet!" she chuckled. "It serves him right, and he'll have to wait for us, after all. It will be interesting—"

"He's not waiting!" Mabs broke in. "He's running across the beach, girls. Look, there he goes! Oh, my hat! I

believe he's going to try and climb the cliff!"

"What! That old man?" gasped Babs.

"He's climbing—and well, too!"

Again they rested on their oars. Amazing though the sight was, Mabs only spoke the truth. The blue-spectacled individual was clinging to the cliff face, and raising himself at a very respectable speed.

"Oh, this is funny—really funny!" Eulalie cried, her eyes dancing. "Now we are sure that he's a fraud! Rather than let us take him in our boat he is ready to do anything. Quickly! Let us row in and climb up after him!"

"There won't be a chance for that, I'm afraid," said Mabs. "He's half-way up already."

"We'll try!" Eulalie answered.

They took up their oars, and pulled with a will. Mabs, holding the tiller lines tensely, reported the man's progress.

"Difficult bit there. He's slipping, I think! No, he's all right now. There seems to be a path, and he's going up quite easily. Phew! He jumped then—three or four feet. Mighty risk to take at that height. He'll be at the top— Oh!"

Within a few feet of the top of the cliff the man blundered, slipped, then suddenly clutched at the cliff face with both hands. A piercing yell came to the girls.

"A moi! Au secours!"

With a few last pulls the girls sent their boats to the shore and grounded them. The Spanish girl leapt out and ran up the beach. She cried out in French:

"Hold on, old gentleman! We'll come up and save you, after all! Hold there and you'll be all right!"

The figure moved.

It swayed to one side, hesitated, then took a leap. The hands held. In another moment the man was drawing himself up again. Even as they paused, in greater astonishment than ever, they saw the man reach the cliff top and vanish from sight.

"Well, I'm bothered!" cried Babs. "He was only funking! As soon as he knew we were coming it must have given him a fresh fright, and he took the risk and got to the top."

"In my opinion, he was panicky all the time—simply didn't know what he was doing!" said Clara.

"Anyway, we will speak to him!" Eulalie exclaimed. "Let us climb the cliff as well, just to show him what girls can do."

They followed her for thirty or forty yards. Even Eulalie needed help to reach a ledge seven or eight feet from the ground. Once that was gained, however, they found a path that led in perfect safety to the height above. Eulalie led, and Babs and Mabs were close behind her.

In less than a minute they were on the cliff top. And there those who were leading were compelled to come to an involuntary pause.

No one was to be seen!

There was not a sign of the man who had been there two minutes previously!

Quickly they gazed round in every direction. They were in a wide and spreading field given over to pasture. There was no cover near them for anyone to choose as a hiding-place.

"He must be made of thin air!" said Clara, utterly mystified.

Eulalie stamped a dainty foot.

"Now I am angry—really angry!" she declared. "He has beaten us, after all. He is not the invalid he pretended to be,

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THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 164.

for he could not have got away without running."

"But he's gone," said Babs. "The only thing left is for us to get back to the boats. Don't you think so?"

At a more leisurely speed they descended to the beach again.

"It's very funny indeed," said Marjorie Hazeldene in a puzzled tone. "I can understand the man rushing into the water; he might not have heard us. But why did he take such a desperate risk in climbing the cliff? Surely he isn't afraid? He didn't mind hanging about close to us on the promenade."

"It's queer," nodded Babs. "That man could have let us pick him up, and he needn't have spoken at all unless he wished. We couldn't make him speak if he didn't want to, could we?"

"Let us get back in the boats," suggested Eulalie. "We may see him in Contreville again. I hope so, anyway."

They clambered into their boats and pushed off again. Dolly, trailing her hand in the water, saw something like a grey wisp of seaweed, and idly held it. She had retained it for several seconds before she gave a shriek as though stung and held her hand aloft.

"Girls! Look at this—just look at this!" she cried.

They gazed at her in amazement.

"What ever have you found?" Marjorie asked wonderingly.

"The reason why that man dare not stay and face us after plunging in the sea!" answered Dolly breathlessly. "Look at it! See what it is! It's his false beard!"

"Whew! So—so it is!" stammered Clara.

"And that's why he climbed the cliff!" said Dolly. "He's been disguised all the time. He knew that he'd be in a very tight corner if we caught him and found him undisguised. Now, who was it? Can anyone answer that?"

Evidence!

CONTREVILLE was gay and full of life when the tired girls beached their boats at last. The promenade was once again a fashionable parade. The band still played dreamy, haunting dance music, and strenuous lawn tennis was occupying the various hard courts.

"And what we've got to look for," said Freda Foote dryly, "is a wet and bedraggled little man who's been plunging in the sea and lost his beard. Wonder if we'll find him listening to the band?"

The girls chuckled. Whatever else happened, they did not expect to set eyes upon the blue-spectacled little invalid again.

"We may see Petro Mias again," said Eulalie thoughtfully.

Of all the attractions the soothing music of the band made the greatest appeal to them then. And so, at Peggy Preston's suggestion, they went inside the enclosure and took eleven seats—a goodly number, it is true.

They kept their eyes open, but said little. The deck-chairs were very comfortable, and they were in the mood to be soothed. A very pleasant three-quarters of an hour had passed when Eulalie rose and suggested that they should see about dinner.

None of them spoke as they left their seats. They reached the promenade and headed for home. Still that same unnatural silence reigned until suddenly Augusta Anstruther-Browne broke it.

"I may be imagining things," she said

abruptly; "in fact, I quite believe I am. But I've got the feeling that we've been under observation again!"

"By that woman?" said at least six voices at the same time.

And then they looked at each other and laughed.

"We all had the same reason for being silent, anyway!" said Babs. "I suppose, Augusta, you mean the woman who sat behind us?"

"Yes. She followed us in, I know," Augusta replied. "And, if you remember, she left just after us. But she's dropped behind now."

"I saw her," said Eulalie. "I wasn't going to speak unless you saw her as well. I think she was Spanish."

"She looked it," Babs agreed. "But surely it was only a coincidence, girls? I mean, many people are going home to dress for dinner now."

dropped any of them overboard from one of your boats?" He started to count them, with a humorous twinkle in his eye. "Eight, nine, ten—yes, they are all here again! Well done, Eulalie! You must have been very cautious!"

It was impossible to feel anything but at ease with the finely-built, genial Spaniard, and the girls laughed as heartily as Eulalie.

"You are in early this evening," the Don went on. "I am very glad, because I have been hoping that I might have the opportunity of a little chat with you. If it is quite convenient, just for a few minutes—"

"Certainly, sir!" Babs responded readily. "We're quite at your service."

"Then perhaps you will step into my little study?"

The girls all felt a returning seriousness as they followed their host into the



AN AMAZING FIND! Babs gave a low, incredulous cry as she gathered up the scraps of paper. "Our photographs!" she gasped. "Here's one of Dolly and Flap, and Phyllis—and Peggy!"

"We'll hope it was," Clara replied. "Hang it all, if she was shadowing us as well, we may as well conclude that the whole giddy town has gone mad. First Petro, then blue-spectacles, and now a woman. Whew! How cheery! We'll never get to the end of them."

"I don't think we'll worry, anyway," said Eulalie. "Oh, look! The blind is drawn at the side room. That must mean that daddy is at home to-night. That's splendid!"

She hurried on, possessed only by one thought, and the Cliff House girls hurried as well.

They had met Don Vinciente da Silva on their first night in Contreville, and had found him a very charming host, who spoke good English, and was as pleased as his wife to welcome them.

This evening, as they hurried after Eulalie, they found him waiting to greet them in the reception-hall.

"My little Eulalie, you are still safe and sound?" he chaffed his daughter, as she hugged him in her impulsive way. "And the senoritas—you have not

tastefully-furnished room that he indicated. The banter had gone from his voice, and there was a seriousness—almost a heaviness—that did not deceive them.

Those who were watching saw that he closed the door with more than usual care, and the smile that preceded his first words was not quite as carefree as it seemed.

"I wish to speak a few words to you about a certain map," said Don da Silva. "In this matter, as you deserve, you are completely in my confidence. By a mistake—which proved a fortunate one—it was sent to you in England by my wife. You girls protected it courageously, and brought it to me here."

He paused, and his voice was a shade lower as he went on:

"That map—well, you know what it is about. It shows the hiding-place of some rare old ivory carvings that it is my duty to find and hand to the Government of my country. As you know, there are others who would seek

to steal these carvings if they could only find them. Two of these rascals were Monsieur and Madame Conspare, but I do not think that we need to fear them again."

He paused for a second time.

"Until to-day I was easy in my mind," Don da Silva resumed. "Even now I do not know that I have cause for worry. But I have received certain information, and it leads me to speak to you now. You have all seen the map. You all know that, in a short time, we are going to Spain by a certain route. Well, there may be open ears in Contreville that should not hear anything about us."

And with that he left them.

Babs glanced at Eulalie da Silva.

She was so startled by what she saw that her gaze remained on the Spanish girl's face.

Eulalie's whole bearing was tense. The colour was slowly filling her olive cheeks with a dark flush. And her eyes—only once had Babs seen that flash in her eyes, and that was when she had fought with the treacherous Carlota Vilarta in the bungalow.

What did it mean?

"There! At the window! Someone is opening it!" Eulalie cried out.

It was so sudden that even Babs jumped with surprise.

Eulalie herself, in the fraction of a second, sprang forward and rushed at the window. Her fingers were at it in a moment, and she pressed with all her strength. But it did not move.

She turned on them with glittering eyes.

"It is secured—outside! But there was someone there; I have been watching that window. They must still be in the garden. We will find them!"

She was across the room again, and had torn open the door. Even though Babs & Co. were alert by now she out-paced them. Leading by several yards, she tore along the corridor to the back of the house.

"I can hear them; they are still there!" came her ringing cry. "This time we'll make no mistake! Not this time!"

The crowd of them, headed by Babs and Clara, rushed pell-mell into the garden.

"Stop! Come back!" Eulalie was shouting ahead.

It was a lovely garden. At that moment, however, the thick bushes that obscured everything lost much of their charm. Eulalie could not be followed as she raced ahead. They heard bushes crash, and thought she must be holding someone. Then she cried again, and again it was a cry for someone to stop.

They scattered through the garden, all of them tense and alert for anything, but seeing nothing.

Following Eulalie's voice, however, they reached her at last. She was perched on the low stone wall at the end of the garden, gazing along a tree-lined, winding alley.

Strangely enough, she did not appear to be half as angry as Babs had expected.

"Eulalie, you saw the person, whoever it was?" Babs exclaimed.

Eulalie sat there and shook her head.

"No. I was just too slow, Babs. But I know there was someone outside the window, and I know who it was!"

"Who?" said the girls in one breath.

Eulalie pointed to the ground.

"There—see those scraps of paper in the grass?" she whispered. "I saw them just as daddy was coming up. Whoever jumped over the wall in such a hurry dropped them from his pocket. You'll guess what they are, and who had them!"

Babs had already stooped to gather the fragments up. She gave a low, incredulous cry as she gazed at them.

"More photographs—four?" she ejaculated.

"Photographs!" came a gasp from everyone.

Babs laid them on the palm of her hand while they crowded around her.

"Yes; just like that one I found in the library. Here's Dolly, and Flap, and Phyllis, and Peggy." She looked up at Eulalie with a question in her eyes.

"Petro Mias?"

"Petro Mias—without a doubt," said Eulalie. "He must have dropped them as he leapt. But do you know why he has been carrying your photographs about? I had an idea when daddy was talking, and I believe I am right. He is one of those who is in the town, trying to listen for anything we say amongst ourselves. Perhaps that is why he went to the library—hoping that they were looking up details of our journey to Spain."

"Good gracious! Why, of course!" Babs exclaimed. "And he's not the only one. That man with blue glasses, who must have been following our boats along the shore—"

"Yes, that's right!" interrupted Eulalie eagerly. "But just listen to this for a minute. Why has he obtained your photographs? It is because he and his friends must have received instructions from someone else to watch you about and listen. Petro did not know you until you came here, and did not want to follow the wrong girls."

They gazed at the inspired Spanish girl and nodded eagerly.

"And why is Petro asked to spy and overhear at all?" went on Eulalie. "It is because someone believes that we all know more of my daddy's plans than we do—at least, I think so. You remember that the map was sent to you in England? Well, those who are so interested in it may think that it was sent for you to study it. They may not think that you have come on an educational tour at all, but to help find the carvings."

"Of course," said Babs, nodding again. "And the master-mind—the one who is controlling Petro—my goodness!" Her eyes shone with excitement. "Perhaps he is the little man who wore blue glasses, and whom we had not seen until to-day!"

"Monsieur Conspare!" said Flap and Phyllis in the same breath.

A Biter "Bitten"!

MISS STEEL, on the following morning, found her "class" in a distinctly restless mood, for it needed effort and concentration to think about lessons when such mysterious doings were afoot. And the girls were very glad indeed when, satisfied at last, Miss Steel ended the day's work, and released them just when luncheon was ready.

"I wonder if Eulalie's in," Babs said, as they ran down the stairs. "She's jolly lucky to be able to get out just when she likes. I wonder what she's been doing all morning?"

They found Mrs. Da Silva—she preferred the "Mrs." from her British visitors—waiting downstairs, but there was no sign of the Spanish girl.

"I really cannot say what she has been doing," their hostess laughed. "That is the trouble with Eulalie. One never knows what she will be doing next. I really think I ought to send her to school, and then perhaps she would be kept out of mischief. If she does not come in soon we shall really have to start our luncheon without her."

Babs, Mabs, and Marjorie walked as far as the promenade in the hope of seeing their Spanish chum. Look everywhere though they would, however, there was no sign of her. And Eulalie, with her graceful figure and easy, swinging walk, was not difficult to "spot" at a distance, as a rule.

"I wonder if anything has gone wrong," said Marjorie uneasily. "We'll hope not," said Babs. "But we know what a girl Eulalie is for doing anything reckless," said Marjorie. "She may have got too excited and got involved in some scrape. Do you think we ought to go and look for her?"

"Perhaps she has forgotten the time, or gone farther than she intended," said Babs. "Anyway, I think we had better wait a little longer."

A gong sounded, and they went in to luncheon. The first course was served, but Eulalie did not appear. The girls felt an increasing worry as the minutes dragged on, and the second course rapidly disappeared. But the worry was needless.

Late, but cheerfully regardless of that, Eulalie suddenly came bounding into the room just as the plates were being collected.

"So sorry!" she said, as she dropped into her seat. "I must have been day-dreaming. Have you learnt plenty of clever things this morning, girls?" The girls smiled, and Miss Steel looked suitably embarrassed.

"But there—of course you have!" Eulalie went on. "And I am such a dunce myself that I can't think of questioning you. It's been beautiful out this morning! I do wish you'd been with me."

She looked at Babs, and Babs saw a twinkle in her eyes that seemed to go further, and say: "Yes, and I've discovered something, too!"

For that matter, they could all see that there was a restlessness about the Spanish girl that proved that her morning had been by no means idly spent.

She had no lack of an audience when the meal was at last over, and the girls went out together in the fresh air. "What have you been doing, Eulalie?" asked Babs breathlessly. "Have you discovered anything? Or seen something?"

"I've done everything I can think of this morning," Eulalie answered instantly. "First of all, I just walked about, hoping that someone would follow me. But I couldn't see anyone—not even Petro. As for that little man we think to be Conspare—I'm certain he wasn't about."

