

Maryone Wheeler

Stirring and Dramatic are the events at
Cliff House School when there is:—

"REBELLION IN THE FOURTH!"

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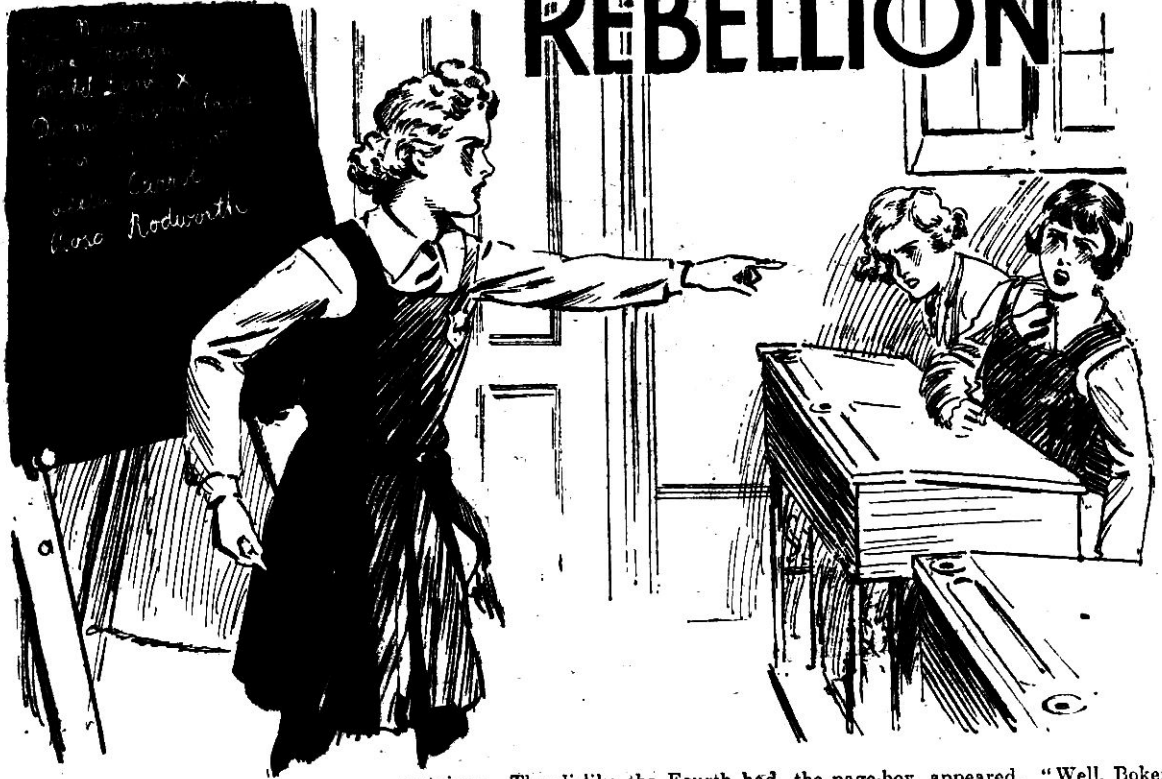
**THE SCHOOL GATES
WOULD NOW BE CLOSED
FIVE MINUTES EARLY!**

**Faith Ashton plans another
blow against her rival.**

*(See this week's grand Barbara
Redfern & Co. story.)*

The Last Round in the "war" between

REBELLION



In Defiance of Faith!



BARBARA REDFERN, stop fidgeting with your desk flap."

Barbara Redfern, of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, flushed and looked up as the annoyed tones of Miss Bullivant, the strict mathematics mistress, fell upon her ears.

"And, Clara Trevlyn, stop grimacing at Faith Ashton," Miss Bullivant rapped.

"Oh crumbs!" Tomboy Clara muttered.

"Mabel Lynn, stop muttering to Marjorie Hazeldene. Bessie Bunter, take that sweet out of your mouth— instantly. I should like to know," Miss Bullivant irritably rumbled as her gimlet eyes swept over the Fourth Form, "what is the matter with the class this morning."

The Fourth could have told her. In fact, had Miss Bullivant been observant enough, she might have read the answer to that question in the sudden battery of glances which were turned towards the flaxen-haired, exquisitely pretty girl who sat in the centre of the class.

Faith Ashton was that girl's name— Faith who, at this moment, was not only Junior School captain, but Junior games captain as well.

Unfriendly were the majority of those glances, for Faith Ashton was the cause of their restlessness— Faith, that girl whose trickery, treachery, and subtlety had first robbed Barbara Redfern, her cousin, of the captaincy of the Junior School, and yesterday had succeeded in wresting from Clara Trevlyn her games

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captaincy. The dislike the Fourth had always entertained for two-faced Faith had now become a smouldering fire of mutiny.

The Fourth smarted under the new power of Faith. The Fourth half-blamed Miss Venn, their new headmistress, who, so strict and stern in all other directions, had been so completely hoodwinked by the seeming sweetness and generosity of Faith.

"If you do not pay proper attention," fumed Miss Bullivant, "I shall detain you all for an extra half-hour—or all,

the page-boy, appeared. "Well, Boker, what is it?"

"Please, Miss Bullivant, Miss Venn wants you in her study. She's calling all mistresses to a special conference."

"Oh!" Miss Bullivant said. "Very well, Boker, you may go. Faith, as captain of the Form, you will take charge here during my absence—and please write on the blackboard the name of any girl who misbehaves while I am away. And behave!" she added, with a frown at the Form as she rustled off in Boker's wake.

The Fourth Form will stand the captaincy of Faith Ashton no longer! The treachery, the slyness of Barbara Redfern's cousin has brought them up in arms. They want Barbara as captain again. And Faith, realising that, realising that she will never have her own way completely while popular Babs is still at Cliff House, starts a spiteful campaign against her cousin.

that is," she added, with a look at the New Form and games captain, "except Faith Ashton. Faith, at least, is a model of good behaviour. I am surprised you do not take a lesson from her."

"That 'two-face!'" muttered Mabel Lynn, Barbara Redfern's greatest chum and study mate.

"Mabel, what did you say?" "Nun-nothing, Miss Bullivant," stutted Mabel, flushing to the roots of her golden hair.

"Then take twenty lines for saying 'nothing' in that tone of voice! Now— Oh goodness!" And Miss Bullivant turned irritably towards the door as it was pushed open and Boker,

Faith, with a loftily superior smile, rose from her place and tripped out in front of the class. Immediately there was a buzz.

"Silence!" Faith frowned.

"Go and eat coke!" cried someone.

Faith's eyes glittered.

"Who said that?"

"Hamlet at the Battle of Waterloo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see!" Faith's eyes darted at June

Merrett. "June, that was you!" she accused, and caught up the chalk and scrawled June's name on the blackboard. "And you, Clara, are talking!" she cried, and up went Clara Trevlyn's name. "Barbara, what are you fiddling about with that desk lid for?"

Faith Ashton and Babs & Co

in the FOURTH!



"Oh, don't be an idiot!" cried Mabel Lynn.

"Mabel, your name goes up, too!" And Faith, with glad enthusiasm, wrote it.

"Beastly sneak!" sniffed Diana Royston-Clarke.

Faith wrote her name on the black-board.

"Toady!" gibed Joan Charmant. "Now write me up!"

Faith glared; but she wrote it up. The Fourth glowered. Somebody hissed. But Faith, conscious of her supreme power, only smiled. Her eyes sought out her cousin again.

"Barbara, I asked you a question! What were you fiddling about with that desk for?"

Babs' blue eyes gleamed. "Your concern?" she asked quietly.

"Most certainly it is my concern!" Faith snapped. "You heard what Miss Bullivant said. As your captain—"

"As our what?" sniffed Bridget O'Toole.

"As your captain—" Faith fiercely repeated.

"As our general nuisance, I guess!" Leila Carroll put in. "O.K.! Write me down!" added the American junior scornfully. "Who cares? You might figure you're our captain, but we figure that a badge doesn't make you what we don't acknowledge you to be, I guess!"

"Hear, hear!" cried Mabs. "Babs is our captain!"

"Yes, rather!" cried plump Bessie Bunter, who shared Study No. 4 with Babs and Mabs.

"Mabel, I shall put a cross against your name!" Faith threatened furiously. "Now, silence, all of you! I suppose you think you're all jolly clever to kick against me as soon as there's no mistress on the scene?" she added sneeringly. "But that doesn't alter the fact Miss Venn's made me your captain—"

"You mean you fooled her into making you!" Rosa Rodworth snapped.

With a vicious flourish Faith scrawled Rosa's name under the others.

"And while," Faith gritted, "I am your captain, you're jolly well going to toe the line, see? Now, Barbara, tell me what you were doing under the lid of that desk?"

"And now," Babs retorted, "mind your own business."

Faith compressed her lips. If she had deprived Babs of her captaincy, she was still antagonistic towards her cousin.

Perhaps Faith realised that, even

copies for a series of pictures she was going to draw for the forthcoming Birthday Number of the Cliff House Magazine.

Dulcia's was the best and the most expensive camera in the school, and because of the power of its lens made winter subjects as easy to take as summer scenes with an ordinary camera. Actually Babs had intended to return that camera to Dulcia before lessons, but had rather been caught out by lesson bell before she had an opportunity of doing so.

"Give it to me!" Faith ordered. "Don't be silly!" Babs retorted contemptuously.

But Faith, feeling her authority being challenged, made a swift downward grab. Babs grabbed at the same time. There came a roar from the Form.

"Go it, Babs!"

"Two to one on Babs!" cheered Clara Trevlyn.

"Give it to me!" shrieked Faith. "Leave it alone!" cried Mabel Lynn.

Faith set her teeth. She tugged. Babs tugged, determined not to let go. Then suddenly Babs' fingers slipped. Faith's fingers slipped at the same time. Too late Babs made a frantic downward grasp to scoop the camera as it fell. It missed her fingers by a hairsbreadth, and— Thud!

"Oh, my hat!" Babs gasped. "Faith, you wretch!"

There came an angry shout from the Fourth. Faith had no business to use her powers like that. Being put in charge of the Form did not mean that Faith was entitled to act like a mistress, and the Fourth would have resented that attitude even if they had not disliked Faith.

In quivering dismay Babs picked the camera up. Her face turned white as she saw that the film-winder had completely broken off.

By

HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

though she was officially captain, it was Babs who still commanded the affection of the Form, Babs who still had the greatest power and the greatest influence over these girls. Faith hated her for that.

"Are you going to tell me?" she fumed.

"No!" Babs straightly retorted.

