

MEET—“GIPSY JOY—The Rich Girl Romany!”—INSIDE!

THE SCHOOLGIRL

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Accompanying
weeklies over

VOTE FOR
DULCIA
FAIRBROTHER

VOTE FOR
BONNIE
JACKSON

WHO SHALL CAPTAIN CLIFF HOUSE?

Dulcia was the popular choice
—until her rival discovered a
strange and startling secret.

Read how Duke & Co. fought to save
their favorite in this week's dramatic
LONG COMPLETE Cliff House
story.

Enthralling LONG COMPLETE "Election" Story, featuring Barbara Redfern, Clara Trevlyn, Mabel Lynn, Bessie Hunter, and a host of other fascinating Cliff House characters, including Dulcine Fairbrother, who was faced with the terrible alternative of becoming either—



Treachery Was the Thing!



Bessie Hunter.

"Clara isn't a cheat?" Mabel Lynn asked.

"Not at all," Clara Trevlyn said, with hearty relief.

"And we're all going to vote for—"

"Dulcine," said a Frenchman, and everybody in the Fourth Form Commencement at Cliff House School raised a champagne cheer. High-toned Dulcine! Who's going to captain Cliff House?"

"Dulcine, Fairbrother?"

"Heaven!"

There was no doubt about the success of that declaration. Such girls as there were in the Fourth Form Commencement at that moment—and there was a good many of them—were in full agreement. A voting sheet, they, it was not clear that such a large majority of the Fourth found fault in anything whatsoever.

But perhaps at this occasion it was not surprising, for Barbara Redfern, Clara Trevlyn, Mabel Lynn, Bessie Hunter, and a host of other fascinating Cliff House characters, including Dulcine Fairbrother, who was faced with the terrible alternative of becoming either—

Dulcine, prompt captain of Cliff House, was their breath and their

champion, and in Dulcine they were giving unstinted support. To be sure, only high-spirited boys took part, but, considering that Dulcine had just announced the details of the Fourth Form, the majority seemed certain.

In the meantime the rival captain, headed by Lydia Cromwell, was also holding a meeting, in Connie Jackson's library. It was a meeting scarcely attended, however. Only Lydia herself and her cousin, Harold Walker, Frank

Allen, since the departure of Stella Hunter. But now even Frances had relinquished them, for Frances had just announced that the Cliff House for next year had been chosen for a new trip to be making up the Atlantic.

And on one more Cliff House was represented. Two more candidates were in the field for election.

The popular choice of the whole school, however, was Dulcine Fairbrother, the fair-haired games captain,

Words that plunged Cliff House into chaos:—

"THE GIRL YOU WANT AS CAPTAIN IS—
THE SISTER OF A CONVICT!"

Ferris, Frances Frost, and Eleanor Hoyle seemed to be in agreement with Lydia. Though there were the popular boys, Boynton, Lewis, the kindly Howard of the Fourth, it was not without Hon. Rowley, Bentley, James Redfern, the Steyer-Potter, and the white-throated twins.

But throughout Cliff House that afternoon there was excitement. It was not often an election for captain was held, and an election for captain was the most important event of Cliff House, it stirred the most profound interest.

For nearly a week now Cliff House had no worthy captain, Frances Barrett of the Sixth impudently talking that

well liked and admired, especially by girls of the Junior Form.

It was the Connie Jackson's cheek, as Clara Trevlyn indignantly pointed, even to feel her name down beside that of Dulcine's.

Dulcine was their choice, Dulcine, if they had their way, should, in future, be head girl and games captain like the bargain.

So in the Commencement all the cheers were for Dulcine.

"We've got three days before the election takes place," Barbara Redfern warmly went on, "in three days, days we've got to whip the boys up together! This, Alfred, Rowley, and

counterpane, lay out to be a "busted, No. 1 victory by Duhls!" None of us likes Duhls!"

"Liar for Connie!" called Jessica Chapman.

"Why not?"

"We've got army vans we can get," Duhls said. "Not because Duhls is in any danger, but because we jolly well want her to smash home. So what we've got to do is to round everybody up."

Speeches, speeches, demonstrations and all that! Get hold of the counters like Emma and the Yells. Talk to the Board and the F.F.S. Duhls for captain!" Duhls cheered.

"We want Duhls!"

"Hurray!"

"And down," shouted Jessie Merton Chapman, "with Connie Jackson!"

Oh, my, but!

And Jess, with a gasp, looks off at the door some open with a suddenness which suggested that the girl who was outside the room had been listening.

"That girl was Connie Jackson of the South. Connie, the improper! Connie, the traitor! Connie, who used her personality to make lawless activities and stifle her spirit."

It was obvious at once that Connie must have heard that last remark. Normally Connie would have scornfully given Jess Chapman a diversion on the spot. Now, however, she looked somewhat less so.

"Hullo, girls! Enjoying yourselves?" she asked pleasantly.

The girls blushed.

"Having a meeting, I presume?" Connie went on.

"Well, yes," Duhls answered.

"Discussing the election?"

"Yes, we are," Duhls replied.

"Oh, in this case what's important? I just looked in to tell you that I've organized the team I gave you in the Fern-room yesterday."

"Oh, I see!" Duhls Duhls played. Duhls had three hundred of these lines.

"But why?" Duhls challenged directly.

"Well," Connie shrugged a little, "you're thinking things over, she said."

"Naturally, I was amazed when somebody hit me with that jabber, and when she wouldn't own up, I lined the lot of you."

"Well, perhaps that wasn't fair, and I do want to be fair, you know, especially as—"

"Naturally, as I might be made captain if you kids only vote for me. By the way, all of you, I'm standing a little trail in the hallway. Any of you who care to try along will be welcome."

"Oh, I see!" cried Duhls.

"Now, Connie?"

"Yes, of course!"

"You're a member of us?" Duhls Merton. "I always did say you weren't such a rat as girls made you out to be. That is to say, I think, any anything of the sort, you know. What I did say was that you're only twice as thick as Duhls painted, you know! Oh, yes."

"Yes, he is."

"Immediately a crowd around the product's surprising fact. It was good as soon as it came, however."

"Well, come along, Emma!"

"You best I remember to thank by the invitation?" Duhls Merton.

"Alone! All this election talk makes me awfully hungry, you know."

"Coming, Duhls?"

"No, said Duhls, and put her hand on the fat girl's arm. "And soiled us too, the girl."

"Oh, really?"

"Because," Duhls went on, looking Connie straight in the face, "we don't accept bribery. You can't buy our

only Connie's treats and then vote for Duhls!"

"Duhls looked.

"Who's talking about voting?"

"Well, aren't you?" Clara asked. "You'll never dream of standing trail if you didn't something to gain by it!"

"Anyway," Clara said bluntly, "we're not jolly well voting for you, so you might as well keep your money in your pocket. And I say—"

But the ladies off to the door behind Connie came open now some. Another couple girls appeared, starting pretty girl this, with a mass of fair, wavy hair, that hung in a cloud of fine gold about her fresh, attractive face. Instantly Connie was forgotten.

"Duhls!"

"Good old Duhls!"

"Duhls for captain!"

"Whack! And we don't jolly well want a fat head to vote for her, eh, girls?" Clara Merton cried. "I see, Duhls."

Duhls stopped, laughing, while Connie, a good-looking girl, white, stopped towards the door.

She gave a glare of hate at the popular games captain as the passed her, passed as if to say something, and then, with a faint gasp, turned the room went out. Her face was covered and glowing as she walked down the corridor, but reaching the main-room she paused. Far from behind that door came the impassioned voice of Lydia Combsdale.

"And, I say," she cried, "we've got to vote for Connie Jackson!"

"Hear, hear!" came another voice, followed by a clapping of a pair of hands.

Connie stopped. With a pleased

By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by F. LAIDLOR

smile she looked in. The walls vanished as she saw the smiling face of Lydia Combsdale. However—Lydia, who was standing on a paravane, leaping one by one into the other. Frances Frost was doing the clapping. Freda Furbur and Reynolds Palmer grinning.

Diana Merton-Clarke was uttering a yawn as she vigorously banged against the piano. Madeline Mertonby was sitting at the harp. Vera Mertonby, sitting at Lydia's elbow. Connie vanished.

"Hullo, girls! Making a meeting?"

"Well, done in fact as if we're voting today!" Diana Merton-Clarke answered.

"Connie wanted, then, remembering that Diana was a favor in the Fern, changed the word to a smile. She gave a forced laugh.

"Ho, ho! Very good!" she said. "Quite good, then, Diana! But I'm pleased to see," she added, leaning round, "that I have some supporters. I take it that all you girls are voting for me?"

"Oh, of course!" Lydia cried.

"Thank!" Diana looked up at her. "Speak for yourself," she said. "I, for one, am voting for Duhls!"

Lydia glared.

"Just what are you doing here?"

