

"HER ONLY FRIEND IN THE FOURTH!"

Superb LONG COMPLETE
story of Cliff House School
inside.

THE SCHOOLGIRL

No. 466. Vol. 18.
Week Ending
JULY 2nd, 1938.

EVERY 2^D SATURDAY

Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**THEY WOULDN'T LEAVE
CHRISTINE ALONE!**

And there was only Babs to
help her in her struggle to
make good.

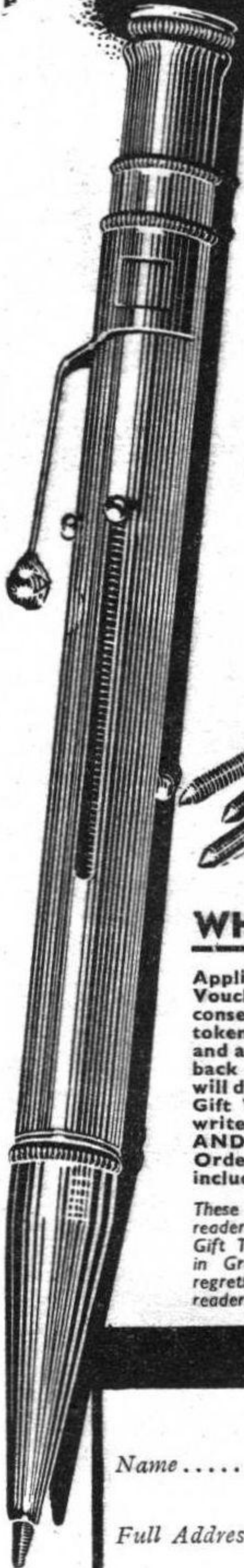
See this week's fine story of the Cliff
House chums.

MARVELLOUS PRESENTATION OFFER

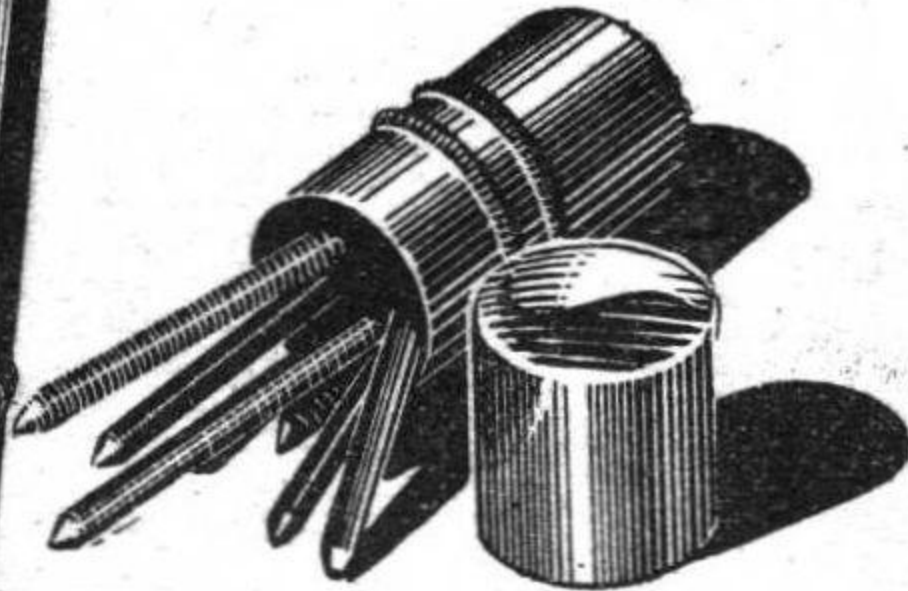
GRAND

4 COLOUR PROPELLING PENCIL

for every reader of "THE SCHOOLGIRL"



Superbly made in Silverine metal, complete with four coloured leads (red, green, black and blue), four extra refills, pocket clip, eraser and extra Silverine tube containing eight refills.



WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

Applicants must cut out and fix to the Gift Voucher on the right six tokens cut from six consecutive issues of "The Schoolgirl." The tokens are the series SCL followed by a number, and appear at the bottom left-hand corner of the back cover of "The Schoolgirl." Any six tokens will do, but they must be consecutive. When this Gift Voucher is complete, i.e. after six weeks, write your name and address on the Gift Voucher AND on the LABEL beside it. Enclose Postal Order for sixpence, crossed / & Co. / which includes the cost of posting and packing.

These Propelling Pencils can only be supplied to regular readers of "The Schoolgirl" who collect the necessary Gift Tokens. This offer applies only to readers living in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Editor regrets that it cannot be extended to Overseas and Eire readers.

LABEL

Name

Full Address

If undelivered, please return to G.P.O. Box No. 184a, Cobb's Court, Broadway, London, E.C.4.

A chance like this comes seldom in a lifetime; do not miss it. Your Editor is again offering this amazing bargain to all those who are regular readers of "THE SCHOOLGIRL" already, or who are willing to become so.

No others can take part in this great presentation offer.

These pencils are superb value. You may have one for the nominal sum of sixpence, which includes packing and postage, the sole condition being that you collect six weekly tokens from "THE SCHOOLGIRL" just to show that you are a regular reader.

Read the rules below carefully and start collecting your tokens to-day. You'll never have such another wonderful opportunity as this. If you'd like to do your friends a favour, tell them about this great offer, too.

Black
Red, Green
Blue



GIFT VOUCHER

CUT OUT AND KEEP THIS FORM— IT IS IMPORTANT.

Affix six TOKENS from six consecutive issues of "The Schoolgirl" in the spaces provided above and send the completed Voucher and Label with Postal Order for SIXPENCE to:

The Schoolgirl Presentation Dept.,
G.P.O. Box 184a, Cobb's Court,
Broadway, London, E.C.4.

Please forward me a 4-Colour Propelling Pencil in accordance with special offer.

Name

Full Address

This Powerful Long Complete Story of Barbara Redfern & Co. is No. 2 of a grand series featuring stormy Christine Wilmer.

HER ONLY FRIEND in the FOURTH!

By
HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER



Christine Wilmer, the finest tennis player at Cliff House, is treated as an outcast, thanks to her ungovernable temper. There is only one girl who believes she can make good, and that girl is Barbara Redfern. Babs strives might and main for Christine's sake, and in so doing finds girls turning against her as well.

dawn upon her mind. Rather resentfully she frowned. "You mean—she's with Christine Wilmer?"

Mabs nodded.

"Oh!" Clara said again. "When's she coming back?"

For no earthly reason apparently, Mabel Lynn reddened. Bessie Bunter, also crimsoning, blinked agitatedly behind her thick, round spectacles. Clara began to glare.

"Dumb?" she inquired pleasantly.

"She—she didn't say!" Bessie stammered. "But it must be sus—soon, you know. She must have been with Christine for over an hour now."

"And she's still there?" Clara demanded.

"Well, yes." Mabs assented.

Clara nodded. Her face was a little grim all at once. Neither very readily nor very easily could blunt, plain-speaking, unimaginative Clara Trevlyn forgive Christine Wilmer for what had recently happened. She, like every other girl in the Fourth, had no use for Christine Wilmer, who had not only played fast and loose with the tennis team, but who, in a fit of revenge, was presumed to have burned down the sports pavilion of Junior Side.

Christine, anyway, was under the shadow of expulsion—and the odds were that as soon as Cliff House's headmistress, Miss Primrose, returned to the school, expulsion would be her fate. Meantime, she was an outsider, cold-shouldered, and scorned, received with hostility by the rest of the Form—a girl who was an outcast.

But Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form—ah, that was different.

For Babs was Clara's friend, just as Babs was the dearest friend of Mabs and Bessie. And Babs, in defiance of her chums, had taken up the cudgels on Christine Wilmer's behalf. Though the Form despised Christine, Babs was still championing her cause. Though the Form, as a whole, saw no earthly good in Christine, Babs was still defending her and sturdily demanding that Christine should be given another chance.

Christine, alone, had been banished to the lonely exile of Study No. 13. Babs, in consequence, to the disgust of the Form, was spending rather more time than her chums thought necessary in Study No. 13. Clara frowned fiercely.

"You mean, she's still sticking by her?" she asked.

Not Popular in Study No. 4



"**W**HOOPEE, news!" chortled Clara Trevlyn, the long-legged games captain of Cliff House's Junior School, as she flung open the door of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form passage. "We're to meet Courtfield High School in the second round of the junior tennis championship, Babs. At home, too! Oh—"

and then Clara, having entered the study, paused and stared at the two girls who occupied it with some uncertainty.

"Oh, so Babs isn't here? Where is she?" she asked.

Mabel Lynn, her golden hair glinting in the light of the cheerful sun which poured through the window, bit her lip. She glanced at fat Bessie Bunter seated in the armchair before the empty grate.

"Well, she—she's out, you know," Bessie said uncomfortably.

"Out? Where?"

"Oh, nowhere!" Mabs vaguely replied.

"Eh?" Clara stared at the two. "What's the matter with you two ninnies?" she asked bluntly. "If Babs is out she must be somewhere. Oh!" And then sudden realisation seemed to

"Well, yes," Mabs said.
Clara snorted.

"Why the dickens can't Babs see that the Form is right?" she asked fiercely. "She must know that Christine, in the long run, will let her down, the same as she's let the Form, the school, and the tennis team down. Give Christine a chance, Babs says—yes, but who's had more chances than she's had? And who, on every occasion, has pitched them away? Babs is just a chump."

Mabs reddened again.

"Well, I—I wouldn't say that," she murmured. "Babs promised Miss Charmant that she'd keep an eye on Christine—and, well, you know what Babs is when she's given a promise. I don't like Christine any more than you do, but Babs says there's good in her—"

"After burning the pavilion down because we wouldn't include her in the tennis team?" Clara sniffed.

"Well, Babs says she didn't," Mabs rejoined weakly. "Babs—" and there abruptly she broke off, staring towards the door of the study. "Oh crumbs, here is Babs," she said.

Babs it was. A pretty, oval face, crowned by a mass of glistening chestnut brown curls, dimpled in at them from the doorway at that moment. And Barbara Redfern's deep blue eyes, lighting up, laughed at them as Babs herself entered. She called behind her into the corridor.

"All right, Christine, come in! Mabs, you don't mind if Christine joins us for a few moments, do you? I want to show her something."

"Oh, n-no!" Mabs said, but the way she said it proved that her answer was made purely out of courtesy to her chum.

Babs came in. Reluctantly the girl in the corridor behind her followed. Tallish this girl, seeming just a little older than the others in the study. Her good-looking face was uncertain as she stared from one to the other.

"Oh, hallo!" she said rather awkwardly.

"Hallo!" Clara Trevlyn grunted.

A reserved silence seemed to fall upon them all. Babs coughed.

"Mabs, I've brought Christine in to show her those sketches we're doing for the next issue of Cliff House Magazine," she said hastily. "Christine is an artist—and I've just discovered it. She's keen on drawing animals, and I've persuaded her to do a page of pets for the next issue of the magazine. Don't you think that's a good idea, Mabs?"

"Oh—er, yes!" Mabs agreed, flushing.

"Don't you, Clara?"

"All right!" Clara grunted.

"And I was thinking," Babs chatted on, "that you, Mabs, might write an article to go with them. You know how keen you are on Nature stuff. I say, Clara, you're not going?" she asked.

"Well, I'm afraid I must," Clara said, shuffling doorwards. "I just called in to tell you that we're up against Courtfield High in the second round of the junior tennis championship, and we're having a practice on Junior Side after tea at six o'clock. You're a member of the team, of course."

"Oh!" Babs looked anxiously at Christine, who, at the word "tennis" had tensed a little. "Who else is practising?"

"Well, the usual crowd. You, me, Mabs, Leila Carroll, Peggy Preston, and Marcelle Biquet. Marcelle isn't hot stuff, but she's pretty reliable, and she will at least make a good reserve. Anything wrong with that?" she added.

"Nun-no," Babs said, but she looked at Christine, and Clara stiffened as she

interpreted that look. For Christine Wilmer, if the outsider of the Form, was easily the best tennis player in it—was, in fact, the holder of the junior schoolgirl championship title, and was often selected to play for the Cliff House senior team. Originally Christine had been selected for the junior team, but owing to her ungovernable temper, had lost her chance. "I—I suppose—" Babs faltered.

"No!" Clara said directly, as if reading her thoughts. And Christine, knowing very well to whom that denial referred, turned first scarlet and then white. She glared a little.

"I suppose," she said, "that meant me?"

Clara shrugged.

"Well, I'll be going," she announced, ignoring that question. "So-long, Babs. Don't forget the practice."

"Please, just a moment, Clara—"

"Six o'clock," Clara said gruffly, and went out.

A long silence fell. Mabs bit her lip; Bessie, uncomfortable, rose to put on the kettle for tea. Babs laughed, however.

"Silly old Clara," she said. "But never mind her! Now, Christine, these sketches. Mabs, we want your advice about this, too."

Mabs flushed.

"Well, do—do you mind if we talk about it some other time?" she asked. "I've just remembered we—we haven't any sugar. I'll go down to the tuckshop and get some."

"Meaning," Christine burst in, "you'll be jolly glad to get away from present company—"

"Christine!" Babs anxiously put a hand upon her arm. Her eyes were pleading as she looked into the storm signs which were slowly gathering in the other's face. "Please, Christine, don't—don't quarrel," she faltered. "Remember—"

"But—"

"Remember," Babs said warningly.

And Christine bit her lip as with a conscious effort she controlled herself. Remember—yes! She had promised Babs, because Babs had stood by her and was still standing by her, that she would do her best to control and overmaster that fiery temper of hers, which so far had proved her downfall.

But it was hard to keep control when Babs, the girl she admired more than any other in the school, was being treated like this—by her own chums—on her account.

And then before any of them could say another word, the door opened again. It was the haughty, rather sharp face of Lydia Crossendale, the snob of the Fourth, who looked in this time.

"Oh, Barbara, could you lend me—" she began, and then, seeing Christine, broke off. "Oh, so you're here!" she said.

"Any objection?" Christine flared.

"Why should I?" Lydia shrugged. There had been a time, not far distant, when Lydia and Christine had been quite friendly, but since it had been noised abroad that Christine, formerly one of the richest girls in the school, was now the daughter of a bankrupt father, Lydia characteristically had no further use for her. "It's not my study. I don't see why," she retorted, with stinging mockery, "if Mabs & Co. aren't particular what sort of company they keep, I should be. Babs, can you lend me some tea?"

Christine's eyes glistened. Her hands clenched.

"Look here—"

"Christine—" Babs cried.

"Oh, let her have it out," Lydia gibed. "She always feels so much better, don't you, Christine darling, when

you've hit a mistress or burned a pavilion, or something. At the same time," she added thoughtfully, "it is about time you found it, Christine."

"Found what?" snapped Christine.

"That temper you lost when you came to Cliff House! Whoops! Keep her off!"

For Christine had suddenly flamed. Christine was touchy on the subject of that temper of hers. With quick fury she took a step towards Lydia. Anxiously Babs caught her and tugged her back.

"Christine—" she panted. "Oh crumbs! Mabs—fling Lydia the tea!"

Without a word Mabs pitched the packet across the room. Lydia caught it, with a light laugh.

"Thanks," she said, and turned towards the door. "Let you have it back when I've been to the tuckshop. Frightfully sporting of you, I'm sure. Keep hold of the wildebeest, Babs! Bye-bye, Temper!" she gibed.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Christine.

The door closed.

"That cat—" Christine breathed fiercely.

"All right, all right, she doesn't matter," Babs said soothingly. "Now, Christine, sit down. Bessie, is that kettle on? Mabs, what about laying the table? Christine will give you a hand, won't you, Christine?" she asked eagerly. "Then we can talk about those sketches. Bessie, where are you going?"

"Well, just—just to get some bread," Bessie mumbled, with a nervous blink at Christine.

"But we've got some."

"Well, we—we want some more, you know," Bessie said. "That—that's stale, you know. That—that—oh crumbs!" she added, as she caught Christine's eyes, and with haste made for the door. "I—I won't be long," she stuttered.

"Meaning," Christine scoffed, "she won't come back until I go! Babs, let me go, please. It's no good. I'm not wanted here—and I'm sure," she added, "I don't blame them. You're the fool, Babs, for having anything to do with an outsider like me! Let me go! I'll tea in Study No. 13."

"Don't be a ninny, Christine! Of course we want you! Don't we, Mabs?"

Mabs, however, set her lips. Not even for Babs' sake would Mabs have told a lie in those circumstances.

"Well—" she started slowly.

"Oh, stuff!" Christine irritably broke loose. "No, don't you go!" she added, as Mabs looked towards the door. "It's pretty plain I'm not wanted! Good-bye!"

And, breathing heavily, she strode from the study.

"Babs—" Mabs muttered.

Babs turned upon her.

"Really, Mabs, you ought—"

"Well, I'm sorry!" Mabs said, rather anxiously.

"I do think," Babs said, with a glint of bitterness, "you might try to hide your feelings, Mabs. Christine's only doing her best, and it's up to us to give her a chance—"

She half-stepped towards the door. Mabs, however, caught at her sleeve.

"Babs—Babs, wait a minute, you old chump! Oh, Babs, what's the matter?" Mabs cried. "Why the dickens do you persist in keeping chummy with that girl? You know what the Form thinks of her!"

"Yes, I know. And I know," Babs said angrily, "what I think of her! Oh, I'll own she hasn't been too good in the past; I'll own she's got the very dickens of a temper. But she didn't jolly well burn the pavilion down, Mabs. She didn't do half those rotten things she's accused of doing, and—well, I've

promised to stand by her. I'm trying to help her. Now let me go!"

"Babs, where—"

"To Study No. 13!"

"But what about tea?"

"I'm having tea in Study No. 13!"
And she went out.

The Chance Babs Got Her!



STUDY NO. 13 was not in the Fourth Form corridor. It was, in fact, situated several yards along the corridor which led to the Fifth Form quarters. Its number—the significant 13—had been sufficient in the past to dub it unlucky. Since Christine Wilmer's occupation of it, however, it had received another name—"Outsider's Study!"

For Christine, to all Cliff House, was the Outsider now. It was her temper which had earned her that title.

But Christine was not a bad girl. Christine, indeed, had many fine points. Circumstances had brought her into conflict with Clara Trevlyn over tennis.

Then had come the fire which had destroyed half Junior School's pavilion. Christine had been accused, and Christine had not denied it.

And yet, had the school only known it, there was a reason for Christine's silence. The reason was—Babs' younger sister of the Third Form, Doris.

For it was Doris, all unwittingly, and even unknown to herself, who had accidentally fired the pavilion. Christine had been on the scene, and had been found there while the building was fully ablaze.

Caught in those circumstances, Christine's own reckless reputation had been sufficient to condemn her, and since Christine, too scornful to deny the charge, had been condemned, she was now under the shadow of expulsion. Only Babs believed in her. Only Babs was not satisfied that the guilt for that fire was not hers. With Babs' help, in a saner frame of mind now, she was trying to make good at Cliff House.

This was how her efforts were being received!

She didn't blame Babs or Clara—no. She had earned the opinion they had of her! But it was bitter to feel, while she was so anxious to do the right thing, they should treat her like this! Still

more bitter was it to feel that Babs was being dragged down with her!