Faith clenched her hands. There was nothing sweet or innocent about her expression now. With three swift strides she had reached Barbara Redfern. With one quick thrust of her hand she had tugged up the lid of her desk. And then her head jerked forward.

"What's that?" she demanded.

Babs looked up angrily. The "that" which Faith indicated was a camera—a new and very expensive camera indeed, which Babs had borrowed that morning from Dulcia Fairbrother, the school's head girl, in order to take snapshots of out-of-the-way corners of the school which she intended to use as

4 "Rebellion in the Fourth!"

"You—you—you——" she panted. And, for a moment, so great was her indignation and rage that Faith, in fear, stepped back a pace.

"Well, it was your own fault!" she blustered.

"It was your fault, you mean!" Mabs cried—Mabs, Babs' chum, normally a quiet and well-behaved girl, up in arms now. "You had no right to interfere——"

"Yes, I did; I'm captain!" Faith snapped.

"Says you!" sniffed Leila Carroll. Faith's eyes glittered.

"Well, who says I'm not?"

"I say you're not!" Mabs cried passionately. "We all say you're not! We've jolly well told you, haven't we, that we don't regard you as captain—not even if you have got Babs' and Clara's badges pinned on your blouse! Nobody here wants you for captain, Faith Ashton!"

"No?" Lydia Crossendale sneered. "Speak for yourself, Mabel Lynn!"

Actually Lydia and her followers had no affection for Faith, but they were old enemies of Babs & Co., and automatically opposed the chums.

"All right," Mabs stared round. "We will speak for ourselves. Who's standing by Babs?"

"I am!" shouted Clara Trevlyn.

"And me!"

"And me!"

"Oh, Mabs!" Babs cried.

"Bunk! Let's have the show-down!" Leila Carroll cried recklessly. "Come on! Hands up for Babs!"

Babs flushed. But immediately a shower of hands shot into the air.

"And now," countered Lydia Crossendale, "hands up for Faith!"

Lydia's own hand went up immediately, and because Freda Ferriers and Frances Frost and Brenda Fallace belonged to the set Lydia led, their hands went up, too. After a pause Lorna Millerchip's and Eleanor Storke's joined them.

Then, hesitantly, not because they liked Faith, but simply because they regarded the Head's orders as unquestionable law, the Terraine Twins raised their hands in the air. Mabs smiled triumphantly as she counted.

"Eight," she said. "Eight against twenty-five!"

Faith's eyes blazed.

"Look here——" she hooted.

"Rats!" cried Mabs—Mabs amazingly leading the rebel faction now. "Look at that! There's our answer! Who's our captain now! Who's the real captain?"

"Barbara Redfern!" came a shout.

"Look here——" Faith shrieked.

"Rats! Go and eat coke!" cried Mabs. "Babs for captain! Babs for ever! And I say, I've got an idea!" she cried, interrupting Faith's spluttering shout. "Let's form ourselves into a Barbara Redfern Supporters Society."

"Oh goodie! Hurrah!"

"And we'll meet," Mabs cried—"we'll meet after lessons in the Common-room!"

"Meetings," Faith blazed, "are against Miss Venn's rules!"

"Blow the rules, and blow you!" Mabs retorted. "Blow——" And then she subsided. "Cave!" she hissed, as the door opened.

And Miss Bullivant, looking extremely annoyed, came into the room.

Faith quivered. To tell the truth, Faith had suffered something of a shock. She was no fool. She knew that she was by no means a favourite in the Form; but to be defeated so openly, to discover that her old hated rival still retained the majority of her old support, had momentarily shaken her confidence in herself.

"And what," Miss Bullivant rapped, "is the meaning of the noise I heard coming in here?"

Faith bit her lip.

"Oh, Miss Bullivant, I am so sorry——"

"Sorry! You mean you could not keep order!" Miss Bullivant rumbled.

"N-no, not that; but——" Faith shook her head. "Oh dear! I—I don't like reporting girls, Miss Bullivant."

"Two-face!" hissed somebody.

"But—but certain girls have—have been getting rather out of hand—Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn——"

"Snun-sneak!" stammered a voice.

"Oh, really, Miss Bullivant, that wasn't me!" plump Bessie Bunter hastily protested, as Miss Bullivant glared at her. "I never even thought of such a word!"

"Bessie, take twenty lines, you foolish girl!" Miss Bullivant snapped. "Faith, who are the girls who took part in this commotion?"

With a false sigh of regret, Faith gave them. Miss Bullivant nodded grimly.

"Very well," she said. "All the girls named will do an extra task for half an hour after lessons, and the girls whose names appear on the blackboard will take an extra twenty lines. Now, get on with your work!"

Faith sighed again; the Fourth grimaced. But, as it happened, that extra half an hour's detention turned out to their advantage. For as soon as Faith and her somewhat wavering supporters were dismissed, Miss Bullivant once again was called away. It was almost instinctive that she should single out Babs.

"Barbara, you will take charge here," she said. "I will be back as soon as I can."

"And we," Mabs crowed, as soon as the mistress had left, "will now proceed to hold our meeting of supporters!"

"What-ho!"

"And the first item on the agenda," Mabs went on, "is what we are going to do about things. It's no jolly use being a society if we haven't got an object——"

"Well and truly spoken!" Jemima Carstairs nodded.

"We're all sticking up for Babs?" Clara asked.

"What-ho!"

"Right! Then the objective of the society is plain enough. Somehow we've got to get Babs back into the captaincy. Somehow we've got to show that two-faced Faith Ashton up! We've appealed to Miss Venn, but Miss Venn won't listen to reason. Now, girls, we've got to take the law into our own hands!"

"But look here——" Babs began.

"You be quiet!" Clara said severely. "You've got no business in this! Faith's dished you; Faith has dished me. She's tried to dish Mabs, but Mabs was just a spot too clever for her. But if we allow her to go on unchecked, then goodness knows where we'll be in the long run."

"Hear, hear!" supported Mabs.

"And so," Clara went on, her eyes gleaming, "we've got to fight Faith. We've got to get back our rights. And we're going to show that we mean it by refusing to recognise Faith as our captain!"

"Phew!" whistled Leila Carroll.

"No orders from Faith! No doing anything Faith asks us to do. She'll report us—but who cares? We'll get punished, but who cares? One thing," Clara went on, "Miss Venn can't expel the whole lot of us, and we're all in so much disgrace anyway, that a bit more won't hurt us. Is the motion carried, members?"

The cheer which echoed through the Form-room showed that it was.

Henceforward it was war to the knife between the Barbara Redfern Supporters Society and the cunning treachery of the doll-faced Faith Ashton.

So Like Babs!



"BARBARA!"

Babs, strolling with Mabel Lynn in the quadrangle after dinner, started as Dulcia Fairbrother's voice fell upon her ears.

"Oh, y-yes, Dulcia?" she asked.

The head girl smiled. "I just wanted to ask you how you got on with the camera," she said.

"Oh, lull-lovely, thanks!" Babs said, and felt a hot flush suffuse her as she thought of the damaged film winder. "Of course, I—I haven't had the films developed yet——"

Dulcia laughed musically.

"I shouldn't think you had," she said. "But I should like you to get rid of them as soon as you can, Barbara. You see, I've an idea for a photographic supplement for the school magazine, and I want to start taking photographs as soon as I can. Let me have the camera by to-morrow if you can manage it, will you?"

"Y-yes," Babs said, and as Dulcia, with another smile, walked off, she looked at Mabs. "Oh crumbs!" she said expressively. "I say, Mabs, it won't take very long to fit a new winder, will it?"

"About five minutes," Mabs said thoughtfully. "You'll have time to dodge off to the chemist in Friardale after tea and be back easily for call over. You could leave your film at the same time."

Babs nodded. It is to be feared that she was thinking more about her responsibility in the matter of the camera than about the Form that afternoon. She felt she could not really give her mind to the new campaign until she had rid herself of this secret little trouble.

Fortunately, however, no incidents transpired; Faith, for that afternoon, remained with Miss Venn, checking reports, and immediately afternoon lessons were over Babs took the opportunity to slip off. Actually, under the headmistress' strict new rule, Babs had no business to slip off without first obtaining a pass. The only person to whom she could apply for a pass, however, was a mistress or Dulcia herself, and such were Miss Venn's instructions that the most minute details had to be given before the pass was granted.

Anyway, it was safe enough. Not for another two hours would the school be called together again, and in two hours there was time and to spare to complete her mission.

Babs stepped into the misty atmosphere of the quadrangle.

The fog was thickening when she reached the village and bade fair to develop into a real pea-souper.

But Babs was cheered when the chemist announced that he had a spare winder in stock, and with the camera repaired and her own films left for developing and printing, she started back on the homeward way.

It was dark now—mistily dark. With a sensation of damp isolation, Babs hurried on, once or twice slipping on the muddy road. Silence, silence everywhere. Until, about a mile from

the school, she heard a faint cry ahead of her.

"Hallo!" Babs breathed, and halted, calling sharply: "What's the matter?" The cry was repeated.

"Oh, please, please could you give me a hand?"

It was a woman's voice, a rather nervous voice.

Gropingly, Babs slithered ahead. Now before her loomed up a faint glimmer of light which could only be a street lamp. She reached it, and then halted.

For clinging to the lamp, her face twisted with agony, was a youngish-looking woman. One foot was poised in the air, and under one arm was a crumpled parcel.

"Oh, my goodness! What's the matter?" Babs asked. "Can I help?"

The woman looked at her gratefully. "If—if you wouldn't mind," she said.

"Oh dear! I—I've hurt my ankle, I think. I slipped on the road," she explained. "And my parcel— she shook her head. "If—if this is broken, it will break little Joyce's heart," she added. "She did so want a doll."

"Joyce is your daughter?" Babs asked, with quick perception.

A nod was her answer. The woman gulped a little.

"Four years old," she volunteered. "And ill—oh, so ill! I—I wonder if you could help me a little way?" she added. "I live at Ivydene Cottage."

Babs nodded sympathetically. She knew Ivydene Cottage—it had been empty for months now. It lay up a side road somewhere near here, and if she could only find the turning she should have no difficulty in locating it.

Gently she put the woman's arm round her own strong young shoulder, and slowly, at a limping gait, they proceeded.

"You belong to Cliff House, don't you?" the woman asked presently.

"Yes," Babs answered.

"My name's Mrs. Randall," the woman volunteered.

Babs smiled again. She did not give her own name, however, for it was just possible that Mrs. Randall might know someone in Cliff House School, and if she mentioned Barbara Redfern to that one, then the fact that Babs was out without a pass was bound to come out.

