

"THE FIREBRAND TAKES NO CHANCES!" Magnificent LONG COMPLETE
Cliff House story inside.

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Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



DIANA THE MAGNIFICENT!

Parading the frock in which she
would take Babs' place.

See this week's grand story of
Barbara Redfern & Co.

Grand LONG COMPLETE story featuring the famous CHUMS of CLIFF HOUSE School.

The FIREBRAND TAKES NO CHANCES!



Just Like Diana!



"FINISHED with the oil, Mabs?"

"Yes, rather! Here you are, Babs! Bessie, pass me that rag, will you?"

"Which rag? Oh really," plump Bessie Bunter sniffed, with an indignant glower through her thick spectacles, "that's my handkerchief! Oh, this rag? Well, why didn't you say so?"

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The three chums of Study No. 4—Form captain Barbara Redfern, golden-haired Mabel Lynn, and Bessie—were gathered together in the Fourth Form Common-room at Cliff House School.

More than a dozen girls were there all told—most of them dressed for going out; half of them still tinkering with roller skates, which were being subjected to a last-minute overhaul.

Dear old duffer Bessie was in difficulties, as usual.

"I sus-say, Babs," she grumbled, looking up, "I can't get the wheels of this skate to work."

"Well, isn't one skate enough?" put in Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, games captain of the Lower School. "You don't mean to say you're going to use both of them, Bessie?"

"But, of course, I'm gig-going to use both of them," Bessie glared. "What a lot of rot you do talk, Clara! How can I roller-skate if I don't use two skates? You know as well as I do that you use two skates for roller-skating!"

Clara sighed and shook her unruly hair. Bessie never could see a joke! Babs, busy oiling a bright new skate,

smiled at her tomboy chum sympathetically. Mabel Lynn giggled. Janet Jordan, also a member of the group, grimaced at Clara as much as to say: "Well, you asked for it!"

Gentle Marjorie Hazeldene quietly smiled. Bessie, having completely crushed Clara with that retort, vigorously got on with the job of making the locked wheels yield to treatment.

"Well, buck up," Babs said. "Rink opens at two, you know. We want to get as much practice as possible. Hallo, here's Bridget! I say, Bridget"—as Bridget O'Toole, the Irish member of the Fourth Form, entered the Common-room—"are you going in for the schools' roller-skating competition?"

"Arrah, and it's that I am!" Bridget said, and looked so, for she was dressed for going out and carried a pair of shining new skates in her hand. "And it's the fancy-dress section I've entered for," she volunteered. "I'm going as an Oirish colleen. What are you going in for, Babs?"

Babs' pretty face flushed.

"Well, I'm competing in the original

costume section. You know, you make up a dress to your own idea. Clara's competing in the races. Janet in the burlesque section. Bessie, what are you going in for?"

"The figure skating, I guess," Leila Carroll said, with a chuckle. "Sure our Bessie would beat the world hands down and feet up in that particular section."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a chuckle in the Common-room. The reference, of course, was a sly one to Bessie's rotund figure. But, as usual, the leg-pull was wasted on Bessie.

"Well, I'm not," she indignantly announced. "I'm going in for the fancy-dress section. I'm going," Bessie added importantly, "as Little Dolly Vardon!"

"Before or after?" inquired Jemima Carstairs, earnestly regarding Bessie through her monocle.

"Eh? Before or after what?"

"Well, Little Dolly Vardon before or after taking Bouncer's Food for Bounding, Bonny Babies?" Jemima announced blandly, and there was a yell of laughter, in which Bessie's indignant reply was drowned.

Laughter, merry good humour seemed to be the keynote of the gaily busy party in the Common-room that half-holiday.

All without exception were booked for the same spot that afternoon—the Courtfield Rink, where next Saturday the great schools' skating championships—both boys and girls—were to be held.

Most of the girls at Cliff House could roller-skate, and the competition, with its dazzling prizes, had attracted a very, very good entry for the various enterprising and interesting sections.

Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth and Lower School, had, as she said, already entered for the original costumes section, and Babs, brightly brainy, as usual, had something extra good in the way of ideas for original costumes.

Clara Trevlyn, fine skater as she was, had entered for the racing competition. Then there were the figure-skating championships, the fancy-dress (solo) competitions, the burlesque competitions, trick skating and one-skate competitions—something, in fact, to suit every taste. No wonder, therefore, that the whole school was bubbling over with excitement.

"There we are, then!" Babs breathlessly laughed. "That's finished! Mabs, give me that strap, will you? All ready now? Leila, are you fixed up?"

"O.K., sister!" grinned the American junior. "Where's my hat? Thanks, Mabs! Oh, her-hum!" Leila added, as the door opened and another girl stepped into the room. "Heads up! Here comes the Queen of Sheba!"

"Ha, ha ha!"

"Funny, aren't you?" snapped Diana Royston-Clarke.

For Diana Royston-Clarke, the famous Firebrand of the Fourth, it was, and Diana, as usual, was dressed to most expensive perfection.

A striking girl Diana with her perfect milk-and-roses complexion, her mass of glorious platinum hair brushed well back from her smooth forehead. A most arrestingly pretty girl, with some dynamic, magnetic quality about her which always caused a little hush at her entry among other girls. Even in spite of the sally which greeted her appearance there was a pause as she stood loftily on the threshold of the room.

And Diana, accepting that pause as homage to her appearance, smiled loftily. Diana knew that she looked well, and it pleased her to know it.

By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

The girls at Cliff House were allowed to change out of their school uniforms on half-holidays, and Diana always took advantage of that.

She wore now a new brick-red suit, cut in the latest and most exquisite style by her expensive London tailors. Over it was a fawn swagger coat, carelessly thrown open to reveal the glories beneath it. Round her slim throat was loosely fastened, as only Diana knew how to fasten, a new Paisley silk scarf, and on her glorious hair was perched a small conical blue felt hat, furnished with a row of tiny brick-red bows. The bows were repeated upon the blue suede high-heeled shoes which encased her shapely feet.

In one hand she carried a glittering pair of brand-new roller skates.

"Natty—what?" Jemima Carstairs murmured admiringly. "Alas, how shabby dost thou make thy poor sisters feel, Diana! Going to a wedding?"

"Eh? Of course not, you idiot! I'm going to the rink. I'm going to drop in my entry," Diana informed the room haughtily, "for the original costumes prize. Oh, Babs—"

"Yes?" Barbara smiled.

"I hear you're going in for that, too?"

"Quite right."

"Taking a partner, of course?" Diana inquired, with studied carelessness.

Jimmy and Babs had been chums for so long that it had never occurred to her that anyone else would have thought of booking him up.

"Cheer up, Babs," Mabs said softly. "There are other partners."

"Yes," Babs agreed. "But it—it's not that. I oughtn't to have said anything, I suppose, until I'd seen Jimmy. It makes you feel such a fool! Anyway, let's go!" she said gruffly.

And, picking up her skates, she started towards the door.

The chums glanced at each other, rather sorry for Babs, but more than a little angry with the Firebrand for having inflicted such humiliation upon their leader, and perhaps in their hearts just a little annoyed with Jimmy Richmond, too. It was strange indeed that Jimmy hadn't consulted Babs first before agreeing to Diana's proposal. On any other occasion Jimmy would have been the first to ring Babs up.

Babs was thinking that, too, as she made the journey to Courtfield on the bus with her chums. Her face was still a little overshadowed. But she was not feeling any animosity towards Jimmy. Jimmy, after all, had a right to please himself.

"Well, here we are," Clara said at length, as the bus drew up in Courtfield opposite the rink. "Tumble out, you cripples! Plenty of people about—what?" she laughed. "Hallo! There's Ralph Lawrence; and there's Beryl Brecknock, of Courtfield High, and Bella Clements. Going into the rink, too. Whoops! Kids, we have rivals!"

Rivals it certainly seemed Cliff House had. Quite a stream of boys and girls,

Popular Barbara Redfern and her boy chum of Friardale School, Jimmy Richmond, enter as partners for the roller-skating carnival. But Diana Roy ton-Clarke, Firebrand of the Fourth Form, determines that Jimmy shall be HER partner. And so she sets out to break the friendship between Jimmy and Babs

"Well yes. I thought of going as Sunshine and Storm. I've designed the Sunshine costume—I shall go as Sunshine, of course—and I've got an idea for the Storm costume."

"Sounds jolly good," Clara put in. "What are you going as, Di?"

"Oh, I've an idea!" Diana said grandly. "I'm not going to talk about it yet, though. What partner are you taking, Babs?"

"Well"—Babs turned a little pink—"I thought of Jimmy Richmond of Friardale School."

"Oh!" Diana said, and, pulling on her gloves, paused to dart a rather challenging look at the captain of the Form. "You would think of the best boy skater at Friardale, of course!" she said, with a hint of malice. "And Jimmy Richmond has agreed?"

Babs' pink became red.

"Well, no, I—I haven't really asked him yet."

"Then I should save myself the trouble if I were you," Diana said loftily. "Jimmy Richmond is already booked to skate. I have booked him."

And, swinging on her high heels, she sauntered out of the room.

"Stuffy cat!" breathed Clara. "Oh, my hat! There are times when I simply ache to box that girl's ears!"

Babs bit her lip. It was true that she had made her arrangements for the skating competition without consulting Jimmy Richmond. But good-looking

all armed with skates, were pouring into the rink. Obviously Cliff House was not the only school excited by the news of the forthcoming roller-skating contests.

And the rink itself when they entered it was crowded. Scores of boys and girls were on the floor; scores of others at the refreshment counters and in the galleries which surrounded it.

Girls from Whitechester, from Kenmarsh, from the two Courtfield Schools. Boys from Friardale, from the Courtfield Art School.

Such a crowd that for a moment the chums felt startled and a little breathless by the sight of it all. Then Bessie gave a sudden cry.

"I sus-say, Babs, there's Diana—and Jimmy Richmond. And—and, I say, who's that with them?"

Babs swivelled round. Clara and Jemima Carstairs and Leila Carroll and Mabs were pushing their way through the throng of skaters and watchers then, intent on finding the cloak-room in which to change.

Babs saw Diana at one of the snack bars. She stood dangling her skates in one hand, her other arm leaning upon the counter in an attitude of studied elegance. She was smiling at Richmond—such a melting smile—and Richmond rather perplexedly was shaking his head.

She looked at the other girl. Who

was she? Rather slimmer than Diana—dazzling Diana, who seemed to be overshadowing everyone around her at that moment—with clear-cut features strangely reminiscent of Jimmy Richmond's own.

It was obvious that she was impressed by the personality of the Firebrand of the Fourth.

Babs hesitated. Courtesy called her to go up and greet Jimmy. A natural sensitiveness, however, held her back. After all, Jimmy was Diana's partner. Diana wouldn't be pleased at being interrupted at this moment—

But the question was decided for her. As though sensing her presence, Jimmy Richmond at that moment turned. His gaze flew straight to her, and Babs saw the glad relief that leapt to his face.

"Why, Babs!" he cried joyfully.

"But, look here—" Diana protested.

"I—Excuse me a minute, Diana," Jimmy said hurriedly. "There's Babs. I rather want to see Babs. Ruth, you come along with me," he added, seizing the other girl's arm.

Babs saw Diana scowl; saw the petulant, furious look she flung after her. Then Jimmy—all beetroot-red, but looking immensely pleased to see her—was before her.

"Babs," he said, "I—I've been looking for you. I say, I want you to meet my cousin—Ruth Richmond. Ruth is living in Courtfield for the time being," he went on. "She's just waiting for a week or two, until there's a vacancy in Courtfield High School. Pretty lonely—oh, Ruth?"

"Yes," Ruth simpered, and her large brown eyes fastened full upon Babs. "Is this the girl you've been telling me about, Jimmy?"

"Rather!" Richmond agreed warmly.

"Well, I'm frightfully pleased to meet you!" Ruth Richmond gushed. "If all that Jimmy says about you is true you must be the eighth wonder of the world!"

"Here, I say, don't tell stories out of school!" Jimmy Richmond protested, reddening. "Don't you take any notice, Babs!"

Babs laughed.

"It's all right, Jimmy," she said. "But did you want me?"

"I—I was wondering," Richmond said. "As I said, poor old Ruth is finding things pretty tame. She doesn't know many people in the place yet—just a few of the Courtfield girls—no more. I hope you don't think it's an awful cheek, Babs?"

"Jimmy, don't be silly!"

"Well," the boy said, reddening, "I—I sort of thought, Babs, that perhaps you wouldn't mind taking old Ruth up for a bit—just till she found her feet, you know? You know, take her places, show her things. Perhaps," he went on, "you might even ask her to come up to Cliff House and watch the hockey and so on. I'd love her to come to Cliff House myself, but my aunt—her mother, you know—is an old Courtfield High girl, so naturally wants Ruth to follow in her footsteps. Of course, if it doesn't fit in with your programme, don't hesitate to say so."

"But why shouldn't it fit in with my programme?" Babs asked, and looked at the girl and smiled, and felt rewarded by the smile she received in return. "What about Ruth, though? Would she like it?"

"Oh, Babs, I—I'd love it!" Ruth said shyly.

Richmond beamed. The affectionate look he bestowed upon his cousin pronounced plainly enough how fond he was of her.

"O.K.! Then that's settled?" he asked, with a breath of relief. "Thanks, Babs! You're an awful sport! That's top-hole! Well, now what about a spot of skating?" he asked jubilantly. "I suppose you've come here to skate?"

"But—but aren't you skating with Diana?" Babs asked.

"Eh? No! Why?"

"Well, I—I understood—" And Babs flushed again. "Jimmy, isn't she going to be your partner in the skating carnival?"

Richmond frowned.

"Why, no! She did mention it yesterday, and she asked me again just now. But you know, Babs, I wouldn't partner anyone else until I'd seen you first. What a funny idea!"

Funny, yes! Babs threw a look towards the arrogant Firebrand, now talking to Beryl Brecknock and Bella Clements of Courtfield High School. She might have guessed that, she told herself. Wasn't it just like Diana to take the deed for granted? Wasn't it just like her, on the strength of having mentioned the partnership to Jimmy Richmond, to have accepted the matter as arranged? And she had been idiotic enough to believe her!

"And—and you haven't got your partner yet, then?" she asked.

"No," Richmond returned. "But I'd like one," he added, a little hesitantly.

"Have you chosen a partner?"

"No," Babs admitted.

"Then what about me?" Jimmy grinned.

"Oh, yes, that would be lovely!" Ruth beamed.

"Thanks, Jimmy, I'd like that," said Babs, her eyes shining now. What a fool she was to believe for a moment that Jimmy Richmond would have let her down! She flung a look at Diana, and, meeting that supercilious girl's jealous glance, was rewarded with a scowl.

But she didn't care then.

"Shall we—practise?" she asked.

"Ruth, don't go away. We'll all have tea together at the interval, and then I'll introduce you to my chums. Jimmy, wait here a moment, will you, while I go and get my skates on, and then I'll tell you all about the idea I've got. Won't be a ticklet."

She was back in less than a minute, to find her boy friend waiting for her. Ruth had disappeared. So, too, had Diana Royston-Clarke.

"Well, this is jolly!" Richmond said beamingly as they skated off arm-in-arm. "And thanks a million times, Babs, for looking after Ruth. Now, what's the big idea for the carnival?"

And as they skated, Babs told him. Richmond's eyes sparkled.

Certainly the idea was both novel and original.

He was to be Storm—the storm costume being represented by a close-fitting suit of black tights, adorned with vivid streaks of gold and red lightning, with a cape falling down the back made of long glass beads to represent rain. The headdress would be represented by a shining helmet bearing side wings to represent the wind.

"Sounds pretty hot to me," Richmond said. "And you, Babs?"

"Well, I thought of a rather frilly dress. Something in white lace, you know. The skirt streaked with gold to get the effect of sun rays. Perhaps a rainbow belt and a garland of flowers as a necklace, and another garland worn with a sky-blue veil as a headdress. I'm going to see about it after tea."

"Good egg! I'll come with you and order mine at the same time," Richmond said. "I say, Babs, you do skate stunningly!"

Babs was thinking the same about Jimmy at that moment. Certainly they formed an attractive picture as they glided over the floor together.

Diana, seated alone near one of the buffets, scowling over an orange drink she had ordered, heard the girl at the next table say to her partner:

"Aren't they fine? Oh, George, I do think the boy's good-looking!" and inwardly choked. Her eyes, glowering, followed the two with bitter glance.

"Stuck-up cat!" she murmured contemptuously, referring not to the girl at the next table, but to Barbara Redfern.

For Diana was feeling considerably ruffled. From the moment of entering the roller-skating competition, she had made up her mind that there was but one partner for her—and that partner Jimmy Richmond of Friardale Boys' School. Not that she had any particular liking for Jimmy Richmond, but simply because Richmond was acknowledged as the most skilful skater among the boys. In matters like this Diana took no chances.

It was with the idea of looking up Jimmy before Barbara Redfern got hold of him that she had first interviewed him yesterday. But Richmond, as he had told Babs, had given a non-committal answer.

She had gone out of her way to warn Babs off in the Common-room, intending, of course, to let Babs gather the idea that Jimmy had already promised to act as her partner. And yet in spite of all that—

Diana scowled again. Still, the carnival hadn't arrived yet, she told herself. There were still several days to go.

Diana's eyes glittered.

"And if," she told herself, "I can't get Richmond on my side in those few days—" And then looked up as another girl rose in front of her. It was Ruth Richmond, smiling timidly.

"Oh, Diana, are you alone?" she said. "I'm simply bored to death with all this skating. Can I join you, please, and talk to you? Because, you know," she added softly, "I do think you're awfully nice. Please, Diana?"

Diana, on the point of snapping out a dismissal, paused, thinking swiftly. She saw suddenly that Jimmy Richmond's cousin might be useful. So she smiled, that charming smile which only Diana could produce. She indicated the seat next to her.

"Sit down, Ruth! I like you, too," adding a mental "fibber" as she said the words. "Now, Ruth, tell me what you and Barbara Redfern and Jimmy Richmond were chattering about. You seemed so awfully pleased with yourselves!"

Under the Firebrand's Spell!



"WELL, that's finished that!" Jimmy Richmond commented, with a breath of relief. "Anything else you'd like me to do, Babs?"

"No, thanks!" Babs smiled.

