

In this week's magnificent story of Cliff House School, Clara Trevlyn becomes:

"THE NO-SURRENDER TOMBOY!"

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Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



"IF YOU'LL PUT ME IN THE TEAM, CLARA DEAR, I'LL GIVE YOU THIS LOVELY BOOK!"

What was behind this amazing offer of cunning Faith Ashton? See this week's superb Barbara Redfern & Co. story.

Story No. 3 in the Powerful Series of Faith Ashton's "war" with Barbara Redfern & Co. In this Grand Long Complete Story the deceitful, cunning Faith pits herself against—

The NO-SURRENDER TOMBOY!

BY
HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER



The Check of Faith Ashton!



"WHAT a feather in Cliff House's cap if we can bring it off!" cried Barbara Redfern, her blue eyes sparkling. "Jolly good idea of yours, Clara!"

Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, junior games captain of the school, grinned.

"Thanks, old Babs," she said. "But congratulate me when we've got the fixture—if we can get it. The question is—can we?"

"Well, I don't see why not," golden-haired Mabel Lynn chimed in. "Of course, they're a crack team—and crack teams, I suppose, are pretty busy. But I've been studying their fixture list, and they've no important game for a fortnight. They might be jolly glad of the opportunity of playing us next Saturday!"

"And I'm jolly sure, you know, that we can beat them!" plump Bessie put in, blinking earnestly through her thick spectacles. "Especially if you make me centre-forward for the game! I sus-say, when are we going to see them about it?"

"Yes, that's so, Clara," said Babs. "When?"

She and Mabel and Bessie—the famous trio who shared Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor at Cliff

House—eyed the tomboy games captain expectantly.

"To-morrow," said Clara. "Then," and she glanced round at the other girls in the Common-room, "it's settled, eh, kids? We challenge the French schoolgirl hockey team to a match on Saturday?"

Settled it was—as far as the Cliff House juniors were concerned. But whether they would be able to get the fixture was another thing. The optimists were hoping; but those not so optimistic were shaking their heads as they looked at the games captain. One or two of the meaner spirits, like Lydia Crossendale & Co., disdainfully sniffed.

"Well, I think," Lydia said, "you've got a check! Fancy an ordinary school challenging a team like the French girls. I suppose," she added, with a sneer, "you'll be challenging the Australians next time they come over here?"

"Oh, don't be a chump!" protested Mabel Lynn.

"Well, doesn't it amount to the same thing?" Lydia scoffed.

"It does—and it doesn't," said Babs. "Bother it, it's not as if we haven't got a record of our own! We haven't been beaten this season, either, have we?"

Lydia sniffed again, but there was a buzz in the room. Whether they believed Tomboy Clara would get her fixture or not, they were all anxious for it.

It would, as Babs had said, be a feather indeed for Cliff House to meet

the crack French visitors—that famous team who, so far, had not been defeated in England, whose exploits on the hockey field were the sensation of junior hockey circles wherever the game was played.

It was Clara's idea that Cliff House juniors, themselves unbeaten on the hockey field this season, should challenge the French girls—and a very attractive match indeed it would make if it happened. Clara was nothing if not ambitious.

Anyway, until the "yes" or "no" was received, it was interesting to speculate.

Clara herself was glowing. In all matters concerning her beloved games Clara was an optimist. As Mabs said, the French team had no fixture for a fortnight. The French team, training in the district, must have heard of Cliff House's record.

"And if we do meet them, we've just jolly well got to win!" Clara said. "I've got a feeling that we can win, too. We—" And then she turned her head. "Oh!" she broke off, a change coming into her voice.

For the door of the Common-room had opened, and into the room had stepped another girl.

Strange, immediately they saw her, how conversation should break off. Strange, the silence which succeeded the buzz of a moment before. And strange, how suddenly the air seemed to become full of hostility and suspicion—and stranger still, looking at the girl who

had appeared, that her presence should so immediately create that atmosphere.

A bright beaming face, almost incredible in its prettiness and its wide-eyed innocence, stared in at them.

"Oh, hallo, girls!" Faith Ashton said.

Nobody answered—unless the grin which Lydia flashed at the newcomer could be called an answer.

For nobody, despite Faith Ashton's angelic expression and her simpering friendliness, had the faintest affection for Faith Ashton. They knew the nature which those doll-like looks of hers hid. Just recently they had been treated to far too many examples of her treachery, her hypocrisy, her cunning, to entertain anything but the strongest dislike for her.

For Faith, descending into the Fourth Form from the Upper Fifth at the same time as Cliff House's temporary new headmistress, Miss Evelyn Venn, had appeared on the scene, had ousted her cousin, Barbara Redfern, from the captaincy of the Lower School.

"Hal-lo!" she said again, and stepped into the room, now waving a sheet of paper which she carried in her hand. "I—I've got something I want you to read, girls! Shall I pin it up on the board?"

Nobody answered. But Faith, with the same bright, angelic smile, moved towards the notice-board. Extracting the drawing-pins there, she pinned up her notice. Lydia Crossendale, the only one who moved forward to read it, jumped.

"Phew! I say, we were just talking about this!" she cried. "Faith, how did you manage it?"

"Manage what?" Clara Trevlyn asked.

"Well, come and look," Lydia grinned.

Clara frowned. But curiosity for the moment was stronger than dislike of Faith Ashton. She crossed and looked. Then she also jumped.

"My hat—"

"Clara, what is it?"

Faith smiled. The whole Form was flocking towards her notice now. And in five seconds the whole Form was reading:

CAPTAIN'S NOTICE.

Having arranged a match to take place between Cliff House Juniors and the French Schoolgirl Hockey Team, on the ground of the Lantham Sports Club, next Saturday, I have selected the following players to form the Cliff House Junior Team:

Faith Ashton (Capt).

Clara Trevlyn.

Barbara Redfern.

Janet Jordan.

Henrietta Winchester.

Jean Cartwright.

Christine Wilmer.

Joan Charmant.

Brenda Fallace.

Amy Jones.

Leila Carroll.

(Signed),

FAITH ASHTON,

(Capt. Junior School).

Clara blinked.

"You arranged the fixture?" she asked.

"Yes; this afternoon." Faith smiled. "Rather a good thing for us, isn't it? And it was my own idea, you know."

Clara gazed at her suspiciously. So did Babs, perhaps both remembering now that when they had first discussed the idea this morning Faith Ashton had been within earshot. It would be a typical Faith Ashton trick to steal

that idea, and then, acting upon it, bag all the credit for herself. But, as usual, it was impossible to prove anything against Faith.

"Well, I say, jolly good old Faith!" Lydia cheered. "That's what I call getting things done!"

But nobody else commented. Everybody was looking now with some interest at Tomboy Clara who, having read through that notice again, was beginning to absorb its significance.

"And since when," she demanded, turning to Babs' two-faced cousin, "have you been made games captain?"

Faith flushed.

"Oh, Clara, please don't be mean, dear!" she reproachfully protested. "Of course I shall captain the team, as it is my fixture."

"And who," Clara asked, "has given you permission to bag my first eleven?"

"Well, we've got to have the strongest team, haven't we?" Faith pouted. "And, after all, you're in it."

"Thanks!" Clara said testily. "But if you want to know what I think, Faith Ashton, I think you've got cheek. I'm games captain of the Junior School. I've got a fixture for Saturday. And, anyway, this was my idea in the first place. The least you could

Form didn't trust her. The Fourth, fed-up already with her captaincy—they only acknowledged it because they were forced to by Miss Venn—suspected fresh trickery, new trickery. Faith all along had gone too far. It seemed now that this was the thin end of a new Faith Ashton wedge to increase that girl's power.

"It's my team, and it's my fixture list you're messing about with," Clara said. "Anyway, I've heard nothing from the French team, and until I do that fixture just doesn't stand."

"I'll tell Miss Venn!" Faith threatened.

"Well, jolly well go and tell her!" Clara said shortly. "If you can twist her round your little finger, Two-face, you can't twist us."

Faith's lips quivered. She looked around her. But it was obvious she had no supporters, except Lydia Crossendale, Freda Ferriers, and Frances Frost, perhaps, and that trio, seeing the dangerous mood of the rest, wisely remained silent. For a moment her eyes flashed. Then abruptly she turned towards the door.

"All right," she bit out, "have it your way, then! We'll just jolly well see what Miss Venn has to say about it!"

And slam! went the door as it banged to behind her.

Clara took a deep breath.

"That sneak!" she said. "That fearful sneak! Of course, she heard us discussing the idea, and, of course, she bagged it. But she's not getting away with this. Look here, Babs, I'm going to see Dulcia."

"Oh, that's a good idea!" Babs immediately voted. "I'll come, too."

For Dulcia Fairbrother, the head girl and games captain of the school, usually had the last word in all matters appertaining to school sports. One could always be certain of getting a fair deal from the popular and fair-minded Dulcia. Apart from which, Dulcia was well acquainted with the wiles and cunning of Faith Ashton.

So off together went Babs and Clara, and, finding Dulcia in her own study in the Sixth Form quarters, put the question to her. Dulcia frowned.

"Thanks!" she said. "I'll take this up with Miss Venn, Clara. Even if Faith had arranged the fixture, she's got no right to take the law into her own hands. Can she play hockey?"

"Never seen her play seriously," Clara admitted. "But, Dulcia, you do agree?"

"I agree—yes," Dulcia nodded. "If the match takes place at all, it should take place under the captaincy of the real captain. In any case, Faith should have consulted you first. Wait here for me."

And Dulcia, with a nod and a smile, went off.

She reached Miss Venn's study, to find that rather heavy-faced lady already in consultation with Faith.

Miss Venn, however, was not looking too happy. She was satisfied enough with Faith's execution of her Form captain's duties; but certain incidents which had occurred just lately, when Faith Ashton had endeavoured to stage a Cliff House play in public, and had made a complete mess of it, had rather shaken her intention of investing Faith with new responsibilities.

Miss Venn was a strict disciplinarian. Miss Venn had no doubts whatever about how a school should be run. But Miss Venn knew next to nothing about sports. She looked up as Dulcia came in.

And for a moment something like a sigh of relief escaped her lips,

From triumph to triumph goes Faith Ashton, Barbara Redfern's treacherous cousin. She turns her attention to sport, attempts to take charge of the hockey team—and instantly comes up against the junior games captain, Tomboy Clara Trevlyn. Blunt, honest as the day, Clara finds herself tricked time and time again by Faith's cunning, until . . .

have done," she added witheringly, "was to speak to me before you rushed off and fixed things up behind my back!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured Leila Carroll, the American junior.

"Well, you want the match, don't you?" Faith said.

"We want it—yes," Clara nodded.

"But," she added, "we don't want it under your captaincy, and we don't want it on your terms. If that match takes place—"

"Which it will!" Faith flashed.

"It takes place," Babs put in, "with Clara as captain."

"Hear, hear!"

"But—"

"Stuff and nonsense, Faith! How do we know, anyway, that you can play hockey, look you?" Lucy Morgan, from Wales, cried. "You haven't played in a serious game before."

"But I've got the fixture!" Faith protested.

"But Clara had the idea as well," Mabs Lynn flashed back, "and Clara's our skipper."

"Hear, hear!"

Faith stared, biting her lip. The

4 "The No-Surrender Tomboy!"

"Ah, Dulcia, you are the girl I wanted to see!" she said. "Sit down, please!" She smiled a little, for even Miss Venn could not help but like Dulcia. "You are games captain of the school?" she added.

"Yes, Miss Venn. It was in that capacity I came to consult you," Dulcia said, and gazed a little grimly at Faith—"about this question of a Junior School match with the French school-girls."

"Oh, yes!" Miss Venn nodded. "I approve the project," she said. "The idea is good; but, frankly, Dulcia, I am a little at sea on the question of sports. It does seem to me that Faith, having arranged the fixture, should play in the team."

"Be captain of the team, Miss Venn!" Faith corrected hastily.

"Well, be captain."

But Dulcia shook her head. "That," she said, "is what I want to talk about. I cannot agree there, Miss Venn. The girl who should captain the team in such an important fixture is the girl who has captained it in all its other important fixtures—Clara Trevlyn. In any case, Clara already had the idea that—"

"Oh, but, Miss Venn—" pouted Faith.

"Faith, please!" Miss Venn said, a little sharply.

"Well, Miss Venn, if Clara captains the team she won't even have me in it!" Faith protested. "And"—with the quick cunning of one who sees the game running against her—"in any case, Miss Venn, I—I only made a suggestion. I didn't really intend to captain the team, if Clara wanted to. I—I only wanted to be in it."

Dulcia gazed at her contemptuously. But Miss Venn smiled.

"Well, Faith, of course not!" she said. "Nobody was imagining that of you, my dear. Well, yes; that is settled, Dulcia? But I really must support Faith's claim to be in the team. You will see to that?"

"I've no doubt," Dulcia said, rising, "that if Clara thinks Faith good enough she will be in the team. Thank you, Miss Venn!"

Quickly she went back to her study to break the news to the anxious Babs and Clara. Those two girls broke into a simultaneous cheer.

"But," Dulcia warned, "remember this. I practically promised, if Faith is good enough, that you'll give her a place in the team. I don't know any more about her hockey playing than you do, but I think the best thing you can do now—just as a graceful gesture to Miss Venn—is to make up a couple of practice sides to-morrow, and give Faith the captaincy of one, and take the other yourself. And if she is any good—"

"Then," Clara agreed, "much as we don't like her, she goes in! Dulcia, you're a wonder!"

"Stuff! Buzz off!" Dulcia smiled.

Storm on the Hockey Field!



TO be sure, on less jubilant reflection, Clara Trevlyn was not too keen on the idea of allowing Faith to captain a practice side; but, having accepted that instruction from Dulcia, she would stand by it.

And, as Clara said, nobody would be more willing than herself to give Faith a chance in the team to meet the redoubtable French schoolgirls if Faith proved herself worthy of it.

Meantime, with the matter more or less officially settled, the Junior School became a hubbub of new excitement. Nobody really believed that Faith had conceived the idea of getting the fixture, but everyone was most whole-heartedly glad that the fixture had been got.

Even Miss Venn was mildly interested, and, deciding that this was a branch of school life with which she must become better acquainted, let it be known that she would attend the practice on the morrow.

As lessons finished early the next day, eleven-thirty was the time set aside for bully-off. But well before the players had changed in the pavilion on Junior side, the ropes around the ground were thronged. Apart from the excitement of the forthcoming match, everybody was keen to see how Faith Ashton was going to turn out as a hockey player.

It was Clara who had made up the two teams, and Clara, soul of sporting fairness that she was, had been very careful not to make one side stronger than the other.

Of the regular Junior First Eleven, indeed, Faith Ashton had no less than six in her side, the six being Brenda Fallace, Jean Cartwright, Janet Jordan, Rosa Rodworth, Diana Royston-Clarke, and Margot Lantham, Clara contenting herself with Babs, Hefrietta Winchester, Christine Wilmer, and Leila Carroll.

In every way, therefore, the sides were evenly matched, with, if anything, a slight balance of strength in Faith Ashton's favour.

"Going to be a bit of a needle match—what?" Jemima Carstairs, an interested spectator, said. "Hallo! Here's our venerable old Vulture!"—a reference to Miss Venn, who at that moment strolled on to the scene in company with Miss Keyes, the gym mistress. "And here, forsooth, are the merry old teams!" added the unusual Fourth Former. "Cheers, Clara!"

Clara, at the head of her team, laughed as she led the way on to the field. Dulcia Fairbrother, who was umpiring the match, came after her; and after them Faith Ashton, wearing a confident look on her face.

There was a silence as Clara and Faith tossed for choice of ends. Another cheer rang out when it was seen that Clara had won.

"Whoops! Now off we go!" chortled Lorna Millerchip.

In the centre Faith and Clara faced each other. Dulcia's whistle shrilled; there came simultaneous clashing of sticks; then Clara was away, passing to Babs, who passed back to Jane Mills.

Faith desperately hurled herself forward; a second too late, lunged at the ball just as Jane Mills rushed to the attack. She never touched it.

"Not too good—what?" Jemima Carstairs chirruped, and waved her monocle. "She should have got that one, my henchman. But—whoa! Look at this!"

"This" was a concerted rush by the whole of Clara's forward line, Clara herself leading. If the movement had been rehearsed it could not have been more responsive, more cohesive, and even Jean Cartwright and Janet Jordan, Faith's backs, could not cope with it. A swift pass from Clara to Jane Mills, a tricky piece of work by Jane to put Babs within the scoring circle, and then a flashing shot resulted in the inevitable. There came a delirious yell of "Goal!"

First blood to Clara's side!

Babs had scored the goal, but the credit was not all hers. It was Clara, with that wonderful eye for an opening, who had made the opportunity; Clara

who, keeping her forwards in perfect combination, had made it so easy.

The teams lined up again. This time Faith's side got away, and for a moment the school had a glimpse of Faith's prowess as a hockey player as, gathering the ball, she carried it up the wing. But Faith, by that manoeuvre, had put herself out of position. The pass she sent along when she had come to the end of her run was missed altogether by Rosa Rodworth, and easily cleared by Lucy Morgan.

Then ding-dong; up and down the field. But it was obvious where the strength lay—obvious that Clara's side was the better.

Faith could play hockey; but Faith's skill was no greater than the skill of the first eleven's weakest player, and as a captain she was a dismal failure.

She had none of that spirit of co-operation. Unlike Clara, who, when she trapped the ball, looked for the best way of making use of it, Faith appeared to think that her duty was to hang on to it and never let it go until the last possible moment.

Ten minutes—a quarter of an hour. A spectacularly brilliant dash by Diana Royston-Clarke failed to register. Clara's forward line swept down again. And again the spectators had a glimpse of Clara's sterling qualities as a captain; again they saw her leading her line as irresistibly they swept forward. Again Clara put the pass across; again Babs trapped it—and whiz—

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Babs! Bravo, Clara!" hooted the crowd.

Two—nil! Faith scowled. There was a desperate gleam in her eyes now. The look she fastened upon Clara was a look in which fury and hate mingled. Well, never mind, her turn would come, she told herself. Just let that cat wait!

Round the touchline the girls were chortling. Miss Venn, not understanding, shook her head from time to time. Now the teams were at it again. Now there was a mix-up on the left near Miss Venn, with three girls desperately struggling for possession. And there was Faith, flying across the field; there was Faith, hurling herself into that scramble. What was happening?

Nobody saw for the moment, but what they did see was Faith suddenly reeling from out of the scrum. Three or four paces she staggered; then, with a crash, went down, a cry of agony on her lips. At once Dulcia's whistle shrilled.

"Faith!" she cried. "What's happened?"

Faith, who had struck her shin against her hockey stick while falling, looked at the mark and shuddered.

"It—it was Clara!" she stammered.