Supporting her, she trudged on, with difficulty at times keeping her feet. And presently, through the shroud of fog, a light gleamed in front of them, and Ivydene Cottage was reached. Mrs. Randall opened the door with a key.

"Shush, please!" she said to Babs. "Joyce will be sleeping."

Babs smiled. She followed the woman in. A light was switched on, revealing a surprisingly nicely furnished sitting-room with a glowing fire, protected by a wire screen, roaring up the chimney. In a bed-cot near the fire a child lay asleep.

"That's Joyce," the woman whispered, and sank into a chair.

Babs approached the cot. She looked down. Then something seemed to rise in her throat; some warm, impulsive hand seemed to clutch at her heart. For a moment she caught her breath as she gazed at the exquisitely pretty child who lay there. But the beauty was not all natural. There was a rather hectic spot of colour on each cheek; the heavy-lidded eyes somehow seemed darker than they should have been.

Even as she watched, the child's eyes sleepily opened. They fastened without surprise upon Babs, and a sleepy murmur came from little Joyce's lips.

"Aunt Fairy—" she said vaguely.

"Aunt Fairy!" Mrs. Randall gave the first little laugh Babs had heard.

"That's very appropriate, I'm afraid,"

she added, "that you'll be Aunt Fairy to Joyce from now onwards."

Babs laughed. "Does she always name people on sight?"

"Always." Mrs. Randall nodded. "It's a funny little habit, isn't it? As far as I can remember, she's always done it. And not only people, but things, too. But—oh!" she said, as Joyce's eyes opened again, this time in wide-eyed wakefulness. "You funny dear."

"Mama," Joyce called, "mama, my dolly. Did you bring my dolly, mama?"

The woman looked at the crumpled parcel.

"Oh dear! I—I hope it's not broken," she whispered. "I—I wonder if you would mind undoing it?" she added to Babs.

Babs smilingly nodded. From the bed little Joyce watched her with big, bright eyes as she cut the string and folded back the wrappings, disclosing a cardboard box. In the box was a doll—

"Oh, my goodness!" Babs cried, biting her lip.

"My dolly!" Joyce said anxiously from the bed. "Aunt Fairy, bring me my dolly."

"But, Joyce—" Babs said.

"My dolly!" Joyce repeated. "I want my dolly. P'ease, Aunt Fairy."

A look passed from Babs to Mrs. Randall. From Mrs. Randall came a little cry. It was clear now that Joyce would not be comforted until she had seen her new treasure. But that treasure—how impossible it was to give to the child, with the doll's chin face smashed into pieces, one leg broken.

"Joyce—" Babs faltered.

"Oh, p'ease, Aunt Fairy, my dolly!" Joyce insisted.

"It—it's broken," Babs said.

"P'ease! I want it!"

There was no help for it. Slowly Babs lifted the battered doll from the box. Joyce's gaze fastened eagerly upon it. For one moment she remained stock still, her great blue eyes wide with

horror. Then she burst into a storm of sobs.

"Oh, my dolly—my dolly! Nasty dolly!"

"Oh, Joyce!" gulped Babs.

"Joyce, my dear—" started her mother, and half-rose from her chair, only to fall back again as she unwarily put her weight upon her injured ankle.

"Oh, my goodness!"

"My d-d-dolly!" sobbed Joyce.

Babs bit her lip. It was dreadful somehow to witness the heartbroken disappointment of the child. She went to her, tenderly putting one arm round her slight, heaving little shoulders.

"There, don't cry!" she soothed.

"Aunt Fairy buy you another dolly to-morrow." And in a desperate endeavour to steer the child's mind into some less disturbing channel, she feverishly dragged something from her pocket. "Look at this!" she cried.

"I want my dolly!" Joyce sobbed; but she blinked at the thing Babs held up—a small sketch-pad on which Babs had done some rough drawings; for Babs was fond of art, and sketched and painted extremely well. "Oo!" she stopped to exclaim, and blinked again. "Fairy house," she said.

"Yes, a fairy house," Babs agreed, though actually it was a rough sketch of the tuckshop at Cliff House. "Nice fairy house, isn't it? It—it's the house that Jack built," she added, with a sudden flash of imagination.

"It is a nice house," Joyce considered.

"Where's Jack, though, Aunt Fairy?"

Babs breathed relief. Slyly she pushed the broken doll under the cot.

"Jack's inside—but we'll have him outside, shall we?" she asked brightly, and sat down beside the cot, taking out the pencil she always carried, sketched in a boy. "That's Jack."

"You draw him?" Joyce said wonderingly.

"Yes, rather!" Babs laughed again now, while Mrs. Randall beamed. "And here's his sister Jill," she added, rapidly sketching in another figure.



FAITH peered in some amazement at the scene in the cottage. What was Babs doing in there? she wondered. Well, never mind what the reason was. The fact that Babs was out of bounds was enough to suit Faith's books.

"Look, this is the pail she's going to carry to the well."

"And then fall down and break her c'own!" Joyce asked seriously. "Oh, Aunty Fairy, don't you make p'etty pictures? Do me Humpty-Dumpty!"

It was obvious then that she had completely captured the child's interest. With a laugh Babs tore off the sheet and commenced Humpty-Dumpty on the next page. Joyce's big eyes grew round with admiration as she saw the picture taking shape.

"Oh, lovely!" she exclaimed. "Now Jack 'n the bean'talk, Aunty Fairy. Aren't you clever?" she added admiringly.

Babs laughed again, while Mrs. Randall, her coat off now, hobbled to the fireplace and put on the kettle. In her wonderment and interest for Babs' sketches, the little one had apparently already forgotten her disappointment, and Babs, so gratefully thankful was she to have cured that disappointment, was also forgetting the time.

"Now a Red Injun!" Joyce begged. "Now Cind'rella, Aunty Fairy! Now the funny little dwarfs! Now the fairy p'ince on the white horse! Aunty, draw them in p'etty colours!" Joyce pleaded.

But Babs had no colours. Joyce pouted her disappointment as that information was imparted.

"But to-morrow," Babs promised earnestly—"to-morrow, Joyce, I'll come again, and this time I'll bring my colours and paint you ever such lovely pictures. But—Oh, my hat! Look at the time!" And she leapt up, her eyes alarmedly fastened upon her wrist-watch. "I must fly!" she gasped.

"Oh, Aunty Fairy, don't go!" little Joyce quavered.

"Joyce dear, I—I must go," Babs said. "But I'll come back to-morrow—I promise. To-morrow evening Joyce! And I'll bring ever so many lovely colours, and we'll have ever so much fun! Good-bye now! Good-bye, Mrs. Randall!" she gasped.

And out she flew, in a state bordering on panic. She must have been over an hour in the house, which gave her just ten minutes to get back to Cliff House before gates were closed. Once outside, however, she breathed a little easier. The fog, though far from being completely dispersed, had lifted sufficiently to make haste possible. She could do it, she told herself, but she'd have to hurry. Miss Venn was strict on gates. She raced.

A Trick with Time!



MISS VENN, in her study, frowned over the list of names which Miss Bullivant had put before her. Then she looked up at the demure Faith Ashton, daintily shuffling together the papers on which she had worked that afternoon.

"Hem! Faith—" she began.

"Oh, yes, dear Miss Venn?" Faith simpered.

"I have here," Miss Venn went on, nodding at the sheets, "the daily report from Miss Bullivant. She says that, during her absence this morning, you were put in charge of the Form, and you found it necessary to report no less than twenty-six girls!"

Faith coloured a little.

"I—I didn't want to report them—of course not, dear Miss Venn. But, as captain of the Form, I had my duty to do, hadn't I? The girls were very dreadfully misbehaving, Miss Venn!"

"But why?"

"Well, I don't know." Faith shook

her head. "But Mabel Lynn and Barbara Redfern started the disturbance. You know, Miss Venn, that those girls do not like me at all."

Miss Venn frowned a little. For once, instead of looking sympathetic, she appeared faintly annoyed.

"It is strange," she said. "Faith, you have been captain of the Fourth for three weeks now. I fondly hoped, by deposing Barbara Redfern and making you captain, that I should see a termination of bad reports and bad behaviour in the Fourth Form. I do not, of course, altogether blame you, my dear, but I must point out that the Fourth under your captaincy seems to be much less well behaved than under the captaincy of Barbara Redfern. It is not an entirely satisfactory state of affairs, Faith."

There was mild reprimand in Miss Venn's tone. There was a question in her eyes as she looked at the captain of the Junior School, and Faith flushed.

She did not reply. There was no reply. But her thoughts were bitter—bitter because she realised the truth of Miss Venn's words; bitter because she felt so helpless to remedy matters. Captain she was, in truth, but, as far as power and authority were concerned, she was a captain only in name. It was Babs still who exercised all the influence in the Fourth; Babs who, despite her lack of official authority, was still her greatest stumbling block.

If Faith was to assert her power, if Faith was to justify herself as captain, she could only do so by breaking the power Babs still wielded. At the moment she realised her captaincy was little better than a mockery.

But how to break Babs' power? How? Only one way of doing that. It was obvious now that there was not room in the Fourth Form for both Babs and herself. If Faith was to reign supreme, then Babs must go. And somehow, she resolved there and then, Babs should go!

She finished her task. With a simpering smile at Miss Venn, she went out. Some vague idea of creating trouble for Babs was already in her mind. With the object of furthering that idea, she trailed along to Study No. 4. Outside she paused as the rather worried voice of Mabel Lynn fell upon her ears.

"Oh, my hat! I hope Babs will be back before gates close!" she said distressfully. "I wonder where the dickens she can have got to?"

Faith started.

"Perhaps she's lost her way in the fog, you know," came plump Bessie Bunter's reply.

"But, dash it, she's been gone an hour and a half!" Mabs said. "And she only went to Friardale! Even with the fog, she should have been back half an hour ago. It's funny."

Faith's eyes gleamed then. So Babs was out, was she? And Babs, by all accounts, had gone to Friardale—an offence in itself without a pass endorsed by Miss Venn, the headmistress. Well, good enough! If Babs were asking for trouble, it shouldn't be her fault if she didn't get it! What was the time now?

She gazed at her wrist-watch. A quarter past seven! And gates closed at half-past!

Faith chuckled a little. It would be a score, she thought, to meet Babs as she came in and demand her pass. That would show the cat whether she wielded any influence or not!

Feeling quite bucked, Faith strolled on to the school gates. It was twenty minutes past seven when she reached the gates, and nobody had passed her on her journey down the drive. For a moment she stood in the middle of the

road, looking this way and that along the darkened road, and grinning again when she heard no pattering sound of footsteps. Babs was running it close—jolly close. What a scream if she turned up too late for gates!

