

"THEY CALLED HER 'THE FRUMP'!" Magnificent Long Complete Cliff House School story inside.

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

No. 458. Vol. 18.  
Week Ending  
MAY 7th, 1938.

EVERY 2<sup>D</sup> SATURDAY

Incorporating  
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**BABS HAD TO  
KEEP THE MISTRESS  
CONCEALED!**

A dramatic moment from this week's superb story of the famous Cliff House chums.



This Appealing Long Complete Story features Barbara Redfern & Co. and a very lovable mistress.



# THEY CALLED HER "The FRUMP!"

## Surprises All Round!



"NOW, girls, just one very last race, and then I must be going," Miss Wanda Belling smiled.

"Barbara, are you ready?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Belling!" Barbara Redfern dimpled.

"And you, Diana?"

"Rather!" laughed Diana Royston-Clarke.

"And you, Leila—and Janet? Jessie, will you please stand between Barbara and Janet Jordan? Joan Carson—Flora Cann! Ah, there you are! Take positions, please, girls!"

The seven girls named—a mixed gathering from the Fourth and the Lower Fifth Forms of Cliff House School—readily took positions on the edge of the big swimming-bath, which was one of the finest and newest buildings in the famous old school.

The watchers—and there must have been twenty or thirty other girls present—looked on with envious interest.

"Now!" Miss Belling cried. "Go!"

Seven lithe figures, as one, left the side of the bath in a perfect plunge-dive. Seven sturdy swimmers cut swiftly the length of the bath and touched the bar. Seven girls, exerting themselves to the utmost, came with a rush back the length of the bath. Janet Jordan first, Joan Carson second, Barbara Redfern, Captain of the Lower School, third, with Diana Royston-

Clarke and Flora Cann fighting strenuously for fourth place, and Leila Carroll and Jessie Naylor of the Fifth within six inches of each other as they swam at the tail end of the team.

But Janet, as always, was the winner. Jessie Naylor, good swimmer as she was, was just a trifle behind at the end of the race, and finished last.

"That was excellent!" Miss Belling said approvingly. Her face, very soft and quiet, and somehow astonishingly pretty, now that the great bun of hair she always affected was hidden beneath a rubber bathing-cap, beamed brightly. "A very good performance, Janet. Very, very good indeed! Jessie, you really must remember to relax your muscles, or you can so easily lose distance at the start. You should take a lesson from Janet, you know—"

Jessie Naylor, of the Lower Fifth, scowled a little.

"Thanks, but I don't want a Fourth Form kid to teach me how to swim," she said tartly.

"Jessie, please!" Miss Belling said warningly, and her normally pale cheeks flushed a little. "That's not the way to speak to a mistress!"

Jessie Naylor turned pink.

"I—I'm sorry!" she mumbled insincerely. "But, anyway, I wasn't really trying. When it comes to the Swimming Gala—and she glanced contemptuously at Janet Jordan—"I shall be able to swim her head off! Anyway, that was only practice," she added carelessly. "But what about the team, Miss Belling? You promised to tell us this afternoon who you had selected."

There was a pause. The seven swimmers gazed eagerly up at the young face of Cliff House's youthful assistant mistress. That was what everybody was extremely anxious to know.

For Cliff House, in common with the other girls' schools in the neighbourhood, had entered for the gala championships, which were to be held at the Gay Buccaneer Roadhouse's splendid open-air swimming-bath in a few days' time. There were to be two teams—one for senior girls over sixteen, the other for girls between the ages of sixteen and twelve.

For many days now the process of eliminating likely candidates for the team had been going on earnestly. To Miss Belling, excellent swimmer and diver herself, had been given the task of selecting the younger team.

This was the last series of competitions which had reduced the first overwhelming number of likely candidates to the last seven, and from these the six which would go to the Gay Buccaneer Roadhouse as the representatives of the Middle School would be chosen.

"Of course," Jessie added loftily, "you'll include me!"

"And me, too!" Diana Royston-Clarke sniffed. "I'm one of the team, aren't I, Miss Belling?"

Miss Belling looked at the two girls. She was very young, rather nervous. In her white bathing-cap and her well-fitting costume, she looked much younger, much prettier, somehow, than she did in her rather uninteresting



everyday clothes. Though, to be sure, the bathing costume was not expensive, for Miss Belling was the youngest, and probably the poorest, of all the mistresses at Cliff House.

What her exact age was, nobody really knew. It could not have been more than twenty-one, however.

"I'm sorry, girls," Miss Belling said now. "It wouldn't be fair to announce it at this moment. As it happens, however, I have decided on the team, and will certainly pin it on the notice-board in Big Hall before I go out—"

She paused again, her eyes travelling to the clock that stood beneath the gallery. "And that reminds me," she said, a trace of anxiety in her voice, "that I must be getting along right away!"

"Oh, but, Miss Belling, now?" Barbara Redfern pleaded.

"I'm sorry, Barbara, I must! I—I—" Again that pink flush, making her look so momentarily pretty, came into her cheeks. "I've got a most frightfully important appointment with—er—er—Flora," she added hastily, "will you please take charge now? We'll have another practice to-morrow morning."

She turned. Watched by the girls, she strode along the side of the bath until she reached her own cubicle. Babs smiled.

"You know, she is nice!" she said to her chum, golden-haired Mabel Lynn, who, indulging in a private swim, had just dragged herself out of the bath.

"Eh? Who is?" Mabs asked, groping. "Ugh! Hand me a towel, Leila!"

"Miss Belling! It just struck me," Babs replied, looking after the retreating figure thoughtfully, "how frightfully good-looking she is when she's not dressed-up in those thick tweeds of hers. She's got a jolly nice, slim figure," she added.

"Has she?" Mabel asked. "Oh, golly! I've got something in my eye. Here, who's pushing me?" she added, her head enveloped in the towel.

"Nobody, but if you will stagger around like a kangaroo you must expect to be pushed," Jessie Naylor said, joining Babs. "And I like your idea of good looks!" she snapped to the latter. "I think Miss Belling is a frightful frump! And I think she's got a cheek to tell me to relax my muscles," Jessie went on indignantly. "Anyway, I wonder which one of you kids she'll drop out to make the team up? You, Di?"

"Fancy yourself, don't you?" Diana snapped. "What's the matter with you being dropped out? I haven't exactly noticed the making of a champion in you yet."

"Well, dash if all, you don't think she'll drop a Fifth Former out, do you?" Jessie returned. "Besides, I'd like to know who, among this crowd, swims better than I do."

"Only six of us," Flora Cann said dryly; and there was a chuckle. "Who says another splash, children?"

"Make a race of it," Janet Jordan suggested at once. "Fourth against Fifth. Wait a minute, though! There are four of us to three of you. One had better drop out."

"I will!" Babs volunteered at once.

"Good old Babs! Right then?" Flora asked. "Go!"

And with a merry splash, off the six went, while Babs, with Mabs and a crowd of her chums of the Fourth Form, watched from the side. It was a good race.

Again, however, Janet Jordan won, with Jessie again last.

## By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

"Fourth wins!" Babs cheered. "Who says we're not as good as the Fifth, now, Jessie? We—" and then she paused suddenly, nudging Mabs, as the door of Miss Belling's cubicle opened again, and Miss Belling, dressed in her outdoor clothes, reappeared. "Look!" she whispered.

Mabs looked, and then gazed curiously at her chum. Certainly there was not a great deal in Miss Belling's appearance to prompt either excitement or interest. Babs herself, while liking Miss Belling, and feeling, in some vague way, sorry for Miss Belling, had never taken this interest in her before—was barely conscious, in fact, that she was taking the interest now.

But then Babs had never been much in contact with Miss Belling as during these last few days, and Babs, though she did not realise it yet, was an earnest student of human nature.

And the fact that Miss Belling could look so radiantly pretty and young in bathing costume, and so awfully ordinary, and almost shabby, in everyday outdoor things, was intriguing Babs mightily at this moment.

For the Miss Belling who appeared now seemed an utterly different Miss Belling from the shyly pretty mistress

**Miss Wanda Belling, the youngest mistress at Cliff House, was charming; she was pretty, and she was happy because she was in love with Lance Naylor. But—Miss Belling did not know how to dress—how to make herself look smart. Jessie Naylor of the Fifth spitefully took advantage of this fact in her efforts to break the romance between her brother and the mistress. And that was why Babs & Co. took a hand in matters . . .**

who disappeared into that cubicle five minutes before.

Dressed in a suit of dark blue gabardine, with brown brogue shoes that were almost flat heeled, and her dark brown hair done up in an enormous "bun" at the back of her head, she looked singularly undistinguished.

Babs, whom Jemima Carstairs of the Fourth Form often described as having the best "clothes-sense" of any girl in the junior and middle school, was mentally redressing Miss Belling as she watched her.

If only she'd wear black shoes with higher heels, for instance. If that skirt were taken up two inches, at least, to show her slim calves. If her jacket fitted a little more closely, and she would wear a pink or white frilly blouse instead of that matching, hand-knitted jumper—

"You know, Mabs," Babs said, "it's an awful pity, but she doesn't know how to dress. She'd look terribly pretty if only she'd wear the right things. Brogue shoes are jolly nice, but only with tweeds—not with navy, which can be jolly smart. My mother always wears navy."

"Perhaps Miss Belling can't afford new clothes," Mabs suggested.

"No, it's not that. She—she just dresses too old, somehow. Her hair, for instance—it's lovely hair, but it's too old-fashioned the way she does it. Then somehow, for she's very dainty, she ought to wear youngish, fluffy things.

And she certainly," Babs said thoughtfully, "ought to wear high-heeled shoes now, as she's going somewhere special—"

"Yes," Mabs said uncertainly.

"Don't you think so?"

"Eh? I really don't know," Mabs confessed. "I'm not an expert on clothes like you are, Babs, and I've got so used to seeing Miss Belling drift around like that, that—well, I never really thought about it. Anyway, if she's happy, why should we worry?" she asked lightly. "Aren't you ever going to get dressed yourself?"

Babs laughed. But she blushed. Perhaps she ought not to have said all that. After all, how Miss Belling dressed was her own business, and it was like her cheek to criticise.

On the other hand, she would like Miss Belling to look attractive.

Now if she only dressed like Miss Charmant, for instance! Miss Charmant, the mistress of the Fourth Form, certainly did know how to make the best of herself. If Miss Belling, for instance, would only get—

Oh, goodness! There she went again! Babs went into her cubicle. As swimming practice was finished now, everybody else was donning their clothes. Rapidly Babs dressed; five minutes later she emerged.

The whole practice team was ready then. A few girls still splashed in the bath, but most of the watchers had cleared off.

Then suddenly Clara Trevlyn, games captain of the Lower School, who had

been eliminated in a previous heat of the competitions, came breezing along with plump Bessie Bunter, who shared Study No. 4 with Babs and Mabs.

"What-ho!" she cried. "Babs, the swimming team list is up!"

"Really? Am I in it?" Babs asked eagerly.

"Why not come and see?" Clara asked tantalisingly.

"But look here, you girls, I'm not in it," Bessie Bunter said indignantly. "And I'm jolly well going to write to the papers about it. Leaving out the best swimmer in the school, you know—"

"They haven't!" said Jessie Naylor.

"Eh?"

"Well," Jessie smiled, "I'm bound to be in it, you see."

Bessie looked rather dazed.

"Jolly cocksure about it, aren't you?" Clara asked.

"Not cocksure—just confident!" Jessie smiled superciliously.

"Well, come and have a look," Clara said, and turned to Babs. "I say, Babs, are we going over to Whitechester to tea afterwards?"

"That's the idea," Babs said. "Let's have a look at the list first, though."

Eagerly they crowded out, reaching the school by way of the laboratory.

Quite a crowd surrounded the notice-board when they entered Big Hall, and there was a cheer from the Fourth Formers gathered there when Babs & Co. appeared.



Eagerly Babs pushed her way forward, and willingly the rest made way for her. And then her eyes sparkled.

For there, on the notice-board, in Miss Belling's well-known and almost schoolgirlish handwriting, was the announcement:

"The following girls have been selected to represent Cliff House in the Middle School section of the Inter-Schools' Swimming Gala, to be held at the Gay Buccaneer Roadhouse, on Saturday, April 30th.

Flora Cann	Lower Fifth.
Joan Carson	Lower Fifth.
Barbara Redfern	Fourth Form.
Janet Jordan	Fourth Form.
Diana Royston-Clarke	Fourth Form.
Leila Carroll	Fourth Form.

"Yoicks!" breathed Diana. "Four from the Fourth; two from the Fifth! Where's little Miss Modest Naylor now?"

"Well, I'm here," Jessie said haughtily from the midst of the crowd.

"Seen the list?"

"Why should I see the list?"

"No reason," Diana said, with a chuckle. "All the same, I think you'd be interested. Apparently Miss Belling doesn't think you're a likely rival to Johnnie Weissmuller yet. But do look," she pleaded.

Jessie blinked. But she came forward. She stared at the list, while the others, nudging, made way for her.

She read it. Her eyes widened. She read it a second time, and then a third time.

"I—I'm not in the team!" she spluttered.

"You've said it!" Leila Carroll, the American junior, chuckled.

"I—I—" Jessie's lips stuttered for a moment. She looked as if she would have snatched the notice down. "My hat, of—of all the cheek! Where is she?" she hooted.

"If," Jemima Carstairs said, strolling forward, "you are referring to one, Miss Belling, hie thee swiftly to the gates. For therefrom, five minutes ago, I saw her slim and swaying form in the act of disappearing! I think," Jemima added beamingly, "she is waiting for a humble, but oh, so useful bus."

There was a titter from the crowd. Jessie's face was red now. Down with a crash had toppled Jessie's lofty dignity; scattered to the winds her arrogant conceit.

She started furiously for the doors.

"Whoops, fireworks!" Diana grinned. "Come on, kids, we're going to see this."

"She seems crusty about it," Babs said.

"Oh, let her get on with it! Anyhow, I'm not going to miss a scene. Jessie in a paddy is too good to miss!"

Diana made for the doors. Babs and half a dozen others started after her. Perhaps, Babs thought, it was just as well for some of them to be on the scene when Jessie and Miss Belling met—Jessie looked so frightfully furious that there was no telling what might happen.

They chased after her. Near the gates Babs caught her up.

"Jessie—" Babs cried.

"Get away!" Jessie cried furiously. "But look here, don't go and do anything silly."

"Will you leave me alone!" Jessie raved. "I'm not going to take an insult like this sitting down. And certainly not from a—from a frump like her! Wait till I see her—"

She tore herself free from Babs' restraining hand, and rushed on. She

was the first to reach the gates and burst furiously into the road.

And then all at once she came to an abrupt, quivering stop.

Babs, Mabs and Clara, immediately on her heels, almost crashed into her. And then following the direction of Jessie's eyes, they too stopped.

For on the other side of the road, imperfectly hidden by a clump of trees, were two figures. One was the tall handsome figure of a man. The other of Miss Belling.

And Miss Belling at that moment had a quivering, radiant face upturned to his. The young man, his eyes glowing, was looking down into it as he took the mistress gently in his arms.

While Babs stood watching, as yet unconscious in the astounded surprise of the moment that they were actually doing so, the young man's head bent, his lips sought the tremulous lips of the mistress.

And then with a shriek Jessie leapt forward.

"Look!" she cried. "Look! That awful frump, and—and my brother Lance!"

### More Than a Match for Jessie!



LANCE NAYLOR—for it was Jessie's good-looking, athletic elder brother—jumped as if he had been stung.

Miss Belling stood rigid. For a moment her face burned, then became cold and pale. For a moment she trembled, stunned and startled at finding the eyes of those girls upon her.

Babs, feeling guiltily aware that they had intruded, however innocently, flushed in embarrassment.

"Oh, my hat!" she stuttered. "I—we're so sorry! Come on, girls."

Quickly they turned, running back to the gates.

But Jessie did not join the general retreat from the scene. She flounced forward.

"Lance!" she called vibrantly.

Lance Naylor's face flushed.

"Well, Jessie?"

"What's the meaning of this?" Jessie demanded.

"I beg your pardon? What's the meaning of what?"

"Flirting with her!"

"Flirting?" Lance Naylor's lips compressed angrily. "Jessie, you apparently forget yourself. I don't think you understand what you are talking about. Will you please go back into the school, and leave Miss Belling and myself to attend to our own affairs?"

Jessie's face was afire, however. Miss Belling, still agitated, looked at her beseechingly.

"Jessie, yes do go," she murmured.

"Thanks, you can talk to me when I've finished with my brother," Jessie said violently. "You've already made a fool of me once this afternoon. Not satisfied with that, you now make me the laughing-stock of the whole school, by jolly well meeting my brother practically in the school quadrangle! It's your business, is it?" she flamed out at her brother. "Well, it's jolly well mine, too! Nice thing for me it's going to be, isn't it—having girls pulling my leg."

The young man breathed deeply.

"Jessie, you're being very childish," he said with admirable patience. "I am not, as you call it, flirting with Miss Belling. Miss Belling and I are in love with each other!"

"What?" Jessie looked staggered.

"Yes, Jessie, my dear," Miss Belling looked at her nervously, yet with pride. "That—that is so!"

"In love with—with that frump?" Jessie almost shrieked.

"Jessie, how dare you!" Lance Naylor took an angry step forward.

"You mean you—you're going to marry her?"

"I hope," Lance said, "to have that honour—at some future date."

"Oh," Jessie said flatly. Then: "Does father know about this?"

"Father," he said firmly, "does not know—yet! But I have Miss Belling's permission to tell him now. I am going away to-morrow. To-night I shall take the opportunity of telling him. And now please, Jessie, instead of standing there and behaving so rudely, I think you'd better come to your senses and be friends with Miss Belling. After all," he added, "she will be your sister-in-law one day."

Miss Belling smiled nervously, mistily again. For a moment Jessie was stricken dumb.

Her handsome brother Lance—was hoping to marry Miss Belling! Brother Lance, of whom secretly she had always been so proud, was going to throw himself away on a dowdy-looking assistant mistress who hadn't a penny to her name!

It was a joke, of course! Just an unbelievable joke!

"Lance, you—you don't mean it?" she cried.

"I have never," Lance Naylor replied levelly, "been more seriously earnest about anything in my life before! Oh, I understand it is perhaps a bit of a shock to you," he added repentantly. "I didn't mean you to find out like this. Wanda, my dear—" and tenderly he took the mistress' arm, and Jessie, seeing that fond glance which accompanied the action, felt as if something had snapped inside her brain. "I think I had better put the position clearly to Jessie—now! At Wanda's—at Miss Belling's request," he said levelly, "I have not yet said anything to father. I am going to tell him to-night, and ask for his consent to our engagement when I return from London, which I have to visit on business to-night. Now please, Jessie, let me see you shake hands with Wanda and be friends!"

"Yes, Jessie, please!" Miss Belling nervously smiled.

But Jessie didn't. Rather deliberately she put her hands behind her back. Most furiously she stared at the two.

Then passionately she flung upon her heel.

"Jessie!" cried Miss Belling.

"Jessie!" echoed Lance Naylor.

"Jessie, come back!"

Jessie did not come back. She never even listened. Stormily, tempestuously, she strode back through the gates.

Babs & Co., who had halted outside the tuckshop, saw her striding forward, saw the dead-white pallor of her face, the dark burning of her eyes.

Never before had anyone seen Jessie Naylor as she looked in that moment.