"Then do you mind if I push off now?" Richmond asked. "There's a committee meeting of the Soccer club on at the school at six o'clock, and I just daren't miss that. You don't mind if I leave you, Ruth?"

"Oh, Jimmy, not at all!" Ruth smiled.

"Right-ho, then," said Jimmy. He raised his cap and hurried off. Ruth looked after him and sighed.

"Dear Jimmy!" she said fondly.

"He's so awfully nice, don't you think, Babs?"

"One of the best," Babs agreed heartily. "The question is now, Ruth, what would you like to do? Like to pop in for an hour at a news cinema? They've got a new Mickey Mouse on there."

It was half-past five then, and Babs, if the truth be told, would have been glad of a little rest in the cinema. Roller-skating was hard work, and despite the jolly little tea which she and her chums and Jimmy Richmond and his chums had enjoyed in the cafe attached to the rink, she was feeling a little tired. Apart from that, there had been the excitement of choosing the material and getting measured for her carnival dress at Hollands; and the helping of helpless Jimmy Richmond in that matter, too.

Clara, Bessie, Mabs, and the others had gone off back to school, tactfully leaving Babs to make Ruth's better acquaintance. Ruth, however, pouted a little.

"Oh, can't we go somewhere else?" she asked a little pettishly. "Who wants to see a silly cartoon? I'll tell you what, let's go dancing," she added eagerly.

"Where?"

"Well, there's the Royal Rooms. They have dancing there."

Babs shook her head.

"Sorry, but our school rules are against it."

"Well, you're not afraid of breaking a rule or two, are you?" Ruth asked.

"Ah, come on, Babs, don't be a spoilsport!" she added coaxingly. "After all, Diana goes dancing at the Royal Rooms, and if Diana isn't afraid why should you be? I know Diana goes, because she told me," she added challengingly.

Babs looked at her, mildly astonished by the change which had come over the girl.

"Ruth, I'm sorry!" she said.

"You mean you won't?"

"No."

"You're afraid!" And Ruth sneered.

"Ruth, please—"

"Well, why not?" Ruth asked pettishly. "After all, you did promise Jimmy you'd give me a good time, didn't you? Jimmy told me you were a sport, and, anyway, what harm is there in dancing?"

But Babs shook her head again. She was not afraid of breaking rules, to be sure, but she saw no reason in breaking them just for the mere fun of the thing. She made another suggestion.

"Look here, let's go to the Exhibition."

"Rats to the Exhibition!" Ruth said crossly.

"Well, why not come back with me to the school and have a look round there?"

"Because I don't want to go to your silly school!" Ruth said peevishly. "I shall soon have a school of my own."

"Then—then—" Babs shook her head. Really, it was rather hopeless. Even though she felt so tired herself she rose to another suggestion. "Ruth, how would you like to look round the shops?"

"Oh, don't you think I see enough of the silly shops?" Ruth snapped. "What do you think I do all day while you're in school? Look at shops—walk round! Look at shops, and walk round again! I'm just sick of looking at silly shops, and anyway you've spoiled everything for me now. I'm going home. Good-night!"

Abruptly she turned away, but Babs caught her by the shoulder.

"Ruth, please! No, don't go like

that!" she cried anxiously. "Look here, what about to-morrow?"

"To-morrow?" Ruth asked surlily.

"Yes," Babs nodded. "It's an early day at Cliff House," she said. "That means we're finished at three o'clock. A party of us—me, Mabs, Clara, Jemima, Janet Jordan, Leila Carroll, and Bessie—are going to the Drome Stadium to see the motor-races. Clara's cousin, Mary Malcolm, is riding in the big one, you know, and I'm sure you'd like to see that, wouldn't you? Would you like to come?"

Ruth Richmond, tempted, paused. It seemed at last as if Babs had hit upon a notion to appeal to her.

"What time?" she asked.

"Half-past three. Shall we meet you here—at the Market Cross?"

"Well—yes," Ruth said, after some hesitation. "Yes, I—I think I'd like that. But you'll be sure to meet me, Babs—here at this spot?"

"Yes," Babs said.

"All right, then." And Ruth smiled.

"To-morrow at half-past three, Babs." Babs smiled. Well, thank goodness she had found something to please the girl. She hurried off after bidding her good-night.

Silly of her to be impatient with the girl, of course. After all, Ruth must find things rather dull with nothing to do all day. And Jimmy—well, old Jimmy liked her. That was good enough for her.

She did not hear the contemptuous "Prig!" which escaped Ruth's lips.

As Babs vanished round the corner, a big Rolls-Royce, driven by a uniformed chauffeur, drove up to the kerb, and a platinum-crowned head suddenly peered through the window.

Ruth, hearing her name called, jumped round with a squeak of delight.

"Diana!" she cried.



"JIMMY RICHMOND is already booked to skate," Diana said loftily. "I have booked him." Babs stared, rather dismayed. For she had assumed that her boy chum would be her partner in the skating carnival.

"Cheer-ho!" Diana called gaily. "What are you doing? I thought you were going to have fun with Barbara Redfern?"

"Fun—with her!" Ruth laughed scornfully. "Wanted me to go and see a Mickey Mouse cartoon. But I say, Diana, is that your car?"

"This," Diana said loftily, "is my pater's car. But, of course, I'm allowed to use it whenever I want to. Going anywhere now?"

"Well, I did want Babs to take me to the dance at the Royal Rooms. But she wouldn't, because she said it was against silly rules, or something."

Diana laughed.

"Then jump in!" she invited. "If you're so dying to go to the Royal Rooms, Ruth—well, I'll take you. Here we are! Put this rug round your knees and make yourself comfy. Jenkins, the Royal Rooms, please!"

"Yes, Miss Diana," the chauffeur said. "But—er—Miss Diana—"

"Well?" Diana asked.

"Didn't your father say that you weren't to go there? You remember he received a note from Miss Primrose—"

"When," Diana suddenly blazed, "I want you to act as my chaperon, I'll ask you, Jenkins! How dare you dictate to me! Do as you're told! Take me to the Royal Rooms at once!"

"Y-yes, Miss Diana!" confused and red-eared Jenkins stuttered then, while Ruth giggled.

"I say, that's the way to tell them off," she said admiringly. "You don't stand much nonsense, do you, Diana?"

"No!" Diana said, rather shortly.

But she was silent for a moment. That better side of her complex character was momentarily to the fore. Dash it all, she ought not to have blazed out at Jenkins like that, she told herself. Jenkins, after all, had only been doing his duty. Last time she had gone to the Royal Rooms against her father's wishes, Jenkins had shared the blame for taking her.

The car bowled on. The Royal Rooms, expensive, exclusive, its facade all a-glitter with red and green neon lights, hove into view.

Out from the portico rushed a uniformed commissioner. With all the deference he would have shown to a princess he opened the door for Diana and her friend to step on to the pavement. Diana loftily nodded.

"Thank you," she said. "Ruth, wait here a moment." And she went to Jenkins who, stiff, upright, and frigid, sat in his driving-seat. "Jenkins," she said softly, putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Yes, Miss Diana?" Jenkins asked coldly.

"Oh, bother it, don't freeze!" Diana said pettishly. "I just want to tell you—take the car back if you like. I'll get a taxi back to the school. And, Jenkins, I'm sorry I snapped your head off just now. If there's any fuss, blame everything on to me. Good-night!"

"Good-night, Miss Diana!" Jenkins said, with a gulp, and turned and smiled at her—that wondering, baffled smile with which the stormy Firebrand was so frequently rewarded by her hirelings.

"Well, here we are," she said happily, taking the arm of the excited Ruth. "Oh, commissioner"—and she pressed a coin into his hand—"please run along and order me a table—one on the floor, please, not in the gallery."

"Yes, Miss Royston-Clarke," the commissioner said.

"Oh, I say, he knows you!" Ruth squeaked.

Diana smiled, a supercilious smile. Of course he knew her. Everybody at the Royal Rooms knew the reckless spendthrift of Cliff House School—and was not her father the wealthy Mr. Rupert Royston-Clarke, Mayor of Lantham? If admiration had shone from the eyes of Ruth before, it was positive adoration which replaced it now. Diana often had that overpowering effect upon girls of the calibre of Ruth Richmond.

At the door the manager, bowing, greeted them. A smiling girl, who called Diana Miss Royston-Clarke, took their hats and coats. And how Ruth inwardly thrilled as the manager himself escorted them to their table—placed right on the edge of the dance floor.

But Diana—how amazingly composed she was! She seemed utterly unaffected by all this lavish attention, though, of course, she must have noticed it.

Ruth glowed, little guessing that Diana, always craving for the limelight, was as pleased with that attention as Ruth herself.

"Take a seat," she invited Ruth, but waited for the head waiter to draw out her chair before she seated herself. "Better have something to eat," she suggested. "Just a snack, of course. Some smoked salmon, I think. Will that suit you? A meringue-glace to follow; and coffee after that. See to that, will you, waiter? Meantime, Ruth, what about a dance?"

"Oh!" Ruth said, shining-eyed.

"With you Diana?"

"Of course, goose! Who else?" They rose. Ruth was thrilling now. Diana smiled a little contemptuously. She had gauged the character of her new friend. Before this evening was out, Ruth, her head so completely turned by Diana's magnetism, her power and her popularity, would be worshipping her utterly. What an empty-headed little idiot the girl was!

"Oh, Diana, you do dance divinely!" Ruth breathed, as they swept round the floor. "I—I only wish Jimmy had asked you instead of Barbara Redfern to look after me. But Jimmy thinks such an awful lot of her!"

"Does he?" Diana asked jealously.

"Oh, yes! And he's looking forward like anything to this silly skating carnival," Ruth said. "Diana, you wanted to partner Jimmy, didn't you?"

"Well, I had that idea, certainly," Diana said, with a shrug. "But still, as Jimmy prefers Babs—"

"But—but you'd still like to?" Ruth asked eagerly.

"Yes, I suppose I would!"

"All right!" Ruth laughed a little. "I'd love to do something for you, Diana, and I'd much rather you were his friend than that funky Barbara Redfern. I know Jimmy. I can twist him round my little finger. He thinks just the world of his little cousin Ruth!" And she giggled in a way which made Diana want to push her on the floor. "You leave it to me!" she chuckled. "I'll manage it!"

Diana smiled again. Things were working as she wished them to work!

The dance finished. They returned to their table, Ruth all flushed and eager, glorying in the attention her friend attracted. Diana leant forward.

"Enjoying this?" she asked.

"Oh, Diana, I'm loving every minute of it!" Ruth said breathlessly. "I—I wish I could often come here with you!" she added wistfully.

"Do you? Well, why not?" Diana laughed. "What about"—she flung a calculating look at her—"to-morrow? They have ripping tea dansantes on every afternoon, you know, and to-morrow's an extra special occasion. Tell you what," she added, "meet me outside the rooms at half-past three."

Ruth looked at her eagerly, then her face fell.

"But, oh, I've promised to meet Babs at that time!"

"Well, any need to keep the promise?" Diana asked. "Please yourself, of course," she added carelessly. "Easy enough, though, if you don't want to say where you've been, to pretend you missed them. In any case, you won't have anything like this wherever you go with Babs & Co. Another dance, Ruth?"

"Oh, please!" Ruth said eagerly.

So they danced. Then they ate and danced again. By the time it was time for Diana to get back, Ruth was utterly bedazzled.

"Oh, it's been glorious—glorious!" she breathed when they were outside. "Diana, I—I do think you're marvellous!" she added softly. "And—and if I have anything to do with it, I'm jolly well going to see that Jimmy doesn't partner that cat Babs. To-morrow, then?"

"Here," Diana smiled, "and—"

She paused.

"Yes, Diana?" Ruth said eagerly.

"Don't—don't mention to Jimmy—or anybody else—that you've been with me. See?"

"I see!" Ruth said, with a knowing wink. "Trust me, Di!"

Diana smiled. She hailed a taxi and climbed into it. Only five minutes before gates were closed she arrived at Cliff House, and, hurrying up the drive, pushed into Big Hall.

Barbara Redfern was there, chatting to Joan Charmant, Clara Trevlyn, and Marjorie Hazeldene. Diana paused.

"Talking about the carnival?" she asked.

"We are," Babs said.

"And all the prizes you're going to win, I suppose?" Diana asked, with a sneer.

Babs flushed a little.

"I wasn't saying anything about prizes," she retorted. "I was just talking about costumes."

"The one you're going to wear with Jimmy Richmond?"

"As a matter of fact—yes."

Diana smiled inscrutably.

"There's a proverb, isn't there, about chickens," she asked, while Babs blinked her angry surprise. "It says something about not counting them before they're hatched!" She smiled again—warningly, provokingly. "And you should remember, too, Barbara Redfern, that some people don't take chances!" she added, and, with a chuckle, swept on.

"Now what," Clara breathed, "did the idiot mean by that?"

Jimmy is Tricked!



"WISH she'd buck up!" Clara Trevlyn muttered irritably.

"It's twenty to four now. You're sure you said here, Babs?"

"Certain," Barbara Redfern said. "Couldn't have made a mistake about the time, I guess?" Leila Carroll asked anxiously.

"Well, I don't see how she could. She repeated it after me."

The first of a delightful new series for your "Cliff House Album."

CLIFF HOUSE PETS No. 1 * PLUTO

ONE of the most famous dogs in the Pets' House at Cliff House School is Pluto, the fine Alsatian which belongs to Tomboy Clara Trevlyn of the Fourth Form. "Wolf-grey" is his colour, as described on his pedigree. Pluto has bright, fearless brown eyes and a coat which is always so healthy and glossy that it might have been polished. It is no wonder he is known as the most handsome dog at Cliff House. Practically every spare minute his adoring mistress has from lessons and games is spent in grooming Pluto, exercising Pluto, talking to Pluto and feeding Pluto! Though Clara does not believe in pampering her pet she certainly insists upon giving him the maximum amount of companionship and care herself.

According to the Tomboy there is not a more wonderful dog in the world than Pluto. According to her Pluto understands her every word and gesture. If you don't fall straight head-over-heels in love with Pluto as soon as you meet him, you can never hope to be Clara's friend.

To Pluto Clara has given a love and loyalty that is comparable only to her affection for her brother Jack. In return Clara has

earned a steadfast and undying devotion from her dog, and for her Pluto would unhesitatingly give his life.

Pluto was a long-legged, frisky puppy when he first came to Cliff House, sent to his mistress complete with an impressive pedigree as a present from her brother, Jack Trevlyn. He was lovable then—but how much has he endeared himself to the hearts of the Cliff House girls since!

On a walk, in a restaurant, Pluto is always most marvellously well-behaved. In spite of his size Pluto is also remarkably gentle, especially with smaller dogs and with children. Nothing angers his young mistress more than to meet people who insist that Alsatians are fierce. For, according to Clara, it is only people who are not dog-lovers and do not know the Alsatian breed intimately, who say such foolish things.

Pluto, to his owner's joy, has won many prizes and certificates, both in local and London shows. Last year he won the prizes for both the Most Intelligent and the Best Looking Dog in the Cliff House Pets' Show, and this year he is to be entered for the Police Dog Trials at Courtfield.



"Then," said Bessie Bunter, "where the dickens is she? The race starts at four o'clock, you know. If we wait much longer we shall miss it."

That was true. The seven girls at the Market Cross in Courtfield regarded each other with anxiety. It was the following afternoon, and they had arrived on time. But of Ruth there had been no sign then—and there was still no sign.

Jemima polished her monocle thoughtfully. Clara, never the most patient of girls, was looking frankly irritable. Clara badly wanted to see her cousin Mary in the race that afternoon—and so did the others. The race started at 4 p.m., and the aerodrome track was a good quarter of an hour away. She looked up and down the street.

"Well, she's not here," she grumbled. "We shall be late. Oh, come on! Blow her, let's go without her."

"Clara, I can't," Babs said. "You go."

But Clara shrugged. That obstinate streak within her rose at once. She didn't want to go without Babs.

"Rats!" she said. "Why should you miss the fun? If the girl hasn't the good manners to keep her appointments, why the dickens should we wait? And why," she demanded bitterly, "should she jolly well expect seven of us to miss our afternoon because of her? She's got all day to fool around in, hasn't she? We've only got a few hours."

Babs bit her lip. What Clara said was true. It was a case of seven against one, and it was grotesque that seven should all have their afternoon spoiled because of the careless neglect of one. If she owed a duty to Ruth, she owed a still greater duty to her chums. She gave one more look round, and then came to a decision.

"All right, let's go," she said. "About time!" Clara growled. "Come on, we'll have a job to get on the bus as it is."

And that, alas, was true! For when they reached the bus it was to be met by the conductor, who waved them away, saying that the bus was full up. Clara glared.

"Oh, my hat! Five minutes to wait for another!"

They waited impatiently. Presently the next bus came along. It was a small service bus to the aerodrome—always well patronised when the motor races were on, and that also was full up. Clara looked desperate.

"We shan't get there for the start, and we'll be jolly lucky to get there for the finish," she said savagely, "and all because that idiot couldn't keep an appointment. It's nearly four o'clock now," she groaned.

Babs shook her head. "Oh, Clara, I'm sorry!" "Stuff! It wasn't your fault," Clara said gruffly.

The third bus rumbled along. This time they were able to squeeze in, Bessie complaining loudly because she would have to stand all the way, the bus being full to suffocation point.

Very ruffled and certainly angry were the party then. They would have been angrier still had they seen the two grinning faces which, peering through the curtains of the dansant floor of the Royal Rooms, watched them as they scrambled aboard.

"Seem peeved," Diana chuckled. "Especially Clara! Wouldn't I just love to hear what they're all saying now! Still, serve them jolly well right! Dance, Ruth?"

And once again, overjoyed to find herself in the Firebrand's company, she swept on to the floor.

Diana smiled contentedly. She was well pleased.

The dance ended. Back to their seats in the window the two girls went. Then Ruth gave a sudden exclamation.

"Diana, don't show yourself! There's Jimmy!"

"Jimmy—?" and Diana drew back.

"Your cousin?" she asked.

"Yes! He's just coming down the road. Oh, whoa!" Ruth suddenly laughed. "What a chance to do Babs one in the eye! Diana, wait a minute. I'll go out and meet him. You stroll along in a few minutes—just as if I'd never met you—see?"

Diana did see. Ruth dashed off to get her hat and coat, and Diana, hiding herself, watched through the curtains.