"Oh, my hat!" grinned Faith, and then paused, struck with a new idea. Couldn't she turn that possibility into a certainty?

Quickly she turned back to the porter's lodge and peered through the window. Faith, like every other girl at Cliff House, was well acquainted with the crusty old porter's little habits, and a soft chuckle escaped her lips as she saw Piper fast asleep in front of the fire.

"Goodie!" breathed Faith. It was Piper's little habit, she knew, to have a nap before gates—Piper possessing an amazing faculty for waking up just at the right moment in order to commence his evening duties. Fast asleep though the porter was now, in five minutes he would be wide awake.

Holding her breath, Faith softly pushed open the door. With one wary eye on the sleeping porter, she tiptoed across the floor to the clock on the wall.

Holding her breath, Faith pushed on the minute finger until the clock said half-past seven, then tiptoed towards the door again. Outside the window she paused, giving a sudden yell.

And out of his sleep with a jump came Piper, blinking round. Then he looked at the clock.

"My heyl!" And in a moment Piper was a terrific bundle of energy. For the clock registered thirty-one minutes past seven, and—unheard of thing—Piper was a minute late in closing gates!

In blind panic he rushed to his desk, with twittering fingers got out his keys, and without even troubling to put on his hat and coat, rushed to the gates. Faith, hiding behind the wall of the tuckshop, heard the gates clang to, heard the key turn in the lock.

She chuckled, and then, turning, fled back to the school, just as Mabs and Bessie Bunter, looking extremely worried, came to the door of Big Hall.

Faith, with a smirk, brushed past them. Bessie blinked.

"I sus-say, she looks jolly pleased about something," she said.

Mabs nodded. But at the moment she wasn't concerned with Faith. She was thinking of Babs.

Where was Babs?

Babs, two hundred yards along the lane, had dropped from a breathless run into an easy walk. With four minutes to spare, Babs, little guessing the trick that cunning Faith had played, felt she had plenty of time to get into school before gates.

Check for Faith!



"TWO minutes to half past," breathed Babs. "Phew! Thank goodness for that!" And then, halting before the closed gates of Cliff House School, she stared.

"Piper—Piper!" she called.

But Piper, who had retired to his lodge, did not hear.

Babs looked quickly at her watch. No. She was right. It still wanted two minutes to the closing of gates.

"Piper!" she called again.

Piper, if he heard, did not reappear.

Babs desperately tugged at the bell. A minute went by. Then Piper, struggling with his coat, came out. He glared through the bars.

"Which you're late, Miss Redfern."
 "But, Piper, I'm not!" Babs cried.
 "There's still a minute and a half to go."

"Which you're late," Piper repeated firmly. "And it's no use you telling me stories, Miss Redfern. Which it's my duty to report you."

"But, Piper," Babs cried, "you've made a mistake!"

"Which I've made no mistake. I hopes," Piper said, as with a grunt he fitted the key into the lock again, "that I know how to read the time at my time of life. Which you're late, and I reports you. Come in."

It was half-past seven then. Babs, in the school grounds, faced him desperately.

"But, Piper, I tell you, you closed gates too early."

Piper sniffed.
 "C'm here," he said, and taking her by the arm, led her to the entrance of his lodge. "See that clock? That clock, Miss Redfern, hasn't been a half-minute wrong in five years. Now tell me if I made a mistake."

Rather dazedly Babs blinked. She looked at her own watch again. Was it possible she had made a mistake? But if Piper had confidence in his clock so had Babs in her watch. One of them had made a mistake; but, in any case, she was booked for trouble now. Piper had authority on his side; Piper would report her. Babs would be charged with the double offence of being out of school bounds without a pass and turning up late for gates.

Rather apprehensively she made her way back into the school. Mabs and Bessie, on the steps, met her as she came in.

"Babs, where the dickens have you been?" Mabs cried.

"I—I met someone," Babs said.
 "Mabs, what time do you make it?"

"Twenty-seven minutes to," Mabs replied.

"And so," Babs said, "do I. Piper's clock was wrong then—it must have been wrong." And while Mabs stared at her, she explained. "Piper must have shut the gates four or five minutes before they were due to be shut!"

"What's this?" asked a voice, and Faith Ashton came on to the scene. "Hallo, Barbara, I haven't seen you all evening! What were you saying about gates?"

"Nothing," Babs retorted. "Mabs, come on!"

They trotted off to the study. Faith smiled as she watched them go. Once they were out of sight she chuckled again, and stepping out into the quadrangle made her way to Piper's lodge. Piper turned as she pushed the door open.

"Piper, have you taken your report to Miss Venn?" Faith asked.

"No, Miss Ashton; not yet," Piper said. "But I've got it all written out."

"Then," Faith frowned, "take it along right away. I think Miss Venn is waiting for it."

She retired. Piper grunted. He picked up the report and ambled off with it. No sooner had he gone than Faith once again nipped into the lodge, quickly turning the hands of the clock back to the right time.

"And now, Miss Barbara Redfern, you can protest until you're black in the face that Piper made a mistake!" she chuckled.

Cunning Faith. Sly Faith. How well she prepared her snares. How little she left to chance!

Barbara, meantime, to prepare her story for Miss Venn, was comparing her own watch with the school clocks, and

was relieved to find her watch true almost to the second. But that availed nothing when she stood before Miss Venn.

Miss Venn, however, was in a milder mood than usual. Perhaps her experience at Cliff House had already softened some of the harshness with which she had set about the introduction of her new routines on her arrival. For once she listened to Barbara's explanation. She even phoned through to Piper to check the time by his own clock. Then she looked at Babs' watch, and her face hardened.

"Barbara, you are telling falsehoods," she said, to that girl's bewilderment. "If Piper's clock was fast by your watch when you came in, how is it that it is not fast now? You do not surely suggest that Piper has been playing tricks with his clock?"

"No, Miss Venn; but—"
 "Very well. That is enough, I think. Apart from going out without a pass," Miss Venn went on sharply, "you were late for locking up. Apart from those two offences, you have told falsehoods. You are confined to school bounds for two days, Barbara. Now go!"

Babs went, a little dismayed and sick at heart, but with an angry feeling that she had somehow been tricked. Not until she spoke to Mabs about it in Study No. 4 later, however, did she get a clue. That was when, reciting what had happened, Mabs uttered a sudden exclamation:

"My hat! Faith—"

"Eh?"

"Listen!" Mabs looked excited. "Babs, there's only one explanation for it—only one. You say Piper's clock was fast. Supposing that somebody had deliberately put that clock on?"

Babs stared.

"But where does Faith come in?"

"Faith," Mabs said, with a sort of sudden fury, "came rushing into the school just about the time Piper must have been closing those gates. We've got no proof, of course; but knowing Faith's little wiles is proof enough. She looked jolly pleased with herself at the time."

Babs compressed her lips. It sounded like her cousin.

"But what," she asked, "is her game? I should have thought, having bagged my captaincy, she'd finished with me. Is this some new stunt, Mabs?"

Mabs' eyes narrowed a little. There was significance in the question. Not for nothing did Faith step out of her way to spite any one girl.

"Watch out," Mabs counselled. "Come to think of it, Babs, it would suit her to see you pushed out, wouldn't it? Perhaps that's what she's aiming for, so that she can increase her power in the Form. But it's no use going for her," she added, as Babs made an angry movement towards the door. "The best thing, if you ask me, is to let her think you don't suspect yet. But this time," Mabs added grimly, "we'll beat sweet-natured Faith at her own game. But, by the way, Babs, what are you going to do about little Joyce?"

Babs bit her lips.

"I'll have to go."

"But you're detained."

"I know. But, Mabs, I couldn't break my promise to the kiddie—I just couldn't! Anyway," she added, "it's not a class-room detention, and if you'll only cover me, it'll be easy enough to slip out. Meantime," she added, "I must go and give Dulcia back her camera."

Babs found Dulcia in her study.

"Thanks, Barbara, that's fine!" she said. "I hope your pictures come out well. Now you can do something for me, if you will."

"Pleasure, Dulcia!" Babs laughed.

"I've been thinking of my photographic supplement," Dulcia went on. "Barbara, you remember the pyramid which the Fourth did at the last gym display under Lady Pat? I wonder if you could get the girls together again, and do it for me in the gym after lessons to-morrow morning? I feel that should go in, you know."

"Dulcia, leave it to me," Babs said joyfully.

And off she scampered. The idea was a good one. But it would require rehearsing. It was such a long time since the Fourth had done the pyramid.

Now who the dickens had been in that team?

Clara, of course; sturdy Brenda Fallace and herself. Yes, that had been the first line of the pyramid. Leila Carroll and Diana Royston-Clarke had been the second row, and, of course, little Marcelle Biquet, the French junior, had been on the top. Right! Best thing to do was to warn them now, and dash them off to the music-room without delay for a practice.

Babs found the rest of the team in the Common-room, together with a score of other Fourth Formers. She was eagerly telling them of the new venture, when the door opened and Faith Ashton came in. It was the first public appearance which Faith had made since the class-room scene, and an immediate battery of hostile glares fastened upon her.

"How do—everyone?" Faith said carelessly; but her eyes darted at once to the little group surrounding Babs.

"Anything I can do?"

"Yes," Clara Trevlyn said.

"Oh, what, Clara dear?"

"Get out!"

There was a subdued titter. Faith looked injured.

"Oh, Clara, that's very unkind!" she protested. "What's the talk about?"

"Something," Leila Carroll retorted, "which doesn't concern you, I guess."

"But—"

"Oh, seat!"

Faith sighed a little in that misunderstood way she was so fond of affecting. With a forlorn shake of her flaxen head, she went out. No sooner had she gone than Babs nodded to her team.

"Come on, then! Now's the time! Music-room for rehearsal—everybody! Jimmy"—to the monocled Jemima Carstairs—"will you keep cave?"

"Yours to command!" Jemima chirruped. "Forward, the light brigade!"

And the "light brigade," otherwise Babs, Diana Royston-Clarke, Leila Carroll, Clara Trevlyn, Brenda Fallace, little Marcelle Biquet, and Jemima Carstairs trotted off.

They reached the music-room. Outside in the corridor Jemima was placed on guard, while the six gymnasts went in. Jemima nodded. She closed the door after the last, and then, just in case of accidents, locked the door and slipped the key into her pocket. From behind the door soon came the sound of laughter, and a heavy bump.