"Clara hit me with her stick!"

"I?" Clara flashed. "Why, you fibber, I never touched you!"

Faith, her lips quivering, her wonderfully pretty face reproachful, looked up at her.

"Clara, you—you did! Oh, you know you did! You lunged out at me with your stick just as I plunged at the ball. But perhaps it was only an accident," she said, with sweet forgiveness.

Clara glared.

"I wasn't anywhere near you!" she cried.

"Oh, Clara, you know you were! Dulcia, will—will you please help me up?"

Dulcia lifted her, staring at the red-faced Tomboy. Nobody in the general excitement had seen what had happened; but Clara knew. She had been aware of Faith's flying entry into

the scum. She had seen Faith trip over her own hockey stick and go flying.

"Look here——" she cried.

"Please, Clara, don't—don't let's say anything about it!" Faith pleaded.

"No? Well, I am going to say something about it!" Clara cried. "You fibbing little cheat—trying to blame it on to me! I saw what happened! You tripped over your own stick——"

There was a mutter. It was a mutter, however, which was interrupted by the rustling arrival of Miss Venn. She looked very stern.

"Clara, that is no way to talk to the captain of your Form!" she said sharply.

"But she accused me——" Clara blazed.

she resented Miss Venn's interference. Her jaw stuck out.

"I'll proceed with the game," she doggedly announced, "when Faith apologises!"

"Clara, don't be ridiculous!" Miss Venn cried.

"Clara——" muttered Babs, and laid a hand on her arm; but Clara, red-faced and mutinous, shook it off.

"Let her apologise!" she cried.

"But, Clara," Faith said reproachfully, "that's silly! Why should I apologise? After all, per-perhaps it was an accident," she said, with a smile which plainly showed that her own opinion was that it was anything but. "Now, Clara dear, do let's get on with the game," she urged.

Clara stood resolute and stubborn. "Are you going to apologise?" she demanded.

viour in my life!" she stormed. "Get back on to the field!"

Clara stood stubbornly immovable.

"Please, Miss Venn, don't—don't be angry with her!" Faith pleaded.

"Naturally, Clara is upset. I—I'm sure she didn't mean to hurt me, you know! Oh, Clara, won't you carry on—please?" she added sighingly.

Clara set her lips.

"Not—not even if I stand down?" Faith faltered. "If that would make you happy, Clara——"

Clara's eyes snapped. Oh, what a lying, cunning, deceitful hypocrite this girl was! Faith was playing a part, of course. Faith was simply putting on this act for Miss Venn's benefit, and Miss Venn, utterly deceived by Faith, could not see it.

"You—you two-faced cat!" Clara flamed out.



"YOU fibbing little cheat!" cried Clara furiously. "Trying to blame it on to me! You tripped over your own stick——" But Miss Venn, rustling on to the scene, was obviously going to believe Faith Ashton.

"Oh, Clara, of course not!"

"Then," Clara said, between her teeth, "the game can go on without me!"

"Oh, my hat! Clara——" cried Babs.

But the Tomboy, with an angry glower at Faith, had tucked her stick beneath her arm and in her most mutinous frame of mind was striding away.

"Clara, that is enough!" Miss Venn was really angry now. "I have been tolerant enough. I think you are the most graceless, ungrateful, bad-tempered girl I have ever met. Faith, I will not allow you to sacrifice the game. Clara, as you so ardently desire it, you shall go. You will report for punishment at call-over to-night. You hear?"

"Yes, I hear," Clara said thickly, and flung a bitter look at Faith, and shrugged her shoulders as she caught Babs' appealing glance. And, watched by the crowd, she stamped off.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Babs. "The game will now proceed," Miss Venn sharply announced.

The game did. But it had lost its vigour, its sparkle. The minds of the players were no longer upon hockey. Their sympathies, their thoughts were with the girl who had left them. They had had too much experience of Faith Ashton to believe her.

Desperately Faith, trying to take advantage of Clara's absence to capture attention to herself, tried to rally her team.

But if Faith was their captain, Clara was their chum, and the team obstinately refused to be rallied. The match which had promised to be such an exciting game just fizzled out. Even Miss Venn, with her slight knowledge of sport, was disdainful.

"Well, I must say," she expressed

"Please do not raise your voice when you speak to me! I have heard. I consider, indeed, that Faith has been very generous and very forgiving. I cannot say that I saw what was happening myself; but Faith, after all, is the injured party, and Faith should know."

Clara clenched her stick.

"You mean to say that you believe that I hit her——"

"I do not mean to say anything, Clara. As Faith wishes the matter to be closed, we will consider it closed. Now proceed with the game."

But Clara stood still. At once her defiant tomboy spirit was up in arms. The accusation was a fib from beginning to end. There had been no possibility of an accident, and she had never touched Faith. She wasn't going to be sweetly forgiven by Faith for something she hadn't done, and,

Playing Faith's Game!



"NO, no, no, Clara!" cried Faith, and while all the others stared in dumb consternation at the Tomboy's retreating form, she rushed forward.

"Clara, please come back! Don't spoil the game——"

Clara grimly strode on.

"Clara!" Faith breathlessly caught her up. She plucked at the Tomboy's sleeve. "Please, please don't go!" she pleaded. "Don't run away like this!"

Clara paused, breathing hard. Miss Venn, her face as black as a thunder-cloud, rustled towards them.

"Clara, how—how dare you! I have never, never seen such rank bad beha-

herself when at last it was finished, "that if you do not play a better game than this against the French girls you look like receiving a most humiliating defeat. I am extremely disappointed."

So were the players, but they said nothing, realising that explanation was worse than useless. Rather crestfallenly Babs & Co. gathered their belongings from the pavilion. With all their thoughts of Clara, they tramped back into the school. They found the Tomboy, still smouldering, in Study No. 7. "Oh, Clara!" Babs sighed. "Why did you walk off like that?"

"Why?" Clara turned on her. "Would you have stopped when you'd been insulted?"

"No, but, Clara—"
"Oh rats!" Clara said crossly. "I'm not sorry for what I did!"

"But you know, old chump, we should have gone into the matter afterwards," said Janet Jordan, who was one of Clara's studymates.

"Yes; when I'd been forced to apologise to that sneaking little cat for something I hadn't done!" Clara said. "No thanks! Well?" And she glared at the door as a timid tap came upon it. And she glared even more fiercely when the sweetly smiling face of Faith Ashton looked in. "Well, you can get out for a start!" she cried.

"But, Clara dear, I only came to ask you—"

"Get out!" Clara cried.
"Yes, for goodness' sake buzz off, Faith!" Babs advised anxiously.

"But I just wanted to tell dear Clara—" Faith simpered. "Oh, please, Clara, don't look at me like that! I only came to tell you," Faith said reproachfully, "that I forgive you for what you did on the field. I—wow!"

Faith did not mean to finish like that. But she did. Clara, exasperated to the last degree, had caught up a cushion. Smack! came its impact as it blotted out Faith's features, and Faith, with a gurgling yell, disappeared into the corridor. Clara angrily kicked the door shut.

"That cat!" she breathed.
And then she jumped. For as suddenly as she had kicked the door shut, now that door banged open again. Miss Venn, furious, stood in the doorway.

"Clara!" she rapped.
"Oh crumbs!" Clara said in dismay.
"I—I didn't know that you were there, Miss Venn."

"Apparently not!" Miss Venn said, thin-lipped. "But as it happened, I was following Faith down the corridor. I heard what happened—and I saw what happened—and I think, Clara, you are a spiteful girl! After your disgraceful behaviour on the hockey field I should have thought, having had time to think it over, that you would feel contemptible and humiliated. At call-over, Clara, you will report for double punishment. And please," she added bitingly, "try to learn to be as forgiving towards your enemies as those enemies are towards you."

And with a glare she went out, leaving Clara brick-red.

"Oh my hat! Just wait till I get hold of her!" she said, between her teeth.

But Babs despairingly shook her head.

"And then—what?" she asked.
"Clara, don't be a goose. Can't you see—you're just playing Faith's game? Faith jolly well knew Miss Venn was coming along then. That's why she popped in to goad you."

"I'll goad her!" Clara promised.

"Clara—no!" Babs looked at her

sharply. "For goodness' sake," she added, a trifle impatiently, "see reason. It's pretty obvious she has got her knife into you and means to egg you on and on. Why? Don't ask me—but you can bet she's not doing it without reason. Well, you old chump," Babs added quietly, "you've got to spoil her game."

Clara stared at her.
"How?"

"By refusing to be drawn. By refusing to be goaded. By just," Babs urged, "being nice to her and refusing to lose your temper. Don't you see?"

Clara nodded. She saw all right. Clara was playing with her; Faith was toying with her. Faith, with some new mysterious goal in sight, was trying—and succeeding—in getting her into disgrace. Well, Babs was right. The only way to beat Faith was to refuse to be drawn.

But could she, the blunt, outspoken Tomboy, already writhing under a whole heap of grievances, play that game?

COULD SHE?

For a time, at least, Clara Trevlyn tried, and in some measure Clara succeeded. When, during tea in Study No. 7, Faith brightly popped in and asked if she could have a cup of tea, Clara, without a word, handed her one. Later, in the Common-room, when Faith, smiling, approached her and asked her to take a hand in a game of Lexicon, Clara complied. And Faith, for the time being, did look a little baffled.

But Clara couldn't keep that up. Honest, straight-as-a-die herself, Clara could only respond to those qualities in others. When call-over came and she was again reminded of all she had suffered at the girl's hands by the imposition of two hundred lines, she felt bitterness welling up within her again. And when, having received those lines and a very stiff lecture in front of the whole school, she took her place next to Faith, and Faith, fixing her with a pair of fawn-like eyes, whispered:

"Oh, Clara, I'm so sorry!" she felt, instead of being grateful, just like kicking Faith.

But she restrained herself. And after call-over was given, she went to her own study. There, with a sigh, she produced ink, pen, and paper, and sat down to write off her lines. For half an hour she worked solidly. Then the door opened.

"Clara darling—" Faith Ashton said hesitantly.

Clara looked at her, compressing her lips, and went on writing.

"Clara, are you doing your lines?" Faith asked sorrowfully. "Oh, I'm so sorry. There are such a fearful lot of them, aren't there? Clara, would you like me to help you, dear?"

"No!" Clara said shortly.
"But, Clara dear, you'll never be able to get through them all—"

Clara put down her pen. Breathing a little fiercely, she rose. While Faith smiled rather doubtfully, she went up to her. Then she caught her arm, threaded it through her own, and walked towards the door. Faith blinked.

"Why, Clara—"
"We're going," Clara said, with a savage sort of sweetness, "for a walk. This way." And she accompanied Faith into the corridor. Then suddenly she pulled her own arm free and darted back into the study. "Good-night," she said curtly, and locked the door.

She smiled grimly as she sat down again. Well, that was giving an ap-

pearance of friendliness, she thought. Faith, a little bewildered, did not attempt to renew the encounter.

Clara worked on, until at last dormitory bell sounded. But by that time she had only done about half of her two hundred lines.

In company with the rest of the Form she went up to bed. Presently Miss Venn, who believed in superintending every duty, came round with Connie Jackson to put out the lights. Then, gazing towards Faith's bed, she started.

For that bed was empty!
"Does anyone know where Faith is?" she asked.

Nobody did.
"I see!" Miss Venn's lips compressed. The expression on her face suggested that she was a great deal shocked as well as annoyed. "Well, get to bed, you girls," she said sharply.

The other girls wonderingly got into bed, some of them perhaps not sorry to find that Faith had got herself into trouble, while Miss Venn went out with Connie Jackson. In the passage she paused.

"Er—Connie, you do not know where Faith is?"

"No, Miss Venn."
"Nobody has given her permission to be out of her dormitory?"

"Not that I know of, Miss Venn."
"Hum!" Miss Venn frowned. She thought for a moment. "Very well, Connie," she said. "I will not accompany you on the rest of your rounds. You may go. Good-night."

With a rather anxious and disturbed frown on her face, Miss Venn hurried off.

Her steps took her to the Fourth Form corridor, and there she paused. For from under the door of Study No. 12, occupied now by Faith Ashton, Frances Frost, and Eleanor Storke, came a chink of light.

Miss Venn hurried along to that study, and swung back the door. Faith Ashton, worried-looking and tired as she scrawled upon an impot sheet at the table, jumped.

"Oh, Miss Venn! What a start you gave me!"

"Faith, why are you not in the dormitory?"

Faith looked surprised.
"Dormitory, Miss Venn? Why, the bell hasn't gone, has it?" And then she looked at her watch, and jumped again. "Oh dear, I—I'm sorry!" she muttered confusedly. "I couldn't have heard dormitory bell."

Miss Venn blinked a little.
"But what are you doing, Faith?"

She came to the table and picked up the sheet, and then started. "Good gracious me! Girl, this is the imposition I gave to Clara Trevlyn!"
Faith humbly hung her head.

"Oh dear, I—I'm sorry, Miss Venn! But—but, you see, I—I felt so sorry for Clara that—that I just felt I had to help her. You see, Miss Venn," she added meltingly, "I—I do so hate to feel that Clara is at loggerheads with me, and I do want her to feel that I'm her friend. I—I thought that if I helped her to do her imposition—"
She faltered to a stop. Miss Venn's eyes softened a little.

"You know, Faith, that you have done a very wrong thing?"

"Yes—yes, Miss Venn! But—but surely," Faith blurted, "it is worth it to—to keep harmony in the Fourth? And Clara, after all, is a nice girl, you know. Oh dear, please, please do forgive me, Miss Venn!"

Miss Venn quipped a little. It was amazing how she always fell for Faith's cunning tricks.

What a dear, generous, warm-hearted little soul the girl was—risking punishment to help an unworthy rival, jeopardising her own good record in order to win the friendship of a girl who had proven herself so worthless. So thought Miss Venn who, though outwardly so hard and unbelieving, had a very human heart.

"Well," she said—"well, Faith, my dear, I—I am not angry, but please do not do this again. If it were another girl I should be very angry indeed. Go to bed now, my dear. I will see both you and Clara to-morrow morning."

"Yes, Miss Venn," Faith said meekly. And while Miss Venn gathered up the impot sheets, she went off. But once she got outside that innocent, sweet expression of hers underwent a change.

"Old fool!" she said scornfully. "Silly old sentimental idiot! My hat! How she does play my game—every time!"

And in a very satisfied frame of mind, Faith Ashton went to bed.

"And—and if I don't want to be friends with Faith?" she asked.

"Then, Clara, you will do your lines!"

"Then," Clara declared bluntly, "I'll do them!" She glowered at the wide-eyed Faith. "Is that all, Miss Venn?"

Miss Venn gazed at her narrowly. "Clara, why do you hate Faith?" she asked.

"I do not hate Faith," Clara said, flushing. "I hate no one. May I go now, Miss Venn, please?"

"But, Clara darling—" Faith quivered.

"Miss Venn, may I?" Clara asked.

Miss Venn nodded. Clara, drawing a deep breath of relief, went out, never hearing the sobbing little cry which Faith gave as the door closed upon her. Red-eared and angry, she marched to her study, there to meet Babs and Mabs.

"I wonder," Babs said thoughtfully, when she had heard what Clara had to say, "exactly what new axe our little Faith has to grind? Do you think she's

"You can stop worrying your head about beating the French girls," Clara said gruffly, "because you won't be in the team!"

Faith looked indignant.

"But why shan't I be in the team?" "Because," Clara said levelly, "you're not good enough. If you were, I'd put you in—and you know it. Now scud!"

And she gave Faith an impatient push—not a hard one, but one which was sufficient, apparently, to send Faith reeling, so that she sat down on the ground with a heavy bump. "And don't jolly well try to make out I hurt you!" she added witheringly. "Now, come on, everybody, let's get busy!"

Faith sighed. Her lips quivering, she rose to her feet—not without, however, casting a covert glance towards Miss Venn's window, where she had perceived the figure of the headmistress looking out. While the practice game commenced, she tramped wearily towards the school—

Just in time to meet Miss Venn, who, bristling with wrath, was coming out.

Faith Plots Afresh!



MELTINGLY sweet looked Faith Ashton; a little bewildered and distrustful Tomboy Clara Trevlyn. With a rather softer expression than usual

on her face, Miss Venn smiled at them. It was next morning after breakfast, and the scene was Miss Venn's study.

"I have sent for you, Clara, because I want you and Faith to be friends," Miss Venn said, almost gently. "I cannot enforce that as an order, of course; but it would make me very happy to feel that you had got over this ridiculous unfriendliness you bear for Faith. I think you ought to know, Clara, that because Faith was so distressed about the lines I gave you yesterday she even risked my displeasure by sitting up last night to do them for you—"

Clara started. Her eyes jerked round to Faith, who, with a little blush and simpering smile, hung her head.

"Would you have done that for Faith, Clara?" Miss Venn asked.

"No, I jolly well wouldn't!" was the Tomboy's instant retort.

Miss Venn's eyes gleamed a little.

"I see. Faith has done her best to be friends with you—so far, without result. You are not touched at the thought of this dear girl risking punishment and losing sleep to do the lines which you had earned?"

Clara flushed, clenching her hands a little. She knew she could not reply to that question without being rude. She had no illusions concerning Faith's apparent affection and generosity. Whatever motive had prompted Faith to take her lines upon her own shoulders had certainly not been inspired by any reason except to further Faith's own aims.

"And I only hope," Miss Venn went on—a little less gently, however, "that, little as you deserve it, Clara, I may be able to help in bringing about a better understanding between you. Therefore, Clara, if you will only shake hands with Faith I will excuse you those lines I gave you yesterday."

Clara blinked a little. That indeed was a concession. She looked at Faith, her sweetly pretty, doll-like face smilingly aglow, such appeal in her eyes, that if Clara had not known her better she would have been utterly taken in. But she stiffened.

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working this so that you'll put her in the team?"

"Well, if she is, she'd better think up something else!" Clara said grimly. "She's not good enough for the team, and that's that. Oh rats! Come on, let's get down to practice."

And down to practice they went, Clara, feeling she had been put in the wrong, considerably ruffled still. But hardly had she gathered her side together than Faith, dressed for hockey, with a stick in her hand, brightly strolled on to the field.

"Hallo!" she said beamingly.

Clara stopped and glared.

"Well, what are you doing here?"

"Oh, but I'm going to practise, aren't I?" Faith asked in wide-eyed astonishment.

"I don't remember telling you," Clara said.

"Oh, but, Clara, we must all practise!" Faith pouted. "We must practise together, of course. How are we to beat the French girls if we don't?"

"Faith—my dear child!" she cried. "Are you hurt?"

"Hurt, Miss Venn?"

"I saw Clara Trevlyn push you!"

