

FREE : 10 FAVOURITE FILM STARS' AUTOGRAPHS

THE SCHOOLGIRL

Every Saturday 2^d

No. 343. Vol. 14.

INCORPORATING
"SCHOOL DAYS"

Week Ending February 22nd, 1936.



WHEN THE SERVANTS WENT ON STRIKE

An incident from the enthralling long complete Cliff House School story which appears inside.

The Merry Chums of the Cliff House Fourth Feature in This Enthralling Complete Story



ALL THE SCHOOL WONDERED

All Very Strange

"IF Gail Greeves Gregory isn't still in this school, I'm a Dutchman!" Conviction rang in Form captain Barbara Redfern's voice as she made that observation in Study No. 4 at Cliff House School.

Mabel Lynn, her blue-eyed, golden-haired chum busily writing, looked up.

"But how," she demanded, pausing in her labours, "can she be in the school, when Miss Primrose had a letter from her in London only yesterday?"

"Because," Babs replied, "I've heard her!"

"Heard her?" Mabs asked puzzledly.

"Heard her voice," Babs nodded.

"No, I didn't see her"—this in response to the question which plainly shone in Mabs' eyes. "But this morning—you remember—I got up early to have the usual sprint round the track, and, in the

blotchy way these things will happen, my shoe came off just as I reached the kitchen. The kitchen window was open,

and while I was tying up my shoe again I heard someone say: 'Bother it!'

"Well?" Mabs asked.

"The girl who said it was Gail Greeves Gregory," Babs added. "She said it because she broke something. I

heard the crash of glass. But when I looked into the kitchen to find out who was there it was empty."

"You're sure," Mabs asked, "that it was Gail?"

"Quite sure."

A little silence fell. Mabs gazed

curiously at the leader of the Fourth Form. It was not like Babs to speak as positively as that without reason, and

certainly the events which had been happening recently in the school gave colour to her observation.

A week had passed since Gail Greeves

CONSTERNATION at Cliff House! The maids have gone on strike and the chums of the Fourth have to turn to and fend for themselves. But Barbara Redfern and Co. suspect the hand of Gail Gregory in this alarming development—even though they are not yet certain that Gail is still at Cliff House!

Gregory, the trouble-maker of the Fourth Form, had, after a violent row in the Fourth Form Common-room, walked out of the school never to be seen again.

Gail had declared war upon the Fourth. She had declared it, in particular, upon Janet Jordan of that Form.

They were both remembering the incidents which had followed Gail's

walk-out—how Janet's study had been wrecked; how Janet had been accused

of sounding the burglar alarm; how Janet had more than once heard Gail's

voice taunting her; and how, finally, Janet had been penalised by having her

name removed from the Fielding Scholarship list because of the persecution of an unknown girl.

They had found things belonging to Gail, which undoubtedly suggested that

she was hiding in the school, and though they had made every effort to discover

her hiding-place, they had not yet succeeded.

So sure, indeed, had Babs been of Gail's presence in the school that she

had reported the matter to Miss Primrose.

Then had come the bewildering announcement which, for the time being, had swept all their suspicions to the winds.

For Miss Primrose, ridiculing the story, had told them that several times she had been in telephonic communication with Gail Greeves Gregory. Those calls, all of them, had been traced to

London.

As if that wasn't enough, she had that very morning had a letter from Gail

Greeves Gregory bearing a London address and a London postmark. Obviously, Gail could not be in two places

at once, and Babs & Co. had been rather inclined to throw their beliefs

overboard in consequence.

Now this—

"Oh, I'm sure you couldn't have heard her!" Mabs said unasily. "After

all—

"I tell you," Babs said, "it was she! My hat, think I don't know that voice

when I hear it? She was in the servants' quarters. What she was doing

there, I don't know. But remember what she said—that she'd get her own

back on all of us! That meant the Fourth as a whole, Mabs."

"All the same, I don't see what she can do against the whole crowd of us, even supposing she is still in the school," Mabs objected. "She wouldn't have the cheek to try anything else."

By

HILDA RICHARDS

"Then," Babs flashed, "why is she stopping here?"

Mabs shrugged. She was troubled by Babs' conviction, for Gail Greaves Gregory had shown herself a ruthless and a cunning enemy. And if Gail was in the school then, as Babs indicated, it was almost certain her presence preaged some sort of trouble for the Fourth.

And Mabs, at this particular moment, was keenly, desperately anxious that no shadow should mar the serene happiness of the Fourth Form.

For great things were destined to happen in the near future at Cliff House School—that is, if Miss Primrose gave her consent.

It was Mabs' idea to give a social, concert, and dance at Cliff House in aid of the local hospitals, and Mabs, without yet approaching Miss Primrose, had calmly decided to use the new theatre for the purpose, and so run a programme of entertainment at the same time.

More than that, Mabs had told the Form about her project; she had even gone to the lengths of warning the girls she wished to perform, to hold themselves in readiness. For Mabs was nothing if not optimistic. And, as she said, Primmy could hardly withhold permission in such a case.

"Well, there it is," she said, straightening up with a sigh. "The whole programme, Babs. Oh, come! Don't worry your old head about Gail. If she does start any nonsense, we'll soon spot her. No good, you know, in taking half-baked schemes to Primmy," she added, as she handed the list for her captain's inspection. "When she sees that, she'll simply have to let us hold the concert!"

Babs smiled at the other's enthusiasm. "Well, when are you going to see her?"

"Now," said Mabs. "No time like the present. And—say, tell the others that I've gone. Tell them we'll have a meeting in the Common-room as soon as I come back. Now, wish me luck, Babs!"

"Luck," Babs said—"heaps and heaps of it! Right-ho, Mabs! Off you go! I'll round everybody up!"

Mabs laughed a little—a rather excited laugh it was. She tripped out, feeling now that it was, after all, rather cheek, but, nevertheless, determined to go through with it. She reached Miss Primrose's door and knocked. Miss Primrose herself opened it.

"Why, Mabel, you want to see me?"

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"Oh, is it important?"

"Well, it is rather, Miss Primrose."

"Very well. Please wait in the study," the headmistress said. "I have to speak to Miss Charmant for a moment. I will see you immediately I come back."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Primrose!"

The headmistress, with a kindly nod, departed, and Mabs was left alone. Thank goodness, she reflected, Primmy seemed to be in a pleasant humour! Supposing, though, she said "No!"

A shrill ringing of the telephone on the headmistress' desk made her start.

Mabs gazed at the instrument. It was a call for Primmy, of course. She wondered if Miss Primrose would think it awful cheek if she took the call. And then, as the bell whirred more insistently, she picked up the receiver.

"Yes?"

"Oh, is that Miss Primrose?" A girl's voice floated over the wire. "This is Gail Greaves Gregory speaking—from London."

Mabs jumped.

"Who?" she gasped.

"Gail Greaves Gregory. You remember, Miss Primrose—or?"—with swift doubt—"is that Miss Primrose?"

"It—it isn't Miss Primrose, but I—I'll give her a message," Mabs stammered, too staggered to think of clearer words. "You—"

"Oh, don't worry!" The voice came from the other end. "I'll ring again." And down went the receiver, while Mabs stood still.

For that voice, she tingled. It was not the voice of Gail Greaves Gregory!

Who, then, was it who had phoned from London?

Mechanically she placed the receiver

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MORE FILM STARS' AUTOGRAPHS GIVEN AWAY

Next Saturday

HERE are the names of the favourite film stars whose autographs you will receive with your SCHOOLGIRL next Saturday :

GRACIE FIELDS, GEORGE ARLISS, JOAN CRAWFORD, TOM WALLS, JACK HULBERT, JANET GAYNOR, GRETA GARBO, CLARK GABLE, RALPH LYNN, GRACE MOORE.

on its hook. Wonderingly she stared at it, as if by the very intuteness of her gaze she could compel an answer from the cold metal itself.

For some reason she felt a qualm of uneasiness. Her mind went back to what Babs had been saying in the study. Could it be true then that Gail was in Cliff House—that the voice she had heard was somebody using her name to bluff Miss Primrose?

But it was impossible. Impossible, of course. Easy enough for someone else to pass herself off as Gail over the wire, but how to account for that letter? Surely that proved beyond dispute that Gail was in London. Then how—

"Oh, bother it, I'll tell Babs about it," she thought.

Meanwhile, Babs, on her mission of rounding up the Fourth, was traversing the Fourth Form corridor, poking her head in each study as she passed. Not, as a matter of fact, that many girls were in their studies at this time of the evening. For it was the interval between tea and prep, and most of them were engaged in the Common-room already.

Not until she reached Study No. 8 did she find a girl, indeed. That girl was Lucy Morgan, the Welsh member of the Form. She turned slowly as she saw Babs, something glistening between her fingers.

"Oh, hallo, Babs!" she greeted. "See what I've found. It was on the carpet in my study."

"What is it?" Babs asked.

"It is a brooch, to be sure," Lucy said, and she handed the thing over to Babs, who looked at it and knitted her brows.

An expensive brooch it was, a circle of tiny opals surrounding an initial "G."

"Where did you find it?" Babs asked, with a hint of suppressed excitement in her tones.

"On the floor," Lucy said. "Right there." She indicated the spot. "Do you know whose it is, Babs?"

Babs' eyes gleamed.

"I—I think so. Can I keep it, Lucy?"

"Why, certainly!" said Lucy. Babs looked at the brooch again. She wasn't mistaken—no! She had seen that brooch before—had seen Gail Gregory wearing it. No possible mistake about it—if there had been, that initial "G" would have dispelled any doubt. Gail had been in Study No. 8. Gail then, beyond dispute, was in the school!

Babs drew a deep breath. She remembered the voice she had heard that morning, in the servants' quarters. Obviously somebody from the servants' quarters had also dropped this brooch. Could it be—a sudden electric thrill flew through Babs' brain—that Gail was posing as one of the staff?

Then she shook her head. No, Babs knew all the staff from Mrs. Thwaites, the matron, to Boker, the pageboy. There was only one new face among them all—that of Ida Walsh, the new maid. But Ida, naturally, was above suspicion.

Still, Babs thought, no harm in making inquiries.

With the object of making inquiries she descended into the servants' quarters. At the door of the maids' rest-room she knocked, receiving a careless "Come in!"

She entered. Half a dozen of the girls were there. They sat up, staring in surprise at such an unexpected visitor.

"Why, Miss Redfern," Ida Walsh said, with a friendly smile, "fancy you coming to see us! Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"No, nothing!" Babs smiled again. "But someone dropped this in Study No. 8," she said. "It wasn't one of the girls, so I thought it might be one of the servants. Who cleared up Study No. 8 this afternoon?"

"Why, I did!" Ida said.

"Is this yours?"

Ida looked at it, shaking her head.

"No, Miss Redfern!"

"You don't know to whom it belongs?"

"No, Miss Redfern."

"I see!" Babs hesitated, her gaze swiftly running over every face there. "Well, if you happen to hear of anyone losing a brooch, tell them that I've found it," she said. "It must belong to one of you."