"What-ho! Pyramid collapsing—what?" Jemima murmured. "Oh! Ah! Hem!" she added, as there was a step farther along the corridor, and Faith appeared. "Top of the evening, Faith!"

Faith looked at her suspiciously. "What are you doing here?" "Well, come to that," Jemima retorted urbanely, "what art thou doing here? This isn't out of bounds, is it? And dash it—well, I mean to say, a girl must park herself somewhere! Hum!" Jemima considered, as there came another burst of laughter from the music-room, this time followed by a real old crash, which seemed to indicate that the complete pyramid had collapsed. "Seems to be a lot of falling masonry about—what?"

Faith looked at her suspiciously. "What's going on in the music-room? I heard Barbara Redfern laugh then."

"Well, any orders in this strict old school that Barbara Redfern shouldn't laugh?" Jemima asked, in surprise.

Faith threw her a glare. She went to the door, turning the handle.

"Jemima, this door is locked."

"Tut! You do astonish me!" Jemima murmured.

And, with a bright nod, she walked away.

Faith breathed heavily. Babs & Co. were in the music-room. No offence in that, of course. Babs & Co. were fully entitled to make use of the music-room. But it was an offence to lock oneself in the music-room.

Faith's eyes glimmered. All right. She did not call out or knock again, but trotted off at once to Miss Venn's study. From the end of the corridor, Jemima watched her. As soon as her back was turned, Jemima nipped back to the music-room door, turned the key in the lock, and looked in. Babs, in the act of forming the pyramid for the last time, swivelled round.

"Lo, Jimmy!" "Just warning you!" Jemima chuckled. "Believe that Faith is bringing Miss Venn on the scene. Be careful, children!"

She winked. Babs & Co. chuckled. Jemima then trotted off.

Sure enough, three minutes later, Faith did come hurrying down the passage, with a somewhat exasperated-looking Miss Venn at her heels. She knocked on the door.

"Come in!" sang out Babs' voice sweetly.

The headmistress turned the handle. The door opened. She looked with a frown at Faith.

"I thought you said, Faith, that these girls had locked themselves in?"

"Well, the—the door was certainly lull-locked!" Faith stammered. "They must have locked themselves in."

"Well, the key's on the outside," Miss Venn pointed out. "Really, Faith, how can you expect me to credit that?"

Well— She looked in. And she blinked. For certainly there was nothing at all in the meek attitude of Babs & Co. to warrant even the faintest reprimand. "Did any of you girls lock this door?" she asked.

"No, Miss Venn!" they all chorused.

"You are sure?"

"Yes, Miss Venn. On our word of honour," Babs said.

Miss Venn paused. She looked at the crimsoning Faith again. Miss Venn still had it in her mind that the Fourth was the unruliest set of girls in the school, but she had been long enough at Cliff House now to respect the Fourth's word of honour. Her lips compressed a little.

"Faith," she said, "has complained that you have deliberately locked her out."

"Oh, Miss Venn!" Leila Carroll said, looking shocked.

"I believe, Faith, you have made a mistake." Miss Venn's lips pursed a

little. "I am very displeased by these unnecessary reports. You should have tried the door more carefully. Well, here is the room! Now you may join Barbara and her friends."

And she rustled off, leaving Faith glaring at the chuckling six.

"And what," she demanded, "were you doing in here?"

"Speaking to us?" Clara inquired pleasantly.

"I am."

"Then would you mind," Clara asked sweetly, "not? You see," she added seriously, "we don't particularly want to speak to you! I think, kiddlets, that is all we can do now," she added thoughtfully. "Too bad, Faith, darling, we couldn't let you in before! Coming, kids?"

And Clara with a nod, led the way out. To Faith's utter and quivering fury, her owl-faced chums followed her. For once the laugh was against Faith Ashton, and for once Faith lost that readiness to fly off to Miss Venn to report them. But she'd jolly well find out what the game was—oh, yes, she would! And if it was anything she could use against Barbara Redfern—

With a bad-tempered slam of the door, Faith went out.

Faith Insists!



"ALL HERE?" Barbara Redfern asked, with a smile.

It was after lessons the following morning in Cliff House's big and well-equipped gymnasium.

All were there, and all dressed in the neat drill costumes they had used in the great display of last year. And all were beaming, bright and merry.

They had cause to be. For it seemed at last as if the Fourth were getting the upper hand of Faith Ashton. Faith, indeed, had suffered a pretty thin time since yesterday. In the Common Room the previous night everybody, just to show Faith how low she stood in the Form's graces, had gathered round Babs.

In the dormitory afterwards it had been all to Babs that remarks had been addressed. This morning, when Faith had ordered the Form into breakfast, not one of them had moved until the bell went. Meantime, Faith, fearing some new plot on the part of Babs & Co., and rather reluctant, in the face of the suddenly changed attitude of Miss Venn, to report every little misdemeanour, had been snooping and spying around.

"Right!" said Babs. "Then let's make the pyramid just once before Dulcia comes in. Clara—Brenda—we'll stand here, where the light from the window falls on us. Right-ho! Now, hold steady! Leila—Diana—up, you get. Now wait till we're balanced."

The chums grinned. Having rehearsed the formation of the pyramid, it was no hard job to reconstruct it again now. Nimbly, Diana and Leila climbed on to the stalwart shoulders of Babs, Brenda, and Clara.

When they had found their balance, little Marcelle Biquet climbed on top of them, slowly raising her hands above her head. It was an effective and very skillful little tableau.

"Fine!" Babs applauded. "Right-ho!" Now— And then she paused, letting out a quick hiss of warning as the door opened and Faith Ashton came in. "Right; break up!" she said.

Faith blinked.

"I say, what's this—?"

Nobody answered. "What's this?" Faith repeated. For answer the pyramid broke up, and just at that moment Dulcia, a bright smile on her face, her camera in her hands, stepped into the gym.

"Hallo, Barbara! All ready?" she asked. "Hallo, Faith, what are you doing here?"

Faith scowled. "I've just come in to find out what these girls are up to," she said. "As captain of the Fourth—"

"Thank you," Dulcia eyed her coldly. "You needn't go into that. These girls are here by my orders—to pose for a photograph I am printing in the Cliff House magazine. Barbara, will you arrange the pyramid?" she said.

Faith's eyes gleamed jealously then. So that was the idea, was it? But she, Faith Ashton, the captain of the Form, had not even been asked to take part!

"Well, bother, I ought to be in it!" she poutingly protested. "As captain of the Fourth—"

"Faith, will you please be quiet!" Dulcia said severely. "This is my concern. Now, girls—yes, that's fine!" she added, as the pyramid reformed; and while Faith stood aside in scowling, jealous silence, the Head Girl fastened her camera on its tripod. "Now, steady, please!" she said. "Ready?" And snick! "Thanks! I think that will be gorgeous! Eh, what did you say, Faith?"

"I said," Faith repeated bitterly, "that you've got no right to take a photograph like that and leave the captain of the Form out of it!"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Well?" broke in Babs, and turned and winked hastily at her followers. "But, I say, Dulcia, there is something in that, you know!" she added thoughtfully. "After all, when I was captain of the Form, I was in it, wasn't I? You're sure, Faith, you want to be in it?"

"Of course I'm sure!"

Dulcia looked at Babs. "She seemed to read something in her face."

"Well, anyway, we can have another one," Babs said. "If the first doesn't come out, you'll want another, Dulcia. What about taking one with Faith on top? And what about taking it in this position—with the whole of the gym in the background? Shall we, Dulcia?"

Dulcia did her best to repress a smile.

"Well, if Faith insists—" she said.

"I do insist!" Faith cried hotly.

"Right-ho! Then let's form up again," Babs said. "Marcelle, you stand out, will you? Faith, you be on top."

Had Faith been less insistent upon her rights, had she been less jealous and less eager for the limelight, she might have suspected something then. As it was, she gazed inwardly to think she had scored another victory over her foes, and very willingly—if shakily—mounted to the topmost position when Babs reformed the pyramid.

The alteration in the position brought Faith directly under one of the trapeze bars which hung down from the roof; so much so indeed that when she gingerly stretched her arms upwards her fingers touched the cold chromium steel of the bar. She blinked.

"I say, what about this trapeze?"

"Never mind!" Babs chuckled.

"Just grab that for a moment to get your balance, will you?" And as Faith unsuspectingly grabbed it: "Right!" Babs said. "Now, quick march, pyramid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"SILENCE!" yelled Faith Ashton. But the game went on as enthusiastically as before, Leila Carroll livening it up by "accidentally" bumping into Faith. The chums were making it clear that they didn't intend to obey their treacherous captain.

"But look here——" yelled Faith.

But the pyramid was not looking there. While Faith clung frantically to the trapeze, the pyramid stepped slowly forward, leaving the limelight-seeking Faith furiously and frantically kicking in mid-air. Faith screeched.

"Look here, you cats, let me down!"

But Babs & Co. did not let her down. They broke up, and without even looking round, marched through the door, while Faith, suspended some ten feet above the ground, howled again.

"Let me down!"

The door closed. Faith, still kicking frantically, gritted her teeth as she heard, from the passage outside, voices upraised in a burst of laughter:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Faith's Master Stroke!



AND it was "Ha, ha, ha!" which echoed loudly through the Fourth Form when Faith's latest adventure became known. Faith had been rescued by Dulcia

Fairbrother with the strict injunction, in future, to mind her own business. For the rest of that day Faith was greeted with titters wherever she went.

Faith fumed. Faith seethed.

If she felt she had been losing her grip on the Form before, she felt it hopelessly slipping now.

The galling part of it, too, from Faith's point of view, was that she could not report the incident to Miss Venn. Miss Venn very plainly had intimated that Faith, as captain, should exercise better control over the Form, and wished to be bothered by no more complaints of what she described as a frivolous nature.

Faith, thinking it over, gritted her teeth. She was becoming desperate then. More and more was it becoming obvious that Babs was the popular one; Babs the one the Form looked up to; Babs the menace to her own success and her own authority!

Then suddenly Fortune, which had seemed for the first time to have turned its back on Faith Ashton, turned and smiled again.

It was that evening, after tea, a bright, starry evening, in vivid contrast to the evening of yesterday. Babs, having arranged with Mabs to cover up her absence, had crept off towards the gap in Lanes Field, and was just in the act of scrambling through that gap when Faith, moodily returning from the tuckshop, saw her in a sudden flood of moonlight. And in a moment Faith recognised her.

"Babs!" she muttered

She tensed. So Babs was off again—Babs, who was supposed to be gated! Her first impulse was to report this to Miss Venn, but a second, more considered, reflection caused her to change her mind.