"Yes?" Babs prompted.

"Even though I went into the library it was no good," Eulalie went on. "I was the only one in there. I soon got tired of that, so I went to the photographers. Oh, I've had such fun! I've had at least six photographs taken. Mother will think I'm dreadfully vain when I tell her. But even then I couldn't find out anything."

"You were thinking about those photographs that Petro carried?" asked Peggy.

(Continued on page 45.)

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' PAPER

THE CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY



No. 34. (New Series.)

Week ending November 18th, 1922.

MY DEAR GIRLS,—
The party of Fourth Form girls who have gone from this school have met with some thrilling and very alarming experiences, about which I can only say "all's well that ends well." It is most comforting to me to know that they were safe and sound again when last they wrote.

In their new Spanish friend, Eulalie da Silva, they had a devoted and untiring helper who performed most signal services. In writing this, I do not in any way wish to belittle any of the gallantry she showed. But one other thing has struck me very forcibly; it is that our girls knew the value of keeping together.

There is a great deal in true comradeship, girls. It is the rule of nature and the rule of civilisation that people should be together. There is a great difference between following one leader like a crowd of sheep and keeping together and acting with courage and determination whatever happens. I do feel that my girls did this. If they had scattered there might have been very different results to tell.

You know, three or four can often be cheerful where one girl

This Week's Message :
KEEPING TOGETHER!

By Miss Penelope Primrose
(Headmistress of Cliff House School.)



alone would sink into the depths of despair. "Keeping together," facing life's little difficulties with a common purpose—these things will often help you to "worry through" the most trying circumstances. How much more pleasant is a happy, united family circle than a family that is divided against itself, with its members always warring.

When you are keeping together, you will not always have your own way. Sometimes you must bow cheerfully to the wish of the majority. You must have a leader whom you obey. But if she is a good leader, she will listen to your advice as willingly as she will give advice herself.

Jolly schools, happy companies of Girl Guides, efficient and go-ahead clubs, successful sports Teams—these are all examples of keeping together. It's a fine spirit to cultivate. It's splendid to be working in a common cause. Disaster only comes when that treacherous spy called Discord opens the door of the City of Happiness and lets the enemy fall upon you unawares.—Your sincere friend,

PENELOPE PRIMROSE.

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL TOPICS!

By BESSIE BUNTER (Editress pro temper.)

THE FOURTH FORM.

Dear Readers,—I know you will all be surprised and annoyed to think that there is no real Fourth Form at Cliff House at present. We have all been put in with the Upper Third again, and it is most unpleasant. Miss Bullivant is our mistress, and she keeps on telling us that she doesn't like such a big class, and then we all get lines to write.

You will also be sorry to hear of the slight I have received. When I was told that I had got to go with the Upper Third, I naturally considered that there had been some mistake, and I ought to be placed in the Fifth. I went and saw Miss Primrose about it, and she was really most off-handed, and actually said that I ought to be in the Third. Of course, that is what is called Discipline. I could not have my rights because there are some jealous girls who might say that it was favouritism if I was put in the Fifth.

Miss Bullivant does not take all lessons. For a few of them we are in charge of the monitresses. Shireen at Raschid is splendid; she called Marcia Loftus, a daughter of disobedience, and I laughed like anything. I wish Shireen took us oftener, because she ticks Marcia off beautifully.

I have got another disappointment for my dear readers. Up to the time of writing, I have not been made Form captain—in fact, no one has. I pointed out to Miss Bullivant most strongly that we ought to have an election for Form captain, or else the school would go to rack and ruin, but she said that it wasn't necessary, and that I'd get some lines if I didn't go to my place. I was so indignant that I simply refused to argue about the matter.

However, I know the girls are not going to take it lying down, and I'm sure there will be a bother before long, and if it takes place I may be able to give a special account of it in next week's number.

THE WEEKLY.

I know all my readers must be delighted with the changes I have made. As I am writing most of the contents myself, I can see that only the best stuff is published. You will probably be surprised to know that there has been a terrible lot of jealousy amongst the other girls, who don't seem to understand how hard I am having to work.

It gets so bad, in fact, that I have to lock the door of my den—Study No. 4—every evening. Angelica Jelly of the Fifth Form is threatening to shake me if I don't publish some of her stuff, and even Connie Jackson has been trying to make me print an article about monitresses' power. As for the kids in the Second and Third Forms, they are quite out of hand, and if it wasn't for the firm stand I have made, they would be running the paper now.

I am very glad to say that Katie Smith has helped me a lot. She is always bright and cheery when I am writing my copy, in fact, she actually laughs, but she has told me several times that she isn't laughing at what I'm writing. As a special honour I have allowed her to write a poem in this week's number.

It was at her special request that I wrote the article telling you how to do good drawings, and Katie said it was one of the cleverest things she had ever seen. I feel sure that she wasn't trying to pull my leg because she kept such a straight face.

Dear readers, there are an awful lot of difficulties in running a paper like this, and the printers have been an awful worry to me. They keep on altering all my spelling, and they have actually had the cheek to send two articles back and said they couldn't read them.

Katie has just told me that I ought to do my next Special Topic on the Cliff House typewriter, so I am going to, and this is a warning to the printer to print just as I



type it so that you can see that I can work a typewriter if I like.

THE GRUBB.

the grubBat cLiff howse] is nodt neerly as g**d as it Ort To bE, expeshully sine the ut hers have gone away 3 : the fact /"—of the mat er iss that we Are nobEing trea&ed as upper IIIrd fourm gerls who re u suposed to h ave smal**ler appeTytes than IIIrth Fourm* girls and Consikunt**ly MRS. PICKLESS is Sav*ing fo od at Our expense (&:?)

Of Course* you 2ill feet that this is a Ver ybad /staTe of thing-a for any Girl's "" in fact it is—95 59 £3 075 — I am sor—ey I was Pressing th* ronk k'y just then — not TO BE StOOD and I am imm*diatE (!y organ is]ing a depputaysshon about it.

(P.S. Note to Prynter. I am riting this to say that on seckend thorts I think you had better set my message about the Grubb in ordnery type.—B.B.)

(Miss Bunter. Sorry, but it's all set up now. I read your message too late. Will alter all the other for you as I come to it—Printer.)

THINGS ALL SCHOOLGIRLS SHOULD KNOW!

Eating fish is very good, because it makes your brains grow. Therefore, if you eat three bloters at breakfast-time instead of one you will be able to do much better work in class and be a credit to your school.

Do not let the moth get into a valuable fur if you have one. I have got a very fine fur, which Pauline Wilson, of the Sixth, told me is made from stuff called rabbetzkia. (I don't know why she laughed when she told me.) The fact remains that when I went to put it on the other day some great lumps fell out of it, and my fur is quite spoilt by the spiteful little insects.

Katie Smith tells me that you can always tell moths that eat fur, because they make a little squeaking noise while nibbling it, and I am going to listen for them next time.



COOKERY HINTS!

By Bessie Bunter.

OUR FAVOURITE RECIPES IN STUDY No. 4.

Babs' Favourite Cake Recipe.—Simplicity Cake.

Required.—2 ozs. margarine, $\frac{1}{4}$ ozs. castor sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ ozs. flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ ozs. cornflour, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoonful of baking-powder, and a little cold milk. Cream the margarine and sugar. Mix the flour, cornflour, and baking-powder together well, add them gradually to the margarine and sugar, add sufficient cold milk to mix the ingredients into a stiff dough. Beat well.

Drop the mixture in little portions, a few inches apart, on to a greased baking-sheet, and bake in a fairly hot oven for ten minutes.

Mabs' Favourite Sweet Recipe.—Lynton Butterscotch.

Required.—3 ozs. of brown sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of golden syrup, 2 ozs. of butter, a few drops of vanilla flavouring, 1 dessert-spoonful of vinegar, and a pinch of bicarbonate of soda.

Put the butter into a saucepan, and melt it over a gentle heat. Add all the other ingredients except the flavouring, and boil together until a little becomes brittle when dropped into a cup of cold water. Add the flavouring, stir a few times, pour the mixture into a greased flat tin, and stand in a cool place to harden.

My Own Favourite Recipe.—Ginger Rock.

Required.—8 ozs. of brown sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ gill of water, and $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of ground ginger.

Put the sugar and water into a saucepan, and bring them to the boil. Stir all the time, and carefully remove any scum that rises. Boil until a little of the syrup, when dropped into cold water will roll into a soft ball between two fingers. Stir in the ground ginger, and continue to stir until the mixture thickens.

Pour the mixture into a tin lined with greased paper, and when nearly set mark into bars.

HOW TO DRAW! By... BESSIE BUNTER.

I DARE say my dear readers have often wished they could draw, and Barbara has never published any tips on the subject. Being rather a dab at drawing myself, I am going to give you a few useful hints this week.

Of course, you must have a natural talent for drawing, otherwise you will never get on. But if you have this, you will soon get on once you have the idea of it.

SKETCH 1.

This is a rough sea, that I drew in about a minute, and anyone can see what it is as soon as they look at it. You see, it shows all the waves, and if I had a bit more time it would have been still more lifelike. After you have practised for a little while you will be able to draw a rough sea just like mine.

(P.S.—It would have been better, but my pen kept on sticking in the paper all the time when I was drawing the rough part.)

SKETCH 2.

I am giving you three faces, as these are most important in drawings; in fact, you will often want to be drawing faces.

Beautiful girls are nearly always plump, and they often wear glasses, because these always improve the plainest girl. The girl I have drawn has got what are called "tight curls," and you can also see that she has lovely eyelashes shown in drawing.

Ugly girls are thin, as a rule, and have bobbed hair. They often have thin and straight noses, not a nose (like mine, for instance) that is full of delicate curves. I have also drawn an old gentleman with a beard—this is a humorous drawing.

(P.S.—I am sorry I made a blot, but the pen stuck in the paper while I was drawing the beard.)

SKETCH 3.

Here you see four kinds of flowers, which you will often want to draw when you are doing country cottages. I just look at a flower and then I sit down and draw it at once. Some flowers have different leaves from others, but I find that you seldom have to worry about this, and you need not draw the leaves too carefully.

I have put the names under the flowers, so you will know how to draw these four flowers now.

SKETCH 4.

Here I have drawn a tree, which is done very easily, and I will let you into the secret. You just draw a few branches, and then you dab your pen about and make the leaves. You do not draw each one separately, although it looks as though I have done so in my drawing. For big leaves I just dip the blunt end of the pen in the ink-pot, and dab with that.

The other drawing shows grass, and I have put a rabbit in, as well. This is a little artists' trick, because people guess at once what they are, as you always find grass and rabbits together.

SKETCH 5.

This is a landscape scene, which you can soon copy; in fact, you can also paint it, too, if you like.

(P.S.—Since writing the above, some of the girls accuse me of copying all my sketches out of a book on the subject; but do they look like that? I know my readers will never believe me guilty of doing such a thing as that.)

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 184.

NEEDLEWORK NOTES!

By Bessie Bunter and Marjorie Hazeldene.



HOW TO MAKE A DAINY AND USEFUL WINTER SCARF.

SOME girls think that the very idea of me sewing is a joke. But they laugh too soon, for I can sew in several ways. Only this last summer I sowed some potatoes in the school allotment, and in class every needlework lesson, I sew a few small and many large stitches in funny little bits of stuff called "specimens."

Now that I've proved to you that I really am well up in my subject, I'll get on with this article, and tell you all about my new winter scarf.

Marjorie Hazeldene wrote the instructional part of this article before going away. Don't, please, think that I couldn't do it, but at the time I was engaged in learning Euclid.

How to Make the Winter Scarf.

Required.—A length of material one and a half yards long and eighteen inches wide, and some coloured embroidery silk.

First cut the edges of the material quite straight, and then, with the embroidery silk, blanket-stitch all round the scarf. Don't turn down a hem, unless the material is one likely to fray. Press the scarf lightly with a cool iron on the wrong side. Coloured wool can be used instead of silk for the blanket-stitching.

My scarf is nigger brown in colour, and the material has a pale blue stripe in it. The material was left over from my new winter costume. The blanket-stitching is done in pale blue, and when I wear my scarf with my costume, it looks as smart as sables. Babs is making herself a scarf in dark blue material, blanket-stitching it with lemon-coloured wool and embroidering little flowers in the corners.

Marjorie did the cutting out of my scarf, the blanket-stitching, and the pressing.

I did the rest.

HOW TO DRAW! By... BESSIE BUNTER.

I DARE say my dear readers have often wished they could draw, and Barbara has never published any tips on the subject. Being rather a dab at drawing myself, I am going to give you a few useful hints this week.

Of course, you must have a natural talent for drawing, otherwise you will never get on. But if you have this, you will soon get on once you have the idea of it.

SKETCH 1.

This is a rough sea, that I drew in about a minute, and anyone can see what it is as soon as they look at it. You see, it shows all the waves, and if I had a bit more time it would have been still more lifelike. After you have practised for a little while you will be able to draw a rough sea just like mine.

(P.S.—It would have been better, but my pen kept on sticking in the paper all the time when I was drawing the rough part.)

SKETCH 2.

I am giving you three faces, as these are most important in drawings; in fact, you will often want to be drawing faces.

Beautiful girls are nearly always plump, and they often wear glasses, because these always improve the plainest girl. The girl I have drawn has got what are called "tight curls," and you can also see that she has lovely eyelashes shown in drawing.

Ugly girls are thin, as a rule, and have bobbed hair. They often have thin and straight noses, not a nose (like mine, for instance) that is full of delicate curves. I have also drawn an old gentleman with a beard—this is a humorous drawing.

(P.S.—I am sorry I made a blot, but the pen stuck in the paper while I was drawing the beard.)

SKETCH 3.

Here you see four kinds of flowers, which you will often want to draw when you are doing country cottages. I just look at a flower and then I sit down and draw it at once. Some flowers have different leaves from others, but I find that you seldom have to worry about this, and you need not draw the leaves too carefully.

I have put the names under the flowers, so you will know how to draw these four flowers now.

SKETCH 4.

Here I have drawn a tree, which is done very easily, and I will let you into the secret. You just draw a few branches, and then you dab your pen about and make the leaves. You do not draw each one separately, although it looks as though I have done so in my drawing. For big leaves I just dip the blunt end of the pen in the ink-pot, and dab with that.

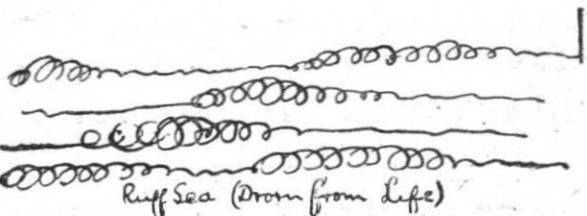
The other drawing shows grass, and I have put a rabbit in, as well. This is a little artists' trick, because people guess at once what they are, as you always find grass and rabbits together.

SKETCH 5.

This is a landscape scene, which you can soon copy; in fact, you can also paint it, too, if you like.

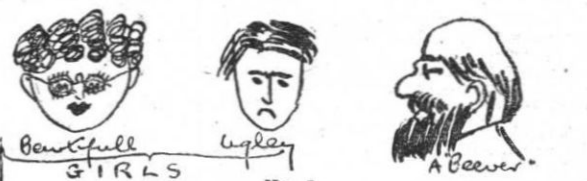
(P.S.—Since writing the above, some of the girls accuse me of copying all my sketches out of a book on the subject; but do they look like that? I know my readers will never believe me guilty of doing such a thing as that.)