She passed them without seeing them. At a speed which suggested some unseen force was urging her on, she flew up the drive into the school and raged off to Study No. 11 in the Lower Fifth corridor.

A kick on the door sent its portal flying inwards, and, grabbing it, she impatiently slammed it to again.

Thank goodness, at any rate, the study was empty!

Well, now? She crossed to the window. That dowdy-looking thing was going to marry Lance! Lance had fallen in love with a penniless school-mistress when he could have married girls with wealth, with even a title.

Miss Belling was to be her sister—her



sister! Her eyes flamed again. No, no, it couldn't be true! It mustn't be true!

But it was true! Lance had declared it so. And there had been that note in the quiet steadfastness of his voice which told her that he really loved her.

He would, as he said, become officially engaged to her. Some day he would marry her.

Jessie clenched her hands to her sides. "And she—she——" she said, between her teeth. "She left me out of the team!"

That was the bitterest, the most galling part of it. Miss Belling, only a few years older than she herself, had had the cheek to exclude her name from the list, and that at the time when she was hoping to marry her brother! The cheek, the impudence, the impertinence of it!

"But," Jessie told herself, "she's not going to get away with it! Love!" she laughed scornfully. "She may jolly well think she's made a good match with Lance, but she's got me to count on yet. Father doesn't know—and father, at least, will never stand for the pauper she is! Wait till I tell him about her! Wait——"

She paused then. Those lines of fury suddenly left her face. Switching from brother to father seemed to provide her with an altogether different line of thought.

Lance obviously had made up his mind—but Lance, whatever he might feel, could do little without his father's consent. For Lance was entirely dependent upon his father, and her father, frightfully keen to see his son get on, would never approve a marriage such as Lance now proposed! A snatch of conversation she had heard once between her father and Lance came to aid her now.

"And Lance, my boy, when you marry pick the right girl! A smart girl! In your business you must have a wife who will be a credit to you—a wife with personality, with character, a wife who always knows how to look her best, and who dresses well."

"Dresses well!" Jessie's lips curled in contempt. Character—that shy, timid little assistant mistress! Not the sort of girl

Mr. Naylor would be pleased to see his son marry—especially as Lance's wife would have to play so important a part in his business life.

For Mr. Naylor was handing over to Lance the management of his extremely exclusive West Leicester Hotel, in Mayfair, London. That, Jessie guessed, was the business which was taking him to London to-day.

Jessie laughed then. Well, she had found a solution. At the same time, she had found no solution to her place in the swimming-team, and never for one moment having felt she would not be included in the team, she had already cajoled her father into coming to witness the performance at the Gay Buccaneer Roadhouse!

Somehow, she'd just got to get into that team.

Meantime, into the quad, Miss Belling—having taken leave of Lance Naylor—was hurrying.

Babs, with Mabs and Clara, paused as she came up. The distress on the young mistress' face touched her.

"Miss Belling!" she said quickly.

"Yes, Barbara?"

"I—I—that is we—all of us are frightfully sorry we butted in, Miss Belling. We didn't intend to see——"

Miss Belling flushed faintly.

"That's all right, Barbara. There is nothing whatever to be sorry about. Mr. Naylor came to the school to-day to say good-bye to me for a week or so." She paused. "Really, I do not see why I should make any secret of it," she added, "especially as you have already guessed Mr. Naylor and I are to be engaged!"

"Gee!" Leila Carroll cried. "Is there going to be a wedding, Miss Belling?"

"Not yet. Not perhaps for a year,"

Miss Belling smiled. "The engagement will not be officially announced, you see, until Mr. Naylor returns from London—which he is due to do on the same day as the swimming gala takes place. Barbara, did you see Jessie?" she asked quickly.

"Yes. She went into the school,"

Babs replied. "Miss Belling," she added softly, "I—— We're all so glad!"

"Thank you!"

Miss Belling smiled tremulously. But

she did not look happy. Leaving those girls in a sudden buzz of conversation, she hurried on into the school.

She reached the door of Study No. 11 in the Lower Fifth corridor, paused, then tapped. Jessie Naylor's voice bade her enter.

She went in. Mistress and pupil stood staring at each other.

"Well?" Jessie asked.

"Jessie, I—I had to come to see you. I promised Lance that I would——"

"Lance?" Jessie asked jealously.

"My dear, you understand now——"

"I understand," Jessie said bitterly, "that you and he have got some silly idea of becoming engaged. But you aren't engaged yet, are you, and until you are I'm bothered if I think you've got any right to call my brother by his Christian name!"

Miss Belling bit her lip.

"Jessie, please," she begged, "try not to be foolish. I know you are a little startled, and I'm sorry I did not mention this to you before. It was Lance's idea, not mine, that it should be kept secret until we had your father's consent to the engagement. But now, my dear—now that you do understand, don't you think"—pleadingly—"that we could be friends?"

Jessie glanced at her, taking her measure. Friends with this plain, quiet girl—friends, indeed! This was the girl Lance hoped to marry; this was the girl who hoped to share Lance's life in one of London's most aristocratic hotels!

She felt inclined to laugh, but she didn't. She had other cards to play first.

"Well," she said, and appeared to consider the matter—"well," she added, "it's not easy, after the way you've insulted me."

"Insulted you?"

"By leaving me out of the swimming team."

Miss Belling started.

"And if," Jessie said deliberately, "you want to be friends with me, that's the first step that's got to be put right."

"But—but, Jessie——" the mistress said, in amazement.



JESSIE stared at the list in fury. "I—I'm not in the team!" she spluttered. "My hat! Of—of all the cheek! Where is she?" she hooted. Jessie was referring to Miss Belling. The watching chums grinned. They didn't think the mistress would change her mind about including Jessie in the swimming team.



"I want to go in that team in place of one of the others," Jessie said.

Miss Belling stared incredulously.

"Jessie, you surely don't realise what you are saying!"

"I do!" Jessie's eyes gleamed a little. "You can fix it. Why not?" she asked. "Anyway, how you do it is no concern of mine. You want to marry my brother, don't you? You think perhaps that you can do that without my help, but I'm telling you this now—you can't. Whatever Lance may say, my father's going to have the last word, for Lance has got no money of his own yet, and I tell you I can bust up this silly engagement of yours with one snap of the fingers. And I will, too," she added threateningly, "unless you do what I want you to do. Well, am I in the team?"

Miss Belling's lips set.

"Well, are you going to agree?" Jessie said, more loudly.

And then, for the first time, Jessie Naylor had an inkling of the real character that underlay the nervous exterior of Miss Belling. She saw distinctly the contempt that showed in the other's face as she gazed at her, and as her reply came.

"After such an unsporting outburst," she said steelily, "the last thing I should think of doing would be to give you a place in a team that is supposed to be composed of sporting girls. You do not deserve such an honour."

Jessie flamed.

"Why, you—"

"And for your insolence, Jessie, you will take fifty lines! That is all. I shall expect," Miss Belling said, as she reached the door and looked back at the flummoxed and furious Fifth Former, "the lines before breakfast."

### They Couldn't Help Overhearing!



"WHO'S going to take them to Miss Belling?" asked Barbara Redfern.

"Well, you, I guess," Leila Carroll said. "The idea was yours, and you're the best speech-maker among us, Babs."

"Unless," Bessie Bunter said eagerly, "I take them. You girls know what ripping speeches I make. Let me take them, Babs."

But Barbara Redfern smiled at such a suggestion from the lovable, plump duffer. She glanced at the fragrant bouquet of flowers which she held in her arms.

She, Mabs, Clara Trevlyn, Leila Carroll, and Bessie had just returned from Whitechester, where they had been to tea with Linda Gay & Co., and in passing the florist's in Courtfield, Babs had thought of this little congratulatory offering for Miss Belling.

Naturally the chums were thrilled by the romantic news they had heard from Miss Belling's own lips. Nothing so exciting had happened at Cliff House since the wedding of Miss Scott, another mistress of the school, and naturally they all desired to give Miss Belling some evidence of their congratulations and good wishes.

"Mabs, would you like to take them?" Babs asked.

"No, Babs; you—"

"You, Clara?"

"Give me a hockey-stick to present to her, and I'd know how to hold it," Clara grinned. "But flowers—no thanks; not in my line! No, Babs, go on, and don't be such a fusspot. They're from us all, anyway."

"But look here—" Bessie expostulated indignantly, and then howled.

"Wow! Wow! You trod on my toe, Clara, you hefty great thing!"

Babs laughed.

"Right-ho, then! Here goes!" she said. "Ahem! Better not hang about near her door," she said. "I'll report full details in Study No. 4."

She laughed; the chums grinned. With the flowers in her arms, Babs, her colour a little heightened, and feeling ridiculously nervous, crossed the corridor to Miss Belling's room.

That mistress' quiet voice bade her come in as she knocked.

Babs went in.

Miss Belling was seated at her desk, her back turned to the quadrangle, over which the rays of the setting sun were spreading. It was warm in the room, and the window behind her was wide open.

She smiled as she saw Babs.

"Why, Barbara, my dear, you wished to see me? And what lovely flowers!" she added, rising.

"Y-yes, Miss Belling!" Babs stammered. "They—they're for you!"

"Barbara, no!"

"They—they are. We—we bought them!" Oh, great goodness, this wasn't a bit like the neat little speech she had prepared mentally. "We—we thought you'd like to have them as—as a token of our good wishes, and—and our congratulations," she added, all in a rush, "and—and we hope you'll be ever so happy, Miss Belling!"

Miss Belling smiled. Her eyes were very soft and very gentle as she came forward.

She took the flowers from Barbara's hand, and Babs was faintly startled to notice how her own lips were quivering as, without another word, she lifted them from her.

In that moment the mistress was almost as embarrassed as Babs.

Then—

"Thank you!" she said, in a low voice. "Thank you very much, Barbara! And please thank the others, too. I—I hardly know what else to say, except that I do think the flowers—and the thought—are lovely! Sit down for a minute, will you, Barbara?"

"Yes, thank you, Miss Belling!" Babs gasped.

"It—it's a lovely evening, isn't it?" Miss Belling asked.

"Yes, isn't it?" Babs replied.

"You—you have been out?"

"Yes," Babs replied. "We've been to Whitechester—to tea," she added jerkily. "We—we had quite a nice tea," she added, wishing to goodness she could find something sensible to talk about, and acutely conscious that her eyes were on the blue gabardine and the low-heeled shoes.

There was a silence. Babs feverishly worked her brain to say something which would relieve the embarrassment. Somewhere there was a drone of girls' voices, followed suddenly by a high-pitched laugh. It was Miss Belling who broke the silence.

"I—I suppose everyone in the school knows about—about my forthcoming engagement, Barbara?"

"Yes," Babs said—"everybody! And—and, of course, everybody's just wild with excitement. Everybody wishes you the most awful happiness, Miss Belling!" Embarrassment vanished suddenly. She found her wits and her tongue, and, boldly daring,

asked the question which she and her chums had been discussing all the afternoon. "Have you—oh, please don't think I'm being curious, but, of course

we are all so frightfully interested—have you known Mr. Naylor long?"

"Oh, yes!" Miss Belling laughed, at ease herself then. "Since the summer. You see we met at Scarborough, where we were both spending our holiday, and—well, I got cramp while swimming, and it was Mr. Naylor who fished me out of the sea. That," she added shyly, "is how we first met."

"Oh!" Babs said, and smiled. "He's awfully nice, isn't he?"

"He's the dearest boy in the world," Miss Belling said, with quite startling enthusiasm. "And—and—"

She paused, looking quickly towards the window, outside which the high-pitched laugh had come again—a laugh Babs recognised at once as Jessie Naylor's.

"And—" she said, and stopped again, for plainly from beneath that window came Jessie's scoffing voice:

"Oh, don't worry! She's just kidding herself! You don't think, surely, that my father would let Lance marry such an awful frump as Miss Belling? Why, she doesn't even know how to dress herself!"

"Well, she certainly does look a dowdy," the voice of Florence Ellison agreed. "But, I say, we'd better not talk about her here. Look—her window's open!"

Babs had risen, her blood boiling. She saw that Miss Belling's face had turned white, saw her unconsciously looking down at herself. And there was such acute distress in her eyes that Babs' whole heart went out to her.

"Miss—Miss Belling—" she faltered.

"Oh!" The mistress looked up with a start. It was obvious, for the moment that she had forgotten Barbara. "I—I'm sorry," she mumbled, though it was difficult to see in what connection such sorrow was expressed. "I—I think you'd better go, Barbara," she said unsteadily. "And thanks awfully for the flowers."

"Y-yes, Miss Belling." And Babs, with a queer little lump in her throat, went. What a hateful cat that Jessie Naylor was!

She closed the door behind her. For a few moments Miss Belling did not move. She sat staring in front of her. A frump! A dowdy! That is what they thought of her.

Was she?

She shook her head. Until this moment it had never occurred to her to question herself about her appearance. Hard working, living only for her career. Miss Wanda Belling had given little thought to either clothes or to looks. She had never had time, somehow. Only vaguely had she ever had the inclination.

For hers had been a hard life. A life given over to work, and nothing but work. The daughter of poor parents, she had been forced to fight desperately for every favour fortune had given her.

Yet—now?

Now! Ah! She gulped a little. Now, with Lance in her life, how things had changed! She did so love Lance; did so want to be a credit to him, and—and— Was she smart? Was she pretty?

She wasn't. She knew it.

Miss Belling rose. Entering the room which adjoined her study, she stood there for a long, long minute in front of the mirror.

"I am—just frumpy!" she told herself, with a gulp then.

Rather helplessly she continued to stare. What could she do? How possibly could she improve herself and



make herself fit to become the important wife of Lance Naylor?

Staring and staring, she felt suddenly and most dreadfully engulfed in a wave of panic. For it came to her then that she did not know how to make the best of herself!

Her face whitened a little. With new eyes she continued to stare at her reflection. Her hair? Supposing she had that cut off? But she daren't, she daren't! It might not suit her.

It might, indeed, only succeed in making her look a bigger "frump"—bitter word—than ever. If she wore a frock instead of this costume—but what sort of frock? What colour to choose? Something like a little sob escaped her lips at last.

"A—a frump!" she muttered.

Not Intended for Miss Belling!



RATHER slowly Barbara Redfern drifted back to Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form passage. Bessie Bunter was there, her plump face beaming as she stirred toffee in a saucepan over the fire. Mabs, who was to be the next editor of the "Cliff House Magazine," was poring over some photographs. She listened as Babs told her of what had transpired in Miss Belling's study.

"What a mean cat Jessie is!" Mabs cried indignantly.

Babs nodded.

"Yes, old Mabs," she agreed. "But the trouble is that there's some truth in her calling Miss Belling a—a frump."

Mabs, glancing at one of the photographs, sighed.

"I was just thinking the same," she replied. "I was looking at this." She passed a photograph to Babs. "It's for the 'Mistress' Gallery' page of the magazine. Miss Belling does look rather ordinary beside the other young mistresses, doesn't she? But it's only her clothes that are wrong, for she's pretty enough."

Babs took the photograph. It was one which Leila Carroll had taken for the "Mistress' Gallery" feature, and which had been enlarged. It showed a smiling Miss Belling in her long skirt and jacket, a rather wide-brimmed hat, and a high-necked woollen jumper. Pretty, that face, attractive those eyes—but all was lost in the general ordinariness of the clothes.

Babs' eyes suddenly gleamed.

"Wait a minute," she said.

She went to the bureau. While the toffee hissed and Mabs bent to the work of making a rough design for the photographic pages, Babs got out her box of water-colour paints.

There was a smile on her face as she took the photograph and began to work, first painting the outline of the figure in Chinese white, then, with a few deft strokes, shortening the skirt.

With black paint she gave the coat a more defined waistline, and added a few curls to the hair just by the ears. Again, with the Chinese white, she removed nearly all of the brim from the hat. With a laugh, she passed the result to Mabs.

"How does this look now?" she asked.

"Eh?" Mabs looked at it and jumped.

"Oh, great goodness," she breathed, "it doesn't look like her—and yet it does! I must say it flatters her!"

Babs shook her head.

"Flattery not intended," she said. "You can't say it flatters her, because

I haven't added anything. That is Miss Belling as she really ought to be, not as she is. As a matter of fact," Babs added, "she could look even better than that. She does look nice, though, in that, doesn't she?"

"Just marvellous!" Mabs breathed.

"Here, I sus-say, who's that pretty woman?" Bessie asked, rising from the fire and peering over Babs' shoulder.

"I say, Babs, you might get me a tin, so that I can pour this toffee into it, will you? I sus-say, that's nun-never Miss Belling!" Bessie added, blinking. "I thuth-thought it was Miss Charmant. Did you dress her like that, Babs?"

"I did," Babs said—"with paints."

"Well, I think it's fine!" Bessie said.

No. 7 of

CLIFF HOUSE PETS

POLLY, BESSIE BUNTER'S AFRICAN GREY PARROT

According to his enthusiastic mistress, Bessie Bunter, Polly is the rarest bird of his kind in the world. According to Pearl Braithwaite of the Upper Firth, who is the school's ornithological (bird life) expert, Polly belongs to the Psittacus erithacus branch of the parrot family, which breeds in millions in South Africa.

Also, according to Bessie, Polly is the most beautiful of birds—which just shows you what pet-love can do. Though I hate to run down any pet, it must be admitted that Polly is far, far from good-looking these days! Many of his original grey feathers are now missing; his red tail is now a rather bedraggled appendage which has turned to pale pink.

Those eyes of his, once bright and perky, are dull. He has every sign of old age, and really does look, as Jemima rather unkindly remarks, as if the moths have got at him.

But what Polly may lack in outward splendour he more than makes up in intelligence and wisdom. If the years have robbed him of beauty, they have amply rewarded him in other directions.

For Polly has a most astonishing flow of language at times. His voice, so far from growing feebler with the years, has undoubtedly increased both in volume and in richness. Polly has been known to talk for a whole twenty minutes, and I guarantee, during that time, that he has not repeated himself once!

As is to be expected, Polly is very fond of using his mistress' phrases. His invariable mode of address to everybody, boy, girl, man, or woman is "I sus-say, you girls!" If you say "Hallo, Polly!" he will then blink at you very solemnly and say "What about my titled relations?"

Not long ago Polly was used by the Upper Fifth in a skit written by a Fifth Former on Shakespeare's "Hamlet." During the rehearsal, in which Polly was on the stage, he managed to hop away. A search was instituted, but no Polly was found.

But in the small, creepy hours of the morning the Fourth Form woke up with a start. A deep, sepulchral voice apparently coming from nowhere was

into it. At the same moment there was a knock on the door.

"Oh, come in, silly!" Babs sang out.

The door opened, the "silly" appeared, and then Babs flushed to the roots of her hair.

"Oh crumbs! I'm sorry, Miss Belling! I thought—"

"That's all right, Barbara," Miss Belling smiled. "I just popped in to ask you to arrange another practice for the swimming team to—" And then she stopped. Her eyes, focusing on the photograph on the table, became startled. While Babs, too late, fastened her eyes upon it, Miss Belling's hand strayed towards it and she picked it up.



declaiming in the dormitory "I am thy father's spirit!"

Everybody was scared to fits, and Bessie, in spite of the Bunter bravery, fled the dormitory, shrieking that it was haunted by a ghost! It was Babs who at last tracked the ghost down, and it proved to be (yes, you've guessed it!) Polly! Somehow Polly had got shut up in one of the cupboards, and, perched on the coat-rack, was solemnly chanting Shakespeare's lines.