Savage her mood as she flung off down the corridor. What chance was there for a girl like her?

She reached Study No. 13—hateful apartment, with its hard and comfortless furniture, and with, now that her beloved and indulgent father was bankrupt, no money wherewith to purchase those little extra necessities and luxuries which would have made her life so immeasurably more endurable.

Irritably she flung the door open; tempestuously she kicked it back with her heel. The door slammed—crash! And simultaneous with that crash there was another in the corridor outside.

Christine did not heed that, however. She flung herself into a chair.

Then the door flew open.

And Christine blinked at the angry figure of Miss Bullivant which appeared there.

Miss Bullivant, during Miss Primrose's absence, was acting headmistress of Cliff House. There was no love lost between her and Christine.

"Christine, how dare you!" she choked.

Christine blinked.

"Eh?"

"How dare you, I say—how dare you, miss!" Miss Bullivant was almost quivering with anger. "Will you never behave better than a hooligan? Come here—come here at once!"

Christine flushed. What had she done?

But she stood up. She went to the door. Majestically Miss Bullivant swept back, pointing at the ruins of a picture on the corridor floor. Frame and glass were smashed, the picture itself—a water-colour—torn across where a slice of broken glass had cut it. Still Christine did not understand.

"Well, what?" she asked. "I didn't do that!"

"You slammed the door!" Miss Bullivant accused.

"Oh, did I?"

"And in slamming that door, you dislodged this picture hanging on the wall of the corridor!" Miss Bullivant said. "That is the result of your bad-tempered violence! Slamming doors," Miss Bullivant added, her eyes glinting, "is not tolerated in this school, Christine Wilmer, and for allowing your temper to get the better of you, you will copy out the table of logarithms in your Mathematics

Book A! Now pick up these pieces, and be sure I shall stop your pocket-money until this damage is paid for!"

Christine stood still then. It wasn't fair. The picture must have been put up rottenly, anyway, to fall like that. She clenched her hands.

"I—" she hotly began.

She paused as running footsteps sounded along the corridor, as Babs, who in one sweeping glance summed up the situation, came bursting on to the scene.

"Christine, pick those fragments up!" Miss Bullivant snapped.

"I wo—" Christine began, and then caught Babs' eye, saw Babs frantically shaking her head, and clenched her hands again to regain that control which she was losing. "It—it was an accident," she said.

"You were responsible, girl!"

"I—"

"Miss Bullivant, please," Babs begged. "Miss Bullivant—"

"Barbara, this is no business of yours. Do not interfere."

"But, Miss Bullivant—"

"And take twenty lines for persisting in interrupting!"

"Oh, dash it, that's not fair!" Christine fumed. "Babs is only trying—"

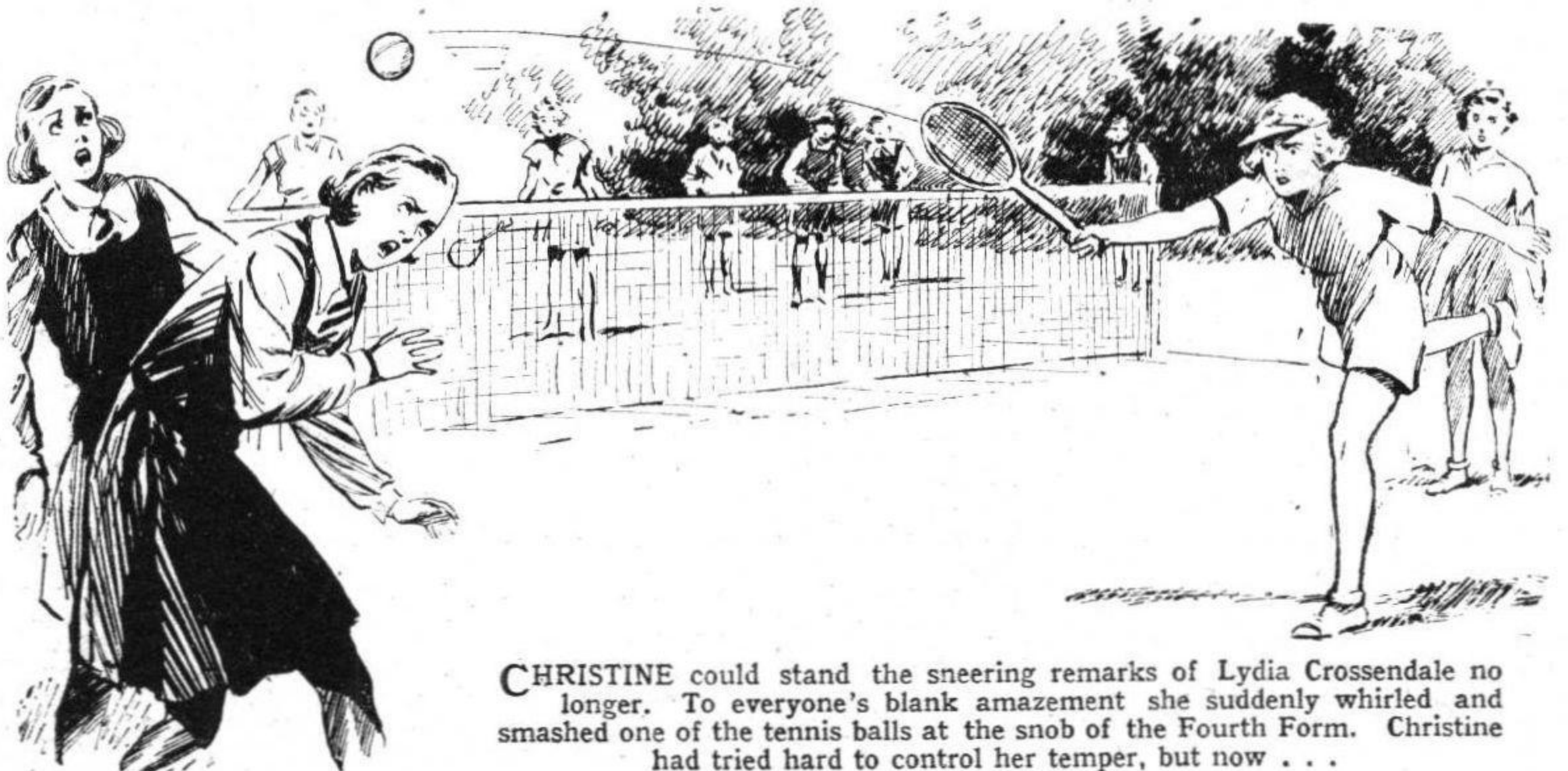
"Christine, you will now copy out the table twice," Miss Bullivant snapped. "Now obey!"

"Christine!" Babs muttered apprehensively.

The stormy one's eyes flashed. But she looked at Babs again, and she remembered. With fingers that trembled she collected the pieces, and Miss Bullivant took them as she handed them over.

"Very well, now go into your study and close the door properly," the mistress said. "Barbara, I shall expect those lines before call-over."

She rustled away. Babs shook her head. She could guess what had happened, and her sympathies in that moment were all on the side of Christine. For that picture had been rather askew for a few days now. Babs had remarked only this morning to Jemima Carstairs that the hook on which it hung appeared to be coming away from the wall, and had intended to mention the fact to the school porter, except that she had not seen the school porter. She waited till



CHRISTINE could stand the sneering remarks of Lydia Crossendale no longer. To everyone's blank amazement she suddenly whirled and smashed one of the tennis balls at the snob of the Fourth Form. Christine had tried hard to control her temper, but now . . .

Miss Bullivant had disappeared. Then quickly she stepped into the study.

Hopelessly Christine looked up.

"Christine, old thing! Cheer up!"

"Oh, but what's the good?" that girl asked despairingly. "What is the good? I'm sorry if it was my fault that picture came unstuck, but, dash it, it—it was an accident. Everybody in this beastly school has her knife into me—from Miss Bullivant down. And a nice thing, isn't it," she added bitterly, "to be deprived of my pocket money now, when I can expect no more remittances from home?"

"Never mind, Christine; I can lend you some money—"

"Yes! And who," Christine asked, "is going to pay it back? No, old Babs, thanks frightfully, but you've done too much already. I'm trying to do my best; I'm trying, goodness knows how, to turn over a new leaf, and this is the encouragement I get. I wonder," she said hollowly, "if it's worth it?"

Babs watched her anxiously.

"Christine, a fight's always worth it. Stick it, old thing! But come now, let's get down to these lines."

"But, Babs, your chums—"

"Oh, never mind!" Babs said, her lips tightening a little.

"Babs, I do mind," Christine broke out. "I won't see you suffering for my sake. You're fond of Clara, and Mabs & Co., aren't you? They're fond of you. They're your pals. It's not fair to get at loggerheads with them for the sake of a pig like I am! Why not leave me alone?"

"Christine, the lines," Babs said firmly.

"But—"

"Come on, we don't want any more bother!"

Christine stared at her. Very dangerously near to tears she looked in that moment. They were tears of gladness, however, of adoration, tears that seemed to symbolise her wonder of this girl who could be so steadfastly loyal in the face of all things. She did not reply; perhaps she couldn't. But she gave a queer little half gesture, which seemed to express all the wonder and the gratitude she felt. She sat down.

For the next half-hour they worked steadily.

As she worked, Babs was thinking. If Christine's feelings towards her were all of adoration, Babs' feelings towards Christine were of admiration. Christine, despite her moments of despairing moodiness, was making a fight of it. She was most desperately trying to control that temper of hers, and to a point she was most admirably succeeding. If Christine had a chance now, if the Form could be made to realise the change in her! If Christine, for instance, could get back into the tennis team! She looked up suddenly.

"Christine, how would you like to play tennis?"

Christine blinked.

"In the team?"

"Why not?" Babs' eyes were gleaming. "I can't promise anything; but I do know—and you know, too—that Clara is up against it. Deep down in her heart the one girl she would like most in the team is you, and I believe if only she could be persuaded that she'd give you another chance. Christine, I'm going to ask her for that chance, and I'm going to ask her now."

"Oh, Babs, it's hopeless—"

But Babs, buoyed up by her new idea, anxious at once to put it into action so that it might be possible to include Christine in this evening's practice, had gone.

Clara she found in Study No. 7. The Tomboy looked up without a smile as she entered.

"Clara, I want to talk to you seriously," Babs said. She closed the door. "About tennis—and Christine."

Clara's eyes glimmered a little.

"If that means, Babs, you want me to give her another chance—"

"It does."

"Well, nothing doing," Clara said briefly.

Babs looked a little desperate.

"Clara, please listen," she said. "No, just a minute. You'd be the last girl in this school not to give another a helping hand when she's down—and Christine's down now. Yes, I know she's got a rotten temper; I know she's done things in the past for which she's been sorry. But, Clara—honestly—that's all over. Honestly, she's doing her best to reform."

Clara breathed hard. She looked directly at Babs.

"Last week," she said, "we had all this out, Babs. You begged me then to give her another chance. I offered it to her. And what happened? She just insulted me."

"But, Clara, that was the old Christine—"

"And it was the old Christine who burned the pavilion down—out of spite?"

"No!" Babs spoke almost sharply. "Clara, she didn't do that—she didn't! Even the Christine you knew wouldn't do a thing like that—I'm sure of it!"

There was a pause. Clara took a worried step up and down the study. She seemed to be pondering. While Babs eyed her anxiously, she flung round.

"Babs," she said, "I'm sorry—no. Just for once, old girl, I'm afraid I don't see eye to eye with you—I'm tempted, I'll own. Christine is such a ripping player that if it was her play alone that counted, I wouldn't hesitate. But it's not only that, Babs—she can't be relied on. She's just as likely to let us down in front of another school as she has in front of the Form. Apart from that," she added gruffly, "the team's made up."

Babs gulped.

"Would it help," she asked, "if I backed out?"

Clara stared at her chum in utter astonishment.

"What?"

"So," Babs said steadily, "that Christine could take my place."

"Oh, Babs, don't talk rot!" Clara said shortly.

"But I'm not talking rot—I mean it!" Babs faced her resolutely. "I have faith in her, Clara. She'd do the team more good than I would. Clara—please."

Clara stared.

"Blessed if I see—" she growled, and frowned, gazing at the captain of the Junior School keenly. "Well, all right," she said. "If you really mean it all that much—well, I suppose I've got to listen. You can tell her she's to join the practice to-night. But that doesn't mean," Clara added warningly, "she's in the team."

"Clara!" Babs cried in joy.

"Oh, stuff, I'm a fool!" Clara said gruffly. "Anyway, go and tell her before I change my mind."

And Babs, with a glad laugh, pelted off.

All Lydia's Fault!



"CHRISTINE WILMER?"

"She's playing in the practice?"

"No!"

"But it's a fact!"

Cliff House juniors stared at each other with eyes of dumb amazement.

For that news certainly rather flabbergasted Junior School.

And yet there it was—on the notice-board. There it was, in Clara Trevlyn's own handwriting.

In consequence, it was quite a crowd which turned up to watch the practice on Junior Side that evening—Junior Side, still grimly marked by its half-burned-out pavilion.

And there, when they turned up, was Christine Wilmer, a little apart from the other players as she talked to Babs.

"Christine," Clara said, "partner Babs, will you? We'll start with a doubles. Leila, you partner me. Mabs, will you keep score?"

"Righto!" Mabs said.

"Right! Then let's get going."

The crowd breathed a little more tensely as the four players stepped on to the court. Clara was serving to Babs. The shot was a peach, but Babs was there, and returned deep to Leila. Leila took it on her backhand, and, with a smashing return, shot it at Christine.

Nine girls out of ten would have missed that shot—and would have been forgiven. Hurling with hurricane force across the net, it smote the ground within six inches of the sideline, and Christine seemed miles away from it. But she caught it. With a swiftness that was breath-taking she dived, and back, like a streak, went the ball into the opposing court.

Clara, desperately running, just managed to touch the ball with the edge of her racket. Then it had spun over her shoulder out of court.

A murmur of admiration, almost unwilling, went up.

Christine laughed. She dimpled with breathless delight at Babs. Oh, but this was fine; this was grand; this was topping!

She'd show them she could play tennis! She'd show them, at the same time, that they need have nothing to fear on account of her conduct in the future!

And that resolve would have been carried out if it had not been for Lydia Crossendale & Co. For Lydia, too, had heard that Christine was practising. Lydia & Co., ill-natured as they were, having no use whatever for Christine now, had come over to Junior Side to watch the game. Quite near the court and Christine they stood—near enough, indeed, for Christine to overhear the ill-natured, chuckling gibes they passed.

"Look at Temper Wilmer!" Freda Ferriers gurgled. "Trying to behave herself at last!"

Christine compressed her lips, her eyes glinted a little. "Temper" Wilmer was the name she had earned when she had been in the Lower Fifth. It was the name she hated, which was calculated to arouse her more than anything else.

"And she really does think, you know, that she can play tennis," Lydia sighed. "Poor little simp!"

"I bet she wishes that racket was a bludgeon, so that she could throw it at Clara," Frances Frost giggled.

Christine wavered. For the first time, she muffed a shot. Babs, who heard that last remark, glared daggers at Lydia & Co., and Freda, catching the glance, put out her tongue. Lydia cheered.

"Go it, Temper!"

"Show 'em what a naughty little spit-fire can do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Christine choked. Those cats! Why wouldn't they leave her alone? In spite of herself, she was beginning to quiver with anger. She ought to take no notice, of course. But how was it possible to take no notice when every audible remark was a goad?

Breathing hard, she gathered the balls for the service which was then hers. And, as she stood, there came a snigger from Lydia again. Something seemed to snap in Christine's head at that. All the self-control which she had been exerting went to the winds. Well, let them snigger! Here was a lesson for Lydia!

She threw up the ball. Round came her racket. But to the amazement of everybody, it did not sweep the ball across the court; it smote it hard and fierce in Lydia Crossendale's direction.

Just in the very nick of time, Lydia ducked, and the ball, winging its way over her head, shot straight as an arrow for the one remaining untouched window of the pavilion.

Crash!

"Oh, my hat!" spluttered Clara. "Christine, you fool!"

"And look—here comes the Bull!"

A murmur then. Glowering looks were turned upon Christine.

Miss Bullivant had seen the incident—Miss Bullivant, who had been nearly scared out of her wits when, passing the pavilion, that ball had crashed through the window. Amid an electric silence, she came bristling on to the scene.

"Christine, you wicked—you destructive girl! I saw that! Go to your study at once!"

"But—" protested Christine.

"Do as I tell you!"

"Yes, go on," Clara Trevlyn cried in disgust, and there came a little murmur from the crowd. "I'm sorry, Miss Bullivant, I ought to have known better than to play her."

"But it wasn't Christine's fault!" cried Babs.

"No; then whose was it?"

"Girls, silence!" Miss Bullivant cried. "Christine, go to your study at once!"

"I tell you—" Christine cried.

"Obey me!"

"I won't!"

"Christine!" cried Babs. "Oh, my hat! Christine, remember. Christine, be careful!" and she ran to her as Christine, sickened, her temper over now, defiantly faced the mistress. "Christine—" she pleaded.

"Barbara, leave the girl alone," Miss Bullivant said.

Christine gulped. Bitterness was in her face again. For one moment her fingers clenched round the handle of her racket. Then she saw Babs—Babs' pleading eyes. She shrugged. With a short, bitter laugh, tramped away. Tight-lipped, Miss Bullivant passed on.

"And that," Clara said witheringly, "is the girl you asked me to give another chance to, Babs. That's the girl you stuck up for—a girl who can't even control her temper on the tennis courts. And I was fool enough," Clara said bitterly, "to listen to you."

"Well, it was Lydia's fault," Babs cried. "Lydia was goading her!"

"Then, why the dickens couldn't she wait until the end of the game and goad Lydia back? Oh, rats! Anyway," Clara added, "that is the finish as far as I'm concerned, and please, Babs, don't ask me again to put her in the team. Here, I say, where are you going?" she added.

For Babs, with a face that had turned suddenly pale—Babs, who felt her own

temper beginning to rise then, was starting towards the deckchair on which she had left her blazer.

Bitterness filled her as it filled Christine. It wasn't fair, it wasn't fair! Perhaps Christine ought to have waited until the end of the game, but Christine was Christine, and nobody, apparently, was willing to make allowances for her impulsive nature.

"Babs," Clara called. "Where are you going?"

But Babs, without replying, was hurrying away.

One or two of the girls grimaced rather angrily at each other. It was obvious what they thought about Babs' behaviour.

Babs, meantime, had caught up Christine.

"Christine—"

CLIFF HOUSE PETS

No. 15

Margot Lantham's

TARTAR

TARTAR is a thoroughbred hunter, and a very fine and valuable horse.

Officially he is the property of Margot Lantham of the Fourth Form, and though there is no doubt that Tartar is very fond of Margot, he is still fonder of Margot's friend, Diana Royston-Clarke.

Tartar is the latest acquisition of the Pets' House. A two-year-old, he was given to Margot as a birthday present by her father, Lord Lantham. Rather fiery and untamed was Tartar when he came to Cliff House, and even Margot, expert little horsewoman as she is, had difficulty in handling him.