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 184.



Ruff Sea (Drawn from Life)

No. 1.

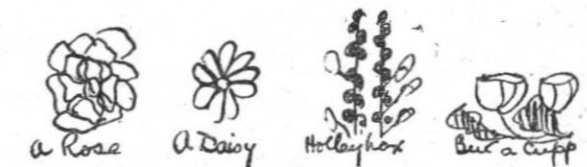


Beautiful GIRLS

Ugly

A Beaver

No. 2.



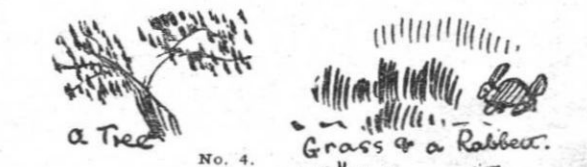
A Rose

A Daisy

Hollyhock

But a Cup

No. 3.



A Tree

Grass & a Rabbit.

No. 4.



A Landscape Seen Near Cliff House No. 5.

AN EVENTFUL WEEK!

By
Marcia Loftus.



YOU say that I am a stranger to these pages? Ah, indeed, I am, and so I intend to be while Babs and her precious priggish crowd have anything to do with running it. But now that they're away I've been able to get round Bessie with two or three packets of chocolates to let me have some space—and I want it for several reasons.

To tell you the truth, Bessie is suffering from the worst attack of swelled-head we have ever seen. Not that it is strange. Of all the mad and selfish things that dear Barbara Redfern has ever done, it is to give this paper into the keeping of Bessie Bunter. She is a horrid, fat, toadying little spy, as conceded as she can possibly be, and a born fibber.

Well, to come back to my title, it has been an eventful week, apart from the doings of swelled-headed Bessie (for whom, by the way, I've arranged a nice little apple-pie bed to-night). Being without Babs and her fawning cronies has been just delightful. Lady Hetty, Nancy, and I have never had such a good time before. There is no "bossing" in the dormitory, and we can put any girl in her place and give her a little "hairbrush torture" whenever she deserves it.

We all really wish that these precious Spaniards would take to dear Babs and her "sweet chums" and adopt them for life. What a different place Cliff House would be without them. What a different Fourth Form it would be without such goody-goodies in our midst.

Connie Jackson is very nice to us at present. As I have always said, she is a very good sort at heart, and only wants handling the right way. After all, when we are seniors, we shall probably expect a little help from the juniors. We occasionally run errands for Connie, and she is very grateful indeed.

Gwen Cook is proving herself a very queer girl—more priggish and stand-offish than I thought. We've offered her to join our little set, but she was most curt about it. Lucy Morgan and Bridget O'Toole have also been making their little voices heard, but, of course, we don't take much notice of them.

The girl who really wants putting in her place is Katie Smith. She has saved blundering Bessie from innumerable scrapes, and yet she is always with her when she's doing the "Weekly," and pulling her leg all the time. We can't make Katie out at all. If she likes Bessie, why should she urge her to write such piffing things for the "Weekly"? If she doesn't like her, why should she look after her? If it wasn't for Katie the "Weekly" would probably have been suppressed by now, or put into different hands.

Well, I'm coming to the end of my space, but I think I've said about all. Look out for most interesting developments in the Fourth—if we have anything to do with it.

(Neat.—I am very angry indeed to read Marsea's article, and I would not publish it if I could help it, but she has been so artful that the post is just going, and there is absolutely nothing else to fill the space. However, what she says is all falsehoods, especially about me, and as soon as I have posted this I am going along to give her a very severe torking-to!—Signed, Bessie Bunter.)

STORIES OF CLIFF HOUSE PETS!

No. 6.—Polly, the Parrot.

By BESSIE BUNTER.



(Note.—As Peggy has left out the most important pet of all, in spite of my protests, I am writing it myself.—B. B.)
(To Printer.—Please do not alter my spelling.—B. B.)

POLLEY, the parritt, was the pride of the jungel.

There was really no dourt about that. Some of the munkeys were conseted because they could swing about with their tails, and other beasts used to show off in various ways, but there wassent one of them that could talk like the humen beans except Polley.

It was not that Polley showed off at all. He torked becoss it was his nacheral gift, and not becoss he was at all conseted about it. But some of the uther animals and berls became so envious that they hatched a plot agensst poor Polley's life.

Poor Polley! Imagine him sitting in his tree, imitating all the other things he herd, and enjoying it in his innosent little way. First he would growl like a rhinossus, then he would grunt like a hippoppemus, then

pull all the fethers out of his tale at the least; or my name is not Crafty Willey!"

With that he went bounding up the tree. Stelthily Crafty Willey crept along the tree, intent on the poor, innosent parritt. Closser and closser to him he crept. He might have got right to the spot, but suddenly a twig snapped under his foot, and Polley started rownd.

"Oh, it is you!" he cried out.
Crafty Willey came nearer, his savvidge face showing quite well that he intended to bite his dedly rival.

Poor Polley's heart began to thump with allarm.

Here was a dreadful predicament. He was at the end of the bough, and he could not go further. The munkey was rushing rapidly at him. Whatever was he to do?

Quick as thort he remmembered something that he had quite forgotten in the exsitement of the moament. He had got his wings. He could fly. It gave him a fresh curidge.

"I am not afrade of you, you ugly little munkey!" cried out Polley at Crafty Willey. "You cannot hurt me! I will away!"

The munkey sprang—too late! Polley was off! With a swift and gracefull leap he sprang into the air and startid to flap his wings. Snarling with baffled rage the munkey hung on the tree and shook his fist.

Very angry, but quite baffeled, the munkey stayed on the bough. The uther animals were larling at him, for they couldnt help admiring the clever trick that Polley had played on the plotting munkey.

"I will have my rivvenge!" he snorted.
He did not see that Polley was coming back. But Polley was a plucky berd. He had come back to renew the combat, and he saw that the munkey was sitting with his back to him.

It was Polley's chance to give him one that he would remember.

Moving his wings so slowly that they did not make any noise, Polley crept nearer and nearer. He saw his chance at last, and he flew forward and gave Crafty Willey a bite right in the back of the neck.

"Oh!" cried the munkey.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed all the animals.
The munkey tried to turn, but Polley was ready for him. He bit him agane and agane, and for the benefit of those who don't know, I can assure you that parrits can bite very hard indeed when they want to.

Vantly the munkey tried to get at his adderserry, but Polley seemed to bear a charmed life. He gave the munkey the lessen he needed, and with cries of allarm he went running down the tree.

It was the last time that Crafty Willey dared to challenge the supremacy of Polley in the jungel. All the uther animals who had been plotting with him were so ashamed that they turned right agensst him, and he was compelled to fly to another country alltogether. The rest of them admitted that Polley was too clever for them, and left him alone in future.

Of course, this deals with the orly life of Polley, before my uncle capchered him and brot him to England for me. I have allredly described how this happened, and althow Polly was annoyed at the time, he was very glad afterwards, and is quite happy now, and will be ever afterwards.



he would make a noise like an elefant, and when the other creachers looked around in surprise, he would chuckle at them and tell them that it was just his little joaking way.

Poor Polley! Think of his innosent little spirit—and all the while, under the very tree where he was making his home the plotting animals were gathered, wondering how they could reek their rivvenge.

"I am no good for this job!" muttered the wezel.

"Nor I am—I have not the hart for it!" added the giraffe, banging his hed shamefully.

"But we must do something!" muttered the munkey, who was reely the leader of the uthers.

"Then you go and do it!" cried the uther animals. "And if you get rid of Polley we will make you our king!"

"I—I think—"

"You are afrade, that is what it is!" jeared the kangeroo.

"Oh, am I?" said the munkey truckulently.
"Then you watch me! Up I go, and I will

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK—THURSDAY.

Thursday, oh, Thursday! Now, is there a worse day?

The end of the week's drawing near.

They force us to speak in Latin and Greek—

They're hardly the tasks for a cheer!

Each mistress reveals the fact that she feels

In no mood for banter and chaff;

No time to be witty—we only can pity

The girl who on Thursday can laugh!

It's grim mathematics, equations (quadratics),

And problems are well in the van;

There'll be no forgetting the prep they are setting

To do just as soon as we can.

Our hobbies we leave, an' we spend Thursday even

In swotting, instead of at ease;

And nobody rises for "supper surprises"—

We know Thursday's bread and dry cheese!



REALLY CLUMSY!

An Ode to Dolly Jobling.

By KATIE SMITH.

Dear Dolly Jobling, you're fond of your tumble,
Stairs are, for you, just a "reason to stumble";
Crockery held in your fingers so rash
Very soon goes to the floor with a crash.
The ornament store in your room ne'er increases
(Ornaments *do* go so quickly to pieces!)
Have you reflected in times calm and cool
How many things you have broken at school?
Some little things I am sure you have missed;
Here you will see I am giving a list.

Once you were gated for playing the fool;
Sentenced to stay for a week in the school.
Feeling fed-up, and for mischief, no doubt,
You went through the gate and were then *breaking OUT*.

Once, when you had a long impot to do,
Straight to your room you went, feeling so blue.
Grimly determined, not once did you slack,
Soon 'twas half finished—you'd *broken ITS BACK!*

In the Fourth Form once, with just a small sub,
You started what was the Confection'ry Club;
That was original, brainy, and sound—
In fact, you'll admit it was *breaking FRESH GROUND*.

Once troubles came, and you felt quite bemused;
Arthur, your brother, was falsely accused.
When you discovered the circus' clown,
No one could blame you because you *broke DOWN*.

When Clara starts whistling in music-less strain,
You feel that upon her remarks you must rain!
Have you reflected and seen that the din
Is only increased when you keep *breaking IN?*

When the Third-Formers once raided our dorm,
You were the captive they took from the Form.
Feeling that such an affair was no use,
One mighty struggle—and then you *broke LOOSE*.

Then I remember, in manner so real,
You stood in the Form-room and "took off" Miss Steel.
All went quite well till the mistress' cough
Came from behind you—and then you *brokē OFF*.

When we were led by a monitress grim,
Just as a punishment, up to the Gym,
You—very recklessly—had your full say,
And then you finished by *breaking AWAY*.

Finally, Dolly, we always shall feel
One day for you has a special appeal.
How you must cheer when our last meal we sup
And in a few minutes we're all *breaking UP!*

"NOTE.—You must excuse the mistakes that Katie has made in this as she has really done her best, and she has pointed out to me that there are quite a lot of good jokes in it—in fact, I have larded to think that Dolly Jobling is even clumsier than I thort. I am sending a copy of it to her in FRANCE.

"BESSIE BUNTER."



FAMOUS AUNTS WHO VISIT CLIFF HOUSE!

No. 1.—Aunt Rebecca.

I AM glad to say that the most famous aunt who visits our school is my own Aunt Rebecca, and, in response to numerous inquiries I have pleasure in giving you a few details about her.

DESCRIPTION.—Miss Rebecca Rose Bunter. Height 5 ft. 6 ins. She is not at all plumply built like most of the Bunters, but this is because she was half-starved when she was at school. She has frequently told me that she never had half as much to eat as she required, which is a crying shame. She is of independent means, and lives in a little country cottage, and drives a pony and trap, but the pony is a very lazy animal, and will never go up a hill when I am in the trap. I always have to walk up, which is most exhausting, and I am hoping that Aunt Rebecca will buy a motor-car.

HOBBIES.—She is naturally gifted at sports, like all the Bunters, and is very strong. A little while ago she started to play golf, but the men were afraid that she was going to beat them, and accused her of hitting one of them with a ball, and she resigned indignantly.

EXCITING EXPERIENCES.—The most exciting one I can remember is when she helped father to hang up the chandelier at home, and he thought it was fixed but it wasn't.

She was also on a bicycle once when the brakes refused to act, and it ran straight down a hill and threw her into a pond, where there were some swans, and the beasts went for her, and she had to run as hard as she could.

She once kept bees at her cottage, but the stupid creatures came out, and swarmed just outside the front door, and poor aunt dare not go out the front, but had to climb out a side window, and she has not kept them since.

POPULARITY.—Aunt Rebecca is the most popular aunt who ever comes to Cliff House, and the girls will walk miles to see her, even though she is rather sharp with them at times (but they know that they deserve it).

The last time she came, Clara Trevlyn and quite eight or nine other girls walked right to the village to meet her. Unfortunately, they missed her, and did not see her at all, but it showed a very nice spirit. (Marcia Loftus was horrid enough to say that they missed her purposely; but Marcia would say a thing like that.)

Of course, Aunt Rebecca can be very outspoken—she is as fearless as all the Bunters. She has frequently reprimanded Clara for her slangy ways, and told Dolly Jobling that she should not be so clumsy. I like to see her telling them off, but she is occasionally irritable, and then she turns on me instead. She has slapped my arm more than once, and it brings up a great red mark that is very painful, because her hands are rather bony.

(Note.—I may deal with the aunts of all the other girls in a week or two, but at present I'm afraid that there won't be any room for them here.—Bessie Bunter.)

CARNIVALS. - - By Bessie Bunter.

I have just heard from the girls who are away that they are going to attend a Grand Carnival that is going to be held in Contreville, and I really don't know how to express my indignation that I have not been allowed to go with them. Carnivals are awfully jolly things. My father went to one once, and I hardly knew how to stop laughing when someone threw some confetti and it went all down father's neck, and he was wriggling about all the afternoon after that. If I had been with the others I am quite convinced that I should have been the life and soul of the whole event. When it comes to making other people feel jolly and really happy I am in my element, and I am giving some pictures on this page of how I should have been disguised if I had been with the others. They will now understand what a lot of fun they have missed.



Cliff House on the Riviera!

(Continued from page 40.)

Eulalie nodded.

"Yes. I thought that he might have been to one of the little photographers to have them printed or enlarged. I tried all I could, but I couldn't find out anything. And then, quite accidentally, I had some luck. That is what made me late for lunch. Who do you think I've been talking to? Donna Petro Mias!"

"Petro's wife?" asked the girls.

"Yes—oh, and it was such an accident!" said Eulalie excitedly. "There was a woman walking on the front, and her handbag dropped. It opened just as it fell. I was behind her, and just as I picked it up I saw there was a letter inside addressed to her by that name—but not addressed to Contreville at all. I shut the bag at once, ran after her, and gave it to her."

"And she suspected nothing?" Babs asked.

Eulalie laughed.

"Oh, that is the joke of it—she did not guess anything!" she exclaimed. "She started to talk to me and thank me, and she told me her name—not Donna Petro Mias at all! I listened to all she said and pretended to be friendly. Why? I will tell you. She is the woman who followed us at the band last night!"

"Never!" said the girls incredulously.

"Yes, yes—it's true!" said Eulalie.

"That was Mrs. Petro Mias. She doesn't know that we know it, of course. I pretended to think she was quite a stranger here, and it pleased her. I told her that perhaps we would see her at the band this afternoon!"

Babs smiled excitedly.

"My word! That's carrying the war into the enemy's territory with a vengeance! But we'll have to be careful."

Eulalie went on to explain her plans in a lower voice.

To say that they met with enthusiasm would be to put it mildly. Suggestion followed suggestion. And within ten minutes they were approaching the bandstand on the broad promenade, and Eulalie was giving an excited whisper:

"She's waiting, as I thought! Everything will go well."