"Don't worry," Diana drawled. "Oh, go on, there's no hurry! This is the main-room, isn't it? Well, when you students have finished it, I want to play the piano. Rather interesting playing



As Connie Jackson read the letter, her eyes gleamed ardently. "So, Duhls Fairbrother," she muttered. "You got me, just where I want you. Who'd be captain now, I wonder?"

to you in the morning, though. You do talk such delightful gibes. Let's sleep!"

Connie laughed hard.

"And you," she said to Ross Redworth, "you're going for me, aren't you?"

"Oh?" Ross came out of her brown study with a jerk. "Yes, absolutely certain," she said, "by the look of them."

"What?"

"Let's sleep," Ross replied. "Let's be sensible this morning, for they came from Paris. Not sleep," she said, "but not Parisian—only an imitation of a Parisian model."

"You mean," Connie declared, "that that was what you came here here to do?"

"Well, my hair is it?" Ross asked in surprise.

"But who are you going to vote for?" Connie asked.

"Oh, Dublin, of course!" Ross retorted with a smirk. "Didn't you know?"

Connie hit her lip. Diana chuckled. The twins, catching her glance, smiled in answer. Connie looked at them. Here, at least, was an easy game.

"And you," she asked, "are you voting for Emmet?"

"I'm voting for the girl my sister Francis votes for," Emmet retorted with a grin.

"Oh! And who are you voting for, Francis?"

"I shall vote for the girl Emmet votes for," Francis answered promptly.

"But what's that?" Connie asked.

"We haven't decided yet," Emmet replied.

Connie laughed hard as she glared at the immovable trio. "Suppose in that case," she said, "you and I accepted the invitation to the hockey which had been on for long."

Beating Browning smiled—a sorry, shy smile, which suggested that if questioned, she was prepared to be as forthcoming as the rest. Connie, with a glance, dismissed the idea.

"Little can't," she muttered.

In a few days' untroubled frame of mind, the worst of all doors the corridor. Connie was not that afternoon to test her chances in the election, and it could not be said, so far, that the result was encouraging. As far as the Fourth was concerned, it looked as if she could count upon about four votes only.

And things were little better in the Upper and Lower Fifth. The next to the Third Form room. Here she sought out her younger sister, Miss.

"What, how's it going?" she asked anxiously.

"As posted."

"You mean—"

"I mean," Miss said, "that Jessie Clayton and you, and about five other girls in the Third are voting for you. Not you," she added, "and I'm following the example of Barbara, Kathleen and Clara Trevlyn. You know, Connie, I think this is going to be a lasso. Why don't you withdraw?"

"And here Debra is a withdrawal?" Connie asked.

"Well, that's better than being the laughing-stock of the school! Oh—Here, what are you doing?"

"But that was obvious. For Connie had been leaving for Miss a card, cordially refusing to act and pointing her younger sister's ear-lead. Then, smiling, she went off along the corridor.

"Whistling! That was Miss's advice.

In her heart of hearts Connie recognized it as the best possible course. There were three hundred girls in Cliff House. According to her present information she could only upon her own thirty at the rate to vote for her.

Connie wanted to be captain of Cliff House. The captain of the school was a girl above reputation; a girl above most of the feminine rules, regulations and restrictions which applied to other girls.

A captaincy would mean Connie's influence much more thoroughly than her present popularity.

But there was another reason—she never argued, far more important! It was for that reason that Connie was contemplating her every effort on getting votes.

For, under the Pleading League, only newly elected captains are presented with a girl of considerable position—typical parents! Connie's eyes flashed upon as she thought of it.

Twenty-five pounds at this juncture would save her; make all the difference between her remaining at Cliff House and resignation.

For Connie, not for the first time in her life, was desperately in debt, and, as usual, without money to pay off those debts. Connie's usual dominating character and more powerful, more energetic, more to take their life to Miss Fainwood.

Connie showed her teeth. She anxiously lay steps took her towards the quadrangle. Somehow, she had to get some positive opinion round to her favour! At whatever cost she had to win this election!

She felt desperate.

If only she could get an extra hundred or two! She had a list of names at Cliff House had been her intention for that. If she could only induce something on her—but how to do that? It—

"Oh," said a voice. "Are you, Miss Debra Fainwood, please?"

Connie started. She swung round. Unconsciously her steps had led her upon the quadrangle side the drive. She turned to see a diminutive girl, rather shabbily dressed, at her side.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"Please, my name's Mollie Perkins," the girl replied. "I live in Fainwood with my mother. We've got a father, you know—my name named Mrs. Briggs. He used this letter the Miss Debra Fainwood. Are you, Miss Debra Fainwood?"

It was on the tip of Connie's tongue to give out a "No!" and send the child packing about her business. But a notion thought arrested her. She glanced sharply at the rather plain, shabby-looking girl, and stepped forward in surprise.

"What's that?" she asked.

"And who's Mrs. Briggs?" she asked.

"Oh, but I can't tell you!" the child answered, her eyes opening in surprise. "Mother took him to because my mother would have him, you know. He's just come out of prison. My father is Mrs. Debra Fainwood, please?"

Connie's anger her breath. A rather greenish-golden tinge into her eyes. She remembered—remembered—remembered in the school Dublin Whispers! What had she done?

In the desperate position of the dressing room, Connie was ready to clutch at any straw which would give her an advantage over her rival. She turned.

"Yes," she said. "I am Miss Fainwood. Thank you! How?" she asked, and gave the thin girl a squeeze.

"Well, Mr. Briggs I'll write.

"Oh, thank, Miss Fainwood?"

"And out off—possibly, now?" Connie said apprehensively.

"Yes, Miss Fainwood?"

"And Mollie, smiling, and off, running at least as her legs would carry her. Connie's eyes, as she watched her, were crossed the better side but pointed and hurried into the school.

Over in her study, she drew out looked at the sheet, put the kettle on to boil, and when the steam was sporting from the spout, carefully examined the envelope's flap. She drew out a note.

"And there, her own! Indeed, she caught her breath. For this is what she read!

"Dear Miss Debra,—I have heard you are applying for captain of Cliff House, so I don't reckon you'd like it to be known that your brother Mollie is in London, especially after the war your father received letters and words to look up his own brother. If you don't want this to come to Cliff House and tell the truth about Ned, bring or send five pounds to the above address."

Connie, in her excitement, almost choked. Oh, great goodness, what a gift from the girl! How was a scandalous situation, accompanied a scandal which, when known, would shake the popularity of Cliff House's present chief to its foundations!

Connie gazed gratefully as she folded the letter in her hand.

Almost reverently she put it in her pocket. Not for the first time that Briggs had for would Connie Jackson have had that letter at that moment. For it promised to her what all her own eyes had failed to dream, the position and the diploma of Debra Fainwood; the weapon with which she could sweep that money which a few months ago had seemed an utterly impossible!

Accusation!



"THE in the Commencement," declared Barbara Redford. "Jolly good idea!"

"Isn't all Debra's supporters, and get Debra in asked as the great of honor?"

"Right!" applauded Mabel Lynn.

"Then O.K.," Mabel laughed. "Looky I had an extra few minutes this morning! Mollie, will you and Beate go off and get the tickets? Clara, you come with me, and we'll go and see Debra. Debra, will you get and send up your books, and tell them what's up."

"What's that?" Beattie beamed, and, adjusting her spectacles, called back from Study No. 4 at once.

And immediately Mabel and Clara became fervent bundles of activity. It was a good idea—to stand in to the whole Form in the Commencement. It was a better idea still to make Debra the guest of honor—rather a reversal, in fact, of Connie Jackson's policy. Not instead of allowing the candidate to stand there, she would stand there to be crowned. Mollie and Beate went off, Beate grinning.

"Come on," she said to Clara.

Clara smiled indifferently. Her own eyes were dimming them. If Clara had a feeling among the women, that feeling was certainly Debra Fainwood, and there was nothing on earth which Clara could do to help her. There was to be a dinner, but the dinner, captain and captain of Cliff House.

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what Duke. In two minutes they had reached the South Foren corridor. They were in the way of passing General Jackson's door when they drew apart, and Connie bowed grace out.

Connie had both hat and coat on, and was obviously going out. She threw them a triumphant smile as she passed. "Hello! Connie looks lovely glowed with love!" Clara murmured. "Where's she off to?"

"Oh, how Connie!" Duke exclaimed. "What's come over Duke?"

"Duke was in her studio when they captured. She looked round, with a smile, from the crystal hat she was slipping.

"Hello, Duke and Clara! Come in, will you? There are some splendidly on the abandoned three—your favorite hand mirror, Clara. Well, and what is here?"

"Surprisingly Duke told her. Duke smiled.

"Well, that is very kind and very thoughtful, Barbara," she said. "And, of course, I'll be most awfully glad to open. Yes, you can rely upon me. What time did you get?"

"Half-past seven."

"That is just one hour. Thank you for the invitation?"