For a time, indeed, it seemed that nobody else ever would subdue Tartar, and even when Diana first tried to ride him he rewarded her by flinging her into a ditch. That, of course, angered Diana; and only made her all the more determined to get the better of Tartar. As Diana has a rather wonderful power over horses she eventually succeeded, and though Margot may still be Tartar's mistress, Diana has a way of regarding him as her own pet.

Tartar has won many prizes for Margot in the various trials in which he has competed, but perhaps his greatest effort has been under Diana's inspiration.

That happened quite recently, when Diana and Margot, out riding—Margot on Tartar and Diana on a "hack"—rather foolishly tried to race the train which runs from Courtfield to Lantham. Going at full gallop over the downs, Tartar suddenly stumbled, throwing Margot who, in falling, hit her head. In a moment Diana had dismounted. Margot, bleeding from the forehead, was lying unconscious and it was obvious that medical aid would have to be summoned at once.

Apart from that, it had begun to

"Oh!" she said. "Oh, dud-dear! I sus-say, I'm just going, you know. Ahem!" And she blinked rather flusteredly at Christine, hastily gathered her sheets of papers together, and moved towards the door. Christine, however, stopped her.

"All right," she said, "don't be in such a hurry, Bessie Bunter. I know why you're going—because of me, eh? Well, I'm not stopping, thanks. I've a study of my own to go to, and I'll push off. So long, Babs."

She went out through the door again. Babs threw Bessie one look. But she did not remain. As Christine was striding along the corridor she flew after her.

Just where the corridor turned she caught up with her. And then she stopped.



rain, and thunder was rolling in the heavens.

With an effort Diana flung Margot across Tartar's back, then mounted the animal herself. It was six miles to the nearest hospital, and that six miles, in spite of the most terrific thunderstorm Diana had ever experienced, was completed in just over twenty minutes.

Arrived at the hospital, the doctor congratulated Diana on her plucky action, saying she had probably saved Margot from a lengthy illness. As it was, Margot, after a fortnight in hospital, completely recovered, and her first action upon returning to school was to thank Diana for the part she had played. "Yoicks," Diana said, "don't thank me—thank Tartar."

A very fine animal indeed is Tartar, but one which Cliff House as a whole regards with respect. Nobody, except Margot and Diana—not even Lady Patricia Northanson—has dared to ride him; and probably nobody else ever will.

Margot, naturally is fond of him, and like the good sport and horse-lover she is, is not in the least jealous of Tartar's affection for Diana.

The girl turned. Her brow was moody.

"Oh, Babs, leave me alone!" she cried.

"But listen, old thing—"

"Please," Christine said impatiently, and then turned and squarely faced her. "Babs, what's the good?" she cried. "Why put up with a rotter like I am? I do my best—but, well, that was just too much—"

"Christine," Babs said patiently, "let's go up to my study."

"What's the good—"

"Please," Babs insisted firmly.

And gently she pulled at her sleeve. Christine hesitated. Then, with a shrug, she turned. Not a word she spoke until Study No. 4 was reached. Babs peered in.

Bessie Bunter was there, writing lines. She frowned as Christine came in.

For out of the door of Study No. 13 three girls had suddenly rushed. Babs caught a glimpse of them as, giggling, they sped along the corridor.

"Lydia & Co.!" she cried.

Christine's eyes glinted. Angrily she took a step forward. But again Babs was at her side.

"Steady, old thing," she warned.

"They've been playing tricks in my study."

"Never mind. Come on."

Christine breathed fiercely. But she did not go in pursuit of Lydia as was her intention. Rather fiercely, however, she strode along behind Babs to the study. Babs flung the door open. And then both stood staring.

Christine's eyes flashed.

"The—the cats!" she choked.

For scrawled across the mirror in chalk was a message. It said:

"Get out of Cliff House! No one wants you!"

Babs set her teeth.

"The—the cats!" Christine choked again. "The rotten, insulting cats! But, my hat, I'll make them sorry for that!"

She glared furiously round the study. She saw her duster lying soaked in ink—another spiteful little act of Lydia & Co.

She grabbed it up, savagely wiped clear the insulting notice from the mirror. Then she whirled, and at that moment the door opened and the face of Lydia Crossendale peered round the jamb.

Lydia was grinning mockingly.

"Got my message, Temper?" she asked cheekily. "I really think——"

On top of all that happened, that was too much for Christine. Her arm flashed out.

Smack! went the duster, full into Lydia's mocking features, and Lydia, with a suffocated gasp, went reeling back into the corridor. Babs nodded grimly.

"Jolly well serve you right," she said. "You asked for that!"

"What, what—Lydia!" and Babs froze as she heard Miss Bullivant's voice. "Lydia, what is this? What is that filthy thing on your face, my girl?"

"Christine threw this duster at me," Lydia hooted.

"What? Christine——" Angrily Miss Bullivant peered in at the door. "Christine—again! What is the meaning of this?"

"Ask her!" Christine said grimly.

"Lydia——"

"Please, Miss Bullivant, I—I don't know," Lydia said, wiping a smear of ink from her features. "I—I just popped my head in at the study, you know. I—I wanted to borrow some chalk. Then Christine just flung this at me."

"Why, you fibber!" cried Babs.

"Barbara, don't interrupt. And I object to you calling Lydia names."

"Well, she is a fibber," Babs blazed. "She did nothing of the kind! Lydia—oh blow!" she added, realising in her heat that she was on the point of sneaking. "It wasn't Christine's fault!"

"I think," Miss Bullivant said icily, "I am the best judge of that, Barbara. Christine, you do not deny you flung that duster?"

"No," Christine said resignedly.

"But, Miss Bullivant, you ought to know——" Babs blurted.

"Barbara, have I to warn you again?"

"No. But—oh, dash it, it's not fair!"

"Barbara—silence!" Miss Bullivant thundered. "How dare you accuse me of being unfair? I plainly perceive," she said angrily, "that what both you and Christine require is a lesson—and a lesson you shall have. Go to the detention-room—both of you, and go this instant! I will send Sarah Harrigan to look after you."

Christine, with a smouldering, sulky look, clenched her hands. But Babs warningly shook her head.

They went, while Lydia, slyly chuckling, continued on her way.

Babs Speaks Out!



"BABS," Clara Trevlyn announced, with grim decision, "is just off her rocker. If she goes on sticking up for that wildcat at this rate, she'll go and get herself expelled with Christine. And I

say," Clara said fiercely, "that we've jolly well got to do something about it—and we'll jolly well do it as soon as she comes out of detention."

Her words were received in silence in Study No. 4. But it was a silence which had in it the quality of agreement.

There were four girls in the study. Clara herself, Mabs, Janet Jordan, and Leila Carroll. Tennis practice was over, and only a few minutes ago the chums had received the news that Babs, with Christine, was in detention. Clara eyed them.

"Well, everyone agreed?"

"Well, it—it does seem that we ought to do something," Mabs said hopelessly. "It isn't like Babs——"

"That bad-tempered rotter!" Janet Jordan put in fiercely. "I can understand Babs sticking up for somebody who's down, but there's no sense in sticking up for anyone who's just determined to go to the bad. The worst of it is that some of the girls are already saying that Babs is not fit to be captain——" and then she stopped and reddened as the door opened, as Babs herself, with rather a wondering stare at her chums, came in accompanied by Christine.

"Oh!" she said. "I—I didn't know you were all here. Christine, just a moment, and I'll get those pets' photographs for you."

"Babs, we want to talk to you," said Clara. "It concerns Christine, so she might just as well hear what we've got to say as well as you. Come in," she invited.

Babs stared at them as Christine came in.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"We're your pals, Babs," said Clara. "As far as I remember we've never had any serious differences in the past, and we're just trying to straighten things out now before they get worse. We want to remain your chums, but we're not jolly well going to have Christine in the Co. as well."

"Thanks, I'll go!" Christine said tartly.

"No, wait a minute." Babs caught her arm. She looked round. "Is this some sort of ultimatum?" she asked quietly.

"Not exactly——"

"You mean——" It was Christine who spoke, very quietly, very decisively, "that if Babs doesn't give me up, you'll give her up?"

Clara moved uncomfortably.

"Well, we don't mean that," she said gruffly. "What we mean is to give Babs a warning. Babs is letting us down the same as you, Christine, are letting her down."

"And unless," Christine said, her eyes beginning to glitter, "Babs gives me up, she'll go on letting you down? Well, O.K. for my part. The last thing I want to see is Babs parted from her friends."

"But, Christine——" Babs cried.

"Let me go," Christine said thickly, and strode from the study.

Babs faced her chums. Her eyes were steely now. She understood; they didn't. They, instead of making things easier for herself and Christine, were, with the most good-natured intentions in the world, only making them worse.

"And that," she said rather bitterly, "is the way you're helping out, is it? Well, now you've had your say, listen to mine. We're chums; we always will be I hope—but I don't just agree with you about Christine. I've said I'm sticking by her. I am sticking by her. So that ends the matter."

"And letting the Form down at the same time!" Clara cried.

"I'm not letting the Form down."

"No?" Clara herself was bridling then. "It's not letting the Form down to leave tennis practice so that you can run after that outsider?" she cried. "It's not letting the Form down to have the Bull practically telling you you aren't fit to be skipper?"

Babs' lips compressed.

"Don't you think," she asked, "we'd better say no more about it? I don't want to quarrel, and I won't quarrel. But rightly or wrongly, whoever likes it and whoever doesn't, I'm standing by Christine! That's all."

And Clara gazed at her angrily as, very upright, she stood and faced them; while from Mabs, sitting in the corner, came a sound that was almost like a cry.

An Unfortunate Good Deed!



PERHAPS, after that, it was only natural that there should be a slight cooling of relations among Babs and her friends. The atmosphere in Study No. 4 that evening was, in consequence, of not too happy a nature. Clara, in Study No. 7 growled like a bear with a sore head whenever she was spoken to.

Babs herself was truly miserable. She hated this unhappy feeling between herself and dear old Mabs and Bessie, but Babs, at the same time, was sticking to her guns. She was Christine's only friend. While Christine knew that, it was possible to keep uppermost the good in Christine.

And Christine was trying. In class the next morning, during the first lesson, which was being taken by Miss Bullivant, it warmed Babs' heart to see the way Christine was quietly and industriously working.

Babs was watching Christine, when Muriel Bond, with a wary glance at Miss Bullivant's downbent head, leant across from her desk.

"For Christine," she whispered.

And she slipped towards Babs a piece of paper.

Babs took it, withdrawing her hand quickly as Miss Bullivant looked up. She glanced round, marking the interested, sneering grin on Lydia Crossendale's face as she gazed towards her.

She looked at the folded paper in her hand again, and Lydia nodded, proving very plainly that she was its author, and pointing at Christine—who was sitting next to Babs—at the same time.

Babs' eyes glimmered a little then. She had a feeling—very natural—that the contents of that paper would not please Christine. Under cover of the desk, she opened it. And then her lips compressed.

The paper contained a caricature. It depicted a girl, obviously meant to be Christine. She had a flaming torch in one hand, with which she was setting fire to a wooden building, with a bludgeon in the other, which she was bringing down upon the head of a diminutive junior, who was in the act of falling unconscious. Underneath was a caption:

"Temper Wilmer Does Her Stuff."

Babs' eyes flashed. Just as luck would have it, Christine, at the same instant, looked towards her. Her eyes at once fell upon the caricature. Her hands clenched.

"Why——"

"Christine!" Babs muttered. "Christine, remember——"

"Barbara, take twenty lines for talking in class!" Miss Bullivant snapped.

Babs sighed. But Christine, brought to a stop by that "remember!" bit her lip. While Babs crunched the caricature in her hand, Christine started round. She saw for a moment the gloating face of Lydia, and her eyes glimmered. That cat—again! All right! Let her wait!

"Babs, I'm sorry!" she muttered.

Babs nodded, but as Christine, her lips tight, bent over her work again, she drew a piece of paper towards her. Not knowing that Christine was watching, she wrote: "Don't be a mean cat!" Then she nudged Muriel.

"Pass it to Lydia Crossendale," she muttered.

"Barbara!" Miss Bullivant snapped.

"Oh, crumbs! Y-yes, Miss Bullivant?"

"What is that you are passing to Muriel?"

"I—"

"Bring it here—bring it at once!"

Babs, biting her lip, stepped in front of the class with the note in her hand. Miss Bullivant snatched it and opened it.

"Oh!" she said. "So this is how you, captain of the Form, spend the time you should be using for lessons! And for whom, Barbara, was this insult intended?"

Babs reddened.

"Answer me, girl!"

"Well—Lydia!" Babs blurted. "She jolly well asked for it—"

"I see!" Miss Bullivant tore the note across. "As you are so fond of writing notes, Barbara, you will sit in detention this afternoon and write them under the direction of the prefect on duty. Now go to your place!"

Two girls immediately sprang up in their seats. One was Clara Trevlyn, the other, her face suddenly flaming, was Christine.

"Miss Bullivant—" Clara cried.

"Well?"

"Miss Bullivant— Oh, my hat! Babs is wanted for tennis practice this afternoon."

"Clara, please sit down. Barbara should have thought of that. Christine, you sit down, too."

"In a minute," Christine cried. Her face was flaming suddenly. "It's not fair that you should punish Babs—" she broke out.

"Christine—" cried Babs.

"Christine, how dare you?" Miss Bullivant choked.

"I say it's not fair!" Christine flamed. "If Babs is to be gated, so should Lydia!"

"Christine, for that you are detained also."

"Well, that doesn't matter, does it?" Christine asked bitterly. "I'm detained, anyway—from now until Miss Primrose comes back. But I can't sit here and see Babs blamed for everything. She only wrote that note because of me. Lydia jolly well started it, because Lydia," Christine cried, "wrote this first."

And she held up the crumpled ball.

"Sneak!" Lydia hissed.

"Lydia—Christine! My word, what is this Form coming to?" Miss Bullivant stormed, while Babs stood in front of the class and desperately shook her head. "Christine, bring that to me—at once!"

There was silence as Christine angrily strode out. Lydia's face was bitter. Sneaking, it might be; but there were degrees even in sneaking, and if the Form had no use for Christine, they had to admire her principle of sticking up for Babs. Miss

Bullivant smoothed the caricature out, looked at it.

"You did this, Lydia?"

Lydia could not deny it.

"Very well. For this you also will do a detention task this afternoon. At the same time, Barbara, this does not excuse you. As Form captain, you should know better. Now go back to your places, all of you."

They went back. Clara Trevlyn was looking stormy. This afternoon was the only half-holiday before the match, and the only long session of practice that could possibly be put in. Babs, next to Clara, was the best player in the team. And Clara had intended to make the practice a sort of dress rehearsal for the big event. Now—

Break came—fortunately, without further disturbance. Babs, in company with Christine, went out. Christine worriedly shook her head.

"Babs, I'm sorry! I seem to be bringing you nothing but bad luck—"

"Oh, stuff!" Babs said. "Oh—er—Clara!" she called, as that girl came out.

Clara, rather grim-lipped, stopped.

"Well?"

"I—I'm sorry about the practice."

"Rather late, isn't it?" Clara asked tartly, and stared at Christine. "Pity you didn't think about that before."

"You see?" Christine said bitterly as Clara walked off. "That's what they think of you. Do them a good turn, and they'll be all over you; do me one, and you're not fit to be spoken to! It's not fair, Babs—it's not fair!"

Babs said nothing. She was feeling just a little bitter herself. And her mood wasn't helped when that bright afternoon, in the company of Christine and the scowling Lydia, she had to sit in detention class under the watchful eye of Sarah Harrigan of the Sixth.

Afterwards Christine went off to tackle the many lines she had been given, while Babs went to Study No. 4.

Mabs and Bessie were there, and tea was laid. Rather uncertainly they looked up as she came in; rather wistful Mabs, rather pleading Bessie.

Babs nodded brightly. It was no good being down in the mouth.

"Lo, everybody!" she said. "Tea ready? Yum! I'm just ready for it!"

They sat down. But tea in Study No. 4 that day was not the bright, merry meal it usually was.

Mabs rarely spoke. Bessie seemed nervous and awkward.

"Well," Babs said at last, "I've some lines to do and other work. Like me to help clear up, Bessie?"

"Nun-no thanks!" Bessie blurted.

Babs nodded. Rather grimly she went out. As Form captain, she had many duties to perform, and, thanks to her detention that afternoon, she had had no chance to perform them—until now. She must collect impositions. Then she must get the exercise-books from Miss Belling and take them to the class-room. She'd have to warn girls about locker inspection to-morrow, too. And— Oh golly! There were those drawings she had to collect for Miss Ayres from the studio. And those maps to be hectographed for Miss Belling!

She went to Christine's study. Christine had already started on her lines. She looked up as Babs entered.

"Lo!" Babs smiled. "Christine, can I do my lines with you?"

"Yes, of course," Christine replied. "Love you to. But what's the matter, Babs? Anything else happened? You look frightfully worried."

Babs smiled.

"I am worried, but only on account of the work I've got to do," she said.

"That's one of the disadvantages of being Form captain—sometimes you never seem to have a moment to yourself."

"Babs, can I help?" Christine asked earnestly.

"I don't see how you can. But wait a minute, you could go and collect the drawings from the studio, couldn't you?" Babs asked. "If you'd do that, Christine, it would help no end. Will you?"

"Oh, yes!" Christine said.

And her face brightened with the pleasure she felt at being able to do her chum even that slight good turn.

They got on with their lines. Lines finished, Christine immediately rose. Up to the studio she went. The Fourth Form had been doing water-colour work that morning, and the paintings, having been left to dry, were spread on top of the desks. Quickly Christine collected them, smiling as she did so.

Well, that was that! She laughed a little as she picked up the last painting of all. All to do now was to hand them over to Babs. Whoa, though—that window! And suddenly she twisted as the draught from the window lifted the top sheet from her hands and gently wafted it across the floor, where it came to rest face downwards under the blackboard.

Christine made an anxious dive for it.

But, in diving, Christine knocked against the easel on which the blackboard was supported. Even as her hand touched the fallen water-colour, that blackboard came crashing down.

Too late Christine jumped aside, and then uttered a sharp cry of pain as the heavy edge of the blackboard struck her right wrist.

"Oh, my hat!"

She caught the wrist. Frenziedly she rubbed it. Oh, great goodness! Now what had she done? She stared at the throbbing, burning wrist, and winced, feeling sick and faint.

Then angrily she pulled herself together. What a weak, silly thing she was! Of course, it hurt now! Most sharp blows like that did! Once the sting went off—

Anyway, she wouldn't say anything about it to Babs. Babs would only fuss; Babs would only say that she ought to have done the job herself. A pretty rotten thing if she couldn't do such a tiny favour for Babs without having to complain afterwards that she had hurt herself. And so, when she returned to Study No. 4 with the water-colours, she said nothing to Babs.

Lydia Scores a Point!



CHRISTINE WILMER was doing her best to stifle the groan that welled to her lips.

In bed in the Fourth Form dormitory that night, Christine was in very bad pain. Under the bedclothes her wrist was burning.

She had put ointment on it; but that had apparently done little good.

"Oh!" she gasped.

She couldn't sleep with her wrist burning like this. It was no good. But what— Wait a minute! Hadn't she heard somewhere that cold running water was good for sprains?