"Oh!" Faith looked dismayed. "Oh, Miss Venn, please don't—don't go for her because of that," she pleaded. "Clara didn't mean to hurt really. She was just annoyed because I wanted to practise, and—and—Miss Venn, please, please don't punish her!"

Miss Venn paused in amazement.

"But, Faith, my dear—"

"No—please!" Faith entreated.

"She—she'll only think that I've been complaining to you again, and—and I do so want to be friends with her—in spite of all that has happened."

"Are you sure, Faith, that you are not wasting your time?" Miss Venn asked.

"No, Miss Venn. You—you see," Faith explained haltingly, "Clara, after all, is captain of games. I'm captain of the Form, and it's only right, isn't it, that as we both have to handle the

Form in different ways, we should be able to co-operate.

"Clara doesn't like me now—goodness knows what I've ever done to her," Faith added sighingly. "But I mean to show her, Miss Venn, that I'm her true friend, and sooner or later she's bound to feel that for herself. You know," she added, "I don't believe she doesn't like me really. It—it's only because Barbara Redfern and her friends are against me, and—well, as Clara is their friend, too, they've been setting her mind against me."

"In that case," Miss Venn grimly promised, "I will speak to Barbara." "Oh, no, Miss Venn—please!" Faith begged anxiously. "Because then Barbara will say I've been sneaking to you. Whenever anything goes wrong, Barbara always puts the blame on me. Miss Venn, please leave me to work this out in my own way. And—and—oh, Miss Venn, there's something I wanted to ask you—"

"Yes, my child, what?" Miss Venn asked gently.

"You know, in your study, you have a book on winter sports—one of the prizes left over from last term—"

"Why, yes, my dear!"

"I—I wonder," Faith stuttered, "if—if I might have it, Miss Venn—to—to give to Clara? Clara's frightfully keen on reading about sport as well as playing it."

The headmistress stared at her oddly.

"Faith, my dear, what an extraordinary girl you are!" she said. "Is there no depth to your generosity, your forgiveness? Oh course, my dear, I will let you have the book, if you want it. But I may tell you, Faith, that I am rapidly losing patience with Clara Trevlyn, and if she persists, after this, in displaying this spirit of vindictiveness, I shall act. Of course you may have the book. Come and get it now." And Faith, with a smile, went off.

"You Will Put Faith in the Team!"



IT was not until after lessons that afternoon that Faith launched her new attack on Clara Trevlyn.

In the meantime, however, Faith was not idle.

Having been refused practice, and having, at the same time, been warned that she stood no chance in the team to be selected to meet the French girls, Faith was artfully building up her plans.

She made no further attempt to break up the practice on Junior Side, but gathering together a team of Third Formers, organised an impromptu match beneath Miss Venn's window. Easy enough for Faith, in that lowlier company, to shine; easy enough for her to get goals, all the time pleasantly aware that Miss Venn was watching from her window.

The headmistress, meeting her after the practice, beamed.

"Why, Faith, that was a very good game you played!" she said. "I was watching it from the window. But why, my dear, were you playing with the younger girls?"

"Well, just because," Faith simpered, "I didn't want to offend Clara again. But I'm glad you enjoyed it, Miss Venn. I only wish that Clara had seen it, too. Of course," Faith said, "she'll put me in the school team."

Miss Venn blinked a little.

"I should think so. But that is a decision entirely for Clara, is it not, Faith?"

"Yes, in a way." But Faith shook

her head. "But I can play hockey, as you can see, Miss Venn. And—well, I mean to say, for the Junior School hockey team to be made up without the inclusion of the captain of the Junior School—"

Miss Venn did not see—quite. But the stumbling suggestion in the words hit its mark. If Faith could play hockey well, then Faith, as the most important girl in Junior School, should be the hockey captain's first choice.

"Clara will put you in, of course." And Miss Venn frowned. "If," she added, a gleam in her eyes, "she carries her spitefulness to the point of excluding you, then most certainly, Faith, I shall have something to say! Either captains must work together, or—"

"Yes, Miss Venn? Or what?"

"Oh, never mind!" said Miss Venn, a little sharply. "Listen, Faith! There is first dinner-bell! Get yourself changed, my dear."

Faith nodded. Off she went, while Miss Venn, suddenly thoughtful, rustled off to her own house. Dinner then. After dinner, lessons, and, after lessons, Clara sat alone in her study making out the hockey team list for the match against the French girls. She was in the middle of that extremely delicate task when the door opened, and Faith, a gilt-edged book under her arm, came in.

"Oh, hallo, Clara! Making out the team?"

Clara grunted, but, remembering Babs' advice, looked up.

"Well, I am. Now buzz off!" she said.

"Am I in it?" Faith sweetly smiled. Clara put down her pen.

"Didn't I tell you this morning that you were not?"

Faith pulled a face. "But I'm junior captain, Clara. And, after all, I can play hockey!"

"Yes; but you can't play hockey well enough to force me to stand down a member of the team who's already earned her place. Push off! I'm busy!"

But Faith did not "push off." She displayed the book, looking at it lovingly as she stroked its cover.

"Ahem! Clara, have you read this? It is a book on winter sports, you know. Look here," Faith said, "put me in the team, and I'll give it to you."

Clara started.

"What!"

"Put me in the team, and I'll give you this," Faith repeated. "Surely there's no harm in that!"

The look of stupefaction on the Tomboy's face changed to one of utter disgust.

"Get out!" she cried vibrantly.

"But, Clara dear, you'd like the book, wouldn't you?" Faith said coaxingly.

"Look! There it is—a lovely one, too, isn't it? If you had to buy that in a shop it would cost you ten-and-six. And you can have it, Clara—there!" She placed it down on the desk. "Now put me in the team, please!"

Clara breathed fury. Faith, as if unaware of the despicable thing she was asking, smiled. A gleam in her eyes, Clara picked the book up.

"Well, Clara, will you?" Faith asked.

"No!" Clara cried.

"Oh, but, Clara, you've taken the book!"

"I haven't taken the book. I wouldn't take the rotten book if it were made of gold!" Clara cried; and, all her own honest principles up in arms, she thrust the book at Faith. "Here, take it!"

"But, Clara darling, I don't want it! It's yours, you know! Just a little gift for putting me in the team!"

Clara breathed hard and fiercely. She forgot for a moment her promise to Babs—forgot that she might be reacting just as Faith had planned she would react. Indignation, exasperation mastered her. Whis! went the book from her hand—not at Faith, but in Faith's direction. Faith gave a startled cry as she jumped back. The book, crashing against the wall, fell, with one corner bent.

"Clara, you nasty, wicked, awful thing—"

"Get out!" quivered Clara. "If you stop in this room another second I'll buzz the inkpot at you! And I wouldn't—just wouldn't—put you in the team now if you were as good as Dulcisa Fairbrother!" she shouted.

Faith blinked. With one scared eye on the Tomboy, she gathered the ruined book. Not another word she said, but, backing towards the door, hurriedly disappeared into the corridor, and there, bursting into the ready tears which could always be summoned at will, she made her way along the passage.

Perhaps Faith knew that it was Miss Venn's habit about that time to attend the prefects' meeting in Seniors' Common-room; but it was by the most apparent of coincidences that Faith, still sobbing, bumped into Miss Venn at the junction of the corridor. Miss Venn stopped.

"Faith, my child!" she cried; and then, as she saw the crumpled book, jumped. "Why, goodness gracious me, what have you been doing to that book, Faith?"

"I—I—" Faith gulped. She turned such an utterly miserable face in Miss Venn's direction that the Head's heart smote her. "I—it was Clara!" she gulped. "I—I offered the book to Clara, and—and she threw it at me!"

"What?"

"And—and she said that, even if I were as good as Dulcisa Fairbrother, she wouldn't put me in the junior hockey team!" Faith blurted.

Miss Venn breathed heavily.

"I see!" she said. "I see! Very well. I am sorry, Faith, but I cannot tolerate your pleas for leniency any longer! You will go back to Clara now. Tell her that I wish to see her in my study in half an hour's time!"

"Y—yes, Miss Venn."

And Miss Venn, with a decidedly angry rustle, turned away, while Faith, darting back to her own study, put the book on the table, and then went off to the Common-room. Babs & Co. were there.

"Oh, Barbara, have you seen Clara?" Faith asked.

"No!" Babs said curtly. "But she'll be here in a moment with the team list."

"Oh, very well! Then I'll wait," Faith said, and simpered. "Nice afternoon, isn't it?"

Nobody replied. Rather grim and unfriendly were the looks fastened upon the captain of the Junior School. Faith, however, with that brazen cheek so at variance with the injured innocence she adopted before Miss Venn, seemed not to be hurt.

Calmly she took a seat next to plump Bessie Bunter, who was trying to play clock patience before the fire. But not for long. For suddenly the door opened, and in came Clara, the team list in her hand.

An immediate surge was made towards the notice-board as she pinned it up.

And then, as girls read, there were exclamations—some of joy, some of disappointment—some—by girls who never expected to be in the team in any case—of approval. For certainly Clara was fielding the strongest side.

It read:

"Clara Trevlyn (Capt.).
Barbara Redfern.
Janet Jordan.
Diana Royston-Clarke.
Henrietta Winchester.
Jean Cartwright.
Rosa Rodworth.
Christine Wilmer.
Margot Lantham.
Leila Carroll.
Brenda Fallace."

"Jolly good!" Mabs voted, though she was not in it. "If that little combination doesn't put paid to the Frenchies' no-defeat account, then they jolly well are unbeatable! Who's reserve, Clara?"

"And what," demanded Faith Ashton, "about me?"

Clara glanced at her. "Please don't talk to me!" she said curtly.

"But, Clara, I've got something to ask you—"

"I said," Clara retorted, "don't talk to me!"

"But I want to tell you—"

"Oh rats!" Clara said, and flung herself away, only to be immediately followed by Faith.

"Clara, this is important—"

"Oh stuff!" Babs said. "Let her alone!"

"But I tell you, Clara—"

Clara deliberately averted her face. Faith's eyes flashed.

"All right," she said. "You've all heard I've tried to tell Clara. Clara won't listen."

"Oh, buzz off!" scowled Rosa Rodworth.

Faith shrugged and left the room. Clara breathed deeply.

"Thank goodness she's gone!" she said. "My hat! I'm trying to keep my temper, but if I listen to any more of her little games I shall be doing something desperate!"

From then until the bell for Call Over rang the talk was all of the team, all of the Junior School's chances against the schoolgirls from France.

Strangely enough, Faith Ashton made no reappearance, and the chums had almost forgotten about her until, at Call Over, when Miss Venn had read out the orders for the following day, she darted a sudden look at the new captain of the Fourth.

"Faith, step this way, please!"

Faith, with a nervous blink, stood out.

"Faith, I thought I told you to send Clara to me this evening?"

"Yes, Miss Venn," Faith agreed.

"Clara did not come. Didn't you give her my message?"

"No, Miss Venn."

"What?" Miss Venn looked a little taken aback. "Really, Faith! Why did you not give Clara my message?"

Faith hesitated and looked appealingly at the Fourth Form.

"Well, Miss Venn—"

"Faith, why?"

"Oh dear!" Faith shook her head.

"I—I think Clara can answer that question best."

"Clara!"

"But she never gave me any message!" Clara hotly protested. "I never knew you wanted me, Miss Venn."

Miss Venn looked annoyed.

"Clara, step this way," she said.

"Now, what is the meaning of this?"

"Well"—Faith looked injured innocence—"I tried to tell Clara, Miss Venn—I tried to tell her ever so many times. The whole Form heard me, and the whole Form can prove it. But all Clara would say was 'Don't speak to



HURRIEDLY Clara scrambled out on to the ladder. In a few seconds now Miss Venn and Faith Ashton would enter the study, and if Clara and Babs could get clear before they did so, Faith's little scheme would have failed.

me.' And finally she walked away altogether."

"Oh!" said Miss Venn, and her eyes glimmered. "And why, Clara, wouldn't you speak to Faith?"

"Well, I thought she was going to worry me to put her in the team."

"And you can't put her in the team?"

"No!" Clara said determinedly.

"Thank you." Miss Venn heaved a deep breath. "It is pretty obvious, Clara, that, in spite of the efforts Faith has made to win your friendship, you are just persisting in being spiteful. I can only imagine that it is that spitefulness which prevents Faith having a place in the team—"

"Miss Venn, that's nothing to do with—"

Clara burst out hotly.

"On the contrary," Miss Venn said, "it has everything to do with it. I have tried not to interfere in this matter of sports, Clara, but I see now that I have been mistaken. If the sports in the school are going to breed ill-will and enmity among girls, they must be controlled as other matters are controlled. And I," Miss Venn went on, her eyes gleaming, "will control them. Clara, you will put Faith in the team!"

"But, Miss Venn—"

Clara began.

"Silence, girl! You will put Faith in the team," Miss Venn went on. "If you do not"—she threw a darting look at the Tomboy—"you will take yourself out of it! Now go to your place!"

Too Late To Save Clara!



"I TELL you I won't—I won't!" Clara flamed. "I'll jolly well scratch the fixture first! I won't have her in the team!"

"But, Clara, you old chump, listen—" Babs pleaded anxiously.

"I won't listen! I'm skipper, aren't

I? I tell you I won't have her in the team! She's schemed all this. All along the line she's played for it, and now she's got it. Well, I'm not going to take another girl out of the team to make room for her! I'll scratch the fixture first, I tell you!"

Clara, in Study No. 7, was in a towering rage.

Babs, Mabs, and Marjorie Hazeldene—the latter shared the study with Clara and Janet Jordan—were with her. And how they sympathised with Clara! But the common sense of Babs & Co. made them anxious.

They dreaded this mood of the Tomboy's—this won't-be-beaten, no-surrender mood—which, more than once in the past, had landed its owner into serious trouble.

All her sense of right was up in arms now. She did not altogether blame Miss Venn, except as a gullible woman, who could not see when she was being deceived. But Faith—how furiously bitter Clara felt against that two-faced girl!

"But, Clara," Babs said hopelessly, "oh, you duffer, listen! You can't scratch the fixture—"

"Oh! Who says?"

"Well, I do." Babs shook her head.

"In the first place, it isn't yours to scratch!"

Clara fumed. She hadn't thought of that.

"Then you mean I'm to put her in?"

"Clara, yes, you'll have to. Don't you see, you ninny, you're still playing her game? Faith is in the team—by the Head's orders. What do you think will happen next? If you go on like this, the next thing is you'll find yourself left out of the team, and then—"

Clara set her lips.

"That cunning cat!"

"But calling Faith names won't make matters any easier," said Mabs anxiously. "Babs is right. Faith would just love to see you left out of the team!"

Clara breathed deeply.

"So, Clara—" pleaded gentle Marjorie Hazeldene.

"Oh rats!" stormed Clara. "Rats, I tell you! Let her try it on, that's all—just let her try it on! Who's going to stand down, anyway, to make room for that wash-out? I'd feel traitor to the girl I had to stand down—and traitor to half a dozen more whose claims to be in the team are head and shoulders above Faith Ashton's! Rats! Bosh! Let her do her worst!"

"But, Clara—" Babs cried.

"Oh stuff!"

"Think—"

"I am thinking! And I'm not jolly well thinking of giving in to a two-faced little twister like that! I tell you—"

"Oh, my hat!" Mabs hissed from the doorway. "Cave! Here's Faith!"

"Let her come!" Clara challenged, a gleam in her eyes.

But Babs shivered. She could guess what would happen then. Clara, reckless, headstrong, didn't care. Clara was as likely as not to do something which would bring the further wrath of Miss Venn upon her head. It was no use arguing, no use pleading any more. Action was the one thing necessary, and in a moment Babs had made up her mind.

"Out of it, all of you!" she said. "Clara, quickly—listen! If Faith comes, don't answer—see?"

"Think I want to talk to her?" Clara sniffed.

"Clara, promise you won't answer?"

"Oh, all right—I promise!" Clara said.

Babs nodded. The ruse was a hasty one, made up on the spur of the moment. But something had to be done. If Clara did not speak to Faith, then Clara could hardly lead herself into further trouble, and any unpleasant idea Faith might possess of goading her into further recklessness would be defeated. In a body the chums rushed outside, just as Faith came tripping down the corridor. Babs, the last out, breathlessly turned the key in the lock and slipped it into her pocket.

Faith came up.

"Oh, hallo! Is Clara in her study?" she asked.

"Well, what about finding out?" Mabs asked.

Faith smiled. She looked at Babs, and for an instant Babs glimpsed that sneering triumph on her rosebud mouth. Then Faith stepped to the door.

"Clara!" she cried.

No answer!

"Clara dear, I want to talk to you."

From inside the room came the sound of a faint movement, but no reply.

Faith shrugged. She stared round at the chums. Then she tried the handle.

"I say, she's locked herself in!" she exclaimed. "Clara!"

Still no answer.

"Silly, silly thing!" Faith said, and frowned. "Why has she locked herself in, Barbara dear?"

"Why ask me?"

"Well, she's got no right to lock herself in her study. Clara—"

Silence in the study now.

Faith frowned. Then sharply she turned—so sharply indeed that she cannoned into Babs, standing near her. She bit her lip.

"Well, I'm sorry," she said. "But Clara's got no right to lock herself in her study, and if Clara won't answer I must fetch Miss Venn—"

"You beastly sneak!" cried Mabs.

Faith smiled demurely, and walked off.

"Oh dear! What can we do now?" Marjorie asked anxiously.

"Easy enough!" Babs grinned. "Faith has got no proof Clara is in the room. All we've got to do is to let her out. When Miss Venn comes and marches into the study, there'll be no Clara here—and Miss Venn, I should think, wouldn't be too pleased with Faith for having dragged her along on a wild-goose chase. But—" And then she jumped. "Oh, my hat! The key—"

"The key?" cried Mabs.

"I—I've lost it!" Babs stammered.

"You put it in your pocket?" asked Marjorie.

"I did—at least, I thought I did."

And then Babs' eyes widened.

"Oh, my hat! Faith! The cunning twister! Faith has pinched it! Don't you remember—when she banged into me? She must have seen me lock the door. She jolly well knows Clara is in that room, and—"

In dismay and a little anger they stared at each other. They could see what was going to happen now. Faith, in that sly way of hers, would fetch Miss Venn along. Though Faith had the key, it would not be Faith's way to use it—oh dear, no! If she did, Miss Venn might want to know why she hadn't used it in the first place before disturbing her. What would happen was that Miss Venn would have to get another key—hardly the sort of thing to put her into a good temper for meeting Clara.

"And when she does get a key, and she finds Clara, has been lying low all the time—" Mabs murmured. "Oh, golly! What shall we do?"

