

No. 1 OF A DELIGHTFUL NEW PAPER.

THE

No. 1. Vol. 1.

Week Ending August 3rd, 1929.

SCHOOLGIRL

6 REAL PHOTOS **2^d**
of Famous Film Stars
FREE!



THESE
Two Photos
AND DAINTY
**STAND-UP
MOUNT**

FREE inside!



Gather Round Your Editor.

I am always pleased to hear from my readers. Address your letters to:
The Editor, THE SCHOOLGIRL, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street,
London, E.C.4. Enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish for a
reply by post, otherwise letters will be answered on this page.

MY DEAR READERS.—The examinations are over! The last question has been answered, and now we can go away for that splendid holiday to-morrow, awaiting the result of our efforts with calm confidence.

You've all experienced the feeling, haven't you? What a sigh of relief you give! No more lessons to worry about for a whole month!

By a happy coincidence No. 1 of THE SCHOOLGIRL will be in your hands just as the holiday season commences, and I feel just as you will be feeling, as I glance through the finished pages of this new schoolgirls' publication which, I am confident, is going to achieve an astounding popularity.

I say "astounding" but, really, when you come to examine the contents of No. 1 I don't think anyone will accuse me of boasting when I add that its popularity will be well-merited, too. No effort has been spared to get as near perfection as possible.

EVERY STORY A GEM!

What a magnificent array of stories it is! Every author a tried and proved favourite, and every story a gem of its kind. And then the illustrations—in my opinion, which I know you will share—the artists have excelled themselves.

It has not been easy to get together such a galaxy of talent, but I was determined that THE SCHOOLGIRL should be the kind of paper you would want to show to your friends, proud to be a reader yourself, and anxious to introduce them to all the good things it contains.

What, then, is to be the policy of this new paper? The keynote is to be found in the one word "romance!" The stories will be as varied as you could possibly wish to read. There will be stories of travel, stories of adventure, of circus life, of school, home life, of splendid holidays in foreign lands, and heaps of other things, and, in all of them, romance and mystery will play a big part.

The programme I have arranged for the future is a fascinating one and I assure you with the utmost confidence, that THE SCHOOLGIRL will never look back from the high standard set by No. 1.

MORE GRAND FREE GIFTS!

Aren't the free gifts in this issue delightful? The photo-cards of Laura la Plante and Dolores Costello are as near perfection as it was humanly possible to make them, and the dainty stand-up mount is just the thing for your own room. When all the six Free Gift cards are mounted on it I know you will vote the result "absolutely topping."

Next week's free gift card is a charming photo of Norma Shearer, known to all of you as a beautiful and talented star.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

As next Monday is
Bank Holiday, No. 2 of
THE SCHOOLGIRL
will be on sale next
Saturday, August 3rd.
Order it now.

Then, during the three subsequent weeks, I am presenting free to all my readers, superb photo-cards, to complete the set of six, of Clive Brook, Dolores del Rio, and Ronald Colman, in the order stated.

These photo-cards have been specially made with adhesive backs so that, without any fuss or bother, you can easily affix them to the mount. The best and most satisfactory way of doing this is as follows:—Moisten the back of the photo-card and carefully place it in position as shown on the mount, then cover it with a clean sheet of blotting paper (ordinary white paper will do), and place a fairly heavy book or other weight on top for a few minutes.

The finished effect is so charming that it is worth while taking a little trouble to get each card fixed in its correct position.

DON'T RISK DISAPPOINTMENT.

You will all readily understand that with such splendid stories and free gifts the demand for THE SCHOOLGIRL is bound to be

tremendous, and therefore you will be well advised to place a standing order for it with your newsgagent at once.

It would be most disappointing not to be able to complete your set of photo-cards because your newsgagent had sold out, wouldn't it? Well, there's no reason for a single reader to experience this if only you will follow my suggestion and order your copies now.

Speaking of ordering in advance brings me to a very important point. THE SCHOOLGIRL is on sale EVERY MONDAY, price twopenny, but as next Monday is August Bank Holiday, No. 2 will be on sale on Saturday of this week, that is, August 3rd. Subsequent issues will, of course, appear as usual every Monday.

In No. 2 then, on sale Saturday August 3rd, you will find further instalments of the FOUR grand serials which commence in this issue, and a charming long complete story, "In Crinoline and Ringlets," by Alice Stafford, which is sure to delight every girl who is interested in amateur theatricals; and what girl is not! Also, No. 2 will contain the Free Gift photo-card of Norma Shearer.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

I should be a very strange Editor if I didn't think THE SCHOOLGIRL a first-rate paper, and feel immensely proud of it, but now I am intensely keen to know your opinion of it.

Will you, when you have read it, write to me at the address given at the top of this page, and tell me exactly what you think of the new paper? Don't hesitate to say just what you feel regarding it. I shall welcome criticisms and suggestions equally with praise, and give any idea that is put forward my most careful consideration.

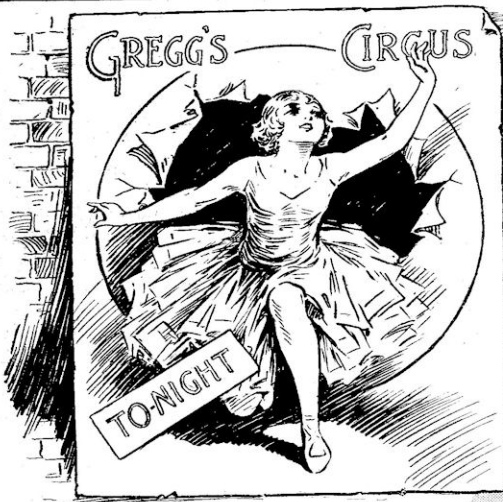
Now, there's just one request before I close, dear readers. If you like THE SCHOOLGIRL do me the favour of telling all your friends about it.

I want you to look upon me as a friend as well as an editor—that is why I am asking a favour in the very first number of our paper! In return, if you want my opinion or advice upon any little problem you have encountered do not hesitate to ask me, will you?

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Meet Mimi, the talented girl dancer, who was forbidden to perform in public!



This story has been
specially written for
you by
MURIEL HOLDEN

CINDERELLA of the CIRCUS



Success Could Never Be Hers!

THE throbbing of a drum and martial strains of a brass-band—these sounds, mingled with the hum of many voices and the deep-throated roaring of lions, filtered into the cosy caravan where two girls were busily engaged, one in getting ready for the performance soon to begin, the other in acting as her "dresser."

The former, a lovely, golden-haired girl of fifteen, every movement betraying unusual suppleness and grace, was seated before a mirror putting the finishing touches to her simple make-up—a make-up designed to accentuate her own naturally rose-like complexion and to show up the dainty "bow" of her lips. She uttered a happy laugh that contained more than a hint of excitement.

"Isn't it wonderful, Mimi!" she cried, her blue eyes sparkling vivaciously. "I never thought I'd get a chance like this. I've dreamed about it often and often, and now—now it's come true at last!" She glanced through the small caravan window which commanded a view of the entrance to the great circular marquee enclosing the circus ring. "Just look at the crowds!" she murmured. "Goodness! I do hope I shan't be dreadfully nervous!"

Her companion, as dark as she was

fair, smiled—a wistful, longing smile it would have seemed to an onlooker.

"You've no need to be nervous, Sylvia dear," she remarked. "You look lovely enough to win the hearts of any audience; and then your dancing—why, you must know how wonderful it is! You're bound to be a success."

Sylvia Carmenita turned, a smile on her lips revealing even, white teeth.

"I ought to be, with your good wishes to help me," she admitted, "and I'll do

The glitter of spangles and the sparkle of sequins in the colourful glare of the limelight, the whirl of the dance and the rapturous applause of the onlookers—you will read about them all in this fascinating story of Mimi and her loyal friend, Sylvia Carmenita of Gregg's Circus.

my best, you may be sure, now my big chance has really come. I simply must get over! There's one thing, Mimi, although I'm terribly nervous now, I know I shan't be once I'm in the ring. Somehow I forget everything then. I just don't know the audience is there until I stop dancing, and then"—she paused and laughed merrily—"then I hope to see hundreds of pairs of hands clapping. It's a wonderful moment that, Mimi, and more than repays you for all the hard work of rehearsals and all the disappointments—"

Mimi Clayton was gazing in fascinated silence at the beautiful girl dancer.

"It—it must be very wonderful," she murmured softly at last. "I—I can just imagine how thrilled you must be."

Something in her tones caused Sylvia to look at her keenly.

"Mimi, what exactly do you do in this circus?" she inquired. "You don't perform, I know, and yet—with your looks and figure—"

Mimi averted her eyes swiftly. She was trembling a little from some secret emotion she found hard to control.

"Oh, I—I don't do anything in particular," she answered in a muffled voice.

"I help in the canteen, and sometimes assist the wardrobe mistress, and—and, oh, all kinds of odd jobs."

She bit her lip suddenly, and Sylvia, sensing that

something was amiss, put a hand gently on her arm.

"You're quite happy here, aren't you?" she asked softly.

Mimi nodded.

"Why shouldn't I be?" she said, with an effort. "I love circus life, and Tony—my little brother—and I are devoted to one another. After all, I don't have to worry whether I please audiences or not, and I don't have the bother of rehearsals and inventing new acts."

Sylvia smiled.

"No, there's something in that," she agreed. "It is worrying at times. Still, it's a pity no one ever taught you to dance. It really is thrilling to perform before hundreds of people and to know they're all watching you and appreciating every movement. I wouldn't be anything else but a dancer for all the money in the world. Of course, I suppose you find it hard to understand how anyone can be so wrapped up in their work as all that, don't you? Why, Mimi, dear, what's the matter?"

For Mimi had suddenly turned away and was pressing her hands to her face, her shoulders heaving.

"Goodness, dear, what have I said to upset you?" Sylvia continued, in horror.

But before Mimi could utter a word of explanation, there came a sharp tap on the caravan door, and the voice of Tony Clayton, her ten-year-old brother, was heard outside.

"Ready, Sylvia?" he cried. "It's almost time for your first appearance."

Sylvia put her arms about Mimi.

"Cheer up, dear," she urged. "We'll have a talk about this later. I certainly never intended to say a word that would hurt you in any way. Forgive me."

Mimi looked at her through tear-wet eyes and forced a smile to her lips.

good-looking boy, though rather frail of build gave her a searching glance.

"Hallo! Been crying—eh?" he said, with boyish bluntness. "It's old Gregg, I'll bet! Has he been bullying you again? If only I was a bit older and bigger I'd go for him, I would!"

Tony had mounted the caravan steps, and Mimi put an arm fondly about his shoulder.

"You're a good little pal to me, Tony," she said, kissing his forehead. "But it isn't old Gregg this time. I'm just—well, disappointed, that's all."

"What about?" demanded Tony.

"Has he turned your idea down again?"

Mimi nodded.

"Yes; he absolutely refuses to let me



train, although I showed him what I knew already. He said I'd never be any use, and it would be a sheer waste of money."

Tony sniffed disgustedly.

"The awful old skinkint!" he exclaimed. "He's a hard 'un, Mimi. Why, if only he'd give you a chance you could—Ow!"

Tony broke off, with a gasp of pain, for strong fingers had suddenly clutched his left ear and were twinking it vigorously.

"Awful old skinkint, am I?" growled a deep, harsh voice. "So that's the way you talk about me behind my back, is it? Fine gratitude that is for all I've done for you and your sister, you cheeky little imp!"

Mimi gasped. Standing on the lower step was the guardian of her brother and herself, Martin Gregg, the manager and ringmaster of Gregg's Morning Circus and Menagerie. A powerfully built man of middle height, he had a short black moustache and piercing grey eyes that glittered now with anger. Clad in a scarlet coat, white breeches and black top-boots, and with a silk hat on his head, he made an imposing figure.

Once more he gave Tony's ear a painful twist, which drew a stifled exclamation from the boy; then, with a jerk, he pushed him from the caravan steps, and Tony, stumbling, fell heavily to the grass.

Instantly Mimi was at the caravan door, her breath coming quickly, her pale face flooded now with colour.

"You coward, Uncle Martin!" she cried. "Don't dare touch Tony again, or—"

Martin Gregg laughed mockingly.

"Or what?" he demanded menacingly. "I'll give him a taste of this whip if I have any more of his impudence! Both you and he have got far too much to say for yourselves. And what on earth are you doing here, Mimi? You've been snivelling again, I can see that. Get over to the canteen at once! That's your place once the show's started. Come on! No more idling about, or I'll make you both sorry for yourselves!"

Mimi met his eyes fearlessly.

"I haven't been idling, Uncle Martin!" she retorted spiritedly. "If you must know, I've been helping Sylvia Carmenita—"

The ringmaster flourished his whip angrily.

"You dare argue with me, girl!" he snapped. "Go to the canteen at once! You hear me? As for Sylvia Carmenita, you just keep away from her! I don't want her upset and bothered with your imaginary grievances! You're no good as a dancer, and never will be!"

Mimi winced at the harsh criticism, but she saw that further delay might only lead to fresh trouble for her brother as well as herself, so she left the caravan and, helping Tony to brush his dust-stained clothes and whispering a word of comfort to him, she walked quickly over to the tent which was used as a canteen and dining-hall for the circus performers and helpers.

En route, she had to pass the huge marquee where the performance was taking place. Unable to resist the impulse, she cautiously made her way to the annex where she could see through the looped velvet curtains into the ring itself.

The packed marquee, with its tier upon tier of seats and benches, scarcely one of which was unoccupied, was strangely quiet.

Save for the scarlet-coated band playing a dreamy waltz tune, all was still. And there, right in the very centre of the ring, Mimi could see the cause of that enraptured hush. Sylvia Carmenita was just concluding her turn. She wailed with bewildering rapidity; tripping feet, outflung arms and slender figure all moving in perfect time to the music. Like some dainty thing of gossamer she looked in her ballet dress, the sequins of which glittered in the yellow limelight.

And when at last the dance came to an end, Sylvia sank to the tan in a low curtsy, what thunderous applause arose! Again and again she bowed, and then, twisting first one way and then another, blew kisses to the delighted audience, who seemed as if they would never stop clapping.

There was a doubt that, as she had so ardently desired, Sylvia had got over. Her success was unmistakable.

From between the heavy curtains screening the annex Mimi watched her friend in fascinated admiration. How she, too, longed for a chance to make good as a dancer!

"I know you didn't, Sylvia," she whispered. "Don't take any notice of me. I'm just being silly. Good-bye—and good luck!"

Next moment Sylvia had hurried from the caravan and, with a cloak about her shoulders, was walking swiftly across the circus field towards the huge marquee, in the wake of Tony Clayton.

Left to her own devices, Mimi sank down on to a chair.

"If only Sylvia realised the truth—how her words hurt!" she whispered to herself. "She doesn't guess how I long to be—what she is! I'd give anything to have a chance like she's got; but, of course—"

A bitter note crept into her voice—"I'd be a dead failure. I couldn't ever dance like she does—now."

And, with a hopeless shrug of the shoulders, she got up and began putting the caravan to rights, gathering up Sylvia's discarded garments, collecting together the grease-paints and powder-boxes that lay scattered about on the little make-up table.

It was while she was engaged on this self-imposed task that she heard her brother's voice once more.

"Coming over, sis?" he was asking. "Show's started some time ago. There's a whopping big crowd to-night."

Quickly Mimi dried her eyes and opened the caravan door. Tony, a

Mimi, watching her closely, felt that she, too, wanted to applaud. Sylvia's dancing was superb!

An involuntary sigh escaped Mimi's lips. Nor for a moment did she begrudge Sylvia her well-won applause, but, oh! how she longed for a chance to shine like that.

"If only Uncle Martin hadn't forbidden me to go on with those lessons!" she murmured to herself. "The ballet master himself said I should make good. It's cruel—cruel to think I'm never to have a chance!"

Silently she slipped away and out of the vast marquee into the grounds.

Her head bowed, and, a strange mistiness before her eyes, she stumbled over the uneven ground to the canteen, a dull ache in her heart, resentment in every fibre of her being.

In the Limelight's Glare!

"ENCORE! Encore!" The applause and the shouts were actually growing in volume, as Sylvia, a cloak about her slim shoulders, stood with flushed face and shining eyes behind the heavy velvet curtain.

Martin Gregg, a broad smile on his face, strode up to her. "Wonderful, my dear!" he said enthusiastically. "You must go on again. Do your acrobatic dance this time. They'll never be satisfied till you do. You've scored a wonderful success. I'll announce you."

And without giving Sylvia a chance to reply, the ringmaster strode between the curtains and flourished his whip in one hand and his silk hat in the other. The band, recognising the signal, sounded a sustained chord which produced some measure of silence among the packed audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he cried in stentorian tones. "Miss Carmentita has come to thank you for the kind way you have received her. She will appear again immediately in a wonderful acrobatic dance."

A fresh burst of applause arose, and the ringmaster signalled to the band, which at once struck up. Next moment Martin Gregg had walked to the curtain and ushered in Sylvia, who, having discarded her outer ballet dress, with its frounces, was now clad in a garment that resembled an old-time doublet and a corsage that sparkled with dozens of tiny ornaments. She looked, if anything, even prettier than before.

After a low curtsy and a preliminary staccato, she commenced her second dance. This depended for effect largely upon a number of very difficult acrobatic twists, including several double somersaults in the air, and was rendered all the harder by the necessity of keeping time to the music.

But Sylvia was at the top of her form that evening. She was resolved to make no mistake, and the easy grace with which she carried out the dance fascinated the spectators and roused them to such a pitch of enthusiasm that when at last she stopped they were still unsatisfied, and immediately there were loud shouts of "Encore!" which became more insistent every second.

Sylvia bowed and curtsied repeatedly. She was just a little tired now, and half hoped that in a few seconds the enthusiasm might abate. But no: the audience simply would not let her go.

She managed to reach the exit, where Martin Gregg was waiting for her, an anxious look on his face. As an experienced ringmaster, he knew that Sylvia must be fagged, yet the audience wanted more.



Sylvia swayed this way and that, pirouetting and twirled with bewildering rapidity; tripping feet, outflung arms and slender figure all moving in perfect time to the music. Her success in the circus ring was assured!

"Can you manage another, my dear?" he inquired swiftly.

Sylvia hesitated, then nodded. "Yes, if you'll put the clowns in for a few minutes to give me time to change," she agreed. "I'll do it."

Into the ring then Martin Gregg strode and announced that "Miss Carmentita craved the audience's indulgence for a few minutes while she changed her costume." Then he turned and issued a sharp order, and into the ring, somersaulting, tumbling, running, and walking, dashed at least half a dozen grotesque-looking clowns whose main duty it was to keep the audience amused between each of the more important acts.

Sylvia paused to smile at the last of these—"Crinkle," the oldest clown in the circus—with whom she had already made friends, and then ran to the nearby dressing-room.

With the aid of a dresser who was always on duty there, she performed a lightning change into a beautiful Turkish maiden's costume, consisting of short, heavily-embroidered jacket, a tunic with full sleeves, baggy trousers, pointed shoes, and a flimsy yashmak which veiled the lower half of her features, then hastened back to the annex. Martin Gregg saw her coming, and sounded a shrill blast on a whistle he always carried, as a signal to the clowns to retire from the ring.

Out they came, twisting and tumbling, to the accompaniment of much laughter and applause, and then the ring-master glanced at Sylvia appreciatively.

"All ready," he inquired.

Sylvia nodded.

"Orange spot-light only, please," she said, "for entrance, and revolving ones to follow immediately."

Rapid signals were exchanged with the limelight operators, and then the curtains were drawn aside to the fullest extent.

Instantly the circus marquee was plunged into darkness, save for one solitary beam of orange light directed full on Sylvia, as she pirouetted through the curtains into full view of

the audience. Round and round she spun with astonishing rapidity, and now the beam of light began to revolve and reveal a myriad colours.

The effect was dazzlingly pretty, and as Sylvia completed her dramatic entry and came to a sudden stop in the centre of the ring, the applause was deafening.

There was no need to signal to the band this time; they had been warned in advance, and now broke into an exotic Eastern tune, weird yet soothing, and Sylvia, moving with the slowness of the beat, commenced her dance. It was a dance-story, and the movements conveyed perfectly the theme—that of a slave girl pleading before the sultan for the life of someone she loved. Met with refusal at first, the sultan's assent to her pleadings was gained later, and then Sylvia's movements changed. It was a dance of triumph and joy now; faster and faster she gyrated until it seemed impossible for any human being to be so wonderfully agile.

Then, as if some powerful brake had been applied, she stopped dead in a graceful pose, with arms outstretched and raised to the skies, head flung back.

The band ceased. There was a moment's dead silence while the audience slowly realised that this marvellously-executed dance had really ended. Then they rose and cheered, and the stamping of feet and even whistles rent the air. Somehow they were determined to demonstrate their enthusiasm.

Again and again Sylvia had to return to the tan, and only when the ring-master announced that she would appear in the second half of the programme did the noise subside.

In the annex Martin Gregg did not conceal his pleasure at Sylvia's fully-deserved success. An equestrienne act was now occupying the ring, and he was at liberty to talk to her unhindered.

"You're the most successful dancer we've ever had, Miss Carmentita!" he declared enthusiastically. "Of course, you mustn't let to-night's success turn

your head. You'll have to go on working just as hard to keep in the popular favour as you had to win it. You know how fickle audiences can be."

Sylvia smiled.
"I quite realise I'm a long way from being a perfect yet," Mr. Gregg," she answered. "I've been in the game too long not to know that."

The ring-master nodded.
"Then you'll be all right," he said. "Anyway, I want you to feel absolutely at home here. You'll find every opportunity to get on with, except, maybe, one or two, and those you can ignore. In any circus you'll always come across a few grumblers and grouseers. Have you made any friends yet?"

Sylvia seated herself on an upturned box, drawing her cloak about her, for the evening was chilly.

"I think so," she replied thoughtfully. "There's my niece, Mimi. She seems an awfully nice girl. Mr. Gregg, though somehow she strikes me as not being altogether happy."

Martin Gregg looked away quickly for a second, an angry gleam in his eyes.

"I hope she hasn't been whining to you, Miss Carmenita," he said rather abruptly. "You mustn't take too much notice of what she says. She's got rather a reputation for grousing and complaining. As a matter of fact, she isn't really my niece at all. She and her young brother, whose guardian I am, are absolutely no use in the circus, except for odd jobs that anyone could do. I only keep them here because—well, their father was a friend of mine, and I promised him I'd look after them until they were old enough to fend for themselves. No, Miss Carmenita, don't let Mimi worry you with her stories. She's a queer sort of girl."

Sylvia hardly knew what to say. She recollected Mimi's strange manner while she was helping her to dress; her bursting into sudden tears.

Was the ring-master right? Was she a girl with a perpetual grievance—the sort of girl who loved to harbour a fancied sorrow in order to win sympathy? Sylvia had to confess to herself that she hadn't thought so. She had liked Mimi, and still did.

She was about to move away, for the equestrienne act was over, and Mr. Gregg was hurrying into the ring to supervise the attendants, who were erecting apparatus for a troupe of acrobats, when a soft voice fell on her ear.