There was another occasion, too, when Bessie was lost. At the same time there was a fall of masonry at the entrance to the old crypt. Babs & Co., anxiously searching for their missing chum, were startled to hear a muffled voice saying "I sus-say, you girls, help! I sus-say, you girls, help!" And, thinking Bessie was imprisoned, they set to work hastily and perspiringly to clear away the debris.

After half an hour they had freed an entrance into the crypt, and there, blinking violently from a niche in the wall, was Polly! "I sus-say, you girls!" he greeted them. "Lend me half-a-crown, you girls! I'm expecting a postal order!" Bessie was not there, after all, and how Polly had found his way there was a mystery! For Bessie, having "bagged" the remains of Lydia Crossendale's Dundee cake, had merely retired to the clock-tower to eat her plundered "feed" in undisturbed comfort.

"Blessed if I could have done it better myself! You ought to show her that, Babs, and tell her how to dress, you know."

"And wouldn't Miss Belling be pleased," Babs scoffed, "being told by a junior girl in the Fourth Form how to dress! No; we couldn't do that, my old Bess. Anyway, never mind the photograph. Yum!" she added. "That toffee looks good, Bessiekins! Careful how you hold that saucepan, though, duffer! We don't want it all over the carpet!"

She produced the tin. Pushing the photograph to one side, she held it while beaming Bessie poured the treacly liquid

She glanced strangely at Babs. "Barbara, did you do this?"

"Y-yes, Miss Belling!" Babs stuttered, crimson-cheeked. "You—you see—"

The mistress, however, was looking at it. Mabs pulled a face. Bessie blinked in sympathy at Babs, who, wishing the floor would open up and swallow her, was biting her lip. That photograph, of course, had never been intended for Miss Belling's eyes.

"I see!" The mistress looked up. Babs expected to see anger, reproof, hostility in her eyes, but of those there was nothing. Instead, it was Miss Belling who looked embarrassed. Almost



nervously she said, and with a queer, appealing look at Babs as she did say it: "May—may I keep this, Barbara?"

"Why, y—yes!" Barbara answered, her eyes widening.

"Then—thank you!" The mistress tremulously smiled. "I should like to have it," she stammered. "Meantime, will you make a note that we shall hold another swimming practice to-morrow afternoon?"

And quite abruptly she turned on her heel and quitted the room, leaving the three chums gaping at each other.

### Ten Minutes of Ordeal!



"JESSIE, have you done the lines I gave you this morning?"

It was Miss Belling who spoke.

Jessie Naylor was at the door of Big Hall, surrounded by half a dozen of her friends. It was after tea at Cliff House, and Jessie, to the envy of everyone, was going out.

Jessie, in fact, was going home for late dinner, her father having settled in Courtfield recently.

She turned now. Her brows shot up in a supercilious stare.

"No," she said.

"Jessie, that is not the way to talk to a mistress!" Miss Belling said reprovingly. "Why haven't you done them?"

"Because," Jessie said coolly, "I forgot them. I'll do them to-morrow—unless, of course," she added, a gleam in her eyes, "you'd like me to do them now, when I've had special permission from Miss Primrose to go home!"

Miss Belling turned pink.

"Very well; do them to-morrow," she said. "But this time the imposition is doubled! And please, Jessie, remember that I do not joke when I give you lines! I expect them to be done!"

She turned on her heel and whisked away. Jessie scowled furiously. Florence Ellison giggled.

"Smack in the eye for you!" she said.

"Oh, shut up!" Jessie scowled. "Shut up! Smack in the eye—eh?" she added sneeringly. "Well, just wait till to-morrow morning and see who will get the smack in the eye then! Just wait till I've seen my father! She won't be thinking about lines after I've brought him to the school, I can tell you! I'll let him know what an old-fashioned thing she is! And I'll jolly well tell him how she's got her knife into me!" she added vindictively. "You watch!"

"And, of course, dear poppa will believe you?" Georgina Skeppington asked.

"He'll believe me all right. Father generally does believe what I say. In any case, it won't matter whether he believes me or not. He's only got to take one look at her, and the romance is finished from that moment!"

"How your talk does impress me!" Diana Royston-Clarke drawled sarcastically. "I should like to know who Miss Belling is marrying—you and your father, or your brother? Of course, not that it matters what brother Lance thinks! He's only the bridegroom, after all!"

"Keep out of this, you!" Jessie retorted. "What do you know about it? If father says 'No,' Lance won't be able to get married. Who do you think Lance gets his money from? And where do you think he'd get the money to marry that frump on if father cut him off? Has that car come yet?" she added irritably, staring through the doorway.

The car had. It drew into the drive even as she spoke. With a wave to the group on the steps, Jessie, her face aglow, went off to meet it. But nobody noticed that the door of Miss Belling's study near by closed softly as Jessie went. Nobody saw Miss Belling, who had overheard every word of that conversation, sink into a chair, her cheeks ashen. She was a frump! Jessie was bringing her father here to see the frump!

She winced. What would be the result of such a meeting? She had heard enough to know what sort of woman Lance's father expected his son's wife to be.

Lance loved her, and she loved Lance. Lance, for her sake, would have defied his father—but at what a sacrifice to himself! No, no! Mr. Naylor mustn't see her. She mustn't meet him without Lance beside her to help her, and give her confidence.

Her eye fell upon the photograph which she had taken from Barbara Redfern. Quickly she snatched it up. Certainly that girl had an eye for the right line and style in clothes. If she could only transform herself just a little to resemble the well-groomed figure in this photograph!

Suddenly she rose—struck with an idea. Carefully she locked the photograph away in a drawer of her desk. Taking her hat and coat, she reported to Miss Bullivant and went out. For the rest of that evening Cliff House did not see her again.

In the morning, Babs, Mabs, and Clara, taking a turn in the quad after breakfast, were surprised when a car drew up on the fringe of the drive, and a tall, middle-aged man, wearing morning dress and white gloves, descended. He beckoned to Barbara.

Wonderingly, Babs went across to him.

"Ah!" he said, and smiled at her. "You are one of my daughter's friends, I presume. I am Mr. Naylor," he volunteered.

"Oh, Jessie's father?" Babs asked. "Good-morning!"

"Yes, Jessie's father." He smiled. He was so faultlessly dressed that Babs eyed him in awe. "Perhaps you can tell me where I shall find Jessie?" he asked. "And also a mistress of this school—Miss Belling?"

Babs glanced at him quickly, and then turned.

"Clara!" she called.

"Here we are," Clara said, striding forward.

"This is Mr. Naylor," Babs said. "Will you take him to Jessie's study? I—I'll go and tell Miss Belling you are here," she added.

"Thank you!"

He smiled again. Really, Babs thought, in spite of his awe-inspiring appearance, he was quite nice—different from the spiteful Jessie. But she could understand now that Jessie was right when she had said her father would be very particular where his son's future wife was concerned. As she sped to Miss Belling's study, she wondered anxiously how he would regard his son's choice.

Rather breathlessly she knocked at the young mistress' door, and from inside there came a little exclamation. Babs mistook the exclamation for "Come in!"

She pushed the door open.

And then she stopped.

The exclamation most obviously had not been intended for "Come in." For Miss Belling, so to speak, was caught red-handed. She sat in front of her

desk, and on that desk, propped up in front of her, was a mirror. In front of the mirror were two boxes of face powder, and no fewer than three small sample lipsticks.

Furthermore, Miss Belling held one of those lipsticks in her hand as she stared at Babs. Her lips bore evident traces that she had been making-up.

"Barbara, shut the door!" she gasped agitatedly, and in a terrific fluster arose.

"I—I was just—" she stammered.

Babs looked at her. Then her eyes fell upon that re-touched photograph. She understood in a moment, and her heart melted.

"Oh, Miss Belling!" she breathed.

"Barbara, I—I hope you do not think I—" Miss Belling stuttered, with a rather helpless glance towards the lipsticks.

"Oh, no!" Barbara glanced through the window. She looked at the mistress. "I—I think make-up suits you—awfully," she said daringly; and blurted, before she realised what she was saying: "But, of course, that lipstick's a little too dark for your colouring, Miss Belling. I mean—oh dear!—I—I didn't mean to say that. I—I came instead to tell you that Mr. Naylor is here."

She wondered as she said it at the pallor that overspread the mistress' features.

"You mean he—he is coming to see me?" she breathed.

"Yes, Miss Belling."

Only for a moment the mistress trembled. Then, amazingly, she grabbed up the powder and the lipsticks. With a frenzied energy which left Babs marvelling, she stuffed them into her drawer, hastily wiping her face with a towel at the same time. Then, as if having forgotten that Babs was in the room, she took one or two agitated steps towards the door, paused, and came back. Her face was tense.

"Barbara," she said—"Barbara, you will help me, won't you? Please!" she added, and her eyes were full of such agitated entreaty that Babs felt startled. "Barbara, he mustn't see me! I mustn't see him! You—you understand?" she gasped out. "Barbara, please do help me!"

And then, almost with a cry, she stopped.

For outside the door came Jessie Naylor's voice:

"This is her room, father! I'll knock!"

"Barbara, don't let them know I'm here," Miss Belling whispered.

Barbara gasped. Miss Belling, like some frightened girl, fluttered towards the screen and disappeared behind it as the knock sounded on the door, and it opened.

"Miss Belling in?" Jessie asked.

"Well, I—I'm waiting for her," Barbara said.

"Where is she?"

"Somewhere in the school, I dare say."

"Why isn't she in her study?" Jessie said rudely.

"Well, really, that's not my business," Babs said quietly.

"Ahem!" Mr. Naylor coughed. "Ahem! She is in some other part of the school, perhaps?" he suggested.

"Then, in that case," Jessie said, "we'll jolly well wait! She won't be long."

"But, I say," Babs cried, in alarm, "you can't!"

"No? Why can't we? You're waiting, aren't you?" Jessie pouted. "In any case, you can buzz off," she said, with



all the superiority of a girl in a higher Form. "Our conversation with Miss Belling is likely to be private, isn't it, father?"

"If all you have told me is true," the man said. "it will be—most decidedly private, Jessie. May I sit in this chair near the screen?"

"Oh, no, no! Dud—don't sit in that one!" Babs shuddered. "That—that—oh dear—Here," she added; and, with her mind in a whirl, and one agitated eye upon the screen, she hastily dragged another chair into position. "I—I'll wait, too, if—if you don't mind," she mumbled incoherently, and found her heart leap as the screen visibly moved. "Miss Belling—Miss Belling is—I say, assembly bell will soon be ringing!" she added desperately to Jessie.

"Well, it will ring for you as well as for me, won't it?" Jessie answered, with a suspicious glower. "What the dickens is the matter with you, Barbara Redfern?"

"Me? Oh, nun—nothing!" Babs stammered. "What should be the matter with me? Isn't it a lovely morning, Mr. Naylor?" she added, gazing towards the window.

"Yes, marvellous!" Jessie interrupted. "It's just going to rain! Don't you think you'd better go and find Miss Belling? My father can't wait all morning."

"But where can I find her?" Babs asked, and watched in agony as Jessie moved near the screen. "Besides, I—I promised to wait for her, you see."

Jessie scowled. Babs breathed in relief when she took a seat near the window. Then came another interruption. It was little Joy Finch of the Second Form this time who opened the door.

"Please, Barbara, is Miss Belling in?" she said. "She asked me specially to come and see her before assembly."

"I'm sorry, Joy," Babs gasped. "We're all waiting for Miss Belling, too!"

"But she is in, isn't she?" Joy asked. "Because I saw her going into her study ever such a long time ago, you know, and she hasn't come out yet. She said—"

"Joy, run away!" Babs said hurriedly, and felt hot. "I—I'll tell Miss Belling as soon as she arrives."

"But, please, Barbara, I saw—"

"Run off now!" Babs blurted desperately, and pushed the astounded youngster back into the corridor.

"Where the dickens is she?" Jessie scowled. "My hat, there goes first assembly bell!" she added.

"Which means, I presume, it is a quarter to nine?" Mr. Naylor frowned. "Really, I am afraid I cannot wait any longer."

"But, father—"

"I am sorry. I will see her another time!"

Jessie scowled. Babs could almost have shouted with joy as, very firmly, the man picked up his gloves and hat.

Hardly had he and Jessie disappeared into the corridor, than the screen moved and Miss Belling, with a deep breath of gratitude, and her eyes shining with relief, stepped back into the room.

"Oh, Barbara, you—you little brick," she breathed fervently. "That was splendid. I—I'm so sorry, my dear, to—"

"It—it was a pleasure, Miss Belling," Babs mumbled.

"I shall not forget it," Miss Belling smiled. "Now, my dear, you had better hurry. And, Barbara, just one minute," she added, turning red. "Did

you say—the lipstick. I mean, did you suggest I should use a paler shade?"

"Y—yes, Miss Belling."

"Thank you, Barbara! Please go!"

And Babs, still wondering whether she was on her head or her heels, hurried from the study as the tremulously smiling mistress held the door open for her.

**A Change Comes to "The Frump"!**



"I SAY—"  
"What's happened?"  
"Look at Miss Belling!"

Cliff House blinked.

Cliff House was at assembly, which was taking place in Big Hall ten minutes after Babs had left Miss Belling in that mistress' study. And certainly Miss Belling's appearance was something to excite comment.

For there, at the head of the Second Form, which she was taking to-day in the absence of Miss Gilbey, Miss Wanda Belling stood.

Very self-conscious she was; very nervous; and it was obvious by the strained way in which she stared straight ahead of her, that she dared not meet the astonished eyes of the school.

Yet she looked different. She looked prettier, somehow. Her cheeks were rosier, her lips were brighter. It took Cliff House some moments to grasp the staggering truth.

"Gee! I guess she's been using some

**COUSIN GEORGE and "THE IMP" are HERE AT LAST**  
You'll find them on page 17

make-up!" Leila Carroll breathed to Babs.

Most of the school was making that same discovery. Certainly, the use of those simple cosmetics improved Miss Belling wonderfully. Had it not been for the overlong skirt, the thick jumper, and the too-big bun of hair, she would have looked positively pretty.

Babs just smiled. Her heart warmed towards Miss Belling.

For Miss Belling, of course, was quite within her rights in using cosmetics. All the Cliff House mistresses, with the exception of Miss Bullivant and Miss Primrose, used make-up discreetly, of course, during school hours.

"That's what comes of being in love," Frances Frost giggled. "But I must say she looks a lot better."

That was the general opinion. Girls who had never taken any notice of Miss Belling before, were staring in frank interest now.

But there was one girl who was scowling. That girl was Jessie Naylor.

"Oh, my hat, look at her!" she cried, so suddenly, that Miss Wright, the mistress of the Lower Fifth, heard her, and gave her fifty lines. "And how the dickens," she wanted to know, under her breath, "does she come to be here when she wasn't in her study a few minutes ago?"

"Ha, ha!" sniggered Florence Ellison. "Perhaps she was afraid to meet your father? Perhaps she was in her study all the time, and Barbara Redfern was hiding her. Look how pleased Babs looks!"

Jessie gazed at her crony sharply. She looked at Babs. Certainly that girl

was looking pleased. For the first time Jessie began to see daylight. Vividly, and with an undercurrent of fury at the revelation, she was remembering Babs' agitation in Miss Belling's study. After assembly, she tackled her.

Babs just laughed.

"You were hiding her!" Jessie accused hotly.

"You can think what you like!" Babs answered, with a shrug, and walked away.

She didn't care then. The danger was past. But Jessie did, and, realising how she had been fooled, she gritted her teeth. Miss Belling had dodged the trap she had set for her. Miss Belling most amazingly had become appearance-conscious at last—was starting to use make-up. That did not suit Jessie Naylor at all.

Jessie was in Big Hall during mid-morning break, when Miss Belling strolled past her—and Miss Belling had quite forgotten her self-consciousness as the morning had worn on—Jessie simply could not contain her feelings.

"Don't painted faces look common!" she said loudly to Florence Ellison.

In a moment the mistress had swung round. She stared at Jessie.

"Was that remark intended for me, Jessie?"

"Well, you seem to have taken it to heart," Jessie sneered.

Miss Belling's face flushed. She looked even prettier when she flushed now.

"For that," she said, "you will write me a further fifty lines. That makes one hundred and fifty, Jessie, now, remember."

"He, he!" giggled Florence Ellison, and then yelled: "Jessie, you pig, what did you dig me in the ribs for?"

"Work it out for yourself—by algebra," Jessie scowled.

Miss Belling was smiling a little as she descended the steps into the sunlit quadrangle. Amazing how confident she felt. Undoubtedly her first experiment in make-up, thanks to that advice from Barbara Redfern, had been a success. She was keen now to make other experiments. And yet she was not sure of herself.

She had never had many clothes all her life, and now, every time she thought of them she always thought of what would be "serviceable," never of what would be "smart." If only, she thought to herself, she could combine serviceable clothes with smart ones! Was it possible, she wondered.

Babs, returning rosy-cheeked from a game on the tennis courts with Clara Trevlyn, Janet Jordan, and Mabel Lynn, paused as she encountered her.

"Clara says tennis is good practice for swimming, Miss Belling," she laughed.

"Clara's quite right. But, Barbara, I would like a word with you!" Miss Belling said.

"Oh, yes, Miss Belling!" Babs dimpled.

"Er—you—you know Hollands Stores, in Courtyard, don't you?" the mistress asked.

"Oh, yes, Miss Belling. We buy a lot of things there," Babs replied.

"Do you, now?"

Miss Belling's flush deepened a little. She looked acutely embarrassed, all at once.

"I—I've not bought much there myself," she said, "but I—I was thinking of—of getting a new hat, and—and new shoes, you know, and perhaps an evening dress for the Gala Ball, which is taking place after the swimming races! I—I wondered if you thought Hollands' was the best place?"



"Why, yes," Barbara said at once. "It's a very reliable shop. Though, for clothes, perhaps Simpkins' is better. Simpkins' is where Diana Royston-Clarke buys most of her things. But the prices are frightful! Were you going this afternoon?" she asked innocently.

"Well, yes. After the—the practice, I thought! Thank you very much, Barbara!"

With a kindly nod she strolled away, while Babs, with a sudden sparkle in her eyes, rejoined Mabs and Clara. She chuckled as she retailed the conversation.

"And as Miss Belling's going to be there, we'll be there, too," she said. "I think I know what's worrying her. She wants to buy new clothes, but she's frightfully nervous about buying them. Well, kidlets, this is where we step in—and help!"

Clara stared.

"You don't mean to tell her what she ought to buy?"

"Not exactly—no!" Babs said. "At the same time, we're not going to let her buy the wrong things. Especially," she added thoughtfully, "as we want her to look her most stunning best at the ball!"

"But how?" Mabs objected.

"Just you wait!" Babs advised, and smiled a happy, knowing smile.

### Helping Miss Belling!



"**S** HUSH! There she is, girls!"  
Babs, Mabs,  
Bessie, Marjorie  
Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn,  
and Jemima Carstairs

stopped.

The scene was the entrance to the millinery department of Hollands' Stores, in Courtfield. Swimming practice had been finished an hour since.

The six chums were looking at the worried and confused figure which stood before one of the long mirrors, with a rather bored assistant in attendance.

That figure was Miss Belling—and Miss Belling in a very fashionable, but quite unsuitable hat of green straw, surrounded by a pyramid of artificial flowers, was peering distressfully at her reflection in the mirror. She turned to her assistant.