She slipped the trinket into her pocket. With a smile she went towards the door. Then a sudden thought struck her. She turned.

"Oh, perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea if I left it with you," she said. "You could question the maids when they came off duty." Again her hand dipped into her pocket. And then amazedly she looked round. "My goodness, I must have dropped it," she exclaimed. "Ida, did you see me drop it?"

Ida shook her head.

"But I had it a moment ago," Babs persisted.

"Oh, Miss Redfern, I'm sure you couldn't have lost it," Ida reproached.

"No, but—" Babs bit her lip. She

did not see Ida Walsh's face as she pretended to search around. She had not observed Ida, as she put that brooch into her pocket, brush past her, and dexterously whisk it out again. And she did not see Ida now as, approaching Sally, one of the other maids, she dropped it surreptitiously into her lap. "I'm sure, Miss Redfern, you couldn't have dropped it," she began, when Babs gave a sudden exclamation. "Why," she cried, "there it is! Sally, you've got it."

"I haven't!" cried the astounded Sally. "But you have!" And very gently Babs went over to her. She picked the trinket out of her lap while Sally stared, her face going suddenly crimson, as she met the queer look which Babs flung at her.

"I—I—" she stammered. "I'm sure, Miss Redfern, I don't know how it got there."

There was silence. "You didn't take it for a joke, Sally?"

"That I didn't!" Sally began indignantly, when the door opened and Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper, came in. She stopped.

"Miss Redfern, what is this?"

"Oh, nun-nothing!" Babs said.

"Nothing!" Sally's eyes flamed. "But it is, Mrs. Carey. Miss Redfern is practically accusing me of stealing this brooch."

"I'm sure," she began indignantly, "I said nothing of the kind. I lost the brooch for a moment, and it happened to be in Sally's lap."

"And how," Sally asked tensely, "did it come to be in my lap? I never put it there. I never even saw it there until you made a grab at it. Then Miss Redfern asks me if I took it for a joke, meaning all the time," Sally added indignantly, "if I had stolen it? You could see she meant that by the look on her face."

Mrs. Carey's eyes glistened. "Ida, is this true?"

Ida shuffled uncomfortably. "Well, I—I don't like to say. But—but it did seem to me that Miss Redfern was playing some little joke herself upon Sally."

"I see!" Mrs. Carey's eyes gleamed. "Miss Redfern, it will be my duty to report that to Miss Primrose. I do not—tartly—allow my girls to be called thieves without reason. Please go."

"Please go!" Mrs. Carey said stiffly. And Babs, realising that to remain there would only provoke a further scene, went slowly from the room.

She did not see the fleeting smile that hovered for an instant upon Ida's lips—a smile of secret satisfaction.

Babs, who had been frowning rather thoughtfully, was startled out of the gloom which seemed to have descended upon her.

"Oh, Mabs, old thing! she cried. "What did she say?"

"It's O.K.!" Mabs laughed.

"Whoopee!" cried Leila Carroll.

"It is! It is!" Mabs gulped. Oh, goodness, she was so breathless with excitement that she could hardly get her words out. "Primmy was a sport," she said. "She loved the idea really."

"Good old Primmy!" enthusiastically cheered Tomboy Clara Trevlyn.

"She said that we could have the dance—and the concert. But—but—Mabs choked. "Oh, wait a minute, cuckoos, don't all mob me. She said, though, that we'd have to do all the ordering ourselves, and take the responsibility, and so on. She's made me organiser-in-chief, with Miss Charmant holding a watching brief to see that everything goes O.K."

There was a whoop of joy then. Smiles everywhere.

Clara Trevlyn, indeed, feeling the need to express her joy, caught fast Bessie Bunter round her ample waist and waltzed her round the room. The whole room buzzed. Every girl, at the same moment, started to talk. What a din!

But for once it was a happy din. Even Lydia Crossendale & Co., who usually held aloof from the stunts of Babs & Co., looked enthusiastic.

For Lydia & Co. also had a part in the programme which Mabs was organising.

Lydia was to be the saxophonist in the band. Diana Royston-Clarke, usually at variance with Babs & Co. on all points, was enthusiastic, for Diana's little cousin, Madge Meredith, a member of the famous Starways Orchestra, was going to lead the band.

And as if that wasn't enough, Diana herself was going to do an exhibition dance.

Oh, it was all to be such ripping fun,

and such a gorgeous idea—in such a charitable cause.

Bessie Bunter, Marcelle Biquet, and Lucy Farraday had already been told off to officiate at the refreshment counter—and did that prospect make hungry Bessie's eyes glisten!

Diana, Rosa Rodworth, Frances Frost, and the Hon. Beatrice Beverley were going to perform the modern exhibition dances. The solemn, owl-faced Terraine twins were doing the old-fashioned dances.

All the rest of the Form, with the exception of Janet Jordan, at present in the sanatorium, and Mabel Lynn, who was acting as general organiser and stage manager, were to take part in the various turns which would go up to make the concert.

So all was joy in the Fourth Form. All was joy in the rest of the school when the great news spread.

For other Forms, too, were taking part. And other Forms were on Mabs' committee.

Right there and then Mabs suggested a committee meeting, the committee comprising herself, Babs, Joan Sheldon-Charmant, Muriel Bond, Doris Redfern and Madge Stevens of the Third, Flora Cann and Joan Carson of the Lower Fifth, and Angelica Jolly and Roberta Weston of the Upper Fifth.

"And while," Mabs cried above the clamour, "the committee meeting is taking place, everybody else had better start rehearsing. Whoa, there! Let me hear my own voice. Band, pay attention! Miss Primrose says you can use the music-room every day between tea and prep. So get busy. Diana, will you take your exhibition dancers to the room behind Big Hall? Lucy, perhaps you had better go with them and play the piano. Everybody else, start getting your lines off. We haven't too much time, you know."

"Yes, rather!" Bessie supported. "But what about the refreshment committee, Mabs? I mum-mean, couldn't you get us tarts and things so that we



Joyful News

LIKE a whirlwind Mabel Lynn burst into the Fourth Form Common-room.

"Whoopee, everybody!" she cried. "Oh, my hat! I'm dying with excitement. I've got it!"

"No!"

"Yes!"

There was an immediate stir. The Common-room, unusually crowded, focused its attention upon Mabs at once.

As one, the girls flocked round. Even



BESSIE'S chair went over with a crash as she leapt to her feet. "Ow, gug-goodness!" she howled. "I'm on f-fire! Someone's put too much pepper in the stew!"

could start practising? We want rehearsing too, you know."

A perfect yell of laughter there was at that. But if that suggestion struck the Fourth as comic, it did not strike Bessie Bunter as such. She glowered.

"Well, I'm blessed if I see what there is to laugh at," she remonstrated.

"Look in the glass, old Spartan," Jenima chuckled. "Meantime, if you want rehearsing, what about trotting off to the merry old tuckshop and asking Aunt Jones to let you serve behind the counter? She'd love your assistance. I'm sure."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Excited, enthusiastic, the Fourth at that moment was in the mood to laugh at anything.

From then until call-over, indeed, everybody was terrifically happy and busy, and the amount of work they got through was just staggering.

"Tickets to be sent to the printers," Mabs said at that meeting. "Letters to be written inviting people to buy them. Babs, that's your job. Get hold of the teams we played in the Lantham Cup and ask them to support us. Get Margot to write to her father asking him to spread the happy tidings in Lantham. And we shall want bills. Bills everywhere. Flora, will you see to that?"

"I will," Flora said.
"And two or three adverts in the local papers," Mabs went on. "Nothing like publicity, you know. Joan Charmant, I'll leave that to you. Doris, you and Madge will be responsible for the costumes required in the concert. See that we have them here before Thursday. Roberta and you, Angelica, will—"

"We are all ears," Roberta grinned. "Will you go to Friarland School tomorrow to let the boys know? They'd love to come, I'm sure."

"We will."
"And Muriel, you—well make you treasurer," Mabs said. "We want money, you know. Primmy herself is giving a donation to the funds. Miss Fielding has promised ten pounds, and we'll have a whip round among the girls of the school. You might see to that, will you?"

"Rather!" agreed Muriel.
"Right! Then that's everything, I think," Mabs barked. "My hat! Well, we're all serene, aren't we? Meet again tomorrow after lessons."

This was the committee meeting finished off.

Meantime a special notice in Miss Primrose's own handwriting had appeared on the board, and the school, agog at the news, was working with a will.

In every study, in every Common-room that night, girls were muttering lines. In the music-room a blare of sound showed that the band was doing its work enthusiastically, even if its members were not always in harmony.

Happy Cliff House! Joyful Mabel Lynn! What talk, what laughter, what glow there was that night!

Half the girls went to bed with not the faintest desire for sleep, and many were the weary yawns that greeted the clanging of the rising-bell next morning, in consequence. But still, every-body was happy.

But perhaps they would not have been so happy if they knew what schemes were taking shape in the mind of one girl at Cliff House School—a girl who hated the Fourth in general, and Barbara Redfern in particular. A girl who, if the Form had known it, had already sowed the first seeds of poison in the minds of the servants.

That girl had vowed vengeance upon the Fourth, and she meant, if she could manage it, that the dance at Cliff House, so far from being the great success which everyone so confidently anticipated, should be the biggest "flop" with which Cliff House had ever been associated.

She called herself Ida Walsh, but her real name, had they known it, was Gail Greaves Gregory!



Who Is To Blame?

"HERE I say, what's this?"
Clara Trevlyn, Tomboy of the Fourth, glared into the inside of Study No. 7, which she shared with Marjorie Hazeldene, and—when she was out of the sanatorium—Janet Jordan.

It was morning break at Cliff House School, and girls had been dismissed from lessons.

Clara, anxious to get word perfect in the part she was playing in the concert—for Clara as a rule, was a slow learner—had, in company with Marjorie Hazeldene, her best chum, hurried immediately from the classroom to her study.

But in the doorway she had halted in dismay.

For Study No. 7 certainly presented a disreputable appearance. Normally, it was untidy—one couldn't have daintiness and Clara in the same room! Always there were oddments where there shouldn't have been oddments; usually, in spite of neat-minded Marjorie's tireless tidying, there were bits and pieces on the floor, and scraps and odds and ends thrown carelessly into the hearth when the morning lesson bell summoned its inmates to class-room.

As a rule, however, those oddments had all disappeared, and the room presented a spick and span appearance when the girls returned, the maids having been busy in the meantime, and—to use Miss Carroll's expressive description, "done their stuff." This morning—

The bits and pieces were still there. The ashes had been raked out and left untidily in the fireplace. A picture hung askew upon the wall.

The vase of flowers in the middle of the table had been upset, and was dismally dripping water across the pretty cloth on to the floor. The door of the bookcase hung open, and the books had been slung upon the floor. Amazing state of affairs!

"Perhaps," Marjorie timidly suggested, "the maids haven't been in."

Clara looked grim.
"The maids haven't been in, haven't they?" she asked. "Well, if they haven't, someone else has. Look at that bookcase—and the hearth!"