"You dance beautiful, splendidly, Missee Carmenita! Mr. Gregg, him seem vellee pleased, eh?"

Sylvia turned. At her side was a girl with raven-black, gleaming hair and almond eyes set in a perfect, oval face that stamped her at once as an Oriental. It was Lo San, a plump and usually smiling girl, who was one of the cleverest members of the Annamese acrobatic troupe, now waiting in the annex to enter the ring.

Sylvia had previously met Lo San and had taken an instant liking to the little Oriental.

"Yes, Mr. Gregg has been saying lots of complimentary things to me, Lo San," she admitted, with a smile.

Lo San nodded slowly and dreamily.
"Me hear him congratulate voo, missee," she answered. "Mr. Gregg vellee happy, next minute." She shrugged. "Him not too nice to poor Missee Mimi and her brother," she added shrewdly.

Sylvia started. She realised that Lo San must also have heard the ring-master's reference to his "niece" and her brother.

"What—what do you mean, Lo San?" she demanded quickly.

The little Annamese rubbed her hands together, and her lips parted to reveal beautiful white teeth in a slow, inscrutable smile.
"Only that me great fiend to Missee Mimi, and she not a girl who glances and glumbees—that all. Me go now to perform. Good-bye, Missee Carmenita! Meet you again after the show."

And in company with the rest of the troupe, Lo San somersaulted into the ring, for all the world like an india-rubber ball.

For a few seconds Sylvia followed her with a puzzled look in her eyes, then she turned and walked from the marquee into the night air.

Dusk had fallen and lights gleamed before the circus entrance and in the caravans and tents dotted about the huge field where the circus was pitched. Sylvia was very strange. Sylvia was thinking that, whereas Martin Gregg had gone out of his way to discourage Mimi, Lo San had equally gone out of her way to defend her, impelled by a very obvious sense of loyalty.

Which of them was right? That was the question Sylvia found herself asking, and a puzzling one it proved.

Trouble in the Canteen.

"HURRY up with the ham and eggs, Martha! Guess they'll be cooked all to cinders!"

"How much longer hev I got to wait fer that coffee, eh?"

Good-natured laughter and banter echoed through the canteen. The show was over, and performers and "hands" had crowded into the canteen for supper and to talk over the work of the day. It had been a record evening, and everyone was in high spirits.

Sylvia found herself at a table with Lo San and a girl equestrienne named Ella Mackay, and the three were listening with amusement to the rather noisy efforts of two "cowboys" to speed up the waitress.

"You just be quiet, Deadshot Pete," the imperturbable Martha rejoined, in no way abashed, "or I'll tie you up with your own lariat! You're not in Texas now, if you think you are!" Just then Sylvia noticed a pale-faced girl hurry from the back of the canteen. It was Mimi. She looked half-frightened by the noise and the repeated calls for orders to be carried out more speedily.

"I'm ever so sorry, everybody!" she cried apologetically. "Something went wrong with the oil stoves just before the show ended, but we've got them going again now."

The two cowboys gravely raised their broad-rimmed hats to Mimi to intimate that the explanation quite satisfied them; but a rather stout girl with dark, bobbed hair and an olive complexion, uttered a disbelieving laugh.

"Of course the stoves would go wrong if you had anything to do with them, Mimi!" she said jeeringly. "Why don't you stay in the old clothes department? That's more in your line than cooking, I should imagine!"

Mimi flushed, and Sylvia, noticing her agitation, felt deep resentment at such a vulgar and unnecessary remark on the stout girl's part.

"Who is she?" she whispered to her companions.

"Oh, that?" returned Ella, a hint of contempt in her voice. "That's Selina, old Gregg's niece—his real niece. She's been away for a few days, thank goodness, that's why you haven't met

her before. You'll soon know all you want to about her."

"Vellee funny girl, Selina," Lo San purred softly. "Vellee gleedy and think herself one big noice."

But though Lo San spoke softly Selina apparently heard her. She gave an angry cry and swung round in her chair.

"Were you talking about me, Lo San?" she demanded sharply.

Lo San nodded gravely.

"I did speak of honourable missee, yes," she admitted.
"Lo San was small. Selina was big, and she was a bully by nature. She rose from her chair and literally rushed at Lo San. Out went her hand to grasp Lo San and shake her, but—Lo San had gone!"

With an astounded quick movement she had performed a back somersault, landing on her feet some yards behind the chair into which Selina promptly blundered, barking her shins badly.

There was fury in her eyes as she recovered her balance, and prepared to dash in pursuit of the little Annamese, but a figure barred her way. Sylvia it was, and now she stood right in front of Selina, watching her closely.

"Kindly leave Lo San alone!" she said bluntly. "You were to blame in the first place for being so rude and objectionable to Mimi, who's trying to do her best for us all."

Selina stared in stupefaction at Sylvia.

"Who are you?" she snapped.

"What's it to do with you anyway?" "Everything to do with me," was Sylvia's quietly-spoken answer. "Lo San is my friend and so is Mimi."

For a moment or two Selina hesitated as if wondering whether to try conclusions with this pretty, fair-haired girl; then, with a glance of hatred at Sylvia, she uttered an ejaculation of rage and hurriedly left the canteen.

Everyone had been watching the little drama, and now quite a buzz of talk and not a little laughter arose.

"Gee, kid!" Deadshot Pete smilingly commented to Sylvia. "You sure handled her good and pretty. She's a spiteful little crittur, though, so keep your gigtamps oiled."

By which extraordinary remark he intended to convey a warning to Sylvia to beware of Selina Gregg.

Lo San came back to the table and pressed Sylvia's hand.

"You vellee good fiend, Missee Sylvia," she said in her quaint way.

"Lo San not forget."

Sylvia smiled at her, and then waved to Mimi, who ran across.

"Congratulations on your success, dear," Mimi whispered. "Will you come over to my caravan in about half an hour? I do so want to talk to you. I'll be free then."

"Right-ho, Mimi; I'll be there!" Sylvia promised.

After finishing her supper she bade good-night to Lo San and Ella, and after calling in at her own caravan to deposit some things, went across to Mimi's.

It was snug and cosy inside, with the curtains drawn over the little window and the hanging oil-lamp giving a cheerful radiance.

Sylvia seated herself and then looked intently at Mimi. She was thinking how pretty Mimi was with her deep auburn hair, fresh complexion, and expressive brown eyes.

"I've been thinking such a lot about you, Mimi dear," she said. "Won't you tell me what it was made you so unhappy when you were wondering all the evening if I were to blame—"

"Why, Mimi, you dance beautifully," said Sylvia, as she watched her friend critically. "It will be a real pleasure to dance opposite you in the circus." Oh, if only you can persuade Uncle Martin to think the same!" sighed Mimi.



Mimi shook her head swiftly.

"You to blame? Of course not!" she declared. "You must have thought me a queer sort of girl. But—but it wasn't your fault in the least."

"Then what was it, Mimi?" Sylvia asked gently. "Won't you confide in me, dear. Don't think I'm just being curious or wanting to pry into your business. It isn't that, but—well, we're friends, aren't we? Perhaps I can help you."

Mimi sat silent, with her hands clasped, a far-away look in her eyes; then suddenly she turned to Sylvia.

"Yes, I will tell you!" she declared. "I must tell someone, and I know you'll understand because you're a dancer." She paused and put a hand that trembled slightly on Sylvia's arm. "Tony and I have been with this circus for some years now," she continued, "and when we first came—I was about nine at the time—I was given dancing lessons, and the ballet master who taught me always said I'd make a star. I dreamed of that, just as you dreamed of the big success that has been yours to-night. Then, quite suddenly, Mr. Gregg, Uncle Martin, as I always call him, ordered the lessons to stop. He declared I'd never make a first-class dancer, and though the ballet master argued with him he wouldn't listen. I was broken-hearted, Sylvia—"

She sighed deeply.

"Of course, dear, I realise just how you must have felt," Sylvia said. "And that was the end of your dancing?"

Mimi shook her head.

"No, I determined I wouldn't be kept down, and I've practised secretly, hoping that one day an unexpected chance might come along. When Rosa

was taken ill and had to go home to Ireland I thought it had, but—"

Sylvia started. Rosa was the dancer whose place she herself had taken.

"Mimi!" she exclaimed, a note of dismay in her voice. "You—you mean that I stepped into the place that really should be yours? Oh, how unfair it all is! Mr. Gregg has no right to keep you back like this. I'd no idea there was anything like this going on." She jumped up, a look of deep resolution in her eyes. "I won't be a party to it!" she added vehemently. "You deserve a chance, Mimi. Why, I wonder you don't hate me, instead of which you've been ever so kind and helpful. I see now why you broke down, dear. So should I have done. Never mind; I can help you. I'll go back to Watson's Circus and then Mr. Gregg will have to give you the chance, you deserve it."

Mimi gripped her arm and an exclamation of fear escaped her. "No, no! You mustn't do that," she said, shaking her head. "Uncle Martin would know I'd been talking to you about myself, and he'd be even more unkind to Tony and me than he usually is. Promise me you'll stay here—promise!"

Sylvia thought swiftly. An idea for helping Mimi in another way had suddenly come to her. She nodded, and was just about to speak when, from outside, a confused shouting and a series of deep trumpet-like notes sounded.

"What ever's that?" Sylvia asked, frowning.

Mimi had started to her feet. "It sounds to me like Gobo, the African elephant," she replied. "Goodness, what a din he's making! And what ever's all that shouting for?"

She went to the caravan door and opened it, then gave a cry of alarm.

The noise proceeded from the direction of the circus menagerie, where were housed elephants, lions, and tigers, zebras, bears, and several monkeys. Lights were flashing, and there were a number of men dashing about and shouting.

Sylvia joined Mimi at that moment, and the two girls, wondering what could be amiss, descended the caravan steps to the field.

Next moment they realised what was happening. It was indeed Gobo, the African elephant, for they saw the huge

beast appear next moment, his trunk raised high in the air and his enormous ears flapping. The crowd scattered to right and left, and then Gobo rushed straight at a small, square tent. With one twist of his trunk he uprooted it and flung it over his broad back.

"It's gone mad or something," Mimi said in deep alarm. "Look out, Sylvia! It's coming this way!"

Sure enough, Gobo was charging straight towards them. There was no time to get back into their caravan, and so the friends simply ran as hard as they could for a thick hedge a few yards away and scrambled through to safety.

Behind them they could hear crashes and more shouting; but realising that they could do nothing they wisely stayed where they were for a few moments.

It was certain that Gobo would not long be allowed to roam about at will. The numerous cowboys attached to the circus were hot on his track with ropes and nets, and from their vantage point the two girls saw Gobo, in the light of dozens of naphtha flares, neatly lassoed and then made prisoner by sheer weight of numbers.

"How ever will they get him back?" Sylvia asked breathlessly.

Mimi, having recovered from her first shock, smiled. "Oh, quite easily!" she answered. "They'll bring out Jumbo and Rupert, the other two elephants, and fasten them on either side of Gobo—Look, there's Deadshot Pete; I'll ask him what caused all the trouble."

She hailed the cowboy through cupped hands, and Deadshot Pete came towards them, grinning amiably.

"It's all safe now," he assured them. "Gobo's been having trouble with a tooth, it seems, and this is how he shows his ill temper. He's done a small way of damage to your caravan, by the way, Mimi—smashed a panel or two in the side, so you'll've him to mind the draughts to-night." The boys'll fix it for you to-morrow."

Mimi stared at her companion. "Goodness! He might have chosen someone else's caravan!" she exclaimed ruefully. "Oh, well, it can't be helped! Come on, Sylvia; let's go and see just how much damage he has done."

Side by side the two friends raced back to the caravan. Fortunately, the lamp was still alight, and they saw that Deadshot Pete had not exaggerated. Three panels on one side were badly smashed near the floor, and Sylvia knelt down to examine the damage.

"Looks as if you'll have to come and share mine to-night," she said. "There's plenty of— I say, Mimi, what ever's this?"

The cause of Sylvia's startled ejaculation was soon apparent to the equally amazed Mimi. Jutting out from between two of the splintered

panels was a torn piece of paper which floor scrutiny showed to be part of a letter.

The Ringmaster is Annoyed.

TOGETHER the friends peered curiously at the torn piece of notepaper. It had been white once, but now was a dirty yellow, as if years had elapsed since it was written. The letter apparently had been torn almost completely across diagonally, for all that was left were parts of lines reading:

"... both to school... in good hands... fees regularly... profits before remitting to me... gratitude for your... poste... restant... sincere friend... Then followed what was obviously part of the signature:

"... ENHAM."

It was when Mimi came to the mutilated signature that she started violently and clutched Sylvia's arm in a vice-like grip.

"Sylvia," she muttered hoarsely. "I've just remembered something else. Seeing that the torn signature has reminded me of it, My name isn't Clayton, really—"

"Not Clayton?" ejaculated Sylvia in astonishment. "What is it, then?"

"It's really Denham," Mimi said, pointing to the torn signature. "And that name is Denham, if I'm not very much mistaken!"

"But if your name's Denham, why ever did you change it?" was Sylvia's puzzled question.

"Uncle Martin made us," Mimi answered. "He said Tony and I were henceforth to be known as Clayton. He never explained why, and I was too young at the time to think very much about it!"

Sylvia frowned. Her brain was working hard at that moment, and for some seconds she did not speak.

"Do you know, Mimi," she said thoughtfully and slowly at last, "it seems to me there's a mystery of some sort connected with you and Tony. It's very strange, isn't it, that Mr. Gregg made you change your name to Clayton and then forbade you to go on with your dancing lessons? He's got some very good reason for treating you as he does. I'm sure of it—"

Mimi clasped her hands. "So am I!" she said quickly. "Oh, Sylvia, I've thought so for a long time, but I've never been able to find out what it can possibly be. All the while he seems as if his one idea is to keep Tony and me as much in the background as possible."

"It's all very queer," Sylvia remarked, the puzzled frown still on her forehead. "Mimi, dear, you need a friend, and if you'll let me, I'm going to be that friend!"

A cry of real joy Mimi gave then, and her arm stole round Sylvia's shoulder.

"And you won't go back to Watson's Circus, after all?" she said tremulously. "You'll stay here?"

Sylvia nodded. "Certainly will, dear. We'll be better friends than ever after this. And, listen, Mimi, Mr. Gregg shan't keep you down even though I have been engaged in Rosa's place. I've got an idea for a new act, and I shall need a partner. We'll rehearse it together, and at the right moment I'll go to him and ask for you to be allowed to appear with me. I don't see how he can possibly refuse."

"Sylvia, it'll be wonderful!" Mimi cried. "Oh, I feel better already; it seems as if you were sent here by Fate just when I needed a friend. I shan't ever—"

She broke off, and following the direction of her gaze, Sylvia was just in time to see a pale face disappear from the opening caused by the broken panels.

"Who ever was it?" Sylvia asked, turning back to her companion.

"It was Selina Gregg—I'm almost sure!" Mimi answered, a hint of dismay in her voice. "She hates me, and if she heard what we were talking about she'd be sure to tell Uncle Martin. I hope she didn't see this torn letter."

Sylvia pursed her lips.

"Just in case she did I think we'll hide it," she suggested. "I've an idea at the back of my mind that that letter may be very useful one day, and, in any case, it will be as well if Mr. Gregg doesn't know we've seen it. Where can we put it?"

Mimi considered for a moment. "Come with me, Sylvia," she said. "I know the very place."

Sylvia followed her from the caravan, and Mimi led the way to the big covered wagon which was used for transporting costumes whenever the circus moved. In a corner under the driver's seat she placed the letter.

"It'll be safe there," she said, with a sigh of relief. "Now, if you're ready, Sylvia, let's go to bed, dear. I feel quite fagged out after all the excitement of the day."

Sylvia nodded.

"Yes, I'm more than ready for bed," she agreed. "And to-morrow, Mimi—I'm sure we'll go off somewhere nice and quiet on our own, and make a start on that new act of mine."

The two girls made their way to Sylvia's caravan. Sylvia insisted on Mimi having the bunk and made up a bed for herself on the floor.

In a few seconds the friends were fast asleep, and neither woke, nor scarcely stirred indeed, until the morning sun, shining full into the caravan, roused them to consciousness.

They were early astir, and Mimi departed for the canteen, where she was soon helping to prepare breakfast. As arranged, however, they met at eleven o'clock, and, leaving the circus grounds, pitched camp of which the circus was the outskirts of which the circus was the centre, they turned off across some fields towards a pretty spot known as Latmyer Woods.

Here, in a glassy glade, Sylvia called a halt, declaring that it was ideal for her purpose. En route she had explained the idea of her new act to Mimi. It was a dance scene in which Sylvia was supposed to be a Swiss girl awaiting a letter. Mimi was to be a glorified postman in a costume specially designed by Sylvia, and would cycle into the ring and deliver the letter, which Sylvia would open and find to contain bad news.

Thereupon Sylvia was to break down, and Mimi, appalled at the sight of the tears, was to play the part of comforter and the dance end on a note of joy.

Sylvia showed Mimi just how the various steps were to be performed, and Mimi grasped the idea at once.

"Why, Mimi, you dance beautifully!" Sylvia told her as she watched her friend critically. "I can see at a glance that you're cut out for the work. It will be a real pleasure to dance opposite you."

Mimi flushed at the sincere compliment.

"Oh, if only you can persuade Uncle Martin to think the same!" she sighed.

"I'm afraid he'll be furious with me," she added wistfully.

Sylvia smiled at her encouragingly.

"Don't worry about him," she said in an attempt to infuse confidence into Mimi. "If he doesn't agree with my suggestion regarding this act, I shall refuse to fear. After all, if I'm to be a success in the circus my ideas for new acts have got to be considered, and as a showman he'll realise that quick enough."

For an hour the two enthusiasts practised, and then, feeling more drawn to one another than ever before as a result of their mutual love of dancing, they returned to the circus ground.

Scarcely had they arrived back, however, than they were accosted by Selina Gregg. She favoured them with an ill-natured grin.

"Uncle Martin wants to see both of you at once in his office," she announced. "And you'd better hurry up. He's in a towering rage, I can tell you!"

The two friends exchanged puzzled glances. Both were thinking the same thing. What did Martin Gregg want with them?

They were not left long in doubt. Proceeding to the ringmaster's office, as the small marquee he used for business purposes was called, they found him seated at his desk savagely chewing a cigar.

"Ah, here you are at last!" he said, glowering at them. "I want to talk to you girls! I understand that, as a result of Gobo running amok your caravan was damaged, Mimi?"

Mimi nodded. "Some panels were smashed, uncle," she answered, wondering whatever was coming next.

"And I understand, also, that you found something in the caravan."

Mimi started, and the colour rushed to her cheeks.

"I—I don't understand you, uncle," she temporised.

"Oh, yes, you do!" snapped Martin Gregg angrily. "Don't try to deceive me. I know more than you think. You found a letter, or, rather, part of one, didn't you? Come, answer me at once!"

Mimi's head went up proudly. Sylvia's presence just then gave her confidence. She would not submit to this bullying.

"What I have found is my business, uncle," she answered firmly. "I refuse to tell you anything about it!"

Martin Gregg jumped up from his chair, and his hand struck the desk a resounding smack.

"You do, eh?" he ejaculated. "Well, I happen to know that you did find a letter there. That caravan was mine before you had it, girl, so that letter belongs to me." He paused and gave a sneering laugh. "I know where you've hidden it," he added. "Come with me, both of you, and we'll get it now. If, as I suspect, it is my property, then I'll make you both sorry you dared to keep something that didn't belong to you. Now, come along, and let's have no more nonsense!"

(If Martin Gregg gets possession of the letter it may mean that Mimi will never be able to clear up the mystery surrounding herself and her brother. But perhaps, even so, Mimi and her friend Sylvia will find some means of outwitting the ringmaster. Be sure to read the sequel to this tense moment in the second instalment of this splendid serial of circus life, which will appear in No. 2 of THE SCHOOLGIRL, on sale Saturday, August 3rd. Tell your friends about it.)

A Magnificent Story of the French Revolution.

Her mother and sister torn from her side and herself left with the task of saving them from a dreadful fate—such was the heartrending situation that confronted Rosalie Duval, the heroine of this grand historical story.



IN THE DAYS of the TERROR!

By JOY PHILLIPS.

One Night in France!

"LISTEN! It is a carriage! Oh, I must open the shutters and see—"

"My child, no! Rosalie, dear one—"

"But, mother?"

"I would not open the shutters, Rosalie. I would not go near the windows."

The girl, dark-haired, and olive-complexioned, gazed across the candle-lit room at her mother, her dark eyes full of inquiry.

There was a resumed silence between them, and there was complete silence all about this great old house that bore the name of the Chateau of Blancheval. But, from somewhere not far off in the hot summer's night, came that tell-tale sound which had caused Rosalie Duval to clap shut her book a moment since and fly towards one of those closely-shuttered windows.

There must have been some bit of rough, stony road out there, where horses were labouring to get the carriage they drew over the great ruts.

"It is going away," Rosalie whispered her mournful comment at last. "And I thought—I thought—"

What her sudden, wistful thought had been she did not say, but went back

to the chair and recovered the flung-down book.

Perhaps the mother divined that this younger daughter of hers was only making a brave pretence of resuming the printed page. Perhaps Madame Duval knew that her dear Rosalie was trying hard to hide all the anxious fears that must possess her at such a time as this, for suddenly there came a loving invitation.

"Come and sit near me, dear one. Yes, that was only some traveller going through post haste—unfortunate traveller, whoever he may be! I do not hear it now, Rosalie."

"No, mother, but listen again—how now?" the girl questioned, pausing to look towards the shuttered windows as she crossed over. "What is that sound, then?"

Madame Duval would not offer any explanation. She merely smiled cheerily, patting one arm-rest of her high-backed, carved chair as a sign to Rosalie to perch herself there.

The lattice shutters were closed in front of big windows, that were themselves wide open, the night being so hot. At moments the candles, in their branching standards, smoked with the draught of fresh air, and then the

great room would go very dim indeed. The panelled walls, really light coloured—for it was not oak panelling—looked like black stone at such times.

Rosalie, restlessly glancing around, could hear that different sound which had puzzled her persisting. The night breeze brought it into the room, a murmurous sound, like the risen tide upon a distant shore.

The sound of rioting!

So, she was thinking to herself, this part of dear France was to escape no better than all the rest, all the fire and blood-shed of these dreadful times!

Her dear mother did not wish her to look out of the window lest there should be a sight too awful for her young eyes to endure. Yet to sit there imagining it all made one shiver—and wonder.

The last few months of Rosalie Duval's young life had witnessed the rising of this storm of revolt against the ruling classes. Now the Reign of Terror, as it had come to be called, was at its very height.

Never a word of news leaked through to Chateau Blancheval these days, but what it held a grim warning for the Duvals themselves.

Prisons everywhere, crammed with the victims of a people seemingly gone mad. In Paris, daily, the tumbrils taking the "batches" to La Guillotine! In lonely country places, like this of Blancheval, mob law and burnings. For, as Rosalie knew, it had come to this at last: simply to be an aristocrat was to stand condemned.