"Joyfully Duke and Clara left. Excitement then in the Fourth Foren, and excitement in the Common-room. There was no lack of willing helpers. Trunk-misses were set up, lockers borrowed up and down, studies, laboratories re-arranged. Within a hour of noon, Duke and Bruce came, wrapping it presently, and everybody had a hand holding bread-and-butter, making sandwiches and preparing the meal.

All Duke's supporters, including the left Fitzbarron, Houston Brewery, and Ross Northwood were there when Duke, smilingly entered.

"No! too soon!" she asked. "No! rather late!" Duke said. "Just on time, as a matter of fact. Hi, Bruce! Sit out of that chair, you'll be dumping! That's for the ghost of Bruce!"

Duke laughed. Very bright, very charming, she looked when she laughed like that. In great good humor, she gave each their places, with great care, till upon the table.

"Hello, smiling in the laughter and the cheerfulness, but the time being as much a factor as any of them.

The meal was over at last. Duke, who had conducted himself cheerfully, tapped the table with a spoon.

"Order, please?"

"Whistle?"

"I know you and Duke," Duke beamed. "I know you the pleasure of seeing you get of house, Duke, whom we all hope is going to be our future captain, to address you."

"Well, said, I guess! Cheers for Duke!"

"Cheers?"

Duke smilingly held up her hand.

"Not too much noise, she begged.

"Remember! For a quiet, I'm with a reason. Well, I don't know that I shall say much to you about the election. Naturally, I want all your votes, and, naturally, it will be the strongest indication of my life if you return me to your captain. I am not going to make this promise, but I do say that if I am returned, I will do my best to live up to the high standards which my predecessors, Duke Stone and Francis Barrett, have set."

"Good old Duke?"

"And—well, what else is there for me to say?" Duke smiled.

"Oh, surely you're forgotten?" a smiling voice said, and everybody turned down to behold the girl at the



"GIRL waiting in the Common-room for you," Duke began. "Coming along, Duke!" And then, startled, she looked after Duke, covering her face with her hands, was suddenly hurrying away.

—Duke's girl, standingly triumphant, a girl, dressed in her outdoor clothes—Connie Jackson, herself. "I should think," Connie said, smilingly, "that you can and give a lot to that?"

Duke's face deepened.

"Meaning what?" she asked.

"Well, about your brother Ned, for instance?"

Duke started.

"What's my brother Ned to do with it?"

"Going to draw it, eh?" Connie asked.

She strode further into the room, while Duke's face stared angrily. "Why don't you tell them," she repeated indignantly, "that your brother Ned at this moment is serving a sentence of three years in prison. Why don't you tell them all that about you, it will be the first time in history that Old House has had a grand-son's sister by its captain? Tell them that, Duke's Fair-brother, and we have proved they'll be of you then."

"Ned?"

"Connie?"

"Get out!"

There was a level. Faces were set now. Steving in their support of Duke, the Fourth Foren was not going to listen to stories of that nature. It was just like Connie, with her nose and smiling ways, in giving a last-minute reminder like this. Just like her, to make such a passionate attack! But—Oh never it was! Just a great, big, whopping lie! Duke held up her hand.

"Ned?"

But her eye Duke was ignored. The Fourth, motionally indignant, was up to eyes.

"Tell her to get out!"

"I won't get out!" Connie roared. "I won't! I'll tell you this—every word. Let Duke answer, brother Ned. Let her face it! If her brother Ned isn't in prison, where is he?"

"My brother Ned," Duke replied quietly, "was always, three months ago."

"Yes, in Dartmoor?" Connie jeered back.

Clara Tierlyn breathed hard. Her eyes were flashing now.

An insult to Duke was no insult to Clara. As it happened, Clara, like Duke, knew Duke's brother Ned, and liked him immensely. She caught up a level rail.

"Are you going?" she stormed.

"No, not now!"

"Then—"

"What?"

That Clara remembered the presence of Duke she might not have done that. But when Clara was indignant—as she was equally was now—Clara was in the habit of looking direct and consistent. She looked at Duke, and her hand the level rail. She was in the path of time Connie saw it, and darted. The

A woman's utter silence followed that announcement. Duke covered her face and said these things, getting to her feet, as if she could hardly believe her own truth. Then she withdrew.

"And there," she demanded, "did you get that information away?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Clara Tierlyn, ever innocent as if she didn't get it from anywhere. "It's just an election story to divert you in the eyes of the electors."

"Who, you Duke?"

"No, Ned's brother?"

"Neither?"

"Duke!" Duke's face grew?

"But I told you!" Connie shrieked.

"Yes, but she said! I can prove it! Ned Fitzbarron was sent to prison!"

called Bert Briggs. There had been some, at a shop at the Eastern of Lincoln's town, one night, a quantity of valuable jewellery had been stolen. Bert Briggs had accused Ned, and then Ned was searched one of the missing pieces was found upon him.

His known association with the gang, and that stolen piece of jewellery, had been his making. As he had not had been sentenced to three years' hard labour, and Bert Briggs, accused only of being an accessory before the fact, had been given three months.

"Dad, you're a brave, white-faced, honest old bloke!"

"But that's about the rest of the staff!" she cried. "You say only one piece was found upon Ned!"

"Only one," Mr. Fairbrother said. "The rest of the gang got away with the remainder. Naturally, the police were put on their track. It is believed that they either hid it in the neighbourhood, or got away to the Continent with it. Of course," he added heavily, "it is hardly necessary for me to tell you that I am a deaf and dumb man, and that I naturally protested his innocence most emphatically at the trial. His defence was that he had been made a witness of the gang, and the piece of jewellery had been planted on him, but the evidence of this man Briggs was too strong for him. He naturally knew who Briggs was, of course, didn't he?"

"No, sir."

"You remember your old mate—Annie Briggs—the woman who was so terribly kind of you—"

"Why, yes, of course," but I haven't seen her for years!" Ned cried.

"He is her man," Mr. Fairbrother said.

But Debbie stared, hardly believing that she could be so deceived. Of course she remembered Annie Briggs—the woman who had been so wonderfully gentle with her, who had promised to love, honor her, looked upon her almost as her own child.

"Tragically it is her eyes, in her hair, now. Somehow she was shaking her head. Ned-Ned crossed the awful thing. Ned is prison!"

"Debbie, my dear, don't take it to heart!" Mr. Fairbrother said.

Debbie smiled miserably.

"I am sorry," she said, "you didn't let me know before. But I don't believe it, father—I can't believe it—most of Ned! He was mild, I know, but there was something rotten about him. I'd rather have been told in the first place."

"My dear, I'm sorry, but we thought it was for the best. Knowing your position here, we did not want a breath of scandal to touch you. That is why I tried to keep it hush at out of the papers."

Debbie smiled bitterly.

"Thank you!" she said.

And that was all. Mr. Fairbrother, shaking his head, left. His departure was marked by Bala & Co. standing on the steps of the entrance. Naturally they were greatly pleased to Debbie's reply. Her story they repeated at the door they received no reply.

"Milk! Water's all gone!" Mabel cried.

"Open the door!" Clara said.

Mabel knocked again. Again she received no reply. Debbie she caught hold of the handle. The handle opened, but the door refused to budge, she forced it with her hands.

"Oh, then Debbie's out," Clara declared. "Is the key in the lock?"

"No!"

"Then she's just locked it up and left the house," Clara said. "Anyway,

she'll be in a position to tell us everything now. But she didn't go out with her keys," she added.

"They know that. But the mystery of Debbie's innocent whereabouts can not hold as important as the fact that she had seen her father."

Not for a moment did Bala & Co. doubt that Mr. Fairbrother had completely and most effectively quenched Annie Briggs' special disavouring propensities. Knowing Ned they just could not believe anything so frightful about him. Suddenly they dashed away from the door. Descending the stairs, they were received outside by a policeman and a constable in the yard. Clara looked on. Then she gave a start.

"My hat! Look at that!"

No need for that expression. Bala & Co. were already looking. And as they looked, their faces dyed crimson with anger and with indignation. For on the steps of the door, flanked by Miss Cyprianda and Miss Fidelity, a policeman was waiting for them. In the front of a Lada and Fidelity carried a banner upon which was the highly insulting inscription:

"KEEP SCANDAL AWAY FROM CLIVE HOUSE: VOTE FOR CONNIE!"

Another banner further along the procession, carried by Jessie Crutchen and Miss Jackson of the Third, bore a large great arrow. It said:

"WE DON'T WANT THIS AT CLIVE HOUSE: VOTE FOR CONNIE!"



"WE DON'T WANT THIS AT CLIVE HOUSE: VOTE FOR CONNIE!"

Clara's face flushed. Her eyes lit up.

"Run up!" she cried.

"We're not jolly well going to stand by that!"

And without further ado, Clara brought down the stairs, Bala & Co., with a grim glance, following her. The procession, consisting of "Annie's" Grandmother for the General," continued its march, so intently that they did not see the morning Clara with a red, she was among them. There—

"Here, stop her!"