Marjorie bit her lip.
"Perhaps," she said, "somebody's having a joke."

"Well, we'll jolly soon see about that," Clara said grimly. "Who's responsible for this room? The new maid, isn't it? Ida Walsh?"

"Yes."
"She wouldn't have done this."
"Oh, goodness, no," Marjorie cried, for if Ida did make herself up rather overmuch for a young girl, she had taken a warm grip upon the affections of Marjorie. At the same moment, however, there came a shout from Study No. 1.

"My hat! Who's been stewing the

coal all over our floor?" Lydia Crossendale wanted to know.

"And who's put the cinders in the cupboard?" came a shout from June Merrett, at the door of Study No. 2.

"Ciel, and see—someone has broken the glass of my so-favourite peccure!" Marcelle Biquet wailed from Study No. 3.

While from Study No. 4 came a wretched howl in Bessie Bunter's voice.
"Here, I say, who's messed up our jam tarts? Some s-illy duffer's put salt all over them!"

The corridor was seething with girls now. Apparently, Clara and Marjorie were not the only victims. If there had been a joker at work, it was a joker with pretty wholesale ideas of "fun," for not a study in the Fourth Form had been left untouched.

Yet who was the joker? Certainly, no girl in the Form itself, for the Form had been at lessons.

"Well, somebody's done it!" Lydia glowered. "And somebody's jolly well going to suffer for it. And if it isn't one of us, it must be one of the maids. I'm going to tell Primmy!"

"Yes, rather!" Nancy Bell supported. "And I'll jolly well come with you!"

"No; wait a minute! Hold on!" Babs' eyes were gleaming suddenly. She was remembering how, a few days before, Janet Jordan had found her study mysteriously wrecked. Then, as now, there had been no clue as to the identity of the joker, but Babs, still strongly suspicious that Gail Gregory was in the school, thought she detected a trace of the same vandal hand. "Don't be in too much of a hurry to blame the maids."

"Oh, rubbish!" Lydia retorted. "Who else could it have been? What happened is that one of them got a tickling-off, and has just taken it out of us. Well, that may be all right for you ninnies, but it's not all right for me. My father doesn't pay fees at this school for my things to be messed up. I'm going!"

And go Lydia did. When anyone interfered with Lydia she had no scruples about sneaking or complaining. Nancy Bell went with her. So did Freda Ferriers and Frances Frost.

They returned in five minutes, with Miss Primrose at their head. The head-mistress looked scandalised when she examined the studies.

"Why, my goodness—my goodness!" she cried. "Barbara, go at once for the housekeeper. Tell her to bring the maids who cleared up this morning."

"Yes, Miss Primrose," Babs said doubtfully.

She trotted off, not very happily. On the whole, the domestic staff at Cliff House and its scholars dwell on terms of respect and amity. Rarely indeed does there arise any complaints, and Babs had had that uneasy suspicion that the hidden Gail was at the bottom of this. But if so, how had she compassed it without revealing herself?

Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper, looked askance when Babs gave her Miss Primrose's message.

"But—what's the matter?" she asked.

"You—would better see Miss Primrose," Babs said, biting her lip.

Mrs. Carey frowned. She, too, did not look pleased. Very jealous was Mrs. Carey of her work, she prided herself upon doing her job well, and in keeping the servants strictly up to the mark. A summons from Miss Primrose could only mean complaint, and Mrs. Carey was rather touchy on the matter of complaints.

"Anything wrong?"

"Well," Babs said, "it—it's the Fourth Form studies, Mrs. Carey."
 "What's the matter with them?"
 Babs shook her head.
 "Don't you think"—evasively—"you'd better see Miss Primrose?"
 "All right!" But the look in Mrs. Carey's eyes showed that she was prepared for trouble. "Ida! Sally! Army!" she called into the servants' quarters. And Ida, Sally, and Amy came forward, throwing rather wondering looks at the rare spectacle of one of the schoolgirls in the servants' domain. "Smarten yourselves up!" Mrs. Carey ordered briskly. "Miss Primrose wants us!"

"Yes, Mrs. Carey."
 Babs took advantage of the interruption to escape. She whisked through the nearest doorway, which took her into the kitchen.

The kitchen, a long and roomy apartment, full of delicious smells, was deserted at the moment, Mrs. Murphy, the rather short-tempered cook, who suffered from severe headaches, having absented herself to take a whiff at her smelling-salts bottle.
 On the huge range a pot was simmering and boiling, throwing out clouds of steam.

Babs paused. That ever-ready instinct to do a good turn took her footsteps towards the pot at once. She lifted the lid. A cloud of steam belched out, filling room with a delicious odour of Irish stew.

The stew was boiling. Certainly, Babs considered, it was in too hot a spot at that moment to do it any good. Carefully she pulled it to one side and turned the lid sideways so that it would simmer instead of boil.

She was in the act of completing that operation when Mrs. Carey, followed by Ida, Amy, and Sally, came in.

They all stopped at sight of Babs, who turned.

"What is the matter, Miss Redfern?"
 "Oh, nothing!" Babs laughed. "The stew was boiling over, that's all. I thought I'd better move it to save it from getting burned. It's all right now, I think."

Mrs. Carey darted her a sharp look. Mrs. Carey resented interference in her own domain. She resented it particularly when it was caused by one of her superiors. She nodded stiffly.

"Thank you!"
 "A pleasure," Babs beamed.

She went out then, never noticing that one of the three girls—Ida Walsh—dropping behind, had stopped, apparently to tie up her shoelace.

Up the stairs she accompanied Mrs. Carey—that good lady looking very grim—and so into the Fourth Form studies.

Miss Primrose was still there, reinforced this time by Miss Bullivant, who was duty mistress for the day.

Several girls, among them Lydia and Rosa and Diana Royston-Clarke—hung about in the passage, anxious not to miss whatever went on.

Miss Primrose bore down upon the housekeeper.

"Ah, Mrs. Carey! You have brought the maids who cleaned up these studies this morning?"

Mrs. Carey stiffened.
 "I have, ma'am. There's nothing wrong!"

"I am afraid there is." Miss Primrose frowned. "The girls are complaining that the housemaid's work in the studies has not been done—indeed, they are complaining that, so far from not having been tidied, the studies have been left in a more disgraceful condition than ever. Did you inspect the studies

If You Are—

THE SPORTING TYPE

The Sports Girl is always popular—especially if she has time for other things besides games.

YOU must often have heard it said about other girls—you have very likely said it yourself many times: "What a sport she is!" or "She's ever so sporty-looking, so you can't miss her!"

And what a compliment such remarks are to the girl of whom they are spoken, for there's no type that is more generally admired than the sporting type.

So if this is your type I want you to make the most of it; at the same time, I want to give you a little warning, not to overdo it.

This is so easy to do—not only for the sporting type, but for all.

The girl who once has the idea she's rather petite and fluffy will sometimes go to such an extreme that she becomes clinging and cloying.

While the sporting type may become so hearty and outdoorish that she will lose her greatest charm of all—which is her feminine schoolgirl appeal.

This simply mustn't happen.

YOUR HOBBIES

Much as you probably adore games, don't devote every single spare moment you have to them. Cultivate other interests as well.

Sewing may not appeal to you—and there's no particular reason why it shouldn't—but there are other indoor pastimes of a restful nature that should appeal to your outdoorish instincts.

Developing and printing your own snapshots, for example. Or, if you find this is too much for you, what about mounting them into an album?

You can make one yourself from sheets of stiff brown or white paper and a cardboard cover!

Reading, too, should certainly be included among your hobbies. However many games you have in view, it is well worth giving up at least one of them a week to devote to the widening and refreshing of your mind that a good book or a good story brings.

YOUR DRESS

Dress is another thing that the sporting type must be careful not to overdo. Brogues and hairy tweeds make a lovely outfit, and no one looks better in them than the English girl.



But how sorry you'll be when you're a little older if you don't learn to appreciate the daintiness of the type of clothes usually called "fluffy."

By fluffy I don't mean loads of frills and drooping ribbons, but the grace of soft materials that hang gracefully and give you a confidence that makes you as much at home in a lovely sitting-room as you are in your more "sensible" clothes in the wide, open spaces.

Your voice must never give you away as the sporting type. Loud as it has to be to carry on a windy day, keep it soft and sweet for other occasions. You wouldn't like it said of you that no one else could ever be heard when you were about, would you?

YOUR LOOKS

Outdoor freshness should be the chief charm of the sporting type's good looks. But even this needs other care than the wind, the rain, and the sun to guard it.

If your face gets rough in the wind apply cold cream to it with all the care that the stay-at-home might use.

Your hands, too, may suffer, so these you should keep nice for those other occasions when hands are more noticeable than on the netball field.

Look after your nails, and though you will very wisely keep them short that's no reason why they shouldn't be a pretty shape.

Hair that is wind-blown and wild looks fine in the middle of a country hike or a strenuous game; but what about when friends come to tea? It doesn't look quite so suitable then somehow, does it?

So if yours, you sporting girls, is the envy of the watchers during a game see that it is also worthy of admiration at other times.

Don't be afraid that brushing will take out the unruly waves; it won't. It will only make them more tractable and sleek.

A dab of setting lotion smoothed on wayward locks will control them wonderfully for those times when hair must be controlled if you are to look well-groomed.

YOUR HATS

Some sporting girls don't like wearing hats—and a very healthy notion, too. But there are times when hats are essential, and as I'm sure you don't want to look self-conscious in one, then try wearing it a little more frequently so that your head gets that "used-to-it" feeling.

You won't be afraid that any of my advice will make you the hot-house flower type, will you? Nothing will ever do that. But as long as you remember that the sporting type must also have her moments of repose and graciousness, you'll always be the most envied type there is!

after the maids had cleaned them, Mrs. Carey?"

"I did," Mrs. Carey said stiffly.

"They were all right then?"

"At what time was this?"

"Eleven o'clock, ma'am!"

"You did not return to this corridor after that?"

"No, ma'am, I had other things to do."

"Did you, Ida?"

"No, ma'am!"

"You, Amy?"

"That I didn't, ma'am!"

"And you, Sally?"

"No, Miss Primrose, I didn't. I had to help in the kitchen as soon as I had cleared up here."

"I see," Miss Primrose looked annoyed, however. "Then you can throw no light upon the mystery. You are sure that you cleaned out every study?"

"Yes, ma'am; and we did our work as usual," Ida said.

"Thank you. It is very—very perplexing," Miss Primrose frowned. "I cannot express myself as satisfied, however. I will make further inquiries. Meanwhile, Mrs. Carey, you will see that the studies are put to rights."

Mrs. Carey's lips compressed.

"Begging your pardon, ma'am," she said, "but we have our other work to do."

"You will do," Miss Primrose commanded steadily, "exactly as I say."

"Yes, ma'am!"

"Thank you! Girls, you will please vacate your studies while the maids are at work!"

There was a general shuffle.

Mrs. Carey stood grim-lipped, Ida, Amy, and Sally glanced at each other resentfully, a little angrily, seeming for the moment on the point of mutiny.