The law of the suspect had been put into force—a thing of frightful meaning, open to dreadful abuse. Rosalie herself had even heard it said one only needed to be "suspected of being a suspect," and—La Guillotine! It had become one of the grim jests of the Revolution.

Not a time, this, for Madame Duval and her two daughters, Rosalie and Marie, to be alone—quite alone, except for merely two or three faithful servants in the age-old ancestral home! Yet so it was, and Rosalie could only wonder often, as she was wondering now, why—why had her dear, loving father been away so long?

In such a time of crisis, with the Terror liable at any moment to find its next victims in them, high-born family that they were—why was he so mysteriously absent?

Did mother herself know the exact reason? If she did she dare not explain. When questioned she would only answer—and, ah, what comfort it was to Rosalie and her loving, elder sister to be told—father was not in prison. He was not even in France, although they must never imagine that he had fled the country.

Just as if Rosalie could ever have thought of her father as being no better

than a coward! No, it was for some reason that did credit to his patriotism and courage that he was far away. If only one could know what the exact reason was!

At last Rosalie ended the musing silence.

"You did say, did you not, my mother, that father might come back quite suddenly—without warning?"

"My Rosalie, yes. We never know. He might be unable to communicate with us. He might be unable to trust anyone with a message or letter. There is such treachery now."

"Rosalie was going to speak again, but something checked her. Once more the shuttered windows drew her startled gaze.

"Someone's there!" she declared tensely. "I heard a tapping!"

"Ah, no, my Rosalie, only a branch stirring in the wind, my child, or a night-bird. Where is Marie, I wonder?" the mother addressed, with unwavering cheerfulness, tumbling the needlework into a basket. "We must all to bed, Rosalie!"

"And so," exclaimed the girl, "it will be another day gone, and father not home to see of him again!"

"We shall pray for him, Rosalie—"

"Ah, yes, my mother, that he may come safe home to us after all, and that soon it will be all over. If only—if only this terrible bloodshed might end suddenly—in a few days from now, mother, and father be amongst us again to lead the rejoicing that will surely follow. But listen! Oh, mother, do let me see who is there—outside the window—rapping!"

Rosalie was thinking that it might be some belated messenger from her father—someone who dare not come openly to the front entrance of the house, lest he should be seen and stopped by those to whom, in these changed days, all who lived in any sort of style were suspect.

"My dearest, it is a mistake," Madame Duval declared, but her voice had lost its convincing calmness. She moved towards one of the windows, and Rosalie took that to mean that she herself could now look out.

In a flash she was at the window. Her hands threw open the simple fastening and then pushed the hinged shutters wide apart.

What she saw then made her fall back crying out in great anguish.

"Fire, mother!" she panted, as they drew together and watched the fitful glare of light above the distant trees.

"It is at the next village! The mob has set fire to Chateau Sailly!"

At this instant the room door opened and Marie Duval, the elder daughter, entered.

I have been watching from my window upstairs," she spoke, coming very calmly across to her mother and sister. "Yes, it is at Sailly-le-Petit. It is the chateau there."

Madame Duval uttered a cry of horror.

"The Leroys—what is happening to them?" she exclaimed distraughtly. "If they are still in the chateau—"

"Rosalie took her arm, and led her from the window.

"Do not distress yourself, mother mine!" she intervened. "Fortunately, they have gone away; though, it may be that, had they remained, the mob would have hesitated to set fire to their home. The Leroys were ever kind to the poor."

She went on talking about the Leroys, their old neighbours in Sailly-le-Petit, anxious to keep her mother's mind occupied, and away from the one thought that made Rosalie herself shudder. When the mob had finished

at Sailly, would they come here to Blancheval, anxious to burn and plunder?

The very prospect was enough to make the stoutest heart quail; but Rosalie allowed no hint of her fears to show either in her manner, or expression.

"I do not know whether it were better to go or stay," Madame Duval said, half tearfully. "Perhaps I have done wrong to keep you and Marie here."

Rosalie shook her head, and smiled.

"Nay, mother, you have done right. If only for father's sake, we must stay here. How would he find us else, when he returns?" she pointed out. "Besides, we will not be cowards. Whatever befalls, we will let the people of Blancheval see that we are unafraid. Never have we done ought to harm any one of them, and they know it!"

"Yes, mother!" put in Marie. "Never mind what the revolutionaries call us, so long as they do not have to call us cowards!"

There stood the two girls, both of the same mind about that. And now, could anyone have seen how the troubles and terrors of the Revolution had left their impress upon both sisters, even as they had brought grey hairs to a mother who was still only in the forties.

Marie, older than Rosalie by at least five years, for there had been a brother between them, who had died in infancy—was serious beyond her years, given to sudden fearless looks, yet governed by a quiet good-humour.

As for Rosalie, at fifteen she was just a dear little maid of France, with a great capacity for roguishness, if only the times for her had been different.

"Well, if the mob come here it will be a wicked wrong to you, my mother!" she cried out passionately. "It is hard upon you, who have done so much for the poor, if you are to be called an enemy of the People!"

"It is hard upon all France!" Marie added sadly. "Old and young alike—yes, and of either side! It started; it goes on; and I am sure that there must be these even amongst the revolutionaries who feel it is the end of the world!"

"It must mean, at least, the end of France," was Madame Duval's poignant rejoinder, "unless—Oh, what is that?" she broke off. "Who is it? Rosalie, you were right!"

There was a sudden loud rapping upon the shutters.

Rosalie was nearest. Again she eagerly threw wide the lattices; and now, in utter amazement, they all saw a strange little figure, darkly silhouetted against that glare of the distant fire.

"If you please," entreated a girlish voice, with the real French accent. "May I come in? May I shelter? I am English, and I am all alone!"

A Terrible Blow!

Rosalie, like her mother and sister, felt instant compassion for this young girl, whose pretty face was full of mingled fright and supplication. Here was someone as young as herself—and English at that—adrift in turbulent France.

"It is terrible!" the English girl said breathlessly. "That fire over there—some great house—and there is rioting. I think I see you, too, in danger? If so, I am sorry."

"But enter!" Rosalie entreated eagerly, and drew the English girl into the room. "She is welcome, is she not, mother?"

Madame Duval nodded.

"Certainly. And now close the shutters—the windows also. Let us try, if we can, to shut out all those noises."

But they could not do so. Even when Marie and Rosalie between them had closed all the big windows, the hurly-burly from that mad scene in the neighbouring village could still be heard.

The fire must have got a great hold now. A noise like muffled thunder, probably the crashing in of some bit of roof—sounded once, and then a roar made by the crowd itself.

But in this room at the Chateau Blancheval there was now a dramatic stillness, except for the hard breathing of the wait-like stranger.

He seated, Rosalie said gently, offering a chair, "and have no fear."

"Oh, I—I hope I'm not afraid!" exclaimed the English girl, with a jerry laugh. "Only it has been very—" She could not find the right word in French, so began afresh. "Everything has gone wrong with me!"

There was such a touch of humour about the annoyed remark, mother and daughter alike, that she smiled.

"Alas!" exclaimed Rosalie, drawing a little nearer the English girl. "Does anything go right for anyone, these days? Not in France. The whole country has risen against people like ourselves, whether we have done well by them or not!"

"But I was not in France when my troubles began!" the bright rejoinder was made. "Oh, dear, that companion of mine—if ever he see her again!"

"Companion? Where?" asked Rosalie. "But you mean she has deserted you, yes?"

"I shall have to explain everything, and then," said the English girl. "I do hope you will pardon me for coming here like this."

Instantly she was made to feel still more how sorry they were for her. Rosalie stood close enough to rest a caressing hand upon one shoulder of the seated girl, whilst Madame Duval and Marie gazed in silent sympathy.

"You shall tell us, my child, when you have rested. Why did you eat last? But we must offer you something at once—"

"If you please, no!"

"It must be a glass of milk, at least," insisted good-hearted Rosalie. "Have we milk, Marie? There is no coffee, we know."

Mother sent the evening's milk to the wife of the woodcutter, who lies sick in the village," Marie reminded her sister. "But I will go and see. Perhaps our Jacques can get Blossom to give him a little more! He can do anything with Blossom, our Jacques."

"A good lad, yes," murmured Rosalie.

"And a very good cow, also," suggested the English girl, smiling, "if she will give more milk so readily."

Rosalie burst out laughing.

"How cheering to hear one joke!" she said approvingly. "It is the only way—even though times be serious, there is no use in crying."

"That's just what I think!" assented the mystery girl, looking very drawn towards Rosalie. "If you please, my name is Burbridge—Amy Burbridge."

"English, you said?"

"Yes. And it is like this. Amy Burbridge went on, whilst Marie silently quitted the room. "I was on a voyage to England with my old aunt, but our vessel was captured, and brought into French port. My poor aunt and I had been ill all the time at sea. When we were landed, all was disorder, besides a

bad feeling against us. In the end, she died."

"That is very sad!" exclaimed Rosalie.

"Yes," sighed Amy. "I was with my aunt in a kind of lodging, and I thought the woman of the place was true and good. She did do all she could for my aunt until the end, and auntie must have had faith in her, too. The woman was given a lot of money. I know, to get me safely across France to Calais, and we have been travelling—oh, I cannot say how many days! It has been so difficult!"

The listeners nodded their sad comprehension.

"It was your carriage we heard?" said Rosalie. "Passing through Blancheval?"

"Yes, but we only went a little way beyond your village, and then suddenly we stopped, and my companion told me I must get down and fend for myself. She was changed—cruel, all at once. I had thought for several days she seemed moody; but there was a lot to try her as we came along from the coast."

"Did the carriage go on?" asked Rosalie, finding that her mother was leaving it to her to do all the questioning.

"Yes. The woman said something as a sort of excuse; that there was rioting in the village that lay ahead. But I think she had made up her mind to get rid of me, and have all that money."

"Mother, it is a mercy, is it not?" cried Rosalie, impulsively throwing her arms about Amy, "that she herself is unharmed? Oh, cruel, that you should be here, in our unhappy country. How I am glad that you came to us for help."

"Yes, indeed," was the mother's fervent rejoinder. "If pity for you can avail anything, you should be safe with us. Blessed comfort, you are English; and so, even if we ourselves—"

She stopped. Marie had suddenly returned, leaving the door open to reveal a shadowy figure who had followed her.

"Mother, here is Jacques, and he tells me he has something to say to you," was the elder daughter's agitated whisper.

"Come in, Jacques!" the lady bade him, keeping calm in face of a manifest crisis. "Well?"

He who came into the grand, but dim room, was very poorly clad, and obviously slightly lame. He was deeply respectful, and as soon as the English girl got a direct sight of his face she saw that it was a good-looking one.

"How then, Jacques?" asked his mistress.

"Miladi," he said, advancing a little farther into the room to speak guardedly, "there is danger at hand. Men are even now on the way, and they mean no good. It will be useless to try to keep them out. They have arms. One amongst them has authority, I think."

At this instant, with a sudden rush, an old man and a white-haired woman, who looked to be his wife, came to the doorway.

"Miladi!"

"Nanette, and you old Pateau, be calm. You at least they will not harm."

"Ah, it is not for ourselves we fear!" was old Nanette's half-whispering cry. "But you, miladi! You that I nursed as a child, and your dear ones also; and milord the master not here!"

"This unhappy house!" quavered old Pateau, wringing his hands. "This unhappy France! Listen—"



There was a sudden crashing blow at some outer door, and Madam Duval uttered a startled cry. Instantly Rosalie was at her side.

"Now, go to your quarters; it will be best!" she ordered the old people, to get them out of harm's way. "Jacques, you will admit them!"

Rosalie took a grip on herself as another blow sounded through the great house, and voices demanded roughly:

"Open!"

Jacques turned and limped a step or two, and then turned round again.

"But, mam'selle—"

"Jacques, will you please do as I ask?"

Amy Barbidge glanced admiringly at Rosalie. In that moment she was so calm and collected, a true daughter of France.

Then Jacques went away, but not without a last look of dread that ended with a kind of desperate stare at Marie. She smiled at him encouragingly.

"Go, Jacques. Have no fear for us," she said softly.

Thud—bang—thud! That outer door was being pounded again.

"Mother!" whispered Marie, "is it that they have come to burn this house also?"

"Quick, there!" stormed angry voices. "Open!"

Madame Duval, now that Jacques had passed out, closing the door behind him, gave her young charges a very collected look.

"It is only some piece of impudence," she smiled. "I am sorry, my child"—to Amy—"that this has come when you are here. But, in any case, you are English. Perhaps you have papers to show it—a safe conduct!"

"No. If there were papers, my companion had them! But never mind about me," pleaded Amy steadily. "How wonderful you are, your three! Oh, they will soon go away, when they see— But here they come!" she broke off, as a rush of heavy feet sounded in the vast passages.

Two seconds later the door flew round wide before a giant of a man. He held no weapons, although some of

Eagerly Rosalie Duval threw back the shutters, revealing, a strange figure. "If you please," entreated a girlish voice, "may I come in? May I shelter? I am English, and I am all alone!"

those who surged in after him had pikes. His tri-colour sash, however, may have held knife or pistol.

Not a head was bared in the presence of the lady and her girls. Mostly they wore red caps, which the intruders wore, with here and there a round hat and tri-colour cockade.

The leader began, with a hard laugh:

"He is a faithful servant, that fellow of yours; he should easily find services elsewhere—if he recovers. We had to knock him on the head—yes!"

"Jacques!" exclaimed Marie, starting forward. "Brutes, when he is almost a cripple! Mother, I will go to him."

"Stay, mademoiselle!" the foremost intruder ordered, with a gesture. "We want you also. Your name, I think, is here!"

And, whipping out a paper, he consulted it near some candles.

"Honoraria Antoinette Duval—that is you?" He looked up at the mother.

"And her daughter, Marie Duval! Voila—see you, a warrant for arrest! I, Jules Lafaire, have come from Paris—"

Rosalie felt her heart give a great leap. Her mother and Marie—both to be arrested! Surely it could not be. What had they done to deserve such an indignity?

Her cheeks flaming, she stepped forward, and confronted the speaker.

"Surely, you have made a mistake!" she exclaimed quickly. "You would not arrest my mother and sister, who have harmed no one. It is unjust—"

Jules Lafaire stared at her, astonished by the girl's courageous manner.

"You had best keep silence!" he declared angrily. "Or you may also be arrested. And how would you like that, eh?"

Rosalie had started forward again. "But you have no right—"

"Hush, dear me!" Madame Duval entreated. And then: "On what charge are we to be arrested?" she asked, with much dignity.

The leader gave a swaggering shrug and laughed.

"That you might also guess, eh? Where is your husband?"

"I will tell you. It is nothing to his shame. He is not in France—"

"So! It is certainly his luck to have slipped away. Hoping, doubtless, that you and your daughters here would join him later? It is, however, his misfortune that you will not do so!"

"You mistake!" Madame Duval protested fiercely. "The suggestion that my husband has fled—"

"An emigrant, ay!" the leader of the ruffianly gang shouted down that indignant voice. "And will he return when he hears of you two in the Conciergerie? No shall see!"

"Mademoiselle!"—he again addressed Marie, putting out a detaining hand—

"I have said stand still!"

"Don't touch me, you!" she cried. "I wish—"

"Aristocrats like you may wish nothing now—except to be dead!"

chuckled Jules Lafaire, well aware that his cruel witticisms were amusing the pikemen and others surging near the door. "Come then—"

"To Paris!" whispered Madame Duval.

"To the prison of the Conciergerie, yes! Both of them!" the man shouted importantly; and several of the National Guards advanced upon the pair; but Madame Duval held up a hand, and somehow her stately calmness checked them.

"Wait. It is surely a charge that I can answer here and now. If it be because my husband is out of the country—"

"It is because he and you—your children, too; this youngest one, for that matter, ay!" said the leader, glaring at spellbound Rosalie. "But we are not taking her—yet. You are all aristocrats; therefore, enemies of the people."

"Not so," Madame Duval dissented strenuously. "I can prove it at once—this minute! My husband, far from being an enemy of France in her sufferings, is serving her at this moment. It is why he is abroad—"

"To make one less mouth for starving France to feed, eh?" jeered the leader; and again his attendants laughed and commented amongst themselves. "But aristocrats do not take much bread out of our mouths now. We do not keep them long enough. Ha, ha! No!"

In an impatient way Madame Duval made a swishing turn upon the carpet, then faced the bully again.

"I will go with you; my daughter, too, will go—"

"It is," he laughed, "very gracious of you to consent!"

"But," she continued, ignoring the mockery, "why not let me prove at once the house of Duval lives for France?"

"Yes, listen to me, please!" came the sudden entreaty from Rosalie, starting all. "My mother and my father have always been good to the poor. Here in the village, only to-day, every drop of milk for the sick. Always—"

"A pretence!" sneered Lafaire. "No more of this—"

"But, good sir, Amy Burbridge now made bold to interpose, "if the lady says she can prove it? Be fair—"

"What? And who are you?"

"An English girl—"

"Oho! English? Bah, taissez-vous—shut up, you!" he snapped, making as if to strike Amy. "It is a fine house of Duval that shelters an English girl!"

They are fine patriots," he sneered at the English! "The English have helped France so much. Oh, yes, we love the English!"

It was Amy who looked most upset now. The harsh gibe had told her that her chance presence might all be used as evidence against the household, France being at enmity with England.

"Your pardon, then!" demanded the people's representative as Lafaire was entitled to call himself.

"No, on second thoughts, I will not offer them now," Madame Duval refused coldly. "They are papers, and you might take them from me. And then where would I be?"

"Only where you will shortly be, in any case," he grinned evilly. "At the guillotine, most probably. You refuse?"

"Bon—good!" he shrugged. "Voilà, then, my brothers of the Republic One and Indivisible—your prisoners!"

In a rough, martial manner the guards set themselves on either side of the mother and daughter. It was a thing to make Amy and Rosalie—the latter especially—their hair torn from their blanch with horror.

"You will permit us," Madame Duval asked in an unshaken manner, "to bid farewell to this our Rosalie?"

"Quick, then!" Lafaire granted the plea, if only for the sake of airing his new-found dignity. "For I and my brothers are hungry, and there is a good supper for us at Saily—with a good light to see by!"

He stamped to one of the windows and with a foot he began to chank a window, kicking open the outer shutters. The glare from Saily was now so vivid, lighting all the night sky, it came like a red dawn-light into this room.

At the same time all the distant uproar sounded louder. There was a great singing over yonder, and mad beating of pots and pans—a fearful din, with the strains of the "Marseillaise Hymn" somehow emerging clearly.

The man at the window began to chant and stamp a foot in time with the distant chorus, and some others here also took up the song.

Amid such distractions did Rosalie have to bid good-bye to her mother and Marie—perhaps never to see them again. Marie was the first to be embraced by the younger girl, who smothered her with passionate, agonised kisses.

"Courage, dear heart!" Rosalie whispered, as they kissed each other's wetted cheeks. "You will be saved! Father has ever been a good patriot!"

Marie's lips quivered.

"Say farewell for me to Jacques," she whispered. "He saved my life when I was a child—our dear, brave Jacques! Rosalie, sister, an revoir!"

But Rosalie knew that this was likely to be farewell for ever!

"Heaven hear my prayers for you, Marie!" breathed Rosalie; and then, whilst her sister turned to say a hasty farewell to Amy, the mother began to whisper:

"Rosalie—quick! Listen! When I and Marie are gone, get the papers that are in the cabinet in my salon—the ones in father's writing. Show them to no one, unless it be Jacques. Only get those papers sent after me to Paris, and we shall be saved! This little key—"

"My mother—"

"Be careful whom you trust! The papers were to be kept until your father came, with others. But my child, my poor little one—"

"Attention!" Lafaire turned round from the smashed window to shout

sternly. "March, then, my brothers! Take away your prisoners, the aristocrats are—"

"Aristocrats!" howled the gang; and those who had no pikes to shake shook their clenched fists in the air. "Down with the enemies of the people! Long live the Republic!"

"Long live the Revolution!" bellowed the leader gaily. "Long live the guillotine! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mother and elder daughter were being dragged away now. They were looking back, trying to see their darling Rosalie still; but there were men blocking the view, following behind, singing and laughing.

But Rosalie would not be denied, with Amy Burbridge close at her heels, she followed the prisoners from the room

into the hall of the chateau, and down the long, winding drive, lit now in

cerie fashion by the flickering torches.

Over the tree-tops was still to be seen the glare from the burning chateau of Saily-le-Petit. On either hand the black shadows seemed intensified. It was a scene of horror, made worse by the hoarse, laughing voices of the men, who ringed Madame Duval and Marie about.

Rosalie felt her pulses racing, as desperately she tried to approach nearer to her loved ones, only to be thrust back now, too gently.

"Let me be with them just for a few seconds!" she pleaded agonisingly; but the revolutionaries barred her way.

"You've said your farewells!" one of them growled. "What more do you want? Get back to your chateau. You're mistress there now."

He and his companions laughed at what they considered an excellent joke.

"Ay!" added a second. "Go and enjoy it, my dear. You may not have it long. I shouldn't wonder if it shares the fate of yonder chateau ere many hours have passed."

He added over towards Saily, and there were renewed guffaws of laughter.

Rosalie was not heeding these "jests" at all; her expense, however. Her whole mind was concentrated on those two slender figures ahead, now just passing through the big entrance gates of the chateau. There was a kind of desperate longing in her heart to feel her arms about them for just a brief second before they parted from her—perhaps for ever.

She darted forward, attempting to thrust a way through the guard; but their pikes massed before her, barring her progress effectually. Had this check, she could only watch, agony in her heart, as her mother and Marie were bundled into a waiting coach. Jules Lafaire clambered in after them, and the coach rattled off at a good pace towards Saily.

Then the erstwhile guards lowered their pikes.

"There goes your mother!" chuckled one. "If you hurry you may catch her!"

With a strangled cry, Rosalie darted after the coach. Every nerve straining, she raced forward, intent on overtaking it.

"My mother! Marie!" The names came pantingly from her lips in a kind of prayerful supplication. "I must see you once again."

She was gaining on the rumbling coach. A fierce exaltation filled her, and she increased her pace. Now she was alongside the lumbering, pair-horse vehicle, a bound, and she had sprung on to the step, and her face was pressed to the window.

"Mother dearest—Marie!" she murmured. "Good-bye! May Heaven be with you!"

She tried bravely to smile at them through the tears that now would not be checked.

Madame Duval and Marie glanced at the window in startled surprise, and half rose from their seats. But Jules Lafaire was too quick for them. He let the window fall with a jerk, and then, thrusting out a huge hand, sent Rosalie reeling into the roadway.

And as Rosalie, falling heavily to the ground, lay momentarily stunned with grief and pain, she heard the window closed with a bang. The coach rattled on its way, and with its going it seemed to Rosalie as if everything she cared for most in life had gone with it.

Yet, a few moments later, Rosalie was reminded that she was not entirely friendless. Amy Burbridge had followed her precipitate flight, and now came up, to drop on her knees beside the forlorn, grief-stricken girl.

How glad Rosalie was, at that moment, for the comforting presence of this English girl! How much worse it would have been, she was thinking, had she been left alone!

"Poor Rosalie!" Amy murmured. "Be comforted, dear. Something tells me you will see them again!"