She saw Jimmy Richmond on the opposite side of the road. He was alone, and had paused to gaze into the window of the Radio Stores. Then she saw Ruth.

And Ruth, stepping up behind him—

"Jimmy—oh, Jimmy, have you seen Babs?"

Richmond wheeled round, stared.

"You, Ruth? What brings you here? I thought—"

"I was going with Babs?" Ruth shook her head. "So did I," she said with a trace of bitterness. "But look at the time—a quarter past four. I've been waiting outside the Market Cross ever since a quarter past three! I—I was so anxious not to miss them, you know."

The boy frowned.

"But I don't understand, Ruth. You're sure you got the meeting place right?"

"Oh, of course," Ruth said. She shook her head dismally. "Jimmy, you—you don't think perhaps Babs has changed her mind about wanting to take me around? Oh, I know she's a nice girl and all that, and—and I know you like her ever so much, Jimmy. But—but she wasn't very nice to me last night, you

know. Because I didn't want to go to the pictures she got quite huffy and walked off home."

Richmond looked shocked.

"Babs did?"

"Yes, Jimmy! I—I didn't want to tell you, of course, knowing how much you like her. And—and I would have gone to the pictures, of course, but what was the use when I've already seen the programme? It—it did seem as if she'd sort of repented of her promise to take me around, didn't it?"

Richmond frowned worriedly. That certainly did not fit in with what he knew of Babs. At the same time Ruth looked so utterly deserted and lonely that his whole boyish heart went out to her. Jimmy was very, very fond of Ruth.

"Well, I'll have a word with her," he said. "All the same, I don't understand it. I—" And then he turned as a delighted "Ruth!" fell upon his ear, and blinked again at magnificent Diana who stood before him, all smiles, looking radiantly pretty.

"Fancy meeting you!" Diana beamed. "Hallo, Jimmy! Still practising for the carnival?"

"Well, not till to-morrow," Richmond replied. "I was just mooching around looking for a cheap set of valves for my radio set, you know. But, Diana, have you seen Babs this afternoon?"

"Babs? Oh, yes!" and Diana's delicately thin brows lifted in surprise. "I saw them all about half-past three, scrambling on the bus for the aerodrome. But why, Jimmy?"

Richmond's lips became a little set.

"I suppose," he asked, "Babs never mentioned she was meeting Ruth?"

"Why, I didn't hear her say so, no!" Diana said. "Was she?"

* Be sure to cut out this little feature without delay, so as to avoid missing it. So many readers were disappointed over our "Celebrities," you know I should stick these "Pets" in your Album as soon as you get your copy, every week, then you CAN'T go wrong. —YOUR EDITOR.

"She was," Richmond replied, and glanced sympathetically at his cousin. "Poor old Ruth's been kicking her heels round the town for the last hour waiting for her. Still, never mind," he added quietly, though there was an undertone of anger in his voice, "as you're on your lonesome, Ruth, what about snooping around with me?"

"Or what about," Diana countered brightly, "both of you coming back to Cliff House and having some tea with me? I'm sure Ruth would love to see the old school."

The fleeting scowl which appeared on Ruth's face suggested that suggestion found no welcome. Secretly Ruth was yearning to get back to the glamour of the dance floor in the Royal Rooms. At the same time, the suggestion came from Diana, and, as by this time there was no one in all the world quite like the imperious Firebrand of the Fourth, she smiled.

Richmond for a moment frowned, on the point of making excuses. Then he thought: Well, if he went to Cliff House that would give him an opportunity of seeing Babs. Babs must have some explanation.

"Well, thanks," he said. "That's nice of you, Diana. If it's not too much trouble—"

"The pleasure," Diana drawled, "is mine. Shall we go by taxi or by bus?"

"Oh, a bus, of course!" Jimmy Richmond said, with a stare.

And they went.

The Trouble Maker!



"JUST a spot more tea, Jimmy?"

"Well, thanks," Jimmy Richmond said hesitantly.

"Another cake for you, Ruth?"

"Oh, please, Diana," Ruth simpered.

Tea in Study No. 10 in the Fourth Form passage was in progress. And an excellent and very dainty tea it was.

There were neat salad-and-salmon sandwiches, a plate of cakes, another whole cake, and a pile of bread-and-butter daintily cut. At the head of the table Diana, a most charming hostess, presided, the silver teapot on one side of her, the burnished copper kettle, standing on a stand with a methylated spirit light beneath it to keep the contents simmering, hissing faintly.

Impossible in that room—even though she shared it with Margot Lantham—not to feel the full influence of Diana's personality. It was Diana's oil paintings which hung upon the walls; Diana's real antique pieces with which it was furnished; Diana's thick pile carpet which was spread upon the floor.

The table was laid with Diana's gleaming silver cutlery and hand-made lace mats. Everything simply breathed her daintiness, her wealth, her superb good taste.

"Nice!" Ruth said admiringly.

"Don't you think so, Jimmy?"

"Yes," Richmond mumbled.

"Have another cake," Diana pressed.

"N-no, thanks!"

For Richmond was not feeling comfortable. He was thinking of Babs, wondering when she would return.

Trying desperately as he was to find mental excuses for Babs, he was still conscious of a sense of hurt and annoyance that she could so far have forgotten her promise to him as to have let his cousin down so badly that afternoon.

So tea in Study No. 10, despite its cosiness, was not a happy meal for Jimmy Richmond, and Ruth and Diana, knowing full well those thoughts which

were passing in his mind, glanced at each other significantly and meaningfully.

"Yoicks!" Diana said suddenly.

"Somebody coming!"

Richmond started up. Somebody was coming. Several somebodies, for there was the tramp of many feet in the passage outside. It was, as a matter of fact, Babs & Co. returning.

Babs & Co. at that moment were only one degree less angry than Jimmy Richmond himself. Many were the grumbles which had been directed against the ill-mannered Ruth that afternoon. For thanks to Ruth the party had completely missed Mary Malcolm's race. Twice en route the bus had been held up by traffic jams, and when they had reached the aerodrome it was only to be met with the news that the very last seat in the stand had been taken five minutes before their arrival, so that all they had had for their trouble was an infuriating and chilly wait outside the track. True they had seen Mary for a few brief moments before coming away, but that hardly compensated for all the fun they had missed.

Rather wearily Babs entered her study with Bessie and Mabs, rather ruffledly flung her hat on the chair.

"I wish to goodness," she cried bitterly, "I'd never seen Ruth Richmond!"

"Yes, rather! And I think!" Bessie glowered. "Oh!" she gasped, and her spectacles almost fell off her nose as a figure loomed up in the corridor. She blinked. "Why, Jimmy Richmond!"

Jimmy Richmond it was—a Jimmy suddenly white about the face. For he had heard that most unfortunate remark of Babs.

Babs, seeing him, flushed.

"Jimmy, you! I didn't know you were in the school."

"I'm having tea with Diana," Richmond said quietly. "I'd rather hoped to have a word with you, Babs. That's one reason why I came. Is it possible?" he added, with a glance at Mabs and Bessie.

"You mean you'd like to speak to Babs alone?" Mabs asked.

"Well, if you don't mind—"

"Not at all. Bessie, come on!" Mabs said. "We'll trip along to No. 7 to see what they're having for tea. So-long, Babs! See you later!"

The door closed upon her and Bessie. Jimmy stood still. Babs, guessing from his expression that some sort of trouble was brewing, and feeling decidedly nettled herself, braced herself.

"What is it, Jimmy?" she asked quietly.

Jimmy Richmond turned red.

"You can guess, Babs?"

"I'm sorry, I can't! What?"

"Babs, why did you promise me yesterday that you'd be chums with Ruth?" Richmond broke out. "Why did you say, if you didn't mean it, that you'd show her round?"

It was a wrong, perhaps an unfortunate beginning, not at all calculated to soothe Babs in her present ruffled mood. But Richmond, after all, was only a boy, and not very accustomed to dealing with girls.

Her own face flushed.

"And who says," she inquired, "that I haven't done my best?"

"Well, have you?" Jimmy asked. "You left the poor kid rather flat last night, didn't you? You promised to meet her this afternoon, and just ignored her. Apart from that, Babs, I couldn't help but hear what you said as I came into this study. Even you can't say that sounded friendly."

Babs bit her lip.

"I'm sorry!" she said. "But, Jimmy, please try to understand. Who told you all this—Ruth?"

"Well, who else?"

"I see!" Babs' brows came together. The half-formed suspicion she had had all that afternoon that it had been no accident which had prevented Ruth from missing that appointment crystallised. "And you believe it, Jimmy?"

"Well, she's my cousin, isn't she?" Richmond asked.

"Yes, she's that; but I'm also your friend," Babs reminded him. "Or am I?" she asked, noting the stormy look which passed across his features. "Last night, Jimmy, I did my best with Ruth. I wanted her to come to the cinema."

"And because she didn't, you walked off back to school?" the boy broke out. "Did you go anywhere else with her?"

"No."

"Then you admit you walked off?"

"Ruth said she was going home."

"Oh!" Richmond did not look convinced, however. "And what about this afternoon?"

"We waited nearly half an hour."

"Where?"

"At the market cross."

"Oh, you did?" Richmond felt his temper rising. "Well, Ruth waited there, too, and she didn't wait half an hour. She waited a whole one, Babs. Funny you didn't see her!" he added.

Babs' lips compressed.

"Very funny," she agreed, "if she was there! But I was there, and six of my chums with me. Funny, indeed, that we all missed her!" she added. "It does seem, Jimmy, that either Ruth or I am telling fibs, doesn't it?"

Richmond reddened.

"But why should Ruth tell fibs?" he demanded.

"And why," Babs retorted, "should I?"

They glared at each other, each trying to fight down rising anger, each in turn finding that anger getting the upper hand.

And as they stood one each side of the table, a knock came at the door. It was Ruth, who, glancing quickly from one to the other, timidly entered.

"Oh dear!" she cried. "You—you're not quarrelling? Jimmy—"

"Thanks!" Richmond said thickly.

"Well, if that's all, Babs—"

"That's all!"

"But—" Ruth cried. "Oh, Babs, please don't quarrel! Oh, Jimmy, you do look cross! Please, please go! You know I should hate you to row with dear Barbara! Let me fix it up!" she added eagerly. "You boys are always so clumsy when it comes to arguments! Jimmy, go!" she added pleadingly. "I'll talk with Babs!"

Jimmy Richmond paused.

But Ruth settled the matter for him by getting hold of his arm and bundling him out of the room. The Friardale boy, red and ruffled, stumbled out into the corridor, almost falling into the arms of Diana Royston-Clarke, who at that moment happened along. She gave an exclamation.

"Jimmy, what's the matter? You do look upset!"

"D-do I?" Richmond gulped.

For a moment he hesitated, looking at the door. Diana, behind his back, smiled, knowing very well what was going on there—knowing very well what would be the outcome of that interview between Barbara Redfern and Ruth Richmond.

Jimmy turned to Diana again. At the same moment, from behind the closed door of Study No. 4 there came an angry exclamation:

"Ruth, how dare you—how dare you! You know I didn't—"



THE commissioner touched his cap, the manager bowed. Ruth Richmond thrilled at the respect Diana commanded. And that was just what Diana, in her scheme against Babs, wanted.

Jimmy Richmond started. Then, following that exclamation, the sound of a sharp blow, and a choked cry in Ruth Richmond's voice. That was enough for Jimmy.

What his eyes did not see, his imagination pictured for him. He rushed forward, wrenched open the door, and then gasped.

"Ruth!" he cried.

For there was Ruth, one hand to her cheeks, tears in his eyes, as, quivering, she stood in front of Barbara Redfern. And there was Babs, looking astonished, glaring at her near the table. The scene seemed to speak for itself.

In Richmond's present worked-up state, it could only have one significance. He stepped forward, putting an arm about his cousin's shaking shoulders.

"That was a rotten thing to do, Babs!" he said bitterly. "Ruth—"

"But—" Babs cried.

"She—she hit me!" Ruth quavered.

"Oh, Jimmy—"

"That's all right," Richmond said gently. "Come on! Get out of this!"

"But, Jimmy—" Babs cried angrily.

"Oh, don't worry!" Richmond said curtly.

"You mean you believe I hit her?"

"What else?" Richmond asked.

"Well, I didn't! If you want to know, she smacked her own face! It's just a scheme—"

Richmond threw her a scornful look. It was the sort of look which brought Babs' utterance to a complete stop—

which all at once filled her with an overflowing, raging anger. Pride, rising hotly in arms, choked down anything else she would have said.

Well, if Jimmy liked to believe Ruth, let him get on with it!

"Come, kid!" Richmond said briefly.

The two passed out. Diana, in the doorway, kept her expression inscrutable. Down the corridor the boy went, one protecting arm still tenderly around his cousin's shoulders.

The door of Study No. 7 came open. Clara Trevlyn and Janet Jordan emerged. Clara blinked.

"Jimmy, I say—"

"Good-afternoon!" Richmond said thickly.

"Well, my aunt, what's bitten him?"

Clara gasped. Glancing up the corridor she saw Diana in the doorway of Study No. 4. "Something's happened," she decided. "Come on!"

Up the corridor she and Janet darted. Into Study No. 4 they burst. Babs, still looking shaken, but crimson, was facing Diana.

"Babs, what is it?" Clara cried.

"What's the matter with Jimmy?"

"Spot of misunderstanding, what?"

Diana drawled. "Apparently our little Babs lost her temper!"

"What—Babs?" cried Clara. "Babs, what did happen?"

"Well, I don't know," Babs said angrily. "That awful little cat came in and insulted me. She seemed to be deliberately spoiling for a row. I suppose I lost my temper a bit and ticked her off. And then—well, she just smacked her own face, at the same time letting out a yell. Then Jimmy dashed in—"

"And Jimmy, of course, thought you'd done it," Clara said, and rather grimly nodded. "Where was Jimmy?"

"Outside with Diana."

"And of course," Clara asked, turning towards the Firebrand, "you know nothing of it?"

Diana shrugged.

"What should I know of it? What the dickens are you hinting at?"

"Nothing! Seems a bit of a coincidence that you should be outside with Jimmy at the time it happens, though, doesn't it? Rather keen yourself to be Jimmy's partner in the carnival, aren't you? And if you know nothing, what did you mean yesterday by making that footling remark to Babs about counting her chickens before they were hatched—and that some people took no chances? Is this some new game you're playing, Diana?"

Diana looked in no wise abashed.

"As you're so jolly clever at putting two and two together," she said coolly, "I'll leave you to work that out for yourself. But thanks," she added tartly to Babs, "for spoiling my tea-party; and thanks a million for insulting my guests! Let me pass, Clara."

And Diana swept from the room, with a haughty tilt of her chin.

TEN MINUTES later Diana went out. She went to Friardale Boys' School. And not until gates were in the act of closing did she return to Cliff House.

But Diana at that time was looking very, very satisfied with herself.

Broken Friendship!



"BABS, it's come!" Mabel Lynn cried breathlessly, fringing open the door of Study No. 4 after morning lessons next day.

"And a box for Diana's come with it."

Babs, thoughtful and a little worried, looked up.

"It?" she repeated. "What's come, Mabs?"

"Why, your carnival-frock—from Hollands, goose," Mabs laughed. "Lady Pat signed for it, and I've taken it up to the dormitory. Oh, Babs, do come and try it on. I'm dying to see how you look in it."

Babs brightened considerably at that. Since the quarrel with Jimmy Richmond yesterday Babs had been rather down in the mouth. For Babs was very fond of Jimmy.

She had half-expected, and had hopefully looked forward, this morning, to some card or letter expressing regret for what had happened, and had been rather downcast when it had not arrived. But now—

Her frock!

Excitement filled Babs at once. She was very humanly feminine in her joy of new things. For the moment her worries vanished.

Together she and Mabs quitted the study, racing up to the Fourth Form dormitory. There, on Babs' bed, was the box which had just been received from Hollands' stores—addressed to her. With an excited laugh Babs undid the fastenings. With fingers that trembled a little smoothed back the tissue wrappings. Then Mabs gave an exclamation of rapture.

"Oh, Babs, how lovely!"

Babs took the frock out.

Beautiful—beautiful—it looked—a thing of billowing cobwebby lace and net with a white satin underslip. With an excited laugh Babs tore off her tunic—with Mabs' assistance donned the frock. Mabs gulped.

"It—it's ripping!"

Marvellous it looked on Babs in this moment of her excitement. Like a thing of white cloud and foam it fell from her slender shoulders, the golden sun glowing upon the bodice, the rainbow-belt most marvellously real.

"Lovely!" enthused Mabs. "Oh, just too wonderful, Babs! If that doesn't win the prize I'd jolly well like to know what will! I should think Jimmy will be as proud as Punch of you in that!"

"J-Jimmy—" Babs halted. "But, Mabs, supposing—"

"Supposing fiddlesticks!" Mabs said scoffingly. "Jimmy won't let you down! Why not get in touch with him? You're feeling fairly beastly about it now, aren't you? You can bet your boots Jimmy is feeling just the same. You ring him up and ask him to meet you at the Rink this afternoon."

Babs paused. Should she? Foolishly, perhaps, the idea of being the first to make a step towards reconciliation went against the grain. On the other hand—

"Right-ho!" she said suddenly. "Give me a hand off, Mabs, and I'll go and phone Jimmy now. Shall I ask him over to tea?"

"Yes, that's the ticket," Mabs said, and then paused as Diana Royston-Clarke lounged into the dormitory. She nodded pleasantly at Babs.

"Nice little outfit," she commented. "Cute design! But I don't think," she added languidly, "I'd try to get hold of Jimmy Richmond this afternoon, if I were you, Babs. You see"—with a calculating look—"he's entertaining."

Babs flushed.

"Entertaining?"

"At Friardale in his study—two very, very charming young ladies to tea," Diana said mockingly. "I'm one of them. The other is his cousin. Hallo, is that my box?" she added, waving towards her bed.

Babs glanced at her. Again she hesitated. But Mabs, catching the uncertain look in her face, vigorously shook her head. Very quickly she helped Babs off with her costume, and led her firmly out into the passage.

Once there, Babs paused.

"Mabs—"

"Now look here," Mabs said warmly. "Don't be a goose! You know jolly well Diana is just trying to get your rag out. Buck up and phone."

Babs nodded.

She hurried to the prefects' room. Dulcia Fairbrother was in there and gave her permission at once to use the phone. The school captain nodded to Babs as she went out.