No, her job, obviously, was to find out where Barbara Redfern was going, what she was doing, sneaking out like this in the early evening. It was not just sufficient now to keep on getting Babs detained. She must strike a blow of a more serious nature.

And, unknown to Babs, she trailed her to Ivydene Cottage. She watched as she knocked; she watched as a limping woman came to the door and admitted Babs. Who was the woman?

Curiosity as well as spite gripped Faith. She crept through the gate and made her way to the window. Poised for instant flight, she raised her head above the level of the sill. And then she frowned at the sight which met her gaze.

There was Babs, seated on the edge of a child's cot-bed, painting on a pad, and there was a bright-faced, bright-eyed child staring in speechless adoration at what she did.

She did not notice as her eyes swept round the room that Babs for a moment took her eyes off her work and looked up, and was not aware in that moment that Babs had spotted her! But she breathed low and deeply.

So this was Babs' game, was it? Babs was helping that woman. Babs was amusing the child. Why?

Faith scowled. Well, she was going to find that out. Babs had no business to be out of bounds at this hour; Babs had no business to be at this cottage. She'd jolly well wait for Babs. She'd jolly well make her tell what she was doing!

Faith returned to the lane and waited, musing upon her schemes.

A chuckle broke from her lips.

"Oh, yes, Miss Babs, just wait!" she softly breathed. "This time I'll land you—for keeps!"

But she wouldn't! For, unknown to Faith, Babs at that moment was creeping out of Ivydene Cottage by the back way, and while Faith still waited, seriously rehearsing her line of attack, Babs was hurrying in through the gates of Cliff House school. And this time Babs, taking a leaf out of Faith Ashton's book, gathered the lines she had written and went to Miss Venn's study with them—Miss Venn frowned.

"Thank you, Barbara; put them on the desk," she said.

Barbara put them there, and left, grinning a little. If Faith now reported her as being out Faith, it seemed, would have a hard job to prove it.

Meantime, Faith, in the lane, was growing impatient. Where was Babs?

She looked at her watch, and then jumped.

Oh, goodness! It was twenty-past seven!

Faith broke out into cold perspiration then. Mentally perfecting her plans she had lost count of the time. Babs was still there—Babs also apparently having lost count of the time.

That would mean that gates would be closed against her again—and another black mark against her in Miss Venn's bad books. Her own scheme could wait till afterwards.

Meantime, she must fly.

And fly Faith did—but alas for Faith! She flew too hastily, planking one foot well and truly into an unseen pool and skating three yards on her back before regaining her feet. Rather shaking that, and rather painful, too, because, in falling, Faith slightly twisted a muscle in her leg and it was only at a limping gait that her next five minutes' progress was possible.

The pain had hardly worn off when, to her dismay, she reached Cliff House gates to find Piper just in the act of retiring to his lodge after closing them. Piper glared.

"Which you're out of bounds, and I'll report you!" he said.

"Dash you!" Faith snapped. "Has Miss Redfern come in yet?"

10 "Rebellion in the Fourth!"

"Which I ain't seen Miss Redfern," Piper sniffed. "But which it is my dooty to report you. Come in."

Faith went in, her temper in shreds. Anyway, Babs hadn't come back.

She hurried up the drive. She went into Big Hall, and then she stopped and blinked. For a group of girls were gathered round the notice-board, and among those girls was Barbara Redfern.

"You!" cried Faith.

Babs smiled.

"Hallo, Faith, what's the matter?"

"When did you get back?" Faith hooted.

"Back?" Babs asked puzzledly.

"You've been out?" Faith accused.

"I?" Babs looked convincingly surprised. "Oh, Faith!"

"You've been out!" Faith cried. "You tricked me, you cat! All right; wait till Miss Venn knows!"

"But," Babs said sweetly, "Miss Venn does know. Miss Venn knows that I'm in, you know, because it was half an hour ago that I went and handed her my lines. I do think you're behaving very queerly, Faith. What's the matter?"

Faith glared.

"You mean to tell me you haven't been to Ivydene Cottage?"

Babs stared in pretended astonishment.

"Ivydene Cottage? Why on earth should I go there? Sure you feel all right, Faith?" she added concernedly.

Babs chuckled at the expression on the other's face. Clara Trevlyn, one of the party, grinned. Bitter the look which Faith threw at her cousin—doubly bitter because Faith was wondering whether it would be wise to report Babs after all.

Miss Venn was very strict on her officers setting an example—and what sort of an example was it to be reported for being out of bounds after gates had been locked? She could say, of course, that she had been trailing Barbara Redfern, but supposing that Babs kept up this pose in front of Miss Venn and allowed Miss Venn to think that Faith was making another frivolous charge.

Five minutes later Miss Venn sent for her. She was not looking pleased as she tapped Piper's report which lay upon her desk.

"I should like an explanation of your absence, Faith," she said.

Faith bit her lip. Then she had an idea.

"I—I'm sorry, Miss Venn, but— but— Oh, I know I did wrong," she said, "but—but I couldn't do anything else."

"Where have you been?"

"To—to a place called Ivydene Cottage, Miss Venn."

The headmistress looked at her sharply.

"There—there is a woman there—and—a child." Faith shook her head. "The woman is in very poor circumstances, I think, though she hasn't said anything to me about that, of course. And the child, Miss Venn—such a sweet mite—you'd simply adore her if you could see her! And I'm sure she's ill—dreadfully ill."

Miss Venn stared.

"And—and so," Faith gasped, "I—I thought it my duty to help a little, Miss Venn. I—I was drawing pictures for the child, and—and I rather forgot the time. I'm sorry. I know it's against the rules—"

But at that moment the hard features of Miss Venn softened.

"I see." She stood up. "In—in the circumstances," she said, "we'll say nothing more about it—but please, Faith, do see that it doesn't happen

again. You are welcome to go to Ivydene Cottage whenever you wish, but please come and ask permission first." And she smiled and shook her head. "You know, Faith, you really are a dear girl."

Faith smirked. Well, that was that. It seemed that, by altering her plans and taking the credit for what Barbara Redfern had done, she had achieved a shrewd stroke. Such a whole-hearted return to Miss Venn's favour gave her renewed confidence, renewed faith in herself.

Babs is Warned!



FAITH went down to the Common-room presently, to find a considerable amount of noise coming from that apartment. Buoyed by the knowledge that she was once again in Miss Venn's good books, she barged her way in.

A rather exhilarating game of "Blind Man's Buff" was in progress, and the room was alive with laughing, dodging girls. Faith frowned. Well, she'd jolly well let them see who was captain.

"Silence!" she cried.

Nobody took any notice.

"Silence!" she cried again. "Barbara Redfern!"

"Whoops! Nearly caught me!" Babs laughed, just dodging the arms of Bessie Bunter, who was the blind man.

"Look here—" yelled Faith.

"Say, move out of it!" Leila Carroll cried breathlessly, and by accident barged into her. "Hallo, what's that I trod on?"

"That," Faith hooted, "was my toe!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

But nobody was looking there. If Faith had been utterly invisible she could not have commanded less attention. She shrieked, but was not heeded. And finally, losing her temper altogether, she strode into the middle of the crowd.

"Stop it!" she yelled.

Was it accident, or was it design? But just at the same moment, Rosa Rodworth, pretending to duck under the groping arms of blindfolded Bessie, straightened up with a jerk right under Faith's nose. She caught Faith in the chest.

With a splutter and a yell Faith went back, tripping over a foot and falling in a sitting position against a desk. The desk shook. A bottle of red ink, carelessly left on its surface, overturned. And suddenly Faith gave a furious splutter. A deluge of ink, shooting out of the bottle, cascaded over her head.

"Oh, my hat! Look here—" she gasped.

The Fourth did look there then, and looking, went off into a simultaneous roar of mirth. Faith, sitting there, furious, with red ink streaming down her face, certainly did look comic.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Faith, darling, do stop blushing!" giggled June Merrett. "You make us feel quite embarrassed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In fierce fury Faith sprang to her feet.

"You cats!" she flashed out. "Barbara Redfern, it's your fault! You're egging them on to do this! You—you—you—"

And then, as another yell of laughter swept through the room, she bolted. Choking with fury, she rushed up the stairs and almost hurled herself into Miss Venn's room. Miss Venn, dressed for going out, was just in the act of putting on her gloves. She jumped.

"Who—what—" she cried. "Girl, what is the matter? Have you cut yourself?"

"It—it's me, Miss Venn," Faith said, calming down and beginning to sob now.

"Good gracious! What have you done to yourself?"

"I've done nothing—nothing!" Faith panted. "It was the girls, Miss Venn—led by Barbara Redfern! They were making such a noise in the Common-room that I tried to stop them. Then they pushed me over, and somebody emptied this bottle of ink over me! But Barbara Redfern was the ring-leader!" she hooted. "Barbara—"

"Very well, Faith; I will deal with Barbara." Miss Venn looked stern. "Go and clean yourself, child. My goodness! I wonder what this school is coming to! Boker," she added, when, in answer to her ring, the page-boy appeared, "send Miss Redfern to me."

Two minutes later Babs was shown in. Miss Venn eyed her grimly.

"Barbara, I demand an explanation of your treatment of Faith."

"My treatment?" Babs blinked. "Miss Venn—"

"The treatment," Miss Venn ground out, "of the whole Form! Whether you instigated the assault upon her or not, Barbara, does not matter. You are the ring-leader. Faith is my appointed captain. I am aware, because you once held that position, that you have no love for Faith; but I tell you now, once and for all, that there shall be a stop to this horseplay and hooliganism where she is concerned."

"But, Miss Venn—"

"Silence! I am talking." Miss Venn was her old self once more. "I have not called you here to argue, Barbara; I have called you here to give you a warning. I am aware that there is rebellion in the Fourth Form; I am aware, Barbara, that you are its ring-leader. Well"—and Miss Venn's eyes glittered—"it has got to stop. You hear? And if it does not stop, Barbara, loth as I shall be to perform such an unpleasant duty, I shall expel you. Now go!"

"But—but, please, Miss Venn—"

"Go!" Miss Venn thundered. And Babs went—to break the news of that warning to her angry Form-mates.

In dormitory that night Faith again endeavoured to assert her authority by calling for order when lights were out and the usual chatter commenced. All she received for her pains, however, was a swipe from a pillow thrown by some unseen hand.

Faith clenched her hands. All right, let them wait! Her turn would come.

It did come. It came, surprisingly enough, the very morning following. Almost as soon as she was down from dormitory she received an urgent summons from Miss Venn.