"Oh, goodness! It's such a change for me that I just don't know whether it suits me or not," she said despairingly. "What do you think?"

"It's the very latest style," the assistant said guardedly.

"But—"

Miss Belling looked at herself again. She glanced hopelessly at the pile of other hats which stood by her side. She bit her lip.

"Then—then I—I think I had better take it," she said, and stopped, starting, as her eye fell upon the chums. "Barbara!" she cried.

"Oh, Miss Belling!" Babs said, in pretended surprise. "We were just going through to the stationery department for some notepaper. We're jolly lucky to have met you."

"Lucky?"

"Well, yes." Babs looked at her. "Er—Miss Belling, I wonder if you'd be awfully kind—and help me?"

"Why, most certainly, Barbara!" And Miss Belling, suddenly remembering the adornment on her head, hastily snatched it off. "Er—hum! I—I'm choosing a hat!" she said nervously. "In what way can I help, Barbara?"

The chums blinked. Not yet did they know Babs' plan, although they knew

very well what she was aiming at. So they listened, determined to back her up in any way they could.

"Well, it's like this," Babs said. "You see, I've got a cousin. She's just your height and build, and exactly the same colouring. And she asked me if I'd get a few things from Hollands' and send them to her on approval. Naturally," Babs added artfully, "it's not easy to choose things for her when she's not here to try them on, so—so I was wondering, Miss Belling, as you and my cousin are so much the same size, if—if you would mind just trying them on for me. Just—just to get an idea."

Miss Belling stared at her.

"You mean you want me to be a sort of model? Oh, dear! Well, Barbara, I'm afraid I can't help you very much." She looked despairingly at the pile of hats already tried on. "You won't ask me to take any responsibility if I agree?"

"Oh, no, of course not, Miss Belling! I'll do the choosing," Babs said earnestly. "Now, what about this?"

"Well, my giddy Aunt Flo!" breathed Clara to Marjorie. "The nerve of the girl!"

Babs picked up a hat priced twelve shillings and elevenpence. It was a neat little sailor style in fuchsia-coloured straw, with a turned-up brim, and trimmed with blue petersham ribbon. With a smile she handed it to Miss Belling, who, with an obliging nod, put it on. She turned.

"Well, Barbara?"

"Oh, I say, I think that's lovely!" Bessie Bunter said. "You look frightfully sweet in it, Miss Belling."

"Yes, rather! You've got the sort of face that just fits it," Marjorie beamed.

"I've never seen you look better in anything," Mabs said, loyally backing Babs up.

Miss Belling looked at herself critically. Certainly the hat did suit her. The turned-back brim, set well back on the head, showed her hair and gave her pretty features an altogether new and vividly alive expression. For a moment she forgot Babs' cousin in the exciting recognition of that fact. This was the hat, most undeniably, which suited her!

"Well," she breathed, and stared again, "do you like it, Barbara?"

"Very much. It's lovely!" Babs enthused. "It's so young, somehow—and just the thing to wear with a tailored costume. My cousin loves navy, and I think this new colour will make a ripping contrast, don't you, Miss Belling?"

"I'm certain of it," Miss Belling said, and, in her interest in the hat, forgot for the moment she was a mistress. "Yes, it is nice," she decided. "Will you take this for your cousin, Barbara?"

"Well, no, not if you want it!" Babs said. "Why don't you have it, Miss Belling, while I look round for one like it for my cousin?"

And Miss Belling dimpled. She bought the hat while Babs said that, after all, perhaps she'd go to Simpkins' for her cousin's hat.

Miss Belling was not noticing her, however. She was so thrilled, indeed, that she was like a schoolgirl herself. She insisted upon her old hat being packed and sent back to Cliff House while she wore the new one there and then.

"But now," Babs said, "I simply must just look at the shoe department. I don't know that I shall buy the shoes to-day, Miss Belling, but if you'd be good enough to try on a pair or two it

would give me an idea. Then I could write to my cousin and ask her which pair she liked. Do you mind?"

"Of course not!" the mistress exclaimed, with a thrilled laugh.

So to the footwear department they all went. And after a quarter of an hour, Miss Belling was trotting round in an exquisite pair of blue suede shoes which were nearly two inches higher in the heels than the brown brogues she had been wearing.

"Barbara," Miss Belling said suddenly. "You do seem to have lovely ideas on the subject of clothes; perhaps, now, you'll come and help me to choose an evening dress. A second and third opinion is always so useful. Now, what style would suit your cousin, do you think?"

"Nothing slinky, but something fluffy and lacy!" Babs said. "Something in pink or yellow—especially yellow."

Off they all went to the dress department. And what a thrilled, tremulously delightful half an hour Miss Belling spent trying on frock after frock! How tactfully and carefully Babs made suggestions, until at last the frock was chosen—a really delicious thing in yellow net, which transformed Miss Belling into such an exquisitely radiant creature that even Babs gasped.

It was sheer pleasure to watch Miss Belling so rapturously excited; tasting, for the first time, the delights of dainty dress! And when at last the shopping was done, nothing would satisfy her but that the whole crowd of the chums should repair to the intimate little restaurant, The Singing Kettle, that had just opened, and, at her expense, take tea.

After a really delightful meal they all packed into the bus, with Miss Belling so proudly conscious of her new shoes and her new hat. And almost the first person they met at the school gates was Jessie Naylor!

Jessie, as on the previous night, was going home to join her father at dinner. But she simply stood and stared when Miss Belling, surrounded by Babs & Co., stepped out of the bus.

"Well, mum-my hat!" she stammered.

No doubt that Miss Belling looked pretty, despite the long costume and too big bun of hair. The hat was the finishing touch to that lively, pretty face. The new, shapely shoes showed her slim ankles and gave a grace to her feet which Jessie had never suspected before.

"Phew!" Jessie gasped, turning as the little group passed through the gates.

Really, Miss Belling was progressing at such a pace that even she was left bewildered. The next thing, she supposed, was that her hair would be cut off. And then her costume altered to look like a real tailor-made.

In that case—And here Jessie gave quite a jump of alarm, and upon Jessie's face became spread a deep and hateful scowl. In that case her father, so keenly desirous of seeing his son with the right kind of wife, might even bestow his blessing upon the frump.

That shouldn't happen! That never, never must happen! That cat, who had humiliated and insulted her, must never be her sister-in-law! No, whatever happened!

The car for Jessie came along. Impatiently she climbed into it. Flustered and annoyed, she tried to collect her thoughts. And then suddenly, with an altogether new gleam in her eyes, she fished in her handbag. From it she produced a photograph—a copy of that same photograph of Miss Belling which, had she known it, had started Miss Belling off on the road to improving her



appearance. And suddenly she grinned. She reached home. Her father, in faultless evening dress, was waiting for her.

"You are late, my dear!" he said mildly.

"Yes, father; I—I'm sorry!" Jessie shook her head, not mentioning the hold-up due to the traffic lights, which were being installed in Courtfield. "But it wasn't my fault."

"Indeed!"

"It was Miss Belling's!"

He looked at her sharply.

"Miss Belling—the woman Lance wishes to marry?"

"Yes, father," Jessie sighed. "Oh, you don't know how horrid she is to me!" she said, her head downcast. "She knows that I don't think she's good enough for Lance, you know, and—and she's just gone out of her way to make my life a misery for me. This morning I—"

"Jessie, my child—"

"This morning," Jessie went on, forcing a tear, "I found out after you'd gone that all the time we were in her study she was hiding from you. Yes, she was, father! She was hiding in the study itself. She doesn't want to meet you. She—she says she'll never meet you until she is Lance's wife, and then—well, then you can't very well do anything about it, can you? And she gave me lines when I told her she was afraid to meet you—"

Her father frowned. Very, very fond of both Lance and Jessie was Mr. Naylor, and these repeated stories of Jessie's were causing him qualms.

"But why," he asked, "did she hide from me?"

"Because," Jessie half sobbed, "she knows you'd never agree to the marriage if you saw her. She knows you want Lance to have a smart wife, and she jolly well knows that she's not smart. She doesn't even try to look nice. She's slovenly. She— But don't take my word for it," she said. "I've brought along her photograph, so that you can see it. Here it is! Look!"

Mr. Naylor looked. The photograph was not a good one. Miss Belling's really excellent features were slightly distorted, but her dowdy looking clothes were distinct enough. He started.

"But, Jessie, this can never be the woman?"

"It is!"

"What is Lance thinking about?"

"I don't know. He must be mad," Jessie pouted.

"I—I—" He stopped, shaking his head. Mr. Naylor was a stickler for appearance, fo. poise, and the woman in this photograph, well— He bit his lip. "Jessie," he said agitatedly, "when you get back, tell Miss Belling that I shall call upon her to-morrow at dinner-time. Tell her that I insist upon seeing her. I must really find out what sort of person she is. Don't forget."

"No, father," Jessie said meekly.

But when she arrived back at Cliff House she said nothing to Miss Belling. And Miss Belling, who, in the new-found confidence her new clothes gave her, would no longer have hesitated meeting her future father-in-law, received no intimation that he was arriving. But after lessons next day, she received a telephone call.

"This is Lance," a husky voice, distorted over the wire, said. "Wanda, dearest, will you pop down to Courtfield station? I shall be passing through on the 12.30, and would love to see you, if only for a few minutes."

All in an excited flutter, Miss Belling left, never guessing that the real caller was Jessie Naylor. She was absent

when Mr. Naylor, expecting to see her, arrived.

"I told you that she was afraid to meet you," Jessie said to him, in her study. "I gave her your message and everything. All she did was to scoot!"

"You're sure?"

"Yes, quite!"

"Very well, then," he said grimly. "In that case I will not waste my time. But I must see her—I insist upon seeing her before I give my consent to Lance's engagement. You say, Jessie, that she is in charge of the swimming team which is attending the gala on Saturday?"

"Why, yes, but—"

"Very well. She cannot very well avoid me there. I will make it my business to be there, too."

Jessie blinked. She hadn't thought of that possibility.

Mr. Naylor left then, while Jessie

hurrying, at that moment, the rather hot-looking figure of Miss Belling.

"And if," she added, her eyes gleaming, "Jessie is anxious for Miss Belling and Mr. Naylor not to meet, you can bet your sweet little gym shoes that Jessie will be up to tricks to prevent it. Children," she added, "I've an idea we had better keep an eye on dear Jessie! I detect mischief!"

### The Final Touch!



**B**UT if Miss Wanda Belling was pardonably annoyed at having had a fruitless journey to Courtfield, there was ample compensation awaiting her upon her return to Cliff House School. For there was the box



**BABS** clenched her hands angrily, while a look of pain entered Miss Belling's eyes. For plainly from beneath the window came Jessie's scoffing voice: "You don't think that my father would let Lance marry such an awful frump as Miss Belling? Why, she doesn't even know how to dress herself!"

from Hollands' Stores containing her evening-dress frock!

Joyfully she took it out of its wrappings. Almost reverently she spread it on the bed. With shining eyes she regarded it.

Oh, wasn't it just splendid!

Of course, she must try it on—and seeing that it was half-holiday this afternoon, she must try it on at once! But wait a minute! She would need help. She hesitated a moment. Then off she rushed to Babs' study.

"Oh, Barbara, will you come and see me—when you are ready?" she asked that girl.

"Why, Miss Belling, I'll come now!" Babs laughed.

She went off with the mistress, grimacing when they met the sour-faced Jessie, who, very bad tempered, was returning from Friardale, as far as which she had accompanied her father.

Babs entered the mistress' study, and while Miss Belling, trembling with all a schoolgirl's eagerness, tried the frock on, Babs did up the twelve tiny buttons down the back. Miss Belling laughed tremulously.

"It is lovely, isn't it?" she asked.

(Continued on page 14)

accompanied him, with inward panic, to his car. She little guessed that somebody had overheard that conversation, and that that somebody, plump Bessie Bunter, was now relating the whole incident to Barbara Redfern!

"Of course," Bessie was saying, "I didn't mean to listen!"

"No, of course not," Mabs scoffed. "It was your shoe-lace which came undone!"

"Nun-no, it wasn't, you know! Really, Mabs! I—I just stopped outside Jessie's door to—to pick up something I'd dud-dropped, you know! And then I heard Jessie telling her father that Miss Belling was afraid to meet him!"

"What?" Babs asked.

"Yes, you know. And then—well, Mr. Naylor said he'd see Miss Belling at the gala, and Jessie sounded frightfully cut up—just as if, you know, the last thing she wanted was her father to meet Miss Belling. Which," Bessie said profoundly, "is jolly funny, if you ask me, considering that Miss Belling is going to marry that good-looking son of his, you know!"

"Frightfully funny!" Babs agreed thoughtfully, and stared through the window into the drive, up which came



# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



*Some real news about homework—PATRICIA (not to mention Heath) in the garden—a frock improvement—concerning rubbers—a novelty to make. Your friend Patricia has lots to talk of this week in her letter to you.*

**I**N spite of to-morrow being the start of the month of May, when, I suppose, we should all be particularly merry (or merrie), your Patricia has a tiny complaint to make.

Mind you, it's not a very serious one—in fact, you who live at Brighton and Hove will wonder what I'm making a fuss about. But I'm quite certain that you others—and there must be an awful lot—will quite understand, and perhaps sympathise with me.

For if there was one thing I detested when I was a schoolgirl—which wasn't so long ago!—it was Homework. I loved going to school; I loved having dinner there; I liked the mistresses; I even liked quite a lot of lessons. But—I did not like homework.

And if ever I ventured to say at home that I thought it should be abolished—well, really, you'd have thought I'd suggested that perhaps the world wasn't round after all, such protests did my daring call forth.

## ● Lucky Girls

But now—I've decided that I must have been a pioneer. For now, Brighton and Hove have actually decided that Homework shall be Abolished!

I think it's a wonderful step in the right direction—and am just as thrilled about it as you youngsters in Brighton and Hove are. My only complaint—mentioned above—is that this grand step has come too late for your Patricia to benefit. (Selfish me!)

But to be quite serious again, homework is definitely to be abolished in all classes of elementary schools and in the junior classes of the secondary schools at Brighton and Hove.

Isn't it a good thing that it is father, as a rule, and not the schoolgirl daughters of the house who decide where the family is to live?

Otherwise, I can just imagine poor Brighton and poor Hove growing at such speed with an influx of schoolgirls, that these towns would soon stretch right over the Sussex Downs from the coast of Kent to the coast of Hampshire!

## ● A Greedy Young Gardener

I've decided that my small brother Heath—whose real name is Heatherington, as you probably know by now—will never make a gardener.

Inspired by Mr. Middleton, who makes gardening sound so easy, I thought I'd do a spot this summer. So I asked father what he'd like me to do.

"Plenty of weeding needs doing," was all I could get from him.

So I've been weeding and weeding AND weeding, and have acquired the most frightening collection of aches in my back, which father unkindly said proved it must be doing me good!

But he did say that Heath could have a patch of garden of his own, if he liked. So we prepared a little corner near the lettuces, and then had a conference—just Heath and big sister—as to what should go in his very own garden.

"You choose what you'd like to grow, Heath," said I. For after all, it was to be his garden. But next moment I wished I hadn't been so considerate.

"I'd like strawberries, and gooseberry bushes an' peach trees an'—an' figs an' dates. An'—some bananas, too," he added ambitiously. "Or—" he looked puzzled—"p'raps bananas don' grow in England, do they, Pät?"

I was so dazed by this huge demand for food that I simply had to give him a lecture on the "beauties of the garden," trying to impress on him that father had said he was to have a GARDEN of his own—not a fruit shop!

So we went out and bought some Marigold seeds—price one penny—for these look such a lot when in flower that father will probably think Heath and I have done rather well for beginners!

## ● In Dainty Ribbon

It always amuses me when I read in the fashion papers about "waists being lower this year," or "waists being higher," or "waists being natural"—as if waists can be anywhere else but just above the hips!

But, talking as the fashion experts do, waists are higher this year—on frocks, of course. And a very pretty and youthful fashion it is, too. For a high waistline on a frock means that the bodice part is short, and the skirt looks longer and slimmer.

It would be very easy for you to give this higher waistline-look to a summery frock that has lost its belt.

You'd require two and a half yards of narrow ribbon in a colour that will "go" or contrast with the frock itself.

Bring half of the ribbon right round the line where the bodice joins the skirt of the frock at the moment, and tie in a pretty bow in front. Then arrange the other half of the ribbon around the frock, two or three inches above this, tying this piece also in a bow at the front.

Bring half of the ribbon right round the line where the bodice joins the skirt of the frock at the moment, and tie in a pretty bow in front. Then arrange the other half of the ribbon around the frock, two or three inches above this, tying this piece also in a bow at the front.

Just catch the two little ribbon belts at the back with an invisible stitch to make sure you don't lose them, and then try the frock on.

It will look like this year's very latest!

## ● Very Novel

Now, here's a new pencil-stand and pen-wiper combined that I want you to make, either for yourselves, a small brother, or to sell at a bazaar.

All you require to make this novelty is an empty carton—one which has contained cream, or a newly-bought one, which cost three-pence for six—a wooden meat skewer, and an empty cotton-reel.

Jab the pointed end of the skewer into the cotton-reel, and glue the other end of the reel to the bottom of the carton.

Now cut a small piece of thick material into two fairly big circles and snip round the edges. Fasten these with a coloured drawing-pin to the top of the skewer, and your pencil stand and pen-wiper is complete.

Or, if you like dabbling with paints, you could improve the appearance of this "gadget" by painting it in any colours you like.

## ● Rubber Note

My big brother, Brian, must have been feeling very generous the other day, for he presented me with a perfectly huge india-rubber.

"Oh, it's a soft one, Brian!" I pouted. "You know I like them hard."

"You girls," said Brian, getting an extraordinary amount of feeling into two such unimportant words. "Why don't you try it first before complaining? You may not be very good at drawing, but it's about time you knew that a soft rubber is better than a hard one!"

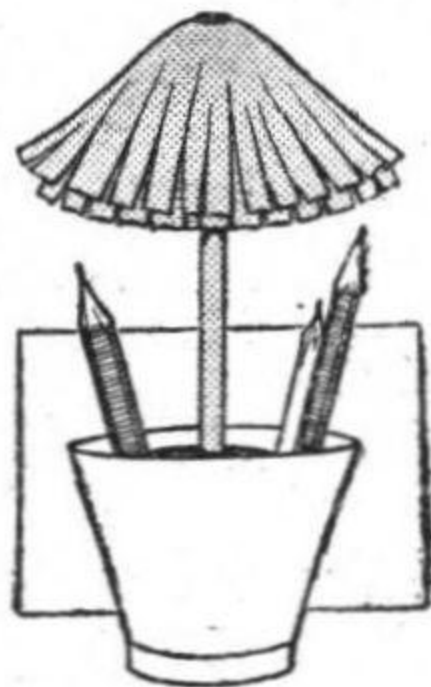
So, humbled, I did try it. And, believe me, my pets, Brother Brian was right—though, please don't tell him.

I used to fume at school when in the Art-room we had soft rubbers passed round, and preferred to use my own harder one.

But I've just realised I was wrong, and the soft ones are better. They get grubbier than the hard ones, it's true, but this soon rubs itself off again.

Bye-bye until next week, all!

Your friend, PATRICIA.







# IT'S TENNIS-TIME AGAIN

—So Patricia wants to give you some suggestions for your comfort and good looks on the court that should make your game “lovely to look at”—even if you don't win every time!