But would they? Rosalie, in that poignant moment, knew not what to think—indeed, scarcely dare think at all!

The Papers.

"**R**OSALIE— But let me close those shutters first."

Darting across to the smashed window, Amy pulled the lattices round once again, shutting out that ominous glare in the sky, even if she could not shut out all the hideous sounds.

She came back to Rosalie, who seemed to be frozen still now that they had returned to the chateau, as if she had received some stunning physical blow from which she would need time to recover.

"This chair, Rosalie," enjoined Amy, very tenderly. "Oh I am so sorry for you and for them! I cannot find words. I do not speak French half well enough. But—you understand?"

"An. yes!" murmured Rosalie brokenly.

They suddenly kissed each other. "Sit down, then, Rosalie," Amy invited her companion.

Rosalie shook her head, and slowly a look of determination replaced the one of sadness.

"No! They have gone now—quite gone!" she commented on the tragic silence within doors. "Then it must be that I lose no time. My mother—at that last moment she whispered me about some papers. If I find them—if only I can find them," she spoke on, clenching her hands, "they will save us all! Papers, in my mother's salon, in a cabinet; papers in my father's writing! But—listen! Is it safe to go?"

They went together to the open doorway, and listened from there, whilst their eyes peered out into a great, dim hall.

"Jacques—we must find him also!" Rosalie said resolutely. "Or have they killed him, perhaps? Our Jacques! We all love him, my sister, I think, much so. He is lame ever since the day

he saved her from being thrown from her pony in the park."

"Shall we call to him?" suggested Amy. "But better not, perhaps!"

"We must. It is too terrible, if he is lying somewhere wounded. Jacques!" Rosalie sent her voice resounding through the vast house. "Jacques, where are you?"

There was no answer. After calling aloud together several times, the two girls looked at each other.

"It must be the papers first," sighed Rosalie. "Perhaps they have taken him with them, after all. This way."

She added, as they went hand-in-hand towards the handsome staircase:

"How I am glad to have you, my dear friend, and yet how sad! Tomorrow it must be that you do something about yourself. France is no place for you, alas!"

"I shall not leave you, Rosalie Duval."

"But—"
"Never!" declared the English girl flatly. "It would be a disgrace. This beautiful house!" She discreetly changed the subject, whilst they mounted the broad staircase. "It is wonderful!"

"It is doomed, I fear," was Rosalie's tragic rejoinder. "unless—those papers!"

"Quick, then, whilst we have the chance!"

"Yes, yes! This way! The room there!" panted Rosalie. She was pointing to a door midway down a first floor corridor into which they had turned.

The room they came to was in darkness. Rosalie found flint and steel in an accustomed place, and at last she had two rush candles burning.

"It will be," she whispered, "a small drawer, I think, for the key is so small my mother passed to me. But here is the cabinet."

The handsome piece of furniture, very tall, had a closed-in front. This, however, formed of two doors of beautiful workmanship, was unlocked. Amy,



Rosalie tried desperately to approach nearer to her mother and sister. "Let me be with them just for a few seconds," she pleaded agonisingly, but the revolutionaries barred her way.

standing by with the light, was all of a tremble as Rosalie straightway tried the key in one of several drawers at the back of the recess.

It seemed a fortunate thing that the key opened the first drawer to be tried; but that drawer was empty.

"How, then, have the papers been stolen?" was Rosalie's appalled exclamation. "But, no; the key opens this drawer also. It will perhaps open all!" And so it did. Another minute, and the whole series of inner drawers had been unlocked and pulled out. Some were empty, some held nicknacks of sentimental interest; but papers there were none.

"Unlucky!" muttered Rosalie, standing at a loss, and plucking a lip. "It is that they have been stolen, and my mother—my poor, unhappy mother—did not know! They are nowhere, yet this is the cabinet. The key fitted the locks!" A cold shiver ran through her. Without the papers she guessed only too well what the fate of her mother and Marie was likely to be.

"Is there a secret drawer, Rosalie?" suggested Amy eagerly. "One that your mother had no time to explain?" "You mean in here—so?" the French girl exclaimed excitedly, pulling a central drawer right out, so as to feel about the tiny recess. "A panel, perhaps—ah, the light, quick! Yes, yes; see!"

Her tiny hand had slid a thin slab of wood outwards, as one slides the lid of a domino box, and now her fingers encountered some papers—a packet bound with ribbon.

Then—a sound over by the doorway that made Amy almost drop the candles, whilst Rosalie suddenly clenched the packet of papers to her heart, even as a cry of dismay was wrung from her.

The man, Lafaire, was there, chuckling, and regarding them mockingly. "I do not need to assist you, then?" he jested, swaggering towards the terror-stricken girls. "It is good! I thought I would have to miss my supper at Sully, searching for those papers. Give them to me."

"They are not yours!" panted Rosalie defiantly. "They belong to my mother."

He laughed. "Nothing belongs to your father or mother any more. What, you, too, would defy the representative of the people—a child?"

"A Duval!" she said.

"An aristocrat; ay, and younger than you have gone to their death!"

"I do not care if you kill me! It will kill my mother to lose these papers! Oh," was Rosalie's anguished, desperate cry, "what am I saying! But, go away—go, you monster you!"

With a leering confidence he came towering nearer, and then, in sheer desperation, Amy Burbridge dashed down the candles, crying, "Rosalie!" the very instant that the room was plunged into darkness.

Both girls dodged this way and that, evading the man, in spite of his furious reaching out of both arms. Amy found the papers being passed to her, and she snatched at them, understanding. At the same time, both girls were rushing for the doorway, but as they reached it, a masculine figure blocked the way.

For the space of one second they felt that they were lost—doomed. In the darkness they guessed that this was one of Lafaire's men who had stayed behind with him, on the quiet.

They found themselves pushed dextrously into the corridor, and they knew that Jacques and no other was here.

Even as they went out headlong into the dark corridor, they heard a violent scuffle begin in the dark salon. What to do they knew not, for the moment. They had the papers, and yet they were remembering that Jacques' bare fellow was but a weak cripple compared with Lafaire.

So they hesitated, wanting to fly with the vital papers, yet wanting also to help Jacques somehow. Nor did this latter impulse grow weaker as the struggle in there grew louder and fiercer.

The men must have been fighting each other all over the room. Pieces of furniture were thudding about, crockery was smashing, and all the time there was the hard breathing of desperate Jacques and the savage cursing of Lafaire.

Amy exclaimed at last: "Rosalie, you run, with the papers! I will go in—do my best. Oh, but it is too late!" She broke off, as a great crash over by one of the salon windows ended the deadly struggle.

"Rosalie—"
"One moment!"
They stood and listened. A low groaning came from the room, which

was not now as dark as it had been. Together they peered in round the jamb of the door.

It was the lurid glare from the distant fire that illumined the salons. The lattice shutters of one window were standing burst open. And only Jacques was here, lying prone upon the floor.

He had mastered his opponent and simply hurled him out of the window.

"Mercy of heaven," breathed Rosalie. "Oh, the poor wretch—see him, not a movement—like the dead!"

"She knelt down, whilst Amy had the presence of mind to grope about for the flint-and-steel, and re-light the candle.

"Yes, be quick—thank you, dear friend," Rosalie said tearfully, as Amy brought the lights near. "Does he breathe? What shall we do for him? Our good, faithful Jacques, he had for us, we always knew. And now, for us, he has died!"

"The papers, Rosalie?" asked Amy, if only to say something rallying. "You have them still? You look at them, and I will see to this poor youth. I think he still lives—yes, what a mercy."

"So! And these papers," the French girl said tensely, giving them a rapid inspection. "Now I know! It is true enough; they would save my mother, save Marie, all of us, if only they could be placed in the right hands, to be taken on to Paris! They would prove that my father has been the best possible friend to France—to the new Republic itself! Here is much that he has found out about one of our foreign enemies—their army's plan of attack! Oh, how my dear brave father has served France over this! Then what are we to do?" she asked distractedly.

"It must be Jacques, my mother said, to take these papers after her to Paris, but Jacques—ah, how bad he is!" She on one side of the inert victim, Amy on the other side, they knelt there, their senses almost reeling at thought of the desperate plight they were in.

Then Rosalie stood up, to go and fetch water. "He will live," Amy said convincingly, stanching blood, "but that brute stabbed him, Rosalie! I am thinking—"

About those papers and getting them to Paris—"

"Yes!" jerked out the French girl, stepping nearer, "about the papers—what?"

"You and I—together—we must go with them, that is all," said Amy.

"To Paris? But yes!" Rosalie whispered vehemently. "I at least will go—for Jacques here has done all he can for us, that is certain, even if he lives."

"I said, Rosalie, we will both go!" "Oh, my welcome, true friend!" came with a sudden rush of tears from the other girl. "Now it is good of you to promise it! To travel with me to Paris—to save my own dear mother, and my darling sister. To save them, as no one else can, from—La Guillotine!"

But some thought of all the difficulties, the dangers, and delays of the perilous journey, made her add: "If only by the help of Providence, we can be in time!"

(A more perilous journey than that which Rosalie and Amy have decided to undertake can scarcely be imagined. Can they possibly succeed in their desperate effort to save Rosalie's mother and sister? Danger surrounds them from the very outset, as you will see when you read the continuation of this thrilling historical serial in No. 2 of THE SCHOOLGIRL, on sale Saturday, August 3rd. Don't forget another real photo-card will be given free with our next issue.)



Aren't the Photo-Cards Given with this Issue Delightful?

You MUST get the other Four
of
NORMA SHEARER
CLIVE BROOK
DOLORES DEL RIO and
RONALD COLMAN

Given
FREE with—
Price 2d.

THE SCHOOLGIRL

This charming long complete story is by popular Louise Carlton.

The SECRET of the OLD KEEP!

Zara Dean loved the old ruined castle near her caravan home, and what a grief it was to her to learn that she and her mother were to be ordered away from their romantic surroundings. It seemed to Zara that everything she held dear was to be taken from her.



The Ruins in the Glen!

"YOU know, mother dear, we ought to be very grateful to Mr. Tomlinson for letting us stay here in this lovely place."

Zara Dean's lustrous eyes were very sombre as she gazed down at the prostrate figure of her mother, who was lying on a bed of canvas bags stuffed with hay, mounted on a somewhat crudely-made wooden frame that did duty for a bedstead.

The morning sun played upon Zara's glorious, nut-brown hair, revealing all its hidden tints; it caressed her lovely, creamy skin, kissed her naturally-red lips. It made of her a wondrous picture as she stood in the entrance of the little tent—a picture to delight the heart of any artist.

Zara was quite unconscious of her beauty, however, although her invalid mother, lying on that rude little bed, was justly proud of her.

At school Zara had been called "The Gipsy Queen," which, was quite apt, for she was of true Romany blood, whilst she carried herself with a charm and grace which was at once the envy of every girl she came into contact with.

Zara had left school now; for three years she had been at a high school for girls at a seaside resort, kept there by a proud and dotting father, who had never as much as received an hour's schooling when he was a boy.

Until a few months back Zara's father had, by dint of many years' saving and care, managed to pay for her education; but one morning he had awakened to

find his little store of money gone—and with it a rascally half-breed gipsy who had formed one of the tribe.

At the same time Zara's mother had fallen seriously ill, and so she had come home to nurse her and help her father.

And "home" meant a caravan and a tent set in a glorious glen in the grounds of an ancient mansion which had for many years been empty. The owner, Mr. Tomlinson, could not afford to keep it up, but he had a kind heart, and he granted Zara's father full permission to camp in the glen as long as he liked, in return for a service once rendered to him.

"Mr. Tomlinson is the kindest man I have ever known, Zara," her mother said quietly, smiling up fondly into the deep eyes. "I—I am afraid, though." Zara started.

"Afraid, mother dear? Of what?" "That one day the Hall and the estates will be sold. A new owner will come, and then—"

Zara saw her mother slowly shake her head.

"You mean we shall have to go from here?" Zara said slowly.

"I am afraid so, dear." The patient, pain-racked face twitched and a solitary tear trickled down the beloved cheek.

Zara felt a sudden, gripping anguish, and she looked sharply away down the glen where the dew was glistening in silvery beads on the leaves of the trees and bushes and upon the blades of grass.

Suppose they had to move from this place where her mother had been per-

mitted to remain during her illness? What would it mean?

Zara knew exactly what might happen in that event. She knew that her mother was too ill to be moved, and yet they were powerless to refuse to go if they were ordered away. For weeks she had lain between life and death, and now she was slowly recovering. It would be hard, cruel, if they had to move her now, and so undo all the good that had been done.

Zara stooped and kissed her mother. "The Hall isn't sold yet, dear," she reminded the invalid, with a gaiety that was forced. "Now I'll go and gather the flowers and take them into town. Oh, dear mother—doesn't the old keep look lovely this morning. Look at those flowers growing right up at the top. Isn't it wonderful?"

Her mother nodded. At the end of the glen was a large lake—her magic lake, Zara called it—in the centre of which was a fairly large island. Upon this, at one time, had stood a noble castle, where in the days of civil strife in England many a fugitive from the Royalist forces had sheltered. All that remained now, however, was the battlemented, round keep, half in ruins and covered by masses of thick ivy and wild flowers, which sprouted healthily from between the massive stones.

Zara loved this spot; nothing pleased

her more than to roam around the lake, or to pass over it in the old, crazy punt that was used for crossing to the island and back. Another favourite spot of hers was the old, ruined chapel, standing on the bank of the lake opposite the castle keep.

Making sure that her mother was quite comfortable Zara left the little tent and walked up the glen towards the picturesque chapel ruins on the bank of the lake.

As she approached them Zara's dark eyes took on a far-away expression.

In her mind she was reconstructing that old pile—from the moss and ivy-covered debris there seemed to rise a beautiful stone building, with arched windows and doors.

She could picture the old chapel as it must have looked centuries ago, when it had been used for worship.

Shadowy figures seemed to pass into the interior—figures clad in old-time attire.

Zara sank on to a large stone—it had been a huge coping-stone of the old chapel at one time, but had long since fallen and rolled to its present position, where it lay covered with moss—and resting her delicately moulded chin in her cupped hands, with her elbows on her knees, she drank in the beloved scene.

A slight breeze sighed through the ruins—the trees by its side rustled lazily. Birds flitting through the remnants of the arches, or across the ivy-grown tops of the jagged wall, sang sweetly as they went.

These were the only sounds to break the wonderful silence of the spot.

And it was wonderful to Zara.

She was living just now in a different world. Her romantic nature was carrying her back through the ages and she was seeing, in her mind's eye scenes that no artist ever depicted.

Suddenly something moved—something that darted from the cover of a

courage. With a bound, it disappeared among the ruins, and smilingly Zara followed.

Inside the moss-strewn pile the sun threw long shadows across the waving grass and piles of masonry, from which grew flowers and ferns. It was a glorious scene, and once again Zara paused, drinking in the solemn reminder of what had once been.

Down that centre aisle chanting monks had once passed, for at one time a monastery had stood on the other side of the glen. That, however, had been bought and pulled down, the valuable stone being used for a more modern building.

"Mother has never been here," Zara thought wistfully. "How she has been looking forward to roaming amongst these old ruins when she is better! Oh, surely—surely nothing will happen to disappoint her! Daddy said only the other day that we should never have to leave here."

She did not go right into the ruins, because she knew that to do so would be dangerous. The floor was none too safe in places—she had discovered this once before when she had been on a tour of exploration.

The great slabs, moss-covered, and the grassy aisle looked safe enough. But the supports from the old vaults below had crumbled, and when Zara had stepped on the edge of a slab of stone it had trembled beneath her



weight, and she had heard the clattering of earth and stone falling into the depths below her.

Since then she had been very careful, and had found that it was considerably safer to keep to the walls. Outside, notices had been placed, on the instructions of Mr. Tomlinson, warning people who might be tempted to trespass for the purpose of exploring the ruins that they were unsafe.

With a deep sigh Zara turned away to where some wonderful flowers were growing—wild flowers jutting out from the moss of the walls; delicate, pale pink flowers, locally called "Ragged Robins," and a host of other many-coloured blooms.

These she used to pick each day and take them into the local town to sell, making them up into attractive bunches. The money she thus obtained went to supplement her father's meagre earnings.

Slowly she gathered bunch after bunch and placed them in the basket she had brought with her.

Suddenly she paused, and, stooping, picked carefully a huge, fluffy dandelion "clock."

"I wonder if you can tell me if—if we shall be turned away from here?" she asked wistfully, gazing at the fragile ball of fluff, so often used playfully by children to tell the time. "Oh, tell me—tell me. Will darling mother be allowed to stay here and get better?"

She blew upon it ever so gently.

And then her heart seemed to stop beating.

For the light seed-heads had all disappeared, and were floating away on the breeze.

"Oh!" she cried disappointedly. "They've all gone. Does that mean no? Does it mean that—?"

She caught her breath quickly and gave a glad exclamation.

"No; there is just one left! You darling! That means we shall stay—we shall stay, I feel sure. Come along, let us go back and tell mother that there is nothing to worry about!"

And, picking up her now well-filled basket, Zara went lightly back down the glen to the little tent in which her invalid mother lay.

"You won't get off the island—unless you like to swim over!" said the rich girl. Zara stood staring across the water. Surely the girl was joking! Surely she did not intend to leave her in such a predicament!

Because She was a Gipsy!

ZARA'S mother received her news of what the dandelion clock had said with a quiet smile. But she said nothing, and, kissing her again, Zara went and harnessed their little black pony, Bob, to the cart. Her mother's words that morning had come as something of a shock to her. She had never thought of the possibility of another owner of the Hall. It was disturbing, for she had somehow come to imagine that they would be allowed always to stay in that lovely spot.

Mr. Tomlinson had allowed her father to cultivate part of the land, where he grew vegetables, which he sold on

An
gran
con
stor
app
No
I
SOB
G
On
Sixt
Aug
H

I
ta
"H
Cri
and
Rid
ST
A

bush towards one of the gaping holes in the chapel wall.

Zara smiled as she watched it.

"Don't be frightened, little rabbit," she called, for it was indeed a timid rabbit that had become startled at sight of her. "I won't hurt you."

The creature paused, looking at her uncertainly.

Kissing, Zara went slowly towards it. But that was too much for the rabbit's

market days in the town. Surely, thought Zara, he would make some arrangement if the land were to be sold. And yet, why should he?

She shrugged. After all, there was little reason why he should worry about them. It was true that her father did him a service long ago and that he had always after been grateful. But—

Zara had reached a portion of the road that ran by the railway embankment, and the piercing note of an engine's whistle suddenly disturbed the serenity of the country spot.

She turned and looked back, to see a train come tearing round the bend in the line a little distance away. Idly she watched it as it drew level and roared past. Suddenly she started.

A girl was standing at one of the windows and had thrust out her hand, evidently pointing at her. The window was open, and her hand, in which she was gripping a small vanity bag, protruded.

Whether it was the rush of air, or whether she knocked her knuckles, Zara could not determine then. But she saw the bag drop from the girl's hand and saw it go tumbling down the side of the railway embankment, shedding its contents as it did so, for the fastening had broken open.

The train rushed on, and was gone; but she drew in the pony, and, dismounting, ran to the side

Half an hour later she entered the main street of the town, and made for the road in which she knew the police station was situated.

On the corner of a street, however, she suddenly espied a policeman, and acting upon impulse, she stooped and picked the bag up.



of the road. Climbing the fence, she reached the spot where she had seen the bag come to rest, and, stooping, picked it up.

Some of the inner pockets had not come unfastened, but the main part of the bag, which was an elaborate, expensive one, was empty.

Glancing round, Zara saw the contents spread over the embankment—letters, a powder-puff, a small mirror, a lip-stick, and several silver and copper coins.

She commenced to pick them all up, and searched over a wide area to make sure she had recovered everything. At length she felt she had succeeded, and she went back to the pony and cart.

There was only one thing to be done; she must take the bag to the police in the town when she reached it. No doubt the girl would report her loss when she reached the end of her journey, wherever that was, and the bag would thus be restored to her.

Zara did not attempt to look into the inner pockets of the bag. Such a proceeding did not suggest itself to her for a moment. She placed the bag in a corner of the cart and drove on.

As she did so a girl's high-pitched voice startled her, and, turning, she recognised the speaker.

Standing upon the kerb, pointing an accusing finger at her, was the girl she had seen at the compartment window.

"There's my bag, daddy!" she cried. "That gipsy girl has it—look! My goodness! What a good job I happened to notice it in her hands. I should never have seen it again if I hadn't, I know. I say, you gipsy girl, give me my bag, please, before I call that policeman!"

Notice to Leave the Glen.

ZARA'S beautiful face coloured and her eyes flashed indignantly. There was no mistaking the girl's tone and manner. She was inferring that Zara had been intending to keep the bag.

"You are quite wrong," she said, with quiet dignity, as she leant over the side of the cart and handed the bag to its owner. "I was just about to call the policeman myself and give the bag

to him. I saw you drop it from the train and I picked everything up—at least, I think I found everything. I searched well."

"I have no doubt you searched all right—inside and out!" said the girl unpleasantly. "Gipsies are very good at that kind of thing, I believe."

The other girl tossed her head and flushed.

"Well, you are a gipsy, aren't you?" she asked imperintently.

Zara nodded. "I am," she replied; and all her Romany pride welled up within her.

The owner of the bag gave a curious laugh, then turned to an elderly gentleman standing by her side.

"I've always understood that gipsies are people to be avoided as much as possible!" she sneered. "They are not famous for honesty, are they, daddy? Come along; I'm frightfully hungry! There's nothing missing from the bag, so far as I can tell."

Without another glance in Zara's direction, the girl thrust her hand through the arm of her father, and the pair walked away—leaving several people, who had been attracted by the girl's high-pitched voice, staring at Zara.

Yet, strangely enough, there was no trace of humiliation in her bearing—and the effect upon the onlookers was not to provoke scorn for her.

On the contrary, their glances were frankly admiring, and murmurs broke out against the haughty owner of the bag.

Zara smiled, shrugged her shoulders, and spoke to the pony. Then, as she drove on towards the place where she usually stood to sell her flowers, she reflected, a little bitterly, that the other girl had not yet thanked her for recovering her bag.

Yet, harsh though she had been, and unkindly though she had spoken, Zara felt subconsciously attracted towards her. There was something in that high-born girl—for obviously she was such—that intrigued her; some appeal that defied definition. Perhaps it was her frailty. Zara shrugged again. She could not understand her own feelings.

She soon sold her flowers, for people made a practice of buying her beautiful, fresh-gathered wild blooms; then she made a few necessary purchases, and at last turned the pony's head in the direction of her lovely glen home.

Many an admiring glance was thrown at her as she jogged along in that old cart. Her beauty was well known in the district. Yet it always attracted attention. But she did not notice the looks, although she smiled at many whom she knew.

She stopped by the railway embankment on the way back, and conducted another search amongst the grass of the slope and in the ditch at the bottom.

"I'll make sure there is nothing here," she murmured. "If she finds there is something missing, after all, and it should be found by someone else and not taken to the police, she might make out I had kept it. I—Hallo! What's this?"