And, going to the headmistress' study, she was surprised to discover Miss Venn in the act of dressing for going out. Miss Venn also had a small week-end case with her. She looked rather pale and frightfully worried Faith thought; and when she spoke, it was with an underlying trace of agitation.

"Faith, I am going away—for a little while," she said. "I may be back to-night—or not until to-morrow. I do not know."

"Oh dear! I—I hope it is nothing serious," Faith simpered.

"It is a purely personal matter, Faith," said Miss Venn. "During my absence Miss Bullivant will, of course, be in charge. I expect you to support her. I also expect you, Faith, to relieve

her of the worry of looking after the Fourth Form out of class."

"Oh, yes, Miss Venn!"

"And if," Miss Venn went on, "they still persist in this reckless rebellion I shall deal with them upon my return—and particularly with Barbara Redfern. Faith, you will make a note of every girl who misbehaves, with a description of her offence. A note to this effect, so that there shall be no mistake, will be pinned on the board this morning. Now," she added, "I must go."

"Good-bye, Miss Venn, and—and good luck!" Faith said.

Miss Venn nodded. She went off. Faith gleefully looked after her. To reign supreme and unchallenged for a whole day—perhaps more! Faith hugged herself.

"And now, Miss Barbara Redfern, won't I make you sit up!" she vowed. "Whoops! Wait till those cats read the notice on the board. We'll see then if they question my authority!"

"Those cats" in due course did read the notice, but they did not sit up. To Faith's furious chagrin and disgust, they seemed more amused than awed.

And at midday break, when Faith strolled importantly into the Common-room, her notepad in hand, she had a taste of the Fourth's reaction.

Very strict, very frowning was Faith; very heavily severe, and most obviously enjoying the responsibility of her position. She frowned at Mabs, who was talking to Babs.

"Mabel Lynn!" she rapped.

"Eh? You talking to me?" Mabs asked.

"I am! And jolly well be careful!" Faith threatened. "You read the notice on the board, didn't you? You know that I've orders to report you if you don't behave. I want you, Mabel Lynn, to clear out Attic No. 2 this afternoon."

"You want me?" gasped Mabs.

"Those are my orders," stated Faith.

"Yeah! And who are you?" sniffed Leila Carroll.

"I am captain of the Form."

"Say, don't kid yourself!" retorted the American junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leila, I shall report you!" Faith said furiously, and wrote her name down on the pad. "And I shall report you, too, Mabel Lynn."

"Fire ahead!" Mabs said scornfully.

"And, while you're about it, report me!" Clara Trevlyn cried. "Tell Miss Venn I called you a two-faced, sneaking little rotter! Go on, write that down!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And tell her," cried Janet Jordan, "that I called you a slimy snake-in-the-grass! Go on, write that down!"

"And tell her," Diana Royston-Clarke whooped, "that I chucked this at you!" And smack! came a rubber. And "Wow!" went up a yell from Faith as it smote her on the cheek.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And report me, begorrah, for aiming this chalk!" Bridget O'Toole roared.

"Yes, rather! And me for chucking the blackboard at you!"

"Whoops! And you can report me for stunning you with the poker!" gurgled June Merrett.

"Look here—" shrieked Faith.

But everybody was laughing then; the room was in an uproar. Nobody really meant their threats, of course, but they wanted Faith to realise that in voicing her threats she was raising a hornets' nest—and Faith was realising that.

A duster sailed out of the blue, flapping on her features. In the moment-

ary blindness that followed somebody snatched her pad out of her hand. Somebody else gave her a push towards the door; and when Faith came to herself she found herself in the corridor, furious and quivering, minus her notepad, and with the door locked upon her.

"You cats!" shrieked Faith. "You awful hooligans! Open this rotten door!"

"Faith!" cried a shocked voice, and Miss Bullivant came rustling down the corridor. "Really! For one who is supposed to set an example you are behaving rather abominably! What is the matter?"

"They—they chucked me out!" Faith panted. "Barbara Redfern and her set—"

"Chucked? Tut!" Miss Bullivant, disliking slang, frowned. But she rapped on the door, and it was opened immediately by Babs herself. "Barbara, what is this Faith tells me about you?"

"Me?" Babs asked.

"Faith declares you have thrown her out of the Common-room. She blames you, Barbara."

"Then," Mabs said quickly, "she's telling fibs, Miss Bullivant. Babs is not to blame. The whole Form is to blame."

"Indeed! And I should like to know," Miss Bullivant said frigidly, "how long the Form has had authority to take the law into its own hands."

"Miss Bullivant, we're not taking the law into our own hands," said Babs quickly. "But we just don't like Faith Ashton, and we just don't regard her as captain. I'm sorry. We don't mean any disrespect to you or to Miss Venn, but we've vowed not to obey Faith, and we won't obey Faith."

"She ought to be expelled for talking like that!" cried Faith.

"Faith, please be silent!" Miss Bullivant bit her lip. But as she gazed over the earnest faces in front of her, as she read the determination in those faces, she paused. "Very well," she said quietly. "I am sorry, but you give me no alternative but to report this to Miss Venn. Faith, I really think you had better come with me," she added.

"But Miss Venn told me—" howled Faith.

"I really think," Miss Bullivant retorted stiffly, "you had better come with me, just the same. I will be answerable for all my own orders to Miss Venn."

Faith scowled. She flashed a look of hate at the grinning Fourth Form. But she went off, and in Miss Bullivant's study savagely listened to a mild lecture on how to use authority for the maintenance of discipline.

Later, strolling in the quadrangle just before dinner, she heard a timid voice. Round swung Faith.

A woman, her face earnest, entreating, stood there—a woman whose face was vaguely familiar. It took Faith a second to place it, and then she gave a start.

For it was the occupier of Ivydene Cottage.

"What do you want?" Faith asked roughly.

"I—I want a girl. I—I don't know her name." The woman shook her head. "A girl of about your age, miss—but with dark hair. The only thing I can tell you about her, I'm afraid, is that she does exquisite drawings."

Faith scowled jealously. She would have known immediately, even if she had not already been aware of Babs' friendship with Mrs. Randall, to whom the woman referred.

"And who," she asked, "are you?"

"My name's Randall—Mrs. Randall.

I live at Ivydene Cottage. Please—" the woman said, and then broke off with a little cry. "Why, there is the girl!" she cried. "Miss-miss—"

And excitedly she waved her arms as Babs, accompanied by Mabs, came down the school steps.

Faith scowled again. Babs, hearing the shout, hurried up.

"Why, Mrs. Randall!" she cried.

"Oh, miss, I—I had to come to see you!" Mrs. Randall faltered. "Something dreadful has happened—"

"Joyce?" Babs questioned quickly.

"Yes. She—she—" The woman gave a choked sob. "Oh dear! I—I think she's—"

"And I think," Faith broke in roughly, "you'd better get out of here! It's like your cheek," she added, with a glower at Babs, "to bring your common friends into the school grounds! Who gave you permission to come in, anyway?"

"Faith, you awful thing—" indignantly began Babs.

"I am sorry," Mrs. Randall said quietly, and looked queerly at Faith. "I never thought of asking permission. I see you are captain," she added.

Faith blinked.

"Well, what's that to do with you?"

"Nothing." The woman shook her head. "But perhaps—perhaps—" She gazed at Babs. "Oh, please, could we talk somewhere—out in the lane?" she asked.

Furious the look Babs darted towards Faith. But she was more concerned then to hear the news of little Joyce. She gave the woman her arm and gently led her down to the gates, while Faith watched, a sneering grin upon her face.

Once in the lane, however, Mrs. Randall faced Babs desperately.

"Miss-miss—" she faltered. "I—I've got to ask you. Joyce—she's very ill. The local doctor is at a loss. We are having a London specialist—"

"Oh my hat!" breathed Babs.

"Joyce is constantly asking for you. The doctor says, if she sees you, it may help her."

Babs thought swiftly.

"Will it do if I come along to-night?"

"Yes."

"Very well," Babs drew a deep breath. "I—I'll get away," she promised. "Expect me somewhere about ten."

"Oh, thank you. You—you won't fail!"

"No, I won't fail." And Babs' lips compressed grimly as she looked back at the figure of Faith. "I promise you, whatever happens, I won't fail."

Thanks to Babs, But—



FOR the very first time since Miss Venn had instituted the new schedule of times,

Barbara Redfern, that night, had cause to be grateful that Miss Venn

had decided that the whole school should go to bed an hour earlier.

It was half-past nine—an hour after the Fourth Form's bed-time—when she sat up in the darkness of the dormitory.

She had made her plans. Mabs, just in case of accidents, would keep watch while she was away, and in the unlikely event of anything untoward happening, would try to cover up her absence.

She rose now, gazing towards Mabs' bed. Her whisper, low breathed, came to her chum's ears.

(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 charming way so typical of her.

ISN'T it dreadful having to go out late at night in thin party clothes when you're a really chilly person?

Your Patricia was invited to a party the other evening—at my rather-rich friend Esme's house. So, as you can imagine, I had to look my very best.

Yet I didn't want to arrive frozen. Father drove me over in the family car—and if there are any cars with more draughts in than ours, I'd like to meet them. (Incidentally, father will never close his driving window. He likes it open so that he can make all the correct signals—even on a black, black night.)

"You must wrap up well, Pat dear," mother said to me.

I agreed. So finally your Patricia set off looking like a cross between Dracula and a rag bag!

I wore my best evening dress and silver shoes, and over this my velvet evening cape.

So far, so good—and smart.

● Well Wrapped Up

Then mother insisted I should wear her fur coat over my cape, so this was slipped over my shoulders.

Next, since my throat is inclined to be a tender part of me, I wore a vivid yellow "pixie hood" and scarf combined. (Like the one I told you how to make, you remember.)

Finally, there were my shoes to be considered. The precious things would get wet in my leap from the car to Esme's front door.

So over these went my brown snow boots!

If you can imagine the picture I made, you'll realise how comic I looked.

But at least I was warm.

I must say I hate "morals" to storyettes myself. But there is just a tiny one to this, if you'll please forgive it.

That is, do keep warm and dry on every possible occasion this weather—even if it does mean you don't look quite as smart as you had meant to. This keeping warm is the only way of preventing chills and colds which can make you—and the whole family, not to mention your friends—feel so miserable.

And if you should be unlucky enough to get a cold, remember that one of the finest cures is to drink lashings of water or lemon or orange juice—hot for preference.