Suddenly the sheet went back. Christine, gritting her teeth, stood up and groped for her dressing-gown. Quickly she grasped it, clumsily slung it about her. Stealthily she went out, making her way to the cloak-room

below. As soon as she had gone, the head of Lydia Crossendale bobbed up.

"Oh, my hat! I say—"

"Shurrup!" growled Clara Trevlyn

"But Temper Wilmer's gone out!"

"Well, let her go!" Clara grumbled.

"Who?" Babs, half-asleep, quickly

sat up. "Who's gone out?" she asked.

"Lydia, did you say Christine?"

"I did," Lydia sneered. "Your pal,

Babs. And that pal," she scoffed, "is

up to her old games again for a cert-

breaking bounds, and so on. Pretty

bad for her if the Bull comes in! The

Bull hasn't finished her rounds yet,"

she added, with quietly satisfied malice.

Babs' heart thudded. Where had

Christine gone? She stared towards

her bed.

And then a wave of relief swept over

her.

For she saw what Lydia, in the

chance of making more mischief for

Christine, had deliberately shut her eyes

at—Christine's clothes! They, neatly

folded on the locker, were still in posi-

tion, even though Christine's bed itself

was empty. Wherever Christine had

gone, it was not breaking bounds.

But Babs was thinking with sudden

anxiety of Miss Bullivant. The mis-

tress usually made a last round of the

dormitories before retiring herself.

Christine's bed, clearly revealed by the

moonlight, would catch her eye at once

—and then there would be more trouble

for Christine.

In a flash Babs was out of bed.

"Babs, where are you going?" Clara

cried.

"Oh, it's all right!" Babs replied.

"I'm just going to make a dummy in

Christine's bed, in case the Bull

comes—"

"Oh, you're a chump!"

Babs was hurrying towards Chris-

tine's bed then. Hastily she grabbed

the pillow. But even as she lifted it,

she stopped, her heart pounding. For

outside came the sound of footsteps.

"Babs, the Bull!" Clara hissed.

"Get back—quickly!"

But Babs did not get back. She

was thinking still of Christine. Like

lightning her mind was working. Her

own bed was in deep shadow; there was

every chance Miss Bullivant would fail

to spot that it was unoccupied.

Christine's bed, on the other hand, was

in the moonlight.

In a flash she had leapt between

Christine's sheets; anxiously she

dragged them above her head—not a

moment too soon! For even as she

settled down, the door creaked open.

Miss Bullivant peered in.

Nine times out of ten Miss Bullivant

would have taken a look round and

gone away contented. Babs felt sure

her scheme would work—and so it

would have done had it not been for

Lydia Crossendale.

Momentarily, Babs had forgotten

Lydia; but Lydia had forgotten

neither Babs nor Christine. Lydia's

own malicious spite had earned her a

detention that afternoon, but Lydia

blamed both Babs and Christine for

that, and Lydia had vowed to get her

own back. This was her chance.

While Miss Bullivant peered, and

then, satisfied, proceeded to withdraw,

from Lydia's bed went up a deep

groan.

Miss Bullivant started.

"Gracious me!" she cried. "Lydia,

is that you?"

Groan!—from Lydia.

Miss Bullivant stepped into the room,

her face concerned all at once. She

switched on the light.

"Lydia!" she cried. "Lydia, my

dear, are you all right?"

"Eh?" Lydia pretended to come out

of sleep with a surprised jerk. "Oh, I

say, the light's on!" she cried. "Oh,

Miss Bullivant, is that you?"

"Lydia, you were groaning, girl!

What is the matter?"

"Mum-matter? Nun-nothing, Miss

Bullivant. I—I must have been groan-

ing in my sleep," Lydia said. But she

looked towards Babs' bed as she said it,

and, knowing that Miss Bullivant's eyes

were full upon her, gave a pretended

start of astonishment. That action, of

course, was the cue to Miss Bullivant

to look in the same direction, and Miss

Bullivant, looking, gave a jump when

she saw Babs' tumbled bedclothes. Her

face became like a thundercloud sud-

denly.

"Lydia, where is Barbara?"

"I—I don't know," Lydia said. "She

was here a minute ago, Miss Bullivant."

"Oh!" Miss Bullivant eyed her. "I

thought," she said keenly, "you were

supposed to be sound asleep a minute

ago, Lydia."

"Well, I mean— Oh dear! It—it

must have been longer, then," Lydia

stammered, and dropped her eyes as she

intercepted Clara Trevlyn's scornful

glare. "I—I saw her moving near

Christine's bed, you know."

"Oh, you rotten sneak!" Clara hissed.

Miss Bullivant stared at the snob of

the Fourth, then she looked at Chris-

tine's bed. Babs, to cover up every

trace, had the clothes over her head.

Miss Bullivant, perhaps a little sus-

picious now—and disapproving, any-

way, of girls sleeping in a half-suffo-

cated condition—went forward and

plucked the clothes aside. Her lips

came together.

"Barbara!" she cried.

Babs, crimson with fury and dismay,

sat up.

"Barbara, get out of that bed!

Where is Christine?"

"I—I don't know," Babs said

flurriedly.

"I see." Miss Bullivant's eyes glim-

mered. "Christine is out," she decided.

"You discovered that. Hoping, doubt-

less, to hoodwink me, you took

Christine's place in her own bed.

Hardly the way for the head girl of

the Form to behave, Barbara. I must

warn you that if you continue in the

same lawless way I shall have to con-

sider seriously of relieving you of that

responsibility. As it is, you may con-

sider yourself confined to bounds on

Saturday."

"But, Miss Bullivant—"

"Miss Bullivant—" Like a jack-in-

the-box Clara, agitated, sat up. "Miss

Bullivant, no—please!" she cried.

"We're relying on Babs for the tennis

match—and the match is on Saturday."

"I am sorry," Miss Bullivant said

stiffly. "Your tennis match cannot be

allowed to interfere with school discip-

line, Clara. If Barbara will persist in

defying the school rules in order to pro-

tect Christine, Barbara must be

punished. She—" And then she

halted, as the door opened, as Christine,

a little pale, but with her eyes filled

with wonder, came in. "Christine,"

she cried, "where have you been?"

Christine blinked as she saw Babs

standing by her bed. She looked

quickly at Miss Bullivant.

"What's the matter with Barbara?"

she asked.

"That is not replying to my ques-

tion," Miss Bullivant said tartly.

"Barbara, if you must know, occupied

your bed. In order," she added grimly,

"to delude me into the impression that

you were in it. For that I have gated

her on Saturday. But, Christine—"

"Gated Babs?" Christine cried.

"Yes."

"But she's playing tennis!"

"That is no concern of mine.

Christine, where have you been?"

"I've been," Christine replied, "to

the bath-room. I went to get—some

water. But I never knew—I never

guessed— Oh, my hat! Miss Bull-

ivant, you can't gate Babs!" she cried.

"Babs was only trying to protect

me."

"Exactly!" Miss Bullivant said.

"But—but— Oh, bother it!"

Christine flared.

"Christine—please!" Babs was at

her side, was clutching her arm—for-

tunately, the uninjured one. "Steady,

old thing!" she breathed.

"Christine, go to bed," Miss Bullivant

said. "For being out of the dormitory

take a hundred lines. And I really do

fail to see," she added, "why, if you

wanted water, you could not have drunk

from the carafe above the wash-basins.

Now, please! Barbara, that also

applies to you," she added. "Good-

night!"

The light snapped out. On the Fourth

Form dormitory descended a momentary

silence. It was broken by a groan

from Clara Trevlyn.

"And so," she said, "good-bye to our

hopes!" Clara didn't mean to be

quarrelsome, but seeing dismally the

crumbling of all her hopes, it was diffi-

cult to be anything else. "I didn't

think, Babs," she added bitterly, "that

even you would have put Christine

before the Form!"

"Look here—" Christine hooted.

"Oh, be quiet!"

"No, I won't be quiet—"

"Yes, you will! You both jolly well

will!" Babs sat up in bed. "Clara,"

she added, "for goodness' sake, be

sensible! Who says I can't play in the

tennis team?"

"Well, you're gated—"

"Well"—Babs' tone held a challenge

—"what does that mean? A gating's

not a detention, chump! All it means

is that I'm not allowed out of school

bounds. The tennis match is being

played within school bounds, isn't it?

If I'm on the courts I'm still within

school bounds."

Clara paused; she hadn't thought of

that.

"Well, that's true enough," she

agreed grumpily. "Well, yes, thank

goodness for that! But, in the mean-

time, don't, for goodness' sake, go and

get yourself into more scrapes! And,

Lydia, you sneaking worm—"

But from Lydia Crossendale's bed

only came an affected snore.

Bad Luck for Babs!



SATURDAY—the day of the great tennis tournament between Cliff House juniors and the juniors of Courtfield High school—arrived.

A bright day—a fine day with its bright sun and its cloudless sky. Cliff House was bubbling over with anticipation.

But in Study No. 13 Christine Wilmer stood alone. Moodily she gazed out of the window, watching the happy groups and little processions in the quad below.

Her face was rather pale this morning. Fortunately, the worst of the pain in her wrist had gone, though it still felt heavy and still dully ached.

But Christine was not thinking of her wrist then; she was thinking of Babs. Babs, that splendid girl who, taking her

part last night, had brought further trouble and disgrace upon herself; Babs, against whom the Form was roused now into almost open hostility; who had been threatened with the suspension of her captaincy. She was responsible for that. The door opened. Babs, bright and smiling, came in.

"Hallo, Christine! All alone?" she asked. "What about a spot of tennis practice before the match?"

Christine thought of her hand. "Well, I—I've got those lines to finish," she stammered.

"O.K.!" Babs laughed. "Christine, you're not looking too good, though," she added keenly.

"Oh, I'm all right!" Christine shrugged. "Just a bit fagged, you know. I missed some sleep last night. Look, there's Clara going out," she added. "It looks as if she's thinking of practising. Why not join her, Babs? And by the way, remember to get your body more sideways to the net when you're playing a backhand shot. I've noticed that you try to face the net rather fully. Right leg well over for the backhand shots, remember!"

no chance of putting her in the team?" she asked wistfully.

"No," Clara snapped. Babs sighed. Stubborn old Clara. All the same, seeing the matter from her point of view, she couldn't really blame her.

Practice was over then. With a few words of warning, Clara dismissed her players, and Babs, rather thoughtfully, went back to the school. As she entered the Fourth Form corridor another girl, most obviously dressed for going out, came sweeping towards her. It was—

"Christine!" Babs cried in amazement. "Christine, where are you going?"

"Lantham," Christine said briefly. "Lantham!" Babs jumped. "Christine, you can't—"

"I'm going," Christine stated firmly. "I've got to go, Babs. I've just had a telephone call from my father. He's there now, but he's leaving on the twelve-thirty train, and he wants me to meet him at the station. Babs, I've just got to go!"

Babs stood squarely in her path. "Christine—no!" she cried.

Even if I should be caught it wouldn't be so bad for me."

"But, Babs, I hate—"
"Never mind that. Christine, take those clothes off. Now," Babs said. "everything's going to be all right, I tell you. I shall be back by two o'clock."

Down to the cycle-sheds she went. There, taking advantage of the hedge which screened the sheds from the school, she wheeled out her machine; two minutes later she was on the road and pelting off through Friardale Woods. That wasn't exactly the shortest cut to Lantham, but it was the least frequented, and Babs didn't want to risk running into a prefect or mistress.

On the other hand, she had not a great deal of time.

Babs pedalled hard; not a soul did she meet. She allowed herself just over half an hour to Lantham, which gave her seven minutes at the other end for a little chat with Mr. Wilmer.

And that plan would have been carried out had it not been for the sharp, flinty patch of gravel she struck



"IT'S not fair that you should punish Babs!" cried Christine. "Christine, how dare you!" choked Miss Bullivant. But Christine was defiant. Babs had stuck by her, and now she meant to stick by Babs.

Babs raised her eyebrows, and then smiled. "Why, thanks!" she said eagerly. "I'll watch that. I am a bit rocky on my backhand."

She sped off. On the courts she caught up Clara, who, surrounded by the rest of the team, regarded her a little grimly. But the Tomboy said nothing.

Clara, although she was looking forward to this afternoon's match, was not feeling too certain of victory. To be sure, she was vastly relieved that Babs would be playing; Leila was good, though not in Babs' class; but Mabel Lynn, the fourth member of the team, was definitely an uncertain quantity. And, as luck would have it, Peggy Preston had caught a cold. That ruled Peggy completely out.

The practice commenced. Babs, keen, eager now, worked with a will. Clara watched her with appreciative eyes.

"Jolly good," she said. "You seem to be placing your backhand shots more easily, Babs."

"Do I?" Babs laughed. "Christine gave me a little hint," she said, and did not miss the Tomboy's change of expression. "Clara, I—I suppose there's

"Christine, you can't! You're gated!" "Well, dash it, I'm going to be expelled, anyway!" Christine said, with some of the old mutiny in her face. "Please, Babs."

"No, wait a minute. Here, come in here!" And Babs threw open the door of Study No. 4. She tugged the girl in; then very quietly she turned. "Christine, listen to me!" she said. "And please remember your promise. You did promise, didn't you, that you wouldn't go off breaking bounds again?"

"But my father—"
"Let me go and see him for you. I can explain that you're detained."

"But, Babs, you're gated, too. And the game—"

"Well, who's to know I've gone?" Babs asked. "I can sneak off to Lantham to meet your father and be back here before two o'clock. It won't matter missing dinner, because dinner to-day is an optional meal, anyway, and the tournament doesn't start until three. Christine," she pleaded, "do let me. Don't for goodness' sake, do anything now which will mean more trouble. You can leave me to look after my end of it.

just past Courtfield. Then suddenly her tyre deflated with a hiss.

"Oh, bother!" Babs fumed. In a moment she was off her machine; in two minutes had rolled off the tyre and found the puncture. But it took her seven precious minutes to repair it, and only by pedalling furiously was she able to reach Lantham Station in time.

Even then the clock above the booking hall registered five-and-twenty minutes past twelve as she panted up the cobbled station-yard. And there, resting her bicycle against the wall, she hurried into the station itself.

And so desperately anxious was she that she never noticed the three Cliff House girls who, as she disappeared into the station, came out of the adjoining buffet.

The three were Lydia Crossendale, Frances Frost, and Freda Ferriers.

"Whoops!" Lydia chuckled. "See that, comrades? Our dear Babs! What the dickens is she doing here? She's confined to bounds. And look," she murmured, "there's her bicycle!"

The three looked at each other, malicious mischief in their faces.

(Continued on page 14)

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

PATRICIA is a friend after your own schoolgirl hearts—lively and gay, yet helpful and understanding, too. On this page, week by week, she writes to you in that chummy way so typical of her, telling you about herself and giving you news and how-to-make suggestions that are of schoolgirl interest.



HAVE you noticed how extraordinarily plentiful—and cheap!—strawberries have been this year? And that in spite of all the earlier-on grouses and grumbles of the farmers at the lack of rain!

While they have been at their cheapest, we have had them for tea and had them for supper—for all your Patricia's family are mad on strawberries, even father.

In fact, it was father who suggested that we might grow less rhubarb—which he hates—and more strawberries in the garden. But since the birds also seem to have the same tastes as he has, I don't think his plan will be very successful!

But meanwhile, we're all trying to encourage it—especially young Heath, that's my small-brother, whose full name is Heatherington (as if you didn't know, by now!)

I think he's fired by the story told by a schoolgirl who lives next door—Rosemary.

Rosemary's Form at her day school went on an excursion to a very famous jam factory last month. After looking around, the girls were turned loose in the wonderful orchards and gardens. And believe me, these kind Jam People actually invited them to tuck into as much fruit as they could.

● Lucky Girls

"I expect after you'd finished, the strawberry beds looked as if a swarm of locusts had descended on them?" I laughed.

Rosemary blushed.

"Well, I thought it would, too," she said. "But, honest, though we ate as many as ever we could manage, and made frightful pigs of ourselves, you just wouldn't have noticed one was missing. There were so many!"

Lucky Rosemary and her chums.

But that's not all. They returned to this wonder-factory and were treated to tea, if you please.

"But somehow," finished Rosemary rather bewilderedly, "I wasn't very hungry!"

Which didn't surprise your Patricia in the least.

But the end of this story is that young Heath demanded to go to this strawberry paradise.

I pointed out that he hadn't been invited. But nothing would pacify the little bully until I had taken him to a farmhouse to tea—where we had home-grown strawberries, and cream.

We were only provided with spoons for the eating of the strawberries. Not that it dulled our enjoyment in the least, though Heath did say:

"Good job mummy isn't here, or she'd make me use a fork!" and he giggled like a conspirator as he placed the biggest strawberry to the side of his plate—to leave till last!

● An Odd Mixture

There's an extra nice discovery that I have just made about the beauties of a nice, tanned skin.

Haven't you also noticed that when your face is brown, your teeth look more startlingly white—by contrast.

I have, and am very pleased about it.

My own teeth are normally those very white ones, so I'm lucky. But some girls have teeth which are just as attractive and even stronger, but—they will stain easily.

And no amount of tooth-brushing with a favourite powder or paste seems to remove those stains.

If your teeth are slightly stained like this, and you want them to be at their white and gleaming best for the sunny days when you'll smile a lot, here's a jolly good "cleansing powder" to try.

It doesn't sound too tasty, I admit, but it is certainly cheap—and is vouched for by People Who Know.

You want to mix together two teaspoonfuls of ordinary soot, and one teaspoonful of salt.

Without first wetting your toothbrush, dip it in this mixture—and scrub.

You won't be thrilled by the flavour—but you will by the result—I promise!

If mother should be a bit worried about the soot, do tell her that it really is quite pure, and so far from doing harm, can only do good.

● So Pretty

Much as this Patricia of yours likes short skirts—yes, even for herself!—there does come a time when even the most adorable skirt is really too short!

And naturally, you don't want to discard one that you like so much.

So what about lengthening it and turning it into the smart little pinafore style shown in the picture?

I'm sure mother's piece bag would yield a piece of material that is nearly a yard square. This should be cut into long strips that are six inches wide.

Machine these strips along on the wrong side and turn inside out and press.

Then, after dropping the skirt the required number of extra inches, sew one of these strips around the top of it to make a belt. Sew long straps that go right over your shoulders to this band. And



then sew two cross pieces from one shoulder band to the other.

This very attractive garment worn over a dainty blouse would make a perfect week-end or holiday outfit.

● A Service Tip

Rosemary, the schoolgirl I mentioned earlier, is frightfully keen on tennis. And she's just learning to do the over-arm service. (Don't you agree with me that it's such a pity so many young people are encouraged to use the underarm when beginning? It would be so much better I think, if they started with the over-arm. Then there is no need to do any UNlearning afterwards. Which is the stage Rosemary is at just now.)

"I'd be awfully bucked, Pat," she said to me, "if you'd try to help me with my service. It doesn't seem to have the power, somehow, that it should have."

I watched, and then told her that she was making the mistake that many youthful tennis players make.

She was swiping the ball well and truly but she was not using her shoulder sufficiently.

Her movement was chiefly from the elbow.