She had pulled a lower branch of an overhanging bush on one side, and just beneath it, half-hidden in the grass, she saw something that gleamed dully. She picked it up, she uttered a low cry. For it was a golden locket, obviously of great value.

"This must belong to her," she thought, as she gazed at the exquisitely chased piece of jewellery. "I wonder—"

She paused for a few seconds; then, acting on impulse, pressed the tiny catch and snapped open the locket.

"It is hers—that is her photograph!" she cried, as she saw on one side of the open locket, a miniature photograph of the head and shoulders of a girl. "I wonder who that is!"

On the other side was the likeness of a lady; and Zara instinctively smiled at the kindly, smiling face that looked up at her.

"Perhaps it is her mother," she thought. "Yes, they are alike. What shall I do? If I go back now and give it to the police, I shall be terrible late home for mother's broth. No; I'll go home first, and go into the town again this afternoon."

Closing the locket softly, she returned to the cart, feeling satisfied that nothing else remained hidden.

Zara was deep in thought for the remainder of the drive home, until she met a girl who lived in a cottage not far from the glen.

"Hallo," the girl called, looking at her a little strangely, Zara thought. "Have you heard the news?"

Zara shook her head wonderingly; at the same time a little stab of apprehension caused her to catch her breath. Instinctively she felt that this girl was about to tell her something that vitally affected her. And she was right. "The Hall has been sold," was the reply. And Zara saw that the other girl's face was concerned. "I wonder if—"

"If what?" asked Zara. Yet she knew exactly what the other girl was going to say. She was thinking it herself now—with fast beating heart.

"I was wondering if it would make

any difference to you," was the hesitating reply. "The new people might—"

Zara nodded. "I hope they won't," she said softly. "For mother's sake. I wonder who they are?"

She parted from the other girl and went on towards the glen, her heart thumping.

"Who has bought the Hall?" she asked herself. "I wonder if they will be like Mr. Tomlinson and let us stay there? Or will they make us go? Will they—"

She turned the pony in at the narrow entrance to the glen. The little tent could be seen beneath the green foliage of the trees, and as she went towards it her heart beat faster.

For, standing before the tent was a small knot of men.

Leaping from the cart, Zara sped to the tent, spurred on by the sound of her mother's voice, raised in obvious supplication.

"Cannot you give us a few days, sir?" she was asking. "My husband will find somewhere else to pitch, and—"

"I am afraid I can allow no gipsies on my estate," answered one of the gentlemen; and, with a start, Zara recognised the man who had been addressed as "daddy" by the girl in the train. "You have to leave my grounds immediately your husband returns."

By that time Zara had reached them, and she dropped to her mother's side with a low cry.

"Goodness! There's the girl who was going to steal my bag!" cried a voice. Zara looked round, and her eyes fell upon a man whom she had not seen as she approached. It was the frail, large-eyed girl to whom the bag belonged.

And the Hall had been bought by this girl's father.

An icy hand gripped at Zara's heart as the truth of the situation became clear to her.

They could entertain little hope of a continuance of Mr. Tomlinson's generous treatment at the hands of these people, she thought miserably. They would have to go. Her mother's fear had been realised!

Left on the Island.

ZARA recognised the other men who were with the new owner of the Hall. They were bailiffs from the town—men who had been looking after the estate for Mr. Tomlinson for a long while.

She saw that their faces were eloquent of sympathy, hardened though they were to affairs of the world.

"The fact that you were in possession of my daughter's bag in the town scarcely induces me to allow you all to stay," said the girl's father coldly.

"You asked us to believe that you were intending to give it to the police, but I doubt it. Apart from that, I object to having you on my land, and that is sufficient. You have a cart and a caravan, and there will be no hardship inflicted. You will still have your home."

Zara's head went up proudly. After all, she reflected, a trifle bitterly, why should they grovel to this man? They were every bit as good as he, and—

There was her mother. Above all things, she must be considered. She was not fit to be moved. Surely this was not fit to be moved. Surely they were enough to realise the position if it were pointed out to them.

But before she could frame words for

the appeal she intended to make the owner turned away, followed by the bailiffs.

The girl paused for a moment, her large eyes fixed on Zara and her mother. It seemed to Zara as though she were hesitating.

Then she, too, with an upward tilt of her head, turned and walked away; and a few moments later the glen was empty and silent, save for the twittering birds in the trees and the mother and her daughter, clasped in each other's arms. From behind the bushes came the champ of the pony's bit.

"I feared it—I feared it," her mother said brokenly. "All my life, dear, I have roamed, as all gipsies do. But of recent years, since my ill-health, I have longed for peace and quietness. We found it here—everything so beautiful and—ideal. Now we must go. We must be thankful, I suppose, that we have been so long allowed to remain here. Sometimes, Zara, it appears to be a crime for one to be a gipsy."

Zara's wonderful eyes were flashing proudly, but her mouth was tender as she kissed her mother's cheek.

She said nothing, however, and commenced to prepare her mother's broth.

"Daddy won't be home until four or five," she thought, as she bustled about and replenished the little wood fire beneath the tripod. "Poor, dear old daddy! How terribly disappointed he will be! He has loved this place, just as we do. Oh, how I wish I could do something to alter that gentleman's decision. If only I could!"

But what could she do? She realised how utterly helpless she was in the matter. She felt sure that her father would go to see the new owner as soon as he learnt of the happening of that morning, but she felt it would do no good.

And she was right. When he returned just after five her father, after listening to their tale, announced his immediate intention of going up to the Hall and seeing the new owner.

He drank the tea Zara had prepared for him, and then departed.

An hour later he returned, and one glance at his bronzed face told Zara the truth.

He had been unsuccessful.

"He flew into a temper, lass," he told his daughter. "Told me it was like my impertinence to ask such a thing. Said he would call the police if we were not gone before nightfall."

His head was throbbing back proudly. "We cannot go until that old caravan rear wheel's been repaired," he went on. "So I must take it into the blacksmith's at once, Zara. Get everything ready for the move."

She nodded and looked towards her mother, who smiled up at her bravely.

There was a big lump in Zara's throat as she set about her task.

The sun was nearing the western horizon when she had finished, and her mother had dozed off on her bed at the entrance to the tent, which was now empty except for the bed.

A sudden yearning to see the old ruins of the keep came over Zara. She walked up the glen and reached the lake.

The sun was setting behind the old pile on the island, throwing it into a sharp relief.

Everything was so peaceful, so quiet. She untied the punt, and slowly pulled across to the island where she stepped ashore, securing the craft to an old stake.

Then she walked over the soft, mossy grass towards the crumbling walls.

It was sad to think she was going to

leave all this. She had grown to love it all so much. She thought of the pleasure it gave her mother to lie and look towards this old keep.

"The little dandelion clock was wrong, after all," she reflected, as she gently rained one with the toe of her shoe. "We've got to go—to leave here. Poor—poor mother!"

A harsh screech from somewhere up in the rafters of the ruins rang out and she glanced up to see, faintly in the gloom, an owl gazing down solemnly at her.

"They can't turn you out, can they?" she asked, with a sad smile.

Poor Zara!

Her little world of romance was going to pass out of her life.

Only memories—precious, glorious memories—would remain. She would live again many times in these old ruins; recall them in all their majestic beauty. But they would be gone for ever; she would never roam in them again.

Yet, with all her disappointment, she was not full of selfish thoughts. She did not worry for herself; it was her mother. What would happen to her now?

"Oh, if they would only let mother stay!" she thought wistfully. "And yet that would not be of any use; for she must have someone to look after her. To think that the father of that girl is the new owner of the Hall! I—I wonder if she will love this place like—like I do?"

She gazed across to the old chapel. Somewhere in the distance a church bell was ringing for an evening service. Mellowed by the distance it sounded almost as though it might be the old chapel-bell tolling.

It would have been about this time that the monks would have filed in to Vespers, thought Zara. They, too, had had to leave; they had been driven out, as she and her mother and father were being.

They had gone and left it all behind them—this lovely place that was now in ruins.

She sighed and passed through the ruins of the keep. She gazed yearningly at the old oaken door, still standing in perfect preservation. It stood wedged open, immovable.

Above her towered a circular space, with the stone stairway going up in a spiral on one side of it, broken and unsafe.

Then high up stood a wide ledge, at the end of which was an opening leading into the thick wall itself. How often she had stood on that ledge and looked down!

"Good-bye, old place!" she murmured. "Good-bye!"

There was something in her throat that seemed to choke her, and she turned abruptly and went out of the ruin on to the mossy grass that sloped down to the lake.

"Well, of all the cheek!"

The sudden, high pitched voice startled her and made her jump, bringing her from her reverie with a jolt.

The voice had come from the opposite bank, and she looked sharply in that direction.

There on the farther shore, a highly-indignant expression upon her thin face, was the rich girl—the daughter of the new owner of the Hall.

"I thought daddy told you all to go!" she continued, shouting quite unnecessarily; for, although the distance was considerable, the quiet of the place was so absolute that had she spoken in an ordinary tone Zara would have heard quite distinctly. "What are you doing here still—and over there on that island, of all places? How dare you go over

there! Don't you know that you are trespassing?"

This aspect of things had not occurred to Zara for a moment.

She flushed as she realised that she was, in fact, trespassing; that she had no right to be there at all.

"I—I am sorry," she returned in her rich voice. "I did not mean to trespass. Only—only I love this place so! I was taking a last look round it. I—"

"Taking a last look round it," scoffed the other girl. "I like that! Anyone would think that you had owned the place. But one can expect nothing else from a gipsy, I suppose."

Zara ignored the insult. "Believe me, I really did forget what I was doing," she pleaded. "I did not realise I have no right here."

"Send the punt across!" commanded the other girl suddenly, as though acting on a sudden impulse.

"Send it across? I don't understand," said Zara hesitatingly.

"Push the punt over to me!" was the reply. "I want to get over to the island."

"Let me come over and fetch you," offered Zara gladly. "I—"

"You stay where you are and push the punt over to me!" was the sharp command. "I am quite capable of poling across myself. Do as you are told, and don't argue!" she added imperiously.

Zara obeyed. She walked down to the punt and untied it; then, making sure the pole was on board, she pushed the ancient craft powerfully towards the opposite bank.

"Be careful how you get into it," she called warningly. "It is not really safe. That is why I wanted to fetch you. I— What are you doing?"

For the punt had touched the bank,

and the girl was busily engaged in securing the painter to the tree on the bank to which it was usually secured.

The frail-looking daughter of the new owner laughed derisively.

"I am making sure that you can't get off until you are fetched," she replied. "You had no right here, in the first place. And when I get back to the house I'll tell daddy, and he can do what he likes about it. You won't get off there for a bit—unless you like to swim over!"

Zara stood staring across at her in the gathering gloom. The sun was sliding down out of sight; long shadows were creeping over the water. Beneath the heavy foliage of the trees it was already dark.

Surely the rich girl was joking! She could not mean that!

But it seemed that she did mean it; for she turned away, after another laugh at Zara's predicament, and walked towards the ruins of the old chapel standing some twenty-five yards away.

Left on the island! And they had been ordered to leave that night. She would either have to stay there until her father returned, or—what was more probable—be taken off before that by the owner, and perhaps be prosecuted for trespass.

Unless—
Zara turned and looked up at the towering keep. There was a way across to the mainland—a way she knew of. It was the secret of the old keep.

Should she attempt it? It was a



The spluttering match revealed to Zara's wondering gaze a heavily-studded door. Would she be able to reach the girl who was imprisoned in the vault?

dangerous way, and there was considerable risk. Was it worth it? Should she undertake it?

Zara turned and looked back, half hoping that the girl on the other bank would, by this time, have repented. Perhaps she had only been trying to frighten her. Perhaps—

In the half-light, Zara saw the owner's daughter mounting the moss-covered ruins of the chapel.

A cry left Zara's lips: "Don't go in there! Stop, stop! You mustn't go in there! The notice says—"

A sudden, rumbling noise interrupted her warning cry. There came a terrific shriek from the ruins.

Then, amid a thick cloud of dust and debris, the girl who had been standing on the ruins disappeared. Zara saw, with horror, a whole wall collapse. There came a crash of masonry; then, gradually, silence fell!

For nearly a minute Zara stood there bereft of action. She was horrified—shocked beyond description.

Then she nearly fainted in sudden relief.

For, muffled, there came a cry that seemed to rise from the ground beneath the ruins on the opposite bank.

"Help! Oh, help!"

Well Done, Zara!

"SHE'S alive!" gasped Zara, in whole-hearted relief. Then, aloud, she called: "Are you hurt?"

"Oh, yes! And I feel I'm suffocating. I'm in a dungeon, I think. I can't get out. I'm hemmed in. Oh, get help—get help—quickly!"

Apparently the imprisoned girl had forgotten that she had marooned Zara by a mean trick a few moments before.

Zara knew every inch of the ruins of both the keep and the chapel, and she knew that it was dangerous to venture in certain parts of the chapel floor. Unsuspectingly, the rich girl had stepped on a weak portion of the floor and it had collapsed, bringing down a side wall with it.

She had been thrown down to the floor of the vault beneath, and the wedging of two flagstones had caused the debris to pile up above her. But all she could do was to turn from side to side—there was room for nothing else.

Zara hesitated only for a few seconds. She could not swim, therefore it was impossible for her to get across in that manner. And, ever if she did get across, could she be of any assistance to the imprisoned girl from above?

Her father had not yet returned, and it was nearly three-quarters of a mile to the Hall. By the time she obtained help it might be too late!

Zara looked up at the ivy on the keep wall, and the next moment was climbing up it, swiftly, surely, and with an ease that suggested it was not the first time she had done it.

High up on the keep jutted a ledge, that had once been a landing inside the great, round tower. The interior had long since broken away in ruins and decay, but this ledge still stood intact.

Lowering herself from the battlement above on to the ledge, she disappeared through a large aperture which had once been a secret door. This gave on to some winding, narrow steps that corkscrewed down the inside of the massive wall.

Down, down, down she went, in impenetrable darkness. In her pocket she carried a box of matches, which luckily was full. She did not, however, strike any as yet. She was sure of her way

until she reached the bottom of the stairs, which actually was under the keep.

Here her way was barred by a huge, studded door, and it was here that she struck her first match.

Using all her young strength, she threw open the door; immediately a stale, dank atmosphere smote her nostrils.

Her spluttering match revealed a tunnel leading downwards before her, and she plunged into the subterranean passage fearlessly.

She knew that she was beneath the lake now, for suddenly the passage ran perfectly straight and flat. Then it commenced to rise until her way was once more barred by a door.

Striking another match, she felt for the fastening, and, with little trouble, opened the great, studded door.

As she did so a frightened gasp that ended in a wail of fear came from the darkness beyond.

"It's all right!" Zara called quickly. "It's only me—it's the gipsy girl!"

"Oh, thank goodness!"

Striking another match, she saw a scene of indescribable ruin in the vault before her. The whole of the roof had fallen in.

Zara saw the other girl in a sort of V-shaped cavity just inside the doorway.

"Are you hurt very much?" she asked tenderly.

"I—I don't know," was the quavering reply. "I knocked my shoulder. I know. Oh, it was terrible! How did you reach me?"

Zara laughed. "I'll tell you that later on. The first thing is to get you out of that hole. Tell me if I hurt you."

She placed her hands under the other girl's arms and gently pulled.

"Press with your feet," she urged.

Slowly she managed to free the girl and soon had her standing in the underground passage by her side, trembling, but safe.

"Come along," said Zara, striking a match. "Hold my arm and you will be all right."

It did not take long to reach the platform of stone at the top of the keep, and when they stepped out upon it from the cavity it was to discover that it was now almost dark.

But Zara was quite at home, and she placed her arm around the girl she had rescued.

"Can you climb?" she asked.

"W—why?"

"Because the side of this tower is covered with ivy and, if you are not afraid, I think I can help you to climb down. If not, then will you stay here while I go and get help?"

There was a moment's pause, then: "I will go down with you. I—I am not afraid—now."

Zara nodded in the gloom and, placing her foot firmly in the overgrowing ivy, helped the other girl to climb over to the outer side of the wall.

Thus, bit by bit, the two girls went down, down, down, until finally they were standing on the mossy bank at the foot of the wall.

There was silence. Both girls were looking at each other.

Suddenly the rich girl spoke.

"Thank you," she said, and her voice seemed to have lost that high-pitched tone; it sounded genuine. "It would have taken hours for men to have cleared a way down to me, and I—I should have been suffocated by that time. I think I—It was awful!"

"I tried to stop you," Zara reminded her. "I knew it was very dangerous—"

there are notices all round those walls warning people from going there."

For the girl before her had reeled unsteadily. Zara caught her and supported her.

"What a little cat I've been!" said the girl, a little unsteadily. "How horrid we can be to you! And—and you have repaid me by—by doing this. You need not have worried—most girls would have paid me out by letting me stay there until my father could have got me out. I—may I kiss you?"

There were tears in her eyes as she said that.

Zara's gentle heart immediately responded, and the next moment the girls were clasped to each other.

For the first time since she had picked it up Zara suddenly remembered the locket she had found on her second visit to the embankment by the railway.

Thrusting her hand into her pocket, she withdrew it. Then she pressed it into the other girl's hand.

"I went back to the railway on the way home and—and I found this," she whispered. "I had forgotten it until now. I—I hope you won't think I was meaning to keep it?"

"Oh; it is mother's photograph—and mine! I wouldn't have lost this for anything. How was it I didn't miss it from the bag? Oh dear—and you went back and found it! You dear! You see, my—my mother is dead, and—"

Her voice broke.

"I understand," whispered Zara comfortingly. "I understand. You know, my mother has been very, very ill for a long while, and—and—"

"And we were going to make you move her. Oh, why were we so heartless? I can't think, unless it was because you were so—"

"Gipsies!" Zara finished for her gently. "But, you know, there are good and bad of all races. There are good gipsies."

"I should think there are—and you are one of them," was the reply. "It is I who should be ashamed—and I am. Forgive me, will you? And—and—I say, what is your name?"

"Zara."

"How lovely! And mine is Jenny—Jenny Price. I say, Zara, we're going to be friends—ever such friends. I have a lot to make up to you, and, my goodness, I'm going to make it up, too!"

All at once a light flashed on the bank and someone hailed them.

"Hi, there, what's the matter?"

"It's daddy," said Zara, swallowing the lump in her throat. "He'll soon get us off here now."

Jenny kept her word. Zara and her mother and father were installed in a little villa that Mr. Price built for them at the edge of the glen. Zara went back to school with Jenny, where their fondness for each other earned them the name of the Inseparables.

Zara was happier than ever before in her life; but her greatest joy was to see her mother's recovery to health, with all worry for the future banished.

Often in the cool of the evening they wandered arm in arm amongst the ruins, accompanied by Jenny—and they often are very, very silent.

Each thinks, probably, of what might have been. But all of them try to forget the past in the beautiful and romantic surroundings of the ancient chapel in the glen.

THE END.

(Of course you have enjoyed this splendid story, haven't you? Our next long complete tale will be every bit as delightful. It is entitled: "IN CRINO-LINE AND RINGLETS!" and is by Alice Stafford.)

Holiday happiness and adventure on the peerless French Riviera.



ELISE PROBYN
is the author of this
magnificent holiday
serial.

The Riviera Revellers!

In Sunny France!

"PORTAIRE! You want portaire—madame—m'sieur!"

The excited voices of the French railway porters rang fascinatedly in Dulcie's ears. Carriage doors were opening and slamming. Trunks, boxes, bags, were bumping down on to the platform. Queer, snake-like trolleys—made up of a dozen trucks linked together—wended their way hither and thither with incredible noise.

Such a commotion—such a babel of foreign tongues—such a bewildering change from England and its placid people and staid old railway stations, that now, perhaps for the first time, Dulcie realised that she really was in sunny France.

It wasn't a dream! It was real! It had all been real—that speedy journey from London to Dover, then the wonderful hour or so aboard till the spires and roofs of Calais hove in sight; the landing; the crush of passing through the French Customs house; then the long journey all day and night in the famous Blue Train, bound for the Riviera. And now—

Now she was actually there! She was in Nice! It was no dream! The holiday had really come true!

"Out you jump, Dulcie!" she heard her guardian saying, in laughing tones, as he steered her to the exit at the end of the corridor. "You can't believe it, can you? But you're in Nice right enough!"

"And you'll know it the moment you get out of this station," smiled Mrs. Densley, "when you actually see the Riviera you've been dreaming about this last twelve months, Dulcie!"

"She will, indeed!" Mr. Densley said. "And she'll thank you and me, wife, for

bringing her to the brightest place on earth for her holiday!"

"Oh, rather!" Dulcie managed to breathe out. "It's going to be wonderful, Uncle Den! Simply wonderful! I'm that excited, I—I just can't realise it's true!"

But now the jostling, chattering, clamouring crowds on the platform made conversation impossible. Dulcie found herself struggling past people and baggage in the wake of the porter, Aunt and Uncle "Den" on either side of her.

Mr. and Mrs. Densley were not really her aunt and uncle. They were her guardians. Vaguely, Dulcie knew that she had been placed in their care as a baby, when she was left orphaned, and that a regular sum of money had been

the most wonderful surprise of Dulcie's life when they had told her, a year ago, that she was to spend a whole month's holiday with them on the Riviera!

It had seemed too good to be true—too far-off ever to become a reality. Yet the year had gone by, and here was the holiday actually and truly beginning. Here was the hotel car waiting in the station yard. Here was its splendid name—Hotel Charmant—blazoned in brilliant blue letters across the polished panels.

"Tell the driver not to go too fast, William!" Mrs. Densley said nervously. "You know how utterly reckless these Frenchmen are!"

But Dulcie wasn't troubling about the speed of the car. Her eyes were feasting upon the white, sun-swept boulevards, with their spreading palm-trees lining the pavements, and the gay cafes, fronted by rows and rows of little round tables, underneath awnings of striped pink and white. The car flashed into the Avenue de la Victoire, with its picturesque decorations arched across the road from tree to tree. Here was the route King Carnival would take.

Le Carnaval!

Dulcie's heart danced. How glorious to think that she would see the carnival—take part in it—revel in the world-famous Battle of Flowers and the Mascarades and the processions through torch-lighted boulevards when all the Riviera is en fete, and Nice just a great big happy playground!

What thrilling stories she would have to tell the girls when she went back to school! If only they could all be with her now!

But never mind school! Never mind any old thing but the wonderful, marvellous holiday that was just beginning!

What more desirable holiday centre could possibly be found than Nice—that gem of the Riviera? So thought Dulcie Hollington, when she arrived there with her guardians. Nothing surely could happen to mar her enjoyment of so glorious a spot, and yet—something did!

paid the Densleys for her upkeep and education ever since.

Dulcie—whose full name was Dulcie Vera Hollington—had dropped into the way of calling them Aunt and Uncle Den for convenience' sake. They had never been quite like parents or blood-relations to her. Before she was seven years' old she had been sent to boarding-school and had remained there ever since, meeting her guardians only at holiday-times.

But they had been kind and considerate towards her, in their own un-demonstrative way—for, after all, she was not their daughter. It had been

Wasn't it queer, in all this beautiful sunshine, to see those distant mountains peaked with snow. They'd be the Alpes Maritimes! How grand would be climbing them, exploring!