But Miss Primrose's word, for them as well as for Mrs. Carey, was law. There was nothing for it but to do their work over again.

Amy, most outspoken of them all, voiced a bitter grumble.

"It's a shame," she burst out—"a beastly shame! We do our work, and we do it jolly well. If you ask me, somebody's been playing jokes."

Mrs. Primrose, moving away, heard that. She turned sharply.

"Amy!"

"Oh, yes, Miss Primrose?"

"Kindly keep your observations to yourself!" the headmistress said sharply.

And Amy, colouring furiously, muttered something under her breath.

But the look she exchanged with Ida and Sally was inimical in the extreme.

With a half-defiant shrug, she turned away, throwing one bitter glare at Babs, who stood in the doorway of Study No. 4. Sally and Ida, less upset, but very hurt, followed.

It seemed, for the first time, that there was friction between the maids and the Fourth.



Trouble Brewing

"STEW!" Bessie Bunter murmured, sniffing ecstatically. "Yum!"

If there's one thing I do like, you know, Babs, it's a nice big helping of Mrs. Murphy's Irish stew."

"And the bigger," Jenima Carstairs chuckled, "the better, oh, old Spartan! A nice big barrelful in place of a nice big plateful—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, please!" And Miss Charmant, mistress of the Fourth Form, frowned down from her place at the head of the table in the junior school dining-room. "Be seated, girls."

The girls took their places eagerly. Irish stew—especially the brand supplied by Mrs. Murphy—was a favourite dish with all of them, and the nip in the February air had made them hungry.

Two great tureens of it appeared upon the table, and there were many appreciative sniffs as it was served out by the waiting maids. Bessie, spoon in hand, could hardly contain herself.

"Oh crumbs, buck up!" she murmured. "I'm s-starving."

But not till every girl was served was Bessie allowed to begin. She had only taken a single mouthful when:

"Yow! Oow-wow! I'm b-burned! I'm on fire!"

"Bessie!" gasped Miss Charmant.

"Wow-wow! Yow!"

Crash! Over went Bessie's chair. Like a jack-in-the-box the fat one leapt up, dabbing her mouth in agony.

"Bessie, you cuckoo!" cried Babs.

"Ow! I'm on fire!"

"I say, what's this?" The cry came from Clara Trevlyn. "Oh, goodness!"

"What the—"

"Clara! Clara, please sit down!" Miss Charmant cried. "What is the matter?"

"The stew—"

"What is the matter with it?"

"Oh, it's hot, you know," Bessie moaned. "Oh, dud-dear! Mabs, old thing, pass me that water!"

"Of course it is hot!" Miss Charmant said severely. "It is meant to be. But this—"

She glared at Leila Carroll, who, suddenly spluttering, gave a violent start. "Leila!"

"Gee, I guess that's fierce enough to burn the roof!" Leila gasped. "Taste it, Miss Charmant."

"But—"

"Taste it, please."

Miss Charmant tasted. And then she suddenly put down her spoon, dabbing hastily at her mouth with her napkin.

"Please, girls, do not eat any more!" she cried. "That stew is not fit to eat."

"Send for the maid—please return the girls' plates to the kitchen and tell Mrs. Murphy that the stew is uneatable. There is far too much pepper in it."

"Yes, ma'am!"

There was a silence among the Fourth Formers as Mary collected their plates. One or two of them had attempted to eat their stew, but had had to desist very hurriedly. The stew simply reeked of pepper.

Mary departed to the kitchen, where she delivered Miss Charmant's rebuke to Mrs. Murphy, Cliff House's Irish cook.

When she heard the comment on her stew, Mrs. Murphy flared up at once. She justly prided herself on her ability as a cook, and the suggestion that she had served up a dish which was unfit to eat aroused her Irish temper.

"And she said that, did she?" Mrs. Murphy exclaimed, when Mary had given her Miss Charmant's message.

"Arrah, and it's meself'll go and see her this minut! Saying things about me cooking!"

And, rolling down her sleeves, Mrs. Murphy stormed away to the dining-room.

There was a gasp of astonishment at the Fourth Form table when the cook marched into the dining-hall and went straight to Miss Charmant.

"And may I ask phwat is the matter with my stew?" she began truculently.

Mrs. Murphy was nothing if not direct. "I'm not used to having complaints about my cooking."

Miss Charmant looked rather bewildered at this unexpected development.

"Well, Mrs. Murphy," she began, "the stew was certainly unfit to eat. If you tasted it—"

"Shure, and I tasted it before it left my kitchen," the cook returned warmly.

"And it's a shame for yerself to suggest that O've done anything but give ye a most excellent stew. Twenty years next month O've been cook at this school, and never in me born days have I been more insulted—"

"But really, Mrs. Murphy—"

"Peppery, indeed! And it's meself put just a sprinkling in the pot. It's cut me to the heart ye have an' all!"

And Mrs. Murphy, very red in the face, turned on her heel, and in a stamping rage she strode into her kitchen.

Ida and Sally, beholding her, turned.

"Why, Mrs. Murphy," Ida cried, "what's the matter?"

Mrs. Murphy told her.

"Oh, my word!" and Ida's eyes suddenly gleamed. "Did you taste it, Mrs. Murphy?"

"And O! didn't!"

"Then—then—"

And at the moment Mary, the maid, came staggering, carrying the tureens from the Fourth Form dining-room. "Wait a minute!" she cried. "Mary, is that the Fourth's stew?"

"It is!" Mary said crossly. "And goodness knows what we're going to do now! Miss Charmant's ordered more stew for the Fourth—which means that we'll have to give up our share and go scratching, as usual. But it is peppery," she added. "It tastes like fire itself. No, don't you go for me, Mrs. Murphy!"

As the Irish lady jumped round, with the light of battle in her eyes. "Taste it!"

"I won't!"

But Mrs. Murphy did.

"Arrah, and some spalpeen has doctored it! It's cinders itself, it is!"

"And that's some," Ida asserted.

"Wait a minute, Mrs. Murphy. You remember you went out just before dinner?"

"I did an' all; but—"

"And remember, Sally"—Ida turned excitedly to her henchman—"that Barbara Redfern was messing about with that stew?"

Sally looked startled.

"But Miss Redfern—"

"Miss Redfern!" Ida's lips curled.

"What happened last night? Who tried to fasten a theft on Sally?" she asked. "Who messed up the studies this morning after we cleaned them? Who was the one who made all the commotion about that—Barbara Redfern! Didn't she come here to fetch Mrs. Carey? And then what happened? She went out by the kitchen—no earthly reason why she should have done that. There's the pepper-pot on the table, just where it was when you were cooking, Mrs. Murphy."

The Irishwoman blinked.

"Arrah, now, you're not after suggesting—"

"What else? Look!" And Ida triumphantly opened the pot. "This was full of pepper, wasn't it? Well, where is it now? The tin's empty. Barbara Redfern put that in the stew. Barbara Redfern complained about us this morning. Barbara Redfern did this, and she messed up the studies!"

There was a startled silence. Mrs. Murphy's cheeks grew red.

"Arrah, the jape-playing little spalpeen!"

"You see?" Ida pressed.

"Arrah, an' it's sceing I am!" The cook rose to her feet. Then she flashed round, as the door opened and Miss Primrose, accompanied by Miss Charmant, came in, looking rather annoyed. "If it's about the stew y'vo come, ma'am," Mrs. Murphy said resentfully but defiantly, "I deny any knowledge of it whatever. It was one of your own girls which tampered with it, an' all!"

"What? Mrs. Murphy, what ever are you saying?"

But Mrs. Murphy was standing her ground. She had weapons with which to fight these upstarts now. When Mrs. Murphy was roused, she was afraid of nothing, and complaint against her stew made her forget even her fear of Miss Primrose.

She spoke bluntly, and she did not mince her words. Miss Primrose looked startled, while Sally and Ida, biting their lips, regarded the scene anxiously.

"Mrs. Murphy, do I understand you accuse Barbara Redfern of this act?"

"Arrah, and it's the truth you're talking!" Mrs. Murphy said angrily.

"And, by the same token, wasn't it Miss Redfern who messed up the studies?"

"But that is absurd. Barbara Redfern was in class. Wait a minute. I will speak to Barbara. Miss Charmant, will you fetch her, please?"

So Babs, wondering-eyed, was brought.

"Barbara," Miss Primrose said indignantly, "a rather grave accusation has been made against you. This morning, when you were in the kitchen, did you tamper with the stew?"

Barbara flushed.

"No, Miss Primrose, I didn't. It was boiling over, so I just moved it."

"Then how," Mrs. Murphy demanded indignantly, "did the pepper-pot empty itself into the stew?"

"I'm sure I don't know," Babs said.

"Is it the truth you're telling, girl?"

"Yes, Murphy, be quiet, please!"

Miss Primrose said severely, "There is no doubt whatever as to Barbara's veracity. That remark was very unbecoming. I hope you will apologise to Miss Redfern."

"Oh, Miss Primrose—"

"Silence, Barbara! I am dealing with this. Mrs. Murphy, you hear?"

"Yes, I hear!" Mrs. Murphy folded her arms. "But it's no apologising I'll do to a spalpeen who spoils my cooking!" she said heatedly. "And since it's not good enough for ye, Miss Primrose, ye can find another cook!"

"You mean—you're resigning?" Miss Primrose gasped.

"I'm resigning I'm doing this minute!"

"But—Mrs. Murphy—Mrs. Murphy, come back!"

But Mrs. Murphy, roused to the highest pitch of her fiery temper, was gone.

Impetuously, she flung herself into the room. The door slammed shut behind her.



Open Revolt

"SHE'S gone!" asked Mabs. Babs worriedly nodded. "Yes. She went this afternoon." She was referring to Mrs. Murphy. "She'll probably want



JUST as Babs and Mabs felt that they had got safely past the gates, Piper's voice halted them. "Hi! I've seen you!" he bellowed. "Come back!" The chums groaned. They were caught after all.

to come back as soon as she's cooled down, but—oh, goodness, I don't know! We had the servants' dinner, apparently, in place of the spoiled stew, and from what I can hear, there's the dickens of a fuss going on below stairs about it. The servants are up in arms!"

The servants were up in arms. There could be no doubt about that. The unfairness of the accusation of the morning, the resignation of Mrs. Murphy—popular enough among them when she was not in one of her paddies—was ranking with them all.

There were mutterings below stairs—mutterings which contained more than a hint of threat, and among which the name of Barbara Redfern in particular and the Fourth Form collectively, was being very frequently mentioned. Rightly or wrongly, they had made Babs the scapegoat of their grievances.

And Babs, who had heard that muttering, was worried. The last thing she wished was to have any sort of quarrel with the servants. As a body, she liked and respected them; she had always felt heretofore that they liked and respected her.

She did not blame them. She felt, on this occasion, that the servants were being used as the dupe of a villain. And that villain—

Babs' lips compressed. She was still thinking of Gail Greaves Gregory. This was Gail's handiwork. She was certain—positive.