"Don't be too long, Barbara."

"No," Babs promised.

Uncertainly she asked for the Friardale number. The phone was answered at the other end by Ralph Lawrence. With a cheery "hold-on, Babs!" Ralph Lawrence at once departed to find Jimmy Richmond. His voice came through a moment later.

"Hallo."

Not "Hallo, Babs, old thing" as usual! Babs, despite herself, felt a little stiffening in her attitude.

"Oh, Jimmy, I—I was wondering," she said with less certainty, "if you were going to the Rink this afternoon?"

A pause. Then:

"I'm sorry, I can't!"

"Oh!" Babs said rather flatly. "But—but, Jimmy, what about the carnival? We—we haven't got much time."

"No," Richmond agreed.

"Why can't you rehearse?"

"Well, I'm entertaining my cousin this afternoon. After all," Richmond said—and Babs knew that he said it on the spur of the moment, though that didn't help her to feel the less nettled about it—"somebody's got to look after her."

Babs flushed fiery red.

"You still think then—"

"Please, Babs, don't let's talk about it!"

"Well, I didn't bring it up, did I?" Babs retorted. "I'm sorry if you still think I let Ruth down. I suppose it's no good repeating that I didn't. At the same time, Jimmy, I do think I deserve a little consideration. What about the carnival?"

"Oh, dash the carnival!"

Babs' lips compressed. Rather tremblingly she put the receiver down, not realising that at the other end of the line Jimmy, already repenting of his attitude, was frantically crying: "Babs! Babs! I didn't mean that, Babs! I'm sorry! I'm a beast, Babs—"

The operator's voice came through.

"I'm sorry, I am afraid the subscriber has rung off. Shall I ring her again?"

Richmond hesitated a moment, staring at the instrument in his hand. Then his lips set.

"No, thanks," he replied gruffly, and slammed down the receiver.

While Babs, turning towards the door, halted sharply as she came face to face with a mocking figure lounging against the door-post. It was Diana.

"Well, any luck?" she asked.

Babs walked past without a word.

Diana, looking after her, quietly chuckled. For Diana had heard enough of that conversation to be able to construct almost to a detail what had taken place. She smiled mockingly.

"When friends fall out, others come into their own, I think. Thanks, Barbara, dear, for the very nice help you have given me!"

And Diana, inwardly exultant but quite composed, passed on.

Diana Wins!

"HALLO, Ruth!"



"Oh, Diana!" And Ruth Richmond, her face shining, came eagerly forward as Diana languidly stepped down from the bus which had brought her into Friardale that afternoon. "Diana, don't you look splendid!" she breathed.

Diana laughed.

"Rather a natty outfit," she agreed. "But tell me, Ruth, before we go on to Friardale School, what's been happening? Is Jimmy still wild?"

"Isn't he!" Ruth chuckled. "I went to see him this morning—just to keep the pot boiling, you know. I think he was half-inclined to ring up Babs and patch it up again, you know—but I soon changed his mind about that. It's wonderful what a few tears will do where soft old Jimmy's concerned, and—well, I'm pretty expert on turning on the tap to order. But what's the news from your end?" she added.

Diana told her. Ruth chuckled.

"Oh, topping!" she said. "Jimmy will still be in a bit of a pet then. Well now's the chance, Di. I've been telling him all sorts of wonderful things about what you've done for me—and he's no end grateful. You wait."

Diana smiled, but the sideways glance she cast at her companion, rather suggested the unflattering contempt she felt for her. Not the sort of girl Diana liked was this Ruth Richmond, but as long as Ruth was willing to prove such a willing ally, Diana was more than prepared to keep on tolerating her.

"Well come on, let's go," she said.

Ruth, with a beaming smile, fell into step beside her.

They reached Friardale School. Up to the Fourth Form passage they climbed. Jimmy Richmond was in his study. His voice, with the suggestion of a growl in it, bade them come in. They went in.

"Oh!" Richmond said, crimsoning. "Er—make yourselves at home," he added awkwardly. "You—you didn't see Babs before you came out, Diana?"

"Well yes, I did," Diana said. "Babs was going off to rehearsal I think. I heard somebody say she had found a new partner."

"Oh!" Richmond said shortly.

Ruth, looking at Diana, slyly winked. He said no more. At least not then. And Diana was clever enough to keep off the subject as well.

It was not until half-way through tea that Diana returned to the attack. Then she said:

"By the way, Jimmy, what will you do now about the carnival? Find another partner?"

"I—I don't know," Richmond mumbled.

"Have you got your costume yet?"

"Yes, it came this morning."

"But it would be a shame to waste that, Jimmy, wouldn't it?" Diana asked concernedly. "Such a lovely costume, too—I saw the design. I've been thinking, Jimmy. As we're both stranded for partners, why not make a twosome up on our own account?"

Jimmy Richmond stared a little. But from Ruth came a delighted cry.

"Oh, Jimmy, yes!" she impetuously cried. "Please, Jimmy! It—it would be lovely to see you and Diana together. Go on, Jimmy—do, please!"

"But—but how can we?" Richmond asked. "Diana hasn't got a costume."

"But," Diana put in, "I have. Oh, I haven't told anyone about it. You

and Babs were going as Sunshine and Storm, weren't you? Well, the Storm part of it's all right, and I've got a costume which could be adapted to Sunshine in less than no time. Of course, it's not the same thing as Babs', she added thoughtfully. "What would suit Babs wouldn't suit me. Still," she added frankly, "if you'd like me to partner you, Jimmy, I'd be ever so pleased."

Richmond paused. After all, Babs had turned him down. After all, he had got the costume, and a pretty penny it was likely to cost him. If he had cause to be grateful to anyone, then certainly that one was Diana Royston-Clarke. His hand was forced by Ruth.

"Jimmy, say yes—please!" she cried. "Well, if Diana will have me—"

the boy mumbled. "Jimmy, you know I'd love to!" Diana glowed. "Shall we call it a bargain?"

"Well, yes." "Then," Diana laughed, and amazingly she changed all at once. Her triumph was complete. She had got what she wanted. "Then," she suggested, "what about going down to the rink for rehearsal after tea? We've got to get in some practice together, you know. Ruth, you'll come?" she added.

Ruth blinked. She tried to flash Diana a warning look. Ruth had other ideas about what Diana Royston-Clarke should do after tea. Ruth was still keen on dancing, and particularly with the attention-compelling Firebrand. But she could hardly fail to back Diana up.

"Oh, lovely!" she cried. "Agreed, Jimmy?" Diana asked.

"Well, yes," Jimmy Richmond said; but he said it without enthusiasm, and rather in the tone of one who wonders, too late, if he has done the right thing.

One Boast Too Many!



"JIMMY'S an ass! Jimmy's a fool! Jimmy's just a chuckle-headed, stiff-with-pride chump!" Mabel Lynn said severely. "Any-

way, Babs, what are you going to do now?"

"Oh, I don't know!" Babs said wearily. "Give it up, I suppose."

"After you've spent the money on that dress? Fiddlesticks to that! Jimmy will come round if you only give him a chance. If he doesn't, there are still tons of other partners. Anyway, that's no reason at all why you shouldn't practise, so get out of that chair. You're coming along to the skating-rink."

Well, after all, Babs thought, half angrily, why shouldn't she practise? Why should she be so dependent upon Jimmy Richmond?

With an effort she shook off the depression which overshadowed her. With Mabs she went to the cloak-room, donned hat, coat, and gloves, and catching up her roller-skates, went off to the rink.

As usual it was filled with skaters. The whirring of wheels was the predominant sound.

"Hallo, Babs!" Douglas Coutts of Friardale said, skating by with Marjorie Hazeldene. "Seen Jimmy?"

Babs blinked. "No. Is he here?"

"Just came in—with Diana Royston-Clarke. There!" And Coutts nodded as he skated on.

Babs started. Mabs, by her side, looked up quickly. And then she saw them—Diana laughing all over her face,

the cynosure of all eyes, as usual; Jimmy Richmond, arm-in-arm with her, skating in their direction.

And yet Jimmy had said he wasn't rehearsing this afternoon! Jimmy had said— At the same moment Diana saw her; waved a gay arm. She skated towards them.

"Hallo, Babs!" "Jimmy!" Babs cried.

Jimmy Richmond's face flushed. "Jimmy, I thought you said you weren't coming to the rink?"

"Well, I wasn't," Jimmy said defensively. "But Diana made me change my mind—"

"Because," Diana chipped in

ing, Don, we might do something together."

"Well, I'd love to, Babs," Don Haybury said, flushing with pleasure at that invitation, "but I'm already in three competitions. I don't think I'd better tackle any more."

"N-no, of course," Babs said.

She turned away towards the cloak-room. She had no wish to stay. Mabs bit her lip. From the other side of the room Diana smiled a little, and yet Diana was not feeling pleased. Somehow, despite the fact that she had what she wanted, she felt mean—a churl. Jimmy was not happy; that was obvious. Had she, after all, gone a bit



ONE arm about his cousin's shoulders, Jimmy Richmond glared at Babs. "That was a rotten thing to do, Babs," he said bitterly. Babs gasped. "You really believe I hit her?" she asked.

sweetly, "Jimmy and I are partnering each other in the carnival on Saturday. So-long, old thing!"

And, catching at Richmond's arm, she whisked him away, flashing a triumphantly mocking smile at Babs over her shoulder as she disappeared.

But Babs for the moment was standing rooted, hardly able to believe the evidence of eyes or ears.

"Babs!" Mabs said unhappily. "Babs, old thing—"

"Well?" Babs laughed—such a recklessly excited laugh that Mabs stared a little. "Don't let's stand here," she urged. "Come on, let's find partners! Oh, Lister!" she added, as Cattermole came by. "Wait a minute! I say, are you fixed up for Saturday?"

"Yes, Babs," Lister Cattermole said. "I'm taking Jean."

"Oh!" Babs bit her lip. "Then thanks!" she stammered. "Oh, Don," she added, as Don Raybury came floating past, "about Saturday. I was think-

too far? Wouldn't it be sporting to give up her partner?"

Conscience whispered to Diana; but, as always, Diana's ruthless will overcame it. No. Why should she? Wasn't this what she had been working for all along—taken no chances for?

From another part of the hall Ruth Richmond, seated with Beryl Brecknock of Courtfield High School, looked at her rather sulkily. This wasn't Ruth's idea of spending the time.

"I thought," Beryl Brecknock said slowly, "your cousin was partnering Barbara Redfern?"

"Well, she isn't," Ruth said. "Diana is."

"Funny! I thought Barbara and Jimmy were ever such friends."

"And so," Ruth replied, "they were; but they're not now."

"Oh, no!" Beryl said interestedly. "Tell me about it!" she begged. "I

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

Your friend PATRICIA finds that buying new shoes for her small brother is not as easy as it sounds; she tells you a little story about the world's Skating Champion; and she has one how-to-alter and one how-to-make idea for you—all in this week's chummy chat.



been worn by the Laughing Cavalier himself as a small boy!

I simply had to laugh, and the assistant and I tried to persuade Heath that the other small boy must be going to a fancy dress party as a pirate, or to a wedding, to wear such gay shoes.

But he just wouldn't believe us.

"Mummy said you was to let me choose," he protested.

"Were"—not "was," I corrected under my breath, but finally I had to approach the Nanny who accompanied the scarlet-shod boy, and ask her if I wasn't right about the shoes.

"Yes," she said proudly. "Master Thomas is going to be a page boy at a very fashionable wedding. And he will wear these lovely red shoes with a lovely scarlet suit made of velvet, won't you, Master Thomas?"

"Yes," grunted Master Thomas. "But I don't think it's lovely. I'm the only boy, and I have to dress up and walk with a lot of silly girls. I think red shoes are soppy things!"

At such a display of contempt for red shoes and scarlet suits from a boy who was older than he was, Heath ran promptly back to his chair.

"I wan' a brown pair, please," he said breathlessly. "With laces—like daddy's!"

So he has them—a pair exactly like his old ones! And mother said he was a clever boy to choose such sensible ones. Why, she thought they were a new pair for daddy for a moment.

● For Spring Wear

If a favourite winter frock has worn badly under the arms and at the elbows—also round the collar—here is a way of making use of it for the warmer spring days.

Take the sleeves right out, and bind the arm-holes, either with the good material in the sleeves, or with tape. Then cut the neck to the fashionable square line, and bind this all round.

Wear this pinafore frock over any of your school blouses, or jerseys. And just to make sure it doesn't look too school-y for week-ends, tie a scarf round the neck and let it slip through a straight opening cut in the front of the dress.

Weren't you thrilled when Megan Taylor won the World's skating championship a few weeks ago?



I was, for I have always been a keen admirer of Megan's. She's such a plucky young person of sixteen.

She has worked and practised so very hard for the honour she has won.

Yet, do you know, it was only about three years ago that Megan had to retire from the championships for some time. She had strained her back.

So when Megan had a horse given her—named Ballyscanion—she would pluckily ride it every single day in order to strengthen the muscles of her back.

And now the result is—the championship.

How Megan must love Ballyscanion!

● From Four Hankies

A full-sized nightie sachet can be made from four ordinary hankies—and such a dainty one, too.

You must place four hankies of equal size together, so that they form one big square, and then join them together at the hems with four points meeting in the centre.

Then turn this square slightly, so that one point is at the top, and the other three, pointing East, West, and South.

Fold over the South point to the middle of the square, where the hankies join, and then bring the right and left points over to join it there—like an envelope, you see.

Now oversew the two hems that run down from the centre to the corners.

Sew a piece of ribbon to the top point and another piece to where the other corners join. Fold down the top flap, and tie.

There, what could be sweeter—and wouldn't it make a pretty present for a chum?

● Spelling Fun

I believe you actually enjoyed asking your chums how to spell the words "fuschia" and "desiccated," which, you remember I suggested to you.

So, if they were a success, try these next.

Ask your chums how to spell "harass" and "embarrass." There's sure to be quite a muddle over the number of s's and the number of r's.

Just one word of warning, though. Do write down the correct spellings on a piece of paper and conceal it in your hand—just in case you yourself should forget!

Bye-bye until next week, pets.

Your friend,
PATRICIA.

DON'T you just love buying new shoes? I do.

And next best to buying new shoes for myself, I like to accompany other people when they are buying them.

So when mother shooed me off to our local shoe-shop to buy my young brother a new pair, I was quite thrilled to go.

Small brother, whose name is Heatherington, but who is called Heath for short, asked me on the way what size I took in shoes.

"A three," I said.

"Coo me," said Heath. "An' I take a six, don' I, Pat? Why do I have a bigger size'n you?"

So, of course, your Patricia had to explain all about "children's sizes" and "grown-up" sizes, and Heath was very impressed when I told him that a size 13 in young people's was actually smaller than a size 1 in grown-ups.

(I happen to have a tender spot in my heart for size 13, you see, for I remember how proud I was when I was thirteen years old to think I took size 13 in shoes. Silly perhaps, but it did please me!)

Mother's last words to us as we left the house had been that Heath was to help choose his own shoes.

"Let him choose what pair he likes—as far as possible," mother had said. "He'll like that."

So when we reached the shop, and Heath had climbed on to a very rich-looking chair, I asked the assistant to bring several pairs for Heath to try on.

● Choosing Shoes

She brought black sturdy ones, and brown sturdy ones. She brought brown summery ones, and black summery ones.

"I don' like them!" Heath groused, as each pair was tried on.

"But, Heath," said big sister Patricia, "what do you want, then?"

A radiant smile came over his face then, as though this was the chance he had been waiting for.

"I wan' a shiny red pair—with silver things on the front!" he said promptly.

Your Patricia nearly passed out, and even the assistant looked taken aback.

"Heath!" I said faintly.

"Like his," he said next, and pointed to a young boy at the other side of the shop whom I hadn't even noticed. This lad was strutting about in a pair of scarlet shoes with silver buckles that might have

"IT'S SO NICE TO SEE YOU!"

That's what your chum who has been in bed—poor dear!—will say when you visit her, if you remember the advice Patricia gives here.

THERE seem to be so many colds and chills around just now, that even schoolgirls will catch these little ailments and have to stay in bed.

So if your chum, or anyone in your Form, for that matter, has been away from school for a day or two, do contemplate going to see her one Saturday.

How she will appreciate it! For you know how miserable you can be after staying in bed for a few days. Even the dearest mother and family can't be with the young patient all the time—and a fresh face is so welcome.

But before you go to visit your chum, I think it would be nice if you just dropped her a note saying something like: "May I come to see you on Saturday, about three o'clock, and stay for an hour with you?"

Then your chum's mother will be able to send you a card, or telephone your house, saying whether it will be convenient or not.

You see, it is possible that the doctor might be there if you arrive unexpectedly—and then you'd feel horribly in the way, and probably have to be hustled out of the bed-room.

So having decided to arrive at three o'clock, say, I want you, before you set off, to treat yourself to a gargle with salt-and-water.

(If your chum's illness is at all infectious, you must not go at all, of course, but will write to her frequently instead.) The gargle, however, will make a safe precaution from un-catching ailments—protecting both you and your chum.

A LITTLE GIFT

Perhaps you'll want to take her a little present. Flowers are always a nice thought—so is fruit. Oranges, I think, are the nicest fruit to take, for these can be eaten in so many ways, and are so refreshing, always.

For an invalid a quarter of fruit-drops makes a better present than the very best chocolates. For these also are soothing and refreshing.

Take her a book by all means, if she is sitting up and can read in bed. But please don't make it a heavy book, for this can tire the arms of a patient so. (What about the SCHOOLGIRL—or does she have that already?)

A jig-saw puzzle, or a book of crossword puzzles—not too difficult, for no one likes thinking too hard in bed—are other gifts that are sure to be welcome.

If you can spare sixpence to spend on her, a bottle of eau-de-Cologne to splash on her forehead, pyjamas and pillow case, is a real luxury.

Another little present that I'm sure would be received with whoops of joy is one of the very latest medicine glasses. They're tiny—as they should be—but are most attractively painted with flower designs on the outside.

I have seen these in the shops for three-pence and the most objectionable medicine would taste better drunk from one of these.

Perhaps your chum likes doing a spot of knitting, in which case you might take her an ounce of her favourite coloured wool. Even if she's not a very expert knitter she could amuse herself making kettle-holders and a scarf to fling round her shoulders when sitting up.