"Wait a minute!" Babs cried. "I've an idea. We've got to get Clara out of it somehow. When Miss Venn does get into the room there's got to be no Clara there. Mabs—Marjorie—quickly—the gardener's long ladder! It was in the cloisters! We'll rescue Clara from the window outside. But—" and anxiously she put her mouth to the keyhole. "Clara!" she hissed.

"Well?" came Clara's voice.

"Don't answer when Miss Venn comes. Watch the window." Then: "Come on!" she cried.

And breathlessly the three of them flew.

Down the stairs they scampered, racing round towards the cloisters. Babs whooped with glee when she saw that the long ladder was still there. In a moment they had whipped it up. With a rush, they carried it towards the window of Study No. 7.

"Right—ho, put it up!" Babs gasped. "Mabs and Margie, you hold the bottom. Now—"

While at the same moment Miss Venn, looking very angry, was hurrying towards the door of Study No. 7.

"You are sure, Faith, that Clara is in the study?"

"Yes, Miss Venn—quite sure," Faith answered meekly. "I called her ever so many times, but she wouldn't answer. And the door is locked, you know."

"Very well," Miss Venn said, and, regarding the door, banged upon it sharply. "Clara Trevlyn!" she called.

No answer.

"Faith, you are sure?"

"Yes, Miss Venn."

"Clara!" And this time Miss Venn tried the door while Faith listened. Still no answer.

"Clara, if you do not answer, I shall give you a black mark!" Miss Venn stormed.

From inside the room came a faint squeak, as of a window being opened.

Faith started at that. Alive for all opportunities herself, she was also alive to the opportunities for others. Now it struck her with ominous significance that

Babs & Co., whom she had left in the passage, were no longer there. Almost instantaneous in her mind was the thought arising from that observation. Babs & Co., in some way, were rescuing Clara!

"Clara!" Miss Venn boomed. "Open this door!"

"Oh, Miss Venn!" cried Faith, suddenly swooping.

"Eh? What's the matter now?"

"The—the key!"—and Faith held it up: "I—I've just found it!" she cried. "Jammed between the edge of the carpet and the door. Here you are, Miss Venn," she added, and hurriedly thrust it into her hand.

"But," Miss Venn inquired, "how could Clara have locked herself in the study if the key is outside?"

"I—I don't know," said Faith, just for a moment at a loss, and then had a new brainwave. "But Barbara and her friends were here. Perhaps it was they who locked her in? Quick, open the door!"

Miss Venn frowned. Into the lock went the key. Click! And back went the door. And Miss Venn pursed her lips. For the room was empty.

"Faith, you have—" she began.

"But look—look!" Faith cried.

"Miss Venn, look!" And then pointed to the end of a vibrating ladder stuck over the sill. "Miss Venn, she's escaped—by the ladder!"

Miss Venn started. In quick strides she was across the room. The window was, of course, open; the betraying upper part of the ladder told its own tale.

Out of the window the Head leant, and Babs and Clara, in the act of descending, started so violently as her booming voice fell upon their ears that only by a miracle did they retain their balance. In utter dismay they looked up.

"Sunk!" muttered Clara.

"Oh my hat!"

"How—how dare you!" Miss Venn almost choked. "Clara, Barbara, ascend at once! Mabel, Marjorie, you will put the ladder away and come back to this study!"

"That cat, Faith again!" muttered Clara, between her teeth.

Babs sighed anxiously. Faith—yes, Faith, once again, had been too much for them—Faith, with her trickery.

In dismay the two chums climbed back. Miss Venn regarded them furiously as they stood in Study No. 7.

"I do not," she said, with extreme tartness, "understand the motive for this ridiculous adventure. Clara, why did you not answer when Faith first called you?"

"Miss Venn, because—" Babs began.

"Barbara, silent! I am addressing Clara. Clara, speak."

Clara looked mutinously stubborn. Her eyes fastened with dislike upon the sweet-faced sneak of the Fourth.

"Because," she said, "I didn't want to answer."

"Clara, Faith is your captain!"

"Is she?" Clara retorted.

"Clara—please! Faith, as your captain, has every right to your respect and obedience."

Clara clenched her hands.

"My respect!" she echoed bitterly.

"My obedience! That two-faced little trickster."

"Clara!"

"Well, I'm sorry, but I must say what I mean!" Clara broke out. "You can't see as we can see how Faith is tricking you—"

"Oh, Clara!" quivered Faith.

"Clara—" muttered Babs.

But Miss Venn flamed.

"Clara, silence—silence this moment! How dare you, girl! How dare you say such things about a girl who, in every way, has set such an example to you! You will write out a hundred lines for that insult. For this extraordinary rebellious trick of yours you are deprived of the use of this study until further notice. If it were not for the match on Saturday, I should detain you for the week-end into the bargain. Be careful, Clara. I warn you now—that the very next offence of yours will be punished with that detention!"

Clara, red-faced, shifted sullenly. "Barbara, for your share in this escapade, you will write out two hundred lines. So will you, Marjorie, and you, Mabel. Now, Faith, my dear, come with me."

And she turned on her heel, while Clara, her face strange all at once, made a step after them, only to be stopped by Babs.

"Take it easy, old thing!" she muttered anxiously.

The door closed on the headmistress and junior captain—but not before Faith had sent back a look of mocking triumph at the Tomboy.

Triumph for the Schemer!



CLARA, up in arms, reckless and headstrong, was not inclined to take it easy. Goaded beyond endurance by the treachery and trickery of Faith,

Clara was just longing now to hit back at Faith.

Babs & Co. knew that, and for the next twenty-four hours Babs & Co. had a most dreadfully anxious time in preventing the games captain and the Form captain from coming in contact with each other.

With that threat of Miss Venn's ringing in their ears, no risks must be taken. The matter had gone past the point when it was sufficient to advise Clara.

And Faith, of course, knowing Clara's dangerous frame of mind, was anxious to provoke another "incident." It would have suited Faith's plans admirably to see Clara detained for Saturday—which meant that she could not play in the match.

So far, however, Clara had done nothing about taking another girl out of the team to make way for Faith. And Faith, seeking to make a provocative argument of that, came to see Clara about it while Clara was being entertained by Babs and Mabs and Bessie Bunter to tea in Study No. 4.

But almost as soon as she poked her head in at the door, Babs rose. She went into the passage, catching Faith by the arm.

"Look here, Faith, leave Clara alone."

"But I'm not interfering with her," Faith said, in big-eyed surprise. "I only came along to find out who she is dropping from the team!"

Babs breathed hard. "You want to know that?"

"Well, of course!"

"Then," Babs said, "I can tell you. No need to worry Clara. If it becomes necessary, I'll drop out. Now push off."

And Faith pushed off—but not for long. After tea, when Babs, Mabs, Bessie and Clara were in the tuck-shop, she strolled in again. She beamed at Clara.

"Oh, Clara, by the way—"

"Clara, old thing, we've got to get on with those lines!" Babs said

hurriedly, and catching the Tomboy's arm, rushed her out of the shop.

Then later, in the music-room, where Mabel Lynn had got permission to rehearse a few numbers for the forthcoming school concert, again Faith stepped in. Again she saw Clara and tripped towards her. She said something, but Mabs, at the piano, crashed down loudly on the chords, at the same time thrusting one of Clara's songs into her hands. And Babs, starting forward, led Faith to the door.

A feverishly anxious evening in very truth—but somehow Babs & Co. managed to keep the two warring elements in the Fourth from clashing, and the day ended without further incident.

Next morning Babs saw Dulcia Fairbrother, who, rather grimly understanding, gave Clara special duties in the afternoon which kept her out of Faith's way until after tea. After tea

"But—"

"Rats! My move!"

Babs sighed. Faith, with a smile, came towards them, looking over Clara's shoulder. The Tomboy, with knitted brows, made a move.

"Oh, why do that?" Faith asked, and Clara jumped round. "I should have moved my king."

"Who's playing this game?" Clara demanded.

"Well, you are, but—"

"Then," Clara said, "keep your nose out of it! Your move, Babs."

Babs moved. Clara frowned thoughtfully.

"Why not try that piece on the side?" Faith asked. "In three moves you can make a king."

Clara turned red.

"Will you stop interfering?"

"Oh, Clara, never mind!" Babs said anxiously. "Look here, let's finish!"

"Rats! Why should we finish? I'm



CLARA could hardly contain herself as Faith leant forward and continually advised her which pieces to move. But Babs saw through her cousin's game. Faith was out to make Clara lose her temper. "Faith, please!" Babs said sharply. "Let Clara play by herself!"

Babs learned that Faith would be busy making an inventory of school furniture in the studies. She spoke to Clara, now using Study No. 4 until the ban from her own was removed.

"What about a game of draughts in the Common-room?"

"Well, I've still got these lines," Clara objected.

"Oh, well, never mind those; I'll give you a hand later. Come on, old Clara. I'd just love a game of draughts."

So Clara allowed herself to be dragged off, and in the Common-room she and Babs soon became absorbed in their game. Clara liked draughts when she could get her mind down to the game, and she was thoroughly absorbed when the door came open and in strolled Faith Ashton. Babs, looking up, saw her.

"Oh, my hat!" she muttered. And then: "Clara, I say, let's finish the game!"

Clara, who had not seen Faith's entry, stared.

"Oh, stuff! I'm just beginning to

playing this game, and I want no advice from—"

"Oh, but, Clara, if you move your king to the left," Faith murmured gently, "you'll be able to get one of Barbara's pieces next move."

"Faith, please!" Babs said sharply. "Let Clara play for herself."

"Well, I'm only advising—"

Clara bit her lip. Out of very obstinacy she moved another piece beside the king—which meant that Babs had it cornered next move. Clara glared.

"Why not take this one out of its place?" Faith asked, frowning, and sensing perfectly the fury which was radiating from the stormy Tomboy. "I should think, if you did that—"

It was enough—too much. Clara, her eyes gleaming, rose.

"Are you going to stop interfering?" she asked thickly.

"Oh, Clara, I'm only trying to help!"

"Will you go away?"

"But why," Faith protested, "should I go away? I— Oh!" she yelled.

(Continued on page 14)

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



As you all know, PATRICIA is your very own friend—
young enough to understand all schoolgirl joys, yet old
enough to be helpful and wise over schoolgirl problems.
She writes for you week by week in these pages, telling
you of her own doings, of things to do and things to talk
about—all in that chummy way so typical of her.

I WONDER what you do with your umbrella and macintosh when you come indoors after a downpour of rain?

Your Patricia always opens up her umbrella and leaves it to drip on the scullery draining board.

Your mac happens to be one of those shiny ones that the water runs off in rivers. So you can just imagine how popular I'd be if I were to leave it to drip on the pugs in our polished hallway.

So this I always sling over the pully in the kitchen—and place a bowl underneath to catch the worst of the drips. I admit it isn't the perfect solution—but at least, it is better than hanging it up with dry garments and so damping those as well.

If your family is superstitious—which, as you can guess, ours isn't!—perhaps the idea of keeping the umbrella open indoors won't appeal to you in the least. (Even though 'tis supposed to be best for the umbrella, mind you!)

So perhaps you may decide yours must dry closed. Then I suggest to you that you stand it in the kitchen sink. Or if this is otherwise occupied, in the bath or in a pail.

All these suggestions are just because it happens to be raining as if it had never rained before as I write this.

Just when the recent ice looked like staying, too. Isn't it annoying?

Though perhaps by the time you read this, it will be freezing hard again.

Let me give you a keep-warm tip, in case it is.

On the very bleakest days it is a positive brainwave to wear a macintosh over your outdoor coat—even if it isn't snowing. You see, the mac keeps out all winds—and so gives just that extra protection which makes the difference between being chilled and being snug.

● On the Ice

I'm afraid young Heath (that's my small brother, whose full name is Heatherington, you know) didn't get on very well on his first trip on the ice.

He wanted to start cutting all sorts of fancy figures and capers.

And he did, too—when, at his own request, I didn't hold him up any more.

Actually I thought he'd probably raise a shriek, and even start howling.

But he didn't. He's quite a plucky little chap, really—and was quite compensated for all his bumps when the bruises started to show exciting blacks, blues, and yellows.

"Would you like to see my bruises?" he demanded of everyone who entered the house, from Aunt Monica (his godmother) to his friend the coalman.

What would have happened if anyone had dared to say "No, thank you," I tremble to think.

● Novel Bookmarks

I was reading some time ago about the extraordinary things that some people apparently use for bookmarks when they are reading.

Now you'd never think anyone would place a kipper between the pages, would you?

Yet I'm not making that up, I assure you. It was the librarian of a big public library in the Midlands, who said that he had actually seen this done.

I must confess that I am often tempted to turn down the corners of pages when I am reading—so that I see at a glance where I left off when I pick up the book again.

But very firmly I restrain myself, knowing how it does spoil a book, whether it is mine or one from the "library."

The most careful readers use proper bookmarks, of course. And here are two I have designed for you—two that you could make in a twinkling—either for yourself, or for a chum who's keen on reading.

You will require two strips of parchment paper—or else good quality drawing paper—measuring $7\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches each.

Paint a cushy armchair at the top of one, and a blazing fire on top of the other, and print beneath the lettering shown in the picture.

I'm sure even you who "simply can't draw a stroke" will be able to manage those two simple sketches. But, if you prefer to, you could cut the armchair out of a catalogue and colour it.

Have you seen those very smart coats—with hoods attached?

My rather-rich friend, Esmee, has one, and she looks adorable in it. Hers is made of tweed, and the hood has a brown velvet lining, which looks so very snug and warm. But I have seen them with the hoods lined in fur. Doesn't that sound luxurious?

Almost as exciting as having a coat lined with fur which no one ever sees.

● A Useful Idea

If you have a velvet frock of your own, then you must know how it will show the dust. And it is so difficult to brush up like new again, isn't it?

I haven't one, but my mother has, and she was saying the other day how impossible it seemed to make it look fresh. Then I had a brainwave—one that really worked.

"Try brushing it with this piece of velvet, mother," I said, and handed her a scrap that I had come across in her piece-bag.

Do you know, it absolutely worked miracles. For the "pile" of the second piece of velvet acted like tiny bristles, you see, and brushed the dust from the dress in a twinkling.

● For a Youngster

Even if it isn't actually snowing when you read this—and you'll probably be hoping it won't, after the frozen pipes and other tragedies of just before Christmas—there's still time for more.

So perhaps a small brother, who's snow-minded, and who only regards frozen pipes as a bit of a lark, anyway, would like a present of a snowman pencil-case.

It would be ideal to make this in white felt—which is terribly cheap to buy, you know. But if you are meaning to be economical, perhaps mother's piece-bag would reveal a strip of suitable white material.

The material should be about 3 inches wide and 14 inches long. Fold it up for about 5 inches and stitch the sides strongly.

Cut out the snowman's comic hat and round face, and snip the front so that it represents snowman's arms.

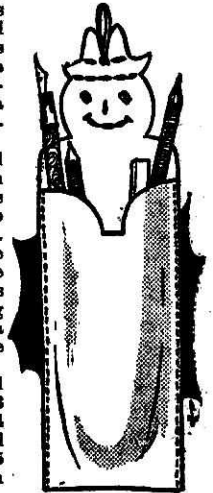
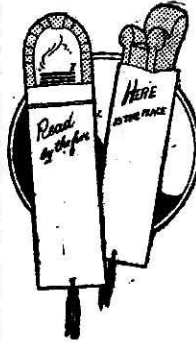
Then, in simple running-stitches, mark the eyes, nose, and mouth, and make a loop so that the pencil-case can be hung up.

What small brother—or sister—could fail to be tidy with his pencils and crayons, with such a case for holding them?

Bye-bye now, my pets, until next week.

Your friend,

PATRICIA.



GLOWING GOOD LOOKS

The cold weather has a way of spoiling even the most charming good looks. So here Patricia comes to help in restoring them.



THERE'S no doubt about it—wintry weather can rob even the prettiest girls of their good looks.

Cheeks that should be a rosy pink, go blue and shivery. Hair becomes crackly and dry. Noses become—well, frankly, cherry-like; lips become cracked. In general, old Mr. Jack Frost can make a thorough nuisance of himself.

This is such a pity, too, for actually, with a little extra care, winter-time should see us every bit as lovely—though in a different way—as we were on our summer holidays.

The keen winds should whip the colour into our cheeks, and give the sparkle of frost to our eyes. We should simply glow with invigoration and that healthy outdoor charm.

But we shall never do this if we huddle over fires all day—nice as this is in the evenings. So do try to get out of doors as much as possible this weather, wrapping yourselves up like Eskimo babies, if necessary, against the winds and cold.

BRISK EXERCISE

There is nothing like brisk walking for stimulating the circulation—and when your circulation is brisk, then that cherry hue from the nose will disappear.

Skipping, "He," "Hot rice"—play any of these active, running-about games at playtime and before school for winter health and good looks.

Don't forget your regular glasses of water—six a day, between meals—even if the water is jolly cold.

The keen winds and cold, I'm afraid, will sting your skin, making it dry and giving it that "starved" feeling.

For this you must use cold cream. No, this is not a "beauty treatment," in the grown-up meaning—but sheer common sense. For if the wind has dried out the

natural oils of your skin, then you simply must restore them, mustn't you?

FOR DRY SKIN

So I want you to treat yourself to a twopenny tin of pure cold cream—a sixpenny pot if you're feeling rich.

Smear this all over your face after washing every night after a particularly cold day out of doors. Smooth it in, using three fingers of each hand, with an upwards and outwards movement.

You'll be astounded at how quickly the cream will vanish into your skin—which will just show you how badly it required this extra care.

If your lips tend to become dry and even painful, you must apply a smear of Vaseline to them every morning before you set off to school, allowing this to seep into the skin. This will nourish and protect them, keeping them soft and smooth.

Even though I'm sure you're all wise enough to keep your gloves on whenever you're out of doors this weather, hands still have a habit of becoming dry and rough.

There are lots of excellent preparations on sale at beauty counters of our favourite shops for remedying this. But if you're not sure what to look for, then ask the assistant if she has a little bottle containing a mixture of glycerine and rosewater.

This costs threepence. It is rather sticky to apply, I admit, but after a moment or two, it certainly does make your hands feel lovely.

And here's a good hand exercise that's very warming when sewing lesson is coming, and you feel sure you'll never be able to hold a needle because your hands are so cold.

Just stretch your arms straight out in front of you, and then shake your hands

up and down, wagging them from the wrists. They'll soon be toasty then.

That other wintry complaint, dry, stand-on-end hair, can also be cured by "nourishment." Just as your body requires extra food in winter-time, so does your hair need extra oil.

FOR "CRACKLY" HAIR

This can be supplied in several ways. First, you might change from your usual shampoo to one with an oil base. One containing coconut oil is particularly beneficial in this weather.