And everything, for that matter, did—astonishingly well. For the women they had all seen on the previous evening rose as soon as she saw Eulalie and crossed to speak to her.

She was a sharp-faced woman, with small and piercing eyes. The smile that she gave them was forced and far from friendly. But the girls showed no sign of suspicion as Eulalie introduced them.

"From England—all English! How luffy!" said the stranger. "I am in England once—I luff it with all my heart. And this is the first time you see Contreville? It is the first time I see it, too. Perhaps you stay here for long while?"

Babs, who had expected that cunning question, was quite ready for it.

"Oh, no—not for long," she said, in a guileless tone. "We're going to see lots of other sights. We expect to get—"

Mabs nudged her violently, and Babs stopped abruptly, favouring the stranger with a foolish and apologetic smile.

"You do not like the beautiful Riviera, perhaps?" suggested the woman. "You care for a more natural country, is it? The crowds are too much here?"

"Well, we—we have something else on foot," said Babs, in the same unsuspecting tone. "We're going—ahem—on a rather interesting journey very soon." "No harm in saying that, Mabs!" she said, in a whisper, that must have reached the

stranger if she had sharp hearing.) "But let's sit down and listen to the waltz that the band is playing. It always makes me feel happy."

Doubtless the stranger would have contrived to join them, but they were not eager for that. The girls took seats together, and the Spanish woman was compelled to sit in front. She turned her chair askew, however, evidently ready for more conversation as soon as the opportunity occurred.

Babs, knowing so much already, resolved that she should not be disappointed.

In spite of her alleged attachment to that particular waltz, she started chattering at once. Anyone who knew Babs would have considered it a strange sign, but the Spanish woman, fortunately, did not know so much.

"It's such a pity that Eulalie, Flap, Phyllis, Mabs, and I have got to go back to the house in a few minutes!" she commented. "Fancy picking on the five of us! And it'll mean staying in all the afternoon, too!" She nudged Clara. "I say, Clara, do let me have a look at it!"

"I say, Babs, not so loud!" implored Clara.

Babs, out of the corner of her eye, saw that the Spanish woman's eyes were shining like diamonds.

It was "working" well!

Mabs, taking her cue at that moment, came to her chum's assistance.

"Clara, let me see it!" she whispered.

If You Are Fond of School Stories,
You'll Love

"THE LASS WHO WAS
NOBODY,"

Now Appearing in

THE SCHOOLGIRLS'
WEEKLY.

"Not here!" said Clara, with great firmness.

Clara could do that well.

"But I—I've got an idea, you know!" Mabs protested, her whisper quite audible above the lullaby tones of the band. "I've been thinking, and I believe that little ears—"

"Oh, hush!" said Clara, in quite an angry tone.

"But why?"

"You know what the Don said when he gave it to me!" said Clara.

"Yes. But still—Oh, all right!" said Mabs, shrugging her shoulders in a pettish manner. "You can keep it to yourself if you want to be greedy. I don't care, anyhow! And I know you won't jolly well solve it!"

"If I were you," said Babs, in a vindictive tone, "I should start off at once, so that you can jolly well spend the whole afternoon on it!"

Clara smiled pleasantly.

"We're going to stop here for another half-hour—until that clock over there says half-past two!" she said. "Aren't we, Augusta?"

"Oh, rather!" said Augusta laughingly. "That will make them feel wild!"

"Mean!" said Babs and Mabs together.

"Yes. You might just let us have a peep!" agreed Phyllis Howell.

Eulalie da Silva's face had gone so red that she looked on the point of exploding. But the Spanish woman, fortunately, could not see that. She had turned back, and was facing the orchestra, but they knew that not a note of music was being allowed to penetrate her wide-open ears.

"I believe she's taken it in!" said Mabs in a whisper that was not audible to the row in front of them.

"Hum!" said Babs affirmatively.

They continued talking in generalities for the rest of the waltz.

When it was over, several of the audience rose to go. The Cliff House girls were not altogether surprised to see their new Spanish "friend" suddenly jump to her feet.

"Dear, dear!" she exclaimed. "The telegram, of course! I had forgotten that they promised to send to me the telegram of my poor father's illness. I must hurry away at once. I will ask you a thousand pardons that I am so abrupt—"

Babs smiled affably.

"It's quite all right. Don't apologise to us," she said. "If you are expecting a wire, you must go, of course!"

"Yes. But perhaps I see you again," said the woman. "I luff your dear England so much. It is such pleasure to meet Englishers here. We see more of each other. Good-bye for now! Adios!"

They watched her hurry away and mingle with the others who were leaving the enclosure.

She disappeared from sight, and then at last the Cliff House girls had their chance.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With one accord the eleven girls lay back in their deck-chairs and shook and shook with merriment.

"How funny! Oh, how funny!" Eulalie sobbed. "She is really such a simpleton, she took it all in, every word!"

"Yes, thought we'd got the map with us, and were quarrelling about it!" chuckled Babs. "Oh dear! It was a scream! I don't think I've enjoyed myself so much for weeks!"

The Cafe Italien!

THE half-hour had passed.

Seeing the obvious success of their astute little plan, Babs, Mabs, Flap, Phyllis, and Eulalie—those who had said that they had to go back to the house—had wasted little time.

They had been back, as a matter of form, but only for a few moments.

From there Eulalie, who was a skilful guide where Contreville was concerned, had led them by devious routes to the eastern cliffs, which held the recognised path for those energetic enough to walk as far as the famous Swiss Hut.

Eulalie had embodied these cliffs in her plan for the very good reason that they were well-wooded. Bushes were scattered liberally about on every side, making it a charming walk, but also providing plenty of cover.

At a spot where there were outcropping rocks which caused the numerous paths to join, Babs & Co. had taken the deepest shelter they could find, and were only awaiting for "developments."

There was no laughter now, for they were watching with more than ordinary intentness.

"See anyone?" one would whisper cautiously, but always there was the same reply. "Nothing suspicious yet!"

"One of them may be hanging round, for all that," Babs said reassuringly. "After all, they'd be very foolish to show themselves any more than we're doing. And it's about time that Clara & Co. appeared."

"H'sh!" said Mabs. "Did you hear anything then?"

"Yes. It sounded like voices," said Babs. "I believe they're coming along

at last. Hope they don't overdo it and give the game away."

Which showed that more "play-acting" was to take place.

The sounds did not come nearer very quickly, but Clara and the other five girls were visible at last. They walked slowly, and they argued as they walked—not loudly, but very persistently.

Mabs grinned approval as she saw them.

"Topping!" was her comment. "I hope they understand that they are to stop here!" Eulalie murmured.

"Trust Clara for that!" said Babs easily. "She'll make no mistake!"

The six girls drew steadily nearer. Now it was possible to make out some of their conversation, especially Dolly Jobling's. Dolly could "let herself go" without appearing too unlike her ordinary self.

"Let's have a look at it now," she persisted. They could hear that clearly. "There's no sense in sticking to the paper like that!"

Clara appeared to waver.

"You know what we were told!" she said. "Someone may hear—"

"Oh, rubbish!" declared Dolly.

Clara gave in.

"All right! Have it your own way. But I won't be responsible if anything happens. Shall we sit down just here and have a look at it?"

"May as well!" said Dolly, with triumph in her tones.

In the most natural manner in the world the six Cliff House girls sat down on the soft, green turf, with a clump of imposing and obscuring bushes to their backs.

"Splendid!" breathed Babs exultantly. "They couldn't have done it better. And now they will— Oh, look, Babs— look!"

Mabs looked in the direction indicated—and thrilled.

Swiftly, and in a snake-like manner, a small man crept from his hiding place and wriggled swiftly across the grass to the bushes, behind which the six girls were sitting.

He wore a cap, pulled well down to his eyes. But even that did not conceal a cadaverous, wizened face that they had all seen before.

"Monsieur Conspare!" was the single thought in all their minds.

Conspare—he was here, as they had suspected. And their trap, that had

brought Conspare, which had been their wildest dream!

For a second Clara Trevlyn appeared in the open, and Babs held one hand from her cover. Monsieur Conspare could not see it, but Clara could. It was a signal to her, and she returned to the others.

"And now for it!" murmured Babs. Conspare had gained the bushes. He crept amongst them so swiftly and skillfully that he was once again hidden.

Even as he did so the voices of the six girls broke into conversation.

"Don't snatch, Dolly!" Clara cried. "Well, let me have a proper look!"

Dolly retorted.

"You'll tear it! Let me have it here, and I'll tell you what I think."

"Why should you?" demanded Dolly belligerently.

Hot words followed from Clara. Freda Foote chimed in, and so did Augusta Anstruther-Browne. It sounded like a real quarrel. Clara's way of ending it was really life-like.

"Now you sha'n't see the map!" she cried. "That's the second time you've snatched! I'm going to keep it until we get to the Swiss Hut."

"I won't go to the Hut!" Dolly cried. "I'll have that map!"

"Try and get it!" Clara jeered.

A scuffling sound came from behind the bushes.

"My hat, they're really wrestling!" breathed Mabs. "Oh, topping! And now—whew! Clara's got away! She's bolting!"

Clara was! She was away from the others, and showing them a clean pair of heels. Like mad she raced in the direction of Contreville, and five wrathful-looking girls appeared from behind the bush and gave full and indignant chase.

"A master-stroke!" said Phyllis exultantly.

It certainly was. Clara and the others fled precipitately, and were very soon out of sight. The five concealed girls had little longer to wait. With an audible exclamation of annoyance, Monsieur Conspare wriggled from the hiding-place he had chosen, and stood up.

He turned, and started to stamp away along the cliffs. Eulalie gurgled with laughter.

"Oh, how can anyone be angry with a man when he is so funny?" she asked weakly. "I could shriek at him! Oh, I do think it was fine to see him!"

Babs was laughing as well, but a serious expression returned to her face.

"So far, so good, Eulalie," she said. "Clara and the others have fulfilled their part of the bargain well. They've brought Conspare from his lair. Now that he is unsuspecting, we've got to do our part and see where he goes."

"Of course—of course, I was forgetting," Eulalie answered, rising at once. "Ah, there he is! He is not moving very quickly, after all. We shall have plenty of time to follow him."

The Cliff House girls, all keen guides, had imagined that in the art of tracking they might be able to give Eulalie a few points. They were disillusioned. Excitable and boisterous as she was, as a rule, she proved now that she could be just as cautious.

Monsieur Conspare was walking slowly and sulkily. For safety's sake the girls separated, knowing that cover for one would be found where there was not concealment for the whole party.

The fact that the rascal hardly troubled to look back at all aided them considerably. Only once did they have to dart to hiding-places when Monsieur stopped, and turned. But it was only

for the purpose of lighting a cigarette, and he was soon going on again.

They were nearing the end of the cliffs at last. Fortunately, Monsieur Conspare had swerved inland, towards the back of the town, but their real difficulties were going to start now.

"We must go very steadily," commented Eulalie. "It is better for us to scatter wide now. Then when Conspare gets to the town we can watch which way he goes."

They scattered as Eulalie suggested.

Hiding behind bushes they were able to watch the little man as he broke from cover at last, and crossed a stretch of waste-land that led to the houses of the poorer quarter of the town.

Between two squat and ugly buildings, where a narrow alley existed, he disappeared, and did not return.

"The Rue Victoire!" Eulalie whispered excitedly as she joined the watching girls again. "I know it well. It is narrow and twisty. We can follow him along it, and see where he goes."

"We'll take the chance, anyway," said Babs eagerly.

They hurried across the waste-land and plunged into the dingy atmosphere of the Rue Victoire.

There was no sign of Monsieur Conspare, but the alley was, as Eulalie had said, of tortuous design. One of them peeped around every corner before the whole party followed. They had no desire to overtake the little man and alarm him, if they could avoid it.

But it was to prove a longer chase than they had anticipated.

"Hsssh!" Eulalie whispered, when they were almost beginning to despair. "I see him at last! Stay here for the moment—he is only a little way ahead. Do not move—I think he was just going to look back. Perhaps he is near his home."

They waited tensely. Once more Eulalie looked stealthily round the corner and gave a quiver of joy.

"Quick! Follow me!" she whispered. "We will watch!"

She darted round the corner, and they followed her. Eulalie led them through the white-painted doorway of a dingy little cafe that faced on to a small, cobbled square.

"Here, we will sit at this table by the window!" said Eulalie. With a cautious gesture she indicated the opposite side of the square. "You see the Cafe Italien? Conspare hurried across and went in there! But do not look too much, here comes the garcon."

A waiter came to take their order.

"Cinq cafes, s'il vous plait," ordered Eulalie.

"Bien, mademoiselle," said the waiter; and went to fetch them.

"We must not let him suspect; he may be a friend of Conspare. You never can tell," said Eulalie. "But from here we can watch. I am positive that Conspare went into the Cafe Italien."

"I wish we could go in, too," said Babs.

"We could, but he might take fright," said Eulalie. "Oh, look! Who is that who comes out of the door?"

Four breathless voices answered: "Petro's wife—the woman we were talking to!"

Eulalie quivered with excitement.

"Yes, you are right. Then it must be some meeting-place. I think— Oh, look! Another!" She looked as though she wanted to cry out with astonishment. "Carlota Vilara, our old servant—the girl who pretended to be me at Dieppe!"

And it was true!

For a moment a girl stood in the doorway of the Cafe Italien, calling after



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the retreating figure of the Spanish woman. Donna Petro Mias retraced her steps, and the two spoke.

"Les cafes, mademoiselles," said the waiter.

They took their coffees and sipped them slowly, Babs starting an animated conversation on the joys of exploring Contreville, which seemed the most suitable way of explaining their presence in this rather dingy and out-of-the-way restaurant.

Receiving a substantial tip, the waiter went away smiling, and, apparently, quite unsuspecting.

"They have gone now," said Eulalie, taking another peep through the curtain. "But that was Carlota. She is there, and I expect Madame Conspare as well. Probably Petro visits them as well. It is their meeting-place—that is where they do all their plotting. Oh, we must do something now."

Reason fought with excitement in Barbara's brain.

"Now we know so much, Eulalie, don't you think we ought to tell your father?" she asked.

Eulalie sat with puckered brow, thinking deeply.

"I don't know," she said. "What could he do, Babs? If these people are alarmed they may fly again—even go to Spain, where they would be far more dangerous. But if we could find out their plans first— Oh, I have it! Look!"

She pointed excitedly to a poster that hung on the wall of the cafe.

"The Contreville Carnival," said Babs. "Yes, but what—"

"It is the excuse—just what I wanted!" said Eulalie eagerly. "There are many strangers in the town now, and they keep coming in, for in two days it is carnival time. The cafes, too—they get very excited. They will want entertainment for their visitors—it always happens." Her eyes were shining. "In the Cafe Italien they would be pleased to employ three Spanish singing girls if they did not ask much salary."

"Three—three singing girls?" gasped the others. "But—but—"

"Don't you see? Three of us could do it," said Eulalie tensely. "We could go in there and no one would suspect us at all. We could move about between our songs and watch everyone who came in. And if we did not find out about Conspare—"

"It's a wonderful idea!" said Babs, with shining eyes. "But is it possible, Eulalie? Do you think it could really be done?"

"I am sure!" said Eulalie. "Oh, yes, I am positive; and it would be so exciting." She was rising to her feet. "There is a side door here. We will leave by that and find the others at once!"