But Gail, with her usual cunning, was covering her tracks well. In the same mysterious way in which she had brought Janet Jordan to disgrace, she was spreading disaffection among the staff.

She was pitting the staff against the Fourth, and she was succeeding.

But how? Was it possible that she had accomplices among the staff?

Many worried hours had Babs given to that problem. The position was getting serious—so serious, indeed, that Miss Primrose had issued strict warnings, under pain of heavy punishments, that girls were not to go into the servants' quarters.

Babs had questioned Ida who, as far as the Form was concerned, seemed the friendliest among the maids. She had tried vainly to pump the others, but they, more bitter against her than anyone else, had turned away. No clue of any sort could she obtain.

She frowned worriedly at Mabs. "Mabs, what do you make of it?"

"Make of what?" Mabs was examining the proof of the dance ticket which had just arrived from the printers.

"It's not bad," she said. "There's one mistake in the date, and a comma is turned upside-down. But otherwise it's O.K. I was wondering"—thoughtfully—"if we could run to gold-edged cards?"

"Oh, I didn't mean your old admission tickets. I meant the servants," Babs said. "Mabs, I can't help but feel that Gail Gregory has a hand in this. It would be like her to cause this trouble. We know she's in the school in spite of telephone calls from London!"

But Mabs, at that moment, had no thought for what was happening below stairs. Mabs was too keen—too enthusiastic for the success of her dance.

The thing was in full swing now. In the music-room the band once again was at practice. In the Common-room adjoining several small rehearsals were going on.

The bills had been printed, half the letters already sent out, and the rest were in the process of being duplicated. Already, indeed, several requests had been received for tickets.

Hardly to be wondered at that,

among all those excitements, Mabs had no time to spare for worry at what was happening among the servants.

And neither, indeed, had anyone else. Everybody was too busy. Only Babs, who had an uncanny knack, sometimes, of scenting trouble before it happened, had a vague, uneasy feeling that breakers were ahead.

The Fourth, as a whole, was merely irritated by the sudden disaffection which had broken out in the servants' quarters. They had never had trouble with the servants before, and they saw no reason why they should have been concerned with domestic troubles now.

"Here we are!" Mabs laughed. "Babs, I'll have to get this proof back to the printers. That means—with a glance at the clock—"I shall have to buck up. Care for a trip as far as Friardale?"

Babs agreed, though to be sure, as Mabs said, they would have to buck up.

It was not a cold evening, so, disdaining a journey to the cloak-room for coats, the two of them there and then left the school, just in time to catch the bus outside.

They visited the printers, made the necessary arrangements concerning the number and dispatch of the tickets, and walked back to the bus stop. As luck would have it, the bus was just waiting.

"Do it nicely!" Mabs laughed. But there, as it happened, Mabs was wrong. Nicely they would have done it, had it not been for one unforeseen trouble with the bus itself, which suddenly stopped and refused to go any further.

It took ten minutes to get the engine to rights again, but that ten minutes was just three minutes too long. Babs pulled a face.

"Oh, my hat, gates will be closed!" she said. "Trouble, Mabs!"

"Not," Mabs replied, "if we tell Primmy what happened. After all, we can hardly be blamed for the bus breaking down. Come on, we'll have to ring up Piper."

They reached the gates, fully expecting to find them locked. It was three minutes past seven then, and Piper, the porter, usually the most punctilious of men when it came to locking up, would have assuredly shut them out. But to their surprise the gates were still open.

"My hat, old Piper must be asleep!" Babs chuckled. "But what luck for us! Come on!"

They slipped through. A moment later they halted. Piper's voice, from the door of his lodge, roared after them.

"Hi! I've seen you! It's gone locking-up time! Come back!"

Babs sighed. "No luck!"

"It's like you young ladies' sauce to try and nip through without me seeing you!" Piper grumbled. "And it's my duty to report you for coming in after locking-up time."

"But the gates," Babs indignantly remonstrated, "weren't locked. Piper. So how can you report us for coming in after locking-up time?"

The porter glanced at her sourly. "Somebody," he said heavily, "has took the keys. They were took this afternoon from the hook in the lodge, when I was busy helping Mr. Merry-weather to clean out the greenhouse. Which it looks to me," Piper went on, "as if one of you girls has been up to mischief again. Howsomever, I reported the matter to Miss Primrose, and she's making henquiries."

He took their names. Rather less boisterously Babs and Mabs went on up the drive. They reached Big Hall, there to come face to face with Stella Stone, the captain of the school.

"Late," Stella said, and shook her head. "You saw Piper?"

"Yes," said Babs. "He took our names."

"Right! I suppose"—with a frown—"you know nothing of his keys?"

"No," Babs replied; "only that they're missing."

"Some joker has taken them," Stella told them. "It may be a prank,

but, if so, it's a very foolish and thoughtless one. Not only are the keys of the gates missing, but the keys of the whole school as well. Miss Primrose is very annoyed, and she's conducting an investigation into the matter now. You'd better go along to the cloak-room."

"But why?"

"You'll see."

They went. And very soon they saw. The whole of the Form was gathered in the cloak-room, each girl standing by the peg on which her clothes were hung.

Miss Primrose, in company with Miss Charmant, was there, looking very vexed indeed.

She turned as the two entered. "Ah, Barbara—Mabel!" she cried, "you are late!"

"Yes, Miss Primrose. But—but it wasn't our fault." And briefly Babs explained.

Miss Primrose nodded.

"Very well, we will go into that later," she said. "Meanwhile, you will stand by your pegs. This afternoon,"

Miss Primrose went on, in an annoyed voice, "some girl stole into Piper's lodge, and, for a joke, apparently, took the keys from the wall. As no one seems willing to own up to this offence, and as, moreover, the keys must be found, I am conducting a search myself. Barbara, and you, Mabel, you know nothing about this?"

"Oh, no, Miss Primrose!"

"Very well. Reach down your coats. Turn out the pockets so that I may see."

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

Mabs at once took down hers. She turned out the pockets. Handkerchief, a pencil, a button, which was missing from her blouse were the only treasures that came to light.

"Thank you, Mabel! Now you, Barbara."

Barbara reached up for her coat. Immediately she moved it there was a jingle. Miss Primrose's eyes gleamed.

"Barbara, what is that?"

"I—I don't know, Miss Primrose."

"Turn out that pocket."

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

And Babs pushed her hand into the pocket in question. Then suddenly she tensed. What was this? For her fingers closed on a bunch of cold keys.

"Barbara!" Miss Primrose cried.

"In utter bewilderment Babs drew forth the bunch. It was a heavy bunch, and it was recognisable at once.

There came a gasp from the assembled girls. Miss Primrose's eyes glinted.

"Barbara!"

"Oh, c-r-u-m-b-s! I didn't—"

"Barbara, you prevaricated to me," Miss Primrose said sternly. "Thank you! I will take those keys. I am surprised—surprised, Barbara. I thought, at least, that as captain of this Form, your sense of responsibility would—"

"But—but—" Babs gasped. "Miss Primrose, I—I didn't take the keys."

"Then how," Miss Primrose asked frigidly, "do you account for them being in your possession?"

"I—I don't know," Babs gulped.

"Oh, horrors! Who had played this trick upon her? And suddenly her eyes caught a sight of a limp strip of cambric on the floor—just beneath her own coat, and she picked it up.

It was a handkerchief—a rather cheap-looking handkerchief—bearing the initials "A. F."

"Barbara, what is that?" Miss Primrose asked sharply.

"It—it is a handkerchief," Babs

A COUNTRY CALENDAR



February

YES, the days are really beginning to lengthen at last! It's now quite light after tea, and the birds sing late, as if they knew that spring was just round the corner.

If you're country born you'll probably recognise them all—song thrushes, blackbirds, hedge sparrows, and many more. In a few weeks' time they'll all be thinking of nesting, for, as you know, February 14th is St. Valentine's Day, when all the birds are supposed to choose their mates.

Already there is activity—and a great deal of noise—in the rookery. Rooks are among the first birds to begin nesting, and even in January they'll return to the rookery to carry out "alterations and repairs." And what a fuss they make about it, too! Sometimes a rook will try to steal a few sticks from a neighbour's nest: he may get away with this brass railing—but if he's caught, then his punishment is severe.

The very first wild flowers make their appearance in February. The coltsfoot is one of them—an insignificant yellow flower, which you will find usually in rough meadows or in stubble fields.

There may be a few early primroses in a sheltered corner of the wood, and at the end of the month, if the season is mild, you'll find the golden "pussy willow" in the hedge.

If you're very observant you may notice a fairly large nest in a fork of a tall tree. That's the nest of a mistle thrush, and if you climbed up to it, you would find that already it contains three or four handsome eggs. The mistle thrush is sometimes called the "stormcock," because it seems to like singing in wild, windy weather. Its song is rather like the blackbird's, but more strident and vigorous.

On a warm, sunny day, such as we sometimes get in late February, you may see a beautiful pale-yellow butterfly in the garden. It is called a brimstone, and it has probably been spending the winter in some secluded, sheltered spot, safe from frost and biting wind.

Other butterflies—tortoiseshells, handsome peacocks, and vivid red admirals—also hibernate like this during the winter, reappearing as soon as the weather becomes genial.

gasped. "It—it's not mine, Miss Primrose."

She started suddenly, for a thought occurred to her. Could this have belonged to the girl who put those keys in her pocket? Without a word she passed it to the headmistress.

"It was there—under my coat," Babs gulped.

Miss Primrose frowned. She favoured Babs with a sharp glance. Again she examined the handkerchief, her eyes running over the faces of the Form.

Beneath the initials was a black laundry mark—"C. H. S. A."—which, as Miss Primrose very well knew, stood for "Cliff House—Staff." She paused.

"You repeat, Barbara, that you did not take those keys?"

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"Which leaves us with the conclusion," Miss Primrose went on, "that some other girl must have taken them and put them in your pocket." Her eyes glimmered. "The girl who did that, apparently, was careless enough to leave her handkerchief behind her. Barbara, have you been having any trouble with the domestic staff?"

Babs flushed.

"Only—only what you know, Miss Primrose."

"You have not quarrelled at all with Amy Forrest?"

"No, Miss Primrose."

"But Amy Forrest perhaps—" And then Miss Primrose bit her lip, as if realising that she was allowing conjecture to run away with her. "This handkerchief," she said quietly, "belongs to Amy Forrest, one of the maids who was involved in the inquiry connected with the Fourth Form studies. Elsie Effingham, kindly go to the servants' quarters and bring Amy back here."

Elsie departed. Girls looked at each other. What on earth was the school coming to? Those looks seemed to imply. Had the servants suddenly taken leave of their senses? Never in the history of the school had there been so many brushes between the scholars and the domestic staff.

In a few moments Amy, wondering, came in.

"Amy," Miss Primrose said, "do your duties over bring you to this cloak-room?"

"No, Miss Primrose. Betty Sawyer is responsible here."

"You have not been here this afternoon?"

Amy shook her head.

"No, Miss Primrose."