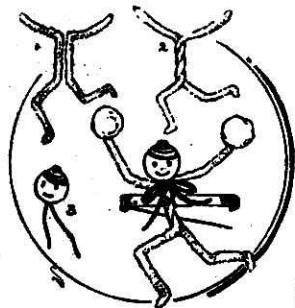
Or you may prefer to brush olive oil (or any other pure oil) into your hair each morning before you set off to school.

But for the girl whose hair is extra dry and almost unmanageable, I think the best treatment is to take a dab of Vaseline on your fingers and work this into the roots of the hair at night-time. This should be rubbed into the scalp—from the base of the neck to the front of your forehead, from one ear to the other.

Brush your hair well after this, and repeat the treatment twice a week if necessary. You'll notice a marked improvement in the condition of your hair.

So, to sum up—eat wisely and well this weather, get as much exercise as you can, drink plenty of water, sleep with your window open, and don't forget that little extra care so necessary for face, hands and hair.

You'll be radiant and glowing through winter's chilliest days then!



A WINTER MASCOT

The very thing to wear on a winter dress, coat, or hat these January days.

Now here's something for you to make one evening when homework is over and you sit cosily by the fire.

This snowball mascot is made from just one pipe-cleaner—a white one.

You will also require a small bead, a piece of ribbon, some cotton, and two wisps of cottonwool.

First cut the pipe-cleaner into two pieces, and then bend them as shown in Diagram 1.

The next step is to twist the "body" part together as shown in Diagram 2.

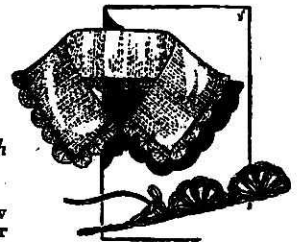
Now leave that, and make the head. A wooden bead would be best for this. Double a piece of cotton and make a big knot in it, then thread the double ends through the bead. Paint a face on the bead—and a hat as well, if you like—as shown in Diagram 3.

Next tie the bead to the pipe-cleaner "body," and wind a little scarf of narrow ribbon (or the cord from a Christmas card) round the neck to hide the join.

Job two little balls of cottonwool to the ends of the hands, fasten a pin to the back of the snowball man—and it is ready to wear and to be admired.

FOR NIMBLE FINGERS

A collar for you to knit—with a crochet trimming.



We've already seen how easily pretty collars for winter dresses can be knitted—even by the girl who is not an expert at this art. (Though many of you are, I know.)

So, this week, we'll try improving on the knitted collar idea, by adding an edging of crochet as well!

But first the collar.

This can be knitted in perfectly plain stitch. You should cast 18 stitches on No. 9 knitting needles and knit a strip measuring 14 inches.

Any oddments of wool left over from jumpers, socks and so on could be used for this, as long as the colour makes a pretty contrast to your dress.

Then the edging—for you who can crochet.

You can select a different colour wool for this, or use a penny ball of "rainbow wool."

Make a chain long enough to go right round three edges of the collar.

Now you work along this chain, working a treble into the third chain from your hook. Make one chain, then another treble into the same chain. Work three more trebles into this chain, making one chain between each treble.

Now miss two chain, and work a slipstitch into the third. Miss two more and into the third work the five treble as you did before. Continue this little shell pattern along the chain, and then sew it around the edge of your collar.

(Continued from page 11)

"Clara—" Babs cried. But Clara's threadbare patience had snapped. She made a sudden swoop at Faith; as if that girl had been a doll caught her up in her arms, and while Faith screamed and kicked, carried her towards the door.

Unfortunate it was that the blackboard stood in her path. Faith, lunging out as she passed it, gave it a kick which sent it clattering noisily to the floor.

Janet Jordan, with a grin, jumped to the door and flung it open. Into the passage, with Faith still screaming, Clara staggered.

And—smack—right into someone who was coming down the passage—a figure in a black gown who gave back with a startled exclamation.

"Why, good gracious me! Faith—Clara! Clara, release Faith this moment! My goodness! How dare you treat the captain of the Form like this!"

Clara allowed Faith to fall. Faith sniffed.

"What is this?"

"I—I was only trying to help Clara, Miss Venn," Faith whimpered. "And—and she suddenly flew into an awful temper."

"I see. Another exhibition of your spite, Clara." Miss Venn glared at her with narrowed eyes. "Very well. I told you what would happen next time—I think you know me well enough by now to know that I am a woman of my word. Clara Trevlyn, you are detained for the week-end!"

Clara turned pale.

"But—but, Miss Venn—the hockey match?"

"Even the match cannot stand in the way of discipline. You are detained. Furthermore," Miss Venn added grimly, "you are barred from using this Common-room until further notice. Now go."

"But, Miss Venn—please!" Babs intervened. "Oh, Miss Venn, we can't play without Clara!"

"Clara," Miss Venn said icily, "should have thought of that. Clara has sacrificed every right to the privilege of playing. Clara, go this instant!"

And Clara, with bitter anger and misery in her heart, tramped off along the corridor.

Who Shall be Captain?



"BARBARA!"

Dulcia Fairbrother, in a rather worried tone of voice, called that name in the Fourth Form Common-room half an hour later.

It was a rather anxious and somewhat gloomy discussion which Dulcia interrupted. Clara had gone—no one knew where—but the consternation following her departure was terrific.

Everybody in the room was up in arms against Faith Ashton, though to be sure there were many of them who maintained that Clara should have exercised more self-control.

"Barbara!" Dulcia repeated, and frowned round. "Less noise, please! Barbara, I want to speak to you—about the match. You know, of course, that Clara won't be playing now?"

Babs grimly nodded.

"I've seen Miss Venn. I've begged Miss Venn to let her off—but her word stands. As Clara isn't playing now that means the team hasn't a captain. Barbara, will you take on the job?"

Babs flushed.

"I'm sorry, Dulcia. You know I'd like to do anything you asked me to do—but no!"

"But, Barbara—"

"Clara," Babs said firmly, "hasn't had a square deal! She's been at fault—granted—but she's not to blame for everything. I couldn't take on Clara's job without feeling beastly about it, so—please, Dulcia, don't ask me!" Dulcia sighed and nodded. She understood.

"Well, Leila, what about you?"

"Sorry; that goes for me, too," Leila Carroll said.

"Jean?"

"Couldn't manage it," Jean Cartwright said. "I feel the same way as Babs about it."

"Margot?"

Margot Lantham shook her head.

Dulcia gazed at the others.

But the whole team, disgusted by the treacherous tricks that had brought about Clara's downfall, was not going to take on her job. Even Diana Royston-Clarke refused. So did Rosa Rodworth. Dulcia nodded.

"All right, then, I'll just have to think up something else."

She drifted off, shaking her head as she went to Miss Venn's study. Miss Venn looked up.

"Well, Dulcia?"

"It—it's about this matter of captain for the junior team," the head girl said worriedly. "Oh, Miss Venn, I suppose there—there's no question of giving Clara another chance? If she doesn't captain the team, goodness knows who will!"

Miss Venn's face became like flint.

"There is no question whatever of going back upon a punishment!" she said. "As it is, I feel I have been lenient with Clara. And, Dulcia, thinking things over, it seems there is one girl who is very fitted to be the captain of the team."

Dulcia started.

"But, Miss Venn, you don't mean to say—"

"I mean to say," Miss Venn said, a little starchy, "that I have come to a decision, Dulcia. Do not worry about the question any more. Faith Ashton, as junior captain of the school, will captain the hockey team. That is enough."

Dulcia, rather alarmed, started to protest. But Miss Venn, having made a decision, was adamant. Nothing would shift her from her attitude. And then, later, the Fourth knew the truth, and the Fourth groaned. What chance for the Cliff House team now?

It was Babs who told Clara the news. The Tomboy almost reeled.

"But she can't—she can't!" she cried. "She'll lose us the match!"

"Well, there we are!" said Babs gloomily.

"Why didn't you take the captaincy, Babs?" Clara stormed.

"Because—oh, golly! I'm sorry. I would have if I'd guessed this would happen. But, Clara, there may be a chance—just a chance," Babs said. "Look here, you want the school to win?"

"Of course, ninny!"

"And you want to captain it?"

"Of course!"

"Well!" Babs drew a deep breath. "This is the idea. It'll mean you'll have to swallow your pride, old thing, but—think of the school. Think of us. Clara, we've always followed you in sport. It's up to you now, even if you absolutely hate the job, to do something for us."

"Well, what is it?" Clara asked.

"Go to Miss Venn. Offer to apologise, in fact. Ask her to postpone your punishment."

Clara blinked. An instant "No!" quivered on her lips. And yet—Babs was right. Her duty came to the school, to the team she had selected. Could she let the school down? Could she let down that eleven who had looked to her?

Bitter, the decision for that proud tomboy nature to have to make. But Clara was big enough to make it.

"Right—ho!" she said slowly. "I'll go and see Miss Venn now. No, don't come with me. I'll manage this alone."

To Babs' immense relief, she tramped off. Rather slowly the Tomboy trailed along to the Head's study. The door of that apartment, when she reached it, was slightly ajar, and Clara was just rising her hand to knock when Faith Ashton's voice fell upon her ears.

Faith was speaking into Miss Venn's telephone—obviously taking advantage of Miss Venn's absence.

"Is that the Friardale Garage?" she was saying. "This is Miss Faith Ashton. What? Of course, I know you don't know me, but that doesn't matter. I want a car at two o'clock on Saturday to drive me to the Lantham Sports Ground."

A pause. Clara stood still. Snooty sneak! she thought. Of course, Faith would go to the match in a private car.

"What's that?" Faith's voice came again. "You have only one car available? Well, that's all right. Look here, I'll pick it up at the garage. At two o'clock—yes. Faith Ashton is the name. That's all right, is it? Thank you."

Clara's lips compressed. Faith would be coming out now—well, she had no wish for a new quarrel with Faith, so she strolled away. As luck would have it, however, she met Miss Venn coming up the corridor. She stopped.

"Oh, Miss Venn—"

Miss Venn looked at her coldly. "It—it's about Faith," Clara mumbled. "Miss Venn, I—I'm sorry. I—I want to apologise—"

"That," Miss Venn said stiffly, "is the most gracious thing I have heard you say, Clara Trevlyn."

"And—and, if—if I do, could you see your way clear to postpone my punishment?" Clara asked unhappily.

"I can never see my way clear to go back upon my decision," Miss Venn said. "No, Clara. If postponement of your punishment is the price you wish me to pay for your apology to Faith, then better leave the apology unsaid. You are detained; that is enough. Now go."

"But, Miss Venn—"

"Go!" Miss Venn thundered.

And Clara, despair at her heart, went. It seemed that the last bolt was shot. Faith, thanks to her treachery, her cunning, had triumphed all along the line. Not only was she in the team to meet the French hockey players, but she was captain of that team.

Surprises All Round!



"H"AS anybody seen Clara?" Barbara Redfern asked distractedly.

Nobody had. Nobody had seen Clara for at least an hour.

And time now was getting on. The coach which was to carry the Cliff House juniors to the Lantham Sports Ground was already waiting in the

quadrangle; half the team already embarked, indeed.

It was not an over-jubilant or over-excited team, despite the terrific importance of the fixture they were to play off that afternoon. They had expected, at least, however, that Clara would come to see them off.

But Clara had vanished. Anxiously Babs looked round. Faith Ashton, a jaunty strut in her walk, came down the school steps. She panted.

"Well, all fit, girls? We'll win, you know," she said confidently.

The team gazed at her without affection.

"Have you seen Clara?" Babs asked.

"Clara? No." Faith shrugged. "Why should we be interested in Clara?" she wanted to know. "I haven't seen her, and I don't want to see her. Isn't it about time you were getting off?"

"It is. And, I suppose, we shall have to go without seeing her," Babs said,

"Clara, you're in detention!" cried Jean Cartwright.

"I was!" Clara grinned defiantly. "But you don't think I was going to let this match slip?" she asked. "Blow detention! Blow everything! If I can't play I can cheer, and perhaps give you a hand. That's why I came here without saying anything—in case any of you ninnies like Babs tried to stop me! But come on!" she added.

The team grinned. The mere sight of Clara seemed to give them fresh heart. Clara, who had already made the acquaintance of the French team, introduced them a little later, and in her whole-hearted way made herself useful as they changed. A quarter-past two came.

"I say, Faith hasn't turned up!" Babs remarked.

"Oh, stuff to Faith!" Clara said.

"But if she doesn't come—" Babs protested.

"Well, why worry?"

"But what are we to do?"

see the team let down, do you? No, don't worry," she added; and while the team stared at her in bewilderment, they each and every one felt a glow at their heart. "Will you give me two minutes in which to change?"

"Very well," nodded the umpire.

"But, Clara—"

"Oh stuff!" Clara sniffed.

"You— you mean you're going to play?" cried Janet Jordan.

"Of course I'm going to play!"

There was a cheer. They could not help it. Well, after all, what could Miss Venn say if her own choice let the team down? Clara would be punished, of course. But what was another punishment? They all hoped now that Faith wouldn't turn up.

Faith didn't. It was Clara who led the team on to the field.

And what a roar went up when she was seen by the Cliff House girls who had travelled along to watch the match! What a mutter and murmur! What a



"CLARA!" shrieked Babs as the Tomboy rushed into the dressing-room. "Clara, you're in detention!" cried Jean Cartwright. "I was!" Clara grinned defiantly. "But you don't think I was going to let this match slip? Blow detention!"

biting her lips. "Are you coming in the coach, Faith?"

"No, I am not." Faith smiled—a supercilious, hateful smile. "As I'm captain I'm taking a private car. I'm just off to meet it now at the Friardale garage. But you'd better buck up," she warned. "It's obvious Clara's keeping out of the way. Good-bye."

She trotted off, followed by a grimace from Jean Cartwright. Rosa Rodworth sniffed.

"Oh, come on! Let's get going!" she said. "We can't hang around for Clara!"

It was true. They couldn't. But how glad they would have been to see her then! How apprehensively half of them were visualising the match, with Faith as captain, Faith as centre-forward!

Rather grimly they were off at last, and there was little conversation as they bowled on towards Lantham. But as soon as they reached their pavilion on the sports ground and started to change, what a yell went up suddenly!

For a girl came bursting into their dressing-room—a girl with a shock of unruly hair, a bright grin on her face.

"Clara!" shrieked Babs. Clara it was.

"Look here, let me do that boot up for you again. The lace isn't tight enough."

Rather feverish, rather queer was Clara—or so it seemed to Babs all at once. Clara, racing here, there, and everywhere, excitedly gabbling as though she found it difficult to find sufficient outlet for her boisterous activity! Twenty past came.

Still no Faith.

"No sign yet," Babs said. "Where can she have got to?"

"Perhaps," Diana suggested, "her car broke down."

Five-and-twenty past! The umpire poked in her head.

"Is the captain here? I want to talk to her."

"She—she—" started Babs, and then jumped.

For Clara, coming forward, smiled.

"Well, yes," she said, "I'm here."

"Are you the captain?"

"Until the real captain turns up—yes."

"But, Clara—" Babs cried.

Clara, however, seemed quite cool.

"Faith is not here; I am," she said. "If Faith isn't going to turn up, you don't think I'm going to stand by and

cheer, when, tossing for ends, Clara won!"

Cliff House brightened then. With Clara in the team, the old confidence came back. But where was Faith Ashton?

Then—pheep! And Faith Ashton's non-appearance—everything—was forgotten in the excitement of the game.

And, to be sure, that game was a thriller from the word go! Not for nothing had the French team earned its reputation. From the whistle it was out for goals; from the whistle the Cliff House defence was the most hard-worked combination in England.

Ten minutes—no score. Fifteen minutes—no score.

"Keep them out, Cliff House!"

"Go on, Clara!"

Cliff House was holding its own. Cliff House, under Clara's dashing leadership, was giving the French side the hardest afternoon of its career. But Clara was feeling her way now; Clara was getting the measure of her opponents. Clara, here, there, and everywhere, directing passes, was an inspiration.

Half-time—still no score.

Breathless, they returned to their dressing-room. Babs gazed round.

"I say, Faith hasn't arrived! What's happened?"

"Never mind Faith," Clara said. "If she does arrive now it's too late for her to play. Now, listen to me, everybody! We've got to take a leaf out of the French girls' book! We were on defence for that half; this time we've got to go into the attack—shock tactics!"

The team nodded. The advice was good. And when the game was resumed—

Nothing on earth could stop Cliff House, led by Clara, as they made one dashing, brilliant rush upon their opponents' goal. And then—Clack!

"Goal! Goal!"

"Clara's scored!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Oh, fine then—wonderful then! Despite the coldness of the atmosphere, the Cliff House spectators warmed. Cliff House had the lead. Now Cliff House were off again. There was Clara—Oh, bravo! She was through! No! The French girls had cleared. Whoops, though, what was this? Now it was the opponents' turn. Now they were swarming towards Cliff House's goal. Look! That girl was shooting—had shot. But, no! Who was that who had flung herself forward at the last moment—who was clearing?

"Clara! Clara! Bravo, Clara!" went up the shriek.

Oh, good, Clara! Wasn't she playing superbly! Wasn't she a captain! Talk about Faith Ashton—pshaw!

And then—

"I say, look here!" went round the murmur.

And every Cliff House girl turned to stare at the car which had just driven up—at the two furious figures which had alighted.

Faith Ashton—and Miss Venn!

"Golly!" muttered Babs, staring. At the moment the play was on the opposite wing. "What is Miss Venn doing here?"

Clara, beside her, shrugged.

"Well, can't you guess?"

Babs blinked. At last she began to understand.

"Oh, my hat! Clara, you—you mean—you planned this—to keep Faith out of the team?"

"Just that! Why not?" Clara asked recklessly. "Faith dished me—tit-for-tat! I meant, anyway, to captain the team! Well, I've done it, and we'll win, and Faith, in spite of her two-faced cleverness, won't get the laugh!"

Babs sighed.

"And now," she said, "you've got to face the music!"

Clara had—but Clara didn't care! Clara never was afraid to face the music when she deserved it—though, to be sure, it seemed she was in for a gruelling now. In a towering rage was Miss Venn.

Sick and quivering was Faith, bitterness filling her heart. For Faith had arrived at the garage on time to discover that a girl giving the name of Faith Ashton had taken her car off five minutes before. The description of that girl tallied in every detail with the description of Clara Trevlyn.

No other car was available. Faith, breathing fury, had rushed back to Miss Venn. Miss Venn, scandalised, had quickly ordered her own car—and on the road had been delayed by no less than two punctures. Three minutes before the match was due to end, they had arrived at the ground.

And look now! The match was ending!

A final shrill from the whistle; a

great roar from the crowd. One—nil! Cliff House had won!

And immediately a rush was made for Clara.

"Clara—Clara!" The cry was on everybody's lips. "Clara! Clara, you giddy heroine! Shoulder high with her, girls!"