Conspare Finds Friends!

THREE "Spanish singing girls" were making their way in the direction of the Cafe Italien, situated in Place Victoire.

It was the following afternoon. Lessons during the morning had been one of the greatest trials they could imagine, for all the Cliff House girls knew that Eulalie was out "making arrangements."

How well her disguise had served her, however, was proved when she returned joyfully to tell them that she had secured an afternoon engagement for herself and her "two companions," and nothing remained but for them to appear in the cafe and play their part.

— But who should be her companions?

The lucky ones were already known—the choice had fallen on Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn. Mabs, of course, because of her known ability as an actress; Babs, for recommendation, was not only a very passable actress, but was used to working with Mabs at all times.

If eight other companions had been required, however, it would not have been difficult to find them!

As it was, the unlucky ones had to content themselves with making their way leisurely towards the cafe that faced the Cafe Italien, where they could "watch developments" and be ready in case anything went wrong.

But Eulalie, Babs, and Mabs did not fear that.

As far as practice could make them, they were word-perfect in their parts. Eulalie was to do most of the singing, while they twanged on simple guitars and crooned in harmony. As an alternative, there would be the cafe's piano. And, in case they did find themselves too heartily encored, they had even practised an old Spanish dance, at which Eulalie herself was an expert.



WOULD SHE PIERCE THE DISGUISE! A concealed door had opened and framed in the aperture was Madame Conspare. Her gaze was fixed on Barbara Redfern.

It was the sort of "show" that might well pass muster for an afternoon, but be an utter failure if attempted for any longer.

For disguise they wore dresses that Eulalie took from her own wardrobe. Mabs had made them up so effectively with the aid of stains and grease-paints that even their own chums hardly knew them. So they felt that there was little chance of anyone else guessing their identity.

"Along here; this will be best," Eulalie said, when they left the house by a back gate and hurried along the tree-lined lane. "We shall not go through the main part of the town. It would not matter much, but it is best not to be seen coming from this direction."

The dingy Place Victoire came in sight.

"My word! There at last!" murmured Mabs, and gave a little shiver. "Wonder how we shall get on!"

The very appearance of the Cafe Italien gave them a thrill of excitement not altogether unmixed with apprehension.

The difficulties of which they had made so light seemed greater now.

Could they sustain their parts as Spaniards for a whole afternoon when they hardly knew a word of the language?

Eulalie had said that she would do all the talking; but that might not be possible!

And what would be their position if they were unmasked?

"The proprietor waits for us!" Eulalie murmured. "Now the fun will really start. Are you ready?"

"Yes!" muttered Babs and Mabs.

They walked at a swinging pace into the cafe, and the proprietor gave them a nod and motioned to a small dais at the far side of the array of tables.

Babs glanced swiftly round. There were quite a number of visitors in the place. Were any of those they wanted to see present?

She could not recognise anyone for the moment.

The customers seemed to be quite ordinary callers.

The proprietor followed them, and spoke in rapid French, of which Babs and Mabs could only catch the drift.

"Start to play quickly!" he said. "Everyone is going into Poldeni's. Make plenty of noise—let them know that you are here! I will put a notice outside the door."

Babs took another look round. Her first impression had been right. Conspare was not to be seen.

"We'll make plenty of noise!" whispered Eulalie. "They shall know all right that we are here!"

The entertainment started.

Babs and Mabs may have felt inward qualms, but they showed no visible signs of nervousness. Smiling joyously, trying to catch the spirit of Eulalie, they entered into the fun of the thing with all their hearts.

"More noise!" said the proprietor as he passed. "They will not hear outside!"

So the Spanish singers obligingly made more noise—plenty of noise. They had no wish to be turned out again as useless. If the management required quantity instead of quality, they must supply it.

Eulalie not only sang, but danced as well. It was very energetic work, but she seemed to enjoy it. More patrons

came into the restaurant, and when the turn finished there was considerable applause.

Eulalie sat fanning herself, and chatted in low tones with her assistants.

"Phew! Good, isn't it?" she said. "I think we're going to get through, somehow. They don't want songs at all. They just want plenty of fun and noise! But I wonder, if we're going to be lucky?"

The proprietor, evidently a business man to his finger-tips, looked impatiently for more entertainment.

"May as well," said Eulalie, and she rose to sing again.

Babs strummed the few chords she had learnt to "vamp" on the guitar and harmonised as loudly as she could. Her eyes dwelt chiefly on the door. What made her look to one side she could never understand.

But suddenly she did. And as she looked her heart seemed to leap into her mouth.

A concealed door had opened. Framed in the aperture was the figure of a plump woman with set, determined features, and glittering eyes.

And those eyes were resting on Babs, as though she would read her through and through! Recognition was instant. The face was the face of Madame Conspare!

Babs looked away again. Making the greatest effort possible, she went on singing and playing, as though nothing had happened. But out of the corner of her eyes she saw that the figure had emerged into the open and was coming towards them.

Were they recognised?

She forced herself to go on. Eulalie was singing gaily, and Mabs was playing well. The figure came right to them—and passed!

They were safe! The disguise had served!

Madame Conspare walked past them and began to look round the cafe with the same caution that she had shown before appearing at all. And now Babs understood the look she had received. There was a mirror just behind her. Madame Conspare must have been looking at that!

Babs went on singing. She saw the woman give a slight motion with her hand and turn away. Scarcely a moment later the door opened and two figures came in. Her surprise was not so great now to see Monsieur Conspare accompanied by Petro Mias.

"Encore!" came the shout as Eulalie and her chums finished at last. "Tres jolie! Encore une fois!"

Madame Conspare seated herself at a table not half-a-dozen feet from the three girls, and the two men swiftly joined her, sitting with their backs to the door.

Two more figures came from the side. The first was a girl whom Babs was likely to know anywhere—Carlota Vilarta, the ex-servant. The other was the wife of Petro Mias, who had been tricked so effectively the previous afternoon.

They sat together, and as Eulalie gave her encore a grinning waiter brought them coffee. From the way they accepted it and pushed it to one side it was evident that they were here for a very different purpose.

The turn finished, and the three girls

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THE SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 184.

sat down, fanning themselves. One look was sufficient to convey the fact that they had all seen the new arrivals. To speak in English was impossible, when the others were so near.

Out of the corner of her eye Babs watched. She saw that Conspare was speaking with considerable heat. It was impossible to hear what he said, for he seemed to be speaking some dialect. On the pretext of looking through some music, Eulalie drew near enough to her companions to whisper:

"He says nothing—only grumbles at them. I think he is very angry, but without a plan. My daddy has been too clever for them, after all!"

Monsieur Conspare looked up, and Babs was suddenly aware that his eyes were resting upon them.

He turned for a moment to ask a short and sharp question of his wife. She shrugged her shoulders, and then nodded.

Monsieur Conspare rose from his seat, and in two strides came right to the spot where the three girls were sitting.

Touching Babs' shoulder to attract her attention, he looked down into her eyes and spoke in a language that she knew must be Spanish.

Spanish—and she did not know half-a-dozen words of the language!

Her heart throbbed painfully. She felt the blood coming to her cheeks in a flood. She must say something to keep up her part!

Monsieur Conspare had finished his question. Now he looked at Babs with eyes that glittered more brightly than ever. The British girl knew the peril of the moment, knew how close she was to being denounced as an impostor. And in the dire emergency inspiration came to her.

"Idcirco certis dimensum partibus orbem!" she gabbled.

Monsieur Conspare started, and gave her a sharp look. Then he repeated his question more slowly.

"Per duodena regit sol aureus astra!" gabbled Babs.

They were two lines of a Latin imposition that she had once had to learn. It was all she could think of—all she could do to save the situation. Would monsieur understand that their true meaning was agricultural?

Eulalie Da Silva laughed, waved her hands, and broke into fluent Spanish, while Babs continued to blink with owl-like gravity.

"Ah, une Portugaise?" said Monsieur Conspare, and actually smiled.

Eulalie gave a farther explanation, and waved her hands as though describing mountains.

"But we spik jost one leetle bit English," put in Mabel Lynn.

It was done perfectly. Mabs had never "taken off" a foreigner more successfully than she did at that moment.

"You all speak English?" said monsieur eagerly.

"Oh yes," answered Babs.

"As long as we 'ave one language we speak eet is good," declared the wizened little man. "You do not play for a few minutes? Eet is good. I 'ave wish to speak about leetle matter. You see me 'ere with my wife and my two daughters and the 'usband of one of my daughters."

He brought out the falsehood in a most convincing manner. "We are just 'ere to witness the sights, for we are vairy rich and we do much travelling."

"Vairy lucky to be so rich!" nodded Eulalie enthusiastically.

Monsieur Conspare scratched his chin.

"Per'aps—per'aps it cost you a lot of money—ah! No, I am no good at explain what I mean!" he said despairingly.

"I call my wife, and she speak as well. Louise!"

Madame Conspare came to his side and listened to his fluent French.

"My dear 'usband—e so vairy shy when he take a fancy to cleavair musical people and wish to 'elp them!" said Madame Conspare unblushingly. "E wish me to tell you 'e like to encourage your musical efforts—make your veest worth while."

"Eet is vairy kind," nodded Eulalie.

Babs and Mabs were almost swept off their feet. They had hoped to find out something about the plotting five, but they had never dreamed that any offer would be made to them.

There could be little doubt now, however, that some offer was forthcoming.

"It is so difficult for us to get a leetle service done when we are strangers 'ere," said monsieur tentatively.

Madame's eyes glowed with a hint of her real nature.

"But we are vairy grateful when people 'elp us," she hinted broadly.

"You are three cleavair girls. It would be easy for you, I am sure."

"What is it you want?" asked Eulalie eagerly.

Madame felt that the way was clear.

"There are some Breetish schoolgirls 'ere—they stop with a Spaniard, Don da Silva. You will often see them walk on the promenade. We would like you to get to know them before the carnival. When the carnival is on everyone grow vairy 'ospitable, as you know. You understand?"

"You would like to be introduce to these Breetish people?" said Eulalie.

Monsieur and madame beamed expansively.

"Mais oui—yes, indeed," said monsieur. "You will soon know us. We shall all wear the dresses of a family of harlequins and columbines at the carnival. It is so terrible lonely when we do not know anyone, but if you introduce us to these jolly veistors we then feel 'appy. See? Per'aps you say we are your father and mother; there is no 'arm in that! And then I am like a generous father to you all, for I am rich man, and the money—ah, 'e is nothing to me!"

"It is vairy kind; we do this easily!" said Eulalie.

Babs and Mabs beamed agreement.

"To-morrow, eh?" said monsieur, and he and his wife chuckled. "We do not forget. You will know us anywhere. Until then—adios!"

It was time for more singing. Eulalie rose and went through her turn with more spirit than ever. She danced and she capered. Her two companions saw her flashing eyes and understood her mood. She was mad with excitement.

It had hardly abated when the time came for their engagement to end at last. The proprietor grudgingly paid their small fee, and said they might come again on the morrow if they wished. Monsieur and Madame Conspare nodded in a very friendly manner. In another few moments they were out in the street and walking quickly along.

"What an adventure it's been!" breathed Babs.

Eulalie hugged her in wild excitement.

"Oh, it was lovely! You both played up so well!" she exclaimed. "Now that we have been through this together we must always be friends."

"I thought we were done when I started to speak in Spanish," confessed Babs, with a reminiscent grin.

"It was fine to say those words; it deceived him completely!" laughed Eulalie. "And Mabs—ah, you were just like a Portuguese speaking! We have taken them in; they have actually drawn

us into their plotting! Oh, now we'll be able to do something at last."

Babs turned to Eulalie. "But I am still a bit in the dark," she said. "Does it mean that they think they have found a way of getting into your father's house at last?"

Eulalie nodded quickly. "Yes, yes! Of course that is what it means," she said. "In carnival time everyone goes mad. Visitors go into every house. It is nothing to invite strangers to come with you, for nearly all of them are nice people. That is what they want—to get inside so that they can look and listen for themselves!"

"What a cunning plan!" said Babs. Eulalie led them swiftly through back streets, turning here and there, and frequently doubling on her tracks, so that there should be no possibility of anyone following to see where they really lived.

"It is a cunning plan!" she declared. "But it is not going to succeed. Now that we have found out so much it is time to tell my father. He will know what to do. We shall not be worried with Monsieur Conspare and his assistants much longer."

Light-hearted and gay, they went on, feeling that the whole adventure had been very skilfully carried out. And indeed it had. Only one tiny slip had been made if they had known. Only one—but it was a slip!

Yes, back in the Cafe Italien, underneath a pile of the tumbled music, rested a little cambric square—a dropped handkerchief. It bore tiny red initials in one corner—"E da S." It still lay where it had fallen; it was still undiscovered. But would it remain so?

Much was to hang on the answer to that question!

A Cunning Plan!

IT was carnival time in Contreville. In a single night the appearance of the town had been changed. Dozens of workmen had erected festooned posts, arches, bunting, and floral decorations.

The casino was a blaze of flags; its grounds were hung with Chinese lanterns that would glow after dark. At the side of the tennis-courts huge fireworks were being placed into position ready for that evening's celebrations.

And the people themselves, they, too, had taken on the festive air. Strangers in gay and unusual costumes filled the town. Decorated motor-cars that had, until now, been kept in their garages, began to take their first peep at the light, ready for the pageant that would be the principal feature of the afternoon.

And the Cliff House girls? Despairing of getting any attention from her excited pupils, Miss Steel had very wisely abandoned lessons for the day. First thing in the morning they were all out together with Eulalie for an early morning swim. Later, their numbers were reduced, but with them walked three figures in bright, flowing costumes—three "Spanish singing girls."

And as they walked along the promenade Eulalie da Silva, who, of course, was one of them, gave a little triumphant whisper.

"It is working well; it is going to be a great success!" she said. "A little while ago we passed Petro Mias, and now I see that his wife is watching for us as well. They both grinned. They are feeling very pleased that we have been able to 'get to know' you so soon!"

Conspare, his wife, and the girl Carlota Vilarta were not seen; but no one expected that they would appear—as themselves, at any rate. The three of them

were too well-known to risk any chance encounter with the Cliff House girls, whom they had deceived and treated so badly but a few days previously.

Removing their disguises, Eulalie, Babs, and Mabs spent the rest of the morning entirely as "themselves." They knew that they had carried the deception far enough. Three times they had appeared in the town as the singing girls, and Conspare now knew without a doubt that his intended dupes had done all he wanted them to do.

Don Vicente da Silva, their host, spoke to them when they came in for lunch.

"You have done very well indeed," he said. "I had never guessed that you girls knew so much. I have suspected the presence of my enemies in this town for several days, and police have been helping me, but how they got here even now is a mystery."

"Daddy, you have spoken to the police?" asked Eulalie quickly. "What

many things coming to light," he explained. "If they can be caught in this house this afternoon it will be so much the better. Then they can be taken away as simple burglars until it is time for me to bring another charge."

"We'll catch them all right!" said Eulalie excitedly. "We'll bring them in, and let them wander about the house just as they like. It will not be difficult to catch them, I am sure."

"I shall make it easy for them!" smiled Don da Silva. "Your mother and I are going to keep right out of the way. We have given the servants permission to attend the pageant. Only the detectives will be in the house, and they will pretend to be visitors themselves!"

"Splendid—oh, splendid!" cried Eulalie enthusiastically. "What a lovely afternoon it is going to be! And when they are caught—how easy our trip to Spain is going to be, after all!"