"You're not beating carpets, you know, Rosemary," I told her. "Your service won't be powerful while you throw the ball in front of your face and just pat—however hard you do it."

Rosemary listened intently, after smiling at the carpet-beating reference.

"You must swing the whole length of your arm UP and BEHIND you," I finished like an expert, "so that you strike the ball with the full stretch of your arm."

Poor Rosemary; it was a shame to nag her. But, being the nice young thing she is, she was frightfully grateful.

Bye-bye, pets, until next week, then!

Your tennis-expert friend,
PATRICIA.

P.S.1.

You did see the joke about my being a tennis expert, I hope. For I'm not really!

P.S. 2.

I've got my two coupons saved towards the Four-coloured Propelling Pencil. But perhaps I shouldn't boast, for I expect you have, too.

However, even if you haven't, you can start this week, you know. It will only mean you'll have to collect for a week longer. I hope you're also saving a penny a week towards that sixpence. So far I have a brand-new threepenny piece towards mine, which I have hidden away very carefully so that I'm not tempted to spend it with the ice-cream man.

P.S.3.

If any of you are in doubt as to what all this talk of Four-Colour Propelling Pencil is about, just turn to page 2. That's all—much as I'd like to write a fourth P.S.

FADE AWAY, FRECKLES!

Some helpful advice from PATRICIA for the girl who is worried by too many freckles this weather.

JUST for a start, I think we must all realise that there are freckles AND freckles.

There are those that are just a charming spattering of colour on the nose, which remind your admirers of film stars Janet Gaynor and Myrna Loy—who are freckle-owners.

Then there are those which can make the owner look rather like a Dalmatian. (No not a native of Dalmatia, but the plum-pudding dog, you know!)

The first type of freckle can be charming, giving the owner an enviable outdoor look of cheery youthfulness that will make her much admired.

The second type are not always attractive—so we'd better do a little something about them, rather than you should be worried.

WISE PRECAUTIONS

And now I'm going to be rather discouraging, for I'm going to tell you first what NOT to do, so that you can avoid freckles.

For, I may as well admit, that it is much easier to keep them at bay than to get rid of them once they have arrived! And that's being perfectly frank—which I'm sure you will admit is as it should be among friends.

First, you thickly-freckled young people, you must—you simply must protect that delicate skin of yours. (Yes, it honestly is much finer skin than that of your chums who don't freckle.)

One way to protect it is by always wearing a shady hat when the sun is at its freckle-making hottest. I know this sounds rather dull for you who like to go hatless, but still, it's my advice, and I'm sticking to it.

A very clever sun hat that I saw the other day seemed to consist entirely of brim!

Just supposing mother has a hat she'd allow you to cut up, you could make a very attractive holiday "chapeau" from it. Chop out the crown, and trim the inner edge of the brim with coloured ribbon or material.

Tie a scarf over your hair and then place

the brim over this. It'll look charming—and so smart.

Should you refuse to wear a hat because you know you look so nice in one of those head-scarves, well I can't stop you. But I do beg of you to wear sun-glasses all the time you're in the sun. (Those with white rims are considered very elegant by all the Bright Young Things—and cost only sixpence to you, though, perhaps more to them!)

The third precaution is one for holiday-time—when you'll see I am presuming that you're simply refusing to wear that hat.

SO SMOOTH

You should pour a little milk into a saucer, dip a clean rag in it and smear this all over your face.

Cheer up, you won't look funny! As a matter of fact, you'll look rather stunning. No shine, but a lovely petal-smooth finish to your skin this will give. And not only will it keep out the freckle-making rays of the sun, but it will also keep your skin satin-smooth.

So much, then, for keeping away those freckles, those of you who have a feeling they're coming this year.

Now we'll suppose you already have a crop, and so we must do our best to fade them.

BLEACHING TRICKS

A slice of tomato rubbed over the freckles is definitely bleaching. Do this at night, after washing your face as usual, and allow the juice to remain there while you sleep. Wash it off in the morning, and apply a dab of milk for day-time.

Next time, or when the tomatoes are all gone, try using a slice of cucumber, instead. This all sounds very salad-y, but I assure you that both these favourites of the salad bowl are very bleaching, and will tone down freckles in no time, if you persevere.

A more drastic treatment is for you who have almost given up hope of dispersing your freckles—and one that I only want you to try after the others.



I want you to smear a few drops of the juice of a fresh lemon (bottled lemon won't do) over the freckled areas at nighttime.

But—one word of warning—this is NOT good for the skin itself. For lemon juice, as you know, is acid, and acids dry the skin.

So you must make up for this action. In the morning, after washing, you must on no account forget to rub some cold cream into that part of the skin where you applied the lemon juice the night before.

Also, I don't want you to try this "treatment" every night.

Say you use the lemon juice on a Monday (and the cold cream on Tuesday morning), then on Tuesday and Wednesday nights I want you to use the tomato or the cucumber treatment.

On the Thursday you might apply the lemon juice again—and again not forgetting that cold cream on Friday morning. (I'm sorry to keep on repeating myself like this, but it really is important.)

Naturally, you won't feel inclined to slice a new lemon in half every time you want a drop or so of the juice. So here's a way of extracting just sufficient of the juice without waste.

Jab a bone knitting needle or wood skewer into one end and then squeeze out a few drips. Return the lemon to where it was—and you'll find the hole will seal itself up again, so that the lemon, looking almost as good as new, can be used again.

What with the precautions and what with the "cures," I shouldn't be at all surprised if I don't have a peculiar feeling this summer—a feeling of something missing.

And it will be—those freckles. (From which, you may conclude, quite rightly, that I rather like them myself!)



SUMMER FANCY DRESSES!

Two easy-to-make fancy costumes for summer parties or the cruise.

"PLEASE wear fancy dress," say some invitations to parties out-of-doors round about this time of the year.

Hotels, boarding-houses, and holiday camps where there is dancing, often have a gala evening when they like the guests to "dress up," too. And, of course, on the cruise, a fancy-dress dance is the most-looked-forward-to event of the trip.

So here are two very simple, and yet very effective fancy dresses that are particularly suitable for summer wear and which you can make yourself.

SO PERKY

If you are petite, perky (and, of course, pretty), you would look charming as a dainty French doll.

Over a short-sleeved blouse—the fluffier the better—wear a very short, full skirt made of checked gingham, with straps over the shoulders. (If you haven't a frock this could be made from, you could actually make it yourself in no time from two yards of gingham at sixpence a yard.)

Wear a large bow of this material at the neck of the blouse and on your hair.

Avoid stockings, but wear short socks if you like, and on your dancing shoes sew large bows to match the skirt.

SO DEMURE

The tallish, slim girl with dark, straight hair would make a charming Japanese

Lady, especially if she is the lucky possessor of a gaily-flowered kimono. (If not, perhaps it would be possible to borrow one.)

Wrap this tightly around you, over your petti, and keep it in position with a wide ribbon sash.

Brush your dark hair smooth until it gleams and then tuck a red or blue flower into it over the ear. (Sew the flower on to a "grip" for security.)

Wear flat, sandal shoes, walk with tiny, shuffling steps, and wave your fan when the dress parade is on.

And let's hope you win a prize!



(Continued from page 11)

"Very tough for Babs if she lost her bicycle—what?" Lydia chuckled. "Pretty hard lines if she couldn't get back in time for the stuffy old tennis match. Oh, my hat!" And Lydia's eyes gleamed. "I've got a lovely idea. Frances, keep cave."

"But what," Frances asked, "are you going to do?"

"Watch," Lydia chuckled.

And, with a glance round her, she stepped towards Babs' bicycle. She caught it, wheeling it along the front of the station building to a spot where a pile of luggage was already awaiting attention. There were three other bicycles among that pile, and Lydia, with a furtive chuckle and swift look round, untied the label from one of them and fastened it to Babs' bicycle. Then, just as two porters came along, trundling a luggage truck, she airily sauntered away.

Frances and Freda giggled.

"Looks," Frances sniggered, "as if dear Barbara's bike is going for a ride."

With interest they watched as Lydia rejoined them. They saw the porters pile the luggage on the truck. The bicycles followed—all except that which bore no label, and that one of the porters detached from the rest of the luggage and carefully propped against the station wall. Then, while the three still watched, the truck was trundled off. Through the gate that led to the near-by siding it was pushed.

"Whoops! They're going to load it straight into the luggage-van," Freda giggled. "But, Lydia," she added, a little nervously, "I suppose it's all right? I mean, supposing Babs doesn't get the bike back?"

"That's all right," said Lydia. "Babs has got her name and address on her saddle-bag. She'll get it back—but not just yet! I think," she added blandly, "it's time to make ourselves scarce."

"What-ho!" chuckled Frances.

And, stifling their mirth, they rushed away.

Meantime, Babs, having met Mr. Wilmer on the platform, was anxiously looking at the station clock. The train was due to leave in two minutes.

"Well," Mr. Wilmer was saying, "I'm sorry Christine couldn't come herself, but I'm glad, Barbara, that she sent you along. I rather wanted to see her. I wanted to tell her not to be too gloomy about what's happened concerning my financial affairs. There's a chance—just a faint chance—of putting things right. Tell her I may have some news for her before long. Meantime, Barbara, thank you very much for coming. Give my love to Christine."

"I will," Babs promised—"and your message."

"Thank you, my dear!"

With a smile he climbed into his train. Babs stood on the platform, waving as it steamed out of the station.

Well, thank goodness that was over, and Christine once again saved from the risk of running into trouble! No need to hurry now, she told herself, and after her exhausting ride she really could do with a snack. Wait a minute, though, had she enough money?

She counted it. One-and-sixpence. Goodie!

So happily, feeling that something had been achieved, Babs strolled into the buffet. There she treated herself to an iced lemonade and chocolate biscuits, and at ten minutes to one strolled out again. Without thinking she moved to the spot where she had left her bicycle.

And then she jumped. The bicycle was no longer there.

"What the dickens?" Babs said.

She was not a great deal disturbed at first. It was quite possible, of course, that a porter had moved it. She hunted around a little. No bicycle! Then, with anxiety beginning to take possession of her, she went to the left luggage office. Not there. She asked a porter.

"Well, there was a bicycle, yes, with no label," he said. "It was standing with some others that are on their way to London now. Come along here and have a look at it. Is this yours?"

Most decidedly it was not. It was a man's cycle, moreover.

"Then," the porter said, "I'm sure I don't know what's become of it—unless, by some chance, it went on the train by accident," he added doubtfully. "Not likely, but perhaps you'd leave your name and address."

Babs nodded and did so. Her expression was very worried. Oh, great goodness, look at the time! A quarter-past one now, with the tennis match starting in an hour and a quarter's time. Well, never mind the bicycle; that would have to be found later. She'd got to get back.

How?

She thought of the buses, then groaned. Services from Lantham to Courtfield ran only every two hours, and she dared not risk missing a bus. Then she thought of the trains. Wait a minute! A train direct to Friardale left platform No. 2 every day at one-twenty. That would land her back in heaps of time. But, whoops! The time—she'd have to fly! The train would be going in less than two minutes.

Back into the booking-hall Babs, very flustered, sprinted. She booked a third-class single to Friardale. Off to platform No. 2 she flew, and look—there was the train just on the point of going out. Babs simply raced.

The guard was already waving his flag and blowing his whistle. He shouted to her:

"Stand away!"

But Babs did not stand away. Desperately she flew for the first door, jerked it open, and shot into an empty carriage.

"Phew!" she gasped.

The train was moving swiftly as she slammed the door. And then, dropping into a seat, she blinked.

What was this? This wasn't the local Friardale train surely? This was a corridor.

Funny!

She fanned herself, gathering her breath. She looked out. Golly, but the train was going fast for a local! Sure there wasn't some mistake? Kenmarsh came and was passed like a flash. But this train usually stopped at Kenmarsh!

The door in the corridor opened; the guard appeared.

"Young lady—" he began.

"Oh!" Babs gasped. "I say, why didn't the train stop at Kenmarsh?"

"Because," the guard said, "this train never does stop at Kenmarsh."

"But—but it's the Friardale train, isn't it?"

"It is not." The guard frowned. "I believe the local train to Friardale went from platform No. 4 at the same time as this. There's been a temporary shuffling of trains, you see, because there's been a landslide on the main line. This train," he said, "is the fast express to Eastbourne, and Eastbourne, young lady, is the next stop. Can I see your ticket, please?"

And while Babs gazed at him in utter dismay he stepped into the compartment.

No One Gessed the Truth!



"BUT Babs, Babs, Babs!" Clara Trevlyn was almost frantic.

"Where the dickens is Babs? The Courtfield people are waiting."

"You can't find her?" asked Dulcia Fairbrother, head girl of Cliff House and captain of games.

"No; we've looked for her everywhere."

"Then," Dulcia Fairbrother decided, and looked at her watch, "you're five minutes late already. You'll have to play someone else, Clara."

"But who else?" the junior games captain demanded distractedly. "There's nobody else half as good as Babs."

"There's Christine Wilmer," Dulcia said.

"That cat!"

"Clara," Dulcia frowned, "this is no time for personal prejudices. I'm bothered if I know what has become of Barbara; but Barbara obviously is not available. Christine, still more obviously, is the only choice left to you if you are to win this match. I've heard a lot of rumours about that girl, but there's no questioning her brilliance at tennis."

"But will Christine"—Clara glowered—"play up for us? And won't Christine let us down? Look here, Dulcia—"

"You asked my advice, Clara?"

"Well, yes."

"Then I'll give it to you. Play Christine."

Clara breathed hard. Christine! Well, where was the girl? Then she remembered having seen her near the school gates. Furiously she ran off in that direction. But her heart was bitter; her anger was mounting. Babs—Babs had let her down. Babs, even though she was gated, had gone out.

"Oh rats!" Clara fumed. And then, spying Christine anxiously standing at the gates, looking down the road, she shouted to her.

Christine turned. Her face was worried.

"Well?" she said curtly.

"Christine, we want you—to play!" Clara rapped. "I suppose you don't know where Babs is?"

"No," Christine said. "At least," she added, "I don't now. But I know she was aiming to be back by two o'clock."

"Then," Clara growled, "she must have a pretty rotten aim. It's after three now, and there's never a sign of her. Hang it, she might have left me a message. Where did she go?"

"On an errand for me," Christine said.

"Oh!" Clara stared at her. Unbidden, a suspicion came into her mind. She set her lips a little; then she shook her head. "Anyway, you're playing, if you want to," she said gruffly. "You'll have to take her place. Come on, we're late already."

Christine's eyes lit up. She to play—after all; she to be in the team. For a moment she quivered with joy—and then she thought of Babs. Babs, because of her, had lost her place. Babs, goodness knows for what reason, could not turn up.

She thought of her wrist. That felt almost normal now, however.

"Well, do you want to play?" Clara growled.

"Yes," Christine said.

And she braced herself. She wanted to play—yes! She would play—she was taking Babs' place. She'd jolly well do her best to deserve the honour. Babs wasn't there—because of her. Very well, she would see that Babs wasn't let down.

Would her wrist hold out, though?

Except for a stiffness and a tiny ache it felt all right.

"Right-ho, be on the courts in five minutes," Clara said. "Better go and get changed."

Christine flew off; glad, but yet anxiously wondering what had become of Babs—what could have happened to delay her? As she flew, Lydia Crossendale & Co. came in at the gates.

Clara had hurried back to the pavilion. A great crowd was collected there, rather impatient at the delay. Everybody was asking why Babs was not there; everybody feeling rather nettled because of this discourteous treatment of their visitors. A cry went up when Clara appeared.

"Clara, who's playing?"

"Christine Wilner."

"Christine!" The name passed from lip to lip. Christine the outsider; Christine, the girl who had let the Form down! Lydia Crossendale, coming up just in time to hear that, burst into a scoffing laugh.

"And what," she cried, "a pretty put-up job! Oh, my hat, the artfulness of it! Babs wanted Christine to play all along, didn't she? Babs even asked Clara to give Christine her place."

Clara stared.

"You mean—"

"I don't mean anything," Lydia mocked; "but facts, you know, have a way of speaking for themselves. Babs isn't here; Christine is. What more likely than that Babs deliberately kept away to let Christine have her place?"

There was a murmur then. Girls looked at each other. Was that it? Did that explain Babs' absence? Had Babs really worked for that?

"Well, Mabs, get started," Clara said. "You'll play the first singles!"

Mabs nodded. She looked rather pale. Truth to tell, Mabs herself was not feeling up to the mark. She was worried because of Babs, and because she hated to feel, but could not deny, that there was a grain of truth in Lydia's accusations.

And unluckily for Mabs, Courtfield High School put their best and strongest player against her.

Mabs did her best. Considering her worried state of mind, indeed, she did excellently. The first set was 6-4 in Courtfield's favour.

The second set started, but clearly it was hopeless for Cliff House. Once again the score was 6-4.

Clara looked glum as Christine hurried up.

"Your turn now," she said, "and for goodness' sake wipe out that defeat!"

Christine nodded. She won the toss for service, and took her position. A little silence fell as the game began, changing to a murmur of admiration as Christine commenced to play. Her first service was a smasher, and Beryl Brecknock, her opponent, never stood an earthly. Cliff House cheered.

Well, perhaps it wouldn't be so bad after all. Christine certainly could play tennis. If only she kept control of that terrible temper of hers—

They watched excitedly. Christine

was going all out then. She had felt a little twinge from her wrist, and knew it couldn't stand the strain of three sets. She must win the first two, so that there wouldn't be any need to play the third.

And playing at her most brilliant best, Christine won the set 6-0. It was wonderfully good tennis, and Cliff House cheered and clapped, while Clara's face grew brighter and brighter.

But Christine's smashing shots had taken their toll of her wrist. In the second set it began to throb, weaken. The power went right out of her strokes.

She won the first two games sheerly on wonderfully accurate placing. And then in the third game she very feebly netted a ball.

A titter went up from Lydia & Co. Christine knew what burning pain her wrist was causing her. With Beryl Brecknock playing well against weak driving from Christine, the next six games—and the set—went to Courtfield.

The watchers were amazed. What was this? Christine was no longer playing like a girl inspired. She was playing like a duffer. She was not—or so it seemed—even attempting to drive hard—because the truth of the

Now the game started—and up from Cliff House went a murmur of amazement as it was seen that Christine actually meant to play left-handed.

She didn't do too badly, but left-handed against a good player like Beryl Brecknock—it was hopeless! Clara's eyes were blazing as she watched Christine lose the next three games in a row. If Beryl won the next game it was set and match to Courtfield!

"What a player!" Lydia sniggered. "Why don't you get some lessons from the Second Form, Christine?"

Christine flamed round, fury in her face. But it was a fury of agony, heightened by those spitefully heartless gibes.

The last game—Beryl's service. The first ball came over, and Christine hit it on the wood of her racket, skying it out of court.

Cliff House watched in glowering silence. To them it seemed that Chris-



HIDDEN under the sheet, Babs groaned. In a moment Miss Bullivant would whip away the bed-clothes and discover that it was Babs in Christine's bed. Then the mistress would want to know where Christine was.

matter was that Christine couldn't!

In the third and vital set Christine called upon all her courage, and her will-power. She won the first two games—but oh, this arm! This arm! she seemed to have no power in it.