Whoops!

Up, laughing and protesting, Clara was hauled. Bubbling with excitement, her victorious team-mates carried her to the touchline, swarms of Cliff House girls about them. And then there was a sudden lull, and the procession, coming to a halt, stared in dismay as Miss Venn pushed her way forward.

"Clara, get down—get down this minute!" she stormed. "You bad, wicked girl! I have discovered what you have done! You have robbed Faith of her chance!"

Clara tilted her chin.

"Well, we've won!" she said defiantly.

"I do not care whether you have won or not!" Miss Venn quivered. "That does not come into it! All along, Clara, I have had reason to reprimand you for your spitefulness to Faith—"

"But, Miss Venn—" Babs indignantly broke in.

"Silence! I am speaking! It is obvious," Miss Venn rumbled on, "that the limit has been reached! As captain of games, Clara should make it her duty to work in harmony with Faith, who is captain of the Fourth Form and the Junior School. Instead of harmony, I have found nothing but bitterness, spite—"

The chums gazed at her wonderingly. What was this leading up to?

"And so," Miss Venn said, while Faith sighed with a sort of despairing regret, "I have decided, after a talk with Faith, that there shall no longer be two captains in one Form. Clara Trevlyn, you are detained for one week from this date. You will play no more games without first obtaining my special permission. And in addition to that—"

Clara's hands clenched.

"In addition to that," Miss Venn added distinctly, "you are no longer games captain of the Junior School! Faith Ashton, at my express order, will in future combine both offices!"

"Miss Venn—" gasped Babs.

"Silence!"

"But, Miss Venn—no!" Babs' eyes blazed. "Miss Venn, that's not fair!"

Miss Venn turned frigidly. "My word," she said icily, "is law! Barbara, when you get back to school, report to me for insolence! Faith, come!"

And leaving a muttering, red-faced team behind her, she strode back to her car, Faith strutting at her heels.

"WELL, AND there you are!" Babs said grimly. "Now emerges the great secret! Faith, all along, was playing a cunning game as usual! Faith, all along, had her eye on Clara's captaincy, and this is how she's got it! The question is, what are we going to do about it?"

This was in the dressing-room ten minutes later.

"Well, let her get on with it!" Clara cried recklessly. "Blow her! After all, we have won! Who cares?"

Babs shook her head.

"You don't care, Clara?"

"Why should I?" the Tomboy growled.

"Because," Babs said determinedly—and there were nods of agreement from the others—"you've got to care, you ninny! We've all got to care! Faith took my captaincy, didn't she? She's tried to trick Mabs out of the leadership of the dramatic society; now she's got your captaincy! And you don't care! You mean you're just going to go on letting Faith get away with everything she sets her mind on?"

Clara flushed.

"Oh rats! I didn't mean that!"

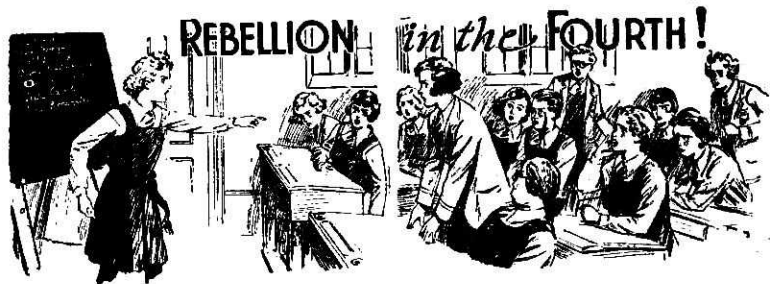
"Thanks! Well, somehow, we're going to put a stop to Faith's little games! Somehow, we're going to get those captaincies back and show Faith up for the two-faced cheat she is!"

"Hear, hear!" Mabs nodded.

"And we start," Babs said, her eyes gleaming, "from the minute we get back to Cliff House School! Who's with us?"

But there was no need to ask the question. The unanimous cry which instantly arose gave the answer. From that moment there was to be no more nonsense—no more quarter. It was to be war to the knife between Babs & Co. and the two-faced Faith Ashton!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



Captain of Junior School at Cliff House though she is, Faith Ashton's hold over the Fourth Form grows less and less. Furious and disgusted, the Fourth cling loyally to Barbara Redfern, their former captain. Against Faith they openly revolt. There is only one way, as Faith realises, in which she can ever exert her power, and that is to get rid of Babs. So, cunningly, unscrupulously, Faith plots to that end—successfully, too, for Babs is faced with disaster. And then Miss Venn, the tyrannical headmistress, plays a most astonishing part that fills Cliff House with sensation. Don't miss this magnificent HILDA RICHARDS story, the last of our present series. It appears next week.

Magnificent opening chapters of a fascinating new story—

ON TOUR with YIN SU



Yin Su Arrives—Midst Mystery!

"O. H. come on, Daphne!" begged May Joliphant. "It's only the same face you can see in that mirror that you've seen for years."

But even though that was true, Daphne Yardley remained in front of the weighing machine on Platform No. 3 of Walsley Junction, looking at her reflection in the mirror with great interest and some concern.

"Don't hurry me, May dear," she begged. "Remember, we have to make a frightfully good impression, you know."

May sighed and gave in, for there was no hurrying Daphne when she was busy beautifying herself. And there was something in what she said, too. As they were meeting a girl from China, new to England and its ways, it would be well to make a good impression.

May and Daphne were English school-girls on holiday, and when they had been invited to accompany Miss Vesey, a governess, to act as companions to her Chinese charge, they had thought it a simply marvellous way of spending the time.

Except that her father was rich, and a man of some importance in China, they knew nothing about the Chinese girl, Yin Su. It was a quaint name, and she was likely to be equally quaint herself; but according to Miss Vesey she was pretty, charming, and a great admirer of England and the English.

Naturally, Daphne, who took more than average interest in her appearance, was eager to create a good impression on Yin Su.

"How do I look, May?" she asked, turning.

"Like the Lady of Shallot, Elaine the Fair, Joan of Arc, and the Lily of Laguna, all rolled into one," teased May. "Buck up!"

"You don't think I've got too much hair showing under my hat?" asked Daphne anxiously.

"Just the right amount to a hair," said May flippantly. "Do come on! It'll make a lot worse impression if we're late, and Yin Su's train is due in two minutes."

Daphne saw the point of that, and even gave a little lecture on etiquette, impressing the need of punctuality.

"And be careful not to use slang phrases, May dear," she said. "We must be fearfully careful, and mind our p's and q's and all that."

"Not half!" said May lightly; for May was a girl who believed in enjoying life.

They crossed the bridge to Platform No. 2 just as the train came in, and May rushed down helter-skelter to the platform. Daphne arrived a second or so later, and together, greatly excited, they awaited their first glimpse of Yin Su from China.

Quaint but Adorable, Full of Fun and yet Very, Very Shrewd—that's Yin Su, the Chinese Girl whom two English Chums are Conducting Round England. There's Excitement Galore for them all—and more than a Hint of Mystery!

Doors opened and people stepped down—men and women, boys and girls, but not one with a Chinese look.

"She's missed the train, surely," said May, alarmed.

"No, she hasn't. There—look!" squealed Daphne, ashamed of her own excitement next moment.

The girl had black hair, and a saucy little pointed hat on the side of her head. Her eyebrows were prettily arched, and there was something porcelain-like in the quality of her skin; something reminiscent of famous portraits by old masters in the oval, delicate outline of her face.

"Yin Su!" murmured Daphne. "Oh, isn't she lovely!"

They ran forward, but found progress difficult, because passengers leaving the train did not quickly make way. Yin

Su, leaning from her compartment, was addressing a porter.

"Illustrious gentleman," she purred in a musical voice, "this most ignorant and stupid creature wishes to be acquainted with the name of this exquisite railway station. Should the name be known to you—?"

"Oo, me?" said the porter.

"It's all right, Yin Su," burst out May. "Here we are!"

"It's your station," added Daphne.

The porter opened the door, removed his cap, and, grinning, bowed.

"Step down on the exquisite platform, princess!" he said.

Yin Su's face was expressionless, as, bowing gracefully, she stepped down, her tiny feet, in pretty shoes, hardly seeming to touch the platform, so lightly did she tread. Then, with a quick, but warm smile, she slowly inclined her head, first to May, and then to Daphne.

"Honourable greetings," she said, poisoning her tiny right hand, in which was a small parcel.

From May, who took the small parcel limply, Yin Su turned to Daphne. Smiling sweetly, she also gave her a small parcel, which, like the other, was wrapped in soft blue paper, and tied with gold thread.

"Oh!" said May. "I—er—thanks awfully, Yin Su!"

"How—how lovely!" breathed Daphne.

Then they exchanged quick, embarrassed looks, for the idea of bringing Yin Su a present had not occurred to them, and they felt guilty in consequence.

"All friendship," said Yin Su, "is giving. The ill-chosen and inadequate gifts, alas! are all too insufficient for the noble English girls who so kindly greet one of whom they know nothing."

Then, having fulfilled the requirements of Chinese courtesy, Yin Su charmingly proved that English customs were not unknown to her. Putting her

BY

ELIZABETH CHESTER

head forward, she closed her eyes and pouted her lips.

Daphne, blinking, stood as in a trance; but May, quicker-witted, kissed the expectant Yin Su, who then turned to Daphne. A little self-consciously, Daphne also kissed her.

"The charming English custom," said Yin Su. "I study it in books."

May laughed, and the ice was broken. "Yin Su" she said, "we're going to have fun! And, my golly, it'll take a lot longer to unteach the customs you've learned, I should say, than to teach you new ones."

Daphne had opened her parcel and found a lovely jade pendant; May's present was also a jade pendant, but not exactly the same. Had they but known it, those pendants were priceless

works of art; but, at least, they did realise that they were lovely, with intricate carving that would take an hour to study in detail.

"But the governess, Miss Vesey?" exclaimed May. "And your luggage—I'd better see to that."

But the porter had lifted down the suitcases from the compartment, and the heavy luggage had already been put out on the platform. Of Miss Vesey, however, there was no sign.

"Very sad," said Yin Su, looking quite merry, with twinkling eyes. "Miss Vesey not on train. Highly educated and clever governess failed to reach station before departure of train."

"Oh!" murmured Daphne, dismayed.

"Then she'll come by the next?" hazarded May. "We'd better wait."

May led the way to one of the platform seats; and Daphne, having noticed how lovely Yin Su's coat was—of most expensive material, perfectly cut—dusted the place where the Chinese girl was to sit.

"I suppose that isn't Miss Vesey?" exclaimed May, as she saw a tall woman pause on descending the bridge stairs and stare at them intently.

Yin Su regarded the woman for a moment.

"Governess not so elegantly attired," she said. "Smartly dressed woman you indicate is unknown to ignorant Yin Su."

"And ignorant woman doesn't know us," smiled May; "for she has turned away."

The woman had turned away; but May was quite wrong in supposing that she did not know them. Nevertheless, she made no attempt to approach the small group, but went at once to the booking hall and rapped at the window marked "Telegrams."

"Is there a telegram for Joliphant—May Joliphant?" she asked.

There was; and the man handed it through.

The woman took it and slit the envelope. As she had asked for the telegram the clerk needed no proof of her identity—and naturally May had no idea that it had arrived.

"Regrettably missed train. Please await me in station refreshment-room. Arriving 1.14.

"VESEY."

That was the telegram—of the greatest importance to May. But the woman crumpled it and put it into her pocket. Then for another few minutes she loitered in the booking hall.

Again the window of the telegraph office opened and the clerk looked through.

"Another telegram for Joliphant," he said.

The woman eagerly took it and turned away. But this time she did not open it; instead, she went on to the platform and looked up and down until, seeing May, Daphne, and Yin Su, she hurried to them.

"Is one of you named Joliphant?" she asked pleasantly.

May turned, surprised.

"I'm May Joliphant, yes."

"Then this telegram must be for you. It has just arrived here," said the woman, and with no further ado, giving the telegram to May, she turned away.

May, guessing that the telegram was from the governess, opened it eagerly, while Daphne looked over her shoulder.

"Please take charge" (read May).

"Yin Su is in your care until I can join you later. Have been taken suddenly ill. Shall be removed to nursing-home not yet decided upon; so do not try to communicate. Five pounds telegraphed to P.O., Walmley. Please collect immediately. Other instructions follow. Show Yin Su what she wants to see of England.

"VESEY."

And while May read out that startling message Daphne and Yin Su listened intently; no less intently the woman who had delivered the message to them watched from a distance.

She waited only to be assured that they accepted it as genuine, then went into the telegraph office again and dispatched a telegram of her own. It was

Your Editor's address is:—
The SCHOOLGIRL Office, Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS.—For several weeks now I've been longing to tell you of another little adventure I had with Claudine, my niece, whom most of you have met before. Thanks to all our recent programme treats, I just haven't had the space until to-day, but at last—here we are.

For the benefit of new readers I should, perhaps, explain that Claudine, while being a very likeable, very charming young lady, is rather over-confident, quite certain in her own mind that she can lead anyone—anywhere.

Well, she's tried to "lead" me several times; on horseback (with disastrous results); on cycle (with equally disastrous results!); and by car (with almost criminal results). A short time ago she led me on foot—with really comic results.

You remember that glorious week before Christmas, when we had the first fall of snow? Well, it was during that period. The scene was "Somewhere-in-the-Country," where Claudine's people have a delightful little cottage. I had been invited down there, and when I arrived there was Claudine, waiting on the platform, and there, all around us, was just the thickest, most impenetrable blanket of snow you ever saw.

"Hallo, Claudine!" I greeted her. "Brrr! What a night!"

"Hallo, uncle!" Claudine greeted me. "Isn't it gorgeous? Sorry I couldn't bring the car, but it'll be all right. I know a lovely short cut!"

Of course, I ought to have known better. Claudine's short cuts are like the paths of a maze—the longest possible route there! We started off all right down a lane, along a trench which the locals had dug through the snow. Then we climbed a stile, and started off over a field. The farther we went, the deeper grew the snow. When we were well up to our knees your Editor coughed.

"Ahem! Are you SURE, my dear, this would be the best way? The lanes might be longer, but—"

"This is much quicker—and ever so much easier, uncle," Claudine said, with her most engaging smile.

Whereupon, she promptly disappeared into a ditch, right up to her neck!

Was I very unkind, do you think? I simply had to chuckle. I do feel that that chuckle was my reward, in advance, for it was I who had to extricate my embarrassed, sheepish niece from the snow; I who had to brush her down; and I who had to lead her, shivering and gasping, back to the lane and commandeer a very opportune lorry!

By bed-time Claudine was her old self again, and I—well, I'd had another lesson in trustfulness!

But I really must hurry up and tell you all about Hilda Richards' simply magnificent LONG COMPLETE story for next week. It is called—

"REBELLION IN THE FOURTH!"

and is the last of the present tremendously popular series featuring Faith Ashton and Barbara Redfern & Co.

Too long have the Fourth Form endured Faith's treachery and craftiness; too long have they been helpless victims of the new headmistress' favourite—and too long has Miss Venn been deceived by the simpering cry-baby.

There is only one thing Babs & Co. can do to obtain justice. They must rebel! And rebel they do. Faith, despite the enormous authority she wields, finds herself nonplussed for the first time. But not for long. In her own spiteful but subtle way she retaliates, and the result is one long, titanic struggle for mastery that will hold you spellbound.

I won't tell you what the outcome is. You must discover for yourself next week. Our next issue will also contain the second instalment of "On Tour with Yin Su"—and DO, please, write and tell me what you think of this new serial, won't you?—another fascinating COMPLETE story featuring Lady Fayre and Robin Hood, and more of Patricia's Bright and Interesting Pages, so—order your copy well in advance.

And now—cheerio for another week.

With best wishes,
Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

not addressed to the governess, needless to say, and the message ran:

"Girls have fallen for scheme. Have no suspicion."
"J."

Then, hurrying from the station, she entered a waiting saloon car, and there remained to keep an eye on the girls as they left the station.

Making "Elegant Whoopee!"

MAY JOLIPHANT read the telegram through a second time, looked at Daphne, who was frowning, and from Daphne to

Yin Su.

"My word, I'm in charge!" exclaimed May, with a laugh. "In future, girls, call me Miss Joliphant."

"May," said Daphne, quite shaken, "can this really be true? We're on our own. Three girls alone! I don't know that mother would quite approve."

"Wouldn't approve? With me in charge?" said May solemnly. "Tut, tut! I bet I'm as good a guide as any dithering governess, you know. And I'll show Yin Su something more interesting than museums and picture galleries."

May looked at the Chinese girl rather anxiously; for much depended upon what Yin Su thought of these altered arrangements.

But Yin Su was smiling.

"Happy are the ways of Fate," she purred. "The highly intellectual governess dislikes simple merriment, but the pretty and so charming English girls are otherwise. The simple-minded and altogether frivolous Yin Su shall make what the English call whoopee. Let us make elegant whoopee—dance, sing, and flutter flowers as leaves in autumn."

Daphne smiled faintly but uneasily; May laughed.

"I don't know about that," said May. "But first of all, let's go to the post office and collect the cash. This is just about the biggest piece of luck that has happened."

Yin Su seemed to think so, too; but Daphne was looking troubled. Yin Su's mention of whoopee, and May's somewhat boisterous nature, made her wonder whether Miss Vesey had been wise in trusting three girls to tour England alone.

"I—I suppose it's all right," mused Daphne. "It can't be a joke or anything?"

"Joke! Goodness, no! No one would send us five pounds for a joke," said May, with a laugh. "Besides, the telegram was from Miss Vesey all right. I never knew anyone for worrying like you, Daphne. Cheer up; this is going to be fun."

Arranging to have their luggage stored, May led the way from the station to the yard, where several taxicabs stood.

"A ride round the town first—and then we'll have to think of lunch," said May.

But Daphne had paused in the station yard, and was looking at the small saloon car in which a woman sat.

"My word! That woman, May, the one who handed us the telegram," she exclaimed. "Why is she sitting there watching us?"

"Watching us?" said May lightly. "I suppose there's no law against her sitting in her own car, is there, duffer? And as we're the only people on view, why shouldn't she watch us, especially



"THE bill," announced the waiter, "is two pounds, fourteen and sixpence." Yin Su, emptying her handbag on to the table, gave the most expressive gesture. "Then," she calmly announced, "I have just not sufficient." May and Daphne stared. Yin Su possessed exactly tenpence!

when there's someone as lovely-looking as Yin Su—"

May opened the door of a taxicab, and Yin Su stepped in, followed by Daphne.

"I suppose it's all right," murmured Daphne. "Only, it's rather odd. Of course, if the five pounds is at the post office, then that will be proof that all is well."