But Clara was grim. Clara was fierce. In that mood there could be no stopping the Grandmother of the Fourth.

She snatched the banner from Lada's hand, she ripped it aside, and tore the hem, right and left.

Meanwhile, Bala, Mabel, and Jonathan were with a mob by Jessie Crutchen and Miss Jackson. A short, snarl stopped them.

"Here!" cried Bala. "There!" and scrapping the second banner upon the trail it and managed it contempt.

"Now, you awful dandies—"

"Oh no!"

"Vote for Annie!"

"Vote! Vote for Debbie!" called

Barbara Redburn. "Debbie! Debbie!"

"Hush! the country's noisy," ordered

Lada sternly, and then looked at

Clara stopped back. "Clara, you

don't mind! That was my last job

you!"

"I know," Clara said gently. "And," she added, "I've got a hand, too. What's coming for Debbie?"

"We are!"

"Indeed, and fair play! Down with

the scandal-mongers!" shouted

Jonathan. "I'm serious, and I'm

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 - Land Of My Fathers.
 - Landlady's Air.
 - Maple Leaf For Ever, The.
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6d

FULL WORDS AND MUSIC OF ALL SONGS

Sure, Connie, I can't believe in your Mr. Bragg, after all."

"But I tell you—!" Connie panted. "Well, profess him?" Diana smiled, and, with a wave of her hand, called "No!"

Connie gritted her teeth. But she looked anxious, all the same. Where were Ida and Dora? Ah, this was it! Would he be late, even if he did bring her, for him to make any statement. For Connie, having seen Bert Bragg, having obtained some trifling note to this end, ordered Bert Bragg to stop in at the station, just in case she should appear there. What was the girl?

"Well, I'm off, too, looked?" Bridget O'Flaherty said. "There, and I can't be bothered to wait for a woman who's not a woman!" Coming, Lucy!

"Yes, I am!" Lucy Morgan said. "And so," said another Bostonian, "we'll push off, I think."

"And so," Margaret Langham said. "Well, I take, coming down to the station."

"But, my dear—!" The woman was looking at the unheeded Connie. Minutes were precious now. There was just time for a quick snatch at the topknot before callers, and taking the lead of Diana they were all straying out. In a few moments Connie found herself with an empty room.

There was Ida? What the whereabouts of Ida from this moment became a mystery. Calls were left unanswered. The girl marched into Big Hall to answer the calls. Miss Hunt, mistress of the Upper Third, passed as she called Ida Jackson's name.

"Ida Jackson," she repeated, and forward at the spot where that girl should have stood. "Does anyone know where Ida is?"

"Please, Miss Hunt," Fanny Carter piped up. "Dorrie just left on an errand to Fribensh."

"Oh!" Miss Hunt nodded her head. "Very well, I will speak to Connie," she promised.

She turned as she continued the call. What she saw, even to the third floor. But there, another sensation had leaked up. For, in addition to Ida, Doria Fairbrother was also missing.

"And," Connie cried angrily, "there's some connection between the two, Miss Hunt. Just as I got her off with this message, Doria Fairbrother came into the room. She followed Ida as she went out. Judge then, either of them has been seen."

"How—what is this?" Miss Primrose asked, coming forward. "Connie, you surely aren't suggesting that Doria has anything to do with the disappearance of your sister?"

"You are suggesting anything?" Connie said, spitefully. "But there are the facts: Ida went off to the village for me—to bring to the school someone whom Doria Fairbrother had a great reason for wanting to keep out of the way. Miss Primrose, may I have your permission to go to the village and find out if she delivered her message? It may help to trace her movements."

"Why, most certainly," Miss Primrose said. "You may take my car, Connie. But please," she said, "hurry!"

Connie hurried off. The school by that time was in a lull. Connie had not troubled to moderate her voice when she spoke. Had the school had overlooked what she said, it would be missing! Was it possible that there was something in the probler's cooled accusation?

"Girls, please discuss!" Miss Primrose said.

The girls, in a ferment, discussed. On all sides, now, the absence of Ida and Connie was being discussed. Not very far did many of them stray from Big Hall. In the corridors, on the stairs and at the exit they hung about in little groups, with Miss Primrose and the matrons, contrary to their usual practice, scattered across the stairs.

The minutes ticked on. Suggested ring, but few girls there, with the exception of heavy, Doria Bragg. Thought of answering that optional call. Had to leave soon by. Someone was whispering. "Dorrie," but would ring

perhaps, the man who would denounce her. Instead she ran girl—across and waves of girls, pouring fastively from hall a dozen halls and passages. And then she saw Miss Primrose—this happened and started, making towards her. She stopped.

"Doria," Miss Primrose asked, "where have you been?"

Doria gulped. "I—I've been shut up in the clock tower," she said.

"Indeed? What about you up?"

But Doria shook her head then. She had not Doria Jackson's propensity for speaking. As a protest, she would deal with Ida Jackson in her own way."



FIERCELY, Connie, Jackson advanced on the white-faced Doria, while Dora & Co. looked on, tense and expectant. "What have you done with my sister?" Doria's enemy demanded.

in another an intention, and everyone on earthquake for developments. Then suddenly—

"Look!" whispered Barbara Redfern excitedly.

Everybody looked. And everybody stopped. For through the door of Big Hall a figure had suddenly appeared—a girl, eyed-looking, wild, and shifty. A girl who stared around her, with lightning eyes.

"Dorrie!" muttered Clara. "Oh, my aunt! If so, where's the hero?"

That was the question on everybody's lips. And Doria, finding a beautiful flash of eyes upon her, stared furiously. She felt faint, weak, exhausted. Now that she was face to face with eyes she hardly knew what she could say or do.

Eye on her and a half Doria had tried to fight her way out of the clock tower. Shouts and hangings having been of no avail, she had finally to make a sound of the empty old dress and buttons and anything else she could find to push the window one look up in the wall and escape that way.

She now— She stood around, expecting to see Ida Jackson there. Expecting to see

Ida. In any case, she was not sure. She had not actually seen the girl who had run and locked the door upon her. She heard Miss Primrose.

"I don't know," she said.

"Indeed?" Miss Primrose's eyes glimmered a little.

"When did this happen?"

"About an hour and a half ago."

"And at what time?" Miss Primrose asked. In Doria's consciousness—the of Ida Jackson's disappearance, "did you see my little Jackson?"

Doria stared a little.

"Well, about—about an hour and a half ago, in the Fourth Form passage."

"And you haven't seen her since?"

"No," Doria said, biting her lip.

"Indeed—!" Miss Primrose told her, "she has disappeared. Thank you, and then she disappeared. The door opened again, she apparently having escaped at Connie Jackson, who passed. "Well, Connie—did you find Ida?"

"I did not find Ida," Connie said. "She never turned up at Mr. Bragg's place. And then she never fell upon Doria. The red rushed into her then.

"Duhia Fairweather," she cried, "what have you done with my sister?"

"Yes, yes! You? Cousin Isabel? My sister—where is she? That's what I'm asking. You told me her when she went out of the Fourth Form Common school? You didn't want her to go to Bragg? Duhia?"

"Duhia's head was pale.
"I refuse to say anything!" she cried.
"I know nothing at all about your case!"

"You deny that you prevented her from going to Bragg?"

"I do!"

"You deny that you interrupted her—sent her to school?"

"Duhia had sent. Miss Fawcett caught."

"Everyone was accusing me?" Duhia cried.

"I am accusing you!" Cousin cried sharply. "You were the last girl to see my sister! You were the only one who could have had an interest in preventing her from doing the wrong I see! Now, you accuse me!"

"I am not accusing you of having interfered with her going to Bragg, but of having interfered with her going to school."

"And if," she added, and suddenly jumped forward, her hand reaching at Duhia's pocket, "if you haven't done anything to help," she cried in a vibrant voice, "how dare this come to be in your possession—look at it!"

"And she held up, amid a scandalous silence, the Jackson's broken bracelet!"

The Mystery Unfolds



THE silence was broken by a gasp. Fairweather, unable to gaze forward, turned to a peasant hand which held the bracelet out of her reach.

"That bracelet," she said, "is Ida's. Everybody in the Third will tell you that, Miss Fawcett. The fact that it is in Duhia's possession shows that Duhia has not Ida. The fact that it is broken indicates some sort of struggle. Duhia, I will open your eyes to my own! What have you done with Ida?"

"Yes, Duhia, please?" Miss Fawcett said.

But Duhia stood still, stricken. She had forgotten all about that bracelet till this moment. How could she continue to be hampering a struggle with a Third Form girl? How would the position Cousin's violent accusation that she had tried to prevent her from going to Bragg!

"That, in fact, could be a confession that she was afraid of Bert Bragg's reputation as Cliff House, and it is knowledge that was tantamount to confession that she believed her brother guilty. She let her lip.

"Duhia, answer?" Miss Fawcett said sharply.