ALL THE NEWS

I expect there will be a chair in your chum's bed-room, but if there should not be, you mustn't sit on her bed.

This can be very jarring to the person in bed who is by no means feeling her very best.

The window of the patient's room will be open, when you enter, I hope. But if she should insist on sitting up, do remember to close it for her. Fresh air's very good



as we all know—but a draught is definitely dangerous, particularly to an invalid.

As soon as you have inquired after your chum's health, do let her tell you all about her symptoms—for she'll love doing this. All invalids do!

It's no use expecting her to have lots of news for you—for she won't have it. In fact, she'll be wanting you to supply that.

So tell her all that has been happening at school. Make her rejoice that she's missed the "putting in of sleeves" in needlework lesson; make her laugh about the stray cat that came into the playground and led the caretaker a dance before he could "expel" it.

Tell her about your Form-mates, tell her about the mistresses—about lessons and about games.

In fact, tell her everything that you know will interest her.

But don't tell her things that will make her want to argue—for staying in bed can make one want to do this, and it is not good for the patient.

Make her smile without making her too excited.

Pat up her pillows; make a fuss of her; above all, tell her how much you all miss her at school.

And then she'll be back in a day or two, feeling you're the very best friend in the world!



THE VERY LATEST CAPS FOR SCHOOLGIRLS

Even the youngest schoolgirl can make herself one of these so-easy caps. It can be made in an evening, in plain straight knitting.

JUST right for windy March days, for hiking and for week-end wear, are these very newest caps.

They were inspired by the Winter Sports fashions, when people like to keep their ears cosy and out of the Alpine winds.

You may have seen grown-ups and small kiddies wearing them already—and now is your chance to have one of these for yourself.

They're unbelievably easy to knit.

You want some wool in a favourite colour, say yellow, navy or red—to go with your coat—and a pair of No 9 needles.

Cast on 48 stitches, and knit in garter-stitch (which is just plain knitting both sides) for 10 inches.

Cast off, and then knit another strip like it. Join the two strips at the top

and down the back, as shown in the diagram on the right.

Next cast on 10 stitches only and knit for 32 inches. Sew this along the bottom of the cap, and allow the ends to tie in a bow under your chin.

SCARF AS WELL

That's the first cap. The top picture shows one that is cap and scarf combined. Very snug for you chilly ones, or for you who go motoring in the family car.

Cast on 48 stitches again. This time knit two strips that are each 39 inches long. (Yes, it will take more wool than the other one.)

Next join the two strips together at the top with wool over-sewing stitches, and down the back for 10 inches. Fasten off carefully.

Fix a little bobble of wool to the top corner of the cap, just to make it gay.

Now try it on, and you'll see that the ends of the cap make a scarf which will wrap around your neck very cosily.

Make whichever of these two caps you like—or both, in different colours—and I know you'll look charming in it.



(Continued from page 11)

do love hearing those sort of stories. What happened?"

Ruth looked at her. Ruth rather liked Beryl Brecknock. Once or twice before Ruth had met the not-too-nice captain of Courtfield High's Fourth Form, and, discussing things, found she had a lot in common with her.

Beryl, like herself, was rather inclined to be spiteful, liked showing-off, was given to boasting, and really Ruth was feeling rather proud of her exploit. Hers was a nature which liked to boast of its victories.

"Oh, they had a row about me," she said carelessly. "Jimmy had an idea Babs would look after me, you know. I had a different idea as soon as the looking-after business started. Babs is such a prig."

"Oh, yes!" Beryl said eagerly.

"Well, what else? You don't think I'm going to tell you all my secrets for nothing, do you?" Ruth asked petulantly. "I just worked the row, that's all. You don't know what an easy-to-handle old chump Jimmy is! Well, this is the result. Diana is taking Babs' place. That's all!"

"And Jimmy doesn't guess?" Beryl giggled.

"Of course not!"

"But perhaps," a quivering angry voice put in at her elbow, "Jimmy jolly well knows now! Ruth, get out of that chair. I want to talk to you!"

And Ruth, spinning round, found herself looking into the glowering features of her cousin, James Richmond!

Such a Startling Diana!



"IT'S no good!" Barbara Redfern murmured. "I—I wish I hadn't thought of going in for the wretched carnival!"

There was just the tiniest hint of tears on those long lashes of hers, just the suspicion of a quiver in her lips.

In her hand was the beautiful lace and net frock which she had visualised as so proudly wearing on Saturday night. But of what use now was that creation to her? Jimmy Richmond, listening to the lying stories of his cousin, had chosen another partner for himself.

Babs sighed, and then suddenly she started. And she stared—stared for one moment as if her eyes would pop out of her head.

For through one of the cubicle doors in the Fourth Form dormitory, where she stood alone, had stepped a figure. Such a figure—so startling, so resplendent that for one moment Babs did not recognise it.

A figure in a dress adorned with glimmering artificial flowers some red, some pink, some of silver lame, some of gold lame, some of shining sequins. On her head the most marvellous headdress Babs had ever seen away from a London stage. It comprised a great glittering golden circle, from the edges of which shining spear-shaped points gave an effect of rays streaming from the sun.

So dazzling, so startling, so utterly and supremely magnificent was the whole effect that for one moment Babs was struck into dumbfounded breathlessness.

Then—

"Diana!" she almost shrieked.

For Diana it was!

"Like it?" she asked carelessly.

"Like it!" Babs drew in a deep breath, her eyes alight with admiration.

Then suddenly the significance of that design struck her. "Oh!" she cried.

"I see! That's your carnival dress?"

"Yes," Diana said.

"You're going as—as—"

"As sunshine," Diana laughed. Diana was feeling thrilled, pleased and proud. "Sorry, old thing. It was your idea—but I had to fit in with Jimmy, you know, and this is the best I could do at short notice. Rather original, don't you think?"

Babs turned away.

And Diana, arrayed in her magnificence, saw that swift coming and going of emotion across the other's face; realised all at once what Babs must be suffering in that moment. Suddenly, overwhelmingly there came to her again that whispering voice of conscience.

"What a pig I've been! What a cat I am!" suddenly she felt sorry for Babs—this girl whom she had ousted; this girl whose triumph she had planned to steal.

Impulsively she took a step forward.

"Babs," she said softly. "Babs—"

But Babs, bitterly, had turned away.

"Babs, old thing—"

Babs shrugged. She slammed down the lid of her box.

And with that action Diana stiffened, that impulse of momentary contrition left her. Bah, why should she worry? Why should she feel sympathetic?

And then there was another interruption. It came from Bessie Bunter. Bessie who, sticking her head in at the door, jumped as she saw Diana.

"Oh, mum-my goodness! Who's this?" she stammered. "Oh, mum-my hat! It looks like Cleopatra, you know. Why, it's you, Diana!" she cried.

"That's right!" Diana smiled superciliously.

"Oh, crumbs, dud—doesn't it suit you!" Bessie said in awe. "But oh, I forgot, I—I'm not speaking to you, Babs," she added. "Jimmy Richmond is downstairs. He's come to see you."

"Who?" cried Diana, while Babs started.

"Jimmy Richmond," Bessie repeated. "But don't you talk to me, you know. You've jolly well upset Babs, and I don't speak to girls who upset old Babs. Babs, will you come? Jimmy says it's most frightfully important."

Babs nodded.

She quitted the room without another glance at Diana.

Diana paused as the door closed behind her, biting her lip. Then suddenly an angry flame rushed up into her eyes. A rather grim expression came to her face.

Hurriedly, feverishly, she began to remove her carnival dress.

Held to His Promise!



JIMMY RICHMOND, looking thoroughly ashamed, stood in Study No. 4 when

Babs went down. As Babs, hardly knowing what to expect, rather stiffly entered the room, he moved nervously.

"Well, Jimmy?" Babs asked.

"I—I—" Richmond said. "Oh, my hat, Babs, I—I had to come," he stammered. "To—to say I'm sorry!"

"Jimmy!" Babs cried.

"Well, that's it," the boy said, with a breath of relief. "I've been feeling pretty rotten about things, I can tell you. I don't know now exactly what happened, but I heard Ruth saying something to Beryl Brecknock at the Rink last night—and—well, it sort of opened my eyes."

Babs smiled radiantly.

"And now," she said, "you believe me?"

"Yes!"

"Well, what an old goose!" Babs laughed. "Sit down, Jimmy. I've been feeling pretty miserable, too," she confessed, "especially as I did my best for Ruth. But why, Jimmy," she added, "did she go out of her way to upset things between us?"

Richmond shook his head.

"I don't know," he confessed. "When I heard her talking to Beryl I tackled her, of course. I tell you, Babs, I never had a bigger shock in all my life than to find out what sort of a girl she was. She refused to say anything, however, when I got her on her own. Just turned surly, you know. But I'm glad I've found out. Jolly glad!" he added, with relief. "Babs, what about the carnival now?"

"You mean—"

"Well, I mean, let's get on with it," Richmond said eagerly. "We've only got to-day and to-morrow for rehearsing. You—don't—don't bear any malice?" he added hesitantly.

"Good gracious, no!" Babs laughed, though her radiant face should have been answer enough to that question.

"But, Jimmy, what about Diana?"

"Diana?"

"Yes. Aren't you going to the carnival with her? I understood—"

For the first time the boy's face clouded. In his anxiety to make up with Babs, he had completely forgotten the stormy Firebrand of the Fourth.

"Oh!" he said, and his face fell a little. "I—I'd forgotten her."

"Well, thanks for that!" put in a tart voice at the door, and into the room flounced Diana herself, dressed once again in her drill tunic, and looking rather fiercely angry. Coldly, haughtily, she faced Jimmy. "It's rather refreshing, at least, to hear your opinion of me," she said. "So I don't count, do I?"

Richmond reddened.

"Oh, Diana, I didn't mean that! I meant—well, oh crumbs! You—you don't understand. You see, I—I've just found out that I've made a mistake. I—I've been blaming Babs for something she never did."

"Well?" Diana snapped.

"And—and, well, we're friends again now. And—and—well, you do know, Diana, that Babs and I were officially partners for the carnival."

"I see," Diana drew herself up. "And so," she added bitingly, "you're going to ask me to give up the carnival?"

"Well, if—if you wouldn't mind," Richmond said haltingly.

"Supposing," Diana suddenly flamed out, "I do mind? What about me? Where am I to get another partner from at this time? What about the dress I've bought? What about the rehearsing? Is it my fault you had a silly quarrel, and then made it up again? And what about your promise to partner me?"

Richmond gulped.

"You—you still hold me to that?"

"Naturally. What do you expect me to do?"

"But I thought—"

"Jimmy"—it was Babs who broke in. Beseechingly she laid a hand upon his arm—"please, please don't worry. It—it's all right. If you promised Diana, of course, you'll just have to go through with it. It—it doesn't matter, really," she added, with an effort. "I don't mind."

But she did. For in Richmond's apology all her old enthusiasm had been rekindled. She understood Diana's

point of view, though, to be sure, she did not hold Diana altogether blameless for the quarrel which had been precipitated between herself and her boy chum, and which had culminated in this unhappy state of affairs.

But Diana, obviously, was not going to give in now.

And Diana did not give in, though she was angry at having been put in the position of having to accept Richmond's partnership as a favour.

Ruth—that vain-glorious, boasting little fool! If it hadn't been for her she wouldn't be placed in this position.

Diana was furious, even though she was triumphant. She felt the sting, the humiliation of forcing Richmond to keep his promise against his will. In that mood the Firebrand simply had to have it out with someone.

Immediately after dinner she went down to Courtfield, and to Ruth Richmond's rooms. Ruth greeted her with a delighted shriek.

"Oh, Di, how lovely to see you! I say, are we going dancing?"

"We are not!" Diana pronounced fiercely.

Ruth fell back a little.

"But, Diana, what's the matter with you? You—you look cross."

"I'm more than cross," Diana broke out; "I'm furious! And I'm furious with you, you big-mouthed little idiot! A fine humiliating mess you've put me in! If it hadn't been for your swanking boasting, Jimmy would never have found out anything."

"But, Diana," Ruth broke out, "I—I never even mentioned you."

"I know—but does that alter matters?" Diana savagely flashed back. "A nice thing for me, isn't it, to go on the floor with a partner who doesn't want me—and all through you!"

Ruth pouted.

"Oh, rats! Why should you worry? You've got what you wanted," she pointed out.

"You don't understand," Diana snapped. "You can't realise, I suppose, having no pride of your own, how rottenly you've let me down. Good-bye!"

"But, Diana—" hooted Ruth, and stared. And then turned angrily red; for the door had slammed. Diana was gone!

citedly, feverishly tucking skates and fancy dresses into bags, anxiously discussing their chances this afternoon.

Diana Royston-Clarke was nowhere to be seen. Diana, in her father's car, had gone off an hour ago. Diana, keyed up, on the threshold of a new and dazzling triumph, had just felt that morning that Cliff House could not hold her. Already, while the chums packed, Diana was in the private dressing-room, she had hired for the occasion at the rink.

Joyful, eager, was Diana as she smiled at her carefully made-up face in the mirror.

Diana scowled.

"Get out!" she snapped.

"But—but, Diana—" Ruth stammered, coming forward. "Oh, Diana, don't you look lovely? Please, Diana, don't—don't be cross with me again," she pleaded. "I didn't mean anything—really. Can I—I do anything for you? Do please let me," she begged.

Diana paused. She had no more use for Ruth. These last two days, indeed, she had deliberately avoided her. But the glowing, glittering, happy Diana, who now felt herself on top of the world, was a rather different being from



On the Threshold of Triumph!



"TOUGH!" Jemima Carstairs sympathised. "Jolly tough! Poor old

Spartan Babs—and after that simply stunning outfit you designed for yourself! What are you going to do?"

Rather wistfully Barbara Redfern smiled.

"Just go and watch, I suppose," she said. "In any case, I can't do anything else now. I've lent my costume to my younger sister Doris. She's competing in the solo fancy-dress section, you know, and she's going as Summer-Time. Mabs, let me help you with your coat; and please, please don't worry about me. I'm going to enjoy it like anything."

Brave words! Cheerful words! Perhaps only Mabs, who knew her chum so well, realised the great disappointment they hid.

Not Babs to throw even the tiniest shadow on the eagerness, the excitement which was pervading Cliff House at that moment, for to-day was the day of the roller-skating carnival.

Everywhere through the school girls were scampering and shrieking ex-

"AND so you're going to ask me to give up the carnival?" flared Diana. "What about your promise to partner me?" Jimmy Richmond gulped. "You—you still hold me to that?" "Naturally!" snapped the Firebrand.

She knew the great rink would be crowded. Half the district was coming along, and with them her own father, Lord and Lady Lantham, Lord and Lady Courtfield and family, the Fields-Crofts, and a dozen or so other notabilities. Miss Primrose would be there, too; Miss Charmant, Miss Bullivant; the masters from Friardale; and Miss Jane Matthews, from Whitechester.

Diana laughed as she carefully touched up her face.

Jimmy had not yet arrived. She hoped he'd do his best. There had been a decided lack of enthusiasm on Jimmy Richmond's part these last two days, but now that the event was here he'd buck up. In any case, she reflected, she had enough poise and personality for both of them. She wondered what Babs' feelings would be when she walked off with the prize. She chuckled again.

There came a tap on the door. It was Ruth Richmond who looked in.

"Oh, Diana—"

that Diana of the last two days. Diana, having had all her own way, could be the essence of sweetness.

After all, whatever grudge she might have against this girl, Ruth had helped her. Thanks to Ruth, there had been no chance of failure.

"What can you do?" she asked, relenting.

"Well, Diana, could I go and oil your skates, for instance?" Ruth asked wistfully.

"All right!" Diana turned, with a light laugh. The skates were perfect, but if it would make Ruth happy to perform that slight, unnecessary service, she was quite satisfied. "Here they are," she said.

Ruth nodded eagerly. She picked up the skates. Outside she retreated with them. But as soon as the door was closed, what a change overcame her!

Dark and glittering that look in her eyes; fiery and vindictive that mutinous scowl on her face.

For it had not occurred to the Firebrand that by her treatment of Ruth she might have turned that girl into an enemy.

She went on with her dressing.

Five minutes later the door opened. Ruth, with a bright smile, appeared again.

"Here we are, Diana. I think you'll find them splendid now. Anything else I can do?"

"No, thanks," Diana said. "Is Jimmy here?"

"Yes; he's talking to Barbara. But you'll have to buck up, Diana. The parade starts in ten minutes. Where shall I put the skates?"

"Oh, on the chair there!" Diana said carelessly, and turned to the mirror. "Just tell Jimmy to buck up," she added.

And, without another glance at Ruth, she reached for her magnificent head-dress.

"There's many a slip—"



GLEAMING lights shining through garlands of gay flowers; white-grey faces rising tier upon tier; an orchestra in scarlet tunics

with white facings playing in the stand at one end of the rink.

Gay the scene, festive the atmosphere. Everybody talking and laughing—everybody in the highest of good-humour. A thousand programmes rustled, and then a thousand voices were hushed in tense expectation as the master of ceremonies strode into the middle of the floor and raised his hand.

"The carnival is open," he boomed, "and the first item on the programme is the Parade of the Competitors. The competitors will skate past in the following order—" He glanced at his list. "First, the Most Original Costume Competitors. Next, the Racers. Third, the Figure Skaters and—"

The list droned on.

Babs, seated in the front row, listened eagerly. But there was a mist before her eyes, a sense of aching disappointment in her heart, a rather humiliated stain upon her face, for near her were seated Beryl Brecknock and Bella Clements, of Courtfield High School, and she had heard Beryl's rather spiteful whisper to Bella:

"Look! There's Barbara Redfern. I bet she's feeling sick because Diana's got her place."

Ill-natured these Courtfield High girls, but Babs refused to be drawn.

Now there was a stir, a rustle, and, with a fanfare of trumpets, the first of the Original Costume competitors stepped into the rink. A breathless hush went up, to be followed by a burst of handclapping.

Certainly the costumes were original. Certainly they deserved high commendation. Two by two they came out and gracefully began to skate. Then suddenly there was a hush. And Babs, despite the hurt this girl had done to her, felt herself catching her own breath, felt herself thrilling with sudden admiration.

For on the right of Jimmy Richmond out came Diana. Such a dazzling, magnificent Diana that everybody was held spellbound.

And then a burst of clapping arose.

It was easy in advance to see who was going to be the winner of that section!