"Then—then"—and Miss Primrose held out the handkerchief towards her—

"is that yours, Amy?"

"Yes."

"How comes it"—Miss Primrose's voice was very quiet—"that it was found in here, then, beneath the coat of Barbara Redfern, in whose pocket the missing keys were discovered. Amy, please tell me the truth!" she said sternly.

Amy flushed.

"You mean—I put them there?"

"Unless you can account for the finding of that handkerchief, I am afraid that you leave me no other conclusion," Miss Primrose said quietly. "I am aware Amy, that there is discord between the servants and Barbara. Three times to-day there have been unpleasant incidents in which the staff and the Fourth Form have been involved. I am not blind, Amy, and I fear that this sudden disaffection among the staff is attributed to Barbara Redfern. If this is some sort of revenge—"

Amy's cheeks flushed.

"Well, it isn't!" she cried hotly. "I

know nothing about it, Miss Primrose! If Miss Redfern is blaming me—"

"Oh, Amy!" cried Babs

"Miss Redfern," Miss Primrose said, "is blaming nobody. Miss Redfern is just the victim of this trick. Now, Amy, that is enough!" she added sharply, as the maid stormily opened her mouth. "Please do not provoke a scene here! Silence!"

But Amy now cared nothing. Amy was bitter; she was fed-up. It seemed to her that the Fourth—and Barbara Redfern, in particular—were making a dead set at her. With these accusations flying about, the resignation of Mrs. Murphy, it certainly did look as if the Fourth were determined to persecute them. There had been talk downstairs—mutinous, threatening talk—hinting darkly at strong action if the persecution did not cease. Whatever Amy did

eyes fastened upon Babs; a bitter sneer wreathed her lips.

"And now I hope you're satisfied!" she said. "You've got me the sack, haven't you? Well, I'm not going! I won't go, you'll see! You think you've got the whip-hand now, Miss Redfern, but wait till I've seen the others! We may be only servants, but we're not going to be sat on any longer, so don't you think it! We'll go on strike first!"

And, her eyes blinded by tears of sudden rage, she turned and rushed tempestuously from the room.

HALF AN HOUR later Cliff House received the surprise of its life. Again it came from the servants' quarters. The servants, following an indignation meeting in the maids' rest-room, had thrown out an ultimatum!



BABS' heart turned cold as her hand closed upon a heavy bunch of keys. Someone must have hidden them in her coat—hoping to get her disgraced!

now she felt sure of her fellow-servants' support.

Her blood boiled.

"I won't be silent!" she stormed. "I won't! What right have you—or anybody else—to accuse me? Because I'm a servant, it doesn't matter—eh? It hasn't occurred to you, has it, that Miss Redfern herself might have pinched these keys because she knew she and Miss Lynn were going to be late coming in to-night, and that if the gates were open, she would be able to dodge in without being spotted? If you ask me—with a heaving chest—" Miss Redfern planned the whole thing, and put that handkerchief there so that I should get the blame—"

"Amy!" Babs cried

"Stand back, Barbara, please!" Miss Primrose, her lips quivering, rustled forward. "Amy, you are a wicked, wilful, disobedient girl!" she cried

"Never, never have I heard such insolence! Amy, you will take a week's notice. Now go to your quarters!"

For a moment Amy stood hesitant, trembling, defiance in her attitude. Her

Either Mrs. Murphy was recalled at once, and Amy Forrest's notice withdrawn, or, as far as the Fourth Form was concerned, they would go on strike!



The Threat to the Dance

IT was rubbish, of course. The servants didn't really mean it. By the time they had had a night's sleep they would have thought better of it, and everything would be merry and bright once more.

So the Fourth told itself. It was just too absurd. Never in the whole of Cliff House's long history had such a state of affairs arisen before. The servants at heart were too loyal too afraid of Miss Primrose to carry out their threat.

In any case Miss Primrose would dismiss them all.

But the Fourth was in for a shock.

Whatever the Fourth might say, the servants were standing solidly together.

They made it perfectly clear that they were not striking against the school. They were striking only against the Fourth Form, at whose door they laid the responsibility for all their woes.

There was a great deal of excitement that evening. Several times Miss Primrose was observed to journey backwards and forwards between her study and the servants' quarters.

Once it was rumoured that she had dismissed the whole staff. Some of the girls were inclined to look upon the whole thing as rather a lark, others with just curiosity.

Only one or two of them, indeed—Babs for one, and Jean Cartwright and Marjorie Hazeldene—seemed to realise its deeper significance and the disturbances it might lead to.

But by-and-by startling news filtered through. Apparently it was not only the maids who were on strike. The whole staff, with the exception of Piper, the porter, and Mrs. Thwaites, the matron, had plumped solidly for Amy's cause, and the cause of the now absent Mrs. Murphy.

It was not a situation to which Miss Primrose reacted easily. Miss Primrose, always just, always strict, had her position as headmistress to think of, and to give in to the servants was altogether out of the question. Miss Primrose would have resigned first.

On the other hand, she could not dismiss them all out of hand. The staff at Cliff House was large. Not in five minutes could it be replaced, especially at this time of the year.

For the time being, at least, it seemed that all the remaining cards were in the servants' hands.

In the morning there were loud cries in the Fourth Form dormitory. Not a single shoe had been cleaned.

"Oh, I wish, this is too thick!"

"I don't mind the servants being on strike," Lucy Morgan shrieked, "but it's coming to something when they don't clean the shoes!"

"Yes, rather! And where's my clean towel!" Lydia Crossendale cried. "I asked Sally to give me a clean one yesterday!"

"And I've no soap!" Beatrice Beverley said. "Look here, I'm going to see someone about this!"

Beatrice did. So did Lydia; so did one or two other girls. They came back, looking furious.

"Well," Clara grinned, "what happened?"

"Why, the cheeky little upstarts!" Lydia hooted.

"Get your towel!"

"No! But all the Fifth had clean towels, and so have the Third! Mrs. Carey—Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper, if you please—said that, as far as the Fourth was concerned, the servants refused to lift a finger!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bessie apprehensively. "Then—then—what about breakfast, you know? Who's cooking breakfast?"

But that was another question, answered before long. It was answered when Miss Primrose sent for Barbara Redfern.

Barbara went, feeling sympathetic and rather worried. She found Miss Primrose looking harassed.

"Barbara, you have heard what has happened?"

"Yes, Miss Primrose," Babs said, biting her lips.

"I am faced"—Miss Primrose brushed a hand across her head—"with a situation unparalleled in the history of this school, Barbara. The servants have taken severe umbrage against the

Fourth Form. They demand that I—But never mind. Needless to say, I'm not giving my—not on one single point. But it is a situation which, from its very suddenness, places us all at a disadvantage."

Babs was silent.

"The—servants," Miss Primrose said, "refuse to cook breakfast. I am determined, if it is possible, to break this strike. The Fourth shall have their breakfast, but I must leave the cooking of it to you, Barbara. Do you think you could manage to press a few of the girls into service?"

"You mean—cook it, Miss Primrose?"

"As there is no one else to do it—yes. I will see, Barbara, that you are unmolested and undisturbed."

What a gasp went up from the Form when Babs conveyed that news to them! The situation, it seemed, was grim in the extreme.

At the same time it nettled the Fourth. If the servants had declared war on them, they would declare war on the servants.

In consequence there was no lack of volunteers. Cooking breakfast in the kitchen at Cliff House was a new thrill that appealed to all of them, and Babs had a really embarrassing time choosing her staff.

Bessie, of course, not usually in demand on other occasions was, as the best cook in the Form, unhesitatingly chosen.

Then Babs herself, Mabs, Clara, Leila Carroll, Jemima Carstairs, and Marjorie Hazeldene.

Down to the kitchen in a body they tramped, there to be met by Miss Pamela Plummy, the domestic science mistress. Obviously she, too, had been pressed into service by Miss Primrose.

Of the servants there was no sign. Under her instructions they set to work.

They worked busily, determined at all costs to show the Cliff House strikers that they weren't going to have it all their own way.

They worked with a will—especially Bessie, who was engaged with an enormous saucepan of porridge.

Certainly there were incidents—as for instance when Jemima, tripping blithely across the floor, loaded with a pile of plates, suddenly slipped.

"Wow!" yelled Leila, as she saw the pile rocking, and rather frenziedly made a terrific grab to save them. The next moment there was a crash.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Now look what you've done!"

"Appears," Jemima said, adjusting her monocle and thoughtfully surveying the wreckage, "I've dropped them. Tut-tut, too bad you know. Pick 'em up, Clara, my athletic old top."

"Pick 'em up yourself," Clara retorted.

Jemima sighed. With an air of resignation she got down on her hands and knees. There and then Jemima was summarily dismissed from the temporary domestic staff. With one or two other minor incidents, however, breakfast was at last cooked—and cooked, the Fourth Form voted, when it was served up by two of the other girls acting as maids, to a turn.

So the first difficulty of the strike was grappled with and overcome.

After breakfast, when volunteers were asked for to clean up the studies and make the beds in the dormitory half the Form stepped forward. Then came the question of dinner.

Again Miss Primrose went to the servants, again appealed to them. Again to that good lady's great annoyance, they refused point-blank to have anything to do with the Fourth. Miss Primrose sent for Babs.

And again Babs took her cooking party down to the kitchens.

But this time a fresh surprise awaited them all. For the kitchen door was locked, and from within came the murmur of many voices.

"My goodness, they've locked us out!" exclaimed Clara indignantly.

For the moment Babs was nonplussed. She did not know what to do, and her first thought was to report to Miss Primrose.

But then, she reflected, that would be of little use. Miss Primrose had given her authority to enter the kitchen and prepare the dinner, and she had no wish to worry the headmistress with fresh alarms.

She stepped forward and knocked on the door.

The talk from within ceased at once. "We want to come in," Babs called.

From inside the kitchen came a voice.

"Well, you can't! We're holding a meeting."

The Fourth-Formers looked at one another in amazement. Here was a nice thing! They were barred from the kitchen!

Clara stepped forward grimly.

"I'll jolly soon make them open that door," she vowed, and suiting action to words, began to hammer vigorously on the panels. One or two of the other girls, including Babs, joined in, and the corridor echoed to the sound of their blows.

Evidently the strikers within realised that they could not indefinitely hold out; they no doubt guessed that the Fourth had Miss Primrose's permission to visit the kitchen and, even though they had carried defiance so far, they could not altogether flout the headmistress' commands.

There was the grating of a key being turned in the lock, and a moment later the kitchen door was opened.

Babs & Co. walked in, to find the whole of the kitchen staff drawn up in a body, looking decidedly antagonistic.

Babs stepped forward and spoke quietly.

"Miss Primrose has given us permission to use the kitchen," she said.

There was a moment's silence, then Amy Forrest took a step forward.

"Either," she said, "you have the use of the kitchen, or we do. We refuse to work with the Fourth."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Clara. "I say—"

"No, wait a minute, Clara," Babs struck in quietly, but she looked at Amy with eyes that held a light of anger.

"This is the decision of every one of you, Amy?"

"It is!"