Duhia answered.
"I am sorry, but I must refuse to answer," she said proudly. "Both my accusation—with a shaking glance at Cousin—is not worth answering!"

"That old Duhia!" muttered Clara Trevins.

"Duhia, you realize that Ida Jackson is missing?"

"I have nothing to do with that?" Duhia answered.

"Yes, yes!" Miss Fawcett nodded her head. "Very well, Duhia, I hope you may change your mind and decide to come and make a full explanation. This is a serious matter, very serious matter indeed! Now, please"—as the

assembly bell sounded—"all you girls go to bed!"

The girls went off to bed, chattering, whispering, excitedly discussing among themselves. The talk now was all of the broken bracelet. Had the school seemed to have made up its mind that there was something in Cousin's accusation. Several said nothing, preferring to wait until there was fuller information to be obtained, or until Ida Jackson turned up. Only Hain & Co. and Clara, and Joan Cartwright openly scoffed at the talk.

Twelve o'clock that night! Still the hall was not yet in an excitement. Again Duhia's name was mentioned, again vehemently protested that she had nothing to do with it. At one o'clock Miss Fawcett sent out wardenships of noise and confusion. As they returned, still empty-handed. In this morning conversation settled throughout the school.

Where was Ida?
Where was Cousin, looking quite harassed. Miss Fawcett, the matter, but which she decided were the best to cope with any longer. She sent her to bed.

And, as both would have it, the police arrived during morning assembly.

A slip then, a beam of shiffling, identified instant, as Inspector Winter, accompanied by a sergeant, stepped up to the gate. A few scattered words with Miss Fawcett—a shaking glance towards the pale-faced Duhia, who this morning was looking after the Fourth.

Miss Fawcett seemed very agitated.

"Yes, Inspector Winter?" she said. "I have dismissed the girls," she said.

"Miss Fawcett, may I ask you not to disturb the girls? The matter is more serious than you matter, indeed, in which some of them may be involved. I take it this Ida Jackson was well known throughout the school? It may help me if you allow me to conduct my investigation in private."

"By—very well," Miss Fawcett said faintly.

The school staid hush and stirred. The inspector's eyes fell upon Duhia.

"Miss Fairweather, and you, Miss Jackson, would you mind explaining this way?" he asked. "Miss Jackson, I am informed by your headmistress that you have made certain accusations against this girl. As far as it is known, Miss Fairweather was the last person to see the missing girl last night. Is this so, Miss Jackson?"

"By—very well," Miss Fawcett returned sharply.

"Right! Then let's start from the beginning." The inspector frowned.

"Miss Jackson, you sent your sister with a message to the village?"

"Yes, Cousin replied.

"To whom was that message addressed?"

"To Bert Bragg, of Clifton College."

"The inspector eyed her sharply.

"What do you know of Bert Bragg?"

"Nothing, except," Cousin said apologetically, "that he is an eccentric who was mentioned as a term of impeachment at the same time as Miss Fairweather's brother."

A ray from Duhia; a hint from the school. The inspector turned his attention to Duhia.

"And you know this girl was going to see Bert Bragg?"

"Yes."
"Did you try to prevent her?"

Duhia bit her lip.
"Did you?"

"Oh, goodness, must—and I answer that question?" she asked.

"Miss Fairweather, you must! This is a serious matter. You yourself at this moment stand implicated in some way, even if you are extremely grave charges. It is well known that this man, Bert Bragg, and your brother were confidants, both convicted for the same crime."

Something like a ray came from Duhia. It was a ray school by a started school. For one second the importance of the questioning was forgotten. Here, in the most startling way, an confirmation of Cousin's account for the case! It was true! And Fairweather was a convict! Bert Bragg was his accomplice! Even Clara looked doubtful.

"Oh, my hat!"

Duhia turned deathly pale, a proud and bitter smile on her lips. The cut was one of the lung with a vengeance now. Her indignation was complete! The clarity of her mind returned. "I've lost your girl, but the inspector."

"Thank you," she said calmly. "I've become very handy now!"

"Miss Fairweather, I am sorry! I thought it was better."

"It was not—that," Duhia added proudly. "I say that—in it was better, but I believe in any way you policemen have made an error. My brother Bert may have been a little reckless, but he never, never!" Duhia declared vehemently. "And the thing for which you have imprisoned him! Now," she added stiffly,

"ask what question you like!"

The inspector coughed. Miss Fawcett bit her lip. The school, on a slight of excitement, stirred with disturbed attention.

As proudly now Duhia gave her answers. No longer had she anything to conceal. She did not care. She spoke with indignation, overworked with despair. She described how she had got the bracelet, how she had passed it to her, how she had got it up in the clock tower, how she had got it out. There was silence.

The inspector bit his mouth.

"You realize, Miss Fairweather, that your story may be doubted, especially as it is now known you had such a good reason to prevent this Jackson from reaching her sister?"

"That," Duhia cried passionately, "has to be decided! I've told the truth!"

But had she? That was the matter being discussed by the whole school when the investigation was over—was Duhia, crushed and humiliated under the bitter burden thrust upon her shoulders, had returned to her own study. The evidence seemed all against Duhia.

"But, but it's not—!" Hain cried with a gasp. "The Inspector—!"

"What, but Cousin's a convict?"

"I did! Cousin's a convict!"

"What, but Cousin's a convict?"

"I did! Cousin's a convict!"

"What, but Cousin's a convict?"

"I did! Cousin's a convict!"

"What, but Cousin's a convict?"

"I did! Cousin's a convict!"

"What, but Cousin's a convict?"

"I did! Cousin's a convict!"

"What, but Cousin's a convict?"

Heads over to, Helen, at the head of half a dozen of Dablin's most staunch supporters, led the march that started up the procession and went to sprawling over the playing fields.

But before we proceed.

Afternoon-games procession. Clara, to test the feeling of the school, looked the girls, leaving a letter, accompanied with a note to Dablin, and led a ragged procession of twenty girls round the field.

Larkin joyfully seized the chance of opposition, grabbed up another banner, and led a whole crowd out to meet her. Larkin and Clara, meeting, glared into each other's faces, but when Larkin saw something you can't see through an X-ray, that was the mark. In a moment Clara had reached up. There was a desperate struggle for Helen's banner, which ended with Mabel Butler coming on the scene and giving both combatants a hundred lines.

And all that day Dablin was not seen. She kept to herself, refusing to answer knocks at her door, her study locked. Night came. The school was looking, wondering. Miss Jackson's observations will a mystery—through the day of the election.

Helen was almost desperate.

"Oh, my hat! We don't stand a chance," she said. "It's ghastly! More than three-quarters of the school, if not on Dablin's side, is against Dablin now. As they'll have to use their votes, you can guess what will happen. It's not to believe the disgusting thing that Dablin's accused of. But Dablin's not looking matters by looking to herself."

"Well," Clara said, "what would you do, if you couldn't find light?"

"But what? When she's already judged. You can't jolly well plead one guilty when you've been sentenced to be hanged. And that's the position Dablin's in now."

It was a school, and not a very clear metaphor, but Helen understood what she meant. All the classes gathered there—a gloomy group, in all uniform consisting of Helen, Mabel, Joanna, Clara, Margaret Hamilton, and Joan Carter, who—understood in Joan's favour.

"You know, I've got an idea that if Dablin could be made to fight we've got a hope," she said. "And I've got an idea, too, that there's more in this than meets the eye. We know jolly well now that Dablin's had some sort of understanding with Ben Briggs—"

"They started at her."

"Well," murmured Helen.

"Well," Aron drizzled, "we all know Dablin. We know she'd slip up by accident to win this election; and that's the weapon she's using to disgrace Fulkia Partridge!" (Sighing.) Aron said seriously, "that this was a real—oh! Supposing all the time, that she's disappeared the in with Ben Briggs."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Clara.

And for a moment they were all jerked out of their worry by the startling surprise that announcement had provoked within them. But it was possible! It was possible! Like speaking Dablin to do a trick like that. Helen had been guilty of worse things than that in the past. Her own father, that theory, that the utterly impossible idea that Dablin had been responsible for Jack's disappearance. Helen's eyes flashed.

"My hat, why didn't we think of that before!" she said. "I believe there's something in it. It sounds like a Greek Jackson trick. To-morrow's the elec-

tion. While Dablin's in disgrace and Dablin is getting all the sympathy, the cards are in her hands. She's not right enough—and then, like a bolt from the blue, Ben Briggs will come up with some perfectly genuine story. Oh, bother it, what didn't we think of that! It's too late to do anything now!"

"But what could we do?" questioned Margaret Hamilton.

"We can," Helen snapped, "and we jolly well will. We'll go and see Bert Briggs to-morrow. If there's any funny business in his end of the line we'll get on to it. To-morrow, kids! If we go off immediately after breakfast—" She was waiting?

"And, meantime, old Dablin?" Joanna asked.