It was a festive lunch-time.

Even Miss Steel unbent for the day.



PREPARING FOR THE CARNIVAL! "I can't get my arm into this sleeve," mumbled Dolly Jobling. "I am sure the thing is—" "Back to front as usual!" laughed Augusta. "Trust you, Dolly, to be the last to be ready!"

are they going to do? What plans have you made?"

"Private detectives will be here this afternoon to watch in the house," answered the Spaniard. "They will be dressed, of course, as any other revellers. We are going to invite this good Monsieur Conspare in, and he will be given as much rope as he wants. There are several valuable things of which he would like to rob me besides that plan, which is now quite safe."

"Conspare has not been seen by the police?" Eulalie asked.

Her father shook his head.

"No. I have given information about him, of course, and they have been watching for him," he answered. "But he must have been in disguise ever since he has been here. This morning the Cafe Italien has been watched, but he has not been seen. It was only a meeting-place, and probably he has found a fresh one now. But things are best as they are."

He chuckled quietly.

"It would have been a very difficult matter to arrest Conspare for what he has already done; it would have meant

and was laughing and joking quite freely. There were shrieks of laughter when Eulalie offered her a false nose of large proportions, which she suggested that Miss Steel might care to wear during the afternoon.

"Ahem! Dear me! Oh, dear no!" Miss Steel stammered, looking quite concerned. "I—I will appear just as myself, thanks, Eulalie. I—I do not wish to go to that length, thanks!"

The Cliff House girls naturally held very different views.

Without exception they were going to "dress for the day." Eulalie had found quite a number of things for them to wear, and the rest of the things had been purchased that morning.

When the meal was over they went up to their rooms, and spent a most delightful half-hour in "trying-things on" and getting ready.

Clara's choice of a mask was a thing of fearful and truly alarming design. Clara took an immense pride in that mask. She capered about and made extraordinary noises.

"Wouldn't Bessie Bunter have just THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 184.

loved to be here to-day?" she said suddenly.

They all had to agree that Bessie would. They had thought of her quite a number of times that day. The fat girl would have been in her element at the carnival.

"But let us get ready," Eulalie said, a moment later. To Eulalie, Bessie was only a name. "I think it is a good thing that we are all wearing disguises, because then Monsieur Conspare will not notice that there are only eight of you with the three Spanish girls. And we must separate, too, to keep him unsuspecting."

"That's a good idea," said Babs. "Come on, girls! Do hurry up! He may be along at any moment now, waiting for us. Oh, Dolly, what is the trouble?"

"I—I can't get my arm into this sleeve any way!" Dolly mumbled. "I'm sure the thing—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Back to front, as usual!" laughed Augusta. "Dolly would go of do something that made her last, of course! Let me give you a hand!"

Peggy Preston and Marjorie Hazeldene, both dressed, and looking very sweet, assisted clumsy Dolly as well, and in the end they were all dressed and ready to go downstairs.

In the vestibule Don da Silva stood with two strangers, looking through a bunch of papers that he held in his hand. He turned and smiled as he saw the girls coming down.

"Eulalie, it is all right. We are quite safe now," he said. "The first two detectives are here. Two more will come later and make themselves known to me on the promenade. These two will remain in the house for the present. It is not expected that our friends will come along until the fun is at its height."

The two men, understanding the position, bowed to the girls.

One was tall, and the other was on the short side. Two men who looked less like detectives could not be imagined. Both wore fancy costumes and masks, and their features were almost unrecognisable.

"It is the way here at carnival time," Eulalie told the girls a moment later. "There are always thieves who come to the town to try and steal jewels. They disguise themselves, so the detectives have to be as clever and disguise themselves as well. You never know who anyone is—that is the fun!"

Outside the house a gaily ornamented car drove slowly past, filled with cheering occupants. One began to chase it, then another. Amidst cries of laughing excitement the occupants were pelted with flowers.

"Things are starting!" said Clara appreciatively. "We must get out and see this. Are we all ready?"

Everyone was ready. "The back way will be best," said Eulalie. "Come with me!"

They bade a temporary farewell to Mrs. da Silva and Miss Steel, who were going to depart in a few moments. In the highest possible spirits they went through the garden, and made their way to the leafy lane at the back.

"Here we will divide," said Eulalie. She indicated Babs and Mabs. "We three 'Spanish girls' will meet you all again on the esplanade. Then it will not look as though we have come out together."

"ELDORADO NELL"

Read about her adventures
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"SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY"

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 184.

"Don't be long!" said Clara.

Eulalie led the way with certainty. After a few turns she was in a road that led to the promenade. They walked together, and within a minute were mingling and jostling with the crowds that thronged everywhere.

Never before had Babs and Mabs seen anything quite to equal the excitement of the Riviera Carnival.

The organised procession was yet to come, but the revellers were wasting little time in waiting for it.

Confetti flew here, there, and everywhere. Some carried baskets filled with sweet-smelling petals of roses. They were hopeful souls who expected to keep them until the appropriate time. For the sight of a basket of petals was just the signal for some enterprising person to take a generous helping and scatter them over the crowds.

"This is a mad and merry affair!" laughed Babs, dodging a shower of confetti from some unseen hand.

"It will be when it really starts!" laughed Eulalie. Her eyes sparkled. "To you, perhaps, this is strange—not quite real. It is so different to a Spanish girl like myself. We love all this shouting, and all this excitement. I do not care for the crowds as a rule, but to-day—yes, it is all wonderful!"

Two bands were making frantic efforts to become audible, but no one seemed to wish to listen to the bands.

Along the crowded promenade they slowly made their way through the jostling throng. Mabs, with returning caution, gave a cry in the broken English that had been so successful in the Cafe Italien.

"Zere! I see Da Clara! Oh, see 'ow she t'row confetti!"

Babs and Eulalie burst out laughing as they saw the Cliff House girls.

Marjorie and Peggy were looking rather ruffled, but not Clara. Single-handed, she was engaging in one of the fiercest confetti battles possible. How Clara had obtained the confetti at all was a mystery. But not only was she holding her own—she was routing the others.

Laughing and excited, the two parties joined and walked together along the spacious promenade.

"They set on me first," Clara explained. "They were two French girls, and I wasn't going to take it lying down. Seen anything of the Harlequins and Columbines?"

"We've seen several, but not the Consquares, I'm afraid," Babs answered, in a low voice. "I think we'd better keep near to the house. We're more likely to see them there."

They moved along, and drew nearer to Don da Silva's house, where the crowds were smaller and not so boisterous.

Ten minutes passed, and lengthened into a quarter of an hour. Many people came and went, but the five who were expected did not make themselves known to the girls.

Eulalie made a suggestion.

"Supposing you girls stay here, and Babs, Mabs, and I go for a little walk round and see if we can see them?" she said. "We are more likely to succeed. But do not move from here."

"We won't go far," Clara promised for the others.

Eulalie and her two chums walked away. They were beginning to grow anxious. It was really such an excellent chance for laying the plotting rascals by the heels that they did not like to think that such an opportunity could possibly be missed.

"I expect the other detectives are in the house now," said Eulalie. "They will conceal themselves well. It is a pity that we have to wait now. Perhaps if we

walk in different directions we shall see something?"

It seemed a good idea. They parted, promising not to be long, and went different ways.

So interestedly was Babs looking about her that she did not realise at first whether her steps were taking her. Suddenly, however, she looked up and saw that she had walked straight towards their house. The front door was only a few yards' distant.

A thought leapt into her mind, and she wondered why it had not occurred to her before.

They were taking a big risk in leaving the house like this. True, there were detectives. But at least one plotter had been in the grounds—Petro Mias—without doubt. It was at least possible that the conspirators might change their plans and try to get in without being seen.

"I'll just have a glance to see that everything is all right!" Babs murmured.

It was typical of her sense of caution. There was no real need. She suspected nothing. It was just a precaution, in case.

Quickly, for she felt half ashamed of her fears, Babs hurried along beside the house, and came to the bottom of the garden. She touched the gate and found it open. In another moment she had passed through and closed it behind her.

After the excitement on the promenade the garden seemed very still. Swiftly Babs passed through the bushes. Her eyes were alert, her ears were strained to catch any sound out of the ordinary. Unnecessary caution, perhaps, but—

Her eyes opened wider. She shrank back against a bush, staring up at the house. The French windows were open. Had the house been left like that? Had the maids been so careless?

The indefinite fear in Barbara's mind began to grow definite.

She wondered what to do. Perhaps the detectives were merely living up to their part as guests, and making themselves at home. Anyway, they would know her again. The quickest way to get to the others now was to go through the house.

Slowly, very cautiously, she tiptoed to the steps that led up to the French doors.

The room was deserted. Everything was as she had seen it last. But, as she listened, she heard sounds—tinkling sounds that came from the upper part of the house. Once there was a bump, like the sound of a blow.

And someone was talking in a quick, low voice that she could not make out.

"My word, it's queer!" muttered Babs. "I don't like the sound of it at all. Surely the detectives can't have gone to sleep and let someone come in?"

After a momentary hesitation she crept on into the main part of the house.

No sounds on that floor came to her ears. She looked into every room, but saw no one. Again she hesitated. Then, unable to resist her curiosity, she commenced to climb the stairs.

The tinkling noises were louder, and seemed to come from a front room. The voice that was speaking was French, and—familiar. Babs could hardly tell what her confused thoughts were then.

She rounded the corner of the stairs and paused in astonishment and dismay. Ahead of her was a room with an open door—the room of Don da Silva himself. On the floor was a pile of scattered garments and tumbled furniture.

Even as she looked something else was thrown by an invisible hand to join the pile.

By whom?

Caution urged her to run and give a

warning to the others. Another feeling urged her to go on for another yard or two. Having come so far, she might surely see who it was?

She crept to a dark corner of the landing and waited. Steps came from Don da Silva's room, and two figures appeared in the light by the window.

Babs could have cried out with amazement to see Monsieur Conspare and Petro Mias!

Those two—the two for whom they had been waiting on the promenade!

A feeling of horror and revulsion possessed her. There had been a trick—an astounding piece of deception. She had seen these two before, not half an hour ago.

Wearing their masks they had been the two detectives!

For an instant Babs felt frozen to the spot. But it was only for the instant. Even as the figures moved back out of sight she collected her faculties again. The others must be warned instantly, while there was still time. The Don must be found.

She turned to creep back along the passage, and, as she did so, a dark figure loomed up and rushed at her.

"He—"

Something dark and smothering fell over her head before she could voice the cry. Strong hands gripped her and grappled with her.

She had been watched. There was someone else here as well!

Furious, filled with a mad desperation, Babs struggled. Was she to be caught like this? It was impossible! She had seen all—she knew the cunning plan at last. She could go back and warn the others if only she could get free.

"A moi! Vite!" cried out the voice of Madame Conspare.

Running steps came from the front room.

Babs made a last desperate effort for liberty. She even broke free. A second's respite could have enabled her to gain a lead. But, quick as light, Madame Conspare thrust out a foot.

Babs pitched forward and sprawled heavily, and, as she did so, the woman sprang on her again, and in a second she was a helpless prisoner. Then she was carried below and into the garden.

Desperately Babs hoped that even now someone would see her. No soul appeared in sight. Cheers, shouts, laughter came from the distance. Tantalising thought, the pageant was passing at last!

The pageant! Things could not have coincided better for Monsieur Conspare's plans. No one would be here in this quiet spot. For the next quarter of an hour, at least, the pageant would occupy everyone's attention.

They carried her into a sort of courtyard. Here a powerful-looking motor-car was purring softly. A girl sprang from it and grinned with triumph into Barbara's disguised face.

"Espagnol!" jeered Carlota Vilarta.

"Ha, ha! Espagnol!"

Monsieur Conspare gave her a quick, sharp order. She answered him instantly.

"Je resteraï ici en garde!" She would stay and keep guard!

Babs was bundled into the body of the car, and the door was slammed. Even then she hardly thought of the event as it was to affect herself. Her dismay was too great.

The car was broadside on to the gate. Babs, lying on the seat, could see nothing. She imagined that Carlota had gone to the gate side to keep guard, but a small sound suddenly caught her ear. It came from the other door—the door away and hidden from the gate.

It was repeated. Out of the corner of

her eye Babs saw that the door was slowly opening. Carlota, of course—Carlota come to taunt her and jeer at her again! The Spanish girl did not forget. She had—

"Babs, dear!" whispered a voice.

Babs started up, her heart pounding with excitement.

The girl who had come so softly and silently to her side was a friend after all—Eulalie Da Silva!

In Her Chum's Place!

THE Cliff House girls who waited for the pageant to come along were growing uneasy and almost anxious.

They had waited when their three disguised companions went away, expecting them back in not more than five minutes. Mabel Lynn returned within that time, and reported that she had seen nothing of the strangers they were expecting. But Barbara Redfern and Eulalie Da Silva did not return. The five minutes lengthened into ten. Peggy fidgeted, and Marjorie looked very anxious. Clara began to talk vaguely of searching.

"I think they'll come back," Dolly Jobling said, in a voice that tried to sound reassuring. "After all, they may have got cut off by crowds. Or they may even have met Conspare and the

"THE LASS WHO WAS NOBODY!"

A magnificent school story that is full of pathos and dramatic incidents now appearing in

"THE SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY."

others and taken them into the house—

"They wouldn't do that—it would give the game away!" said Phyllis Howell, shaking her head.

Mabel Lynn turned from the jostling crowds with a gesture of repugnance.

"We three ought to have kept together," she said. "It was Eulalie's suggestion that we should separate. I wish we hadn't. I've got a dreadfully uneasy feeling coming over me. Everyone is so excited that anything might happen. Let's have a scout round and see if we can see them."

"In two parties this time—not less!" said Clara Trevlyn firmly. "And we meet at this point again in five minutes' time."

Five minutes found them back. Each party looked at the other expectantly. Both were disappointed. Their faces fell.

"My word! This is serious!" said Augusta.

"Perhaps they—they've been back while we've been away," said Dolly; but there was a tremulous note in her voice. "They might—"

Her words were drowned in the roars of cheering that arose around them.

Rose petals and confetti filled the air. Squeakers were blown. Hats flew hither and thither. The excitement was tremendous.

"Let us search again, girls!" cried Mabel Lynn, turning from the dazzling scene.

"But where?" said Clara dully.

"Where have they gone?"

"We ought to look everywhere and get people to help us—"

"Help!" said Clara scornfully. "They've gone mad—absolutely! No one would even listen. My hat! What's that?"

"Only someone ringing a bell now!" said Augusta.

"No! I heard a sort of shriek!" Clara answered.

They all heard sounds that were discordant and alarmed—not the sounds they had been hearing.

"There's something happening!" Peggy Preston declared, tiptoeing to get a better view. "See, the decorated cars are drawing to one side. Hear those cries again? And someone is shouting—not with merriment! My word, there's a car coming this way, and—and driving furiously!"

They craned their necks to see better. Some of the laughter and cheering was dying down. Grotesque though it was, it seemed as though an icy wind had suddenly blown upon that part of the crowd.

"It's a decorated car coming this way—and there's a man standing up and shouting!" cried Augusta, whose tallness allowed her to have a better view. "He's ringing the bell, too, and—My! That was a narrow escape for the other car! Oh, look! The crowds are parting! The car's coming this way!"