And now the car had turned a corner and was speeding through a palm-tree avenue. Suddenly Dulcie saw the words "Hotel Charmant" crowned in gold letters above a veritable palace, set in a garden of palm and cactus.

The car jerked to a halt.

"And this"—smiled Uncle Den—"is to be your home, and ours, for the next whole month, Dulcie!"

Porters were scurrying down the steps, opening the door of the car, and giving courteous welcome.

"Bon jour, madame et m'amselle! Bon jour, m'sieur!"

A diminutive page-boy sidled importantly to Dulcie's side.

"I speak zo English, neess! I show you! You and mistaire and missees, you come zees way, like zees!"

He strutted up the steps, threw open the door with a flourish, and led Dulcie and her guardians into the hotel vestibule.

And there, by the side of a playing fountain, three other girls were standing—jolly, laughing, sun-tanned girls, of about Dulcie's own age, with swimming-costumes and towels under their arms.

Eagerly they looked at Dulcie. Eagerly she looked back at them. All were thinking the same. Could they be friends? Would they understand each other? Or didn't they speak the same language?

In a loud stage-whisper the trio questioned the page.

"English?"

"Yes, mees!"

"Cheers!" came a whispered but hearty chorus.

Dulcie thrilled as the lift gates closed upon her and swept her aloft. If these three topping girls were going to be her friends her holiday would be absolutely perfect, absolutely complete.

And Aunt and Uncle Den thought the same.

"Those young girls should be very good company for you, Dulcie," they said. "We must hope they'll be here for the whole of your stay!"

"Oh! That would be simply lovely!" Dulcie breathed; and her eyes flashed pure gratitude upon these guardians who had made this wonderful holiday for her.

She couldn't have imagined a daintier room than the one that was given her. It was just a perfect little piece of France in itself. She threw open the window shutters, and saw that it overlooked the garden, where golden clusters of oranges and tangerines were growing as large as life.

But she was given but little time to absorb these wonders, and no time at all to unpack.

Bang, bang, bang! came at the door, and the diminutive Gustave stood there once more.

"Mees, please!" he said. "Ze English young ladies send me here. Zeey say eet ees swimmeeng time. You like to go wiz them? Yes? No?"

"Oh, yes! Rather!" breathed Dulcie, in raptures. "Oui, garcon! Comprenez? Oui?"

"You speak me in English, me understand you bettaire!" reproved the little page.

And he retired, looking slightly hurt. Dulcie was diving down into her trunk for her bathing-costume. What luck! Three topping friends already found! Now for a swim together in the magic blue Mediterranean! Her holiday had indeed begun.

She little dreamed of the shadows so soon to overcloud it.

Under Mediterranean Skies.

DOWNSTAIRS in the vestibule, Pat Seymour beamed across at her friends as the page delivered Dulcie's answer.

"That's great! She's going to join us!" she said enthusiastically. "I liked the look of her, didn't you?"

"A case of love at first sight!" declared Josie Gay, who was the wag of the party and couldn't be serious to save her life.

"There was something particularly nice about her," Zella Drayton murmured thoughtfully. "I don't know why, but as soon as I saw her I thought to myself: 'I do hope she's English, and that we'll get to know her!'"

Inseparable chums though they were, Pat Seymour & Co. were no over "cliquey." They liked company, and lots and lots of it. The more the merrier, was their motto. It was quite amazing the number of people they had already got to know after three days on the Riviera.

They turned now, and swooped across to the staircase as Dulcie reappeared. Laughing and eager and breathless, they all talked at once:

"We're so glad you're English! Are you staying here on holiday? How long? A month? Oh, great! So are we! We've only been here three days so far. It's marvellous! Nothing on earth to touch it! The sunshine! The bathing! The climbing! The trips! My dear, you'd never believe! It's the most wonderful place that ever was! We're having the time of our lives! So will you! You're going to be one of us, aren't you?"

It was Pat Seymour who came to the rescue of the laughing, helpless Dulcie.

"Do dry up, you two, and give the poor thing a chance!" she protested. "She doesn't even know who we are yet, or our names, or any other old thing!"

"Then I'd better break it to her," Josie said solemnly, "that you're Pat Seymour, and the one whom she'll have to beware of! You see"—she turned to Dulcie—"Pat's the leader. If there's any trouble knocking about, she leads us into it. Her chief vice is being inquisitive; she calls it exploring, and she—"

"Don't take any notice of the child!" Pat pleaded of Dulcie. "Her name's Josie Gay. She must have had a bad fall as a baby, but she's quite harmless. Let me introduce you to Zella Drayton. Zella's almost sensible at times, except when she laughs at Josie's wit!"

And then she turned her way forward, and smilingly addressed Dulcie.

"Supposing you tell us your name?" she suggested. "You know us now, don't you? These other two, by the way, are from Churton College. I'm not, worse luck! I just happen to be their friend!"

And her eyes seemed to be saying to Dulcie:

"And I'd like to be your friend, too!" The feeling was mutual. It was one of those rare meetings when two people are instantly attracted to each other. Dulcie's brown eyes met the blue eyes of Zella—softly, understandingly. The glance was returned. In that moment each knew by instinct that there would be a very dear, close friendship between them—always.

"My name," Dulcie said, "is Dulcie Hollington. I'm here with my guardians. It's an absolute treat to

meet you three other girls—Zella and—and Pat and Josie. Is that right? I'll love to be one of you, if I may!"

"Rather!" breathed Zella.

And now Pat and Josie were hustling them out of the hotel. It was a crime to miss another minute of the sunshine, they said, and a bigger crime still to be out of the water at the hour when all Nice was bathing prior to midday dejeuner.

"You're not too tired to swim, are you, Dulcie?" Pat asked quickly. "We forget that you've been travelling all night!"

"Tired?"

Dulcie laughed at the thought of it. Could anyone feel tired under these glorious, tropical, azure skies? She caught her breath as a bend in the boulevard revealed suddenly the first glimpse of sea—blue and sparkling as the sapphires.

"And there's the bathing pavilion!" breathed Zella.

It was a charming, Eastern-like structure leading off the promenade and extending over the beach. A terrace surrounded it, laid out with blue-and-gold chairs and tables, and people were sitting there sipping cooling drinks and ices while the Mediterranean rolled lazily beneath them.

"Come and peep underneath, Dulcie!" Zella said.

Gazing through the promenade railings, Dulcie saw that the under-part of the pavilion had been fitted out as an open-air gymnasium. Bathers in marvellous costumes were raising and bending and stretching over the horizontal bars. Some were skipping. The Casino dancing girls were there in full muster, practising steps and movements, and all looking as fit as fiddles.

And the beach!

It was one mass of colour—folks of every race and every hue lying sun-bathing, their wraps and costumes even more gorgeous than the frocks one saw on the promenade.

A medicine ball was sailing around a circle of people whose faces were all vaguely familiar to Dulcie.

"They're film stars! I dare say you've seen them all on the pictures heaps of times," Zella said. "We were picking them out by name the other day, seeing who could recognise the most—"

But Pat and Josie were getting impatient.

"Come on! Swim!" they shouted, and led the way into the pavilion.

It was a scream to have to bargain with the old lady in charge as to the price of the cabins.

"Trois francs par personne!" madame at first demanded. Three francs each! "Ah, non, madame!" Pat smiled her sweetest smile. "Deux pour trois francs!"

Two people to share a cabin for three francs! Madame groaned and expostulated and waved eloquent hands in protest. It would be an insult to the beautiful Mediterranean to allow swimming at such a price, she conveyed to them.

But the offer of a "tip" for herself brought yielding and smiles. That was different. The demoiselles should pay one-and-a-half francs each no more, and choose whichever cabins they liked. And, incidentally as Pat & Co. had already discovered everyone in Nice paid the same.

"You've got to tip, you see," they laughingly explained to Dulcie. "It doesn't matter where you go or what you do out here, you've got to tip! Even Josie can't get away with it!"

They chose two cabins on the terrace

side by side. Pat and Josie went into one, Dulcie and Zella into the other.

"Bang on the partition when you're ready," said Pat. "I bet we'll race you!"

But it was a dead heat. On the first bang all four appeared on the terrace together, costumes donned, sandals on, all ready for the dip.

Across the beach to the water they scampered, Josie leading and Dulcie running her an easy second.

Splash! Into the marvellous blue. But no icy shock, no sudden chill to take one's breath away. The water was as warm as toast—soft, fragrant, like a bath filled with luxurious perfume and heated to magic perfection.

"And what do you know a bit about this Dulcie?" gurgled Josie, turning over on her back and beating the warm foam with her heels.

"Simply scrumptious!" Dulcie sang back.

Pat and Zella were lining up for a race. The others joined her, to the frantic delight of a camera-man who came rushing to the water's edge.

"Restez-la, demoiselles! S'il vous plait, restez-la! Un moment!" he screeched.

That being a frenzied appeal to stay where they were while he took their photographs.

The excitement on the beach was bewildering and amusing. Everyone gathered round the photographer, shouting directions to Pat & Co. in voluble French as though they, also, had an interest in the portrait. That is the way of the happy Riviera. No reserve or aloofness. Whatever happens to be going on everyone else has got to be in it.

The photo was good fun. The swim was absolutely great. The joy of lying out and sun-drying on the beach afterwards just capped the lot.

A white-coated Nicolis sold them little bunches of toffeed walnuts and almonds and apricots, willingly allowing them to take the morsels and pay him afterwards, when they were dressed. Alphonse always gave credit to his bathing customers.

"Me come back—you pay me, eh? Vaire good," he said, and went humming upon his way.

Then the guitar-girl from Rome came along and sang plaintive songs of her native country. She was a very happy lass. She ought to be, observed Josie, because she made a fortune of money on this glorious beach. In the evenings one would see her dressed in a Paris gown, strolling along to the dance or the opera with her dark-eyed Roman sweetheart.

She was interested in these "English misses," was Grinelda. She wanted to know what they were doing that afternoon.

"We go to the old Lone Castle!" Josie explained.

Grinelda peered up her olive features.

"Chateau Seul—re lonely castle, you call it?" she said. "No good! Verra strange, verra mysterious! Oh, me afraid! Not like re lonely castle!"

Laughing and eager and breathless, the three girls all talked to Dulcie at once. "We've only been here for three days. It's marvellous! The sunshine! The bathing! The trips! It's the most wonderful place that ever was. We're having the time of our lives! So will you! You're going to be one of us!"



And she passed on her way, shaking her raven-black head.

"She makes it sound more exciting than ever, doesn't she?" Zella said gleefully. "We really must explore that old castle this afternoon. It's supposed to be haunted, and I don't know what else! You'll come, won't you, Dulcie?"

"You bet I will!" Dulcie breathed—"that is, if my guardians will let me, of course. But I know they'll be only too glad to get me off their hands. By the way, who's looking after you people?"

"Nan Green—Josie's old nurse!" Pat said, as a burst of laughter went up from the others. "She's the dearest old sleepyhead you ever knew. Would you believe it, she's done nothing but sleep ever since she arrived here. It might be Margate or Southend for all old Nan cares!"

"But she'll waken up for her lunch!" grinned Josie. "Which reminds me that it's time we were getting back. Lunch is early on the Continent, you know, Dulcie. Twelve o'clock sharp, and it gives us a glorious long afternoon. Let's dress!"

Instinctively, Dulcie linked arms with Zella as they walked back to the cabin. That first, mutual liking had deepened. Both know it. They had met scarcely two hours ago, and yet each felt that they had known the other for a lifetime. Possibly the fact that they were

both orphans, as Dulcie now learnt, had something to do with it. It made a common bond. But also there was an intensely sweet, unassuming side to Zella Drayton's nature. She had been brought up in poor circumstances—she had not had the education or advantages that her two friends had had, and she made no secret of these things, and no complaint.

Just a natural, jolly girl, whom Dulcie was attracted to from the first moment of their meeting.

"I'm a careless thing," Zella murmured, as they were dressing. "I ought to have left my only piece of jewellery in madame's charge. Thank goodness it's still safe and sound!"

And she took a queer little gold locket from her pocket and hung it round her neck.

Dulcie stared in amazement. It was a strange, harp-shaped locket, of the rarest design, the gold blending into bright silver at the edges. But to Dulcie it was astonishingly familiar.

"Why, Zella!" she burst out, "I've got a locket exactly the same as that—its absolute twin! I'd never have dreamed there was another one like it on earth. Fancy you having one!"

Zella was quite as surprised as herself.

"Gracious me! And I'd always believed this was the only one of its kind!" she exclaimed. "It's so absolutely uncommon, I thought! Look! Has yours got anything stamped on it? This has my initial!"

And she turned the locket over and showed the letter Z engraved on the back.

Dulcie was flabbergasted. Her own locker bore the initial D engraved upon it in exactly the same fashion.

"Well, doesn't that beat the band!" she gasped. "Mine's identically the same with my own initial stamped on it. I'll show it to you this afternoon. It's in my trunk. I wouldn't wear it on the journey in case I lost it!"

But her surprise quite overcame her. Her locker had always roused other girls' curiosity for its rare and quaint design. Fancy meeting with its twin double, a thousand miles from home!

A Mystery.

LUNCH-TIME in the sunny, mirrored dining-room of the Hotel Charmant. That room was like a veritable garden of flowers. Flowers everywhere—flowers and fruit. The combined effect, with its gilt walls, blue-coated waiters, fashionable guests and grass-green plush carpet, made one glorious blaze of colour. High aloft in a little ornamented terrace an Argentine band was playing, its members all wearing the picturesque uniforms of their country.

Dulcie sat with her guardians at a table tucked away in a gorgeous little alcove. Far across the room, half-hidden in a similar alcove, she glimpsed Pat Seymour & Co. lunching with their genial, sleepy old Nan Green.

"And did you see an enjoyable morning and a good swim, Dulcie?" Uncle Den was asking.

"Just marvellous!" breathed Dulcie, helping herself to an iced fruit soufflé which looked really too beautiful to eat. "And you soon made friends!" murmured Aunt Den. "Were they nice girls?"

"Ever so nice!" Dulcie said enthusiastically. "I felt I'd known them all my life as soon as I met them—especially Zella, the fair one. They want me to go exploring with them over an old ruined castle this afternoon. May I?"

"Certainly!" smiled Aunt Den. "We only want you to enjoy yourself, don't we, William?"

"That's all!" agreed Uncle Den in flowery tones. "We are thinking of nothing but your enjoyment, Dulcie!"

If he spoke a little smugly and self-satisfiedly, Dulcie was too happy to notice it. She chatted on:

"Yes, I particularly liked the fair girl. I think she's named Nell. We seemed to sort of take an instant fancy to each other. Oh, and here's an extraordinary thing!" She looked up from her plate, her eyes excited. "You know that queer little lockert you gave me when I was quite tiny? Well, would you believe it, Zella's got one exactly the same!"

"Oh!"

It was a sharp intake of breath from each of her guardians. Both seemed to change colour. Was it her fancy—Dulcie wondered amazedly—or did they look startled all of a sudden? But—but why?

"It's a surprise to you, then—?" she began breathlessly; but as a quick look passed between Aunt and Uncle Den, the latter interrupted her.

"Oh, no, no!" he said hastily. "Nothing at all uncommon about that. Er—you're sure the lockerts were alike? You compared them together?"

"No," Dulcie said. "Mine's in my trunk, in the tray of the lid. I'm going to show it to Zella after lunch!"

Strange, but Dulcie had the momentary feeling that her words had brought relief. Just a fancy, of course. She forgot it a second later.

"I see!" murmured Uncle Den, exchanging a sidelong glance with his wife.

"You'll show her your lockert another time, eh? That's right. By the way, this girl's name is—er—Zillah, or Zella, I think you said?"

"A very pretty name!" smiled Uncle Den.

"Very!" echoed Aunt Den, and carelessly she dipped her fingers in the finger-bowl, then rose from her chair. "You must excuse me. I have one or two little things to attend to. Please don't hurt my account!"

"Oh, no, my dear!" Uncle Den met her eyes smilingly. "Dulcie—and I will take it easy for a few moments!"

As Aunt Den retired, he chatted pleasantly to Dulcie, describing some of the topsy-turvy wonders of the sunny Riviera, and how it was possible for olives to be out of season in one field, and bearing full fruit in the next. He spoke for some little time, and Dulcie found it all very interesting. But she was glad when at last she could retire, for Pat Seymour & Co. had already left the dining-room after beckoning her with handwaves.

She hurried straight up to her room. She would take the lockert out of her trunk while she remembered it, and show it to Zella as they set out together.

Undoing the heavy straps and buckles, she threw open the lid. It had a removable tray, a handy and safe place in which to store treasures for easy access.

Taking out this tray, Dulcie lifted the flap and felt in the recess in which she had placed the lockert.

Then her eyes suddenly widened with astonishment and dismay.

The lockert had gone! Everything else was there exactly as she had packed it. But the lockert—her inseparable treasure since babyhood—had gone!

"Oh!"

She caught her breath, perplexed and dismayed. Surely, surely, she could not have lost that prized little keepsake! And how? She had packed it so carefully; if it had been stolen on the journey why had nothing else in her trunk been tampered with?

It couldn't have been stolen! It couldn't be lost! But where was it?

From the garden below the window she heard the voices of Pat Seymour & Co. calling:

"Coo-ee, Dulcie! Coo-ee!"

She rose briskly to her feet, determined not to worry or puzzle over her loss any more for the present. The lockert had probably dropped into the bottom of the trunk during all the lifting and carrying en route. That evening she would make a thorough search for it.

Two minutes later, the clouds chased away from her face, she had joined Pat and the others in the garden.

"Come along, slowcoach!" Josie said this way without walking through the hotel, if you're all ready. Is it all right? Did you speak to your guardians?"

"Yes!" Dulcie said brightly. "They said I could go!"

"Cheers!" quoth Josie. "At the present moment they're talking to our old Nan Green in the lounge, so we'll leave her all undisturbed. Now for the haunted chateau!"

"Is it really haunted?" laughed Dulcie, as the whole quartet passed between rows of palms and cactus to the boulevard beyond.

"Absolutely!" insisted Josie, who was of a highly romantic and adventurous turn of mind. "Anything can happen in those mystic ruins—and does! People go there and never come out again. Just vanish off the face of the earth—spirited away! You can hear weird music and swords rattling and chains clanking, so I'm told. White ladies fit

by on horseback. Ghosts, of course! Then there are—"

"Supposing we wait till we get there, chatterbox!" suggested Zella. "You're worse than a French guide, the way you ramble on! Just mind you don't get spooked away yourself!"

"No hope of that!" sighed Pat Sey-

mour. They were within sight of the big square now—the Place Massena—where queer little motor-buses wait to take one up to the heights surrounding Cap Ferrat.

It was part of the fun to travel on the bus. First-class passengers sat inside; third-class passengers stood on the back platform with the conductor, getting the full benefit of the view and the breeze. Of course, Pat & Co. travelled third-class; it was a thousand times more amusing than the other.

That bus just turned up its nose at sight of the first great hill, and then flew upwards and round the bends like a streak of wind. The speed—the excitement! And the breeze! No wonder everybody wore berets. Even those had to be held on for dear life.

Josie, in a rash moment, freed her hand to point to a flotilla of yachts. The next second her beret was sailing gaily over the cliffs and into the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

"Au revoir!" sighed Josie, waving a farewell hand to it, as her chums and fellow passengers laughed hysterically.

"I'll look out for you on the coast at Dover when we reach England again!"

"It's the reading for Corsica at the present moment!" Pat told her, shaking with laughter.

The loss of a beret was a cheap price to pay for that thrilling trip. Up—up into the purple heights, the blue sea below, the golden sun above, and the whole vista one glory of colour that no brush could imitate.

At the little village of Eze, below the Cap Ferrat, Pat & Co. jumped off the "autobus." Zella was the map expert and pathfinder. She led the others through cobbled archways and olive-groves till the village was left behind, and they came out upon the steep mountain path towering dizzily over the tiny, unreal world below.

Not one of them could resist the temptation of peeping down at that little world. Stray farms and cottages dotted here and there looked like diminutive dolls' houses. The grazing cattle and sheep were so many dwarf creeps, seemingly no bigger than apes. A mountain railway far below quite completed the illusion of a toy world, for its little puffing engine looked scarcely as large as one's hand, and it seemed to be running on rails the width of a match-box.

"It's like Gulliver's Travels to the very life!" gurgled Josie. "And the funny thing is, I don't suppose we look any bigger than specks to the people down there!"

"Well, it's the first time you've ever been made to look small, Josie!" chuckled Pat.

And now Zella led the party briskly on its way, rounding this bend and that bend, stumbling over rocks and boulders, till presently—the distance—there loomed the first gaunt-looking ruins of the Chateau Seul—the Lone Castle.

Its straggling, shapeless walls made an eerie sight against the dark background of the neighbouring hills. So cunningly had it been built—long centuries ago—that while it remained hidden to all but the close approach, it commanded in itself a full view of the country, above and below.

"It's an old fort, isn't it?" Dulcie queried.

"Rather! This is where the Turks were beaten when they tried to take

Nice, right back in the twelfth century." Zella told her. "I've been reading it up. Follow me, everybody. There are tunnels leading right down into the dungeons, if we can only find one! I believe I'm on a trail!"

The first trail—and the next half dozen as well—all proved fruitless. Either by design or by landfalls, the tunnels had been blocked after the first yard or two.

It was Zella's idea to go farther afield, and see if a longer and secret tunnel, perhaps, had been built by the fortifiers to allow their men exit and access in times of emergency.

Zella was right.

At quite a distance from the ruins she stumbled upon an innocent-looking gap in the mountain-side, half-hidden by underground.

"Girls, I believe I really have found a clue this time!" she breathed.

And, dragging the bracken aside, she wriggled a little way into the cave. Then the others, eagerly waiting, heard her give a breathless shout:

"It's all right! I can see a spot of daylight right at the end. Tumble in after me!"

The excitement had begun. Wriggling and groping their way one at a time, the girls found themselves in a dark, icy-cold tunnel, its floor as firm and solid as the mountain rock. Far in the distance shone the ray of daylight that Zella had seen. Josie—ever thoughtful—produced an electric-torch from her pocket, and switched it on. It gave out a faint, yellow gleam that was somehow uncanny.

"Don't waste the battery," Pat warned her. "It might run out when we really need it."

In pitch darkness, fumbling, groping, they came at last to the shaft-light where Zella was waiting.

"There are several different passages branching off from here," she told them excitedly. "Let's get our bearings, and judge whereabouts the main exit lies. I say it's the middle passage that leads there!"

"It might be this one on the left," Josie suggested. "How about splitting up in pairs, each pair going a different way?"

"We don't want to lose each other," Zella said.

"But we can keep in touch by shouting every now and again," Josie pointed out.

"I think we'd better go on as we are, in single file, and see where the middle passage leads to," Pat said; and her advice was agreed on by the others.

It was harder going now. The tunnel wound and curved, with no beacon of daylight to guide them. Its floor was uneven, sometimes uphill, sometimes steeply declining. Fresh airways, opening into other passages, appeared from time to time, and only the occasional flash of Josie's torch kept the party together.