"Meanwhile," Helen replied, "I'm going to see Dablin."

But Helen, when she did see her, was dumfounded, shocked. She had no interest in the election, she said. How could she stand by the sympathy with the student organization too, this kind of change being in the air. She was overly cautious. She was debating, she said, whether she should cancel her resignation.

"What, and give Dablin a walk over?" Helen cried.

"Well, what else?" Dablin asked helplessly.

"Anything—anything!" Helen cried. "Dablin, it's not like you! Fight, old thing! Put on the old armour, as Joanna says. But, by goodness! why, don't you go up! She cried, "We don't—and we can't—have Dablin for captain, Dablin—"

"Yes, Helen."

"Will you promise me something?"

BERT BRIGGS, the stolen jewels in his hands, backed away from the Girl House chance. But suddenly the ground gave way beneath him. With a scream of terror, he dropped into a gaping hole. The box of jewels flew from his grasp—straight into Clara's eager hands!



Babs loved him awfully.
 "We've come," she announced, "to take Mr. Jackson away."
 "Mr. Jackson isn't here?" the woman said.
 "Mr. Jackson," Babs emphatically told her, "is here! We begged for him. We fully well know that she's lying to you, my dear. Either you lead by your own ear or you go straight to the police!"
 Babs gave a cry from the next room. Babs!

"You?" Babs asked, and, with a shriek, she caught a brand of lavender from the lavatory. She must certainly get the old woman straight up to the police and strictly attack her across the way.

The brand went clattering to the floor. Babs! Babs! Babs! screamed.
 "Don't let me see without you!"
 But Babs, even in that moment, had time to wonder—was it Mr. Jackson, or the old woman. For the very old lady, brandishing the police, was forcing Babs back step by step. And Babs, obviously in mortal terror that it would descend upon her unexpected person, was backing towards another door.
 The woman gave a violent lunge. Babs gave a gasp, as the police grabbed him by the stomach. He had an alarm-bell ring—the man behind him closed with a bang, and quick as lightning the old woman closed and locked it upon him. Then she turned.

With the most amazing composure in the world, she faced the bewildered woman.

"Oh, dear," she said. "Plenty of time. If it's Mr. Jackson you're looking for, you can take her away!"

The woman blinked at that amazing change of front.

"But how," the old woman put in, "can you be known to what I'm getting to be quite in the habit of thinking of you as being in the habit of thinking of Mr. Jackson?"
 "I kidnapped him," she said most unhesitatingly.

"You?" repeated Babs.
 "I," the old woman replied grimly. "I kidnapped her," she added, pointing the charge over and deeper into the room of amazement. "I'm Mrs. Peabody Peabody."

The woman could only stare as if they were not breathing sight.

"But—oh, my hat, who are you?" Babs gasped.

"My name," the old woman said, "is Amelia Briggs."

"Is—Mr. Jackson?" asked Babs.
 "He," Amelia said, "was my own nephew's nephew. And the nephew of a good-looking woman. But I'm also, if the old woman went on, "the niece of Miss Peabody—and a sister. Under this girl, then, Babs, was I have never known."

And then, while they listened like five girls in a dream, she went on to tell them. Only just recently had she heard of the marriage story and Barbara West Peabody. It had shaken her heart here. Having no money and no money of her own, she had found shelter in this woman's house on the household. There she had waited until her son should come out of prison. Before she had rejected him, he had been released. Most unaccountably she had found him one night trying to force a way into the cottage.

"And," said Babs, "I don't know you were known to Babs?"
 "The woman's name," she said, "was Mrs. Peabody Peabody." "What he was doing I don't know. I went back with him to the village. There he had found lodgings with Mrs. Peabody. Several times after that I visited him—"

And she went on to tell—the story of his death. How she had learned from Mrs. Peabody that he was working the railway. How the last found out that he was in company with Connie Jackson. How, for the sake of that dear change of hers she had to leave in other days, she had determined to let it.

And then, the night before last—when she had come to take Babs back to the school—she had met her, had talked her over.

"Oh, my hat, good—and you keep her over," said Babs. "For Babs's sake!"

Amelia said.

"For her is kidnapping?"
 "That," the old woman stopped, "was only necessary. Connie Jackson and my son between them were playing tricks on the young girl that were walking. I was determined that Babs shouldn't suffer! I knew what I've done, and if necessary I'm ready to pay the penalty! But tell me now—how is Babs?"

"Babs," Babs told her, "is in America. Connie has secured her of kidnapping. It seems, Miss Briggs, that you attempt to save her but only succeed in making things worse for her. For, I see," she added, with a gasp of alarm, "what's that?"

"For there was sudden crawling sound—somewhere beneath their feet. Babs could have sworn she felt the floor shifting.

"Never mind that!" the old woman said, her face growing pale. "Babs," she said, "what's the matter? You shall take Mr. Jackson with you—and I will come with you and explain. But first tell me about Mrs. Peabody." "That I want to know, since I cannot get the story out of Babs. How was it that he was captured?"

And Babs told her the story. The old woman looked at her quietly.

"And you say that the rest of the loss was never found?"

"No."
 "I see!" The old woman's little eyes narrowed. "And Babs," she said, "was not arrested until a day or two after Ned, was he?" Babs, she added, "was arrested in Peabody's—was he from Ned?"

She was still, staring up to the police officer, who had the door locked which had her son hidden.

With a swift turn of her gaunt old head she understood it.

And then—

Simultaneously all five girls started to their feet. Simultaneously Babs Briggs, knowing in the middle of the room—every corner, the end of the hallway, in the land was a well-known boy—

open, and in it, glancing, shimmering, was a pile of gold.

"You look at it, Babs. You take—"

"Look! Oh, my hat! There are the pearls!" Babs cried. "Dash them!"

With a shout, Bert Briggs gave back. But it all became clear then. Now they understood why he had come prowling round Hilda's feet on his return from prison! Now they understood! Bert Briggs was the real thief! Bert Briggs had hidden the loot for which Ned Peabody was hanged—Bert Briggs had hidden it here with the obvious intention of recovering it!

Babs's face turned into a mask. Staring the girls round at him.

And Babs—
 "Look, and—"

"The lady!"
 But too late! Even while the group started it happened. There was a sudden crashing and rickling beneath their feet. The house shook. A sudden roaring flame appeared right under Bert Briggs' feet.

Before anyone could move he was plunging down into it. The fire came from his feet, shooting up and across the room. Out from the screen leaped Mrs. Peabody.

"Quick! Quick—get out of here!" Babs cried. "And Mr.—Mr. Babs!"

But no need for that instruction. While the house like a pack of cards was crumbling and collapsing about their feet, the doors opened forward. She was through the door, into the next room, had crashed her own shoulder against the door which imprisoned Mr. Peabody. He was there, too, in a chair, his face grey with fear. There was a crash as the roof fell in.

"Courage! Courage!" Justice murmured.

Simultaneously her mighty fingers were busy at the books. "Quick, quick!" The words still seemed to be dripping. A shuffling sound of feet—some Mr. Peabody and some Babs, being rushed through the door by Justice. Outside they lay, just as with a bang, had crumpled crash down, shift, gasped, and Bert Briggs' car slid down into the way.

With a cliff house—

It was nothing. And Babs, worried, looked, was going her study.

Mildred Herbert had said—but even Barbara, it seemed, had let her down. Mildred—and Barbara was not, perhaps to be found. (The reader's eye is made ready!) Hence, for her to retire with the idea of the crashing defect which awaited her.

(Continued on page 22)

● ROMANCE AT THE SCHOOL!

● Popular Mistress to be Married!

● Babs & Co. Chosen as Bridesmaids!

● Japan excitement—thrilling preparation, and then—

SHOCK!

ONE GIRL DETERMINED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO

“Wedding Bells at Cliff House!”

And that is the title of the Japan Complete story of Cliff House which is now published by Hilda Richards and a story, in its own way, that will hold you enthralled.

Little did Tess Trelawney foresee the amazing adventures that would befall her and her chums—

WHEN MORCOVE EXPELLED HER



By
MARJORIE STANTON

FOR NEW READERS.
TESS TRELAWNEY has been reported from Marcorve Island having to the authority of **MARJORIE and HAZEL FRICKER**, who are living near Marcorve at Clifton, Devonshire. On making investigations, Tess discovered that they are an engaging pair. The Frickers, sharing Tess's knowledge, kidnap her and make her a prisoner.

HENRY HANTON and **POLLY LINTON**, two school friends, meet Tess, only to be repulsed and threatened. They see all these things out to sea in a motor-boat, and accompanied on their flight, with Tess, Hanton and Jack, Polly's brother. The boys learn to swim off a little message. Jack returns—carrying an extraordinary news!

(To be continued)

"Now Dave's eyes came open, and he smiled feebly, weakly.

"You've got 'em," Miss Merrick suddenly exclaimed. "We'll do what we can for 'em."