"And the man with the bell!" Clara Trevlyn fairly shouted. "See who it is, girls? It's Don Da Silva!"

"The Don?" gasped the others.

They knew not why, but their hearts seemed to leap into their throats at the name.

"The crowds—they're running! It's a panic!" Marjorie Hazeldene said hoarsely.

The crowds were breaking. The procession had stopped. Swinging sharply from the road, the decorated car bore swiftly to the spot where the girls waited.

Don Da Silva shouted in a hoarse, appealing manner to the last few who lingered in the path of the car. Again he rang the bell. Two figures appeared at his side, but the girls saw Mrs. Da Silva and their own Miss Steel.

Sharply, with a jerk, the car drew into the kerbside. The Don sprang from it without a second's pause. Behind him ran four men who had been in the body of the car. The Cliff House girls ran to help the Donna and Miss Steel.

"Oh, whatever is it?—Whatever is the matter?" they cried in apprehensive chorus.

Miss Steel pointed to the men who followed the Don as he rushed for the front door of his house.

"Those five men are detectives—the real detectives," she said.

"Real?" the girls repeated, in amazement and horror. "Then the two—"

"Impostors!" snapped Miss Steel, as they started to run after the men. "The two who should have come—the Don discovered them in their room bound and helpless. That rascal Conspare did it, with assistance. He had stolen their papers and the disguise they were to wear. He has been in the house while we have been away!"

"Oh, I do hope we are in time!" Mrs. Da Silva broke in tremblingly. "But for my husband's discovery—"

Gracious! What is that?"

From somewhere not far distant came the roar of a powerful touring car.

"The door! Look, it's locked!" Freda Foote yelled. "They can't get in! Don Da Silva is breaking it open!"

The front door of the villa shook and groaned as the six men strove desperately to smash it in.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 184.

"Poor Babs and Eulalie!" Marjorie almost sobbed. "Oh, girls, they are involved in this—I am sure they are! Where are they now? What has happened to them?"

The front door opened with a crash, and the six men leapt inside.

"We must follow!" cried Clara. "Quickly! There may be time to do something!"

They tore through the vestibule into the palm-decked lounge beyond. French voices cried to each other on the upper floor.

"Oh, it is bad—as bad as we feared!" exclaimed Mrs. Da Silva. "They say my husband's room is ransacked and in disorder. But there is no one in the house now. They have escaped!"

Clara uttered a yell. "Quick, girls! I heard some sound from the back. There is still someone there. Let's get through."

She took half a dozen paces and stopped dead. The girls who came crowding after her pulled up in the same momentary horror. It was one figure they saw—the figure of a tottering girl.

A girl with torn, muddy clothing—a girl with a gag still tied to her mouth and her hands secured behind her back.

"Babs!" cried Clara; and, pulling herself together at last, ran to her.

In another instant they were there in a crowd. The gag was torn away; the bonds were untied. Supporting arms held the figure of disguised Babs, for she was trembling violently.

"Thank goodness we have found you!" Clara said fervently. "But Eulalie—where is she, Babs? Oh, tell us you know where she is!"

In a hard, choking voice Babs answered:

"Eulalie has gone. They have stolen her away! She has been carried off in the car!"

A voice—between a cry and a sob—broke in from the doorway:

"Not Eulalie! Oh, Babs, you don't mean that! They have not taken my Eulalie away! They cannot have done that!"

"It is true, Mrs. Da Silva," said Babs. "The car has just gone. Eulalie went; she took my place. I couldn't prevent her. I—I—"

Emotion choked her. The tears began to stream from her eyes. Mabs and Clara supported her as she reeled and almost fell.

Don da Silva ran into the room. His distraught, horrified wife framed soundless words with her trembling lips. Miss Steel, who was at her side, explained the truth.

"Yes, sir"—Babs spoke with a supreme effort—"it is true—only too true. Eulalie has gone. They are all in a car. It went away in that direction."

Don da Silva rose to the occasion.

"Pursuit!" he cried. "Our car still waits. We may yet be able to overtake them. We can but try. This way, officers!"

Babs struggled to follow.

"Oh, let us go, too!" she choked. "Eulalie must be rescued—she must—she must! She has done it all for my sake. They can't take her—they sha'n't! We'll catch them somehow!"

In a sort of dream they left the house at the heels of Don da Silva and his detective helpers.

An enormous crowd had collected outside the house. Not only were there people, but the pageant cars as well. They thronged the street. Eager, excited faces everywhere, and a babel of questioning.

Then a hush as all the figures appeared. And as they ran for the car, one of the detectives raised his voice and told, in few words, the truth.

Rascals had been at work. A girl—the daughter of Don da Silva—had been kidnapped!

And a cry arose—one loud, impulsive cry of anger and horror. Mingling with it came the renewed buzz of motor-car engines. Voices cried out to the girls in French and Italian and Spanish, and in good, hearty British, too.

"Jump in—in this car! We'll follow—we'll all follow!"

Hardly knowing what they did, the girls tumbled in anywhere. The crowd was rushing forward. The cars were moving as well. For one bewildering moment that the girls will never forget it seemed that the whole of gay, pageant-loving Contreville was sweeping bodily forward in the pursuit.

Yes, they were not the thoughtless, idle pleasure-seekers they had seemed a few minutes ago. Here were set faces and determined voices that cried to the drivers to go faster—ever faster. The street was littered with the scattered festoons. And not one car went, but a dozen—twenty—perhaps even more, in pursuit of Eulalie da Silva and her kidnappers!

In the second car sat Mrs. da Silva. She had mastered her first anxiety and grief. Outwardly, at least, she was composed, and when she leant across to speak to Babs her voice was kind and almost soft.

"You can tell me now, dear, how it happened?" she asked.

Babs sat upright, with tight lips and burning eyes.

"Mrs. da Silva, I was left there, too helpless to move, or stop Eulalie," she said. "I saw her get into the car. Within a few seconds they were all climbing in from the other side. Conspare drove. I know they suspected nothing, for the car started immediately, and drove away. I—I had been struggling, and my legs came free. I got into the house, and you found me." Her eyes swam with tears afresh. "Mrs. da Silva, Eulalie, your daughter, did it for me; she gave herself away so that I could escape! Oh, I can't bear to think of what I have caused, even now!"

The leading cars began to slacken speed. Cries of warning were shouted

back to those who followed. Peggy Preston rose in the car, looked ahead, and gave a cry of alarm.

"Oh, how dreadful!" she ejaculated. "Girls, the road is barred! There is a great steam-wagon and trailer right across and jammed against the brick-work! The driver is there, and explaining something—"

"Explaining the last act of cunning of Monsieur Conspare!" said Mrs. da Silva, in a hollow, toneless voice. "Oh, I do not need to hear the explanation! He has caused this stoppage of the main road; it prevents pursuit. None of us can follow. He—he has won, after all. He has stolen Eulalie from me!"

Don Vinciente da Silva came to the side of their car. His face was set. There was a quiver in his usually clear and manly voice.

"The chase has finished—for the time being," he said. "We cannot follow, except by the inland route. The detectives will immediately telegraph for the car to be stopped, but I doubt if they will be in time. For us there is only one thing—to Spain!"

"Then their search has been successful?" breathed his wife.

Don da Silva nodded.

"An important paper is missing, and it may give them the clue to the hiding-place of the ivory carvings," he said. "But, what is worse, Eulalie knows everything, and they may try to make her speak. I cannot bear to think of it! We shall return to the villa, pack, and start immediately for our Spanish home. It is the only thing."

"And our party, Don da Silva?" asked Miss Steel. "As this most unfortunate and callous action has happened, we may be hindering you—"

"I do not dare to ask you to come when hardships may be ahead," said Don da Silva. "Already my stupidity has involved you in this trouble and anxiety."

"But if we should like to come? If we feel that we can do nothing else?" Miss Steel asked.

"Nothing will give me greater pleasure than your coming to our Spanish home with us!" Don Silva answered impulsively.

Miss Steel smiled.

"Thank you, Don Silva! We accept. We could not think of deserting one we have learned to love so well, unless you wished it. No efforts of ours shall be spared if there is any chance that we can help to find poor Eulalie."

The girls were cheering. Babs, in her heart, wished to add her voice, but the attempt failed. She turned to one side, and buried her face in her handkerchief. Eulalie had gone instead of her! Where was Eulalie now? What was going to happen to her? What adventures and hardships would befall her for taking the place of Babs?

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

Next Thursday's issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND will contain:
"CLIFF HOUSE IN SPAIN!"

Another Magnificent long complete story of the girls of Cliff House on their continental tour,
 By HILDA RICHARDS; a further fascinating instalment of

"DOREEN, THE CIRCUS STAR!"

By JOAN INGLESANT, and

"THE SCHOOLGIRL QUEEN!"

By IDA MELBOURNE; and another superb number of

"THE SCHOOLGIRLS' PAPER!" Edited by BESSIE BUNTER.

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Your Editor's Corner.

MY DEAR READERS,—This week I must, as I have often done in the past, draw your attention to the excellent contents of our Companion Paper,

"THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN."

As you will see by the notice on this page, many grand new features are to commence in this week's issue, and the writers who have made themselves so famous and popular with our Companion Paper—Miss Stanton, Miss Home, and Miss Gordon—are at present excelling themselves. There is to be a fine competition, as simple as it is fascinating, and you all stand an equal chance of winning the handsome money prizes offered. And there are to be wonderful supplements presented that cannot fail to please every one of you. Don't fail to get these wonderful numbers of the "Schoolgirls' Own," the first of which is on sale next Tuesday.

Don't you agree with me that the Continental holiday tour of the Cliff House girls is proving as thrilling and altogether as enjoyable as ever one could possibly wish? The struggle between the Cliff House girls and the Conspires to get possession of the whole of that vitally important map, telling of the hiding-place of the valuable ivories, is giving a thrilling interest to the tour that the girls never dreamed about. In next Thursday's magnificent new, long, complete story of the girls of Cliff House on holiday, entitled:

"CLIFF HOUSE IN SPAIN!"

By Hilda Richards,

the chase is resumed. Eulalie, who has behaved so pluckily and cleverly all along, is in danger. But it is a danger from which Babs & Co. will spare no effort to rescue her. The ivories are discovered next week. But who discovers them? Who gains possession of them? The answers to these questions will make the most thrilling reading, and I must impress upon my readers not to miss this fascinating narrative of the famous chums of Cliff House in the romantic country of Spain.

Bessie Bunter will edit another exceedingly funny number of

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' PAPER,

which you will like every bit as much as you have done the two she has so successfully produced.

The end of this week's instalment of

"DOREEN, THE CIRCUS STAR!"

By Joan Inglesant,

leaves Doreen Harcourt and her friends of the circus in a close fix. But Doreen has been in worse predicaments than this during her short time in South America and we shall see how her pluck and skill and resource again rise to the occasion—and also of a wonderful discovery that is made in the underground city.

There is little more of

"THE SCHOOLGIRL QUEEN!"

By Ida Melbourne,

to be told, but what there is of the greatest importance. On it depends the vital issue: Will the Yarafeys succeed or fail in regaining the Kingdom of Bouralia? And I may safely say that the answering of this great question makes next Thursday's instalment the most thrilling of all that have gone before.

OUR NEXT GRAND SERIAL.

As I mentioned last week, the serial which is to succeed "The Schoolgirl Queen," is to have for its author that much-loved writer, Mildred Gordon. The title of the serial

"THE HOUSE OF MANY MYSTERIES."

must arouse your deepest interest at once. It deals with a young girl—a girl you will take to instantly—whose father is the caretaker of "The House of Many Mysteries," the mysterious happenings which take place in the old house. The story has a peculiar fascination, and is just the type which Miss Gordon can handle with power and skill. Don't miss the first instalment, which will be before you the Thursday after next, and do me a favour

by mentioning the SCHOOL FRIEND'S new serial to all your friends.

THE "SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY."
Price Twopence. Every Friday.

I trust that by this time all SCHOOL FRIEND readers have become regular readers of that splendid new paper of ours, the "Schoolgirls' Weekly." It is, as I said last week, a great paper that caters for every taste, and its many stories are penned by the most popular writers for schoolgirls of the day. Remember that, should you have missed the first numbers, your newsagent will readily obtain them for you.

Your Sincere Friend,

YOUR EDITOR

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21	20	25	20	27	6
24	20	25	20	27	7
26	20	25	20	27	8
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50	20	25	20	27	30
51	20	25	20	27	31
52	20	25	20	27	32
53	20	25	20	27	33
54	20	25	20	27	34
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56	20	25	20	27	36
57	20	25	20	27	37
58	20	25	20	27	38
59	20	25	20	27	39
60	20	25	20	27	40

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THE SCHOOLGIRL QUEEN!



By IDA MELBOURNE

(Who wrote that most popular story "Friendship Forbidden!")

To all who are fond of reading stirring, breathless adventure, quick-moving incident, and the doings of schoolgirls in a strange country, this story will make an instant appeal.—YOUR EDITOR.

DOLORES KALENZI—or Princess Dolores—
an attractive, brave-hearted Eastern girl,
the daughter of the King of Bouralia.
When at Limmershaw High School she
found great chums in the persons of

KITTY CRICHTON, PEARL HARDY & CO.,
the merry and sterling Fourth-Formers
with whom she had many thrilling adven-
tures before it was discovered that she
was an Eastern princess.

PRINCESS JOZINE, the niece of the
GRAND DUKE OF YARAFEY, who was
formerly King of Bouralia, but was
dethroned. Both are enemies of the
Kalenzis.

Dolores receives an urgent message from
her father—the King of Bouralia—telling her
that her presence is greatly needed in her
own country, and that she might bring
friends if permission were obtained. Every-
thing is arranged, and, with the headmistress
taking charge of the party, Dolores, Kitty,
Pearl & Co. set off to continue their schooling
in Bouralia.

From the outset the Yarafeys show that
they mean to be the enemies of Dolores.
The princess, however, does not fear them.
Whilst out riding the king, with Dolores
and her friends, is caught in a sandstorm,
and the king is separated from them. Later,
his horse returns riderless. The girls suspect
the Yarafeys of treachery, but can prove
nothing.

The king is presumed dead, and Dolores
is crowned Queen of Bouralia. Shortly after-
wards Princess Jozine and the Grand Duke
are arrested for treason, but Dolores can find
no trace of her father, the king, either in
the Yarafey's castle or elsewhere. She has
good reason to believe, however, that he is
free.

The mysterious circle enclosing a triangle
reappears, and an old beggar is arrested in
connection with it. It suddenly strikes the
Limmershaw girls that the man may be
Dolores' father disguised, and Monica
suddenly whips off his beard.

(Read on from here.)

An Attack in Force!

HE looked about him wildly, but
the dash he made for freedom
was quickly ended by the stal-
wart guardsmen.

"Got him!" said Jane Prestwich
triumphantly. "Well done, Monica!"
And, laughing, she turned to the school-
girl queen.

"Not your father," she murmured.
"But disguised, all the same."

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 134.

Angrily Dolores strode forward, facing
the prisoner.

"What is the meaning of this?" she
demanded. "Need an honest man
disguise?"

Conflicting thoughts ran through her
mind as she stared at him. She had
known that the beggar was not lame, but
nevertheless used crutches. Had he done
so to gain sympathy? And was his
beard and affectation of old age with the
same end in view.

Thus, while she gazed at him she said
nothing, hardly knowing how to punish
him for what was, to all appearances, his
only crime—malingering.