The next two games went to Beryl Brecknock.

Christine wanted to cry aloud with the pain. Fifth game now, and—

"My hat, look at her!" exclaimed Margot Lantham. "She's changed her racket over; she's going to play left-handed!"

"Well, she couldn't play worse if she used her feet," sneered Lydia Crossendale spitefully.

Christine heard that. A swift gust of anger shook her. Realising her own helplessness, realising that here was the chance she had been waiting for, and that this beastly arm was causing her to throw it away, she gritted her teeth.

tine was deliberately throwing the game away. Playing left-handed indeed!

There was a dumbfounded silence as the game ended. Beryl had won that game to love—and Courtfield had won again!

"Thanks, Christine," said Clara bitterly. "Thanks! I'm obliged. Sure you couldn't play any worse than that?"

"I—" Christine choked.

"I must say," Clara said, "it's a nice way of getting your own back! Clever of you to raise our hopes by playing so well in the first set!"

Christine clenched her hands. For a moment it looked as if she would fly at the Tomboy. Just in time she remembered, however, and marched off the court. A hiss followed her.

"Mean cat!"

"Letting down the school!"

"Why don't you go home?"

Christine, choking, despairing, walked on. She did not look round. If they only knew—if they only realised! But, hang them, why should she make excuses to them? Why belittle herself to excuse her utter bad play? Hang them!

In search of cooling, running water, she drifted towards the school.

Meantime, Clara and Leila, desperately conscious of the leeway that had to be made up, were taking part in the doubles—and Courtfield's doubles pair were a brilliant team.

But Clara was never surer or better than when she was up against it. Her determination, her energy, seemed to convey itself to Leila. Hard and tough that game, with no quarter given or asked on either side. A cheer went up when it finished. For Cliff House, perhaps to everybody's surprise, won.

Two singles were to follow. Clara played the first game, again showing a brilliance that surprised even herself. She won, bringing Cliff House level. A cheer went up.

"Now, Leila, it's up to you!" she panted. "Win this game, and we're through! Go ahead, old thing!"

Rather pale, Leila nodded. She did not like to feel that everything depended on her. While Cliff House watched in breathless excitement, the game started.

Ding-dong, ding-dong! First set to Cliff House; next to Courtfield. Everything depended upon the last set.

Leila braced her shoulders.

Now they were at it! Clara turned quite white. First a game to Cliff House; then to Courtfield. At last it was five-all. Then Leila, coming in to the net with success, won against the service! Six-five! Leila's service now.

The last exchanges. The score went to 40-15. Then Leila served an ace! By a miracle, it seemed, Cliff House, thanks to Leila, just scraped home. They were through into the next round of the tournament!

"Well, we've done it," Clara breathed, as the excitement died down, "but no thanks either to Christine or to Babs! Has Babs turned up yet?"

Babs had not turned up. Babs at that moment was waiting on Eastbourne Station for the next train back, having given her name and address to the station officials.

She had not turned up at tea-time. By that time Cliff House was seething. There seemed no doubt now that Babs had planned to let Christine in, and there seemed no doubt that Christine, having been let in, had just exacted a mean revenge. A hot reception awaited Babs when she did appear.

It was just before call-over that, weary and worn out with anxiety, she drifted in at the gates.

Half the Form had assembled in the quad then. As Babs approached someone hissed. She started, turned pale. She looked quickly round. She saw Clara.

"Clara—" she faltered.

Clara deliberately turned her back. Babs bit her lip.

Through a silent aisle of girls Babs made her way. In the hall, Miss Bullivant pounced upon her.

"Barbara, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing, except that I took the wrong train!" Babs blurted.

"You had no right," Miss Bullivant rasped, "to take any train! You were confined to bounds! I warned you, Barbara, what would happen if you did not cease your reckless activities! Now my patience has been carried too far!

You are no longer fit to be captain of the Form, and no longer shall you remain captain of the Form! You are suspended!"

Babs gulped. With tears dangerously near her eyes, she drifted off to find Christine. In Study No. 13 she discovered her, her blazer sleeve pulled down to hide the bandage round her wrist. Christine, white-faced, stared at her as she came in.

"Babs, you saw pater?"

"Yes. But—oh, Christine, what happened?"

"I played tennis in your place this afternoon, Babs, and—and they think I purposely let them down! But, Babs—Babs, they're saying that you'll lose your Form captaincy—through me! Babs, tell me, that's not true?"

Babs hung her head.

"It—it is!" she said. "I—I've been suspended!"

A deep, a deathly silence. Then something like a sob welled from Christine's throat.

"Through me, Babs—through me?" she said. "All because you championed me—all because you've been a friend to me? They're all against you now—every one! You've lost your captaincy, you're in disgrace! Babs, this is the end! If I get out of it, it will be better for all of us! Well, Babs, I'm going!"

Babs eyed her queerly.

"And leave me," she asked quietly, "to fight it out alone?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," Babs said, and came nearer, "when you were down and out, Christine, I stood by you! I'm down and out now—we're both down and out! Our one and only chance is to stand together—to fight it out together! Christine, it's not hopeless; it's not too late. Are we standing by each other?"

Christine stared.

"But, Babs, your chums—the Form will—"

"Are we?" Babs repeated quietly.

"Well—y-yes," Christine said. "Oh, Babs, what a ripping—what an awful brick you are! But—"

And then she stopped, and the blood rushed into her cheeks as from outside came up a sudden howl. It was a howl in Lydia's voice, but it was received with a roar of applause. It said:

"Who's let Cliff House down?"

"Barbara Redfern!" came the reply.

Babs winced. But she saw the misery on Christine's face, and she gently pressed that girl's shoulder.

"Chin up, old thing!" she said, a little chokily. "We'll make it—together!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



The OUTCAST PLAYS A PART!

Though deprived of her Captancy because she stood by Christine Wilmer, when that hot-tempered, impetuous girl needed her support, Barbara Redfern refuses to put herself first. It is still Christine with whom she is concerned; still Christine whom she is more anxious to help than herself. But Christine—well, suddenly, most amazingly, she changes. Her old bad temper breaks out as badly as ever; she kicks over the traces; she scorns Babs' friendship, laughs at her, taunts her. No wonder Babs is hurt and amazed. But then Babs does not know the truth. Babs does not even suspect the truth, astounding as it is, until almost too late.

Don't miss this wonderful story. It is the last of the present Cliff House series, and is one of the finest stories Hilda Richards has ever written. Read it next week—and be completely enthralled!

Further fascinating chapters of our colourful story of the Golden West.

GIRL RIDER OF THE BLUE HILLS!



By
**DORIS
LESLIE**

FOR NEW READERS.

FAY THORNTON lives on the Flying H ranch in Texas with her father, ROBERT THORNTON, and her two little brothers. The ranch is small, not too prosperous, and they badly need money. But Fay hopes to win a money prize on her range pony, STARLIGHT, in a rodeo race. Mr. Thornton is wounded by cattle thieves on the land of wealthy John Hampton, who owns a big, neighbouring ranch, and who is their enemy. Mr. Thornton is not seriously hurt, but people are whispering that he is really one of the men rustling cattle. Practising for the rodeo race, Fay meets a young Englishman named Douglas Lessiter, who is a guest at Hampton's ranch. Douglas is friendly, but behaves rather mysteriously. And then, on the eve of the race, Mr. Thornton runs into further trouble, and to save him it becomes imperative that Fay wins the race.

(Now read on.)

The Race that Meant so Much!

"S'LONG, daddy! Sorry you won't be there to see the fun. But don't worry. When we get back we'll have a nice little present for you."

And quite gaily Fay Thornton waved her wide-brimmed hat in farewell.

Very efficient, very attractive she looked in her picturesque cowgirl clothes, gracefully seated astride the stocky range pony, Starlight. Her father, his injured arm still in a sling, waved back from the porch of the little ranch-house.

"Best o' luck, honey!" he called. "Sure, I know you'll win th' race!"

A moment later, riding between her two young brothers, and with Tiny Shaw and the rest of the little band of Flying H cowboys following, two abreast, Fay was clattering away on the trail.

She turned to wave a final good-bye. So did her brothers. So did Tiny & Co. Then her father had vanished as the trail wound sharp to the left, and amid a flurry of dust they settled down for the five-mile ride to Redland Gulch—and the year's greatest, most spectacular event, the rodeo.

Fay, thoughtfully staring at the shimmering blue heat-haze in the dis-

tance, was presently interrupted by nine-year-old Ted.

"Say, sis," he said, "it's a mighty big prize you stand to win in the ladies' race, isn't it?"

"Sure, Ted," Fay agreed, and smiled. "A hundred dollars!"

Ted puffed out his cheeks and playfully blew a wisp of dark, straight hair that draped over his forehead from beneath his wide straw hat. But curly-headed Bobbie, being little more than six, was even more demonstrative.

"A hundred dollars? Coo!" he said, and rounded mouth and eyes like saucers. "Coo!" he repeated. "That's an awfu' lot of money, isn't it, sis? More than—more than ten dollars?"

"Heaps more, Bobbie."

"Heaps an' heaps an' heaps more, sis? Like that?"

And he stretched out both arms to their fullest extent

"Even more than that, I guess," Fay said, laughing. "But look out—grab

The sheriff had come to examine her father's saddle and if he saw it, it would mean disaster for the little ranch.

your reins, you young monkey, or you'll come a cropper."

Hastily Bobbie did so. Ted, meanwhile, seemed to be taking that enormous prize very seriously. But not so seriously as Fay herself.

For she knew what the boys did not. That their father's good name, his very liberty, and their own happiness, depended upon whether she won the race that afternoon. Daddy needed a new saddle to replace his original one, which contained a bullet-hole.

That bullet-hole had been made the previous evening. Mr. Thornton had followed a masked man on to John Hampton's land. The man had got away, but some of Hampton's cowboys had fired at Mr. Thornton, taking him for a rustler.

His saddle had been hit, and although the Hampton riders weren't sure that it had been Mr. Thornton, one of them had threatened that he was going to get the sheriff to come and examine his

saddle, which was well known in the neighbourhood.

If the sheriff saw that bullet-hole, it would look very black for Mr. Thornton, especially as there was already the rumour that he was a cattle-thief.

So a new saddle had to be bought as soon as possible, against the possible arrival of the sheriff. But a saddle of the distinctive, ornamental type in question would cost just on fifty dollars.

Fay bit her lip. She must win that rodeo race that hundred dollars!

A hundred dollars! Roughly twenty pounds in English money. Not a great deal of money, perhaps, but to daddy, almost penniless, it would be a fortune—a fortune that could save him from being arrested for a terrible crime of which he was completely innocent, and leave sufficient over to pay off several pressing debts.

"And I'll win it," Fay found herself murmuring again and again. "I've just got to, I guess."

They rode on. The trail wound and twisted, climbed and dipped. Tiny Shaw, the lean, melancholy-looking foreman of the Flying H, was unusually silent for him. Still, the two young-

sters kept up a running fire of chatter until Redland Gulch came into view. There they had something else to hold their attention.

Redland was a town beflagged, gay, and active. By this time the trail behind Fay and her companions was peopled by other travellers, at intervals of a few hundred yards. It was the same with every trail leading to the town. Each had its own broken cavalcade of people. From far and wide they came by every means of transport.

The street had been transformed. It was cluttered up with vehicles of every kind. Banners, flags, bunting, and streamers were suspended from one building to another, and even from the few odd telegraph wires. Some of the wooden, artificial upper stories had been specially painted, and the sidewalks teemed with people.

Wealthy ranchers mingled with cowboys of every description. Mexicans, colourfully dressed, rubbed shoulders

with half-breeds, negroes, and the one or two Chinese who were employed in the district as cooks; and finally there were ladies, girls, boys, and even babies in arms.

Presently Fay & Co. reached the huge rodeo field. At one corner of it a brass band was playing. Its members, recruited from the ranches and stores, had more enthusiasm than talent. But nobody cared; everyone went on chattering, laughing, jesting. It was the spirit of this great day which counted.

Perhaps that was why, although people, wondering about her father, looked at Fay intently, not a word was said. At least, until John Hampton, his daughter leading her magnificent thoroughbred horse, and a few of their guests came across.

Seeing them, Fay gave a warning frown to Tiny, who, winking, whisked Bobbie and Ted off to watch some steer-throwing contests. Outwardly calm, she awaited her father's enemy. She knew Hampton was that—now.

"So yuh've come here to-day, Miss Thornton!" he exclaimed. And as though he wasn't already large and dark enough, he expanded his chest and glowered. "I should ha' thought you'd ha' found it more profitable to stay at home. A mighty fine chance to gain a few cattle, I reckon."

The gibe brought smirks from his superiorly sneering guests, and a rippling but infuriating laugh from his blonde daughter, Lucille, who was dressed as if for her first lesson at an English riding-school. Fay, however, seated on Starlight's back like a fixture, kept perfectly cool.

"That's twice you've reckoned wrong, Mr. Hampton," she said. "Or, mebbe, three times, eh?" she added, with a sudden look at Lucille.

"If you're thinking of the race, save your poor little grey matter," returned Lucille airily. "I don't know why you bothered to enter the race with that scraggy bag of bones. He hasn't a chance against my Phantom?"

She caressed the beautiful animal's long, sleek nose, then turned, with a petulant little scowl.

"Oh, come on, dad! We're missing half the fun!" she said, and strode off.

Her father, glaring at Fay, followed—and, of course, the dutiful, fawning guests made the usual follow-my-leader trail after him. All except one, who'd kept out of sight until now. And he, passing Fay, raised his hat.

"Lovely day, Miss Thornton! You're doing fine! Go in and win that hundred dollars! My shirt—and that includes links and studs—is on you! Bye-bye!"

It was Douglas Lessiter, the good-looking young tenderfoot, who spoke. Fay's eyes glowed. Douglas might be a queer card; he might have been spying on daddy last night—as she was absolutely certain—but there was something about him she rather liked. And, besides, she couldn't doubt the sincerity of those words. He really wanted her to win. But—and she frowned—"doing fine"? What did he mean by that exactly?

Fay hadn't time to ponder the point. There was so much fun and excitement to be dragged to by the wildly clamouring youngsters. Sharpshooting competitions; exhibitions of the most incredibly skilful lariat work; round-the-field races on horseback; other races from end to end of the field, with wagons that had to be loaded first as part of the fun; bronco-busting, and a score of other forms of Western entertainment.

Then, just as Fay was settling down to forget all her home worries, there

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.

MY DEAR READERS,—Have you started to make sure of securing YOUR wonderful Four-Colour Propelling Pencil? There's still time, you know, even though our Presentation Offer actually began last week. All you have to do is to collect the little oblong tokens marked SCL, followed by a number, 1, 2, 3, and so on, which appear at the bottom left-hand corner of our back page. You'll find full instructions as to what to do with these jolly little fellows on page 2.

This week's token is marked SCL 2, because this is the second week of the offer, but don't worry. There is no need for you to have SCL 1, providing you send the correct number of tokens at the proper time. But you'll find out all about that from the big announcement in this issue.

So having set you all on the way to one of the most ingenious little treasures ever offered to schoolgirls, we'll turn to next Saturday's Babs & Co. story, shall we?

It is, of course, the third—and, incidentally, the last—of the series featuring Christine Wilmer, the tennis star, whose temper has been the cause of much fuss, and many dramatic happenings.

This week's story shows you how Barbara Redfern, through standing by Christine and trying to help her to control that flaming paddy of hers, brings disaster to herself. Next week's story tells you what happens when Christine, realising how Babs is being made to suffer for her shortcomings, and resolving to save her at all costs, sets out to make Babs turn against her.

There is only one way Christine can think of to achieve this strange but laudable ambition—by pretending to be as hot-tempered and uncontrollable as before.

I will leave Miss Richards to tell exactly what happens in her own fascinating way.

As usual, next week's programme will contain another superb instalment of "Girl Rider of the Blue Hills," another topping COMPLETE laughter-story featuring "Cousin George and 'The Imp,'" more of Patricia's Bright, Breezy and Instructive Pages, and one more Cliff House Pet. Don't miss it.

And now, with best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

came the megaphoned voice of the announcer.

"Gee, sis, it's your turn!" Teddy cried excitedly. "The ladies' race!"

"Coo, go on, sis! Go on—quick!" urged little Bobbie.

Tiny Shaw and the other Flying H cowboys gathered round to wish her good luck as she and Starlight joined the line of competitors at the end of the street, where the race was to start.

Then, as she recognised one girl on a stalwart little piebald, looking just as much at home in the saddle as herself, Fay's heart knew a faint tremor.

Ruby Shannon! She hadn't known

Ruby was entering. Ruby had walked through the opposition in a similar race last year, and when she got into her stride—

Bang! came a burst of smoke and flame from the starter's gun; a roar from the crowd; a forest of wildly waving arms and hats.

Fay, touching Starlight with her knees, sent him leaping forward. At the same instant the other riders became galvanised into action. In a bunched, ragged line they hurtled away.

The race had begun!

The Sheriff Takes a Hand!

"**A**LL right, old boy! Take it easy! There's plenty of time to do your stuff!" Fay whispered.

She spoke soothingly, fondling Starlight's neck. For Starlight wanted to have his head. He knew this was a race just as much as Fay did; he knew that he wasn't supposed to let another animal keep ahead of him, and the sight of the big, black thoroughbred which streaked to the front almost as soon as the race began, and kept increasing the distance between itself and the rest, seemed to spur on the plucky little pony.

But Fay was smiling to herself—a grim, dogged, yet rather amused smile. Let Lucille Hampton take the lead! Let her give Phantom his head!

"Our time'll come mighty soon, old man!" Fay went on. "That horse of Lucille's is fine on level ground, but I guess we'll show them a thing or two when we come to rough country!"

For this was no ordinary race, run under ordinary conditions. Providing each competitor passed various set points in the six-mile, circular course, they could take any kind of short cut they liked. They could branch off between any of the points, slither down rocky hills, traverse the lowlands, short-cut their way through streams, bushes.

It was there that Starlight, though inferior with regard to speed to several of his rivals, would come into his own. Unflinching sure-footed, as strong and as fearless as a lion, he'd make up any lost ground, and more besides. And, meanwhile, Lucille and the aristocratic Phantom, for all their tear-away tactics, would lag farther and farther in the rear, unless she was foolish enough to try a short cut.

"An' I sure hope she doesn't, for her sake!" Fay reflected. A moment later they streaked past the first stage. Her eyes gleamed. "Now, steady, boy! Down we go!"

Starlight, feeling pressure on his left rein, turned. One by one, other competitors clattered past; but Fay, ignoring them, set her pony for the rocky side of a deep depression that flanked the trail.

Foot by foot they began to descend. It was thirty yards to level ground. Half-way down Starlight commenced to slide.

In a flurry of dust and a miniature landslide of rocks and stones, they descended. Once Starlight faltered and nearly came a cropper. Firmly Fay kept his head up, and on went Starlight.

"Good boy! Oh, you marvellous old chap!" Fay cried, as they reached level ground at last, and went careering across it. "Now, I wonder—" Twisting round in the saddle, she gave a gasp. "Lucille—and Ruby!"