It was a doubt soon settled. The taxicab took them at once to the post office, and May asked for her money order. Giving proof of identity by showing Miss Vesey's telegram and a letter addressed to her at home, she signed for the money and took it.

But on the space provided on the money order was another message.

"Please call at post office, Morsworth, to-morrow morning. Letter will wait you with further instructions. Do not squander this money."
"VESSEY."

Flapping the five pound notes, May's eyes sparkled.

"Well, is this proof?" she asked Daphne. "Five pounds! My word, we can have fun!"

"Gold does not buy happiness," said Yin Su softly. "But it buys excellent dishes and elegant luxuries."

"I'll buy us lunch first," agreed May. "Whither bound, infants?"

They stood outside the post office, looking up and down the busy street, where there were several cafes, and one or two restaurants. With so many places, it would be fun choosing the one they liked best, since they could afford to pick and choose.

"Leave it to Yin Su," said Daphne. "She is the guest."

"Yes—Yin Su, you choose," said May.

Yin Su looked down the road, nodded, and led the way. At the entrance to a large hotel, they were all three brought to a halt by a car which was sweeping into the drive.

Daphne, staring the other way, was pulled back by May just as the car went by. But for May's action she might

have been bumped by the mudguard, and May there and then delivered a wise lecture on watching both ways.

"I—I was looking at that other car," explained Daphne, indicating a small saloon on the far side of the road, drawn up to the kerb. "That woman's in it, and I'm sure it was outside the post office when we were inside."

May laughed.

"Oh, Daph, you duffer, why on earth should the woman follow us?"

"I don't know," admitted Daphne uneasily. "Only I read a book once in which a Chinese girl was followed by a gang who were trying to steal an idol from her that was stolen from a temple."

"Yin Su, have you an idol, stolen from a temple?" asked May playfully.

"Or is a gang—"

May broke off, for Yin Su was no longer at her side.

"Daph. She's gone!" she gasped.

"Gone! There," wailed Daphne, "what did I say? I know there's something behind all this. I know it!"

May, for all her confidence, felt a stab of alarm, when, looking in all directions, she failed to see their protegee. Yin Su had completely disappeared!

No Laughing Matter!

MAY looked up the road, and down; finally stared along the drive where the car had gone.

It led to the front entrance of the largest and best hotel for many miles around, the Hotel Superb, famed for its luxury, its comforts, and its high prices.

And there, in the revolving doorway, was Yin Su, revolving.

"There she is!" exclaimed May.

"She's making whoopee. My golly! Come on, Daphne—"

The hotel porter, in bright, impressive, gold-laced uniform, was waving white-gloved hands in protest at Yin Su, who was doing her best to whiz the revolving doors until they became a blur.

"Yin Su!" called Daphne, hurrying up the steps.

Yin Su slowed and emerged from the doors.

"You skip it," said the porter. "No savvy," said Yin Su, puzzled. "No spikka Enkleesh."

May and Daphne just stared at her expressionless, innocent face, and the porter turned to them.

"She can't go doing that!" he protested. "This is a swagger hotel, not a roundabout."

"Yes, quite. Come along, Yin Su," said May. "There may be some real roundabouts somewhere."

But Yin Su shook her head, and to the porter's blank amazement spoke fluent and flowery English.

"Magnificent and sumptuous palace is fitting place for banquet," she said. "Honourable and ancient custom of my ancestors commands that friends at first meeting shall share the best that the meagre means of our humble selves can afford."

"Well, we can't afford this," smiled May. "They charge ten shillings for lunch, a shilling for coffee, and two shillings for just sitting down."

"My honourable father groans under the burden of riches," said Yin Su. "To lighten it a little would indeed be an act of mercy."

She walked back to the revolving door, let the porter understand that she wished to enter, and went through with dainty steps, leaving May and Daphne with no alternative but to follow her.

It was the most elaborate, expensive-looking place May and Daphne had ever entered. But as Yin Su's father was rich, perhaps such a place as this would have seemed but a carman's pull-up to him. So with that thought in mind, they decided to carry the thing off.

With the manner of a princess, Yin Su entered the dining-room, and the head waiter bowed to her obsequiously.

It was a little early for lunch, and the dining-room was deserted; but the tables were all prepared with shining glass and gleaming napery, and at the end of the room was a gilded balcony shaded by palms, where, in due course, the orchestra would play.

So thick was the carpet that May and Daphne felt that they were sinking into it; and the hush of the large room, the silent waiters who glided here and there with amazing deftness, and, last of all, the prices marked on the menu, almost numbed them with awe.

"Considerable apologies for so humble and sordid banquet hall," murmured Yin Su.

May laughed, Daphne giggled, and both were at ease.

"Humble but homelike," said May. "What do we have—sausage and mashed?"

But Yin Su pointed with trim finger to the most expensive dishes on the menu. Special flowers were brought them; three waiters were in attendance, and presently dishes they had heard about but never tasted were served to them. They had their choice—smoked salmon, hors d'œuvres, cavaire; blue trout, amazingly cooked and served; dish followed dish until the ices were reached, delicious, unbelievable, a schoolgirl's dream.

If Daphne had had to pay the bill herself, she would have been so worried that even that delicious ice would have lost its flavour. But this was Yin Su's treat, which made a difference.

Regaling them with stories of dragons and tigers, which lost nothing in the telling, pretty Yin Su held their attention; and when they in turn told her

of England, its circuses and fairs, she was spellbound.

In fact, they were so wrapt that none of them noticed that the woman whose constant attendance upon them had so worried Daphne, was even now in the dining-room.

It was not until the woman, passing the back of May's chair, accidentally bumped her that she was noticed at all.

"I beg your pardon," she said in a soft voice.

"Not at all," murmured May, moving her chair.

But Daphne caught a glimpse of a large emerald ring, and instantly glanced up.

"May! That woman! I recognise the ring she has!" she exclaimed. "It's the woman who gave you the telegram."

May glanced casually at the woman, but went on with the story of school life she was telling Yin Su.

Daphne, following the woman to the door with her eyes, was relieved to see her leave; for it really began to seem more than a coincidence that everywhere that they went, she went, too.

Five minutes passed, and the waiter brought the bill, placing it, discreetly folded, on a plate at Yin Su's elbow.

Yin Su gave a slight inclination of the head, then, taking a small gold pencil from her Oriental handbag, she made quaint marks on the bill and pushed it to the waiter.

May blinked and looked at Daphne; while the waiter frowned.

"You have signed the bill, Highness?" he said.

He walked away after a pause, and May smiled.

"You don't mean that you can just sign bills like that, Yin Su, and get away with it?" she asked.

"In London, yes, always," said Yin Su. "Honourable father pay all bills some time later!"

She prepared to rise; but before she could do so, the head waiter came across, frowning, and gently explained that as Yin Su was unknown to the management they would prefer money to her signature.

"Sordid concern for money most degrading," said Yin Su in reproach. "Honourable father pay trivial sum."

"Your father is arriving, soon, Highness?" asked the waiter, who had decided that Yin Su was an Oriental princess.

"Perhaps honourable father come in three months. I know not," said Yin Su indifferently, reaching for her bag.

Having tucked it under her arm, she made to rise.

May and Daphne sat as though stunned, while the waiter appeared to be quite unconscious.

"Yin Su, haven't you any money?" May gasped.

Yin Su reflected and opened her bag. "How much of the contemptible gold, scorned by wise philosophers, is needful?" she asked.

"Two pounds, fourteen and sixpence," said the waiter, in a new, cold voice.

"I have, then, just not sufficient," decided Yin Su, producing a sixpence and four coppers.

The Chinese girl's cool offering of that sum in payment of a bill for two pounds, fourteen and sixpence was so startling that May had to laugh.

"Oh, Yin Su!" she protested. "This is England, not China! We have to pay cash. Never mind," she added. "I'll pay. Thank goodness we have that five pounds!"

And May reached for her handbag, which she had put on her chair behind her. She groped for it, rose, looked on the floor, and then went quite white.

"My bag! It's gone!" she gasped.

"And all our money's in it!" "Gone! May! It can't be!" Daphne cried, and for the moment felt faint inside.

But the bag had gone, as a careful search revealed, and with it had gone all their money. The waiter, his obsequious manner changed, knit his brows, and then, with glittering eye, went sidling across the floor to fetch the manager.

"May, we'll be arrested!" gasped Daphne. "They'll say we never had the money; they'll say—"

And then Daphne sat bolt upright, and a cold shiver of dread ran through her.

"That woman—the woman with the emerald ring!" she choked. "When she bumped into your chair she took your bag, May!"

Loth though May was to believe such a thing, there seemed to be no alternative. Who else could have stolen the bag?

As they sat there, silent, shocked, wondering, the head waiter, his face very grim, returned.

"The manager wishes to see you in his office," he said, in a low, tense tone, "and unless you want to be taken along to the police station, you'd better try to find that bag or some money!"

All their gaiety gone, the three girls rose from the table, shaky at the knees.

The headmistress' study at school had never seemed so awe-inspiring as the manager's office when they were shown into it. The manager himself, his expression grim, stood with his back to the fire.

"Well, what have you to say?" he snapped. "The idea of ordering a meal costing two pounds, fourteen and sixpence, and offering a few paltry pence!"

Yin Su clasped her hands and bowed. May anxiously explained about the bag, but faltered out the end of the story lamely as she saw the manager's sneer of disbelief.

"I don't want explanations! I want the money!" snapped the manager. "I'll give you fifteen minutes; by then it must be paid, or—"

There was a rap on the door, which was opened to admit a page-boy who bore a silver salver. On the salver was a parcel.

"Well?" snapped the manager. "Is that for me?"

"For the Chinese young lady, sir," said the page. "A lady handed it in at the bureau. Tall lady—"

Daphne's mind, filled as it was with suspicion, jumped to the woman's identity.

"In a dark coat—and had she an emerald ring on her right hand?" she asked.

"Yes, miss—leastways, a green ring," said the page.

Daphne snatched at Yin Su's arm as the Chinese girl opened the parcel.

"No, no—it might be a bomb!" she gasped.

But the paper was off and the contents revealed.

"My handbag!" cried May, in wonder. "She did take it, then—"

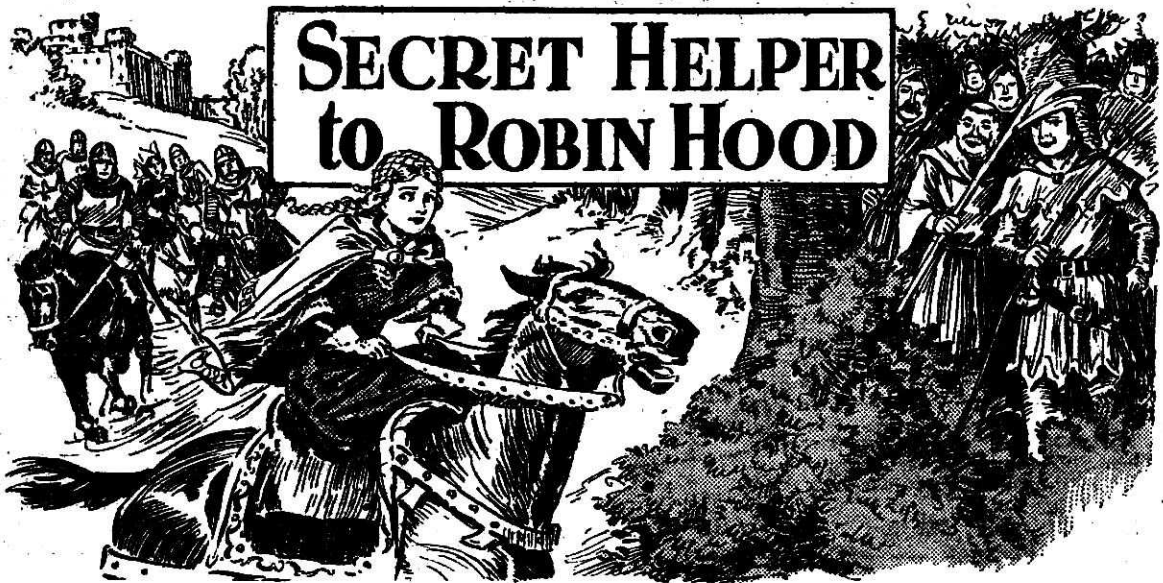
She snatched it up in great glee, but Daphne, shaking her head, did not allow her hopes to rise.

"It's the bag; but there'll be no money in it," she said dismally.

Swiftly, May opened the bag.

WILL there be any money in the bag? Or will the three unfortunate chums have to remain at the mercy of the angry manager? Next week's delightful instalment of this wonderful new story will tell you.

Another delightful COMPLETE story of MERRY ENGLAND in the MIDDLE AGES.



SECRET HELPER to ROBIN HOOD

For a Poor Girl's Sake!

"ARE you asleep, sir?" asked the young Lady Fayre, in so soft a whisper that if the Venerable Brie, her tutor, were indeed asleep, it would not be likely to arouse him.

Impish girl though she was, Fayre had no wish to awaken the Venerable Brie, for one thing, because he was an old man in need of sleep and rest; for another, because she was young, the day was warm and sunny, and while he slept there was no need for her to work.

Having written out: "A still tongue showeth a wise head," ten times in her best handwriting, Fayre had to await further instructions.

Proving how well she had learned the wisdom of the proverb she had written, Fayre kept a still tongue in her head, and crossed to the window of her chamber. From it she had a view of the courtyard of her home, Longley Castle, of the barbican, and beyond the castle walls the lovely trees of the mysterious wood, and the far-distant rolling hills of merry England.

Somewhere in those woods was gay, daring Robin Hood, friend of the poor, plague of the rich, cruel, and powerful. And Fayre, although herself of noble birth, admired Robin Hood, and wished him good fortune in all his enterprises.

But her attention was distracted from the tree-tops by some commotion at the barbican, that outer minor fortress which guarded the castle entrance, and where the drawbridge and portcullis barred the way of invaders.

A man-at-arms appeared, wearing his red pantaloons, and the white tunic, brave with the red cross, that told of his having recently been a Crusader with the baron.

Following him was a girl. There was nothing gay about her, though. She was drably clad in dark green and brown, her head bare, showing long tresses that all but obscured her face. Then Fayre noticed something else about the girl.

"By my faith, but she is chained!" she murmured, half aloud.

Chained indeed the girl was. From her wrists chains hung to her ankles; for all the world as though, instead of being a free English girl, she were a slave.

By IDA MELBOURNE

Fayre, tripping lightly past her slumbering tutor, went through the archway of her room, swinging aside the deep red curtain, and with soft tread went down to the broad stone stairway. Risking stern reproof, she was eager to inquire into this most puzzling mystery.

Before she reached the stairs, however, she heard the voice of her aunt, the Baroness le Feuvre.

"A girl in chains! What means this, my lord?"

The baron's rumbling voice replied: "I know not, neither do I care! If you see the armourer, then tell me; for I have waited all but an hour for the rascal! A whole hour to put an edge on my sword!"

Fayre, not wishing to be seen by her aunt or uncle, stepped back to an alcove. Already the clank of the pikes

"Bah!" snorted the baron in contempt. "If the bailiff has said so—"

Fayre heard the jangle of the chains, the breathless gasp of the girl, and made half a movement to step forward. But the girl was already on the scene.

"O merciful and mighty baron," said the miserable-looking girl, dropping to her knees. "I have come as a slave in chains. I have come to serve you, my lord, as a servant. Let me do the humblest tasks, however hard. Verily will I do them diligently if only my poor mother can stay in her small home."

Tears of compassion sprang to Fayre's eyes as she heard this pitiful appeal. But the baron's heart was made of stone, it seemed. He stood unmoved.

"Begone!" he said sternly. "I want no slaves, nor helpers!"

He made to re-enter the room, but the girl clutched at the hem of his garment.

To save the Cottage Home of a Humble Peasant Lass, Fayre gets Robin Hood, her Secret Friend, to Kidnap Her!

and the jangling of the girl's chains could be heard in the hall below.

"Await the baron's reply," said a pikeman.

Fayre, peeping out, presently saw the pikeman arrive, gasping a little because of the many stairs he had climbed. Adjusting his tunic, he stood to attention, and rapped the butt of his pike twice on the stone floor.

"Noble lord, a village maid prays audience. She would be heard, my lord, by yourself."

Fayre drew up against the wall as the dark red curtain was flung back from the archway, and the baron appeared, clad in a long blue robe with red stripes and yellow border, belted with a buckle of gold. But his red, bloated face went ill, Fayre thought, with his magnificent garment.

"A maid—what is it? Why comes she to me?" he demanded.

"My lord. It is the cot. Your bailiff has said she shall leave the cot, she and her widowed mother—"

"Oh, sir, oh, baron, no!" she cried in great distress. "Your bailiff is cruel; he has no heart. But you who have braved the Crusades with our lion-hearted king—"

The baroness's voice chimed in as she appeared behind her lord, hard and metallic.

"Away, girl; we need no more scullions!"

Fayre, no longer able to remain in hiding, sprang forward.

"Please, uncle—aunt—my lord!" she said, remembering that he appreciated humility. "Pray let this maid help me!"

"Help you!" cried the baroness, her eyes glittering. "Help you to fritter time in idleness? Help you, indeed!"

The girl looked at Fayre, tears shining in her eyes, and desperate hope filling her heart.

"My lady, I would serve you like a slave," she said earnestly. "All hours of the day I would work, if 'twere possible for mother to stay in our little home."

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every month during 1939. You are certain to make sure of getting the superb book-length story of the early adventures of your Cliff House favourites, which comprises one of each month's issues, of course, but you'll find the other three numbers just as absorbing in their own way.

The JANUARY Cliff House story, No. 664, is shown on the right. Here are brief details of the others:

- No. 665. "Not Fit for Morcove," an early exploit of Betty Barton & Co., by Marjorie Stanton.
- No. 666. "If Her School Friends Only Knew," by Joan Inglesant.
- No. 667. "Stella and the Sheik of Mystery," by Renee Frazer.



along the lane that wound between high hedges to the small cluster of houses that formed the village. Fifty yards farther on, humming to herself, she entered the wood.

A few minutes later she was stepping along a path, when—

"Ahoj!" came a shout, and, with crashing of undergrowth, a young man jumped into view.

Clad in green, a short cloak flying from his shoulders, a quiver at his back, and in his hand his trusty bow, Robin Hood had appeared as if by magic.

"Oho!" he cried, with a gallant bow. "Greetings, little lady!"

"Lady! You call me lady?" asked Fayre swiftly—and not without anxiety.

"La! You may not live in a castle," said Robin Hood, his eyes glimmering, "yet by your manner you are indeed a lady. The Lady Fayre is like to be less charming, I trow. Seeing that she is the niece of the robber baron, methinks she is ill-favoured, sour-tempered—"

Fayre drew up indignantly, but then realised that as she was not supposed to be the Lady Fayre indignation would be misplaced.