"Listen!" Pat cried suddenly.

"What's that sound?"

Everyone stood still! Not a breath was heard—not a breath—but the silence, if anything, was even more creepy.

"Ugh! You did give me a start!" shuddered Josie.

"I thought I heard footsteps following us," Pat said, with a nervous laugh.

"No fear!" came Zella's reassuring answer. "It was just the echo of our own feet."

"But—but afterwards, I mean."

"The echo comes a second or two later because of the bends in the tunnel," Zella said. "Pat, you're wrong!"

She led the way forward, with Pat following her, then Josie, and Dulcie

last of all. The ground was steep and treacherous now. One had to feel with the toe before every step, in order to assure a firm foothold. Zella seemed to be gifted with the faculty for seeing in the dark, and she was constantly forced to pause while the others caught up to her.

"You're making me waste this battery, the pace you're going!" scolded Josie good-naturedly. "We haven't all got eyes like cats, that can see in the dark!"

And now those weird echoes, which Pat had first noticed, became plain to everyone. It sounded for all the world as though other steps were following them through these eerie tunnels of a bygone world. Winding this way and that, climbing here and descending there, always those mocking echoes followed them at every step.

"Hurrah!"

A distant shout came from Zella, faintly echoed once, twice—then:

"The dungeons! They're here!"

And immediately afterwards the words were repeated in ghostly, mocking tones.

Hollow footsteps came clambering after her. She was standing awaiting them as Pat and Josie at last drew to her side. Surely enough, the tunnel had suddenly widened into a vast, square chamber, dim and eerie, but with a faint greyness of light where all before had been pitch dark.

"Switch on your torch, Josie!" Zella exclaimed. "We're in the castle itself now, actually under the ruins. Let's see where to explore."

A clinking sound came, but no ray of light.

"Bother!" sighed Josie. "The battery's given out!"

It was a slight setback, but only a slight.

"Never mind," Zella said. "It's more exciting without a light. It'll bring the ghosts out, if any. I'm rather disappointed that nothing really uncanny's happened yet. Let's be getting on, and—"

She broke off, with a sudden start. A sharp question left her lips, echoed in the same breath by Josie and Pat.

"Where's Dulcie?"

And in ghostly, mocking repetition those dark walls threw back:

"Where's Dulcie?"

"I—I thought I heard her following me all the time!" gasped Josie.

She groped her way back to the mouth of the tunnel, the others following, and shouted aloud:

"Dulcie! Dulcie! Where are you?"

No answer save that sinister echo repeating the cry! She shouted again and again, the others joining her, and still no response was heard.

The trio stood aghast.

"I think she must be playing a joke on us," Pat muttered. "Yet those—those sounds I heard—"

"They were only echoes!" Josie insisted. "It's a joke, of course, but a silly one. Supposing she got lost?"

"I don't believe she's joking at all!" Zella said seriously.

"But—but what else could it mean?" gasped Pat. "She's bound to have heard when we shouted!"

"You surely don't think something—something really uncanny's happened?" breathed Josie. "I say, you know, the tales about this castle are jolly queer, and—"

"I vote we go back in search of her," put in Zella abruptly. "It may be just leg-pulling. I hope it is. But I don't see why she should still keep up the



"Oh, Guardie!" Dulcie's voice almost choked. "I—I was so happy! And now everything—everything's spoilt. Oh, why—why can't I have a holiday like other girls?"

voke, unless—unless she's fed-up with our company!"

Her Happiness Shattered.

WHERE was Dulcie? What happened to her? What mystery lay behind her disappearance, so sudden and unexpected as it had been?

Groping her way through those winding, pitch-dark tunnels, she was eagerly striving to catch up with the others in front of her. At first it had been easy. Occasional flashes from Josie's torch had signalled the way. Then, as the bends and turnings became more frequent, she no longer saw the signals, and had to rely upon the sounds of their footsteps. But steadily, steadily they were gaining ahead.

The echoes, too, were confusing. Sometimes they seemed to be behind her, or beside her, but she took that to be either a trick of acoustics or the echo of her own steps.

None the less, she was misled. Turning through one of the archways, she seemed to be following the sounds of her friend's footsteps, until, suddenly, she found herself at the end of a blind tunnel!

They could not have gone this way. Laughing a little ruefully, she groped her way back again. If she didn't catch up with the others in a minute or two, she'd just have to shout and make them wait for her. But not without an effort to find them unassisted. That was part of the adventure.

She stumbled on and on. Then—just as the quest seemed hopeless, and she was about to shout a laughing "Half-a-mo, you people!"—a gleam of light flashed at the end of the next tunnel.

Josie's torch!

And at the same time she heard footsteps, saw the light flash again as its bearer approached, and guessed that the others had turned back to find her.

She hurried toward it, as fast as the blackness would permit.

"I'm here! It's all right!" she said laughingly, as that light suddenly flashed close to her face.

It wasn't Josie's voice that answered her. It was the voice of an elderly woman, husky and foreign, speaking in broken English:

"You ze last mam'selle? You lose your friends, eh?"

Dulcie gave a start. It was a distinct shock to meet with a stranger in those eerie surroundings.

"Yes," she said breathlessly, "I was lost. I've lost touch with the others. But I'll find them, thank you, and—"

"Me show you. Me guide!" the woman put in. "Follow me zis way!" instinctively Dulcie hesitated. The woman might be a guide, as she said. But there was nothing to prove it, and it seemed rather risky to place herself in the hands of a complete stranger under the circumstances.

"You follow!" the woman repeated a little irritably, as if noting her hesitation. "Me guide! Quite safe! Look!"

She flashed the torch upon her own face—a sharp, wizened little face that Dulcie thought incredibly ugly. It made her draw back with a start almost of repulsion. Then the rays of the lamp fell upon a small metal shield the woman was wearing upon her breast.

"Guide official. Chateau Seul," it was inscribed.

Perhaps the old woman heard the gasp of relief that Dulcie gave, for she chuckled.

"You lost, mam'selle. I take you to friends. Voila!"

And, with the torch still illuminated, she abruptly turned about and led Dulcie through the aged, winding tunnel.

Suddenly—so suddenly that Dulcie's eyes were momentarily dazed—the woman touched a panel in the wall and revealed the full blaze of daylight.

"Voila!" she said.

And with a gentle movement, she pushed Dulcie through the aperture. The panel swung back with a click.

Dulcie's hand had automatically gone to her eyes, to shade the strong sun that was dazzling and high blinding her after the darkness of the tunnel. Vaguely she knew that she was standing on another earth once more. Were the others here? Why had they made their exit so soon? Was there nothing to explore, or—

Her thoughts were checked as a firm hand suddenly touched her shoulder.

"Ah! Here you are, Dulcie!" said a man's voice in tones of abject relief.

Are YOU interested in Amateur Theatricals

?

Then be sure to read
the fascinating long
complete story which
appears in No. 2 of

THE SCHOOLGIRL

On Sale next Saturday, Aug 3rd.

It is entitled:

"In Crinoline and Ringlets"

BY ALICE STAFFORD.

"Thank goodness the old woman made no mistake!" breathed another voice.

And, with a gasp of surprise, Dulcie lowered her hand from her eyes and looked up into the features of Mr. and Mrs. Densley.

"We saw you enter. We tried to attract your attention," her guardian said hurriedly.

"But—but did you send the guide to fetch me?" Dulcie gasped. "Why? I'd no idea you were coming here! And the other girls—they were with me. Aren't they out here as well?"

Her guardian gave a curious, evasive laugh. He took her by the arm, Mrs. Densley took the other, then, with strange haste, they led her away to the mountain path.

"Never mind the other girls just now, my dear," Uncle Den was saying hurriedly.

"But, don't you see, they'll wonder—" Dulcie began.

"It doesn't matter if they do!" came an unusually curt interruption from Mrs. Densley.

The tone brought a queer sense of uneasiness to Dulcie. She looked up sharply into the faces of her guardians. Both were grave and unsmiling. Why? What was the matter? Had she offended them in some inexplicable way?

And then, a dozen yards away, where the path broadened, she saw a car waiting. The driver threw open the door at sight of them. In another instant Dulcie was seated in the car beside Mrs. Densley, and it was off and away at high speed.

"Uncle—aunt, what does it mean?" she burst out. "Why did you fetch me? Why—"

Her guardian's lips came together with a snap.

"It means that you will spend your time with us in future, Dulcie," he said deliberately. "We have spoken to the woman in charge of those girls. We have learnt strange news. Grave news that caused us to fetch you away instantly. Our minds are made up. We consider that Zella Drayton is not fit society for you—"

"That none of them are fit society!" Mrs. Densley corrected sharply; and she seemed to flash an angry, warning glance at her husband.

"Precisely!" he said hastily. "They are quite unsuitable companions for you, all of them, and you must have no more to do with them. I will utter no word against them. But in future you will be solely in our care. You understand, Dulcie? I mean this!"

"And there must be no nonsense about it!" came sternly from Mrs. Densley.

Dulcie's face had whitened with utter dismay. It was as though her holiday had been suddenly snatched from her in the height of its enjoyment. Those three splendid friends were forbidden her! She was ordered to have nothing more to do with them! Ordered to spend her time solely in the company of these guardians—two grown-up people who shared none of her tastes, who had nothing in common with her, and whom she had never really learned to know!

"But—but Uncle Densley!" Frantically she appealed to her guardian. "They're topping girls! They're my friends! My only girl friends here! You wouldn't—oh, you wouldn't part me from them—spoil my holiday—"

"I say nothing against them!" he rapped out. "I say that you shall have nothing more to do with them! And I mean it!"

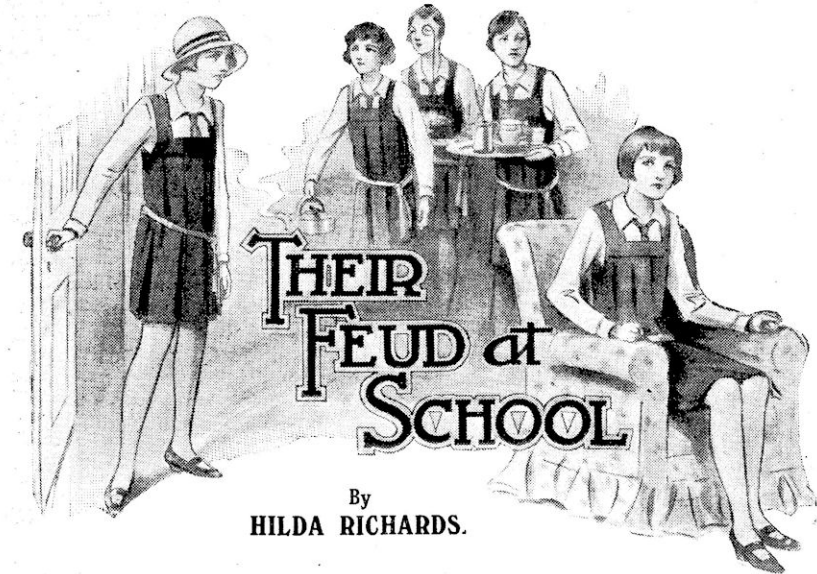
His tone was ruthless in its finality. Dulcie took one frenzied look at him, and then all the blue skies, the sun, shine, and the joy of the Riviera meant nothing to her! Only a mockery of what might have been!

She caught impassionedly at his hands.

"Oh, guardian, why? Why is it?" Her voice choked. "I—I was so happy! And now everything—everything's spoiled! Oh, why—why can't I have a holiday like other girls?"

(Small wonder that Dulcie is filled with dismay on hearing her "uncle's" strange decision. Without the jolly companionship of Zella & Co. her holiday will be shorn of all its zest. And what can she possibly say when next she meets her nearest friends? The next instalment of this grand holiday story is even better than the first, so don't fail to read it. You should place a standing order for THE SCHOOLGIRL with your new-agent now!)

Meet Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff House School.



Off to Cliff House!

GRANNIE wasn't very old, but, anyway, it wouldn't have mattered at all how old she was because she was such a darling, and Cicely Jerome loved her.

"I shall miss you so much, grannie dear," Cicely said, as she leaned out of the window of the train that was to take her away from home to Cliff House School. "I shall miss everything," she added, a little wistfully; and then pulled her new school hat down a little, just to prevent grannie seeing the glister of tears in her eyes.

"Of course, you will, Cicely, my dearest. But don't worry. You'll like school. I've heard Cliff House is such a nice place, and nice girls there. You'll make friends, and then, perhaps, you won't think so much about Pola."

Grannie smiled as she said that, so the sting went out of the words. Cicely managed a smile, too, although it was hard to smile when she thought of Pola, her pony, which she was leaving behind—alas!—for ever. There was not even the consoling thought that she would see dear Pola in the holidays, for grannie's fortune was lost, and the dear old home where they had lived so happily together since the death of Cicely's parents in her babyhood had been sold up.

"It's as bad for you as for me—worse, perhaps, grannie," Cicely said, casting a look at the guard who was smiling at her and making discreet motions with the flag. "It'll be so horrid living in a flat after our lovely house, won't it?"

Grannie had seen the guard's warning, too, so she just nodded her head, and then took Cicely's hand in hers. Grannie's eyes were very sad, even

though she smiled, and her mouth had just the faintest twitch.

"Good-bye; and be brave! Write to me often, won't you? Write to me tonight."

"To-night, without fail. Oh, the train's going! Oh, grannie!" Cicely exclaimed pathetically, leaning as far out of the window as she dared. "It's really good-bye! Oh dear—"

They kissed, and the guard's shrill whistle told that the train had been delayed as long as possible. To Cicely, as the train moved off, the station became a confused blur. She waved her handkerchief mechanically, and saw her grandmother waving back. She saw the bookstall, with its bright-coloured maga-

landscape and trying to forget grannie, her pets, and the old house with its big, rambling garden where she had had so much fun, but which she would never see again.

Hers was to be a new life. No more governesses, but school for the first time, and she would have to make the best of it.

"The girls must never know I've been crying. They'll think I'm a baby. I've got to be brave. And I'm going to win the scholarship this term, so that grannie won't have to go on paying my fees."

Cicely's chin set firmly, and she blinked her eyes several times to get rid of all tears, and then, after inspecting herself in the mirror, took up a magazine and looked through it.

Keeping her mind off home was not so easy, but she managed it, and busied herself, when the magazine failed to hold her attention, with checking over the equipment she had taken for school.

Time seemed to fly as she planned her future life at the school and built castles in the air. She would win the scholarship, and she would make a name for herself at tennis, and perhaps at hockey, and she would be one of the best students in the Form. Oh, it would be splendid fun!

At Lanefield, she had been told, more Cliff House girls would join the train, while at Courtfield Junction the station would be simply packed with them. A fine chance to see how they all looked, and how they were dressed.

Lanefield seemed ages in coming; there were so many small stations before, but, at last, leaning out of the window she saw the glass roof of the

Cicely Jerome was certain she would love being at Cliff House. The fine old school fascinated her, and Babs & Co. were such jolly girls. And then Cicely met Mabel Lynn and, suddenly, all her dreams were shattered!

zine and periodicals, blurred into a confused mist made by her tears.

"Bye-bye, grannie and Pola and Gyp!" she called softly.

Then Cicely sank back into her corner seat and sighed. She was alone in the compartment, and grannie, always nervous, had tipped the guard to look her in. All right then until Courtfield Junction, and until then Cicely could have a good cry.

She squared her shoulders, however. "I must be brave—I must! And it's going to be so nice at school, with tennis and hockey and plenty of friends. I'm silly to cry."

So she dabbed her eyes and bravely forced back tears, looking fixedly at the

station gleaming in the sunlight in the distance. "Nearby it came, and then what a thrill when she saw bobbing about on the platform hats like her own. Cliff House girls!

The train steamed in, and she saw the girls stooping to pick up handbags, saw them gathering odds and ends under their arms.

Now they were running for the train, and she wanted to call out to them that here was a compartment; but, instead, being rather shy, she sat down and concealed her face behind a paper.

Really, there was no need to call out, for three girls came running for her compartment and snatched at the door.

"Empty one here, Marcia!"

"One kid in it, Gwen! But the door's stuck!"

The two girls struggled with the door, while the third, a taller girl, hung back. Cicely, for the moment, had forgotten about the door being locked, and wondered why they were struggling so.

"Better the thing! I say, you inside!" snapped the girl, who had been called Marcia; and her face was dark with anger. "Can't you make some effort to help us?"

"Oh, she's a new kid, Marcia!" said the other girl, Gwen. "You know they're mostly half-witted."

"Cicely went pink."

"The door's locked," she explained.

"My grannie!"

Marcia Loftus paused with her struggling and laughed.

"Your what?" she asked.

"My grannie — my grandmother thought it would be safer if I were locked in."

Cicely saw nothing particularly amusing in that; but the other girls did. Marcia looked at Gwen Cook and giggled. Gwen looked at Marcia and sniggered, while the third tall girl beamed broadly.

"Oh, my goodness—her grannie! Locked in for safety! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But where's her collar and lead?" giggled Gwen mischievously. "I say, is it really coming to Cliff House?"

Cicely surveyed Cicely with a malevolent air. Marcia's face was lean, and her eyes set close together—a most unprepossessing girl, with an obviously bad temper. If she were representative of Cliff House, then all Cicely's castles in the air would come crashing to the ground. But surely that was impossible!

"Well, I mean to get in there," said Marcia. "Can't have a new girl bagging a whole compartment, you know."

"Rather not. I'll watch the door, Agnes, go, and tell the guard this wants opening."

But the guard, having noticed the confusion, came hurrying along and found his key. He was a genial man and took his time.

"No need to hurry, miss; we don't go for a minute. I can let you school girls in here. This here is a new young lady, so be nice to her as she's shy. That's right; in you go!"

He pulled open the door, and Gwen Cook gave him sixpence. Then Marcia stepped into the carriage and trod on Cicely's foot.

"Oh!" Cicely gasped in pain.

Gwen Cook followed, and Gwen did precisely the same thing; so did Agnes, the third girl. And all three giggled merrily, as though it were a great joke.

Tears of pain sprang to Cicely's eyes, for the three girls had used all their weight; but she bit her lip and turned to look out of the window.

"Behave yourself properly, Gwen," said Marcia; "we're in good company here, you know! This girl is used to a special train!"

Cicely was not to be drawn, and looked out of the window. If she had known Marcia Loftus better she would have expected no better conduct from her; but, in the circumstances, she judged the school by the only members of it with whom she had come into contact, and her heart fell. It was only the thought that she would have nice friends that had numbed the pain of parting. But if the other girls at Cliff House were to be like this—

Her thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a prod in the ribs, and she turned, to find that the prod came from a hockey-stick wielded by Marcia.

So Marcia was a hockey player, she reasoned, and probably one of the "set."

"Hey!" said Marcia. "Are you a scholarship girl?"

"Not yet; but I mean to be this term," said Cicely unguardedly.

"What?"

"Oh, my goodness—she means to be!" mocked Gwen. "Did you ever! Can't your grannie afford the fees, or what?"

"I can't," faced them, her face white with anger.

"It isn't grannie's fault she has lost all her money. It was some horrid man who invested it badly for her. And I don't see anything to be ashamed of in trying to help her by winning a scholarship."

Marcia Loftus fairly twittered with excitement. She was the biggest gossip at Cliff House; but her friend, Gwen Cook, ran her a close second. As a rule, it took a good deal of hard work on Marcia's part to rout out the truth about girls' private affairs—especially such affairs as they wished to keep to themselves. But here was someone actually giving information away!

"Your goodness, is that so?" she asked.

"Your grandmother has lost all her money? Tell me all about it."

Cicely shook her head. It was no affair of Marcia's, for one thing, and, for another, the topic was too painful to be discussed. When her grandmother had broken the news to her she had wept. Everything had seemed so secure and her grandmother had trusted Mr. Lynn so absolutely that ruin had seemed impossible, and therefore so much worse when it had come.

"I don't believe it!" sniffed Gwen Cook. "That's what all paupers say—that they were once rich. I suppose you had a governess and a pony of your own?"

"Yes, I had—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed Gwen.

"Another Bessie Bunter. And your uncle is an earl?"

"No, he isn't. You're thinking of my aunt—"

"What! Your aunt an earl?" cried Gwen, her eyes dancing, and she stooped to look her knee exultantly.

"She's better than Bessie. Bessie never said her aunt was an earl."

"My goodness, no! Ha, ha, ha!" Cicely clenched her hands hard.

"I didn't say that at all; only it happens that my aunt married the Earl of Lalworth. I don't see there's anything funny in that."

But Gwen and Marcia linked arms and hugged each other in ecstacy. There was nothing they liked better than tormenting girls, and especially new girls. Cicely seemed to them a providential gift, and Marcia sniggered and whispered something to Gwen, who giggled.

Gwen nodded her head and laughed; but Cicely, her ears burning like fire, turned to look out of window, but saw nothing but mist.

Was this what she was to endure at Cliff House? Was she to be sneered at for a pauper? Was it not bad enough to

have lost money without suffering this? And a scholarship, too! She had thought it rather splendid to work for a scholarship, and so save her grandmother unnecessary expense. But scholarships, she had to learn, were something disgraceful—at least in the eyes of Marcia, Gwen & Co.

How glad Cicely was when the train began to wend its way through the tangle of rails that presaged Courtfield Junction. Here she would have to change trains, and, at least, she would be able to rid herself of these girls!

"Have to run for the other train," said Gwen, as they got out, "over the bridge."

"Rather—like anything!" Marcia agreed.

Cicely, putting her hat straight and arranging her dress, grasped one bag and the papers, and followed them to the platform. Her larger luggage had been booked straight through, so she would not have to bother about it.

Courtfield Junction simply staggered her. It was a large, noisy station, with boys in uniform calling out chocolates and papers, and busy porters trundling trollies hither and thither. But what held her attention most was the number of girls in Cliff House hats.

There were laughing girls, smiling girls, serious girls, pretty girls, girls not so pretty, and one very fat girl, and one who was extremely smart and striking and wore a monocle.

Cicely had not time to examine them all carefully, but she did notice that they gave her scarcely a glance, although all over the place there was warm hand-clapping and patting on the back, and faint cheering and ringing, merry laughter.

Surely they were not all like Marcia? But were they perhaps snobs, who looked down on scholarship girls?

"All change! All change!"

Cicely stood helplessly on the platform, and then she saw girls picking up their things and making for the bridge, so she joined in it, and being nearer the bridge, was over it first.

At the top was Marcia tying her shoelace, and Cicely lost her seat. Then she followed Marcia down to the platform below where two trains waited.

"Quick!" called Gwen.

Marcia and Agnes followed her, and both of them bundled into a compartment. Cicely, however, had no wish to be with them, and she went into the next one, put her bag on the rack, and set her feet in the farthest corner with a paper before her face.

Now for Cliff House. A slow train to Friardale, which was the station for the school, and then her fate would be sealed.

But alas, her fate was to be sealed before that! Marcia, Gwen, and Agnes had sneaked out of the train and climbed into the one at the other platform, and there they giggled unrestrainedly for several minutes. For the truth was that Cicely Jerome was in the wrong train. Her train was not a slow one to Friardale at all, but an express to Linningham, a journey of eighty miles.