From different points of the trail two other riders were essaying that dangerous descent. One of them, Ruby Shannon, was already some distance

down, and managing it superbly. The other, trying to force an apprehensive horse into attempting something which he instinctively knew to be beyond him, was Hampton's daughter.

Fay's face went rather white. She didn't mind Ruby's challenge. She'd anticipated it, anyway. But with Lucille it was different. Lucille didn't realise the terrible risk she was taking. Phantom wasn't used to rough ground; he wasn't built for it.

Fay, filled with sudden alarm, forgot the tremendous urgency of her own efforts and reined in.

"Go back!" she shouted. Frantically she waved to Lucille. "Go back! Don't be silly! You'll never do it—Oh!"

She ended with a startled cry. Lucille had sent Phantom over the dip. And now they came crashing down. Lucille, catapulted out of the saddle, slithered a few yards on her side, and was then brought up sharp by a bush. Phantom pitched headlong, slid from one end of the slope to the other, and then, miraculously unhurt, floundered to his legs.

"Lucille—Lucille!" Fay cried, and sent Starlight racing back to the scene of the accident.

"Hi! Don't be crazy!" came a shout from Ruby Shannon, as she tore past. "She asked for it! Do you want to throw away your chances?"

But Fay did not heed. She was making for that still, sprawling form, oblivious to the fact that it was the daughter of the man who was her father's enemy. Suddenly, though, Lucille stirred. Shakily she got to her feet. As she saw Fay, she brandished a clenched fist.

"All right—laugh!" she almost screamed. "But I—I'll show you yet! Phantom! Phantom!" she shrieked, and went plunging down towards him.

As Fay, turning Starlight round again, glanced back, she saw her mortified rival going pell-mell for a more gentle rise that would take her back on to the longer but less hazardous trail.

"The crazy tenderfoot!" Fay muttered. "An' she's cost me yards. Jump to it, old boy! We've something to make up, thanks to her."

Fifty yards ahead, and going like the wind, was Ruby Shannon. Fay set off in determined pursuit. "Oh, fool—fool!" she was calling herself, to have stopped like this when so much was at stake for daddy. If she lost the race now she'd never forgive herself.

Another rise, not so steep as the first, and she and Starlight were back on the trail. Ruby Shannon was forty yards ahead. Three other riders, who had kept to the dusty track, tore abreast as Fay galloped on. Lucille Hampton was a conspicuous figure far away at the rear, bullying a horse who was badly limping.

The second stage streaked by. Two miles gone; four more to go. Ruby in the lead, then two other girls, battling neck and neck, and then Fay herself.

Between the second and third stages both Fay and Ruby, branching off, forded a swift-running stream. Another girl was not so fortunate. She found herself floundering in mud, managed to extricate her mount, and sadly returned to the trail. But Fay, thanks to Starlight, caught up on Ruby. There was less than thirty yards between them when they entered upon the fourth stage, and when, after dare-devil risks on the part of both, they began the final stage, Ruby's lead was barely fifteen yards.

Fay's face was set. A mile to go and fifteen yards to gain! Screened by the

flickering haze from the fierce Texas sun, she could see Redland Gulch. Crowds still lined each side of the trail. The faint roar of excited voices, rapidly growing louder, dinned into her ears.

"Starlight!" she breathed. "Starlight!"

Gallantly the stocky pony responded. His stride seemed to grow longer. Slowly up and up they crept on Ruby Shannon.

Half a mile to go—a quarter! Five yards behind Ruby now, both calling up last spurts for the finish.

It all seemed rather a whirl to Fay. Two seas of faces fringing the trail on either side; an unbroken roar of shouting, cheering, calling; hands and hats and neckerchiefs being frantically waved; the firing of six-guns.

Twenty yards from the line, she and Ruby Shannon were abreast. Fay, standing in the stirrups, coaxed and whispered and pleaded with Starlight. Nobly he responded. His head slipped in front. Then Ruby replied. Her mount crept a foot into the lead. Then Fay and Starlight, with one last super-human effort, battled back. Slowly Starlight's hot, quivering nostrils drew level with the other's—inch by inch—now in a dead straight line—now the merest fraction in front.

Bang!

The starter's gun roared. All over, and Starlight, by little more than the width of his nose, the winner. Hot and dusty, almost exhausted, Fay slowed down. From head to foot, despite her tiredness, she glowed with triumph. They'd done it! They'd won that hundred dollars! And of Lucille there was no sign.

"Oh, Starlight, you—you old darlin'!" she panted, and flung her arms about his damp, quivering neck.

The cheering was terrific. There were one or two boos, and Fay knew why—because of the rumours about her father. But she did not care. She felt too deliriously happy, and far too proud. Daddy was saved—at least, he would be

just as soon as she could dispatch Tiny Shaw to Ainsworth, thirty miles away, to get that saddle.

Never had rodeo prize money been more swiftly spent. Within ten seconds of receiving that fat wad of brand-new notes, Fay, drawing Tiny on one side amid the crowd, thrust more than half into his hand.

"You know the store where dad got his old saddle," she said breathlessly, "and you know the kind of saddle. Best of luck, Tiny! And please—please be as quick as you can!"

Tiny, pocketing the money, swung on to his horse. He had been taken fully into the confidence of Fay and her father, and knew what a vital mission had been entrusted to him.

"Figger I'll be thar an' back afore you kin bat an eyelid, Miss Fay!" he declared. "S'long! See you at the ranch."

His tall, lean figure threaded its way through the crowd. Heart beating with relief, Fay watched it eventually disappear. Then, turning to collect her young brothers, who had been left in charge of another of the Flying H cowboys, she stiffened.

"Waal, it'd sure pay yuh ter pop along an' have a scout round th' Thorntons' place," a familiar voice was saying maliciously. "Jest ask ter see his saddle, an' unless I'm plumb crazy yuh'll find all the proof you want to clap him in the lock-up right now."

Startled, Fay swung round in the direction of the speaker. A tall, dark cowpuncher, she recognised his features at once. It was Lew Tate, foreman of Hampton's ranch, whom she had already forestalled once in an effort to find her father's saddle.

Fiercely she clenched her hands. So Tate was fulfilling his threat already, telling Sheriff Martin of his suspicions. And Martin, a big-built, pleasant-looking man, was plainly impressed.

"Thanks fer th' tip, Tate!" he drawled, stroking his drooping moustache. "Sure, I'll pay Thornton a visit."



"I DON'T know why you bothered to enter the race with that scraggy bag of bones," said Lucille Hampton airily. "He hasn't a chance against my Phantom." Fay said nothing. But she knew that while Starlight wasn't exactly a beauty he wasn't going to be easily beaten.

Just one small spot o' business an' I'll be off."

And then, while Fay stood there, rooted to the spot in sudden dread, the sheriff disappeared in one direction, and Tate, after watching him with grinning exultation, went off in another.

The Saddle Bobbie Found!

SOONER than she had expected the menace to daddy had come to a head. But even now disaster could be averted. Once they had the new saddle daddy would be safe, and there was still one thing she could do.

Get back home before the sheriff could reach there, put the youngsters out of the way so that they did not suspect the reason for the sheriff's visit—for the rumours about their father had been carefully kept from Bobbie and Ted—and, when the sheriff arrived, keep him occupied until Tiny's return.

"But oh, golly, I'll have to be quick!" Fay muttered, and dashed off to seek her brothers at the rodeo field.

Quite naturally those youngsters resented being dragged away at the height of the fun, but a promise of presents did the trick. As good as gold they set off on their ponies with Fay along the trail, and readily fell into the suggestion that they should make a race for it—not for one moment suspecting the reason.

Nearing the ranch, Fay spotted something hanging from Ted's saddle.

"Ted, whose saddlebag is that?" she asked, frowning.

"Gee, I'm a bonehead!" Ted said ruefully. "Clean forgot about it. I found it, sis."

And he explained that in the rush of leaving the rodeo he'd forgotten to mention the bag before. He had discovered it lying on the rodeo field.

"Oh, well, I'll return it to-night, when I go for your presents," Fay said, and immediately dismissed it from her mind.

She had far more important things to think of now. To her relief there was no sign of the sheriff anywhere along the trail when they got back to the ranch-house. But she became a bundle of swift, efficient action the moment they had dismounted and unsaddled.

First she sent the ponies into the corral. Then, as the three of them made for the house, she called brisk orders to the boys, who were racing to be the first to tell their father of her great victory.

"Get your old dungarees on, both of you! And change your shoes, Bobbie! I want you to play behind the stables."

"O.K.!" Ted yelled back over his shoulder, and tore into the kitchen, followed by young Bobbie.

A moment later her father, his face radiant, hurried to meet her, for Ted had already gabbled out the news.

"Honey, you—you did it?" he cried. "Gosh, but I'm proud of you!"

It warmed her heart to see his joy. But when both of the boys were noisily getting changed she shut their door and then drew her father out to the porch.

"Sure, I won, daddy!" she said, proudly and happily enough. But her voice was serious, too. "I got the money, and Tiny's racing to Ainsworth. He'll be back as soon as he can, with another saddle. But, dad, the sheriff is—"

She told him quickly of the oncoming danger, then, while he was looking at her in shocked dismay, went on:

"Where's the old saddle, daddy? In the stable loft? Out of sight? Good!

Now—" She laid a hand on his arm. Very businesslike was she at this moment. "Don't you think you'd better be off the scene when the sheriff comes? I reckon I can kid him you're riding that saddle. That'll stop him searching. Don't you agree, dad?"

And her father, reluctant though he was to leave her to face such a responsibility and ordeal single-handed, had to agree that it was a most sensible suggestion.

"I'll make myself scarce down on th' range," he said, then drew her towards him. "Honey, lass, I'll never be able to say what I think of you. Guess I—I—" He checked himself, kissed her forehead, and then grabbed his stetson from behind the door. "Best o' luck, honey!" he said, a tremor in his voice.

And then he was gone. Fay did not stop to watch him sprinting away. The boys simply must be elsewhere when the sheriff arrived, or they'd immediately contradict any suggestion that daddy was out riding.

When the youngsters were ready Fay took them off behind the stables and suggested they should build a fort. They immediately fell in with the suggestion, and, leaving them actively engaged, she hurried back to the ranch-house.

Back indoors again, she began to prepare coffee. That was her master-stroke. The sheriff never could resist her coffee. With all her heart she hoped it retained its irresistible appeal this afternoon.

It was not quite ready, but simmering, with an appetising odour, on the huge kitchen range, when a shadow darkened the porch. Heart missing a beat, Fay looked up. But it was not the sheriff who stood there. It was—

"Gee!" she gasped. "You!"

For it was none other than Douglas Lessiter, looking very smart in his conventional but well-cut riding clothes.

"Whatcher!" he said amiably. He looked round. "Natty little place you've got here. H'm!" He sniffed. "Coffee! Smells good! Pity I can't stay. I just looked in to tell you the sheriff's had a bit of a delay. Eagle-eyed yours truly spotted some cut wire about three miles from here, and I thought the sheriff ought to know, in case it's mother's. He's gone to have a peep at it. Well, cheerio! Take care of yourself!"

For a moment he looked at her steadily, penetratingly, his smile no longer in evidence. Then he went out.

Scarcely breathing at all, Fay stared after him. She felt amazed and bewildered. Why had this strange young Englishman troubled to tell her about the sheriff's delay? And how had he known the sheriff intended visiting her?

She drew in her breath to a sudden astounding thought.

"Was the wire cut?" she murmured. "Or did he send the sheriff off on a wild-goose chase, just to hold him up?"

Fay was laying the table invitingly and still racking her brains over Douglas when little Bobbie, very grubby, poked his head round the door.

"Please, sis, can we play in the stables?" he asked. "There's a lot of lovely straw an' stuff in there, an' Ted says he thinks—"

Fay, startled lest the sheriff should walk in at any moment, answered almost without thinking.

"Oh, sure—sure! Only be careful. Don't climb the ladder, and mind the harness! And tell Ted to leave the paint alone!"

"Whoopee!"
And Bobbie's face, one huge grin, promptly vanished.

Fay drew a quick breath of relief. Two minutes later, just as she was wondering when exactly Tiny would be back, a clatter of hoofs announced the arrival of the sheriff.

Wiping her hands on her overall, Fay welcomed him gaily, and hoped that she did not look as strung-up as she felt.

"Why, come right in, sheriff! Reckon you know the best time to call. See?" Laughingly she indicated the table. "And smell?" she added, nodding towards the bubbling coffee-pot. "You're in luck's way!"

"Dad anywhere around?" the sheriff asked, almost casually. "He's not ridin', I see, by the ponies in the corral."

It was a shock to Fay to find such an important part of her scheme destroyed immediately; but she kept her head.

"Oh, no; not ridin'," she agreed, pouring out the coffee. "He's just takin' a stroll. Did you want him?"

Sheriff Martin was an old friend of theirs, and obviously, he did not relish the purpose of his visit. Seating himself, he waited until she had finished pouring out, and then, coughing, began again.

"Miss Thornton," he said gruffly, staring at the hat on his knees, "I guess this ain't no social call. I've allus liked you; I've allus liked and respected yore dad; but duty's duty, no matter how nasty it is, an' certain information which has come to me makes it necessary for me to forgit my likes and dislikes. I hope that information's wrong, Miss Thornton."

He paused, shrugged, and then looked up at her.

"Well?" said Fay, her heart seeming to stand still.

"Yore dad's got a silver-mounted saddle, ain't he?"

"Why, sure! But you don't mean you want one like it, too?"

"I jest wanna take a squint at it, Miss Thornton. You know where to lay hands on it?"

"Oh, I—I guess so!" Fay said, trying to keep a tremor out of her voice.

"Waal, yuh might run along an' get it for me," the sheriff went on.

"Sure!" said Fay again. "I'll get it right away. But, look—do have your coffee now, or it'll get cold! There! Two spoonfuls, and plenty of milk."

She held out the steaming cup, and there was something so winning about her smile and so utterly disarming, that the sheriff, telling himself that a few seconds' delay wouldn't make any difference, and that perhaps Fay's manner was a good omen, accepted it with a nod.

Fay, stirring her own cup, kept up a run of cheery chatter. She was delighted at the result. The sheriff actually began to relax. And then, all of a sudden—

"Coo-ee!" came a whisper from the window.

Fay twisted round so abruptly that she spilled coffee over the cloth. But her alarm at hearing Bobbie's voice was as nothing to the stunning shock that descended upon her at what he did next.

"Look, sis!" he cried. "Look what Ted and me've found in the loft!"

And, with a mighty struggle, he heaved into view their father's incriminating saddle and dumped it on to the sill!

WHAT a stroke of terrible luck! Unwittingly young Bobbie has put his father in danger. You simply must read the continuation of this tense incident in next week's SCHOOLGIRL.

COMPLETE this week. Another topping laughter-story featuring irrepressible—



When Cousin George decided that the IMP should spend her half-holiday watching him fish, it wasn't the fish that got caught. It was, thanks to the IMP, Cousin George himself!

Cousin George Decides!

HETTY SONNING, hearing the tap that Nellie, the maid, gave on her bed-room door, turned over in bed and prepared for another ten minutes' doze. It was time to get up.

Whenever it was time to get up, Hetty always felt sleepy; and when it was time to go to bed, she usually felt wide awake. She felt sleepy now, and the bed seemed cosy.

Yet all of a sudden Hetty hurled back the covers and sprang out of bed, eyes sparkling with the brightness of eager resolve.

"Golly, fancy forgetting! It's a whole holiday!" she cheered. "Catch me lying in bed on a holiday!"

And Hetty, wrapping herself in a dressing-gown, skipped round the room in glee. She hadn't been out of bed so early for weeks; but, then, she hadn't had a whole holiday from school for ages.

Rushing to the window, she looked out at the smiling lawn and the fields beyond. The flowers were sparkling; the sky was a bright blue, and birds were singing.

Hetty opened the bed-room door and called out:

"Cousin George! Whole holiday! Wake up!"

From her Cousin George's room near by came a sleepy answer:

"What's that?"

"Whole holiday!" called Hetty excitedly. "Up and doing!"

And, slamming her door, Hetty returned to get busy with her washing and dressing in gay and merry mood. For a whole holiday was a wonderful treat, and she had planned all manner of things to do—if Cousin George would allow them to be done.

Hetty, known to her friends at boarding-school as the Imp, had not changed now that she was at a day school; she was still high-spirited, fun-loving, and fonder of play than work. Not even solemn Cousin George, two years her senior, had changed her, although, of course, he had tried.

Ever since the headmistress of Hetty's boarding-school had decided that Hetty's presence could be dispensed with, Hetty had been staying with her Aunt Miriam and Cousin George. Her own parents being in India, she had to stay somewhere, and the popular idea in the family was that Cousin George's good influence could be exerted upon Hetty. That was Cousin George's own idea, too.

But Hetty, the Imp, had no intention of changing her nature, although just for the sake of a quiet life she did pretend to be meek, and treated her schoolboy cousin with heavy respect.

Singing to herself, Hetty finished her dressing, and was actually down to breakfast two minutes before Cousin George.

"Down before you!" said Hetty, in triumph.

Cousin George regarded her loftily.

"If you had stayed to do your hair properly," he said, "you wouldn't be down yet! When you are older, you will wish you had worked harder!"

"Looks to me, then, as though I shall have softening of the nut!" said Hetty, with a smile.

"By the nut you mean the brain?" asked Cousin George coldly. "Well, why not say so? Why refer to the brain as the nut? It's time you grew out of using slang, and mastered our mother tongue!"

"Wow!" said Hetty. "Chuck it, Cousin George! It's a holiday!"

"There you go again!" he said.

"Well, there you go!" retorted Hetty, with a sly chuckle. "I suppose 'there you go again' isn't slang? I suppose that's fine English?"

Cornered, Cousin George frowned heavily, and did not continue the argument.

"Kindly address me with more respect and less familiarity," he said. "And you can go and get the letters!"

"Yes, please, Cousin George, thank you!" said Hetty in her meekest tone.

She took the letters from the box and saw that one was addressed to herself in Uncle Archie's handwriting. Opening it, she pulled out the letter, and then saw something green.

A pound note!

Hetty goggled at it and read the letter

By IDA MELBOURNE

hurriedly. Then, eyes shining, she gave a whoop of joy.

"Hetty! Bring those letters!" called Cousin George.

But Hetty hesitated. She looked at the pound note, and then she frowned thoughtfully; for she knew what would happen if she showed the pound note to Cousin George!

Cousin George would immediately take possession of it, and, with the best intention in the world, dole it out a shilling or so at a time.

Uncle Archie, being an artist, had much the same outlook on life as Hetty had herself. When he had money he spent it, and when he hadn't he still spent it.

Hetty, slipping the pound note into her blazer pocket, went back into the dining-room with the letters.

"What were you screeching about?" asked Cousin George.

"Was I screeching?" asked Hetty.

"You certainly were," he said, with a keen, suspicious look. "And there must have been a reason."

He took the letters, saw they were for his mother, and put them beside her plate.

"Well, if you must know, Cousin George, I've had a letter from Uncle Archie," admitted Hetty, a little warily.

Cousin George clucked his tongue with disapproval, for he felt that Uncle Archie was a little wild and frivolous for a man of his years, and a bad influence for Hetty.