"Why, yes," she said a little feebly, "it is possible; for the baron is cruel, heartless. Oh, Robin Hood, there is a task for you!" she went on eagerly.

And in breathless haste she told him of the unhappy girl who lived in the small cottage by the river.

Robin Hood's brow darkened. "It is bad," he agreed. "The baron is a rascal! But what would you? Am I to fight off the bailiffs from the cottage?"

"There are other ways," said Fayre. "It is money they need."

"It is money I need," sighed Robin Hood; "for there seems a shortage." Thoughtfully he twanged his bow-string. "Perchance the baron has gold," he mused.

"In the castle," agreed Fayre. "But there is the drawbridge, the moat—soldiers. What the baron has he keeps."

"True," Robin Hood agreed, nodding.

Fayre, thinking intently, suddenly gave a violent start.

"I have it, Robin Hood!" she cried. "The Lady Fayre! You shall capture her—hold her to ransom!"

But Robin Hood shook his head. "No, no. Robin Hood does not do battle with ladies."

"You shall do battle with the escort when the Lady Fayre goes riding this afternoon," said Fayre firmly. "Yes, yes—there should be enough ransom—"

But Robin Hood's quick ears had heard a new sound. He tugged at Fayre's sleeve and dragged her back to the shadow of a large oak.

"Take care! Someone comes!" he said softly. "Hide! I must summon my band, lest it is an attack by the sheriff."

He sprang away, snatching from his belt the hunting-horn that he carried there, and with short blasts upon it hurried away to summon Friar Tuck, Little John, and the others.

Fayre, crouching back, was aware of the sounds that he had heard, the soft clomp of horses' hoofs, and the mutter of voices. Then there rode into view four men whose horses' hoofs were muffled with heavy cloths. At the head of them was the sheriff, armed with mail, sword in hand.

He swung his sword, shouting orders, while his men rode right and left into the wood. Fayre, hardly breathing,

The baron, muttering, shook his fist at the pikeman.

"Take her away! The next wastrel who brings such a creature snivelling to me shall rue it! Do I pay a bailiff to be pestered myself with these woes? Take her away!"

But as the pikeman took the girl under the armpits to lift her, Fayre, arms akimbo, confronted her uncle.

Wagging a forefinger at him as though he were but a naughty boy, she chided him roundly.

"Uncle, have we not riches enough in this great castle to give this poor girl leave to owe the trifle of rent?"

The baron stood aghast, his jaw lolling, and words utterly failed him.

"Ug-gu-gah—" was all he could say.

"Why, even Robin Hood, the outlaw," went on Fayre, trembling with excitement, half-afraid of what she was saying—"even he, whom you despise and call a rogue, does great kindness to the poor, and he is himself but poor."

"By my halidom!" roared the baron. "Have you taken leave of your senses? What manner of talk is this? One other word and, lady or not, you'll go to the stocks!"

Fayre folded her arms. She had said more than she had meant to, and, despite her outward show of bravado, she was quaking inside with fright.

"My lady, have a care," whispered the girl.

"Have a care, indeed!" cut in the baroness. "Were it not that I think you overwrought by this girl's hysterical prattle, I should have you whipped. Return to your room, Fayre, nor leave it without my consent!"

Fayre stood for a moment as though rebelling; but, knowing that the baroness would have no mercy for her, she swung round and, head in air, marched back to her room.

But at the turn of the corridor she looked back. The girl, on her feet now, was being led by the pikemen to the stairs.

"If by sunset the dues are not paid," roared the baron, "then every stick of

yours shall be flung from the cottage—and you with them!"

Fayre, sick at heart, went softly into her room, where the Venerable Bric still dozed.

With folded arms she stood by the window watching the unhappy girl escorted to the barbican; from the barbican her gaze wandered to the woods.

Robin Hood, the friend of the poor—would he allow this if he knew? If anyone could help this unhappy girl and her widowed mother, it was surely he.

"If he knew—" mused Fayre, a gleam coming to her eyes, and she shook back her long tresses. "By my faith, he shall know, too—right merrily he shall—and soon!"

She pulled back the curtains, hesitated, and then, smiling, took a cushion from a chair, placing it for the Venerable Bric, and gently casing his head back to it to ensure that, whatever might awake him, it should not be discomfort.

Five minutes later from a secret niche in her bed chamber she took a shabby frock, shabby shoes, ragged brown cloak, and hood. Her own lovely rich red velvet frock with its hem of gold embroidery she concealed in an oak chest.

The Lady Fayre was no more; in her place was a simple village maid.

Unless escorted by the baron, the baroness, or with other attendants, the young Lady Fayre could not leave the castle. But who would say "nay" to a village maid? Once clear of the castle, she could enter the woods, and there seek out Robin Hood in his secret lair.

The Plot is Hatched!

THE young Lady Fayre went warily. Bearing a basket, as though she was leaving the castle after delivering some simple goods—fruit or flowers—she was not questioned at the drawbridge.

Light of heart, she danced her way

tiptoed away, fearful lest she herself should be captured. But disaster overtook her. A twig cracked under her foot, breaking with a pistol-shot sound.

"Stand, there!" roared the sheriff, swung his horse round, and with sword raised made for Fayre.

Covering her face with her hands, Fayre crouched back against a tree as the sheriff reined up, dismounted, and grabbed her arm.

"You! You had word with Robin Hood! Who are you?" he demanded fiercely. "What know you of Robin Hood, his lair, his hunting-ground?"

Fayre, trembling, did not answer, and he tugged down her hands from her face.

"We'll hear more about you perchance, after a while in the dungeon of the baron's castle!" he jeered.

Fayre's heart seemed to stop beating. For once she was taken to the castle the truth must out. She was near to fainting as she thought of the baron's rage; the baroness's venom.

"Oh, no—not that!" she said. "I—"

Fayre saw that the sheriff's hand was twisted in the horse's reins. At the moment the animal was grazing peacefully. But if it should be startled it would rear, dragging the sheriff back with it.

Fumbling in the neck of her frock, she found the whistle Robin Hood had given her to scare away wolves, and with a quick snatch put it to her lips and gave one shrill blast.

The horse reared; but the sheriff held it, struggled, and then, seeing Fayre turn to run, released the horse. He caught Fayre firmly, and held her by her cloak.

The whistle still in her lips, Fayre blew, terrified, hoping against hope that Robin Hood would hear and come to her rescue.

Her own shrill blasts deafened her, so that she did not hear Robin Hood's shout. But she felt the sheriff's grip relax, and, turning, she saw him slashing with his mighty sword, the blade reflecting the sun with fiery sparkle.

And facing him, quarter-staff in hands, was Robin Hood, laughing, mocking.

"How now, sheriff! Didst think Robin Hood was a peasant girl? Brave sheriff! Mighty man of valour!"

Fayre drew back against the tree. Her heart thumped and her eyes shone with pride as Robin Hood cleverly took the sword blows on his quarter-stick. This way and that he dodged, now rushing in, now drawing back. Time and again he dealt the sheriff a cunning blow with the stick.

But soon the sword would smash the stick, or a feint would draw Robin Hood's guard; and then—

Fayre clasped her hands, hardly daring to watch, yet too fascinated by this valiant defence of her to look away.

The sheriff was backing as Robin Hood, by strength and skill, kept close to his adversary to prevent the full use being made of the sword. If the sheriff could back enough, he could use his sword point!

Fayre dropped to her knees. On all fours she went forward, just behind the sheriff, ducking her head. As he stepped back, his mail-clad leg gave her a kick that brought a gasp. But next moment he lost his balance and, stumbling over her as Robin Hood thrust, fell flat on his back, legs in the air.

Quick as an arrow in flight, Robin Hood pinioned the fallen man with the

quarter-staff, prodding him in the chest so that he was winded.

Fayre struggled up. She did not wait to hear Robin Hood's words of gratitude, but ran, taking a last look back in time to see him chasing the sheriff from sight with his own sword.

But a moment later there came the clomp of horse's hoofs behind Fayre, and Robin Hood, mounted on the sheriff's horse, drew level.

"Mount," he said, "brave mystery maid!"

Fayre, hearing shouts behind, knew that she could not run to safety. Letting Robin Hood take her wrists, she suffered herself to be swung up behind him. Then riding sideways, her arms round his waist, she was galloped away.

For a mile or two they cantered along paths, ducking low branches, clearing bushes, until presently the river came in sight. Skirting the tow-path passing the new mill with its splendid wheel, they reached a space through which could be seen a stone cottage.

"Here at least you will find a friend," said Robin Hood. "For I know not what manner of place you call home. But, mystery maid, I will be always your friend."

He clasped her hand, and Fayre's eyes danced.

"And I yours, Robin Hood," she said. "But, remember, capture the Lady Fayre. If I have done you a service, let that be your return. At two in the afternoon, she will ride with an escort over the field behind the castle. Her steed will bolt to the edge of the wood. And then—where the brook is, and the tree blasted by lightning—"

Robin Hood doffed his little cap. "It shall be," he said

Held to Ransom!

FAYRE halted at the little cottage by the river. The windows were boarded across, and the solid door was fixed, too. As Fayre tiptoed to the front of it, where vegetables grew in a small patch, she saw her uncle's bailiff hammering on the door.

"Open! An order from the lord Baron Feuvre!" he bellowed, in his

bullying voice. "By sundown, unless the dues be paid, you shall leave this cote with your belongings!"

From an upper window the girl who had arrived at the castle, chained, looked out.

"The baron is a cruel, heartless man!" she cried passionately. "But for the taxes levied for the Crusades the rent would have been paid. Even yet it shall be paid when the new frocks we have made for the ladies in the manor house are ready to wear."

"Idle talk!" boomed the bailiff.

He swung aside, and saw Fayre.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I? I am a good fairy," said Fayre. "And when you speak I will make toads and snakes come from your mouth like in the tale I have heard."

The bailiff was noted for his superstition, and an uneasy look came on to his face, ridiculous though the threat was.

"I speak you no harm," he muttered. Fayre, smiling, watched him go, and then crept to the barred door and looked up to where the girl still stood at the window.

"Have no fear," she whispered. "The money shall be found for you by the brave friend of the poor, Robin Hood."

Then, fearful lest she should say too much, Fayre hurried away.

With the basket on her arm, she re-entered the castle. It was near to the hour for dinner, and she hurried to her bed-chamber, changed, washed, and crept anxiously to her day-room. The Venerable Brie was still there, fast asleep, head on the cushion. Seating herself at the table, the Lady Fayre coughed.

"Mum-mmm!" mumbled the Venerable Brie. "I—er—"

"Hark! The bell, summoning us to eat!" exclaimed Fayre. "After so hard a morning's toil, sir, I am indeed hungry. And this afternoon I go riding, so I shall need sustenance."

To Fayre's relief, the baron and the baroness showed no sign of being aware that she had left the castle.

An hour later Fayre set out for her ride, accompanied not only by the baroness, but six men-at-arms.

Riding side-saddle, with a richly



BEFORE Fayre could escape, the sheriff had seized her by the arm. "What know you of Robin Hood?" he barked. "Speak, wench—or spend a while in the baron's dungeon." Fayre went cold. If the baron saw her, her masquerade to help Robin Hood would be finished for ever!

embroidered cloak over her frock, Fayre went beside the baroness, with two escorts in front, two behind, and two outriders.

It was a riding lesson, and a form of exercise, too; and as young ladies were not supposed to canter or gallop, since such conduct would have been unseemly, the speed was low.

But Fayre decided otherwise when they neared the spot where she had arranged that Robin Hood should lie in wait.

It was now or never.

"Good horse!" said Fayre, and, slapping his flank, pressed in her heels and slackened rein.

The willing horse cantered, and the baroness screamed out. The men, unprepared, were overtaken by Fayre, who softly urged the horse into a gallop.

"Help!" she cried, in pretence.

Straight for the wood she steered the runaway, with the escort following her. Twenty yards ahead of them she crashed through the first bushes.

Next moment there sprang up a score of men in green. Robin Hood, foremost amongst them, leaped at the first of the escort as he half drew his sword, and, clinging to the man's wrists, brought him headlong from his horse.

The others, riding on to catch the Lady Fayre, found a rope across the path high enough to clear the horse's head, but too low for their own. Off they toppled, to be seized by chuckling members of the band.

The baroness took but one look, and then, reining her horse, wheeled, screaming for help, with two of the riders accompanying her for fear that she, too, might be captured.

But Fayre, a hundred yards inside the wood, dismounted. She did not run in fright, but waited until Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, and Little John approached her. Then, with a veil her uncle had brought from the Orient obscuring her face, she clasped her hands in pretended fright.

"Good Robin Hood," she said, in a voice she purposely altered, "have mercy on a young lady of quality!"

"By your good leave, m'lady," said Robin Hood, bowing, "we will take you prisoner. No harm shall befall you, no discomfort, save awaiting the pleasure of the baron in sending ransom."

"Methinks he should send a goodly sum for his only niece," Fayre said modestly.

"Indeed so," said Robin Hood. "Two hundred pieces of gold?"

And he thereupon commanded Friar Tuck, who alone of the band could write, to make out the ransom for that amount; for, he said, he had never yet insulted noble lady.

"But methinks," mused Robin Hood dubiously, "that the lord baron will send not two hundred gold pieces, but two hundred soldiers with archers, pikemen, crossbows."

The Lady Fayre's smile waned. She had not thought of that. Suppose the baron did assemble an army. No score of men, however brave, could do battle with an army.

"And if he should?" she asked tremulously. "You would fight to keep me? It might cost lives."

Robin Hood smiled.

"The outlaw must live by his wits. Like the fox he must go to ground, and you, m'lady Fayre, must come with us."

So saying, Robin Hood ordered the release of one of the baron's men, who had been tied up. Giving him the mes-

sage, he sent him hastening with it to the baron.

Scarcely had he gone than Fayre gave a sharp cry.

"Quick! I have a message! Let me, too, send a message!" she implored.

Robin Hood hesitated, and then out of gallantry complied.

"As you wish. Nor will I read the message, for you cannot harm us," he said. "Being a lady, you will write nothing that is not the truth."

"Um!" said Fayre. And, tongue in cheek, using Friar Tuck's equipment, she wrote her message.

It was for the sake of the girl in the riverside cottage that she wrote, and for brave Robin Hood. For if her message were heeded, then the baron would send gold rather than two hundred soldiers.

"ROBIN HOOD, the rascal, the knave, the coward!" roared the baron, storming up and down the long hall.

The weeping baroness, returning from the woods, and doubtless taking a leaf from her lord's book, did not lessen the desperate order of the battle.

According to her she had all but torn Robin Hood's hair from his head, and stunned him with her riding-crop before escaping. But she had been unable to save the Lady Fayre.

Hardly had her tale been told for the third time, when the messenger arrived, his clothes torn, and his head bruised. Prostrating himself, he gave the baron the message.

The baron roared like a lion:

"A ransom of two hundred gold pieces! Two hundred warriors shall be the price!"

"No, no! Fight him not, for fear Fayre shall suffer!" cried the baroness, in dread.

"Suffer or not, he shall suffer, too!" the baron stormed. "This is the end of Robin Hood. Saddle my charger; bring my armour; my two-handed sword! Assemble the archers, the pikemen—"

Men ran to do this bidding; but before his armour could be brought, there arrived another messenger.

"The Lady Fayre, my lord!" he panted. "In her own hand it is written—"

The baron snatched it, and spelled the message to himself laboriously; for, although unable to write, he could with patience read.

"By my halidom!" he jerked out.

"What now?" breathed the baroness.

The baron crumpled the message.

"Send me my treasurer," he commanded.

"Tell him that I must have a bag with a hundred pieces of gold on top, and underneath a hundred pieces of copper. Rather than let a hair of Fayre's head be harmed, I will pay the ransom, and let the account with Robin Hood wait awhile."

A cheer of approval came from his knights who had assembled; for since it was common practice in those days to hold captured nobles and wealthy knights for ransom, on pain of death, they believed that the baron had most nobly swallowed this insult to his prestige rather than allow harm to befall his niece.

But the baroness knew better. There was a sour smile on her face. For she had picked up the message which, in excitement, the baron, having crumpled, had thrown away.

"Oh, brave uncle!" she had read. "Do not come to my rescue, nor send your knights, nor soldiers; for this fearful outlaw has set such a trap that none can but fall into it. And of such nature is it that you would become a laughing-stock to the peasants, and suffer such shame as the mere thought of it brings blushes to my cheeks. Send rather the gold than bring yourself disgrace."

IN the middle of the field where Fayre's horse had bolted, the baron's treasurer deposited, in accordance to Friar Tuck's written instructions, the bag of gold; and then Robin Hood took himself, bow in hand, lest the treacherous baron had archers in hiding. But there were none, and Robin danced back with the treasure.

"The Lady Fayre is free!" he sang out.

The Lady Fayre, all smiles beneath her veil, was helped to her horse, and sent on her way with the cheers of Robin Hood and his men.

In the lane an escort awaited her, knights, and men-at-arms, and in solemn mood she returned to the castle.

"Never again let such shame be brought upon me!" scowled the baron. "Twas not your message that forbade my sending an army, but fear for your life."

"Yes, my lord," said Fayre, dropping a curtsy.

And demurely she went to her room, where there was some embroidery for her to do. Fayre's mind was in the woods, however, where Robin Hood was wending his way to the riverside cottage. One hundred pieces of gold—enough to buy the whole cottage—was the prize he tossed up in a bag to the girl who had begged the baron's mercy.

It was not until nearly sundown that Fayre knew for certain that the cottagers had been saved, yet she did not doubt that Robin Hood would keep his word. When the trumpets were sounding, and the flags were being brought down from the staffs above the castle, the bailiff rode into the castle.

"Tis paid, my lord!" he cried, dismounting before the baron. "And my magic. A fairy I saw with mine own eyes in the wood this morning. 'Tis fairy gold you have as rent," he babbled.

The baron opened the small sack, and took out some coins.

"Fairy gold!" he scoffed. "Tis as like the gold pieces in my treasure-chest as they are each to the other."

From the window of the Lady Fayre's room came a silvery laugh; and the baron, thinking that he had made a good joke, laughed heartily, too, and gave the bailiff a playful buffet that sent the poor man squatting on the ground.

"Ha, ha, ha! Fairy gold!" roared the baron. "Ho, ho, ho!"

And, the Lady Fayre, leaning out from her window, her long fair hair trailing, laughed until her sides ached, while in the riverside cottage the dressmaker and her daughter, dancing and singing, were laughing, too.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

THERE will be another fascinating adventure about the young Lady Fayre and Robin Hood in next Saturday's SCHOOLGIRL. Don't fail to read it, will you?