"You are leading this strike?"

"I am not. Nobody's leading it," Amy said defiantly.

"I see! You're taking it rather far though, aren't you?" Babs asked. "I don't want to have to go to Miss Primrose, Amy—"

But there was no need for Babs to go to Miss Primrose as it happened, for Miss Primrose herself put in an appearance at that moment. Her face grew dark when she heard the latest development.

"You really mean"—her voice vibrated with the indignation she felt—"that you will make the whole school suffer?"

"I am sorry, ma'am, but we won't work with the Fourth."

Amy spoke quite respectfully, but it was obvious that she spoke for all. Miss Primrose bit her lip.

"Very well," she said bitterly. "I think I see. Barbara, you may retire,

I will make some arrangement for your midday meal. Meantime, I would like to speak to Mrs. Carey. Where is she?"

Babs & Co. retired, rather crestfallen, very uneasy. They would have given a great deal to be present at that interview between the housekeeper and the headmistress, but that Mrs. Carey still stuck to her guns was evidenced by the fact that the Fourth had to make the best of a cold collation that day, hastily served in the dining-hall by volunteers, and ordered specially from the stores at Friaralee.

At tea-time there was no tea; at supper-time no supper.

The Fourth, by that time, was growing angry. There were loud mutters in the dormitory that night; some wild talk of taking action. But worse was to follow.

The next morning it was Mabel Lynn who was summoned to the headmistress's study. Mabs returned to Study No. 4 almost in tears.

So white, so strained was her face, that Babs jumped up in alarm. Even Bessie saw that something was wrong.

"Mabs," Babs cried, "what is it?"
 "The—the dance!"
 "What's the matter with the dance?"
 "Primmy says that we might not be able to hold it."

Babs and Bessie were instantly struck into startled consternation.

"Primmy asked me not to send out more tickets, and to be ready to recall those already sent!" Mabs spoke in a stifled voice. "She says that the servants have delivered a new ultimatum—that as the dance is a Fourth Form affair, they refuse to work on the night it comes off."

"Oh, my hat! And what's Primmy say?"

Mabs shook her head.
 "Primmy's done what she can. She threatened them all with instant dismissal. But she's got her hands tied. The servants know that, of course. She says that she's done all she can to save the dance—even to trying to get a temporary staff of servants from London,

but it's hopeless. Servants, apparently, are at a premium. Oh, Babs, how shall I tell the others?"

But Babs was not listening. Her eyes were blazing suddenly. More than ever now she was convinced that this was the work of Gail Gregory.

Yet how to prove it?
 Babs racked her brains. Something had to be done. The dance was in danger; feeling in the Fourth was running perilously high. If the servants only realised that they were being made pawns in Gail's game, what a different attitude they might take up!

Gail was in the school—Gail was influencing the servants! She had got to find Gail! For the sake of the Form, the sake of the dance, Gail must be bowled out.

And as Gail was in touch with the servants, obviously the place to look for her was in the servants' quarters.

"Mabs," she said, "I've got an idea!"
 "Yes?" Mabs asked worriedly.
 "I'm going to try to find out things." Mabs' eyes gleamed. "Obviously, if Gail is at the bottom of this—"

"But is she?" Mabs questioned.
 "We believe so," Babs spoke quietly.
 "How she's doing it, I don't know. I can only suppose that she's got an accomplice among the servants, and if that's the case, then they must be in constant touch with her."

"It means they have to meet her—pretty frequently. Obviously she can't come out into the open, so those meetings must take place in secret—"

Mabs stirred restlessly.
 "It would be dangerous," Babs went on quietly, "for the meetings to take place in the daytime. That means that Gail must discuss things with her secret confederate after dark."

"Which means," Babs went on tensely, "that every night the confederates, whoever they are, must quit the servants' territory—"

Mabs stared.
 "But what—"
 "This is the idea," Babs said. "Tonight, after lights out, I'm going to the

servants' dorm. The servants don't go to bed for an hour after we've gone, so there'll be nobody there. I'm going to hide somewhere, Mabs, and I'm going to keep my eyes open. Once I've found out who is in league with Gail Greaves Gregory, the rest should be easy. You see?"

Mabs did not. She stared wonderingly at her chum. Neither of them heard the sudden soft rustle outside the door, however, and since the door was closed, nobody saw the figure of the girl who quietly straightened herself up, and, with a gleam in her eyes, strode swiftly off down the corridor.

That girl chuckled as she reached the door which led to the servants' quarters. She flung a look back.

"Thanks, Barbara Redfern, for the warning," she chuckled. "I'll see that the most is made of it!"



When Babs Was Blamed

SILENTLY the door of the servants' dormitory at Cliff House opened, and in the pale beams of the moon that filtered in through the window, the strained face of Barbara Redfern peered in.

All was silent.
 Barbara breathed in relief. It was ten o'clock now. Very shortly, she knew, the servants would be coming up to bed, and it behoved her quickly to find a hiding-place.

Her glance travelled towards the first of the long rows of beds, rapidly appraising its value as a resort. But no. The servants' beds, low and close to the floor, would hardly admit her bulk.

Was there a screen?
 There was not. But in one corner stood the same type of tall cupboard that was a feature of other Cliff House dormitories. It was a cupboard used for

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storing the linen; hardly, Babs thought, likely to be used to-night. There was a key jutting from the lock. Cautiously she pulled the door open and looked inside. Then her eyes gleamed.

"I'll risk it," she said.

Nothing else for her to do. Babs, in her desperate determination to get to the bottom of the strike mystery, was in the mood to risk anything.

She stepped into the cupboard, softly drew the door to, and, seating herself on a stack of folded sheets which occupied one wall of her little prison, sat down to wait, the door slightly ajar so that it gave her a view of the whole dormitory.

But she did not see, as she crouched there, the stealthy figure that rose from behind one of the beds near by. Nor did she see the arm that suddenly reached out across the face of the door, and with a sudden push slammed it to. Then she jumped.

"Why, what—"

"Click! The key turned in the lock. Babs was a prisoner!

"Who's that?" she called.

A soft chuckle came from the other side of the door.

"Look here—"

Another chuckle.

Babs stiffened. Her cheeks were burning with indignation—and with dismay. Who was it? Who had been hiding in the dormitory?

Gail—was it Gail herself?

She did not know, but she suspected then. Oh, what a duffer she had been! Now that the mischief was done, she began to see all those things she should have done to guard against such a surprise.

It had never occurred to her, however, that Gail herself would be in the dormitory—why should it? Had Gail, in that mysterious way in which she seemed to get to know everything, got wind of her scheme beforehand?

What should she do—shout?

But no. That would bring the house-keeper on the scene. The house-keeper would bring Miss Primrose, and the fat would be in the fire with a vengeance then.

She stood there, straining her ears. Her unknown captor, whoever she was, was still in the dorm. She heard movements, rustling sounds. Then the gurgle-gurgle as of some liquid pouring out of the neck of a bottle. A short space of silence, followed by padding footsteps, and the soft closing of a door.

Babs shivered.

She tried the door again. It was locked securely, however. For one desperate moment she thought of hurling herself against it. Reflection showed her, however, that, so far from helping her to freedom, she might, by that means, only overturn the cupboard completely. She bent down, applying her eye to the keyhole, to find that the key was still in it. If it was only possible, by some means, to turn that key from the inside.

But it wasn't. Babs could be ingenious at times, but even her ingenuity could suggest no way of per-forming that miracle.

And even while she was wondering, there came the sound of footsteps along the corridor outside. A sudden glow of light in the keyhole showed that the lights had been switched on, and a crowd of chattering girls came in. Then—

"Oh, look!"

"Our nightdresses!"

"Who's done that?"

There was a chorus of amazed exclamations

"Somebody's been here!" It was Ida Walsh's voice. "That's my nightie, my best stockinette one! Oh, my goodness, look! Ink! Ink!"

"But who—"

"One of those Fourth Form girls!"

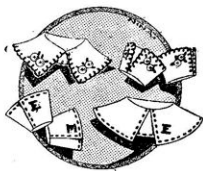
"Oh, my goodness!" Babs gasped.

She bent again. Through the tiny chink in the keyhole she saw. There, surrounded by a crowd of furious servants in front of the fireplace, was a perfect pile of nightdresses and pyjamas, disfigured by great black stains.

Near them—Amy Forrest was in the act of picking it up at that moment—was a huge bottle of ink, obviously wowed empty.

The plot dawned upon Babs, turning her almost sick.

Whoever had shut her up here had deliberately done that damage. Had



A TOUCH OF WHITE IS ALWAYS RIGHT

*Collars and cuffs can absolutely
"make" the plainest frock. And
nothing can improve on white!*

I DARE SAY you have plenty of white collars and cuffs at home—for they're so useful.

So when you get tired of their plainness, do try these ways of brightening them up.

For the first idea, buttonhole-stitch all round the edges of both collar and cuffs. Then sew two little buttons to each corner (you'll need a dozen for this) as trimming.

Next embroider, in any simple stitch you like, a little leaf design, so that buttons and leaves will look like part of the one motif.

The second set is even easier to decorate. In running-stitch, trim the edges of collar and cuffs, using a coloured wool in your needle.

YOUR INITIAL, TOO

Then, in the same wool, embroider your initial, on the corner of the collar and of the cuffs.

Then, when you wear your collar and cuffs next, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that not only are you wearing white—which is always correct—but have added to it a dash of personality as well.

And, by the way, trimmed collars and cuffs are always excellent ideas for school or church bazaars. They cost next to nothing to make—and sell like hot cakes!

It would be wiser, though, if you didn't embroider an initial when the articles are for sale. They'll look quite attractive without.

But you must certainly include them on the set you make for your-

self—Babs caught her breath—to fasten the guilt upon herself. What a trick, what a dastardly trick!

The servants were shouting now. Anger was rife. Heated the exclamations. Hot the threats that went up against the unknown vandal. Then suddenly again, in Ida Walsh's voice:

"Here, wait a minute—wait a minute, girls! Look!" And her voice suddenly trembled. "See that line of ink-spots leading from this pile to the cupboard? Who's in that cupboard?"

"I believe," Ida said, "that somebody's hiding there!"

"Have her out!"

There was a rush. Babs tensed. Whose hand it was that turned the key she did not know, but she heard the click of the lock, and the door was thrown open.

Dazedly she stared at the startled, enquiring faces in front of her.

"Barbara Redfern?"

"You awful thing!"

"What do you mean?"

"Girls, I'm sorry—"

"How dare you!"

"I didn't!"

"Oh, don't try that bluff!" Sally retorted. "Look at my nightie!"

"And mine!"

"And mine!"

Babs staggered back as the ink-soaked garments were flourished under her nose. She faced them desperately.

"Please, please—tell you—"

"But they wouldn't listen. Obvious it was to them that Babs, carrying her persecution further, had done this thing, had remained behind, so that she could gloat over their chagrin. It was, Sally declared sulphuriously, just a mean revenge.