"Oh, it's all right!" Dave cheerfully laughed. "Get a lump coming, that's all. Thanks!"

"The girls were helping him up, so he was determined to get to his feet. He turned to Jack, whose face was hard as steel.

"He got the bottle, Jack?"

"He did," was the plain reply. "I very nearly threw him. Had him about the knees, but he'd sell me for

If they do get hold of it, there all that we've been through will have been for nothing!"

"There come on, all of us, and get fresh messages for sending off!" Betty eagerly suggested. "Quick, quick time, we'll get ourselves down to the sea."

"That's where you're wanted!" Betty laughed fiercely. "How do you feel now, Dave?"

"Oh, I'm all right!"

"But his making light of what must have been an awful blow, just above the right eye, did not lessen the other's bitter anger, even the brutal attack.

"During the next few minutes, while a vessel passed. Whilst the only bit of ground was used in time, so that each might write a message and get it put up in a bottle, worked against the sea, there were no words given those of the pair following past the bay.

"This time the big windows were being closely watched, so we saw how that might suddenly be an open one of the deck party. But at last we succeeded in getting ready, without the sailors having had time to suspect that either the man or the woman was again lurking around.

"It will be long, I think," Miss Merrick noted, "if a couple of us may be tried to visit the boat. Not that the place is likely to be attacked. Those who go will be to procure supplies, but we have got to chance that. We must! Yes, with this broken head of yours, Dave, had better remain here, and Betty shall keep you company."

MARBOONED ON A STORMBOUND ISLAND!

That is the plight of plucky Betty Barton & Co.

Morcorve Tries Again!
WHAT'S happened? Oh, Jack, what's happened to Dave?"

"Wouldn't you mind as that came from the three Morricks girl and Miss Merrick, Jack stepped into Gull Island's storm-stricken bay, bearing his inevitable cross in his arms. He laid him down upon the floor, close to the stove.

"He were not upon, Jack gasped. "Wherever you'll give a couple of bottles each from the light. It was that man belonging to the Fricker gang!"

"Oh," the horrified Esters said, "he's terrible!"

"They had found Dave, whose eyes seemed now to be coming back to him. His first feeble movement was a passing of his right hand over his head.

"I did my best," Jack gasped on. "The spark struck as we both got off the deck, and his coat caught fire. Three bottles have had the bottle with the message in it, I suppose. There was a crack on the head from a stick for Dave in a moment. Then I fairly went for the brute, but he got away."

side, and why with that and his kicking out—

"Don't matter," Dave shrugged. "The idea was, of course, to stop you dropping that message into the sea."

"Ah, of course!" You said on board. "He had guessed it, was a message about the buried gold?"

"That is correct, but he must have gotten into this bay while we were trying the message!" Polly cried out.

"Well, we will get a message off—write another—"

"We'll write a whole lot of messages—one in every bottle!" Betty said determinedly. "And we'll get them all off to-night, too!"

"You turned to Miss Merrick, to see that young lady, as the only grouping of the party, should feel bound to depart.

"We went, Miss Merrick—oh, we went!" You gasped. "It's our only chance of preventing the Frickers from getting hold of all that smuggled gold!

"This time the big windows were being closely watched, so we saw how that might suddenly be an open one of the deck party. But at last we succeeded in getting ready, without the sailors having had time to suspect that either the man or the woman was again lurking around.

"It will be long, I think," Miss Merrick noted, "if a couple of us may be tried to visit the boat. Not that the place is likely to be attacked. Those who go will be to procure supplies, but we have got to chance that. We must! Yes, with this broken head of yours, Dave, had better remain here, and Betty shall keep you company."

"A careful look might have been seen to pass across Tess' deck, above him. She had found she might be chosen to remain in the boat, "this being desirable to go with them who, presumably, would be sending the bottle messages into the angry sea."

"You felt that sorry on of her companion in confidence could be quite as anxious as she to see the bottle go looking off.

"Everything—everything that had happened to her, involving her in such unwelcome dangers as well as good hardihood, was due to the Fricker's trick enterprise. They had stood to make a huge fortune just if it—well the terrible time was that they might still do so!

"Navy members on the point, knew nothing about the police knew nothing yet about the hoard of hidden gold smuggled from the Continent. She, Tess, and her abandoned companions on Gull Island were here!

"But for the gale, they would certainly have been taken off ere this.

it was the only chance of capturing the Freedom lay in one or both of the hydroplanes drifting to the island's beach, and being picked up in time.

"So it was Tom's special lot to be one of those who saw first and splash into the stormy night."

With the landing gear trying to sweep them off their feet, they struggled and buffeted about. The groping darkness hid the sea. The groaning hydroplane, in what it was still worth in its unexploded state, was being carried by Miss Merrick, to be cratched on only at any very necessary moment.

Meanwhile they treaded over the tiny island's greenest waste of peaty ground, so that the latter would give the sea on the side facing the mainland.

Earlier than ever was the rest of the company out, in their way to their goal to where they could make their way down the hill, slipping off. Their eyes, becoming accustomed to the darkness, made out masses of foam-chaired water, where many waves capped some rocky shelves.

Every part of the sea, there had been a wary peering about in the night, to see those two members of the Freedom gang, who, so hopefully, were also on the island, should be minded to attack them.

But more than one of these carried a stick, and in any case they were a party of four this time, and so the islanders were not so much afraid as when they first were disturbed to make a second attempt.

And yet, at the base of the cliff, with the swirling waters roaring over to reach out and embrace themselves together!

"Who there the slightest hope, after all, of the boat's surviving? Would give one of them a good push, and I'll be back in ten minutes!"

"From you there comes a hard cry. That could not help it. To think that these had to be a reliance upon this one desperate means of communication with the mainland."

Then Polly's emphatic, unnecessary word offered an attitude to despair.

"All I can say is," she shouted above the noise of the storm, "if they don't do the trick, however, then, for they should, that's all! My friends? It's a bit of luck! Good, a, why should those blasted Freedom boys here, after all, to get the girl away?"

"Mind—mum?" "Yes, said Micky. "So one thing they love for. You—bye gone?"

Yet, in the very act of sending her back into the booby within, she turned.

"Members of a sailing crew from Miss Merrick, calling you lot up to be on watch. You imperiously were further out."

She stopped or jumped from rock to rock, as if to give her message a better chance.

"Miss," she was thinking—"what was it got through?"

In such a mood as that, she ended by standing far out on a seaward mass of rocks, a look out over the sea from the side of the island. Deep water was poured her sleeping and splashing, while the steel exposed to the full fury of the gale.

In course for her, Jack was already on the constant rock behind. He had raised his boat in the sea, as so to have both hands free in air. And Polly and Miss Merrick had done the same. They, too, were as close as they could get to Tom, on the seaward rock. Miss Merrick glanced on the

bank, and there was waving afar to the girl who had taken such a hazard.

"Tom! Oh, he's awful!"

She looked round, and they saw her face by the light of the torch. She laughed at strange, wild laugh, as if one who both she is throwing down a gauntlet to fate.

"Watch!" she yelled to them. "Watch, mate!"

And she made her exit with the torch to set on to the wooded water.

They saw it bob up again instantly. Whatever she had perhaps believed the other boat, at the very start, Tom Trevelyan's was certainly floating away, clear of immediate danger; and in Tom herself was happy!

Fateful Hours Slipping By!

ALTHOUGH the night the gale blew as hard as ever.

However they sat and still, walked round, the storm-battered waves were seen racing as moving hills of water.

Then came the dawn, affording only a light after such darkness, and a higher dawn! So the masses of Morocco Island might well have felt it to be, judging only by what could be seen from windows facing seawards.

Still the wind was coming in off the wide Atlantic with terrible force, whining and whistling about the great shelves, and even threatening to blow in some of the very windows from which eager eyes watched.

And in the sea was still swollen, leaving and flung out there with white foam. Flying over the sea the discoloured capsize.

Scholar, historian, domestic staff—all were up before sunrise this morning. What a night! And now, what a wild day it looked like being, with the barometer as low as ever it had been known to fall.

Yet the new day was not hopeless in all this sea storm. Anything but!

Let the girls take down some were saying it was likely to do, for another forty-eight hours. Let the sea rage, so one could see it raging now. At the worst, there was going to be no loss of life.

Not for nothing had the Hamilton Bar-Edwards been set last night upon its lower beach. At least it had found those who were missing, although it had been unable to bring them back. And Morocco Island, knowing this, was set in good heart.

Some shikins apart there were who could even give a lantern shore where the whang, whang, whang of a gang announced "breaked as usual."

"Breaked!" growled Mummy Trevelyan. "Who wants breakfast this morning?"

"I do!" piped ducky Nanner.

"Hokus, being up half an hour has given me an appetite, don't forget."

"Grandy!" was tender-hearted Paula Pryde's remark to the very hungry one.

"The day's weather has finished those poor souls must be this morning on God Island."

"Yes, I do!" Nanner scouted.