"Oh, from Uncle Archie?" he frowned. "Well, even so, why should it make you give a sudden yelp with excitement?"

"Just some good news!" the Imp said vaguely.

"Must have been good to make you yip out like that!" said Cousin George. "What was it?"

He seemed to be dangerously near to guessing the truth, and Hetty quaked. For once the pound note was mentioned, Cousin George would say "Hand it over!"—and away it would go into her banking account.

"Well—er—" murmured Hetty, and then remembered something. "He's been asked to do a picture. Isn't that grand?" she asked eagerly. "Thrilling, isn't it? He's the sweetest, most generous uncle—"

She broke off, coughing, realising too late that she had said just a little too much; but there was no drawing back. For Cousin George had quick intelligence, and a light of understanding came into his eyes.

"Generous? So that's it? He's sent you a tip? Hetty, how much?"

There was no backing out now, and Hetty stifled a groan.

"Enough for us to have a grand day on, Cousin George," she said limply. "We could go to the sea, even. My word, yes! The sea!" she added, and

nearly skipped into the air. "Oh, think of it! The sea!"

As deception was no longer needed she took the note out of her pocket and flapped it about grandly in pride.

"A pound! Now you know why I yipped," she said excitedly. "Cousin George, to-day's my treat. We'll go by excursion to the sea. We'll go on the pier. Golly, what fun we can have!"

Cousin George listened, let her ramp on, and then took the pound note. To Hetty's surprise he examined it with great care from all angles, and then, finally convinced that this was not one of Uncle Archie's own handiwork, he folded it up and slipped it into his pocket.

At that moment his mother, Hetty's Aunt Miriam, walked in to breakfast, and Hetty and Cousin George politely rose, so that Hetty's chance to protest was lost for the moment.

"Well, now, a whole day's holiday for both of you!" said Aunt Miriam. "I hope you two will spend the day well. Have you planned it?"

"Yes, Aunt Miriam," said the Imp swiftly. "We—"

"I have planned it," cut in Cousin George. "We are going fishing, mother."

The Imp nearly collapsed. It was the first she had heard of this wonderful plan, and it came to her as a great shock.

"Fuf-fishing?" she echoed blankly.

"Fishing in a quiet little backwater," nodded Cousin George. "While I fish, Hetty can read aloud the French book she has to study this term, and I can correct her accent and help her translate. It will combine work with pleasure."

Hetty almost swooned, but not with joy.

"W-with pleasure? With wh-what

pleasure?" she asked. "You mean, I'm going to spend all day reading a dull French book—"

Aunt Miriam regarded her sternly.

"Hetty," she said sharply, "enough! Be grateful that your Cousin George is willing to sacrifice some good measure of his own holiday to give you much-needed assistance in French. No doubt you planned some frivolous outing, but you have to make up now in holiday-time for the work you should have done previously in lesson-time. For that you have only yourself to blame."

Cousin George looked at Hetty with deep sympathy, and yet some measure of sternness.

"Quite!" he said. "We have to be cruel to be kind."

The Imp said not a word, but all the sunshine seemed to have gone from the day.

For an awful moment the idea did enter her mind of bolting, slipping away by herself. But Hetty knew that it could not be done, for anything like that would mean going out of the frying-pan here into the fire—a tough school for backward and wayward girls.

As from a great distance she heard Cousin George speaking.

"Yes, we can get a train at Sturley Junction, mother," he was saying.

Sturley Junction! The name struck a chord in the Imp's mind. In a flash she remembered that the trains for Sandsea started from there, too.

"My golly!" she murmured, her face brightening.

"Well?" asked Cousin George. "Anything wrong, Hetty?"

Hetty shook her head and managed to hide a smile.

"Nothing," she said—"nothing at all. I think it's a grand idea!"

But she chose not to add what she thought was the grandest part of it all—getting into the wrong train at the junction. Cousin George didn't know yet that that was to happen, but the Imp did, for the Imp was the one who was determined to make it happen!

A word from Bessie Bunter!

"I SUS-SAY, YOU GIG-GIRLS . . ."

I'm so excited. Th-th-the Editor has asked me tut-to tell you all about the other stories f-f-featuring me and—and Bib-Babs & Co. You know, the ones that app-pp—oh, dud-dear—now I've mum-made a big bu-blot. . . ."

From which point onwards Bessie's letter was indecipherable. But what she meant to say was that you can meet her—and all your Cliff House favourites—every month in the grand LONG story of their early adventures which appears in the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY. This month's story—No. 637—is one of HILDA RICHARDS' Masterpieces. Don't fail to get it!

And also remember the other three fine stories, details of which appear on the right. These grand book-length volumes cost 4d. Each . . . are Now on Sale—Everywhere . . . and will give you hours of enthralling reading.



No. 637

No. 636—"AT SCHOOL TO GUARD A MADCAP!" Specially written for this number by Ruth Maxwell.

No. 638—"DRIVEN FROM MORCOVE!" One of Marjorie Stanton's early stories of Betty Barton & Co.

No. 639—"AN OUTCAST—ON MYSTERY'S TRAIL!" Which is simply packed with excitement.

But the Imp Disagrees!

"BETTER leave the hamper to me, Hetty. We don't want it upset. Only three minutes to get our train."

Cousin George was brisk and business-like, and the Imp stood back as she descended from the local train that had taken them to the junction.

"Porter!" called Cousin George.

A porter hurried forward to take the luggage, for Cousin George, armed with fishing-rods as well as hamper, seemed laden enough to need a porter.

"Yessir!" said the porter. "Leave it to me, sir!"

"I can manage myself," said Cousin George. "I merely want to know from which platform the train for Lower Brinksley leaves."

"Oh!" said the porter. "No. 4. Over the bridge. Three minutes."

And he turned aside to another laden passenger.

"This way, Hetty," said Cousin George. "Have you got the French book? We'll have to hurry."

"Yes, Cousin George," said the Imp meekly. "Mind the hamper doesn't come undone."

"The hamper won't come undone. I fastened it myself," he retorted.

But, of course, what he didn't know was that the Imp had managed to loosen the fastening a little. Full of confidence and importance, Cousin George strutted along the platform, followed by Hetty.

And Hetty's eyes were fixed on that hamper, the fastening of which was slipping with every step Cousin George took.

"Run!" he said suddenly.

Hetty ran, and at that moment the hamper fastening gave way. There was a crash, and on to the platform went a bag of buns, a thermos flask, a tin of biscuits, a towel, and a few other oddments.

The Imp, as though surprised, helped him gather the things together, none of them any worse for the mishap. But by the time the hamper had been re-fastened carefully their train had steamed out of No. 4 platform—just as Hetty had hoped.

"Never mind—we'll get the next from No. 5," she said airily.

"How do you know it goes from No. 5?" asked Cousin George.

Hetty went to ask a porter, and came running back.

"From No. 5 in four minutes," she said.

"Oh, then No. 5's where we go!" said Cousin George.

And it did not occur to him that the Imp had asked from which platform the next train to Sandsea went. There was a crowd waiting for that train on No. 5, and Cousin George told Hetty to keep close to him.

"Don't get parted from me," he said, "whatever you do. There's a terrific crowd, considering it's a local train. There must be something on."

"Aren't you clever thinking of that?" the Imp said with relief. So long as he did not guess everyone was waiting for the seaside train she didn't mind.

At last the train came clattering in, and Cousin George whipped up the hamper and fishing rods.

The Imp tugged open a door and scrambled in, took the rods from Cousin George, and pushed them on to the rack, then she grabbed the hamper.

"First stop Sandsea!" yelled a porter.

Cousin George heard, but for the moment did not comprehend.

"I'll put the hamper on the rack. Don't pull, Hetty!" he exclaimed.

The hamper had just been put on the rack, when two people pushed in behind Cousin George. As they did, the porter's voice bawled out again:

"Non-stop Sandsea!"

"Well, we're in, Cousin George," the Imp said loudly. "Look! The hamper's safe—"

But Cousin George, with a yelp of horror, struggled to the door.

"Get out! Let me out. Hetty! Grab the things!" he yelled. "We're in the wrong train! Oh gosh!"

Cousin George snatched at the hamper; but someone had put a small bag on top of it, and the bag fell down. By sheer bad luck it fell on to the head of a short-tempered man.

"Oh, sorry!" said Cousin George.

The man's eyes glinted, and he almost flung the bag at Cousin George.

"That was done on purpose!" he said thickly.

"I'm leaving the train!" said Cousin George frantically. "It's the wrong one. I'm not going to Sandsea."

"Oh, yes, you are, son!" said someone, with a laugh. "We're on the move."

Cousin George almost fought his way to the door, and yelps of agony came as he unwittingly stood on feet; it was practically impossible to do anything else.

The train was gathering speed, and the Imp heaved a sigh of relief; but she did not speak in relieved tone.

"Cousin George," she piped, "is this the wrong train?"



WITH an air of bland innocence, the Imp tossed pebbles into the sea. "Hi! Stop that! You'll scare off the fish!" came a chorus from the horrified anglers. Hetty knew that—it was part of her plan to get away from Cousin George.

"It's the non-stop to Sandsea!" he gasped. "Oh gosh! Unless we get out now—"

But he saw as he looked out of the window that they stood no chance; for Hetty was standing right at the end of the crowded carriage, well jammed in.

Cousin George let out a groan.

"That settles it!" he said. "Hetty, we'll have to go on to Sandsea."

Hetty uttered a groan; but the man with the battered hat held his sides and roared with laughter, and he didn't stop laughing for five minutes.

Cousin George, pale of face, looked at Hetty grimly.

"I blame myself entirely," he said.

"Yes, Cousin George," the Imp agreed, trying not to giggle.

"For allowing you to find out about the train. But I ought to have guessed," he groaned.

And for the next half-hour he was silent, while the Imp looked happily out of the window at the fleeting landscape. They were on their way to the seaside. The first round was hers.

A few minutes later the Imp found George at her side, whispering softly.

"We'll have to pay the return fare," he said anxiously.

"How much?" asked Hetty.

"Luckily," said Cousin George, "it's an excursion, so it'll only be four-and-sixpence each; nine bob the two."

Hetty looked solemn for a moment, and then smiled and patted his arm.

"Cheer up, Cousin George!" she said. "I'll pay; it's my treat!"

"Have you got nine shillings on you?" he asked, amazed.

"No; but you've got my pound note," said Hetty. "Call this my treat; the silver lining in the black cloud."

But Cousin George's face did not clear.

"Your pound note! Why, I left that in the money-box at home, of course," he said. "And all I've got is seven-and-sixpence."

The grin went from Hetty's face—until

she remembered she had two shillings. But even then she didn't brighten. She wasn't going to spend that if she could help it. But how could she save it?

"SANDSEA! SANDSEA!" roared the porters.

From the crowded excursion train alighted the trippers—mothers, fathers, uncles, infants with spades, buckets, parcels, and baskets—determined to have the day of their lives; and amongst that crowd were Cousin George and the Imp.

How they were going to pay the extra on their tickets without using nearly all their money she hadn't the faintest idea.

But Cousin George didn't seem to be worrying at all.

"I think it'll be all right, Hetty," he said.

"We can raise some cash?" she asked.

"We shan't need to," he assured her.

"I shall explain that it was the porter's fault for directing us to the wrong train, make it clear that we don't want to leave the station—"

"We don't?" said Hetty sharply.

"Of course not! We want the next train back," said George in surprise.

"We're going fishing. I can argue pretty convincingly, I've been told; so I think I can make the stationmaster see reason."

"And go back next train?" frowned Hetty. It wasn't her idea of seeing reason; she wanted to see the front.

They waited until the crowd had gone, and then went to the barrier.

"Tickets, please!" said the man briskly.

Cousin George handled the situation with tact.

"Unfortunately," he said, "we have been the victims of a porter's gross carelessness. In fact, I may consider asking damages from the company."

The ticket collector frowned.

"Whaffor?" he asked.

"Because we were directed to the wrong train," said Cousin George.

"We wanted to go somewhere else, not here."

"Nine bob!" said the ticket collector, growing annoyed. "I've heard this wrong train yarn before. You'll sit on a platform, get a couple of platform tickets, and then sneak off. I know!"

"Golly! That's an idea!" the Imp murmured.

Cousin George's eyes flashed as he looked at the ticket collector.

"That's a slanderous imputation of dishonesty!" he said.

"Now then—nine bob, young man, or I call a cop!" said the ticket collector. "You were on the train, and you had the ride. You ought to be old enough to get in the right train. You must be twelve, at least."

"Twelve! I'm sixteen and a half!" said George, reddening.

"That makes it worse. Come on! Nine-bob! If you get away with this you'll be travelling up to John o' Groats for nothing!"

"Don't argue with him, Cousin George," said the Imp, in a loud whisper. "Sock him, and bolt!"

The man heard, gave a start, and turned to call a policeman. As the policeman approached, the Imp whispered to Cousin George, who dived his hand into his pocket and produced his money. Then, Hetty making it up with her florin, they took the sixpence change.

"Sock me and bolt, eh?" said the man, with a grim look at Hetty.

Hetty winked, standing behind Cousin George's back.

"Well, well! We'll have to make the most of it now, Cousin George," she said, in a mock heavy tone. "And now we're here we might as well see the sands and the pier."

Cousin George, with a wary look at the policeman, led the way out, and did not speak to Hetty for ten yards. Then he turned on her fiercely.

"What did you want to say that for?" he demanded.

"Say what?"

"Sock him and bolt." He thought we were crooks."

"Did he?" said Hetty. "What fun! But never mind, Cousin George, we may be down on our luck, but let's put a brave face on it."

Outside the station, Hetty drew in ozone, and her eyes sparkled. Gay shops, the pier not far away, festooned in holiday spirit, and the blue sea shimmering, golden sands, soft and warm. Hetty's heart swelled with happiness, and she squeezed Cousin George's arm.

"Down to the sands for a picnic lunch!" she cried. "Come on! It's out-day out, and we're going to enjoy it!"

But Cousin George stood stock-still, with a fixed expression, staring across the road at a large coloured poster. So bright did his expression become that Hetty followed the direction of his gaze, for whatever he saw made him happy.

"Oh!" she gasped, but in dismay. For, in bright colours and large letters that poster announced that on the pier there would be held to-day a fishing competition.

"Where's the pier?" cried Cousin George. "Come on, this way! Bring your French book. Sea fishing will make a change, and, what's more, there are prizes offered. If the competition is fair we may get a prize. We're in luck!"

But Hetty, blinking, dismayed, walking at his side, was not so sure, for, even

though they were at the seaside, she wanted to do something more thrilling than watch Cousin George fish!

Taking her arm, however, he made sure that she could not escape.

Whoopee!

COUSIN GEORGE took his place in the queue that was lining up for the contest, but the Imp fell back, thoughtful and glum. The only thing of interest that had happened on the pier during their wait was that a small boy had been ordered off. The fishermen were silent, solemn, and patient.

"Shame!" said Hetty to the small boy as he walked past, rubbing his ear. "What did you do?"

"Nothing," he grunted. "Just threw a few pebbles into the sea."

"And they turned you off the pier?" said Hetty, surprised.

"They always do, every year," the boy admitted, with a grin. "Only this year they socked me on the ear, too. Doesn't half make the blokes fishing mad when you chuck pebbles in! All the fishes buzz off!"

Hetty's eyes glimmered.

"Have you got any more pebbles?" she asked.

He held out a bag.

"But a girl wouldn't have the nerve,"

Have you seen

SNOW WHITE and the SEVEN DWARFS—

that fascinating new card game which is on sale at all stationers and toy-shops? It costs only 1s. 6d., and is lovely fun. Get one to-day.

he said. "And besides, they'd chuck you off—order you off, anyway."

At that moment Cousin George called: "Hetty! Come on! You can have a chair beside me!"

Hetty took the pebbles from the boy, strolled forward, and then, as Cousin George stopped to fill in his entry form, she turned and tossed pebbles into the sea—plonk, plonk!

"Hi!" shouted a voice.

An attendant galloped forward, glowering, and caught Hetty's arm before she could toss another fish-livener.

"What's the idea?" he demanded.

Hetty shrugged.

"Beaucoup des fleurs," she said. "Bonjour. Avez-vous la plume de ma tante? Non?"

"French," said the man in disgust. But did not know that Hetty had only said: "Many flowers. Good-day. Have you seen my aunt's pen?"

"Ah, oui, oui! Zees I do alwis," said Hetty.

"Then get off the pier," said the man thickly. "Now, toot swit!"

Cousin George, having signed his name, turned.

"Hetty, come on," he said.

But an attendant barred the way.

"She's not allowed to stay on the pier," he said.

"What? Why not? She's my cousin," said George, in surprise.

"I don't care if she's your Aunt Gertie. She can't stay on this pier," said the man.

Cousin George argued, protested, but the attendant was adamant. Hetty was barred.

"All right, Cousin George, I'll go," Hetty said. "I tell you what. I'll go and send a wire to aunty to say that we shall be late home."

Cousin George had not thought of that himself, but now that Hetty mentioned it he realised that they ought to send a telegram, for they would have to return by the excursion train, which ran late.

"All right, Hetty; but come back," he said.

Off went Hetty, almost skipping with glee, sent the telegram, and returned to the sands in sight of the pier, waving to Cousin George until she attracted his attention. That done, she lay on the sands for a bit, watched bathers, and finally, when her cousin got on with his fishing, she returned to the post office.

For Hetty had sent the kind of telegram that demands a reply, and the reply was to be made to the post office. Luckily the reply was there. Aunt Miriam had wired back at once.

And what Aunt Miriam had wired was the sum of one pound—just the amount Hetty in her own wire had asked for! Cashing it, the Imp left the post office, all smiles.

After that she had the grandest afternoon. She bathed, hiring a costume and hut; she went back to the pier and sampled the machines, sent George the hamper, and had a slap-up lunch in the pier restaurant.

It was late afternoon when the competition wound up, and, apart from the fact that he had caught no fish, Cousin George had done well. He was sun-burned, and his style had won praise; also he had a small souvenir of the occasion.

But there was an expression of guilt on his face.

"Hetty," he said, "I've a confession to make. I—er—I—well, the fact is, I must have eaten both our lunches. I—I sort of thought you had taken yours, but it seems you hadn't."

"Oh, that's all right! I had salmon and cucumber," said the Imp. "Let's go and have strawberries and cream and listen to the band. Then there's a good pierrot troupe—"

Cousin George halted.

"But money! What shall we use for money? I suppose you haven't thought of that, and—Gosh! How did you buy lunch?"

"Out of my pound," said Hetty, and explained what she had done.

Cousin George reeled.

"It's a holiday!" ended the Imp. "Shall we riot?"

The music from the band was intriguing, and a small boy went past, sucking an ice. The hot sun, streaming down, made George thirstier and more in the mood for an ice.

"Yes," he said.

"Attaway!" cried Hetty, in glee, slipping her arm through his. "Dump the luggage, Cousin George, and let's start living. All that's left we share. Nine bob for the fare, though, while I think of it—"

Cousin George grinned.

"All right! Come on! I'll pay for the fares afterwards. But hurry up. Whoopee!"

And whoopee it was.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

COUSIN GEORGE and the Imp will be here once again next week, as full of fun as ever, so be sure to meet them, won't you?