Gaily Diana waved, laughed at Jimmy, and then began to skate.

Everybody watched her. Ruth Richmond, standing by the side of the front row, grinned sourly. What a figure of grace! How everybody else seemed to pale into utter insignificance beside the dazzling Firebrand!

And then—

Diana, gracefully skating along, suddenly reeled to the side of the rink. In vain Jimmy Richmond tried to catch her. Everybody saw the wheel of the skate which suddenly came loose and shot across the floor.

Then—thud!

While everybody rose startled and electrified, Diana went hurtling to the ground, one leg bent beneath her.

There came a gasp.

At once the M.C. stopped the parade. Jimmy Richmond by this time was bending over her.

"Diana—"

"Oh, my—my ankle!" Diana moaned, her face twisted with pain. "What happened?"

"One of the wheels of your skate came off."

"One of the wheels! Why, it couldn't possibly—"

And then Diana started. She looked at Ruth Richmond—and Ruth, meeting her gaze, averted her face.

"That awful little sneak!" she hissed. "She did it! Your wretched, scheming cousin! No wonder she wanted to be nice to me! But, oh, this ankle! Jimmy, help me up!"

Jimmy helped her up, but Diana subsided with a groan.

"It's no good. I—I'm out of it!" she faltered. "Take me to—to a seat."

Babs blinked. She wished she could go and help. The M.C. came forward. He said something to Richmond, but

the boy shook his head. A murmur of disappointment, of sympathy went up from all sides as Diana, limping badly, was helped towards the aisle. As she passed Babs, Babs stepped forward.

"Diana, I'm sorry!"

Diana threw her a bitter glance.

She limped on. Ruth, seeing her coming, moved off. Diana paused, staring at the rink, looking round. Then suddenly the tears rushed smartingly to her eyes as she saw the parade going on without her; that parade she had dominated! For a week she had worked and schemed for this—taking no chances! This was to have been her afternoon of triumph. And now—now—

"Diana!" Richmond muttered.

"Oh, hang you!" Diana suddenly flamed, bouncing round upon him. "Hang you! Let me go! You and your silly cousin! If it hadn't been for you—if you hadn't stood out against me in the first place, all this would never have happened!"

"Oh, my hat! Look here—" Richmond protested.

"Well, isn't it true?" Diana glared, feeling she must have a row with someone. "I asked you before Babs. You wouldn't consent. Well, I meant to get into this competition with you! In the end I ousted Babs, didn't I? I got in—to be beaten at the end by your treacherous cousin! Well, I'm through! I'm finished! I'm going home! Let who likes win the beastly competition now—I don't care!"

"And it certainly won't be," Beryl Brecknock chuckled, so that the words

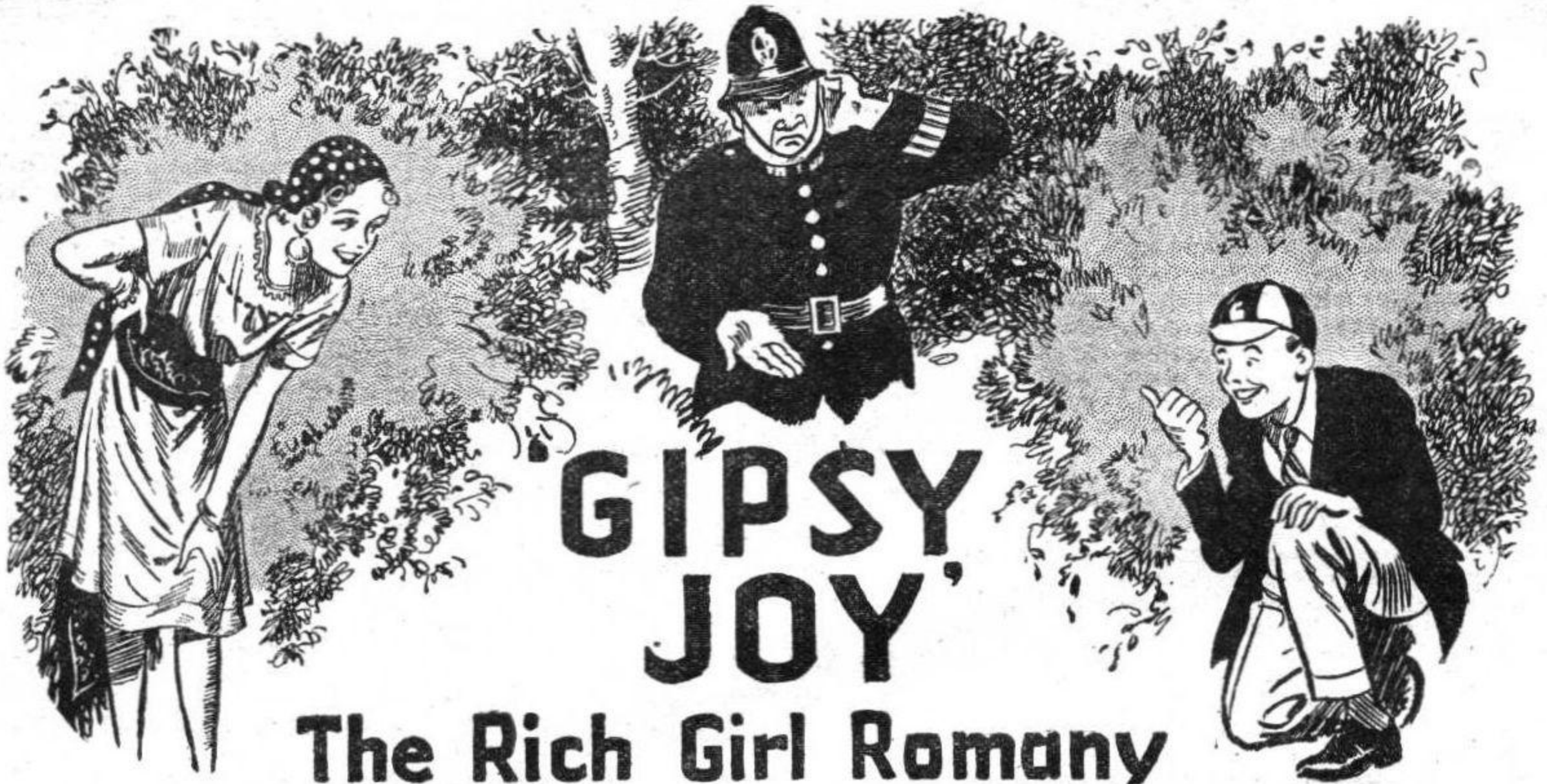
(Concluded on page 24)

What's come over Bessie Bunter? That's what Cliff House asks itself about its own fat, lovable duffer, for Bessie is behaving most mysteriously. She's going round making an amazing list of presents to buy for other girls, and even when she gets into a row she doesn't care. "They can't expel me," she declares airily. "If they do, I shall just bib-buy up the whole school, you know, and kik-come back again." Cliff House is amazed, never realising that the solution lies in—



Money, gems, precious metals! Bessie has found a chart to them; so she thinks. And being Bessie, she sets out to unearth it, prepared to dig herself to a shadow! But, unknown to Bessie, there is a more serious side to it than that; something which eventually involves not only Bessie herself, but all her chums as well. Don't miss this great story. It'll thrill and amuse you at one and the same time. Remember, it appears Next Saturday, and is written, of course, by HILDA RICHARDS.

COMPLETE this week. Another topping laughter-story featuring harum-scarum



The Rich Girl Romany

Joy Sharpe, rich girl, has to do just what her governess says. But when Joy is disguised as Nakita, the gipsy, nothing can check her impish gaiety—not even the village policeman!

Nakita is Kept Busy

FIVE minutes more of freedom, Tinks—and then back we go to prison."

Nakita, the gipsy girl, threw the ball between the trees in the pretty wood at the edge of the lane, and her pup Tinker went chasing after it, barking and yelping.

But when Nakita spoke of prison, she really meant the large house, the Gables, which stood on the hill only a short distance away. And really, anything less like a prison would have been hard to imagine; for it was an attractive house set in the midst of lovely gardens which were already brilliant with early spring flowers.

In less than ten minutes Nakita would be inside the Gables, sitting at the table in the school-room. And it was a thought that saddened her.

If Nakita had been a real gipsy girl she would have been saddened even more; but her gipsiness ended with her appearance.

Her dusky colouring was not even skin deep; it was put on from a jar. And once it was removed, she was revealed as rich girl Joy Sharpe of the Gables.

"Ten minutes—less even," said Nakita, with a touch of sadness. "Miss Retcham will be coming along the lane soon—"

She peeped out into the lane as she heard a step. If the person walking in the lane was indeed Miss Retcham, then Nakita would have to fly. For, before the governess reached the school-room in the Gables, Joy would have to be there, sitting at the table, working!

But it was not Miss Retcham in the lane. It was not a woman at all, but a schoolboy.

"Jack!" Nakita exclaimed, and then put a hand to her mouth, and jumped back into hiding.

Jack Sharpe, strolling along the lane, came to a sudden halt, and looked about him in surprise.

"Funny," he mused to himself. "Could have sworn I heard someone call my name!"

Nakita, in hiding, was caught in two minds. She wanted to speak to him; she wanted to know what on earth he was doing in the lane when he should be at school.

But the very last thing she dared do was to let him, or anyone else, have a chance of guessing that Nakita the gipsy girl was really Joy Sharpe in disguise.

Then an imp of mischief seized her. She could not resist the temptation to try the disguise on him.

"Scuse me, young sir," she said, stepping out into the lane.

Jack came to a halt in surprise.

"Oh, hallo! I say, have you seen another girl around here? I thought I heard my cousin's voice calling my name."

Nakita shook her head slowly.

"No, young gent. But there's a whispering-tree round here that seems to call your name as you pass."

"A tree calling out a name? What bosh!" said Cousin Jack, with a grin. "You gipsies do get scatty ideas."

Nakita frowned at him severely, and held up a forefinger in warning.

"Beware. Speak not evil of gipsies!"

But it was all she could do not to laugh, for Cousin Jack had a round, cheery face, and merry eyes. And really she wished that she could let him share her precious secret.

"Don't try to kid me with all this gipsy twaddle. I bet you think you can tell fortunes," said Jack lightly. "Well, if you're so smart, tell me if my Cousin Joy will come down the lane in a minute."

"Your Cousin Joy?" said Nakita. "Tell me what she is like."

"If you're so mighty clever, guess," he said, with a grin. "And if you're right I'll give you a bob."

Nakita passed a hand across her forehead.

"She has brown eyes, she is fair-skinned, she has fair hair. She is a gay, merry girl, with a lot of spirit—"

"Right and wrong," said Cousin Jack. "She lets that awful governess squash her, so she can't have much spirit. But you're right about her description," he added wonderingly. And then an idea struck him. "I suppose you've seen her? You know where she lives?"

"Gipsies know most things," said Nakita solemnly. "You will find her at the Gables."

"Thanks—and here's the bob I owe you," said Cousin Jack grudgingly.

"No. Keep it," said Nakita. "I know the young lidy, so it wasn't fair like."

"Pretty decent for a gipsy," said Cousin Jack, admiringly. "I'll give you a chance to tell a spot of future, if you like. Tell me if the governess will let my cousin come to the Amusement Park Zoo at Chelford!"

Nakita almost danced with excitement as she heard that, but just managed to calm herself.

"The Amusement Park? No. The

By IDA MELBOURNE

governess will say 'no,'" she said, with a faint sigh.

"Oh, rot!" scoffed Cousin Jack. "I'll talk Miss Retcham round!"

He glanced back down the lane, and then suddenly became galvanised into activity. With a quick spring he leaped beside Nakita.

"Quick—is that a cop?" he asked urgently.

"Cop?" said Nakita, in surprise, looking down the lane. "That's right, young sir. It's a cop. The local cop!"

Cousin Jack stifled a groan.

"Gosh! All I did was to hit him just behind the ear with a bit of putty shot with a catapult!"

Nakita looked at the approaching policeman, who, portly and solemn, was walking as though every step mattered.

"Hide!" she whispered. "Leave him to me!"

Cousin Jack slipped away amongst the trees, and Nakita stepped boldly into the lane.

P.-c. Goff brought himself to a standstill and frowned at Nakita, pursing his lips.

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS.—Well, how do you like our little surprise this week? I mean, of course, the series of "Cliff House Pets," which has come to take the place of the extremely popular Celebrities. I didn't breathe a word about it last week. I thought it would be an even lovelier treat if you just discovered it unexpectedly. But do please tell me what you think, won't you? Not that I have the slightest doubt but that you will be most enthusiastic.

And that reminds me. Here are two little tips for you. The first, very simple, is this: Start collecting the "Pets" straight away—to-day—this very minute, if there's a pair of scissors handy. For I don't want any of you to miss them, and be unable to obtain them afterwards, which is what has happened over some of the "Celebrities," I'm afraid.

So, readers all, cut out Pluto now! And this is where I come to my second tip. It's really an idea Patricia gave me, and like all her ideas really very good. Why not paste each pet opposite its owner in your Albums? Pluto facing Clara Trevlyn, and so on. An excellent tip, isn't it? Look out for another Cliff House pet next Saturday.

I'm afraid I've left myself very little space to chat about

"BESSIE BUNTER'S TREASURE!"

which is next week's magnificent Cliff House story, and all our other features, but you'll find particulars of HILDA RICHARDS' great story on page 16 of this issue.

Really I don't think there's much need for me to add to what appears there. The very thought of the dear old "duffer," Bessie Bunter, on the trail of hidden wealth at once arouses all sorts of amusing possibilities. HILDA RICHARDS has made the most of her chances with this story. It's really brilliant.

There'll also be "Gipsy Joy" to entertain you, as well as the "Jungle Hikers" and Patricia, so do be sure not to miss your SCHOOLGIRL, won't you?

Just a few little letters and then I must close for to-day.

Kathleen Pugh (Liverpool).—By this time I expect you've already received my postal reply, Kathleen. Well, were YOU thrilled when you saw our new feature this week? Do write and let me know, won't you? Best wishes!

Betty Wood (Badminton, Glos.).—Delighted to hear from you for the very first time. Why, of course you may write again, Betty—just whenever you like.

Zinda.—I'll certainly pass on your suggestion to Miss Richards, although I cannot promise that she will be able to make use of it yet awhile. But I'm sure she'll be most grateful, Zinda.

Muriel Arrowsmith (St. Annes).—What a lucky coincidence for you! A story featuring Bessie Bunter is actually on the way Muriel. Look out for it, won't you?

And now, everyone—good-bye until next Saturday.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Your Editor's address is:—Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Please send a stamped, addressed envelope if you wish for a reply by post.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Loitering again?" he said heavily. "Always loitering. How long have you been here, my girl?"

"Ten minutes about."

"Hah! Have you seen a schoolboy with a blue and white cap?"

"Why, are you looking for him?" said Nakita.

She was trying to keep the constable there to give Cousin Jack a chance to get well away, and perhaps reach the Gables.

But, glancing over his shoulder, she suddenly saw Miss Retcham. The governess, having emerged from a side lane, was going away at swinging speed, library book under one arm, a small shopping basket on the other.

"Oh, golly!" murmured Nakita to herself in dismay "She'll get home first—"

Quickly, she stood on tiptoe, looking over the opposite hedge, in quite the wrong direction.

"I did see him—yus—but I can't now," she said.

"Leave him to me," said P.-c. Goff, and then hesitated in the act of turning away. "Just a minute. If you're so knowing, you tell me my fortune."

He held out an enormous hand, and Nakita looked at it carefully.

"This is one of the most extraordinary hands I've ever seen," she murmured. "Looks like a railway junction, it's got so many lines. Yes, I see three stripes.



But, wait! Take care. Danger ahead. You may never get those stripes. You are going to make a great blunder. I can see a large house, and I see you bringing a false charge against someone. Beware! Think carefully."

"And can you see anything about loss of money?" he asked.

Nakita looked anxiously down the lane after Miss Retcham. The governess was already out of sight, and Tinker, the dog, was barking impatiently.

"Yes—loss of money. But you get it back," she said.

P.-c. Goff looked at her in admiration.

"You're a wonder," he said. "Mebbe after all you can tell fortunes. But we'll see."

"Beware," said Nakita.

Then, as P.-c. Goff crossed to the path on the other side of the road, Nakita hurried back through the trees on her

desperate race to reach the Gables and change before her governess arrived home and had time to realise that she was missing.

Skittish Miss Retcham

"NO!" said Miss Retcham firmly. "But, wait a bit," said Joy's Cousin Jack. "I haven't said where I want to take Joy yet, Miss Retcham."

"I do not care where it is, the answer is still 'No.'" the governess said sharply.

It was lunch-time at the Gables, and Joy Sharpe, her governess, and Cousin Jack were at table. Joy's grandfather and guardian was lunching with friends, so Miss Retcham was in sole charge, and making the most of it.

"I still would like to know, Joy," said the governess grimly, "why you were late in answering my calls!"

Joy had been beaten in the race to the house, had had to sneak up the back staircase in grave danger of being caught, and then had had to make a frantically hurried change.

"I was changing, Miss Retcham," she said.

"Changing? But you are wearing the same frock!"

"Yes, I—I took it off and then put it on again," said Joy weakly. "I put it on back to the front first of all, and then I put it on again right."

SO startled was Miss Retcham when the policeman appeared, that she let go of the elastic—

Cousin Jack chortled.

"Gosh! I always said girls were a bit feeble," he commented.

"Not nearly as feeble as boys!" retorted Joy.

Miss Retcham rapped the table.

"I do not want any argument as to the relative stupidity of boys and girls," she said. "I consider that both are stupid. And why you should imagine that I would allow you, a rude, ill-mannered and stupid boy, to take Joy to an amusement park and zoo, I do not know."

"Well," said Jack, "I've got the tickets for the zoo part, some special passes, and I've got a pound note to spend."

He put his hand into his breast pocket to whip out his wallet. But the hand came out empty, and the colour drained from his cheeks.

"Jack! You haven't lost your money?" gasped Joy in horror.

Jack looked chalk-white.

"I have," he said. "Gosh! That gipsy girl in the lane—she must have picked my pocket!"

Joy did not answer, but sat in anxious, thoughtful silence. For that accusation went right over her head since she knew that it was false.

Cousin Jack's eyes had the glint of battle.