**Y**OU'LL be getting down to tennis in real earnest now that the Summer Term is here, won't you?

So I want you to examine your complete tennis-outfit to see it is in perfect condition.

First, the all-important racket.

If you have had last year's carefully stored away in a dry place wearing its press and either a cretonne or macintosh cover, it should be in the pink of condition to greet you and the new tennis season again.

New, white tennis balls look very professional, I know, but old ones can be made to look quite fresh again if they are rubbed on the underside of the front-door mat, or are brushed with a stiff, dry nail brush.

## LOOKING YOUR BEST

Now your clothes—for your appearance on the court does matter very much.

Possibly you will have grown out of last summer's tennis shoes, so a new pair is indicated—great thrill!

For one-and-eleven you can get very satisfactory shoes for tennis, even if they don't wear so long as those costing, say, four-and-eleven.

But I do want you, when going to buy new shoes for tennis, to choose those with the crepe rubber soles (the spongy ones, you know) rather than the smooth rubber soles. They're not more expensive than the others, so don't worry about that—and they really do help your footwork in tennis, and prevent your slipping on grass or “composition” courts.

If you didn't have shorts for tennis last year, I do hope you can persuade mother to let you wear them this. For they really do look nice on schoolgirls—particularly if you have long legs.

You'll select white ones, or off-white ones (which used to be called “cream,”

but isn't any longer for some reason), won't you?

A heavy linen is the best material to select, and in these days it is specially treated so that it does not crease readily, as it used to, you remember?

## A TOUCH OF COLOUR

Next, your “top” to wear over shorts. Here, providing your school or tennis club has no rules against it, you can introduce your first note of colour. But please, let it be a gentle note.

A blouse of pale blue, pale pink, pale yellow, or pale green can look very attractive.

Though, mind you, a white blouse takes some beating, especially if you have your monogram embroidered in a colour, or have a coloured hankie sewn into one pocket. For I do feel, in spite of the introduction of colour into tennis, that it needs to be used very daintily and artistically still.

Your next requirement for a good game is a “woollie.” This can be all-white again, with a piping in your school colours, or your initial worked on it—or it can be a plain, pastel shade to match the blouse.

You won't wear stockings on the courts, of course. But you really should wear over-socks—and these should be all-wool, however hot the day.

You see, your feet get hot and perspire. But wool has the knack of absorbing this perspiration, which will prevent your feet getting hurt-y and tired before the game is over. (Cotton over-socks do not absorb the perspiration, so you see why I am so insistent about wool.)

Now you're all set for the game, except for your hair. If it's short, so much the better; it won't worry you.

But if it is long, you can wear, either an eye-shade (which is a good idea for you who have weak eyes), a hair-net, a beret or a bandeau.

I can't bear the sight of hair-nets, myself—and I don't think they're particularly comfy. A beret can sometimes make the head rather hot, so a bandeau has my vote.

This can be made of ribbon, of a wisp of chiffon material, or can be bought specially made for the purpose.

## A PERFECT PICTURE

So now you're perfect, and I'll just describe my completed picture of you, shall I?

We'll start with the feet.

Immaculate white tennis shoes, topped by white wool over-sock, which may be trimmed with pale blue, pale pink, pale green, or pale yellow stitches. White shorts into which is tucked a white blouse which has a monogram on the pocket in the same colour as the trimming on the socks. A wide ribbon of the same colour goes around your hair, and over your arm hangs a white cardigan, or a coloured one which matches the stitching on the socks, the monogram on the blouse and the ribbon round your hair.

Now for some reminders—just to finish.

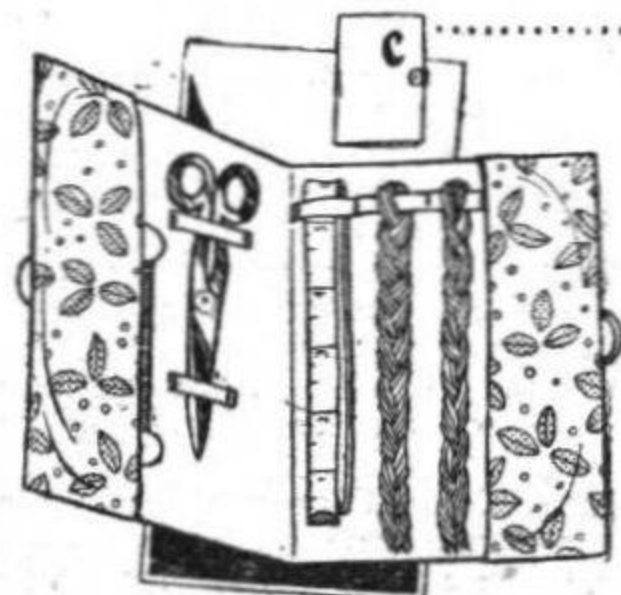
Remember to sprinkle talcum powder generously over your feet and inside your tennis socks before a game. It'll keep them beautifully dry and fresh. (You can get a big tin of talc for 3d.)

A plain pair of over-socks can be embroidered in wool or sylko with two rows of cross-stitch, or two or three rows of running stitch—as in the picture. Remember to choose colours to match the other note of colour in your outfit.

Give your racket a rub over with linseed oil and allow it to rest one week-end. It will absorb quite a lot of this, and any surplus can be rubbed off.

Mark your name on your school racket, either by heating a steel knitting needle in the fire and burning your name on, or write your name in marking ink on a piece of tape and sew this tightly and securely round the handle.

Give the screws of your “press” a clean now and again, and don't forget they like a drop of grease occasionally to keep them working well.



A very useful sewing-companion

# TO TAKE BACK TO SCHOOL

To make it, you require a piece of cretonne measuring fourteen inches by seven and a half inches.

Make a small hem all round the edges, then fold over the two ends to make useful pockets, and stitch these in place.

Now cut a piece of cardboard to the exact size of the case. Cut this in half and slip each piece into one of the pockets. This will keep it beautifully stiff.

Next, sew two pieces of tape or elastic on one side of the cardboard (you'll need

a big needle for this) to hold scissors. Sew one piece on the other side, caught down in two places to make three divisions to hold tape-measure, wools, and embroidery cottons that you are most likely to require.

The pockets can hold a packet of needles and more cards of sewing cottons.

Fold the hold-all in half now, and sew a loop to one side and a button to the other for fastening. Pin an initial brooch on the front—and you'll be certain to recognise your sewing-case at a glance.

**H**ERE'S a little present for you lucky young people who're off to boarding-school to make for yourselves.

This handy needle-case and sewing hold-all will be a perfect boon, and it's just the right size, too.



(Continued from page 11)

"Ahem! Barbara, do you think silver shoes would look nice with this?"

"Yes, rather—but white satin ones dyed the same shade would look better still," Babs said.

"Oh!" Miss Belling looked long and steadily at Barbara, and then smiled. "Barbara, did you say your cousin's hair was like mine?"

"Well, the colour's the same," Babs answered cautiously. "But it's not really like yours, you know, because my cousin's had hers cut and permed. It's like this!" Babs said, and, drawing a sheet of paper towards her, sketched, in a few quick lines, a very commendable portrait, and indicated the long hair style known as the "page-boy."

"How do you like that?"

"I think it—it is lovely," Miss Belling breathed. "Oh, Barbara, what a clever little artist you are! Er—where could I get mine done like this?"

"You mean you'll copy it?" Babs said, her heart jumping for joy.

"You don't think your cousin would mind?"

"Mind!" Babs laughed. "It's not her idea. Lots of people do their hair like this now! And oh, Miss Belling, I do think it's a style that would suit you. I say," she added eagerly, "why not get it done some time this afternoon? Goole's in Courtfield are hair specialists, and I'm sure they'd do it really well! Miss Belling, do make an appointment," she added eagerly. "Let me go and make one for you?"

"You—you're sure, Barbara—that it would suit me?"

"Positive!" Babs said.

"Very well, then," Miss Belling looked excited. "Very well, Barbara, then—then will you do it?" she asked.

Babs could almost have whooped at that. Off she rushed joyfully. She never even saw Jessie Naylor, who was still hanging about in the vicinity of the door.

She didn't remember, in her excitement, that she left that door partly open, and Jessie, furious and curious, peeped in. And then Jessie saw—and seeing, again stood as if transfixed, at the radiant vision in the yellow evening gown who was gazing into the mirror. Her face turned white.

"Oh, dash that Barbara Redfern!" she mumbled.

She almost reeled away. So that was the mistress she had been calling the Frump! When she could dress like that! Why, even Miss Charmant would have a hard job to look better!

But that evening, when Miss Belling returned from the hairdressers, there was something very like a sensation in Cliff House School. Rapidly the news spread from ear to ear. Miss Belling was transformed! Miss Belling had had her hair off, and it was permanently waved, too!

Miss Belling was wearing high-heeled shoes, the dinkiest of hats, and had bought a new, much shorter costume!

Girls gathered round to see Miss Belling. Girls goggled in amazement when they did see her. Girls who had never really thought anything about Miss Belling before began comparing her now with Miss Charmant. She who had never before had admirers possessed in a flash a score or more!

But greatest of all was the jubilation in Study No. 4.

"Well, it's thanks to you, young Babs!" Mabs said. "And the artful way you've worked it!"

"I'll say," Leila Carroll said, "Babs is just a marvel. If I were a man I'd

sure fall for Miss Belling myself. Gee! She looks like a fashion-plate!"

That, perhaps, was an exaggerated description, but everybody agreed that most miraculously Miss Belling had become somebody.

Only Jessie fumed, and for the next two days was in such a temper that even Florence Ellison could not speak to her without risking rebuff.

And then came the morning of the gala.

Happy and radiant was Miss Belling that day, and infinitely grateful to Babs & Co. She knew what suited her now.

With the cutting of her hair it seemed that she had at last cut off the last shreds of her shyness. Instead of being afraid of Mr. Naylor now, she was actually looking forward to meeting him. And how proud Lance would be of her!

Oh, happy Miss Belling! And how, on that bright Saturday morning, she was anticipating the gala of the afternoon, to be followed in the evening by the grand gala ball, at which Lance had promised to be present!

She was humming during the morning when she packed her lovely frock, and the shoes and hair ornament she had bought to go with it. She almost sang the glad "Come in!" which she voiced in answer to a knock on the door. But she momentarily frowned as she saw the girl who entered. It was Jessie Naylor.

Jessie's eyes immediately darted to the suitcase. A jealous light filled them.

"Well, Jessie," Miss Belling asked, "do you want me?"

"I came to ask if you were still leaving me out of the team?" Jessie said bluntly.

"The team," Miss Belling informed her, "is, as you know, made up. I don't think, Jessie, that anything is to be gained by further discussion. Please go!"

Jessie scowled. She went, but she didn't go far. Dinner-bell rang presently, but as it was Saturday, and dinner on that day could be taken or not at Cliff House, Jessie didn't heed it. She waited, instead, until Miss Belling had left her room; then she darted into it.

Quietly she stepped to the wardrobe, flinging the door open, and her eyes gleamed as she saw, tidily hung up, the old-fashioned gabardine which had earned Miss Belling the nickname of the Frump.

Quickly she took it down. She grabbed up a high-necked woollen jumper, a wide-brimmed hat, and a pair of flat-heeled shoes. Feverishly she bundled them into a paper carrier and left the room. As she emerged into Big Hall Barbara Redfern came down the stairs.

"Hallo, Jessie! Is Miss Belling in?"

"How should I know?" Jessie asked pettishly.

"Well, you've just come out of her room, haven't you?"

Jessie did not reply. She hurried away. Barbara frowned thoughtfully.

But Miss Belling came along a few minutes later, and Babs helped her to pack the remainder of her things. Then the team was collected. In great excitement they all set off for the Gay Buccaneer Roadhouse. There a special room had been reserved for Miss Belling, who, apart from coaching the Cliff House team, was taking part in the mistresses diving competitions, and there Babs helped her to unpack the lovely evening frock, and to hang it in

the cupboard provided against such occasions.

The Gay Buccaneer Roadhouse wore a carnival air on that bright day. Grounds and house were gaily decorated. From all parts people had come dressed in their gayest for the occasion. The sides of the bath were lined with spectators when the time arrived for the first races.

It was then that Mr. Naylor came along.

"Hallo, Jessie!" he said heartily, greeting his daughter. "Nice crowd here to-day. And some dashed smart women, too! Is your Miss Belling among them?" he added anxiously.

"Well, of course," Jessie said. "But I shouldn't think she'll want to see you."

"But she can't very well dodge me, can she?" he asked. "I'll have to meet her sooner or later. Lance will be along to-night in time for the ball, and I'll make the young scoundrel introduce me then. Jessie," he added quickly, and pointed to a group of laughing Cliff House girls some distance away, clustering round an extremely pretty figure in a bright blue bathing dress, "who is that there—that attractive young woman with that lovely hair?"

"That?" And Jessie scowled as she recognised from the distance Miss Belling. "Oh, that's Miss Charmant!"

"Nice-looking, isn't she?"

"Yes," Jessie replied. "Father, will you excuse me a moment? I've just seen somebody I want to talk to."

"Very well, run along."

Jessie hurried away. But she did not go to speak to anyone. Already she had found out which room was being used by Miss Belling. She knew now that Miss Belling would not use that room again until she came to change for the ball.

She chuckled as she ran. From the cloak-room she retrieved a certain bag she had brought with her. With that bag in her hand she hurried along to Miss Belling's room. Softly she opened the door and stepped inside. Quickly she looked round.

It was empty.

The grin on Jessie's face deepened. She glanced towards the window which overlooked the lawns, and beyond the lawns the summery cafe, on the veranda of which Bessie Bunter could be seen tucking into a huge ice cream in the appreciative company of Eve Clavering of Whitechester School.

Jessie crossed the room and flung open the cupboard.

And her eyes glittered.

For hanging there in all its loveliness was the yellow evening gown! And hanging beside it were the new clothes which Miss Belling had worn on her journey to the roadhouse.

Jessie opened the case. From it she took the old-fashioned blue gabardine. She took out the low-heeled brogue shoes, the lisle stockings. She took out the woollen jumper and the broad-brimmed hat which Florence Ellison had once described as a "horror," and snatching down every other garment in that cupboard she hung the garments she had brought in their places. Then quickly she bundled the yellow dress, the new costume, shoes, hats, everything into the bag.

"And now, Miss Clever Stick, let's see if even your hair will impress father when he sees you in that rig out," she said vindictively. "Not, I expect, that even you will have the cheek to wear it in public!"

She left the room. In a clump of bushes near the house she hid the bag. Then she returned to her father.

"Oh, so here you are," he said. "I



was wondering where you had got to. The swimming has started. Got a programme? I haven't one, for they seem to have sold out."

"Oh, we don't want two. You can share mine," replied Jessie.

"Exactly what time does your Miss Belling perform?"

Jessie studied the programme. She paused as she fluttered the leaves.

"Half past five," she said.

That was a lie, but Jessie was not stopping at a few lies now. The Mistresses Diving Competition was scheduled to start at 4.30. Her own impression was that Miss Belling would be afraid to face up to her father in her "frump" outfit. In any case, it was no part of her programme to let her father see Miss Belling at close quarters before the ball.

Interestedly they watched the races as they came and went. And what a shout went up when Cliff House, after a hard-fought race, won the first swimming event from Whitechester, and what another when, in the second contest, Janet Jordan, by a mere foot, won the quarter-mile from Grace Gordon of Kenmarsh School! It was four o'clock then, and the two professionals, who had been engaged for the afternoon, filled in the next half hour with some exhibition swimming and diving. Jessie rose.

"Daddy, what about tea? Please take me to tea," she begged. "I'm famished."

"Very well, my dear," her father assented. "But mind you don't make me late for the Mistresses Diving Competition!"

Jessie smiled. Her father rose. Off they went on to the lawns; and there, for the next hour, Jessie was adroit in keeping her father in conversation. At half past five they returned.

"Well, here we are," he said. "Now, when shall I get a sight of this Belling girl? The diving is the next event, isn't it, Jessie?"

"Yes," Jessie said, and then looking at her programme, uttered an exclamation. "Oh, bother!"

"What's wrong?"

"I—I'm sorry. I—I must have mis-read the time! The diving was at four thirty!"

"Very careless of you," her father snapped. "Would you tell me who won the diving competition?" he asked of his next-door neighbour.

"Why, a Miss Belling of Cliff House School," that gentleman replied. "And a prettier exhibition, I must say, I've never seen in my life!"

Mr. Naylor glanced angrily at his daughter. But Jessie did not care. She had averted the immediate danger, though she could still see Miss Belling at the far end of the bath talking to the Cliff House chums.

Miss Belling was having the most wonderful time of her life. Her team had won. She had won!

There would be many joyous Cliff House hearts when the prizes were presented before the opening of the great Gala Ball to-night, but none so happy and joyous as hers, for apart from all her successes she had received a telegram from Lance during the afternoon saying he would meet her at the ball.

And she was thinking of that frock—that wonderful frock! She was thinking of her own radiant self when she met that surprised sweetheart of hers. If Lance had loved her before, how much more would Lance love her now! How she longed for him to be proud of her!

"Next event! 100 yards, Middle School Section!" called the steward.

"That's you, Leila," said Babs. "Go in and win!"

Leila did not win this time. Queenie Pelham, of Whitechester, robbed her of victory in the 100 yards final by three or four yards. But Leila was second and already Cliff House had won three out of the five events in which they had competed! Cliff House had had a good day!

Babs dimpled at Miss Belling.

"And the next event will be the ball!" she chortled. "Miss Belling, may I come up and help you dress?"

"No, my dear. You dress first," Miss Belling said. "Come along when you've finished. I—I expect I shall need your assistance," she added.

Babs laughed, and ran off. At the same moment Bessie Bunter, issuing from the cafe, her face smeared and shiny, hailed her.

"Babs! I sus-say, I want to tell you something!"

"Save it for after the ball!" Babs cried.

"But, look here, you know, it's important! Babs—"

steps. The door came open, and a choky voice said: "Come in!"

Babs went in, and then stopped.

"Miss—Miss Belling!" she cried.

For in front of her was Miss Belling—the old dowdy Miss Belling, robbed even of her lipstick, and dressed in the old gabardine suit, which now seemed hideous.

"I—I—" she gulped. "Barbara, somebody has taken my clothes! I—I can't go to the ball! I—I daren't go—not in these things! Oh, what shall I do?" she cried helplessly, and, to Babs' utter consternation, burst into tears.

Not Clever Enough!



"MISS BELLING! Miss Wanda Belling! Where is Miss Belling?"

A stir. A buzz. A mutter. Heads craning this way; heads craning that. But no sign of Miss Belling.

The scene was the ball-room of the



HURRIEDLY Jessie packed away the clothes which had earned Miss Belling the nickname of "The Frump." Jessie meant to make sure that the young mistress was not a success at the Swimming Gala Ball.

But Babs, heedlessly, had run on.

Bessie glowered. In the room given over to the Cliff House girls, however, she tracked down Babs at last. Rather mysteriously she drew her on one side and talked to her.

Babs looked at her sharply.

"Bessie, are you sure?"

"Oh, yes!"

"All right," Babs said. "I'll attend to that later. I say, you're not dancing, are you? Then give me a hand with this frock."

And Babs, aided by Bessie, very soon emerged in her pale blue. With a wave of her hand to the others, she darted off to Miss Belling's room, and there, pausing, knocked. For a moment there was no reply. Then:

"Who's that?" sounded a querulous voice.