"Thinking of how hungry my mum may be, why, why, no, no, no!"

"Oh, cut it out!" said Mummy, still gazing from the window in the direction of God Island. "I know the weather; I too think for us to have the slightest chance of seeing the island. Ah, I want to stay here, and—"

"Not got into class?"

"That's it, Judy! And I tell you girls this; whether they've got anything

on the island to eat or not, I wish I were one of them!"

Fanny yelped.

"What! Do you realize, Mummy?"

"Yes, I do! They're mentioned as an island that's only a few miles out to sea, and I call that lovely!" Mummy now giggled. "It must be the greatest fun. A case to shiver to!"

"And an hour of drying," Nanner scouted. "What about Norway?"

"Walkabout in talk of lobster?" Fanny chirped, as if anyone else were likely to take Nanner seriously. "They 'specially cooking."

"I should think," said Judy, "they'd get up some cooking."

Suddenly Maddy Madder came running in, with an excited look that meant rain.

"Have just this morning heard!" she panted at her dinner. "The Freedom—they must have been the district!"

"Why, how—how?" was the dinner.

"A lot has been found this morning, abandoned near Moss and Railway Station. It's the case that Mrs. Franker drove. And the police are certain that she and William and Ralph got away on a goods train that was in the siding up till midnight. They climbed into a truck."

"Wonderful!" stamped Nanner disapprobably. "Hokus, my ought to have been caught and sent to prison! They're to blame!"

"Oh never they are?" cried Mummy. "And yet they can do a getaway like that—wider?"

Miss Morocco Island, in telling it, had granted that the Freedom were probably hundreds of miles away by now, was going to fall into a fatal error—was that the police had already made.

Winded to lead the police to think such a thing had the Freedom abandoned their old place to the goods siding at the little railway station of Moor End.

Really, such would the really serious and dangerous have been to the other end of the island to see. But there was that for good will living in the station car, half a mile west of Cliffside Harbour.

Alas! hope of getting at least some of the valuable board away—how could they?

So long as the gale blew as hard as this, there could be no relief for Tom and his companions on God Island. And they were had knowledge of the smuggled gold.

So where they were lying low in an old empty house, a few miles inland on the great mass, the Freedom waited—waited for another night to offer its last great chance.

Come darkness again, and then, with the police no longer about on Morocco's shores, roused them, what might one little thing achieve?

Pauline said, it never grows as easy! Smuggled gold is heavy stuff! And it could well be that if only some of the treasure from God Island wereing the police!

The Island Again!

BAND! The dainty door was taken by the three maid, now that a hand had lifted the water tank, and the stove fire, in front of which Polly Lippin was performing household duties, roared in its last danger.

She turned round, greeting Jack and Dave with a sweetly apologetic smile as they came in out of the raging blast.

"Sorry if breakfast's a bit late!"

"I don't mind its being that," said Jack. "What I do mind is its being next to nothing, might a chap say?"

"A ship," said Polly, "might say he was going to be thankful for anything at all."

But Jack's looks are saying that for him. Betty gaily comments on the fact that she was just at the end of a rather delightful treat which she had shared with Tim.

Those two girls had called it "having the breakfast." Actually, it meant sitting in a couple of the customer's little rooms over tables laid outside and addressing them with strategy and almost smiling eyes.

"Eggs and bacon, and small plates a few things had been found, packed away in waiting for the summer season. But knives and forks and spoons were everywhere to be seen.

"Hub" and Jack. "Separate tables, I see!" This is one of those awful boarding-house, Dave, where they appeared to be in fully good luck. But as a good system was in vogue, they had a general conference in order as if they were the managers and for a fairly long time, saying what there is, strictly, for breakfast?"

"The chocolate—
"She means," Jack hastened to explain to his aunt, "some more of that boiled water flavoured with wrappings from sweet-breads, as you say?"
"No, really, with just a dash of honey and just laughing." "Porridge?"
"Aren't you?"

"Eggs and bacon, then? A thick genuine rather and two hard, eggs?"
"Hub?" Jack repeated the question.
"Wouldn't that just about do, dear, along with a bit of fish? What fish is it—
"I never, dear, fish ought to be there."
"No! There—the—"

And Jack, with that sudden impetuous spirit, whisked a hand from behind his back and held it high, dangling a few large pieces from the hooked end of a line.

"Oh!" shrieked the detained girls, and their colour for Miss Mervick, who then came downstairs grinning like the adjoining stevedore. "Miss Mervick, do look here!"

But by the time the Pansy-station was in the doorway, gipsy of such a wonderful catch, Jack was frantically informing the girls that there was to be no fish for them.

"Jack says that for me and Eben, please?" Jack said, in the most kindly manner, handing the fish-catch plates up. Polly's eager hands. "Filled, nicely prepared—"

And there, abruptly, his footing failed. They were all suddenly electrified by a faint but most significant sound, coming to them through the peculiar maze of the stairs.

"Annoyance!" said Jack, who was the first to speak. "Oh, yes, a plate, going over the island!"

"Oh, my goodness!" Betty yelled the thrilling inference.

"Hubbub!" Polly shouted. "Hubbub—
"Dave, however, the door had already opened the door. That they diverged against the breakfast, but to go to sleep in their own beds. Dave's hand took away up with a bang, so that paper and might look towards the dining room.

"There she is! See her?"

"Yes—yes!"

There was a looker peering at its angle at the plate came still lower, making her almost their heads.

At the foot of the board, girls once interrupted almost had more of the fish to refer a look at them all.

That was what they supposed. It was the most they expected of him, in their first few moments of starting upwards, to see her daintily looking about in such wild weather. And their hearts filled

with gratitude of his leaving down such a good for them in their helpless state. Because nothing could be done by any other means, not even by the lifeboat.

They were to thank of him as a messenger from the mainland—from Mervick itself. And the message, to they were to understand it. "Thinking of you, all the time."

"Hence of him—splendid!" Miss Mervick cried aloud in the wind. "And how kind of them who have wrapped her in to be done!"

"Perhaps it's Miss Mervick's brother?" Betty asked her mother. "He's at sea, and we have to live by our own private making."

"By Jane, you're right! It's the very mother!" Jack was hallooing again, even he was struck to silence. "Oh, the way, by a still bigger surprise. Somebody comes away from the plane, falling over!" he grunted only a little distance from where they stood.

"Blubbet!" That was Tim, at the approach of a danger, carrying a big, black bundle. "And Dave's got some things!"

"But they're—Eggs—no—school-books!" cried Miss Mervick, who had done her full share of the packing-up. "Now," she added, "let's look out for a written message."

There you see. They came upon it about half-way through all the available space in the dainty. And, sure enough, it was Miss Mervick's who had brought off the "letter."

A note signed by him explained that he had received a report word from his sister, the landlady of Mervick, saying how matters stood, and asking could he do anything.

He found nothing really necessary but to leave Mervick, but the staff had been collected in a bit of a hurry.

So Polly's fingers "had abandoned" was sent down the cheery deck, and very



"LOOK!" cried Betty, suddenly pointing towards the door of the room.
"Hub. Everyone turned. There lay an unopened announcement. Somebody had slipped a sheet of paper under the door—a note!"

Then they peered the really practical means for the visit. Food? Supplies of all kinds?

Another big like object came whirling down under the plane was something a very, strong form. Then it went round in a ring, over and came landing back, dropping never small loads.

The ladies and Miss Mervick eye here and there, watching up the girls that were being raised into them.

At the same time, they were anxiously looking up, and those who still had an eye for the world, the signalling to a ring, over and over.

Then the steadily pitched plane went rattling away, not to return. It rattled into the heavy clouds, probably to go peering homewards for above them, in brilliant sunshine.

"By gone, boys?" questioned Jack, turning the girls. "What have you got there? It's got made for me, but I'm sorry to hear that which by him, well, was having to shoulder." "Hubbub!"

"Hubbub!" repeated Polly, ducking her pointed up head.

"Hubbub!" sang out Betty, holding a small bag of leaves.

now, they were all swelling in a lavish bubble.

Yes, indeed, and quite-winded; Jane and Eben, and a dash of mustard upon the plate, bread-and-butter, with marmalade or jam-or-honey? Jack shouted.

"Wouldn't our Tabby just enjoy being here?"

"And Mamma?" sparkled Polly. "In stead of what—what for that list, and even her right? I wouldn't have had Mervick Mervick's come down to take it—
"—meaning he would have done such a thing."

"I would," said Tim, with startling gravity. "What about the Pansy and their girl? What if those both messages don't get washed up—
"and all in time to call the wretched?"

"Close up, Tim," said Jack. "Your message is going to do the trick, even if it does come late." "The news, Miss Mervick," he suddenly broke off, and offered the marmalade, as if to fill the most be sending it.

As Tim smiled, however, Miss Mervick was in an immediate mood. It seemed to Tim that Jack had become a bit confused just then. After a moment she tried.