"Excuse me, Miss Retcham, will you? Can I go out? I've got to get back

that wallet. It's got the tickets, and my money. There's thirty bob in it—all I've got. I'll hunt that gipsy girl if—"

"Jack, wait!" called Joy. "I'm sure it wasn't Nakita. She wouldn't pick pockets. You must have dropped it!"

"Couldn't have dropped it," he said decidedly. "I'm not a careless chap at all. It was stolen. It's good-bye to the outing now, anyway!" he added despondently. "Oh gosh—what a mutt I am!"

Then, without another word, he rushed to the door.

"Well," said Miss Retcham as he went, "that will teach him a lesson! I am glad that the matter of your going to the amusement park with him need not arise now, Joy. He is scarcely likely to find the gipsy girl and the money before it is time to go home."

"Perhaps," said Joy diffidently—"perhaps I ought to go and help him, because I know Nakita—and if she did take it—"

"If she did she is a thief, and I will not have you even talking to a thief!"

"Oh!" she gasped aloud, and nearly collapsed.

"What is wrong?" asked Miss Retcham sharply. "You cried out! Are you in pain?"

Joy thought quickly, and turned from the window towards the hall. Something had to be done; for if P.-c. Goff knocked at the door and inquired about a boy in a blue and white cap, Miss Retcham would know her duty. She always knew her duty, and it was usually unpleasant—for someone else. On this occasion it would be unpleasant for Cousin Jack, who would be handed over to P.-c. Goff.

And as though there was not evidence against Cousin Jack sufficient to prove his guilt, there in the hall was the offending catapult.

Joy snatched it up.

"Put that down!" said Miss Retcham. "That is a catapult; and I hope you are not tomboy enough to use such a thing."

Joy's brain worked at desperate speed. She'd got to think of some way to stop P.-c. Goff from reaching the

ing the main door. Joy saw him from a window and turned back to her governess.

"I'll go and measure out four hundred and forty yards, Miss Retcham," she said.

Opening the door, Joy slipped down the drive towards P.-c. Goff.

"Oh, constable," she whispered, "is that right you were hit by a catapult pellet in the ear this morning?"

P.-c. Goff's eyes gleamed, and he knit his brows darkly.

"I were," he said.

"Well, if you'd like to catch the culprit, just keep your eyes open," said Joy softly. "Hide behind this bush here—quick—duck down! Now—wait!"

Joy strolled on, measuring yards, and then came to a halt. A moment later Miss Retcham appeared in the doorway. She carried a handkerchief knotted to form a carrier, and it was filled with clay pellets, ready to be fired.

Stretching the elastic, Miss Retcham took aim at Joy, who stood at a distant point in line with her governess—and the bush behind which crouched P.-c. Goff.

Miss Retcham let fly. The pellet went right through the bush, bringing an animal noise.

"Odd!" murmured the governess.

She closed her left eye, took aim again, and stretched the elastic until her arms trembled.

At that moment a large blue object rose from behind the bush.

Miss Retcham saw it, recognised P.-c. Goff, and was so stupefied that she lost her grip on the elastic.

The pellet whizzed away with a shrill whistling, and if only P.-c. Goff had not been in the direct line of fire, would probably have travelled for a considerable distance.

Zing!

At least thirty yards before its full flight the pellet was brought to a halt by P.-c. Goff's chin. It flattened itself and spread.

P.-c. Goff's hand went involuntarily to his chin, and in dazed manner he picked off the pellet, goggled at it, and then at Miss Retcham.

"Well, I—" he gasped. "The governess!"

The governess shooting pellets at him—a policeman!

Joy stole away, to sneak into the house by the back entrance, and go up to her room to change back into Nakita!

But as she went she knew that, for a while, at least, she had saved Jack from the clutches of the law.

Miss Retcham, in full possession of herself, did not wait for the policeman to open the attack.

"May I ask you what you were doing hiding behind a shrub in this garden, officer?" she said.

P.-c. Goff, grinding his teeth, advanced.

"And may I ask, ma'am, what's the idea of shooting pellets smack into my face?" he said. "You knew I was hiding there and you deliberately shot at me!"

Miss Retcham's lofty manner faded.

"I—er—I assure you it was an accident, officer."

"It wasn't this morning by the station. I saw you there, but I didn't dream it was you. The idea, at your age, pot-shooting with a catapult!"

Miss Retcham could not follow that, but she invited him into the house to have his chin examined.

"Cook is very useful at first-aid. If you will go down to the kitchen, I'm



—and scored a bullseye! P.-c. Goff reeled back, roaring with anger. But Joy, in hiding, gave a chuckle of triumph. Her little scheme had succeeded!

retorted Miss Retcham. "You will go to the school-room. I will search for Nakita. What is more, I will inform the police if the wallet is not found within the hour!"

"Oh!" murmured Joy in consternation; for if the police were informed, Cousin Jack would have to make a report at the station. And if P.-c. Goff saw him—

It was Cousin Jack's unlucky day, and for once Nakita, the gipsy girl, had not seen the future with her usual crystal clarity of vision.

But even now, if only she could find the lost wallet—and at the same time spare Cousin Jack from the clutches of P.-c. Goff—there might still be a happy afternoon ahead.

The prospects would have been considerably brighter but for the fact that even as Cousin Jack dodged behind a shrub in the garden, and Joy rose from table with her governess, P.-c. Goff was advancing up the drive of the Gables looking for the boy in the blue and white cap.

Joy SHARPE saw P.-c. Goff before he reached the house. He had paused to eye suspiciously the odd movement of a shrub on the far side of the drive when Joy first noticed him.

door and telling his story. Suddenly the idea came.

"Miss Retcham—fancy this catapult being able to send a pellet a quarter of a mile!" said Joy.

Her governess puckered her forehead, looked at the catapult, and clucked her tongue.

"And you really believe such twaddle as that because a boy tells you it? Really, Joy—four hundred and forty yards! Good gracious, if it could send a pellet fifty yards I should be surprised!"

"Oh, but I'm sure it could send one a quarter of a mile if a boy were using it!"

"A boy!" said Miss Retcham huffily. "You surely do not suppose that the strength of the average boy is greater than mine?"

"Well, I still think it could, Miss Retcham," said Joy.

She spoke so meekly that her governess did not realise that she was being led on.

"Very well, Joy, you will write as many lines punishment as the pellet falls short of four hundred and forty yards! Are you still anxious for it to be tried out?"

"Yes, Miss Retcham!" said Joy doggedly.

P.-c. Goff was in the drive approach-



HILDA RICHARDS

REPLIES

to some of her correspondents

ENA (Wales).—So glad to welcome you as a new reader of our paper, Ena. I hope you will like it as much for a long time to come! I see that Babs is your favourite Fourth Former, and I'm sure many Cliff House fans would agree with your choice. My dog, Juno, sends a tail-wag to Tibby.

EILEEN BARNES (Hutton).—I'm rather late in replying to your letter, Eileen, but you do forgive me, don't you? You would be in the Lower Third if you went to Cliff House, my dear. Be sure to write again some time and tell me more about yourself.

MICKY (Kettering).—I certainly didn't find your letter boring, Micky; it was quite the reverse, in fact. I see that "Jimmy" Carstairs is your favourite Fourth Former. She seems to fascinate an enormous number of readers, so I judge from letters. I'll certainly remember your other suggestions—thank you for them.

MARY THOMAS (Camrose, Pems.).—It was nice of you to write to me once more, Mary. You have got a long list of favourites in the Fourth! I wonder who your "special" favourite is. My dog Juno is very well, thank you, my dear, and feeling very proud of herself in a new spring coat. (I'm so relieved the "moulting" is over!)

EVELYN CLARKE (Howley, Newfoundland).—You seem to be very like Mabel Lynn in appearance, my dear. You would be in the Lower Third if you were at Cliff House. Juno, my pet Alsatian, is now five years old, but she's still as frisky and friendly as a small pup!

JEAN TERRY (Eastergate, Sussex).—I was pleased to hear from you again, Jean. Yes, Bridget O'Toole is an Irish colleen. She comes from Donegal, you know. It's nice to know you liked this year's "School Friend Annual" so much. The Editor tells me it was extremely popular—and actually sold out very early!

FRANCES WEST (Canning Town, E.16).—Thank you for another sweet little letter. I was so pleased to hear from you again. So you would like to give your SCHOOL FRIEND Annuals to your little cousins when they are much older? I should think you'll be favourite cousin then!

MONICA (Belstead, Suffolk).—I was delighted to know you had plucked up courage at last, and written to me, my dear. You won't need to "pluck it up" next time you write, though, will you? I think you are rather like Babs in appearance. Janet Jordan is swimming champion of the Lower School, Monica.

DOREEN (North London).—It was nice to hear from you again Doreen. What a long list of favourites you have in the Fourth! Yes, the series of stories about Faith Ashton were popular. I was so pleased.

sure she can attend to it," said the governess cunningly. "And nothing is better for it, I've heard, than steak-and-kidney pie."

P.-c. Goff pulled himself up, beamed, and crossed the threshold. But there he paused. For on a chair opposite the door was a blue-and-white striped schoolboy's cap!

The game was up!

The Mystery Untangled

NAKITA ran her hardest. There was little time to spare. She had changed into the gipsy frock and dyed her skin.

Now she had to find Jack, and then the wallet. After that, all being well, there remained only the persuasion of Miss Retcham, and they could go to the amusement park!

She went to the woods, and as Jack was searching there for her, they soon spotted each other.

"Hi, gipsy girl!" she heard him call. Nakita stood still, and let him walk near. He looked very angry, and faced her with arms folded in a manner that was almost ferocious.

"Hallo, chum!" said Nakita meekly. "Where's my wallet?" demanded Jack. "I know I had it at the station. I put it in my pocket as I came out after showing my ticket, and you're the only person I stopped to speak to. So that's proof."

Nakita frowned worriedly, because, if he was really sure of his facts, the wallet had been lost between the station

and the Gables. And anyone might have picked it up.

"I did not touch it," she said solemnly, and then gave a little gasp.

"Hah! Remembered where it is?" said Jack grimly.

"Shush! Do not speak," warned Nakita mystically, and put her hand over her eyes. "I think—Yes—yes, the wallet has been found. You will be grateful to a lidy—a stern, grim lidy—"

"Miss Retcham?" gasped Jack. "But she won't find it! I couldn't have lost it in the house, surely?"

"No. But you will be glad. You will take her, instead of Joy, to the show as reward," said Nakita.

She saw that Cousin Jack was quite astounded first, and then merely scoffing.

"Not so likely," he said. "Why, I'd rather take you."

"Ah! I will also be there. And Joy, yes—secretly. But you—you will go with the stern lidy. I see it, chum, and it'll come true. So-long!"

And Nakita, swerving aside, avoided him, and then, darting away through the woods, reached the Gables well ahead of him.

P.-c. Goff was waiting in the hall for Cousin Jack when he re-entered the house.

"Ah! Master Jack Sharpe?" he asked.

Jack nearly collapsed.

"That's my name—y-yes!" he gasped. P.-c. Goff produced something from his pocket and held it out—a wallet.

"The wallet!" yelled Jack. "Great gosh! Where did you find it?"

"Outside the station," said P.-c. Goff,

with a smirk. "I saw you drop it; and then, while I was stooping, something smote me. When I looked up you was out of sight."

Jack hid a smile; and Joy, descending the stairs at that moment, gave a squeal of delight.

"And the job I've had finding you!" said the constable. "That gipsy girl put me wrong as a start, just to be annoying. But she was right about the fortune—dead right. I nearly put my foot in it here, and charged the lady with attacking a police officer—"

"Did she hit you with a catapult pellet?" asked Joy eagerly.

"She did. And nothing to grin about, either. But I remembered the gipsy's warning."

"It's funny; she told me the wallet had been found, too," said Cousin Jack.

Deeply grateful to P.-c. Goff for his efforts, Jack rewarded him generously, and then sought Miss Retcham to thank her for her part and to ask her to the zoo, hoping that Joy would then be allowed to go as well.

Miss Retcham accepted, but refused for Joy, who had work to do; and, rather to Jack's surprise, Joy did not seem to mind very much.

But at the station the gipsy girl, Nakita, appeared and Cousin Jack, thankful for the part she, too, had played, offered her an entrance ticket for the zoo, which she gladly accepted.

Oddly enough, in the maze Miss Retcham got lost, and did not see Cousin Jack again until they met at the exit at the agreed time for leaving; yet Nakita, the gipsy girl, and he were together the whole time.

But, though they were together, not once did he suspect her identity.

"Tell me one thing, though," he insisted just before they parted. "Was it a guess about that wallet's being found? I might have gone on hunting all the afternoon if you hadn't sent me back."

Nakita shook her head.

"Not a guess—just common sense," she smiled. "You had the wallet at the station, chum; and as you didn't take it out of your pocket again, and it couldn't fall out, and hadn't bin stole—well, you couldn't have put it in properly in the first place. You must have put it inside the jacket, but not in the pocket, so to speak."

"Well, then, chum," she went on breezily, "the first time you lifted your right arm up it would fall. And when was that? When you took a pot shot at the copper. And you didn't notice it drop, because you were in too big a hurry to bunk. What's more, I had a word with him—and he didn't know who shot the pellet at him. So it was for another reason he was hunting you up. I reckon after that it was an easy guess."

Cousin Jack smiled.

"Well, guessing or fortune-telling, you were right," he said. "And we've had a jolly good afternoon. In fact, I've enjoyed it better than if I'd been with Joy, because she would have been scared in case the old governess saw her. Only don't let Joy know."

Nakita, winking, promised that she wouldn't, and had a little laugh all to herself. There was another private laugh later when Cousin Jack told her, as Joy, all about it—as though she didn't know!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

LOOK out for another delightful complete story featuring our lovable harum-scarum next Saturday.

Further fascinating chapters of our wonderful adventure story—

The JUNGLE HIKERS



FOR NEW READERS.

TERESA FORRESTER, self-possessed and resourceful, and

LUISE RAYMOND, her more timorous chum, are on their way to meet Teresa's parents in Africa when they become stranded. With a quaint native girl,

FUZZY, as guide, they set off by canoe. The canoes were stolen by Fuzzy from a warlike tribe, who come in pursuit of the chums! They escape, but miss their steamer and continue by canoe. Later, they help a white hunter to get to Mongolu, which is said to be haunted. He gives them a talisman ring to show a native king. Fuzzy, seeking fruit, borrows it for luck. She returns alone—Luise is missing!

(Now read on.)

Luise Must Be Rescued!

"WHERE'S Luise?" cried Teresa frantically, as she clutched Fuzzy's arm.

The little black girl was trembling with fear, her eyes rolled. No wonder Teresa's heart stood still for a moment with shock and concern for her much-loved friend.

"You were with Luise! Why did you let the natives take her, Fuzzy?" she cried, unable to keep anger from her tone.

Fuzzy was almost in tears, and could hardly find words.

"Oh, Miss Teaser," she cried, in piteous appeal. "Me no help it. Fuzzy—she do best. She kick, she tear hair. Oh, she fight much hard, and get away—run back find you. Fuzzy know Miss Teaser her get Luise back plenty quick."

Teresa, hands clenched, took a step forward, and then hesitated, thoughts racing in her mind.

Her instincts urged her to rush madly through the jungle, find the men, and drag Luise from them. But even though she was terribly agitated and alarmed, Teresa had a cool head.

"Fuzzy—tell me just what happened," she said fiercely, and pulled the little black girl from the path through the trees. "And talk softly—in case any of them should come back and look for

us. If they get us, too—well, it'll be hopeless then."

Fuzzy explained, between tears and urgent pleas, that she really had done her best to save Luise. Teresa, her first, wild agitation mastered, knew that little Fuzzy had been helpless to save Luise alone.

It appeared, from Fuzzy's excited, half-coherent story, that the warriors, having seen the ring she wore, and heard her boastful story that she was really a black princess, had meant to hold her to ransom.

"It's you they want, then, Fuzzy—you, the princess?" asked Teresa. "They want to sell you back to Nompanyo?"

"Yis, yis—tink me worth much much gold," said Fuzzy, with just a touch of her old vanity showing through her misery.

"Then give me that ring now, before there's more trouble. That's the first thing," decided Teresa.

And with much difficulty she managed

THE SAFETY OF TERESA'S WHITE CHUM DEPENDED UPON—A TROPICAL BREEZE AND A BOX OF MATCHES!

to take the ring from Fuzzy's finger, where it had been jabbed on. That ring—given to Teresa by an English hunter—was a talisman. It belonged to King Nompanyo, and the mere possession of it was guarantee of safe transit.

"These people must be enemies of his," said Teresa, anxiously, "or they'd respect this ring, and go in fear and trembling of his wrath. But why are they keeping Luise if it's you they want?"

"Keep all—me, Luise—you, too, Miss Teaser," said Fuzzy, blinking. "All same. Dey tink you go alonga king tell him dey got me, mebbe."

Teresa nodded her head, and could not

keep still. Pacing up and down in the narrow space between trees, she thought quickly.

"They want you. They'll keep Luise, though, until they get you back. They'll come in search of you," she murmured, thinking aloud.

Fuzzy looked up at Teresa unhappily. "Fuzzy bad girl. She make dem tink she am princess."

"Yes, it's all your fault, you goose," admitted Teresa. "And if they'd captured you and kept you prisoner—"

She paused and looked at Fuzzy wonderingly.

"Would they free Luise if they had you as prisoner?" she asked herself, aloud.

Fuzzy gave a little jump of eager excitement.

"Me go back—" she said. "Dey take me—keep me prisoner. Yis? Den dey not keep Miss Luise. Me go—"

She made to rush off in her impulsive way, but Teresa held her by the arm.

"Wait—hark!" she whispered. "I can hear them coming. If they get you they'll want to keep you, and even though you are a duffer, Fuzzy, we don't want you kidnapped. We'll get back Luise without that."

Fuzzy nodded her head confidently.

Teresa could hear crashing steps in the undergrowth, and knew that the warriors were searching for Fuzzy, determined to recapture so valuable a prisoner.

"Fuzzy—can you climb trees?" asked Teresa.

"Me—umm," nodded Fuzzy eagerly. "Climb high trees."

"Well, climb one of these—and one you can dodge from to another," said Teresa briskly. "Go on—up, there's a good little Fuzzy. And I think I'll have to let you tell fibs, just for once, in a good cause, too. Let's see—" she

By
**ELIZABETH
CHESTER**

mused. "Yes—tell them I've gone back to warn the white men. Soldiers—hunters."