"Well, anyway, you're not getting away with it this time," Amy Forrest said grimly. "You've been pretty clever up to now, Barbara Redfern, but you've rather overdone it, haven't you? Ida, go and fetch Mrs. Carey."

"Oh, the horror of it! Babs stood there not knowing what to do.

Mrs. Carey came. Mrs. Carey, furious, sent for the headmistress. The headmistress, startled, hurried Babs off to her own study. Her face was stern.

"I should think, Barbara, after all that has happened, that you should be the last to play tricks of that description," she said bitterly. "I understand that you are feeling annoyed. I understand that you are resentful. But that, Barbara, is not like you."

"But—but it wasn't me!" Babs said desperately.

"Indeed!"—coldly. "Then what were you doing in the servants' quarters?"

Babs felt almost in despair. But she saw she had to explain. And she did explain, there and then. Miss Primrose's face hardened.

"Barbara, I have already told you that, by fostering this impression that Gail Greaves Gregory is hiding in the school, you are merely making yourself foolish. Haven't I already told you that Gail Greaves Gregory is in London?"

"Yes; but, Miss Primrose, are you sure it is she who rings you up? Mightn't it be someone else?"

The headmistress frowned.

"You forget, Barbara, that I am not a child to be so easily deceived. I admit that her voice does not sound the same over the telephone, but that is hardly unusual. Few people sound natural when speaking over a wire from a great distance.

"Having convinced yourself, Barbara, that Gail is hiding in the school, it is



ONE of the maids stepped forward. "Either you have the use of the kitchen, or we do," she stated defiantly. "We refuse to work with the Fourth." Babs & Co. looked startled. So the maids were resolved to continue the strike!

hardly to be wondered at that any unusual sound or happening, you attribute to her. You say that you heard her voice in the kitchens?"

"Yes, Miss Primrose, I certainly did!"

"Not certainly, Barbara. Do not jump to hasty conclusions. You heard someone say, in an annoyed voice: 'Oh, bother!' Your mind, at that moment, was probably running upon this absurd delusion you possess. What was more natural than you should consider that exclamation as coming from Gail?"

"The finding of the brooch in Study No. 8 I attach no importance to at all. It was a well-known fact that Gail was a very careless girl, and left her property in all sorts of odd corners."

"Barbara, I am disappointed in you—dreadfully, dreadfully disappointed. You realise that what you have done to-night, so far from helping the situation, has only aggravated it? You may go. I will deal with you to-morrow."

Babs went, her mind chaotic. She felt her faith in her own theories shaken.

Was Gail in the school? But if Gail wasn't, who had shut her up in the cupboard? Was some other mischief-maker at work?

"I've got to find out! I've got to be sure," she told herself.

All that night she tried to devise ways and means. She found herself confident one minute, unsure the next.

There was no doubt that she was now in the servants' bad books. She, rather than the Fourth Form, was the target of their spite. Oh, what could she do?

Meantime, the dance—that, too, was in peril. Even if the servants might have been prevailed upon to reconsider their decision beforehand, they would be adamant now.

Would the dance take place, after all?

But it must—it should!

Babs, worried and restless, had little hope. The Form, when they heard of the latest development, were agast.

No dance! No concert, after they had all worked like Trojans to make the dance a success!

Many and bitter were the expressions of indignation in the Form. When, at breakfast, it was found that the servants, still on strike, refused to cook, or allow the Fourth's breakfast to be cooked, something like a riot broke out.

Rosa Rodworth, the Stormy Petrel of the Fourth, was all for going to the kitchens and bundling the servants out by force.

Lydie Crossendale suggested that the whole school should be rallied and called upon to strike against the servants.

All wild; all, of course, entirely impracticable. A way out of the difficulty, however, was found by Miss Primrose, who commandeered supplies from the kitchens, and rationed eggs and bacon to each girl to cook in her own study.

That, of course, was no hardship. Given their choice, the Fourth would rather have breakfast in study than in dining-hall.

Bessie, indeed, enjoyed it, for Bessie, the most excellent cook in the Form, found herself suddenly elevated to a pinnacle of popularity.

Her experience, everywhere, was in great demand, but since Bessie could hardly cook for half a dozen studies at once, a huge breakfast-party was held in Study No. 4.

In the middle of it, Diana Royston-Clarke came in.

She held a bundle of letters in her hand.

"Yoicks, kids!" she cried. "How's it going? Babs, I've brought the letters up from Big Hall. Sorry, Bessie, there's not one from your titled uncle, but there are two for you, Babs—one for Margot, one for Mabs. And here's another—one with an Indian postmark, and marked urgent! It's for Gail Greaves Gregory. What do we do with her letters?"

"Oh, let me have it," Babs said. "I'll ask Miss Primrose. She's got Gail's address in London."

She took the letter, glancing at it curiously. She recognised the handwriting of Gail's father. She wondered vaguely what could have inspired the word "Urgent," which was written at the top of it.

As the captain of the Form, it was her duty to re-address letters to girls who had left the school, but since she did not know Gail's address in London, she must find it out from Miss Primrose.

She left the study, still with the letter in her hand. She went to the head-mistress' study, only to find that Miss Primrose was at breakfast. She was about to leave when—

"Oh, my goodness!" breathed Babs.

For suddenly the idea came to her. What a chance to prove her suspicions! Supposing Gail Gregory was in the school! Supposing Gail got to know that she had this letter? Gail would want it. Gail would try to get hold of it. Obviously, Gail could not openly declare herself, so she would get hold of it by stealth.

That would prove, without doubt, that she was in the school.

Babs tingled suddenly. Now, how to let Gail know that she had this letter? Obviously, Gail had access to the servants. One of those servants, perhaps, was in communication with her. In any case, it seemed reasonable to suppose that if the servants knew that she held this letter of Gail's, Gail herself would get to know about it before long.

Acting upon a sudden impulse, Babs, instead of going back to Study No. 4, changed her direction and went down to the servants' quarters.

She knocked at the door. Mrs. Carey's voice bade her "Come in!"

Babs stiffened. Feeling rather like Daniel stepping into the lion's den, she entered the servants' dining-hall.

They were, as she guessed, at breakfast, Mrs. Carey presiding at the head of the long table around which they were seated.

A battery of inimical glances immediately fastened upon her. Mrs. Carey

turned red. Rather briskly she rapped out:

"Yes, Miss Redfern?"

"Excuse me! I'm sorry to interrupt you," Babs said, with a disarming smile, "but I have a letter here, Mrs. Carey—a letter marked urgent—for Miss Gail Gregory. I don't know Miss Gregory's address—"

The housekeeper's eyes gleamed.

"I—I was wondering," Babs added, "if you happened to know it. You see, I've been to Miss Primrose's study, and she's not in. I shan't have another opportunity of speaking to her until after lessons, and as it's marked urgent, I thought I had better make inquiries and send it off right away."

"Then," Mrs. Carey said stiffly. "I am afraid I cannot help you. I have not Miss Gregory's address. Good-morning."

Babs sighed a little. She endeavoured to look crestfallen. But quickly she shot a glance round the table, hoping to detect some sign of consternation on one face there.

She saw Amy gazing at her, she saw Ida shaking her head, and, at the same time, trying to smile. She saw Sally looking puzzled. The others, for the most part, staring at her resentfully.

But there was nothing on any expression to indicate that they had any guilty knowledge of Gail Greeves Gregory.

"Thank you," Babs said. "Well, I suppose I'll have to tell Miss Primrose about it during break. In the meantime, I'll leave it in my study."

Mrs. Carey did not reply. She turned her back. Babs, shaking her head, went out. But there was a gleam of excitement in her eyes as she went back to Study No. 4. There, very carefully, she propped up the letter on the mantelpiece.

"And if," she said quietly, "that's gone when morning lessons are over, Mabs, we shall know who's got it!"

"You mean—Gail?"

"Yes."

"But what will that prove?"

"It will prove," Babs said quietly, "beyond any doubt, that Gail is in the school. And if she's in the school, she's in communication with the servants. That gives me another idea," she went on. "But first, wait and see what happens to this letter."

At break they saw what happened to it. For when Babs excitedly flung open the door of Study No. 4 the letter was gone!

"So Gail," Mabs breathed, "is in the school!"

Babs' eyes gleamed.

"I was right!" she said. "Mabs, we know now—for sure! I begin to see her little game now. She's been out from the start to ruin this dance, and she's jolly nearly succeeded. But we've time," she added. "Mabs, the dance isn't until next week, and during that week we've got to work like Trojans to bowl her out. Once she's bowled out—"

Mabs sighed. Once Gail was bowled out—yes. But Gail had been so tricky, so clever, that Mabs might have been pardoned for expressing the doubt that she did.

Yet Babs was grim. Babs was determined. Her own conviction had returned to her in full force.

Whatever happened, she vowed, Gail Greeves Gregory should not succeed in wrecking the dance. If she had to move heaven and earth, and risk expulsion a dozen times, she'd save the dance somehow.

To that task Babs pledged herself!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

"GAIL MEETS HER MATCH"

● THAT is the title of next Saturday's dramatic long complete story of the girls of Cliff House School—a story in which you will follow with breathless interest the activities of Babs Redfern, who is resolved to break the strike which she is now certain Gail has fostered.

Packed with exciting incidents, and featuring all your favourites of the Fourth, this brilliant school story brings to a thrilling climax the series of events which have led to one of the most sensational happenings in the history of Cliff House.

Don't miss this great treat. Order your copy of THE SCHOOLGIRL at once, and make certain of reading "GAIL MEETS HER MATCH."

By HILDA
RICHARDS

OUR NEW KING

By The Editor

AS "THE SCHOOLGIRL" goes to press some weeks in advance of publication, this is the first opportunity I have had to refer to the passing of our beloved King George the Fifth.

In the past weeks of national sorrow we have all taken comfort in the knowledge that his son, now Edward VIII., will worthily sustain the great heritage which is his.

When he was Prince of Wales, King Edward won his way to the hearts of all his people. In every corner of the Empire he is known and loved; his wide travels have brought him into the closest contact with those who are now his subjects, giving him a deep understanding of their lives, and a personal knowledge of all their varied activities.

Our new King is very modern in his outlook, and it was typical of him that one of his first acts after his Accession was to fly from Sandringham to London. He was thus the first King of England to make a journey by air.

His love of all forms of sport has endeared him to young people, and there are few pastimes, from big game shooting to golf, which he has not sampled with that keenness and success which are so characteristic of him. He is a daring rider, plays a good game of tennis, and is very fond of swimming.

During the Great War the King, then Prince of Wales, was in the firing line on both the French and Italian fronts, and when hostilities ceased he said with perfect truth:

"There I found my manhood."

Since the War he has taken a special interest in the welfare of ex-Servicemen, and in 1928 he led a pilgrimage to the battle-fields of Flanders.

No doubt many of you, both at home and abroad, have seen your new King; and almost certainly you have heard his voice on the wireless. You have seen his famous smile—"the smile that conquered Canada"—and so you will take pride in the knowledge that you know your King.

Edward VIII. Soldier, traveller, sportsman—King.

Long may he reign!