So she turned away, leaving him in
the charge of the guards, while she joined
her friends.

"I wonder," she said slowly, "is—is he
the same man that the guards arrested?"

And apparently Jane Prestwich shared
the idea.

"Why, of course!" she exclaimed.
"That's the explanation—and a pretty
simple one, too. The real beggar was
your father; they have captured him.
And now this fellow has assumed his
disguise, just to make you think that
your father or the old beggar is still
about."

"It—it must be," admitted Dolores
reluctantly; for she would have preferred
to know that her father was a
free man.

"Not a shred of doubt," said Jane
Prestwich emphatically, glancing at the
beggar. "In fact, everything points to
it. They are pretty cunning, whoever
they are. They didn't think that you
knew that the beggar was really your
father. But for the fact that we saw
the capture, it might easily have
succeeded."

"But the cheek of it!" ejaculated
Pearl Hardy. "Fancy arresting your
father under our very noses, and actually
handing us their visiting-card!"

Dolores turned back to the guards.
"Keep that man under the closest
scrutiny," she said. "Put him in the
political cell down in the dungeon."

The guards saluted, and vanished with
their prisoner.

Not until they had gone did Dolores
move; then she dropped into the nearest
chair, and, dry-eyed but pale with
anxiety, she stared at the carpet.

How brief, indeed, was triumph! Not
so long ago she had thought her troubles
ended. She had captured the enemy,

only to find now that she had more
enemies—enemies who were unknown to
her—whom she would have to fight in
the dark.

Most alarming of all, they had cap-
tured her father!

How was she to find him again?

"I don't know what to think," said
Dolores at last. "It's a complete puzzle.
I wish to goodness it were all over! I
rather fancy even algebra and French
wouldn't be half so bad as being Queen
of Bouralia."

"It is a worry," admitted Jane Prest-
wich. "But it's jolly interesting! I
wouldn't have missed it for the world.
It's an experience we might never have
again."

"Or want again!" Dolores suggested.
"I can't say that I'm particularly keen
on it."

And she moved restlessly from her
chair, to pace the length of the room,
while her chums watched her.

Suddenly, without any warning, the
double doors were flung open. The girls
turned to them, expecting to see the
guard.

What they saw caused them to utter
cries of amazement.

The doors closed as quickly as they had
opened, and lined up against them stood
four black-coated figures, hooded and
masked.

On the chest of each was a white
triangle, whitely encircled.

"What—what on earth—" Pearl
Hardy ejaculated.

The girls were momentarily bereft of
speech. The entrance had been as sudden
as it was amazing, and they looked un-
comprehendingly at the strange visitors.

"What do you want?" Dolores de-
manded. "Go at once, or I will have
you turned out by the guard!" Then she
added quickly and somewhat anxiously:
"Why did they let you in?"

None of the men spoke. But they
opened the door, and speech was
unnecessary.

Huddled in the doorway were the two
powerful guardsmen, both bound, both
gagged.

Dolores started forward.
"What—what do you want?" she asked
in a voice that sounded strangely unlike
her own. "If you do not go immediately
I will shout for help!"

As she spoke she was crossing the room
slowly, yet not obviously, she hoped; for
she wanted to reach the bell.

"Useless!" one of the men said briefly. "Quite useless! The wires of the bell have been cut, your Majesty!"

Jane Prestwich crossed to a window, catching the knob to force it open.

"Also useless!" the man said, with what seemed a malicious chuckle. "We have come to demand that your Majesty abdicate!"

"That I abdicate?" echoed Dolores. "Surely you cannot hope that I shall accede to that?" she asked, with a somewhat hollow laugh. "It is the height of absurdity!"

The man shrugged his shoulders lightly.

"Either that, or your capture, your Majesty. It will be announced that you have been returned to your school," he sneered. "The natives would be neither surprised nor displeased. In fact, they will be overjoyed."

Dolores clenched her hands in helplessness until her nails dug into her flesh.

"You cannot scare me," she said, doing her best to appear unafraid of them; she even tried to laugh, as though she were amused. "My guards surround the castle; everywhere I have loyal supporters. In another ten minutes you will find yourselves in the darkest dungeon I have to spare. I haven't a full house yet."

"Your Majesty is becoming hysterical," the speaker of the four cloaked men replied. "There is no way out. You can scream until you are hoarse, but your loyal natives will neither heed nor hear you!" he mocked. "Abdication is simple."

They came into the centre of the room, and while Pearl Hardy strode towards them almost menacingly Jane Prestwich, behind them, was tiptoeing to the door, which she had noticed they had not locked.

"The door is barred on the outside," said another of the men, without troubling to turn his head.

Dolores stamped her foot.

"How dare you!" she exclaimed. "Get out of this room instantly! Do you hear me?"

"Get out of this kingdom!" was the man's retort. "It is I who give orders, not you! In this kingdom there are thousands who, at a gesture from me, would rise in revolt. But I do not wish clashing of arms. You are bound to lose, then for the sake of Bouralia, avoid civil war. Your father abdicated like the coward he is."

"My father is not a coward!" Dolores retorted hotly, the colour surging to her face. "Why do you not fight in the open? It is you who are cowards. You dare not let us even see your faces—"

Ignoring her words, the man moved forward to the table, thrusting a closely-written sheet before her.

"In signing this," he said, "you will renounce all right to the throne."

"And who shall rule?" Dolores cried.

"That is for us to decide. Sign it; you are only wasting time! The less trouble you give us, the less trouble you will experience in leaving Bouralia. I will arrange that you leave this country, and have a comfortable passage to England—to your school, child—"

Dolores picked up the paper, and tore it across and across, scattering the shreds on the floor.

"That is my answer," she said.

"A great pity," the man observed. "I have a duplicate here. I will sign your name and transport you under escort. You will not be released from bondage until you are in England!"

In proof of his words, he picked up the pen, and signed the paper.

"The signature cannot be denied," he said. "There will be no one to deny it. I have here a farewell message that

you have written, a proclamation that will be heralded through the city, and through the outlying villages."

He handed it to Dolores, but she did not sign it, and, with another eloquent shrug he affixed the forged signature.

"You would not sign the paper and leave quietly," explained the leader of the four cloaked men. "Therefore you must leave as prisoners. You will kindly step into these sacks."

But the girls did not move. They stood together grimly, shoulder to shoulder.

"If you must capture me, please allow my friends to return quietly," Dolores urged angrily.

Jane Prestwich shook her head indignantly, as the others did when Dolores' words had been interpreted.

"No jolly fear!" exclaimed Pearl Hardy. "A fight to the finish. Smash that window, and yell; I'll do it while you ward them off!"

The six made a rush for the men, while Pearl, snatching up a chair, dashed it through the nearest window. Then she leaned out, calling as loudly as she could.

"Help! Help! Help!"

Before she could be heard by anyone, however, she was dragged back.

"Now, listen!" said the leader of the gang sharply. "Please come quietly. You will be placed upon the boat and sent to England."

Dolores did not reply, although her friends murmured angrily.

"We've got to go," she said. "At present I can see no way out. But one must escape—"

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in

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY.

"I will," said Monica eagerly. "I guess I can get away somehow—"

Dolores nodded eagerly.

"Scramble for it, girls!" she exclaimed. "Dodge them all over the room, then offer to go quietly. It's the only way. And you get out of sight somewhere, Monica."

As they spoke in English, the men did not understand a word. Doubtless they imagined that plans were being made for them to escape.

Without a second's warning, Dolores sprang forward, and the suddenness of her rush took the leader off his feet. Jane Prestwich picked up a chair and swung it about dangerously, while all of them shrieked and yelled at the tops of their voices.

Petrified for the moment, the men hesitated. The girls had powerful voices, and yelled lustily.

And Monica crept away from the melee.

By the door were long curtains, and she stood behind them. Then, with a quick movement, she tapped on the door panel.

As she expected, the door was opened, the outside man apparently imagining that the prisoners had been caught.

Naturally he was unguarded, and Monica, ducking under his arm, fled down the corridor.

She turned a corner, then drew up short. For at the end of that corridor was another figure. Escape seemed cut off.

Not a second, however, did she pause to think, but quickly and quietly opened the nearest door, springing into the room.

She opened the nearest window, and

despite the dizzy height from the ground, scrambled out. Monica Lawrence's hardy life on the plains of Arizona had made her "tough," wiry, and fearless.

Now she swung herself down the wall by means of a pipe that ran by the wall. Half-way down she paused against another window.

But the window would not open, and she crouched on the sill.

Below was the castle yard, completely deserted, and to attempt to climb further down seemed madness; quite apart from the fact that she would surely be seen from above.

Her decision to remain where she was proved wise.

Voices came from above, and as the voices sounded more clearly, she knew that someone was looking from the window.

She had left it open, and they had guessed her means of escape. But they could not see her; she was quite certain of that.

How long she remained there she did not know. She was giddy and dizzy with the cramped position. Once she dared to glance below, and saw what she knew was a small bush.

Perhaps the men had thought that she had fallen.

For several more moments she waited, until below in the castle yard she saw soldiers walking to and fro.

As they were almost below her, she whipped off her hat, and sent it hurtling down. Alarmed at first, they jumped aside, then examined it.

She saw their faces, small and featureless to all appearances, so great was the height; but their gestures told her that they were coming up.

Then she hammered on the shut window against which she was leaning. It seemed hours later that they entered the room, opened the window, and allowed her to tumble into the room.

"The queen!" she panted. "The queen! Where is she?"

The soldiers looked at one another in surprise. Although they did not know the language, they knew that word.

"Have you not heard the news?" they cried in Bouralian.

"The queen!" Monica echoed, dull fear gripping at her heart. "Where is she?"

"Why, the queen has abdicated, and she and her friends have left Bouralia."

"Abdicated!"

The word was impressed on her brain, the leader of the cloaked men had used it, and now she remembered it.

"Where are they—Bouralia?" she asked.

The soldiers frowned at one another, and then one nodded his head for her to follow him. She did so impatiently, fearfully.

To her amazement he led her to the flat roof. She gazed about her to the distant sea. And now, as he pointed, she saw a line of white smoke as a ship left the harbour. "The queen," said the soldier simply, in Bouralian. "She and her friends have left Bouralia."

And circumstances made an interpretation unnecessary.

Dolores Hangs On!

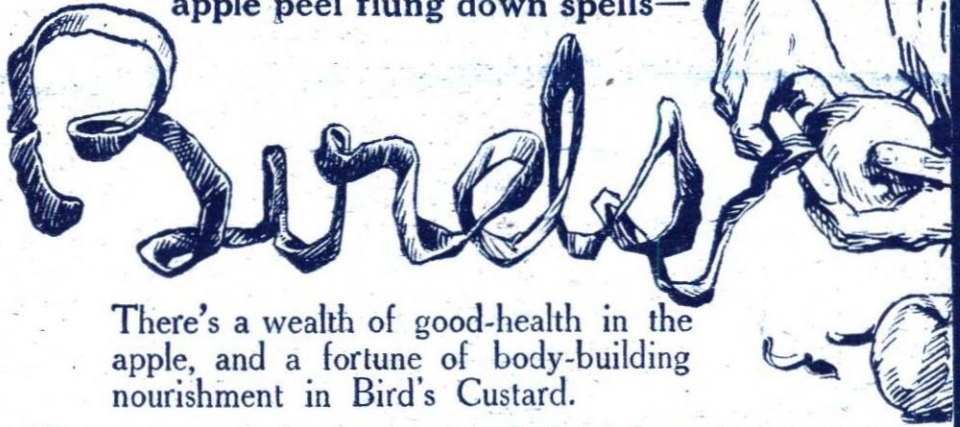
FOR quite a long time Monica Lawrence stood on the edge of the roof, staring rather dazedly at the steamer that was leaving behind it a trail of smoke.

And at every moment the steamer was farther and farther from the harbour, nearing the horizon. Then it would be gone from sight.

Monica drew a breath sharply, and looked from one impassive soldier to the

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other. They were quite motionless, and certainly could offer no help in such an emergency.

"Where are they taking the queen?" she asked, with a faint hope that the soldiers might understand.

But they did not, and she waved her arms, gesticulating somewhat wildly, pointing to the steamer, indicating its direction, and then raising her eyebrows, and shrugging her shoulder to show that she was making inquiry.

One of the soldiers understood at last, and he grimaced broadly.

"England," he replied, in his peculiar dialect, and the word scarcely sounded familiar.

Monica nodded, then returned down the flight of stairs that led to the floor below.

She rushed about, endeavouring to find Miss Bowden. But the mistress was nowhere to be seen. Monica clenched her hands fretfully.

Up and down the corridor she paced again, this time looking for Dolores's maid, Kala Fiuse. But Kala, too, was missing, and she wondered if perhaps Kala had gone with the queen.

The queen had gone. How many mourned her?

She felt that none did, and yet they were not all looking pleased. Now that Dolores had gone would the Princess Joziue still remain in prison?

For a moment she thought of going down to find the answer to that question, to look in the dungeons herself.

But there was only too patently a chance that she might have a dungeon as a resting-place. And she did not wish that.

She turned a corner, and halted. For the Princess Joziue was facing her.

"You!"

The princess stared blankly at the girl, and Monica knew what a shock it must be to her, since she imagined that Dolores and all her friends were even now steaming from the country.

"Yes, I am here," said Monica coolly, although she knew that the princess could not understand a word she said.

The princess laughed, and turned to her scowling uncle, who was close behind her; and he glared angrily at the girl.

Monica, remembering that she in the circumstances stood for the English-speaking race, returned the duke's look fearlessly.

"Have you not learnt to do homage to your queen when you see her?" the princess demanded.

But Monica only shrugged her shoulders, guessing from the other's tone the meaning of the remark.

The Grand Duke growled something in his niece's ear, and the princess smiled.

"Perhaps you will accept our hospitality," she murmured slowly, to give Monica a chance to translate the words, or to gather their meaning. "We have a nice dark room below—the one that I have occupied—"

She saw, however, that Monica was not looking at her. The girl was glancing over her shoulder, and the princess, frowning, stared, too.

"Kala Fiuse!" she said sharply, then beckoned to the girl, who, with head bowed, advanced.

Monica at that moment wished that she could speak the Bouralian language in order to have at least one friend in the country. For Kala would be a friend.

And as she looked at the girl thoughts ran through her mind—she was near to capture now, and must escape. A horse, and she would be free—free to rescue the others.

"Kala, look up!" said the Princess Joziue sharply. "I am the Queen of Bouralia now—now that the impostor, the child, has gone. You will do me homage—"

"Yes, Your Highness—"

"Highness? I am queen, I tell you! One other word of insult, and I will have you flung into goal. Do you pretend to be loyal to the impostor? You, of all the kingdom?"

"Of all the kingdom? All the kingdom is loyal to the queen, Your Highness—all except you; and you are a traitor—"

The Princess Joziue's face went purple with anger, and with amazement.

"You—you dare address me so!" she shouted.

She wheeled round, and yelled for the guard, who came forward somewhat sulkily. For Dolores had been a kinder ruler than the princess, being far less autocratic.

"Arrest that girl!" she said.

The guards strode forward, and then, Kala Fiuse jumped back.

With a sudden movement she flung off her head-dress and veil.

"Don't arrest me, guards," she said sweetly. "Arrest the princess! I am your queen!"

(The last powerful instalment of this great serial will appear next Thursday. You simply must not miss it!)