Fuzzy gave an eager nod and jumped at the nearest tree, calling to Adolphus, the baby chimp, who had been looking from one to another during the conversation, as though pretending that he understood, and was thinking up a good idea.

No sooner was Fuzzy climbing the tree than he followed. Teresa, assured that they could get well out of range of the warriors on the ground below, crept from the path on the opposite side.

It was only a moment or two later that some of the warriors came into sight, beating the bush on both sides, and looking closely at the ground to pick up the girls' trail.

Teresa, in hiding, hardly breathed. A minute passed, and then she heard Fuzzy's voice calling the warriors, but as Fuzzy spoke in native dialect, she could not understand what was said.

Whatever the speech was, it brought the warriors to the foot of the tree, and presently they were waving spears and shouting in a peculiar, guttural way.

Teresa, assured that whatever others there were on the hunt would join the group under the tree, crept on, keeping level with the path.

She could just imagine how scared a dainty, rather timid girl like Luise would feel, captured by the natives. And she might not understand that it was really Fuzzy whom they wanted. Teresa, who had spent some time in Africa with her father, was more used to natives, and not easily frightened by them, although she knew that head-hunters and Ju-ju men were certainly to be feared.

But these natives, except to their own enemies, were harmless enough, despite their painted faces and bone-bedecked hair.

Not many minutes later Teresa came

in sight of the simple native village, an affair of crude mud and grass huts.

It was in a clearing, and plainly to be seen were women busy with preparing a meal. Small children ran about, and there were one or two warriors, but Teresa could not see Luise.

She was already forming a plan in her mind, but the one thing that prevented her putting it into action was a doubt whether it might not be too drastic.

Teresa meant to start a small forest fire!

As the village was in a clearing, the fire would not engulf it. But the moment flames were seen, everyone would rush to quell them. And in the midst of desperate fire-fighting the villagers would have no time to think about their white girl prisoner!

If only she had felt certain of being able to limit the fire to a small area, she would not have hesitated. But could it be done?

She tested with moistened finger for the direction of the light breeze, and then worked her way round so that the wind would not drive the fire farther into the jungle. Not until she had found a clump of tall grass isolated by mud from the trees did she decide to act.

It was a breathless moment when she lit the first match and watched the grass take flame. It seemed slow at first. But how quickly it spread!

Thick black smoke rose in clouds, and soon there was crackling. Moving swiftly away to a hiding-place from which she had a view both of the fire and of the village, Teresa prepared to run to Luise's rescue the moment most of the villagers were out of the way.

A child saw the flames first and shrilled warning. Women put aside their work, warriors dropped spears, and there was terrible commotion.

A fire was common enough, Teresa judged by their swift reaction.

They rushed from the huts, shouting

and yelling instructions each to the other, and presently there was not one black person left in that village.

And Luise? Teresa, creeping forward, tried to catch a glimpse of her, not daring to call and draw attention to her own presence. Luise—where was she?

An Old Friend Returns

LUISE sat crouched on the floor of a mud hut, her heart shaking her whole body. The warriors had been gentle, and the black women into whose care she had been given quite kind, although amazed by her appearance, her fresh skin, her clear blue eyes.

There was only an old woman and a young black girl in the hut with her, and that girl, kneeling on the floor, was tentatively stretching out a hand to feel Luise's golden, silky hair.

It was so utterly different from the wiry fuzzy hair on the girl's own head that she was quite awestruck.

But Luise, far too frightened to try to make friends, only drew farther away.

"Don't touch me!" she shivered.

"Let me alone, please!"

Never in her whole life had she felt so afraid and so terribly alone. For even though she knew that this woman and girl were kind, yet they scared her. They were so ugly with their own broad noses, and their thick lips, that she could not quite trust their seeming friendliness. If at any moment they struck her she would not be surprised.

They seemed to envy and covet her whiteness, and her golden hair; they treated her as some strange animal, even though they must have seen white people before.

Luise seemed to be boiling up in herself—working up to an uncontrollable scream. She was at such a pitch of nervous tension that something had to give.

The woman made a sudden dive for the opening yet only because she had heard the warning cry of "Fire!" But Luise did not understand. It was the breaking-point.

"Teresa!" she cried. "Teresa!"

The native girl, as roused as the woman, also went out of the hut, to go tearing away from it.

Luise, unable to believe her eyes, was quite alone. Paralysed for a moment, she remained still, her own shrill cry echoing in her ears; but, suddenly aware that she was unguarded, she sprang up and rushed through the hut entrance, hardly even wondering who or what might be outside.

She crashed into someone, and almost fainted with fright as a hand grasped her.

"Luise!" cried a voice.

It was Teresa!

TERESA HUGGED Luise to her, and her eyes shone with happiness. But Luise almost broke down, and could not speak for the lump in her throat.

Never, never had she been so glad to see her friend.

"Terry, let's go—fly, run!" she gasped.

"Wait a bit. They're busy with the fire!" said Teresa. "As soon as I'm sure no one's looking we'll dodge round these huts!"

A moment later she gave the word; but even as they ran an old man appeared, hobbling from between the huts. Completely taken aback by the sight of them, he stood staring, open-mouthed.



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Knowing that he would yell a warning as soon as he had recovered from the shock, Teresa thought it best to scare him.

She snatched at an imaginary knife in her belt and drew back her arm as though to strike a blow; and so well did she pretend that he dodged to one side and scuttled into a hut.

Unseen by any others they reached the safety of the long grass on the side of the village opposite the fire.

"Take it easy," whispered Teresa. "If we don't rustle this grass too much we're safe."

"But where is Fuzzy?" gulped Luise. "Poor Fuzzy! Did they get her, too?"

Teresa shook her head, deciding that at the moment it would be best not to say too much about Fuzzy. Luise might fear that they would never recapture their friend.

Very cautiously she led the way, guided as to direction by the thick black smoke that curled up from the fire.

In a few minutes the fire was behind them, and there came the rustling of grass and the trampling of running feet. Luise flung herself flat; but Teresa, more daring, crept forward to investigate.

She saw warriors running in a state of great excitement towards the fire, shouting to each other as they ran, waving spears, and signalling. One brawny fellow paused to drag up a small shrub, which Teresa guessed he intended to use as a broom to beat out the flames.

The others presently did the same, with much shouting; and Teresa, creeping back to where Luise lay, explained to her.

"We can go on now," she whispered. "But no running, and— Hark! Fuzzy!"

They could hear Fuzzy arguing shrilly. A moment later—sooner than they expected—they saw her. She was still in the same tree, but higher up, while a warrior climbed in pursuit, encouraged by a comrade from the ground.

"Only two of them left," mused Teresa. "Good!"

The man on the ground was shouting up something, and Fuzzy was replying in a tone which hardly seemed to be polite or conciliatory.

But the man climbing the tree was half-way to her now, and Luise clutched Teresa's arm.

"We must do something," she urged. "If he gets Fuzzy—"

"Ssh! Watch Adolphus—"

Adolphus, the chimp, from beside Fuzzy swung easily to the next tree.

A moment later Fuzzy herself swung from a long creeper and, while Luise watched open-mouthed, sailed through the air like a trapeze artiste at a circus.

It seemed ages before her hands clutched another branch. But Fuzzy, not a whit alarmed, looked down with large eyes and displayed her shining teeth in a wide smile.

"Golly! Isn't that warrior mad?" gurgled Teresa in delight. "He's half-way up one tree—and now Fuzzy's on top of another."

The warrior climbed a little farther up; and his companion on the ground, shouting something, turned and ran, being hailed by another warrior; so the other man, hastily descending, chased after them.

As he ran Adolphus hurled down a large, soft, squashy berry not unlike a pumpkin. Whether due to wonderfully good aim or sheer luck, the object struck the warrior on the head and burst all over him.



"OH, Teresa, Fuzzy'll be caught!" Luise cried, in alarm. But she was wrong, for the little native girl, gripping a creeper, swung through the air like a trapeze artist, straight for another tree!

Fuzzy shouted and jeered, while Teresa and Luise had to laugh, for the warrior's futile rage was really comic.

He shouted, danced, hurled the remains of the berry in the air, splattering himself further, and then went crashing through the undergrowth. But not until Teresa was quite sure that he was gone did she creep cut and signal to Fuzzy.

"Hey, Fuzzy! You can come down. Did the men say they had gone to put out the fire?"

Fuzzy climbed down the tree and made a spectacular final jump, nearly losing her balance and clutching Teresa for support.

"Me tell 'em big army come quick soon," she said excitedly. "Me say army make fire of all place."

"You did?" cried Teresa. "Well, what a fluke! I did set fire to the jungle; so now they think the army is arriving."

Luise, looking back towards the village, fancied she heard sounds suggestive of warriors approaching in haste.

"Let's go!" she said anxiously.

But Teresa soon dispelled her fears; the sounds were not of warriors approaching, but of animals rushing from the fire.

"I do hope that fire won't spread!" she murmured rather worriedly, knowing well the consequences.

Fuzzy re climbed the tree and swung to another that gave her a better view of the fire. Men were busily beating, their efficiency quite remarkable. They had already ringed the fire round, and were slowly mastering it.

"Fire not hurt now!" she called.

As Fuzzy herself had seen many fires in the jungle Teresa accepted that.

"Well, here we are all together," she said. "And the next thing is to find our porters. A fine crowd they are, running off just when we needed them! I only hope they've left our luggage."

"My goodness! I certainly hope so," said Luise in dismay. "That's all we have in the world; food, clothes, supplies—everything!"

"Me give dem whaffor if dey hab taken stuff!" promised Fuzzy darkly.

"Come on! No use stopping here," said Teresa. "We've got to find those

porters. And we've got to make sure that we aren't caught again."

Teresa confidently led the way, and Luise, tremendously relieved to be free from the black people, linked arms with her.

"Terry, you know, I think you could overcome almost any old snag!" she said, with a sigh. "I never thought I could be rescued from those awful people. I really thought that I'd be there for ever."

"Not likely!" said Teresa. "We'd have rescued you somehow, even if the fire stunt had failed."

Quite cheery and confident she sounded. No one would have known how she was worrying; for there was no telling how far or in which direction the porters had run. And as they were quite likely to make off with the girls' baggage, Teresa, Luise, and Fuzzy would be utterly stranded.

They were not hungry at the moment, but soon they would be, and thirsty, too. Then what could they do? There was fruit, of course, and Fuzzy might know which berries were safe to eat. They could live, but the nights would be alarming.

In a few minutes they had reached the spot where they had been camping when Fuzzy returned with news that the warriors wished to speak to them.

There was no sign of the porters, but suddenly Luise saw movement in the thicket.

"Look there! The warriors or the porters?" she cried anxiously.

Fuzzy peered intently, and Teresa tried to catch a glimpse of the cause of the movements.

"Hide," she said, "just in case! Sounds like quite a number!"

"Big!" murmured Fuzzy, and then suddenly threw up her hands and clapped them over her head.

"The porters?" asked Teresa.

"No, no, no! Dem not black boys!" said Fuzzy. "But him come help us."

"Then wh-what is it?" asked Teresa, stepping forward.

And as she moved, so did the branch of a tree thick with leaves, giving place to a large head and a very long nose.

"A baby elephant!" gasped Luise.

Fuzzy jumped, clapped her hands, and called at the top of her voice:

"Bambo!"

It was Fuzzy's own pet elephant!

"Come On! It's the Only Way!"

TERESA ran forward after Fuzzy, and then stopped short as the young elephant came crashing through bushes and halted, looking at Fuzzy.

"Well, my goodness!" said Teresa, quite overcome with astonishment at

this totally unexpected meeting. "Bambo again!"

"Why, we left him miles behind!" gasped Luise.

"At the steamer landing-stage when we took off in the canoes," said Teresa blankly. "How on earth did he get here?"

Fuzzy, almost purring with satisfaction and pride, patted Bambo's trunk, while his wise little eyes looked upon her with undeniable recognition and affection.

"Him follow me all way!" said Fuzzy proudly. "Find me! Bambo, him cleverest elephant in all world!"

Teresa, anxious to pick up the trail left by the porters, begged Fuzzy to keep Bambo out of the way, for his feet would obliterate everything.

"What we must know is whether the boys went on or turned back," said Teresa anxiously. "We don't want to

waste time going back; but if we go on, and they're not somewhere ahead—"

A rustling to the left made her turn her head sharply.

What she saw then made her heart stand still. A black face peered out from some bushes.

"Teresa!" Luise gasped, when she had recovered from her shock. "Run! Here they come!"

Teresa, kneeling with Fuzzy, examining the ground just beyond their camping site, turned and scrambled up, ready to run with Luise.

But one glance at that black was enough to banish all alarm. If Luise did not know one black person from another, Teresa did.

"Why, it's a porter—one of the boys! Hurrah!" she cheered, and rushed forward to greet him.

Very warily he stepped from hiding. "Gore way along!" he said, pointing down the path.

"That way! Good! Then they haven't turned back!" said Teresa, in great relief. "That's something to be thankful for, anyway!"

But Fuzzy spoke to him in dialect, and her expression showed that she was alarmed.

"What is he saying?" asked Teresa.

"He says dem boys—dey gone along! Dey take all dem things!" said Fuzzy.

"Well, we can catch them, then!" said Teresa quickly.

"Dey gone! Run quick—like dis!" said Fuzzy, giving a demonstration. "Fast—quick! Go sell tings! Bad white man trader dere—ask no tings where get 'em!"

"What! A white trader, and one who won't ask questions!" said Teresa quickly. "How far?"

Fuzzy asked the loyal porter, whom Luise now recognised as the man whose injured foot she had tended. He was not quite sure of the distance, but it was half an hour's quick trotting, and the black boys were untiring.

"Half an hour? We couldn't keep running for all that time!" said Luise, in dismay. "And they have a good start. Oh, Terry, what are we going to do? Will that trader really keep our things?"

Teresa did not know. There are bad as well as good white men in Africa, and they might have lost the best part of their equipment.

"The black case! I don't know what's in it, except that it's important!" she said anxiously. "We mustn't let that fall into any white man's hands—not if he's a rascal!"

From the thicket behind came native voices, the warriors returning! Their fire had been put out, and now they were athirst for vengeance!

"Bambo! Only Bambo can save us!" said Teresa quickly. "He can carry the three of us, and at a trot!"

"Yes, yes!" cried Fuzzy eagerly. "Bambo, him do it!"

The wild yells of war-cries came from the warriors, but they had not yet seen the girls.

Bambo, idly plucking fruit, stood, unconcerned by all this excitement, only a few yards away, and Fuzzy ran to him.

"It's the only way, Luise! Come on!" cried Teresa.

WHAT ever plan can Teresa have in mind? And will it succeed? On no account should you fail to read the dramatic continuation of this fine story.

"THE FIREBRAND TAKES NO CHANCES!"

(Concluded from page 16)

reached Diana's ears, "Cliff House—now!"

Diana paused. She flung round. Bitter, bitter her reaction—bitter, bitter her rage! She was almost choking with it. She felt in that moment she hated everyone. Jimmy, Babs, all the whole beastly lot! And yet that jibe steadied her. That thrust against her school brought her up sharp.

Cliff House wouldn't win now! Cliff House couldn't win! There were some brilliant entries from other schools. Only she and Jimmy could have beaten those entries. Her dazzling and original costume would have ensured that.

Strange and weird the nature of this Firebrand Diana! Strange how even a straw could sometimes turn her from her stormy purpose! That remark stung her.

Cliff House couldn't win, couldn't they?

"Babs!" she cried vibrantly.

"Diana—"

"Don't Diana me! Come along!" Diana snapped. "Jimmy, help me to the dressing-room—quickly! Babs, you've got to put this dress on!"

"Your dress?" Babs gasped.

"Yes, my dress!" Diana snapped.

"For Cliff House! You go and—and skate with Jimmy!"

"But, Diana—"

"Oh, come on!" Diana cried impatiently. "Babs, quickly!"

And while Babs, wondering whether she was on her head or her heels, blundered forward, Diana, limping still and leaning heavily on Jimmy, made her way to the dressing-room.

IT WAS an hour later, and Diana sat in the seat Babs had occupied.

She sat there with smouldering, glowering eyes; sat there with her ankle done up in bandages. Around her the cheers were deafening. On the dais in front of her two figures glowed in the spotlight—the figures of happy, radiant Barbara Redfern, in HER dress; the figure of laughing Jimmy in his storm costume. Splendid they looked. Tumultuous the applause.

Now the M.C. was coming forward. The clapping died down. He put a megaphone to his lips.

"And the winners of the most

original costumes are James Richmond of Friardale School, and Barbara Redfern of Cliff House!"

Diana smiled, a bitter, twisted smile, while the rink rocked. Her triumph! She should have stood there!

Something rose up in Diana's throat. Something threatened to choke her. What had she done? Why had she done it? She had given Babs this triumph which should have been hers; that cat who in the first place had messed up all her pet schemes!

She turned her head away. With difficulty she rose. She couldn't stand this! To a programme girl in the aisle she called:

"Here, I say, give me a hand up!"

"Yes, miss," the programme seller said. "But, I say, isn't Miss Redfern lovely?" she asked. "What a marvellous dress—"

"Sort of thing you like, eh?" Diana asked.

"Oh, I adore it! Please, miss, where do you want to go?"

"Take me to the dressing-room."

"Yes, miss."

She limped off on the girl's arm. She reached the dressing-room just as Babs, happy, laughing, a silver cup on the table in front of her, was, among an admiring crowd of her congratulatory Form-mates, removing the gorgeous dress which had won the competition for her. She gave a cry as Diana came in.

"Diana!" she shouted. "Diana! Make way for Diana, you girls! Oh, Diana, you brick! You awful, awful brick!"

Diana smiled twistedly.

"Finished with the dress?" she asked.

"Diana, yes! It's glorious—glorious! But, Diana, what are you going to do with it?"

For answer Diana took it. She looked at the programme seller.

"This," she began, and turned. "Take it," she said curtly. "Burn it—sell it—bury it—do as you like with it! I never want to see it again! That's all! Now take me back to my seat!"

"But, Diana—" Babs cried, and then jumped.

For the door had closed with a slam. Strange Diana—Diana, the girl who hardly understood herself—had vanished!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

(See page 16 for details of next week's wonderful Cliff House story.)