"Miss Belling, it's Barbara Redfern," Barbara replied.

"Oh!" Another pause. Then foot-

Gay Buccaneer Roadhouse. On the curtained stage at the end of the ball-room the president, surrounded by his committee, sat. On the table, placed in the middle of the stage, was an array of glittering prizes.

The great room itself was crowded. Faultlessly groomed men, dazzling women, charming schoolgirls, and self-conscious schoolboys made a scene of colourful festivity. Everybody was laughing, everybody applauding as the various prizewinners stepped forward to take their rewards from the hand of the jovial president.

But as Miss Belling's name was called for the third time, a silence fell.

"Where is she?" muttered Clara Trevlyn.

"And where," demanded Mabs, "is Babs? It will be her turn soon."

They looked round. But of Babs and Miss Belling there was not a sign. Near by stood another group—a rather grim-faced, middle-aged man, his handsome



son, Lance Naylor, and Jessie Naylor. Jessie laughed.

"Well, what did I tell you?" she scoffed. "Miss Belling's just afraid to claim her prize because she doesn't want to meet you, father!"

"Jessie!" Lance said angrily.

"Well, it's true!" Jessie giped. "If it isn't, why isn't she here? She knows she's a frump! She's scared stiff of meeting father before she's married you, because she knows father's only got to take one look at her to refuse his consent! You must have been blind even to have looked at her!"

Lance Naylor glared, his hands clenched.

"Jessie," he said fiercely, "if you don't shut up I shall shake you!"

"Ahem!" Mr. Naylor shook his head. "Lance, please!" he begged. "It seems that Jessie is right. I must say that, from what I have heard of this woman, I do not approve, especially if her photograph is anything to go by! And if, as Jessie says, she is not afraid to meet me, why isn't she here? Why has she always taken such pains to avoid me?"

"Because she's afraid!" Jessie crowed. "Because—"

And there she broke off. For from the entrance to the hall near the platform an attendant's voice boomed out: "Miss Wanda Belling!"

"She's here!" cried Lance.

"My hat, she'd never have the nerve!" Jessie muttered.

And then she blinked. A ripple of handclapping went up. It was a ripple followed by a burst of cheering—a burst of cheering followed by a breathless pause, in which a concerted gasp of admiration went up. For out of that door swept a brown-haired schoolgirl, wearing a blue frock, to be followed by—

Jessie's eyes almost started from her head, and suddenly, frighteningly, a deadly wave of faintness overcame her.

For there was Miss Belling—no doubt about that; Miss Belling, radiant and lovely in the yellow frock, who would compare favourably with the smartest and the most expensively dressed woman there! While Jessie watched, almost reeling, Lance sprang forward to meet her.

"Barbara!" he cried. "Wanda!"—and took her hand, and then joyfully put his arms around her, and rapturously kissed her in front of all that great throng. "Wanda! Why, by jove, you look like a queen!" he breathed. "Come and meet the pater!"

"Ahem!" the president said, beaming down. "Will Miss Belling first step forward and claim her prize? Miss Belling!"

A thunderous burst of clapping as Miss Belling, blushing, went up to receive her reward. A roar of cheering as she shook hands, and, with cheeks scarletly aglow, stepped down, to be caught by an adoring Lance, who seemed to have grown three inches taller in the last few minutes.

But there was no need for her to meet "the pater" then. Most enthusiastically overjoyed, pater was already there to meet her as she stepped from the dais. He caught her hands.

"And—and you are Wanda Belling!" he cried. "You are to be my son's wife! You—you—" he added chokily. "My dear!" And he kissed her there and then. "Lance, my boy, congratulations on your choice! You're a lucky fellow! Congratulations, Miss Belling—or Wanda now, as you are to be one of the family! Jessie—"

Jessie was pale.

"I think," her father said sternly, "there is an explanation due from you! I understood you to say—what was the word?—that Miss Belling was a—a frump!"

"Well—" blurted Jessie.

"Perhaps," Miss Belling said calmly, "it is not Jessie's fault that I am not—eh, Jessie?"

"Why, you—you—" choked Jessie.

"Where did you get those clothes—"

"Where you left them!" Babs interrupted. "Perhaps you didn't see Bessie Bunter on the cafe roof when you entered Miss Belling's room while she was in the pool. You wouldn't guess, would you, that Bessie told me, and I put two and two together and found the clothes—just in time, as it happens?"

Jessie was speechless.

"I shall never forget what you have done, Barbara!" Miss Belling said softly. "But now Lance, my dearest, I want you to persuade Jessie to be friends. We'll all bury the hatchet—"

She paused, glancing round. "Why, where has the girl gone?" Nobody knew, and nobody cared for the moment. For Mr. Naylor, leaving the job of taking his erring daughter to task for another date, had mounted the platform. His face was aglow.

"Ladies and gentlemen, may I interrupt?" he asked. "I have a special announcement to make—"

"Yes! Yes!"

"The announcement," he went on, "is the engagement of my son, Lance

Naylor, to Miss Wanda Belling, of Cliff House School! I want you all—"

And then—clap, clap, clap! The rest was lost in a burst of cheering. And Lance Naylor, proud, laughing, stood there with his arm about the happy figure in the yellow frock. Miss Belling, her hand in that of Babs', smiled back. Somebody put a bunch of flowers in her arm; somebody kissed her. She laughed.

"And I—I—I—" she said. "Oh, please, how can I say it? But thank you—thank you very much!" she said tremulously. "And please let me say a special thank you to one girl! That girl," she added, to Babs' undying embarrassment, "is Barbara Redfern here—and a certain cousin of Barbara whose name has never yet been mentioned!" And while Babs flushed to the roots of her hair, she turned mischievous eyes towards her. "I wonder, Barbara, if I shall ever know that cousin's name?" she asked.

"W-well—" Babs stammered.

"Perhaps," Miss Belling said softly, "I had better not press the point—eh?"—and laughed again in a way that showed only too plainly she understood. "Barbara, my dear," she whispered, "I can't thank you for it all—ever! I never can thank you! But when—when"—her voice becoming softly happy—"Lance and I get married, I shall insist upon you and all your chums being our bridesmaids!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

## THEIR GIPSY FRIEND'S SECRET!



What WAS the strange secret surrounding the little gipsy girl? She came to Cliff House to do work for the headmistress, and yet—almost the moment she arrived queer things started to take place. A certain Sixth Former began to act most mysteriously. And then, when the little gipsy girl needed help, and Barbara Redfern & Co. went to her aid, the celebrated chums found themselves deeply involved in extraordinary happenings, too. Don't miss this superb LONG COMPLETE story. It appears next Saturday, and written with all HILDA RICHARDS' skill, is certain to thrill and intrigue you. Order your copy now.



No. 1 of a delightful new series of laughter-stories introducing—



### A Memorable Meeting!

**H**ETTY SONNING, generally known as "the Imp," shifted from one foot to the other. She was being lectured. She was used to being lectured by people, but it bored her.

"Yes, Aunt Miriam," she said meekly. "You're quite right. I was the worst girl of the school. At least, so the headmistress said, but you know what headmistresses are—"

Her Aunt Miriam raised her hand.

"I will not discuss your headmistress, Hetty," she said. "All I say is this. Now you have come to stay in our house, all that will be changed. You will have your cousin George's influence. Cousin George may be only sixteen, but he has the wisdom of a grown man. He is very clever, thoughtful, and considerate, and never frivolous."

"Oh golly!" said Hetty, with a suppressed sigh.

He sounded just like the last word in awfulness.

"Cousin George actually wrote and asked for you to come and stay with us," went on Aunt Miriam, his mother. "He felt that his influence and guidance would put you on the right path. He felt that you had good in you—"

"Oh, how sweet of him!" said Hetty, with a touch of sarcasm.

What George needed was taking down a peg or two! But the Imp kept that private thought to herself.

"George, the dear boy," said Aunt Miriam, smirking, "is waiting for you upstairs. You had better hurry. George doesn't like being kept waiting."

Hetty backed out of the room, but in the corridor, after closing the door, she came to a halt and took in a deep breath.

"So that's Cousin George, is it?" she asked. "Gosh, I'll give him Cousin George!"

And she mounted the stairs in very determined manner indeed.

At her boarding-school Hetty had been known as the Imp. There was no harm in Hetty—they all admitted that. But Hetty had a will of her own. She did not like being bossed, and she had original ideas—just a shade too original.

But that was over now. Hetty was to be a day girl at the school near her Aunt Miriam's house; for her own

father and mother were in India. And while with Aunt Miriam, Cousin George was to be in charge.

Hetty mounted the stairs to get her first glimpse of George the Paragon, the Wonder Boy.

At the head of the stairs a door was open, and looking in Hetty saw a room lined with books. There was a large desk, and at it, in a rather stiff attitude, sat a boy.

The Imp rapped on the door, and put on her meekest manner.

"Please can I come in, sir?" she asked.

"Come in," boomed Cousin George, and frowned importantly.

He wasn't a bad-looking lad, and he obviously took care about his appearance. In his way he was something of a dandy, with hair well plastered, immaculate bags, bright tie, and gay socks.

Hetty walked into the room like a nervous cat.

he said. "I am going to forget you were the worst girl at school. I am going to make you serious-minded, guide your thoughts, and all that."

"What fun," said the Imp, her eyes glimmering as she looked at him.

"Fun!" said Cousin George. "Just what I expected you to say. Not at all. Now this afternoon is a half-holiday. What would you like to do, eh?"

Hetty was taken aback, but she had a quick answer.

"Go on the river—"

"Enough," said Cousin George. "That's just where you are wrong. We are going to the museum!"

"Oh, no, we're not—" was what Hetty had on the tip of her tongue, but she swallowed the words. "Are we really?" she said meekly.

"Yes. I have written out a long list of things to see," explained Cousin George. "It will improve your mind."

As Cousin George was plainly proof against sarcasm, Hetty decided to try

**"I'll teach Hetty how to behave!" declared lordly Cousin George. But then he didn't know "the Imp." She decided to teach HIM how to behave—with the most amusing and exciting results!**

"Close the door!" he said sharply.

She closed the door.

"Please, sir, I'm Hetty," she said.

Cousin George swivelled round on his chair and gave a lordly smile, wafting his hand.

"There's no need to call me 'sir.' I am your cousin," he said. "Call me George—No, Cousin George, as I am older."

"Yes, Cousin George," said Hetty.

Cousin George rose, took a look at himself in the mirror, and smoothed his hair. Then he took his stance with his back to the grate and cleared his throat.

"Well, Hetty, I am willing to forget the past," he said.

"Yes, Cousin George. I don't like history, either," admitted Hetty, pretending to be dense. "What does it matter what the old Romans did—"

"Romans? I am referring to you,"

another line of attack. She was resolved to go on the river, museum or no museum.

"Coo! Cousin George," she said, with as much admiration as she could get into her tone. "Aren't you tall?"

Cousin George, taken aback, yammered a bit.

"Er—am I?" he smirked, and took a look in the mirror, straightening his hair and bracing his shoulders.

"And strong—" murmured Hetty, with a sigh.

"Oh, well, I'm reckoned one of the strongest chaps at school," said Cousin George modestly.

"I should think you're almost as strong as—as Bob Biggs," said Hetty, inventing a name.

"Bob Biggs? Never heard of him. Some young friend of yours, I suppose," frowned Cousin George, not so pleased.

"Younger than you," said Hetty. "But fearfully strong. I don't suppose you could pick up that poker and bend

By **IDA MELBOURNE**



it. Bob can. But then, of course, Bob's stronger than the average boy."

Cousin George looked at the poker. "Bob Biggs could bend that?" he frowned. "Rot!"

"Oh, they're not as strong as they look," shrugged Hetty. "And anyway, I dare say it was a knack. It's the wrists that matter. Yours seem a bit slender."

Cousin George picked up the poker. If Bob Biggs could do it, he could, although he had never tried.

Hetty felt a thrill as he picked up the poker. If he actually tried bending it, then she had won the first round. It would prove that, even though Cousin George boomed and woofed his commands, she could manage him easily.

"Careful you don't strain yourself," she murmured with a gasp of deep anxiety. "Bob Biggs nearly did so once."

She could see that the imaginary Bob Biggs was going to be useful for a glint appeared in Cousin George's eye. He was not going to be outdone by anybody.

"Now just watch this," he said. "I don't doubt that boy Wiggs—"

"Biggs—"

"Biggs, then. I don't doubt he impressed you silly, giggling girls with his strength. Actually the thing is easy."

George lifted one foot, bent his knee, resting the middle of the poker underneath it, and took an end in each hand.

With an air of confidence he hauled, then winced as it hurt his knee.

Hetty took a seat as though this would be too long a performance for standing.

Cousin George strained until his face became red, and his eyes bulged.

"I remember now," said Hetty suddenly. "Put it on the ground, put your foot on it, and pull the ends."

George, breathing hard, put the poker on the ground. He strained and he tugged. He used every muscle in his body. And then—the poker slowly bent.

Hetty's eyes rounded.

"Golly!" she murmured.

Cousin George straightened, and in glowing triumph held up the poker, now bent at right angles.

"There!" he cried.

And at that moment the door opened, and Aunt Miriam looked in. She stared at the bent poker, and then at George's red face.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed.

"George! What ever is the meaning of this?"

Cousin George gaped at the poker, and Hetty sprang up, stifling her giggles, and suddenly sympathetic. For Aunt Miriam looked cross.

"I—er—ah—er—" muttered George, at a loss.

But the Imp was never at a loss for excuses.

"Oh, Aunt Miriam, Cousin George has been showing me how to bend a poker," she said. "It's a clever dodge. Cousin George studies science at school, Aunt Miriam, and with a bent poker you can poke little bits of coal at the side which the straight poker can't reach. And then you just bend it straight again."

Aunt Miriam, as Hetty guessed, had an almost fervent admiration for George's scientific knowledge.

"Yes—that's true, mother," said George quickly. "I was just showing Hetty how it's done. I—er—I'll bend it straight some other time, mother. I'm taking Hetty to the museum now."

Aunt Miriam frowned still, looked at the bent poker and then at George.

"Very well," she said. "I only came to see if you would be in to tea."

"It would be rather nice to have tea out," murmured Hetty.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES



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.

**M**Y DEAR READERS,—Have you seen page 17 yet? Why page 17, you ask? Well, because that is where Cousin George and "the Imp" make their bow—as you'll probably guess by a glance at the picture over the page.

Do please let me know exactly what you think of these new characters. Personally, I think they're just the most delightful pair of fun-makers ever; George so lordly, serious and important; "the Imp" so full of sparkle, gaiety and everything her nickname suggests. But what do YOU think? That's the point. I shall be looking out for your letters, you know.

Now I must just say a few words about next Saturday's issue, and then I've several letters to answer. There'll be another "George and 'the Imp'" story next week, of course; further exciting chapters of "The Jungle Hikers," more of Patricia's Useful and Interesting Pages, another Cliff House Pet, and—

### "THEIR GIPSY FRIEND'S SECRET!"

That is the title of the Cliff House story, and a magnificent tale it is, too. I haven't space to tell you much about it, but I can say that it deals with a little gipsy girl who is befriended by the chums of Cliff House.

She comes to the school to do some work for the headmistress. And because she comes, a certain Sixth Former commences to act most mysteriously.

Babs & Co., liking the little gipsy girl immensely—as I am sure you will, too, girls!—are very intrigued by the strange happenings surrounding her. They do their best to help her, with exciting results.

You'll welcome this unusual story by Miss Hilda Richards. It is COMPLETE next week.

Now for a few

#### Little Letters.

"Coreen."—I will certainly see what can be done regarding the suggestions you make, Coreen, but I cannot give a definite promise, of course. Everything depends upon what the majority of my readers prefer. Best wishes.

"Doreen."—So glad you've managed to avoid whooping cough and mumps. They're certainly not the sort of things one wants to get, are they? Be sure to write again soon.

Eliane Carmilleri (Malta).—Delighted to hear from you once again, Eliane. Do please give my congratulations to your granny on having reached her eightieth birthday, won't you?

"Babs" (Warrington).—Although I cannot give a definite "Yes" to your suggestion, there is always a possibility of your favourites coming back if the majority of my readers desire it.

Barbara Atkins (Sketty, Swansea).—Gracious, Barbara, what a tremendous heap of SCHOOLGIRLS you must have. A good way of disposing of them would be to send them to a children's hospital, you know. Don't forget to write again.

And now I must say au revoir until next Saturday.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend

THE EDITOR.

"We shall be home to tea," answered George stiffly.

Aunt Miriam went and Cousin George frowned at Hetty.

"Would you mind leaving it for me to decide what we are doing?" he said. "Run along and get your clothes on."

"Yes, Cousin George," said Hetty, but she was giggling as she skipped downstairs. "Oh golly, what fun I'm going to have! And poor old George won't know that I'm twiddling him round my little finger!"

"WE'RE CYCLING, of course?" said Hetty.

It was a long way from the house to the river, and she did not see the sense of walking. But on the other hand it was not so far to the museum.

"We are walking," said Cousin George, with walking stick in hand, and a thick school scarf flung negligently round his neck. It had taken ten minutes to get the right degree of negligence.

Hetty looked at her cycle, which had been delivered from the station.

"Perhaps it's just as well," she said.

"Bob Biggs said my bike wasn't safe." "Then Bob Biggs is a fool. Let me look at it," said Cousin George. "I'm rather a dab with bikes."

He looked the bike over.

"Nothing wrong with it," he announced.

"It wobbles when I ride, though," said Hetty. "You watch!"

Before George could protest she mounted the machine, put her heels on the pedals, and her knees well out, and wobbled badly.

"Great Scott! That's not the way," said Cousin George, with a superior laugh. "Is that how you always ride?"

If Cousin George had not been so sure that Hetty was a stupid girl, he might have guessed that his leg was being pulled.

"Now just watch this," he said in lordly manner.

He pulled his bike forward, mounted it, and sitting bolt upright he pedalled forward.

Hetty had a stab at it, and rode alongside him down the drive to the gates. Then she clutched his shoulder.

"Oh, please Cousin George," she said, "will you do me a favour—one day?"

"Depends what it is."

"One day will you take me cycling and teach me? Let me watch how you do it!" begged Hetty eagerly. "You can teach me road manners and all that."

They had reached the gates, and Hetty went through.

"Whoa! Look before you go out!" said Cousin George. "Here, I can see you have a lot to learn! You're a danger on a bike! Always put out your hand when turning."

He dismounted, and looked thoughtful.

"I have an idea," he said.

"Yes?" breathed Hetty

"Instead of walking we'll cycle; we'll go a slightly longer way, where there's little traffic. I don't like to think of you riding dangerously."

He strapped his stick to the luggage-grid, so that it ran along the top bar, mounted, and led the way, giving Hetty the inside berth.

"You do think of good ideas, Cousin George!" she said

And then, falling back, she giggled to herself. Considering that she had been riding a bike since she was six years of age, she knew as much about it as he did. But Cousin George liked teaching people.

Hetty, cycling along, breathed in the fresh country air, and found it good. If



they had only gone on cycling, Hetty would have been happy, but what she really wanted to do was to reach the river.

"Not so fast!" warned Cousin George. "You're a girl, and you can't go as fast as a boy, you know!"

But Hetty was going faster than Cousin George. She went just fast enough to follow the signs to the river.