And there she sat, with a paper before her face to conceal herself—and so concealing from herself the fact that the Cliff House girls were getting into the other train, and that her own was about to start!

Cicely was congratulating herself that she had got rid of the unwelcome presence of Marcia & Co. When a relief it would be to complete the journey in solitude, for even her thoughts were pleasanter than the jeers of those other girls.

The Right Sort!

"A I.L. clear?"

A porter stood outside Cicely's compartment as the guard asked that question, and he nodded his head. They were off in a moment now! She simply had to take a final peep, and was gratified to know that she would be alone on this journey. Her chief fear had been that there would be a crowd.

But her heart missed a beat as a Cliff House girl came running towards the train. She was such a pretty girl, with such merry blue eyes and pretty olive complexion, that Cicely had to look at her despite herself. And behind that girl came running another—the girl who was so smartly dressed, and who wore a monocle.

"Whoa!" called the front girl, waving her arms. "You can't go yet!"

"Train's going, miss," said the porter.

"Stand back!" But the girl dodged nimbly under his outstretched arm and whipped open the door of Cicely's compartment, tumbling in, while the girl with the monocle waved her hands to the guard to tell him to hold up the train.

Cicely, of course, was amazed at their coolness. What a check, stopping the train like that; and yet they looked cheeky imps, both of them! But they looked so jolly that she liked them at once.

It was the shock of her life, therefore, when the girl with the merry eyes caught hold of her arm.

"Quick, duffer!" she exclaimed. "Out you come!" And called over her shoulder: "Jimmy, get her bag!"

The girl with the monocle entered the compartment and snatched up Cicely's bag and papers.

"Wrong train," she explained, with a friendly smile, "if you want Cliff House. Nippy's the word, too. Train always starts at the whistle, you know. Very smart line this."

She went out of the compartment with the bag, while the guard came along to expostulate, and Cicely, wondering much, suffered herself to be taken out on to the platform, which now was crowded with Cliff House girls.

"There she is," she heard Marcia call. "Barbara Redfern, you mean thing, why didn't you let her go on?"

"Trust Babs to spoil a good jape," snapped Gwen.

They were side by side and glowering angrily, so Cicely looked at Babs beside her and saw that that girl's face wore an unwonted frown.

"I don't call it a jape sending a new kid miles into the country," said Babs cuttingly. "If this is how you mean to start the term, Marcia, it's a pity you came back."

"Awful pity," agreed the girl with the monocle, and yawned. "But never mind. Perhaps you'll be found out this term, what?"

Marcia and Gwen turned their backs, and Babs laughed, looking at Cicely.

"Don't take any notice of them," she said. "Just one

of their spiteful tricks putting you in the wrong train. You're a new girl, of course."

"Yes, I'm Cicely Jerome. I'm going into the Fourth."

"What, our Form?" asked Babs. "How splendid! Well, come along into our compartment. There'll be room if Bessie hasn't had another piece of chocolate. That's Bessie, there—"

And she pointed to the fat girl with large, round glasses.

"You're looking at the pillar-box," said the girl with the monocle. "Our one and only Bessie is in blue, but the confusion is quite permissible, what?"

Cicely's mind was in a whirl. There was such a difference between Babs and this girl and the others she had met that she was astounded.

With Babs taking her arm, she was led through a crowd of girls, some of whom smiled at her, until they came to a compartment where a girl with an Eton-crop and a broad grin stood beating off all comers with a rolled-up newspaper. It was hardly elegant conduct; but then Clara, I've seen the scumboy of the Fourth Form, never was very elegant, as the girl who sat behind her in the compartment was explaining.

"Whoa!" called Barbara. "Friends—ease up, Clara."

"Right!" exclaimed Clara. "I've booked this giddy compartment and I'm not having any intruders in it. Where's Bessie? Tell her to come and sit inside, then there won't be room for anyone else. Bessie!" she called.

Clara stood aside, and Cicely went into the compartment and sat down beside the other girls there, who smiled at her pleasantly. Babs and the girl with the monocle followed. Then they all called to Bessie Butler, the fat girl.

But Bessie was standing by a slot machine inserting pennies at a rapid pace.

"Oh, the duffer!" was Clara's breezy exclamation. "She'll be ill. She's had two packets of chocolates and some raisins. I know she'll be ill. That's her last shilling, and she's changed it into pennies."

Cicely took a peep out of the window on to the noisy platform then, and saw fat Bessie putting pennies into the machine and taking out small packages as quickly as she could, while a teasing crowd was gathered about her.

"New machine!" called one girl. "New machine, please."



"I'm sure I shall enjoy being here," muttered Cicely, as she gazed at the picturesque buildings of Cliff House School. But all the while she was wondering what the girls would say when they knew that if she were to remain at the school long she would have to try to win a scholarship.

"More pennies, then she'll have to pay excess in the train." Only allowed to carry a hundredweight.

"Oh, really, you girls?" blinked Bessie. "I've got jolly thin in the hois. Look at me!"

They looked, and there was more laughter, for if Bessie had got thinner the must have been extraordinarily fat to begin with, and Cicely could not help smiling. But now the guard waved excitedly, porters called, and they were scurrying for the compartments. Fat Bessie, bearing her packages, arrived breathless, and was hauled in unceremoniously by Clara, who even used the fat girl's plait to help her.

"All in?" asked Barbara.
 "Yes," nodded Clara, looking round.
 "And one extra. Who are you?" she asked Cicely.

"Oh, a new girl—Cicely Jerome," Babs explained. "Marcia put her in the express that's just gone out for a joke."

"Just like Marcia," shrugged Clara; and then added: "But you must have been a bit of a clump to go, you know."

Then the girl sitting next to Cicely interposed. Her voice was gentle, and she seemed to have influence over Clara.

"Oh, Clara," she protested, "she's a new girl! How can she know which train is which?"

"Well, she oughtn't to believe a girl with a face like Marcia's. That's asking for trouble. Never mind; here she is, and here is Bessie."

Then Clara looked at Bessie's bundle and shrieked with laughter. Babs looked and laughed, too; so did the girl with the monocle whom they called Jimmy, and the girl beside Cicely.

What the joke was Cicely did not see at first; and when she suddenly realised that the small packet did not contain chocolates but—matches!

"My goodness! Going to eat them all?" asked Babs gaily.

"Y-yes, rather!" said Bessie. "I shall have to, as you girls don't like this sort of chocolate."

"I'll give you a shilling if you eat the lot before Friarclade," said Clara.

"And I," added Jimmy. "I'll give you a bob if you eat one packet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, nothing to laugh at! Are you serious, Clara?"

"How can I be, duffer, at the thought of your eating that lot?"

"I mean, about the shilling?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then here goes."

Bessie Bunter opened the first box, moved it into the focus of her thick glasses, and blinked dazedly.

"Oh dear! I—say, they're matches!" she wailed dolefully. "This is a box of matches!"

"They kept straight faces."

"Of course," said Jimima. "What did you think they were, Tubby? Hurry up—not much time before Friarclade."

Box after box Bessie opened, and at the expression on her face there was more hilarity. It really was a scream, and Cicely joined merrily in the laughter. Bessie minded the loss of the chocolates more than the teasing.

"That was Freda's fault—Freda Foote," said Bessie wrathfully. "All right—wait until we get to Cliff House. She jolly well put a penny in that slot and pretended they were chocolates!"

"Dear old Bessie," said Babs, and looked at Cicely. "This is Bessie Bunter, our prize exhibit, one of the best-hearted kids at Cliff House. But she's never had a square meal in her life. She keeps on hoping, though—"

And keeps on eating, chuckled Clara Trevlyn. "Still, she'll do to roll the hard courts with, that's one thing."

Talk then veered round to tennis, and

Babs, whose full name was Barbara Rodfern, and who proved to be the Fourth Form captain, asked Cicely if she had ever played tennis.

"On a court at home; but not very much, you know."

"Oh, well, you'll soon get practice! Hockey?" asked Barbara. "We're always looking for new talent. Never quite got over losing. Mabs, really—"

"I haven't really played hockey. You see, this is my first school," explained Cicely.

"What?"

They were interested in her at once, and Clara Trevlyn, for once, was slightly incredulous.

"Never been to school before?" she asked. "My hat! How strange you must feel! Not any sort of school?"

"No," blushed Cicely. "I've had governesses. You see, my granmamma mean, my grandmother, brought me up. My people died when I was quite a baby. Only—"

I suppose you made too much trouble for the governesses," said Barbara Rodfern, with a roguish smile. "Is that it? I had one when I was little, and led her a frightful dance."

"I did lead her rather a dance, but she was a dear," confessed Cicely. "I hate leaving her—only things being as they are—"

"That packed you off to school," nodded Clara. "Good thing. Make you tough."

"Foster the Spartan spirit," said Jimima Carstairs, polishing her monocle. "Great stuff! Well, you couldn't come to a better school than Cliff House, what?"

"Rather!"

"Best school in the country."

"We've all manner of special things," explained Barbara. "Topping studies—ripping playing-fields. There are some red-hot hard courts now. And there's a gym, a swimming-bath; everything you could desire."

"Even mistresses," supplemented Marjorie Hazeldene, with a smile; "and lessons."

"Ugh, don't, Marjorie!" implored Clara. "We try to keep that side dark—especially the Bull."

"Oh, have you a bull?" asked Cicely.

"What fun?"

They laughed then, and explained that the "Bull" was the nickname they gave to Miss Bullivant; and they explained that the Bull was rather a tartar. They explained her so precisely and with such a wealth of colour that Cicely could see her in imagination, a thin, gaunt woman given to wearing blouses of dreadful and fearful patterns; a woman with a sharp tongue, more severe than just, and seeming to take a delight in punishing girls.

"Oh dear, she doesn't sound very attractive, does she?" Cicely mused.

"But I suppose there are nice ones. I suppose she's as much like the other mistresses as Marcia is like you."

"They accepted the compliment with smiles. It was nice to be liked even by new girls."

"Oh, there's Janey, our very own Form mistress—she's sweet!" said Barbara. "You'll love her, and the head mistress, Miss Primrose, couldn't be better. I wouldn't swap her. But if anyone made a reasonably decent offer for—"

"There's Cliff House!" cried Clara suddenly, who had been looking eagerly out of the window. "Doesn't it look ripping in the sunshine?"

Cheers sounded along the train for Cliff House, and there were many heads peering out of the windows. Cicely was almost in a special position, as she was a new girl, and she feasted her eyes on the

fine building that could be seen in the distance through the trees. It was an old Tudor manor house, and spoke of Merrie England in the days of Shakespeare, soft lawns, mature trees, and a quiet simplicity that was entirely pleasing. It was a happy-looking school and Cicely, looking at it, was happy, too.

"I shall love it—I know I shall—and I shall be so happy if only—"

she murmured, sitting back on her seat.

"If only what?" smiled Barbara, putting her hand on Cicely's shoulder; and somehow that action seemed to brace Cicely. She wanted to hug Barbara for it.

"If only I can be friends with you," Cicely finished, and felt how silly and affected it must sound. Yet that was what was in her heart.

"Well, that's easy enough," said Barbara. "If that's all that's worrying you, smile!"

And Cicely smiled; but she was worried really, for Barbara did not yet know the truth. They were all of them nice to her, all of them friendly and utterly different from Marcia & Co., but they did not know the truth—that she was poor, and that she meant to be a scholarship girl. Nor dared she tell them after her experience with Marcia. A scholarship girl! Either she would be that, or she must leave at the end of a term unless fortune smiled upon her grandmother. And would Barbara be friends with a scholarship girl, might it not be infra dig? Were scholarship girls at Cliff House treated as paupers—as things apart?

The train slowed up, there was a bustle to get luggage down from the rack, and Cicely was near to Barbara. She fought to tell what she judged to be her guilty secret, but she dared not.

"Tumble out—"

"Run for a cab, Clara!"

"Porter! Porter!"

Once again Cicely was in the mob of excited girls, but this time Barbara was beside her, and Barbara was showing her the ropes, just as though they were the closest of pals. How Cicely dreaded the moment when that hand might drop, when Barbara might turn her back upon her. And then she saw Marcia and Gwen sneering at her, and overheard their whispers.

"I'll pay her out—crawling up to Babs."

"But Babs doesn't know she wants to be a scholarship girl, Marcia."

Marcia laughed unpleasantly.

"I'll make her wish she were back with her granmamma—and before to-night, too."

That was all Cicely heard, but it was enough to send her heart down into her shoes, and bring a heavy, black shadow across the sunniness that had come into her life.

The Shadow of Unhappiness!

OUTSIDE the station at Friarclade there was confusion. There were only three cabs, but there were crowds of girls. There was a huge charabanc that had been awaiting them, and in that they were supposed to travel. But that fact only made the girls more eager to ride in a cab.

Clara Trevlyn, who had reserved one of the station first, had reserved one for the Co., and as usual she managed to ward off all those who wanted it—and there were many.

Cicely, with Barbara holding her arm, pushed her way out of the crowd, smiling broadly, forgetting Marcia and Gwen and their unpleasantness in this new station first.

"Look, there's a monitress wanting a cab," said Barbara, and pointed to

Stella Stone, the school captain, who was in the station booking-hall with her luggage, being surrounded by girls and asked what sort of holiday she had spent, and where she had been.

"But we're taking it," nodded Cicely. "Good. What a dear old horse."

"That's Nobby," said Barbara. "He'll be a hundred and something next week. He was in the charge of the Light Brigade and the Battle of Waterloo, and they say that his mother was Black Bess who took Dick Turpin to York."

They all managed to crowd in, and Clara, making a sort of trumpet out of rolled-up paper, pretended that it was a coach and four. It made enough noise for ten as it went down the station yard into the lane.

No one minded the crush inside, hot and stuffy though it was, and they were all anxious and eager for the first close view of the old school. There was argument about studies, too, and whether they had been done up, and who was to have which.

They talked incessantly all the way and although Cicely knew few of the people they discussed she soon managed to pick up hints.

Cliff House at last. The long, low wall came into sight, and first the specially low portion at the end of the headmistress's garden, where girls who preferred going to dances, or the second house at the pictures, climbed over into the roadway. Then the longer wall that ended in the imposing gateway where the school porter stood bawling.

"I'm sure I shall enjoy being here," muttered Cicely, as she gazed at the picturesque school buildings. But all the while she was wondering what the girls would say when they learnt that she would be a scholarship girl.

Piper, the porter, was cheered, as everything else was cheered at the beginning of term, and then Bessie Hunter fought to get a view of the truck shop which nestled snugly under a tree in the corner of the quadrangle, and was certainly well worth looking at.

But Cicely was looking at the school building itself, with its quaint old roof, and the latticed windows, and great oaken supports.

"That's our Form room window," Clara pointed out. "Clara—fifty lines for looking out of window" and she chuckled. "Wonder how I shall earn my first lines?" she asked.

"You won't be long," Barbara assured her. "First day as usual."

The cab came to a standstill, and they all patted the horse before grabbing their bags and departing, it being left to Barbara to settle the fare, the rest dividing up as usual afterwards.

"This is the hall," said Clara, standing in the doorway. "This is where Miss Prim says a few mouthfuls on occasion—and—ahem!"

"Clara!" said a stern voice. Cicely gave a jump and a gasp.

"The Bull!" she murmured, recognizing the mistress from the others' vivid description of her.

Miss Bullivant it was, stern and grim, with gleaming glasses and a perfectly ferocious blouse that made Gemima pass a hand across her eyes.

"Oh, I didn't see you, Miss Bullivant," said Clara. "I hope you had a good holiday and good weather."

"I had a very good holiday," said Miss Bullivant stiffly. "But I trust you will remember that the holidays are finished. Begin school quietly. Clara, unless you wish to be punished."

Clara went upstairs after that, on exaggerated tiptoes, amidst sniggers from the others, and Cicely followed.



Barbara Redfern held up the photograph of Mabel Lynn. "Mabs was my best chum," she explained quietly. How Cicely wished in her heart that she could be Babs' best friend!

She was beginning to like tomboy Clara and she felt that the Bull, although stern, would be rather fun.

"Our cosy little home," explained Clara, opening a study door.

"But not when you are playing the ukulele, sweetest," said Gemima gently.

"And let me see," added Clara. "We drew lots for studies because we can't get into one. I'm with Jimmy and Marjorie as of yore, isn't that it, Babs, in No. 7?"

"Right!" nodded Barbara. "And Bessie and I in No. 4—and oh—Miss Matthews."

"Janey," said the irrepressible Clara. A youthful mistress had emerged from one of the studies. She was pretty and her face bore a charming smile. Cicely liked her at once. She looked so kind, and so attractive, quite the reverse of Miss Bullivant.

"Oh, Barbara," said Miss Matthews after she had answered their solicitous inquiries concerning her holidays, and told a few of their adventures. "There's a new girl in our Form, and because she has never been to school before I want you to look after her. It was either you or Marcia and Gwen—so—well—"

"Is it Cicely?" asked Barbara eagerly. "Because, if so, we've already met her. This is Cicely."

Miss Matthews smiled at Cicely and patted her shoulder.

"Why yes, Cicely Jerome. How do you do? Very glad to know that you are in my Form. You will get on with Barbara I'm sure. Study No. 4; and now I must really go down and see to things!"

She hurried down the stairs and Clara gave a faint cheer. Cicely was looking after the mistress admiringly; but she turned to Barbara, hardly able to control her excitement.

"I—I'm in your study?" she gasped. "It can't be true!"

"But it is," said Barbara gaily. "Splendid. That'll make three of us. Come along and see how you like it."

She took Cicely by the hand and dragged her along the corridor, passing fleeting glimpses of cosy little dens at newly decorated, and then to a study which bore a number 4 on the door.

"Home!" exclaimed Barbara ecstatically. "Honey sweet home!"

"Looks topping," said Clara. "Freshly decorated and painted. But same old den really. There's the picture of Mabs—good old Mabs."

"Yes," said Barbara, "and it seems to Cicely that a shade crossed her face. I shall miss Mabs. Mabs was my best chum—"

And how Cicely wished in her heart that she could take Mabs' place.

Barbara Redfern looked at Cicely brightly. "Still, we shall be a three some," she added.

"I'll try to make up for Mabs," said Cicely. "She looks a ripping sort of girl in the photo—so jolly."

"She was," said Barbara, a slight catch in her voice. "Ripping pal. I thought she might be coming back to us again—but there—can't be helped. Throw your bag down. You can hang up any photographs you like, you know—do anything you like. It's as much your room as ours. Make it home."

"I will, rather," said Cicely gladly. "I'll go and get some cakes," squealed Bessie. "How many, Babs?"

"Oh, two shillings' worth," said Barbara Redfern. "Here—catch!"

She tossed Bessie a coin and then—then she and Cicely were alone in the study, and Cicely felt suddenly shy and guilty.

"Oh, I say, Barbara," she began. "I—I feel I'm here under false pretences. I feel you ought to know—"

Barbara turned to her in surprise. "False pretences? Why, what do you mean, Cicely?"

Cicely looked down, blushed and then met Barbara's eyes.

"You see, I'm poor really, and if I have any luck I—I shall be a scholarship girl here," she faltered, and waited for the blow to fall.

"A scholarship girl?" said Barbara. "Yes, I ought to have told you before, but I was frightened to. I know it was wrong."

Barbara looked amazed. "Frightened to—but why? What's wrong with being a scholarship girl, for goodness' sake? Peggy Preston was when she came. Shows a girl is jolly clever, I think, and has pluck. I couldn't win one."

"I haven't—but my grannie has lost her money, you see, because some wretched man—well, the money was badly invested or something and grannie is ruined and our home sold up and the dogs and my pony—and— She pulled herself together and fought back tears."

"Why you silly kid," was Barbara's sympathetic cry. "You don't think anyone worth while would think less of you for that?"

"No, but Marcia said—"
"Oh, Marcia!" And what ringing scorn there was in Barbara's tone. "Marcia doesn't matter here. You and I are going to be friends—all of us. Don't you dare say anything more about that! Goodness! It's suggesting I'm as bad as Marcia."

"Then I'm sorry. Oh dear, I'm so happy," said Cicely. "I want to hug you for being such a dear, and I want to write to grannie and tell her that it's lovely here, better than ever I expected in my wildest dreams."

"Right-o. Scribble a note to catch this post," said Barbara quickly. "Do it while I'm getting tea."

So Cicely took some notepaper and a pen and with happiness in her heart sat down to write a gay note to her

grandmother, full of optimism about her future.

And while she was writing, Bessie came back with the cakes.

Marjorie came in with a tea-cloth and some china, and Clara bustled about to get boiling water to make tea. The table was laid, tea was made and the chairs were just being arranged, when the door banged unceremoniously open and a girl entered, a bag in her hand, hat on the back of her head, her face wearing a broad smile.

What a commotion there was—what a surprise, amazed, delighted chorus! "Mabs!"

"It can't be—it can't be!" gasped Barbara, standing petrified. "It's not Mabs, it's her ghost."

But the girl entered the study, dropped her bag and flung her arms round Barbara's neck.

"It is Mabs—and I'm back for this term, at least," she said. "Daddy decided last night. What do you think of that—quick decision—but daddy's been making a fortune, and I'm to come to school for this term and take up acting again afterwards—and oh, heaps of things!"

She and Barbara waltzed round and round while Cicely stood by unheeded. Handshakes there were, and kisses and skipping for joy and great excitement. Mabel back again—dear old Mabs! No wonder there was excitement! And then Barbara remembered Cicely.

"Oh, Mabs," she said. "Meet Cicely, a new girl—Cicely Jerome."

Barbara made a sweeping gesture in Cicely's direction, smiling, and Mabel,

looking the cheeriest girl in the world, held out her hand welcoming.

"And this is Mabs, our Mabs—Mabel Lynn of Lynn's Folly, Cartley, Essex," said Barbara.

Cicely had moved a step forward, but at Barbara's words the welcoming smile went from her face, and her right hand dropped to her side.

Mabel Lynn of Lynn's Folly Barbara had said, and it flashed upon Cicely now; Mr. Lynn of Cartley it was who had been responsible for the loss of her grandmother's money—and now Mr. Lynn himself had suddenly secured a fortune!

This was the daughter of the man who had ruined her grandmother! That was enough for Cicely, and with tightened lips she half-turned towards the door. The laughter and merriment in the study died away, and the assembled Fourth Formers stared at Cicely in amazement.

And Mabel Lynn, the happy smile gone from her face, dropped her hand to her side, rebuffed, slighted, and in front of all her friends—scorned by a new girl!

(Strangely mixed are the feelings of the two girls in this dramatic moment of their first meeting—the one bewildered and annoyed, the other angry and resentful. It is indeed a poignant and embarrassing situation, and one you will be eager to learn more about. The next instalment of this powerful school story will grip you still more, so be sure not to miss it, on any account. Real photograph of Norma Shearer FREE with No. 2 of "The Schoolgirl", on sale Saturday, August 3rd.)

MORE
4 Real Photos
TO COME!

**A BEAUTIFUL
REAL PHOTO
OF
Norma Shearer
WILL BE
GIVEN FREE**

SCHOOLGIRL



**On Sale
Saturday,
August 3rd.**