"Tra-la-la!" she chanted.

For a moment she trilled; and then a hand dropped on her shoulder—a firm, strong hand—and she was turned to the right.

"Hey!" gasped Hetty. "What's the idea?"

She found herself passing through a large stone gateway, beyond which was a repulsive, depressing stone building.

Cousin George met her look in innocent surprise.

"Why, this is the museum!" he said. "You must have heard me say we were coming here? This way to the cycle park!"

And his firm, guiding hand led the Imp to the parking place.

It was first round to Cousin George!

### One All!

WITH feelings too deep for words, the Imp looked at the forbidding museum. She had never seen a gloomier place in her life, and her heart sank.

For a moment she thought of bunking. But it would not have helped. Cousin George had to be handled with tact, not defiance.

"Tact?" mused Hetty to herself, as Cousin George parked their machines.

It was hopeless to think of putting Cousin George against the museum; it was the apple of his eye. Therefore, the obvious alternative seemed to be to put the museum against Cousin George.

"I suppose they're very particular who they have here, Cousin George?" she said. "Not the riff-raff or hooligans?"

"Good gracious, no!" he said. "Some of our chaps aren't allowed there since they had a rock fight in the geology section."

"Ah!" said Betty, and a light came to her eye.

Just to distract Cousin George's attention, she pointed to his valve-cap and asked if it were loose. While he examined it, she skipped behind a tree and watched.

Cousin George, looking up, gave a gasp of dismay to find her missing, peered right and left, and then decided that she had bolted back through the gates.

No sooner had he gone through himself than Hetty, clearing a "Keep Off the Grass" notice with a bound, ran noiselessly on the springy grass to the bend that led to the main entrance.

Slowing, smoothing her frock, she walked primly up the steps to the glass doors, behind which stood a commissioner.

"Please have you seen a boy with a red-and-blue scarf, carrying a walking-stick?" she asked.

"Eh? No. Not this afternoon, miss."

"Oh, thank goodness!" said Hetty. "Thank goodness! He hasn't sneaked in and broken anything with his stick?"

"Broken anything?" said the man sharply.

"It'd only be his idea of a joke. You know what boys are!" said Hetty.

"Don't hurt him for it, will you? He means no harm. He wouldn't break anything but the glass in the cases and

a bust or two, and perhaps a window and—"

The man in uniform bridled.

"He won't break anything in here!"

he snorted. "He won't be allowed in!"

"Oh, good!" said Hetty, in relief. "I wouldn't like him to go to prison!"

She hurried back then, arriving as George came charging in again.

"So there you are!" he said. "Come on! Now for the museum!"

"Better take your stick, in case someone steals it!" warned the Imp.

"I'm taking it, anyway. I always carry a stick," said George. "Seniors at school are allowed to, but not juniors."

He led the way to the museum, but just as they reached the corner Hetty had shoelace trouble, and George, striding on, did not miss her. He just went on talking, expecting no reply.

"Now, you may not think this interesting," he said, with a wave of the hand, "but I do. And you can always improve your mind—"

In the doorway stood the man in uniform. He saw Cousin George, and gave a violent start. For there was no one with him, yet George chatted and gestured.

"Knowledge is what matters," said George. "And there are some smashing specimens—"

He pulled up with a jerk as the man in uniform faced him.

"Clear off!" said the man.

Cousin George gave a start.

"Talking to me?" he said.

"I'm talking to you! I'll give you smashing specimens! You clear off!"

This was the kind of thing that annoyed Cousin George, and the Imp, peeping round the corner, saw him take a tight grip on his stick.

What Cousin George did then came to her as a shock. There had been moments when she had thought her cousin a little meek. In fact, Hetty had been convinced that when the commissioner said "No," it would be "No." Cousin George would lift his cap, thank the man politely for telling

him, and walk down the steps backwards.

But Cousin George was made of sterner stuff. He took a grip on his stick and strode forward.

"You can't keep me out of here," he said.

"Oh, can't I?" said the doorman.

"No, you can't!" said Cousin George.

The Imp, her eyes rounded, gave a skip of joy.

"Go it, Cousin George! Golly, if you do get in, I'll go in with you! You'll deserve it! Atta boy!"

Cousin George strode valiantly up the steps, and at the same moment the powerful doorman marched down. They met half-way, and there was a short tussle. At the end of it, Cousin George was lifted in the air by the collar and the seat of his bags.

Then, like the young man in the song, he sailed through the air with the greatest of ease, and landed on the hard, unsympathetic ground—bonk!

"Oh!" murmured Hetty, in distress. "Oh golly! Poor old George!"

Cousin George sat where he was for a moment, pink in the face with shame. Having set out to be a hero to Hetty, to show her how to behave and impress her, he felt that he had flopped.

"Hurt?" said Hetty, hurrying up and giving him a hand.

George fended her off.

"I'm not hurt," he said loftily. "I slipped, that's all."

"Poor Cousin George! That old bully," said the Imp hotly. "Why did he have to chuck you down the steps? Let's jolly well rush him! Let's get in through a window!"

A passionate desire to enter the museum now seized Hetty, but Cousin George had changed his mind, too.

"Enter that museum?" he said, with a low, mocking laugh. "Certainly not! I don't enter it until I have a letter of apology from the committee. Maybe that man did mistake me for one of the chaps who had the rock fight, but that doesn't mean I can be rough-handled. I'm not at all sure I shan't send him a solicitor's letter."



QUITE unaware that Hetty—"the Imp"—had skipped behind a pillar, George went on talking and gesturing. The museum attendant eyed him warily. "Now for the fireworks!" chuckled "the Imp."



Hetty looked at him sideways, wondering if he was serious; but instinct told her that Cousin George would let the matter drop.

"Well, it's ruined our afternoon!" sighed Hetty. "Nothing to do but—"

Go on the river was the thought in her mind; but she did not utter it. It was a time for action—not words.

"Cousin George," she said, "I'll tell you what. Suppose I cycle ahead, and you follow behind and watch my style and tell me where I am wrong?"

Eager to change the subject, Cousin George beamed.

"A good idea, Hetty," he said. "I'm glad you are so eager to correct your faults. I was going to suggest something of the sort myself. Ride on and I'll follow."

Hetty, eyes gleaming, mounted her machine, and straightway committed three faults. No. 1 was that she leaned too far over the handlebars; No. 2 that she pedalled as though breaking a world's record; while No. 3, the worst of all, was that she went straight for the river!

From George's point of view it was time for desperate remedies.

"Hi!" he called.

And then in grim fury he gave chase.

### A Win for "The Imp!"

"TO the boathouses," mused Hetty. She was breathing rather hard, for she had cycled flat out for nearly a mile, following the signposts to the river, and was now in a narrow, winding lane.

Cousin George had held the pace well, even though his headmaster had forbidden the boys to go cycling madly through the village, and had threatened severe punishment to any boy seen scorching, showing off, and in any way drawing attention to himself while cycling.

Considering George had overtaken a baby saloon car, he had certainly drawn attention to himself. His face was as red as a raspberry, hardly distinguishable from the red part of his scarf. And the fact that he had been cycling, holding a waving stick with his free hand, had not helped to make him inconspicuous.

"Cycling to the river, eh?" Cousin George muttered. "She's wilful all right. But she won't get her way. I'll see to that. Fate has played into her hands this afternoon, but this is where I put my foot down."

Ahead, just short of the boathouses, the Imp had dismounted, and George, coming upon her suddenly, put his brakes on hard, skidded right round, and fell in a heap.

He disentangled himself from the bike and scrambled up.

"I could never learn to do that," said Hetty, shaking her head. "It might hurt."

George rubbed his elbow, and then, gritting his teeth, straightened his handlebars.

"You don't think I did that purposely?" he asked, in sulphurous tone.

"Oh, didn't you?" asked the Imp. "Not the falling over bit, because I don't suppose you've really practised it much. But Bob Biggs—"

"Shut up!" hooted Cousin George. Hetty blinked and fell back.

"You—you're not cro-cross?" she asked, wondering if it would be best to pretend to cry.

"That's right, now blub!" said Cousin George witheringly. "I'm fed-up with you! You're like all the girls.

But don't think you can get your own way with me!"

"Oh, George, you aren't really cross?" said Hetty, in dismay. "You said you'd tell me my faults, you know."

Cousin George drew a breath.

"If I started telling you all your faults," he said, "I'd never stop. I'd be hoarse. This is just a trick to get on the river!"

"I wouldn't go on the river if you asked me. I don't want to be drowned, thanks," said Hetty. "And I don't want to be soaked through with you catching crabs and scooping water over me."

It was adding insult to injury, and George trembled with righteous indignation.

"I'm a member of the House eight," he said. "I shall be in the school boat next term. I don't catch crabs. But maybe, thanks to you, I shan't even be at the school next term."

"Thanks to me!" gasped Hetty.

"Yes. Suppose my headmaster saw me blinding through the village, eh? He's a terror!"

"And he may have seen you?" said Hetty, conscience-stricken.

The very last thing she wanted to do was to get her cousin into a row, and remorse filled her.

But Cousin George was just trying to scare her.

"I don't say he did," he said. "But he might have. And now, no more cycling away—no more cycling at all, in fact. We'll walk home to tea."

The Imp heaved a sigh. The smiling river was just ahead. So near—and yet so far. Boats bobbed gently at their moorings; there was the music of rippling water lapping the prow of a passing skiff, and someone up-stream was playing a gramophone.

"Home!" said Cousin George firmly. "Come on, Hetty! What are you standing there for, in that silly, sappy way? You look as miserable as a motherless lamb. I'm the one who ought to be miserable. Suppose the Head has seen me—"

Hetty suddenly brightened and drew up, but then conquered her eagerness. For a dazzling idea had come. The way out—the way to the river.

"Can you hear footsteps?" she gasped.

She ran forward to where she had a view of the path and turned back.

"Cousin George, what did you say the Head was like?"

"The Head? A fat man with a red face and a limp; wears a green hat and a red tie."

"Oh!" wailed the Imp. "Oh golly! Hide—hide—quick—quick—anywhere!"

Cousin George turned pale. He did not stop to argue, but jumped to the too obvious conclusion. The Head had seen him—was trailing him.

"Oh gosh! Hope he didn't recognise me!" he gulped.

Hetty grabbed his arm.

"Cousin George, you've got to prove an alibi."

"Alibi?" he babbled.

"Yes. You've got to be seen riding a horse or something—not a bike, anyway."

"Where can I get a horse?" said George anxiously. "Talk sense!"

"Well, you've got to be seen in tennis kit—seen doing anything but cycling!" said Hetty frantically.

Cousin George's eyes lit up.

"I've got it—a complete alibi," he said. "Boating—if he saw me in a boat! Gosh, yes—he needn't know I'd cycled to the river. That's an idea!"

"George, you've got it!" cried Hetty. "What a brain-wave! You do get ideas. Take your jacket off and

your scarf. We can put the bikes in the boathouse."

No sooner suggested than done. George stowed away the bikes and hired a good-locking skiff, while Hetty took the lines.

"And I've got another idea," added George. "The playing-fields go practically down to the river. The school eight's doing a trial this afternoon. You might as well see it. It will improve your mind."

The Imp sighed and lolled back in the boat, while George, rowing his very best, heaved away. He rowed well, and it was not long before they drew level with the field that lay behind his school.

"There's the old school," he said. "And there—Gosh! See that man in the green hat?" He gaped and blinked at Hetty. "There's the Head. He couldn't have been in the village."

"Not if that's the Head. But I wouldn't call that man fat," said Hetty lightly. "And that isn't really a green hat, more of a deep grey, and he's a little older than I thought you meant. But never mind."

George took what comfort he could from that.

"Anyway, Cousin George," the Imp went on, "as you have had such a nasty shock, and I really scared you wrongly—"

"You didn't scare me—I wasn't scared. I was cool and collected."

"I meant cool and collected. Well, I'll stand you tea. Look—a lovely tea-plate down there! Luscious teas, with lettuce and strawberry jam—"

Cousin George's mouth watered. He was tired after that unusually stiff pull against the tide, and he didn't want Hetty to say that Bob Biggs wouldn't have tired.

So he pulled to the bank, helped Hetty out, and then demolished a hefty tea.

Deep down, as Hetty told herself, Cousin George, despite his bluster, was just like any other boy. In fact, she rather liked Cousin George; but she did not tell him so.

"YOU two look tired," commented Aunt Miriam, when they returned. "I expected you in to tea, too. I've never known you change your mind, George. Apparently the museum was so interesting that you even forgot tea."

George looked down his nose.

"I took Hetty to see the school, mother," he said. "From the river—and—er—we had tea at the Shanty. I've been teaching her to ride a bike properly, and how to row."

"He's been very kind, aunty," said the Imp.

"Not at all," said George loftily. "But I think with Hetty it's just a matter of having mixed with the wrong people. My influence will work wonders with her. And one good thing is, she's not stubborn and doesn't try to get her own way."

"Not with George," said the Imp solemnly, and winked at the wall.

"Not with me," smirked George. "There was perhaps a hint of a battle for mastery. But I won—and henceforth I lead!"

To which Hetty's comment was "Bow-wow!" But she made it under her breath.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

WELL, aren't George and "The Imp" a truly delightful pair of funmakers? They'll be here again next Saturday, so be sure to renew your acquaintance with them. And why not recommend them to all your friends?



More thrills and adventure in the mysterious wilds of Africa.

# 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 foot. When they help a white hunter, he gives them a talisman ring, which allows them to enter a native king's country. A treacherous magician pretends to turn Fuzzy into a lioness. He is going to repeat the trick with her baby chimpanzee when Teresa rushes forward.

(Now read on.)

## Underground Secrets!

**F**ORWARD, Bambo—quick, quick!" Teresa cried.

And at the same moment she gave the young elephant a push. It did not affect Bambo, of course—he probably did not even notice it—but Teresa's cry that spurred him forward.

With a swipe of his trunk he knocked aside the guarding spears as though they had been matches, then he charged towards the rascally magician.

At that moment blue flames were mysteriously coming from the magician's hands, for the magic change was due to take place. With a yell of horror at this interruption, the man staggered away from the carpet of lions' skins, which was being held by two native attendants.

Adolphus, the baby chimpanzee, was under the carpet, but when it was lifted he would not be there; in his place would be a lion, or a leopard, or perhaps a human being.

That was what the magician had said would happen. And that was what had happened to the little black girl Fuzzy.

But it should not happen now, Teresa was resolved.

Luise, outside in the corridor with the black King Nompanyo, called to her friend in terror.

"Terry, stop!"

But Teresa went on after Bambo, straight at the lions' skin carpet, and the two men leaped back, dropping it.

Adolphus, terrified, scrambled into view, and, rushing at the magician, perched on his head for safety.

But from under the lions' skin carpet there came the menacing snarl of a leopard, and Bambo pulled up. Unafraid, Teresa ran forward and tugged at the heavy carpet with all her strength so that it twisted aside.

And there, half-way through a secret door in the wall, was a leopard! Its teeth were bared, but its eyes were covered by a silk handkerchief, and its front paws were similarly bound.

"There—there! It's proof! Fraud!" cried Teresa in ringing triumph.

**Wonderful jewels were the chums' reward for helping native King Nompanyo. But those riches led little Fuzzy into terrible danger!**

For to anyone seeing the leopard and Adolphus together it was clear that the leopard, instead of becoming magically transformed from Adolphus, really appeared through the secret door.

"Halt, Bambo!" said Teresa.

The leopard backed, snarling, and a heavy stone slab moved into position, closing the gap.

The magician, clawing at the chimpanzee, knew that the game was up, and in shaking terror dashed for the exit.

But the king barred his way.

"Fraud!" he cried. "Trickster! You are no magician! Hold him, guards!"

The magician pushed past the king and fled, with the guards, carrying their broken spears, in hot pursuit.

Inside the magic-room Teresa and

Luise were in a state of great excitement.

"You see?" cried Teresa. "It was just a trick."

"Then where is Fuzzy?" asked Luise excitedly. "If the lioness just came through that secret door, where did Fuzzy go?"

Teresa pointed to the slab of coloured stone on which Fuzzy had been made to kneel.

"Don't you see that's a trapdoor?" she said. "It opens at a given signal, and the victim falls through."

Luise went pale. "Falls through to what? To a dungeon—to a pool? Terry, we must get it open!"

"We will," said Teresa. "I've an idea that it's counter weighted and held by a bolt. You know what I mean? There's another weight to balance it so that it moves easily. All we have to do to open it is—"

"Is what? Léver it?" asked Luise; and the king looking a little ashamed of himself, stood by watching.

"No. Just this," answered Teresa.

She led Bambo forward, and without the slightest hesitation he put one mighty forefoot on to the stone slab. The bolt that fastened it had not been made to bear the weight of Bambo, and the moment Teresa touched his hind off foot, making him lift it, the bolt gave way.

Bambo stumbled, gained balance, and stepped back, looking suspiciously at the gaping void which was revealed.

"There—a hole—a tunnel," said Teresa, dropping to her knees. "And hark—lions roaring!"

"That's where Fuzzy went—and the

By  
 ELIZABETH  
 CHESTER



king's sister," said Teresa. "And that's where they are still—"

The king dropped to his knees and peered down into the darkness, trembling with great agitation now that he knew the truth.

"My sister—she go there?" he said in horror. "There are lionses! They roar. They—"

Teresa was silent as he broke off. None of them spoke; for the same dread thought was in every mind. Suppose the lions were at large, and Fuzzy and the king's lost sister were in the middle of them?

But Teresa pulled herself together.

"No, no. The magician had nothing to gain by that. He wanted riches for bringing the princess back. She is alive still, and there," she said.

Then, before Luise could stop her, Teresa swung over the edge, and, dangling her feet down, touched something soft below. Standing on it, she took a box of matches from her pocket and struck one.

From near by eyes shone at her—red eyes—the eyes of lions! But those lions were behind bars! Looking down by the flickering light of the match, Teresa saw that she stood on feathers—a downy mass of feathers—into which she sank so far that they were half-way up her riding boots.

The fall had not hurt Fuzzy or the princess. But where were they?

The match burned down to her fingers and Teresa, with a gasp of pain, dropped it. She was in darkness again.

"Fuzzy!" she called. "Where are you?"

But though she waited, straining her ears, there was no reply.

She struck another match and groped forward, finding that she was in a strange room, on either side of which were cages and bars.

Somewhere near, she was convinced, were Fuzzy and the lost princess, the king's sister. Teresa moved forward warily. For there was someone hidden down here who released the lionesses or leopards for the magician, and took charge of the victims.

From the hole above, the king called loudly to his sister, but there came no response.

"Fuzzy! Are you here?" Teresa called again. "It's me—Teaser!"

And then, looking about her, she suddenly saw two other cages packed with green leaves and flowers. Wondering what else they contained, she pressed nearer, and then, lighting another match, gave a shout as she looked into the nearer of the two.

"Fuzzy!"

There was Fuzzy crouched amongst the leaves. To open the cage bolt was but the work of a moment, and then Teresa, groping in, freed Fuzzy's limbs of lions' skin.

Fuzzy struggled out and stared wide-eyed. Then she looked down at herself.

"Me not a lion?" she gasped. "Me am not a lion. It was all dark, Teresa. I was in trees. Where I am?"

"You were tricked, Fuzzy," said Teresa. "There has been no magic at all. None. Look—you were hidden in that box!" And she explained what had happened.

"And the king's sister?" asked Fuzzy anxiously.

She turned to the next cage and opened the bolt, tugging the door wide. Then, in excited tone, she spoke to a young black woman who crouched there, blindfolded.

"The king's sister! Found—found!" shrieked Fuzzy, and rushed and shouted to the king. "We bring her—we bring her!"

## Riches!

THE king's sister was weak and faint. She had been even more surely deceived than Fuzzy, and had thought that she was indeed a lioness caught in a trap.

For two whole days she had been imprisoned, and she had thought that for ever more she would remain a lioness.

Indeed, it was hard to convince her even when she stepped into the daylight, for she was half-blinded. It took two strong guards to lift her out, and she was carried at once to the queen's room, half-hysterical.

Fuzzy, excited to be free again, was hardly controllable. She kissed Bambo's trunk for his help, and then petted Adolphus.

"And now me get jewels an' gold, an' be princess?" she asked.

"Perhaps," said Teresa, smiling. "Dear Fuzzy. It's so good to see you back!"

"It's wonderful!" said Luise happily.

"And now the king will give us an escort, and we can go through his country in safety," said Teresa. "I'm so glad the poor princess was found. Just fancy if she had been there a few days longer."

"But what a horrible man that magician was," said Luise, in shocked tone. "Fancy keeping the king's sister shut up. And he really did take me in for a bit."

Fuzzy looked a little sad.

"Me not been lion," she said dimly. "Me hear lions roar. Me tink am in trap. All leaves and sticks and tings. But it all wrong. Now me never talk to lions."

"I shouldn't worry," smiled Teresa. "I don't suppose a lion has much talk worth hearing, you know. You're lucky to be just Fuzzy."

"Not just Fuzzy. Me princess," said Fuzzy, doing a little skip. "Me have jewels—gold—all tings!"

At that moment the king returned. He looked humbled and ashamed.

"Bad magician he deceive," he said. "I big fool. Big fool. But you wise girl," he said to Teresa.

"It's just that I've seen English magicians at work" explained Teresa, not wanting to take too much praise. "I guessed the bit about the trapdoor, you see. After that, it was easy. One trapdoor dropped the victim below, and the other let the animal in. And, of course, under that lions' skin carpet nothing could be seen. And, like all magicians, he just took our attention off it at the right moment—"

"Yes, with those flames from his hands," nodded Luise.

The king understood her, and scratched the tip of his nose.

"Clobber," he admitted, and looked at Teresa admiringly. "Yes. You shall have jewels and gold—you shall be princess. I will make you my chief adviser!"

Teresa drew up, startled.

"Oh, no, please! We must go!"

"Go?" said the king, in amazement. "No, no. You stay. You teach me many tings. No more I fear magicians."

Teresa shook her head firmly. She had no wish at all to stay. They were journeying to her father with an important black case, she explained, and already they were late.

"Yes—we must move on," insisted Luise anxiously. "Teresa's father will be terribly worried. If you could give us an escort—"

Fuzzy butted in, a look of keen disappointment on her face.

"Me hab jewels—gold—be like princess?" she asked.

The king looked at her and frowned. "You? It was this noble girl, she do tings. She find it out."

Fuzzy's eyes brimmed with tears. She had hoped for so much.

"Oh, poor Fuzzy!" said Luise, and looked at the king in reproach.

Teresa put her arms round Fuzzy comfortingly, and looked quite sternly at the king.

"It was Fuzzy who freed your sister," she said. "It was she who took the risk of being turned into a lioness. It was brave of her, very brave, and you promised the wealth. I don't want it."

The king looked a little sulky then, but he bowed his head.

"She shall have jewels, and gold," he said. "And she shall wear a ring and a necklet which in my country will give her all honour as princess."

Fuzzy's tears dried up and her eyes sparkled.

"O king!" she cried, dropping to her knees.

"Up, up!" he commanded sternly. "Is such what a princess should do?"

Fuzzy, looking sheepish, rose and hung her head. Turning, she saw a slave.

"Go, slave," she commanded. "Bring rich fruit that a princess may eat!"

Teresa and Luise, unable to contain themselves, burst out laughing; for never had they seen such autocracy, such hauteur, as showed then on Fuzzy's face.

"So! It is more like princess," agreed the king. "Come! We will find jewels."

But his face wore a sad, reproachful look, for he wanted Teresa to stay as his adviser.

Fuzzy, wrapping her table cover about her, followed the king with quite a swagger.

"Of course, there won't be any holding her!" laughed Teresa. "We'll have to curtsy and call her 'Highness.'"

"Yes, and make her a crown to wear!" giggled Luise. "Poor Fuzzy! She's just a kid, really."

And, although they were only young themselves, they felt a good deal older than Fuzzy, who seemed at times hardly more than five years of age.

The king was generous, and was rich enough to give valuable jewels and gold without robbing himself. Preceded by an armed underling, the king went to the special room where his treasure-chest was kept, guarded by sentries.

Now and then there was no roof over their heads as they walked down long, stone-walled corridors; and occasionally the wall itself was shattered, in one place the branches of a tree pushing through.

But the strong-room, where the treasure-chest was kept, was solid, and the walls thick enough to resist the efforts of any pilferers. Only the most trusted men stood guard, and the king himself carried the key.

The door was of carved wood, and very thick, while the lock—made in England—was strong, with an enormous key to open it. On either side the sentries carried flaring torches.

Fuzzy could hardly stand still as the door was reached. She quite expected, when it was opened, to find a heap of sparkling jewels in careless profusion, and gold stacked in piles.

Teresa and Luise, who hardly had any such fairy-tale idea in mind, nevertheless waited with keen interest for that mighty door to be opened.

With a heavy, important click, the key turned, and the king walked in, taking from one of the sentries a flaming torch.



Holding it spluttering and smoking over his head, he marched to a gigantic wooden chest, bound with iron.

On the floors and on shelves stood gold ornaments, richly jewelled, and from every side jewels winked brightly. There were idols, swords, old firearms, all neatly stacked, and Teresa looked about her, taking everything in.

"The Treasures of Nompanyo!" she murmured.

And back to her mind came legends she had heard in her childhood, told her by her father. No one knew how rich this black king was. But there were stories of caverns filled with jewels, of diamonds stored like heaps of stones.

Luise stood spellbound. Dearly, she wanted to pick up some ornaments and study them, but she managed to hold her desires in check.

"See, I trust you!" said the king, turning to them. "I do not show you all my store-room, for that would give you envy, but here is much wealth." And he swept out his arm.

Fuzzy's eyes almost popped from her head.

"And it's all yours?" she breathed.

"All mine," said the king. "It's my father's—his father's. Once, many, many years ago, big king lived here. Oh, very big king!"

Teresa looked more eagerly than at the vases, and wondered if, long before the Egyptians, there had been a king here with this mighty palace.

Taking another key from his belt, the king opened the lock of the chest, and then, passing his hand round to the back, operated what was obviously another secret fastener.

He raised the lid, and the light from his torch shone back, reflected from a thousand facets, glinting, winking, flashing, sparkling—quite dazzling to behold.

Fuzzy could not speak. Her hands went to her mouth, and she stood entranced. Luise, moving forward, held her breath in awe.

The chest was stacked, overflowing. Gold and diamonds, emeralds—jewels of every kind.

The king dipped in his hand and brought out jewels.

"Here!" he said to Fuzzy. "For you."

Fuzzy clawed at them, clutched them to her, and kissed them. Then she slipped a gold bracelet on to her arm, a diamond necklet over her head. There was a coronet for her hair, which she perched quite jauntily, a jewelled comb, an anklet, another bracelet, and a ring.

Teresa tried to guess what it was all worth, but gave it up. Thousands of pounds!

Then she realised that the king held a handful to her. He gave them as someone might hand over a bagful of bullseyes.

Teresa found rings, bracelets, a necklet, brooches, and a small golden chalice. For Luise, too, there were gifts.

"But we can't wear them!" she murmured, with a smile. "Not in the jungle. When we are older— Oh, but how mother will love this bracelet—"

"Yes, we shall go, bearing gifts!" nodded Teresa, breathless with excitement. "Oh, thank you, King Nompanyo! Thank you!"

"I will die for de great king!" cried Fuzzy.

She looked like a Christmas-tree more than anything else at the moment; she sparkled everywhere, and was as happy as any girl could be.

"Jewels and gold!" said the king.

He crossed to a box on a side shelf, and took out a necklet of gold rings, in the centre of which was a ruby.

"Only a princess wear this!" he said, and dropped it about her neck.

Fuzzy almost burst with pride. She seemed four inches higher in stature already.

"Hail, Princess Fuzzy!" cried Teresa.

"My goodness, never have I seen anyone more like Cinderella at the ball!" cried Luise happily. "Oh, Fuzzy! What fun! Are you happy?"

"Happy? So much me hurt here!" said Fuzzy, touching the region of her heart.

King Nompanyo beamed, happy himself to bring such pleasure. Then his expression changed.

"Take care," he warned, "not to show jewels here. For jewels and gold bad men fight."

Teresa's eyes lost their gleam, and all at once she, too, became serious.

"That's so," she murmured. "Fuzzy,



"ME rich—me princess now!" cried Fuzzy, strutting about in the most regal fashion. Teresa smiled, but Luise was almost too spellbound at sight of the king's enormous riches. And they were all to receive some.

dear! Better put those things away. Not wear them now. Not in the jungle."

Fuzzy's smile waned.

"Not wear?" she asked. "But dey am mine."

"Yes, dear—and you don't want them snatched from you," warned Teresa. "The best thing to do is to hide them in the luggage."

Fuzzy took on a stubborn attitude then. She wanted to wear the jewels. And she did not mind if people envied her—in fact, if the truth were told, she would have liked envious eyes cast at her.

Teresa tucked her jewellery into her pockets. Luise wisely hid hers, too. But still Fuzzy was obstinate.

"I am princess," she said loftily. "A princess—she have jewels and gold."

And out of the strong-room she marched, looking at the sentries, to make sure that they noticed her sparkling array!

## "To the Dungeons!"

**A**NXIOUSLY Teresa hurried after the impetuous little native.

"Please, Fuzzy," she begged.

"Even though you are a princess, if you are coming with us you'll have to do as we say, you know. We don't want to be set upon by robbers."

"No, we certainly don't," agreed Luise anxiously.

"Or perhaps you're staying here?" said Teresa playfully. "Perhaps you want to stay and be the king's chief adviser?"

Fuzzy's head was turned. No one could blame her. She was just a simple girl, brought up in an African village, who had only dreamed of being a princess, and now really found herself one.

She had lost her bearings; she was no longer little Fuzzy; she was no longer poor. She was rich. Richer, by far, than the wife of the chief of her own village. Richer than a dozen chiefs!

And, furthermore, she was a real princess, wearing the necklet that gave proof of the fact. Why, then, should she take orders? Why should she not flaunt herself?

"Perhaps I stay," she said loftily.

Teresa, a little hurt, flushed.

"Well, stay if you like," she said coolly.

"Oh, Terry!" murmured Luise. "She's only a kid."

"Not a kid—princess!" said Fuzzy, tossing her frizzled head of hair.

"Yes; you're a princess now," said Teresa evenly, and dropped a curtsy. "Please give me the royal touch, Fuzzy."

"Royal touch?" asked Fuzzy.

"Touch my head with your royal, princessly hand, and bring me luck,"



teased Teresa. "It's a cure for measles, whooping-cough, and lumbago."

And Fuzzy, losing her sense of humour for the moment, solemnly touched Teresa's head, while Luise watched wide-eyed.

Fuzzy was changed—a different girl. And with her riches and new-found regalia her own natural charm seemed to have gone.

"Show Bambo!" she said suddenly, and marched on ahead.

Luise took Teresa's arm.

"Oh, Terry, you don't mean that about her staying? You're not really cross with her? She can't help it."

Teresa smiled faintly, but in her eyes was a frowning look.

"No, she can't help it; but we can help her, Luise," she said slowly. "I'm fond of Fuzzy, and I can't bear to see her playing the silly goat."

Fuzzy had galloped ahead to take the great news to Bambo, her young elephant. Everyone must know about this, and if only Fuzzy could have gone scurrying back to her own village, she would have done so.

More slowly Teresa and Luise followed. They, too, were rich—and they were excited; but they were not taken so completely off their balance.

"You not stay?" asked King Nompanyo, following them.

Teresa turned, and shook her head.

"My father awaits us," she said.

"We must go. If we are too late he will be very alarmed."

King Nompanyo made a gesture expressive of his sadness.

"Ah, how sad I am! Mebbe send drum talk to big-man fader?" he added, as the idea struck him. "Send messengers."

Teresa, when her mind was made up, became unshakable. She liked the king, and she was grateful to him for his kindness. But she had to go on.

Not wanting to disappoint him, or be too harsh, she temporised.

"We come back byem bye," she smiled. "My father come, too."

King Nompanyo bowed his head.

"Yes, yes," he said eagerly. "Yes, father come. Stay. Make plenty music—many dancings. Much gladness."

Teresa bowed in return.

"It will give us great happiness."

Then she moved towards Bambo, with Adolphus, the chimp, joining them.

"There—and he hasn't any jewels, and he's not a prince!" said Luise tenderly. "Poor Dolphus, then!"

Teresa and Luise found Bambo, the young elephant, but not Fuzzy. She was missing—probably showing her jewels off, Teresa decided.

Guards were summoned, and men with strange-looking trumpets were ordered to give them a royal fanfare on departure.

Willing boys helped to load the luggage, and soon Bambo was fitted up with all his equipment, and Adolphus was perched on top.

"Now, where is that princess?" asked Teresa anxiously. "We really must be going!"

"Fuz-zy!" called Luise.

Fuzzy came charging into view, sparkling like Blackpool Pier, with her eyes not the least shining of her adornments.

Following her were three other girls, clad in simple attire, bare-footed, and of humble appearance.

"Hallo, hallo! Who are your friends?" asked Teresa, smiling.

Fuzzy came to a halt.

"Slaves," she explained. "Me bring along slaves! Me buy 'm. Dey say serve me all times!"

Teresa blinked, and then sighed and shook her head sadly.

"Fuzzy—Fuzzy, how can we take slaves along with us? Do be sensible! We haven't many supplies, you know."

Fuzzy became sulky then.

"Me take 'm long. Me princess," she insisted.

"Well, princess or not, they can't come," said Teresa firmly. "You can pick them up as you pass by here some other time. And if you are coming with us you can put those jewels away."

Fuzzy faced Teresa defiantly.

"Won't!" she said.

Teresa drew up, a little pink.

"Oh, all right!" she shrugged, after a tiny pause. "Don't, then. We'd better say good-bye—"

Luise stepped forward with a little gasp.

"Terry," she murmured.

"Is it good-bye, Fuzzy?" asked Teresa. "Do you want to stay, and be a princess, or come with us and be Fuzzy?"

Fuzzy hesitated, looking at the palace and at her slaves.

"All stay. You stay," she murmured.

Teresa turned to King Nompanyo and saluted him.

"Good-bye, King Nompanyo. I hope we meet soon again."

"Safe journey and happiness," he answered. "Good-bye! You take soldiers as escort?"

"Yes, please," decided Luise; and Teresa nodded.

"Coming along, Fuzzy?" Teresa asked, as she urged Bambo forward.

Fuzzy did not move, but stood there, pouting.

"Are we going without her, Terry?" breathed Luise, unhappily.

Teresa winked.

"As soon as we turn the bend on to the main path, she'll follow," she said.

They got to the path, and, by agreement, did not look back. But there came no hurrying steps, no shout.

Teresa looked back; her heart was heavy and sad. For she really had supposed that Fuzzy would run in pursuit of them. As she had not, then it could only mean that she did not want to go with them.

What use turning back? They did not want her against her will; and Fuzzy, it seemed, had deserted them, her head turned by wealth.

Yet if they had been able to see around that corner, they would have known that Fuzzy did move after them, but was stopped after three paces by an angry woman, a woman who confronted her still.

"Take off those jewels!" commanded the woman. "You common slave, you good-for-nothing creature! I am the queen! Take off those jewels! Put her in a dungeon!" she commanded.

Fuzzy gave a terrified cry as two guards stepped forward.

"Ter—" began Fuzzy, but the queen's hand went over her mouth.

"To the dungeons with her!" she rapped.

**WHAT** ever will happen to Fuzzy now? Will Teresa and Luise discover she has been made a prisoner, or will they go on, believing she has decided to stay at the palace? Don't miss the thrilling continuation of this grand story.

## HILDA RICHARDS

Replies to Some of Her Correspondents.

**"MAUREEN OF NEW ZEALAND."**—Thank you so much for writing, Maureen. I think you are somewhat like Janet Jordan—also a most enthusiastic swimmer—in appearance. Sylvia Sirrett is top of the Fourth Form at the moment, my dear. Leila Carroll comes from New York, and her great friend, Marcelle Biquet, from Paris.

**MAY GOWDY (Cowaramup, Western Australia).**—Has your new sheepdog arrived yet, May? Here are some names that might suit him: Buster, Rags, Shaggy, Rover, Prince, Shep, Bob, Mac, Angus, Laird, Duncan, Ritchie, Roger, or Mike. Let me know what name you decide on when you write again.

**JEAN HARTON (Caulfield, Victoria, Australia).**—You would be in the Lower Third if you went to Cliff House, Jean. The oldest girl in the Fourth is Lydia Crossendale. Jemima is fourteen years and nine months old. The vice-captain of the Fourth and Lower School is Mabs. Do write again some time, my dear.

**"TWO ARDENT ADMIRERS" (Dudley, Worcs).**—So nice to hear from two such enthusiastic young people again. Yes, Dulcia Fairbrother's mother is still living. Perhaps I ought to keep it a secret, but it's quite true that Jack Trevlyn does admire Dulcia. (And Dulcia likes Jack very much, too!) Write again, won't you?

**WINNIE BARTON (London, W.2).**—Thank you for your charming little letter, my dear. Yes, netball is played at Cliff House, though it is not one of the "official" games. Judy must be a very sweet pet; give her a paw-shake from my own dog, Juno, Winnie.

**PAT SEYMOUR (Port Elizabeth, South Africa).**—It was nice to hear from you again, Pat, and to know you are still such a keen reader of our paper. I will make a large



note of your suggestion about a story featuring Dulcia Fairbrother and Jack Trevlyn. But, of course, I can't promise just when it will appear; for so many things have to be taken into consideration when planning stories, as I'm sure you'll understand.

**"ADMIRER OF BABS, MABS, AND CLARA" (Aberdeenshire, Scotland).**—It's easy to see who your favourites are in the Fourth at C.H., my dear. So you live on a farm? It must be lovely, especially now that summer is nearly here. My pet Juno sends doggy greetings to Jed and Moss.

**DOLLY MARFORD (Guernsey, Channel Islands).**—Many thanks for another very cheery and interesting letter, Dolly. I liked the little riddle you told me. I see you are a stamp-collector. Isn't it a fascinating hobby?

**"JOAN" (Dagenham, Essex).**—What a sweet little letter, my dear! And how kind of you to say such nice things about my stories—and about me! So Clara and Lady Pat are your C.H. favourites? I'll certainly feature them in many more of my stories, and I'll also keep in mind your other interesting suggestions.

**"PAM" (Balham).**—You would be a Lower Third Former if you went to Cliff House, Pam. I see Clara and Lady Pat are your favourites also, as well as others of the Co. You'll write again some time and tell me more about yourself, won't you, my dear?