● Extra Warm

While we're in this snug-making mood, here's a very attractive and cosy waistcoat

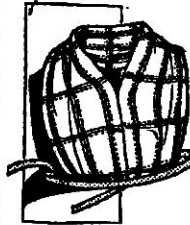
you could make yourself to protect chest-boxes on windy days. (Or you could make it for a small brother or sister who spends a lot of time out of doors.)

It is made from an old scarf, or from a strip of woolly material about thirty-six inches long and seven inches wide.

You must fold it in half and join two of the sides with overstitching for part of the way, as shown in the picture.

Then sew the ends of the scarf on to a strip of material long enough to tie around the waist.

Just the thing to wear under your winter coat!



● Quite Brainy

I wonder if you know this fireside game. We played it over Christmas with great success.

You give each player a pencil and paper and then tell them to write down the following:

- THE KING
- A BOY'S NAME
- A ROYAL EMBLEM
- NORTH AND SOUTH
- A LEATHERWORKER
- FOUR ARMS OF THE LAW

Total 1 6 10½

Now, under the £ s. d. heading the players must give each item on the list a value in cash, so that the amounts add up to the total given—£1 6s. 10½d.

The players will possibly puzzle over this a long time. If they look completely blank, then you may give them one clue. Say to them:

"A favourite boy's name is Bob, isn't it?"

If that doesn't make them realise that a bob (shilling) goes to the Boy's Name item—well, it jolly well should.

After that it is not too difficult.

The King is a sovereign (£1). The Boy's Name is Bob (1s.). A Royal Emblem is a crown (5s.). North and South are two far things (two farthings or a ha'penny—not so easy, that one.) A Leatherworker is a tanner (6d.). Four Arms of the Law are four "coppers" (4d.).

All those, added up, make £1 6s. 10½d., you see.

You may remember that some time ago

I gave you two sentences which read the same backwards as forwards. "Able was I ere I saw Elba," was one of them, credited to Napoleon.

Now a very nice reader has sent me two more sentences, which I must pass on to you.

"Egad, a base tone denotes a bad age," is one, which I think is very good, even though each word is not complete in itself when reading backwards, as it is in Napoleon's.

The other is in Latin—which you clever ones will like, I'm sure.

"Roma ibi tibi sedes ibi tibi amor," it runs, and makes the same sentence backwards as well.

Now, of course, you'll want to know what that means. So with memories of school Latin, I make it, "Rome is your home and Rome is your love," though that is translating rather freely, for "sedes" can mean so many things.

It was Joan Lomas who sent me these (though not the translation), so thank you, Joan. I'm sure my readers will love to add them to their collection of backwards and forwards sentences.

● Walnut Novelties

Are you very expert at cracking walnuts so that the shells don't break?

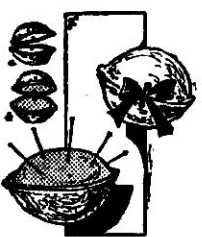
If so, you simply must try making this little pincushion and thimble case to match.

The pincushion is made from one half of a shell. Get a small circle of silk material, gather it around the edge, and then stuff it with bran, sawdust, or frayings of cotton. Then glue this into the shell.

The thimble case to match is made from a complete shell. You bore a hole at the edges of each half (as in Diagram A), then tie them together as in Diagram B. Fasten the halves together with a piece of ribbon and tie with a bow. (Or the cord from a Christmas card would look very sweet.)

As a finishing touch, paint the inside of the shell any pretty colour you like—and the outside, too, if you like. I can just imagine a gold outside with a pink inside, can't you?

Your friend,



Patricia

FRAGRANT AS A FLOWER

One of the secrets of a schoolgirl's charm is fragrant daintiness. And here Patricia tells you how to guard this in the winter time.



DON'T you think it is a lovely compliment to be called "flower-like"?

It conveys so much more, somehow, than a pretty mouth, or sunshiny hair.

It suggests the freshness and sweetness of early-morning dew—and the fragrance of spring flowers.

And, best of all, it is something that we can all acquire.

The first secret of this fragrance is—cleanliness.

There is nothing like a warm bath every single morning for starting the day right. It gives you such a wonderful feeling of freshness and daintiness.

But, of course, this isn't possible for all of you, I know—for kitchen boilers can be stubborn, and hot water isn't ways "on tap." Instead, you have to be content with an early-morning wash.

But this should be a tonic, too, livening you up for the day.

Avoid that "lick and a promise" at all costs, and make your first splash in the morning a good "wash down"; slipping your vest (or whatever you wear up top) right off your shoulders, so that you don't soil your undies with the soapy face-flannel.

Rinse off all the soap carefully and then splash your face with cold water to bring the colour to your cheeks (and to close the pores so that blackheads are kept at bay).

MOUTH FRESHNESS

Sweet-smelling breath is also essential to that fragrance we admire so much. If yours isn't all it should be, perhaps that is because you require a little "dose." Or it may be bad teeth, so do resolve to have these examined regularly.

They should be scrubbed every single morning after your "wash-down" or your bath, of course, using a dry, stiff toothbrush on which is your favourite powder or paste.

If you rinse your mouth out after this in warm water to which you've added a

pinch of salt, it will feel all fresh and new again—another item on your programme of fragrance.

WHITE TIPS

Clean fingernails sound much too obvious to be mentioned, I know—yet they cannot be ignored, for they do matter so much to a schoolgirl's appearance.

Scrubbing them does cleanse them, of course. But, oh, how quickly they get grubby again.

This can be remedied very inconspicuously, if you carry just one orange stick around with you in your school purse or satchel. Press this stick under your nails when you see specks appear, and they will always be immaculate.

Another good idea is to dig your nails into the cake of soap each time you wash your hands. The nails will keep clean much longer then, you'll find.

COOL AND FRESH

Hot and sticky hands and feet are generally thought to be summer problems only. Yet with extra-warm clothing, thicker stockings and gloves, they can be winter worries as well.

If your feet do cause you some frowns even in winter time, then frequent foot-baths are for you.

To wash them thoroughly in hot water to which some bath eau-de-Cologne (that's the cheap variety) or methylated spirits has been added, is wonderfully bracing.

A dusting over with talcum powder, boracic powder, or ordinary powdered starch when they are dry is another little treat for your feet that will prevent "stickiness" and tiredness.

Your hands can be dusted over with these things, too, if they get hot too easily. And this treatment is particularly valuable when you know you have a hard day in front of you at school. For there is nothing like a test paper or an exam to make some girls' hands get so clammy that they can hardly hold a pen in comfort.

SILKY HAIR

Hair also can spoil a schoolgirl's fragrance if she isn't careful. It is so easy, especially this weather, to put off washing it for an extra few days or a week, because it's too cold to trot up to the bathroom.

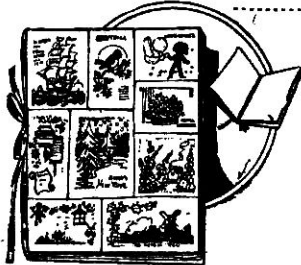
So if you do have to put off your hair-washing for any good reason at all, you must make up for it in some other way.

Give your hair a good sprinkling with a bay rum tonic, and brush this well into the roots. Then rub it hard with a dry towel all over. The worst of the grease will be removed this way, you'll find, and your hair will look almost as soft and silky as if it were newly shampooed.

Instead of bay rum tonic, you could use powdered starch. This is marvellous for absorbing grease. The only thing about this is that you have to brush and brush and brush afterwards to remove the powder—otherwise, your hair will look greyish. But it is this brushing which is the dry-cleaning treatment, so, of course, it can't be skimmed over.

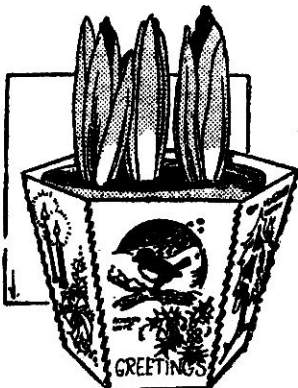
As a final touch of sweetness to your hair, you should sprinkle it again with just a little bath eau-de-Cologne. Brush it in, and then press your waves into place.

Your hair will look sweet after this, and also have just that extra hint of fragrance which is so much envied and admired.



MADE FROM CHRISTMAS CARDS

—are this attractive blotter and useful bowl for standing bulbs in.



HERE are two "treasures" that you can make, to use up those beautiful cards you had at Christmas.

The first is a very sensible blotter, which would be very useful in the bureau at home, I'm quite sure.

You will require a sheet of cardboard measuring about 12 inches by 18. Fold down the centre, so that it makes two covers, and then glue pretty paper over the inside and over the back cover. (Perhaps you've saved some fancy wrappings from your parcels that would do this attractively.)

Now on the front, glue the gayest of your cards, arranging them so that one fits snugly against the other, and cutting and trimming them if necessary.

Cut sheets of blotting paper to go inside the blotter, holding this in position with a piece of cord or gold or silver ribbon.

A CHEERY FLOWERPOT

The other idea should please you who have some bulbs you have actually grown

yourself in a flower pot. For you can make this decorative case to go around it.

Cut six pictures from your Christmas cards, making each piece slightly smaller at the bottom than at the top. Then join them together with big over-stitching in a bright colour, as shown in the picture.

The pot will then stand in this, and very cheerful it will look, too!

FOR THE KIDDIES

Even after making one or both of these novelties, quite possibly you will still have some cards over, and you could out them up to amuse the small members of the family.

Just snip around the picture on the front, so that it has no background left. Then cut a straight piece from the back of the card, and glue this to your picture to make a support that will enable it to stand up on the mantelpiece.

The cords and bows and tassels from the cards can be saved for many purposes. They make belts for dollies' dresses, and bows for very tiny shoes.

(Continued from page 11)

"Mabs, I'm going."
"O.K.!" Mabs said. "Good luck, Babs! Be careful, though. I'll keep an eye on things."

Babs nodded. She rose, dressing in the darkness. In the far corner of the room, however, Faith Ashton heard that whispered conversation, and Faith's eyes gleamed. So Babs was going out! Babs was breaking bounds! Where was she going? For what purpose?

Faith meant to find out.
Slowly she also rose. When Babs tipped past her bed she slipped out after her.

She watched as Babs made towards the head of the stairs. Then, just as she was about to follow, she paused.

The whir of a telephone-bell, ringing insistently, came to her ears.

The bell, as Faith could tell immediately, came from Miss Venn's study.

"Well, bother it!" thought Faith. She stepped out after Barbara Red-

indeed, thank you!" Faith gushed. "The only trouble I have had is with Barbara Redfern. Oh, by the way, Miss Venn, please do keep a look-out for dear Barbara on your way home, will you?"

"What?"
"Because, Miss Venn, Barbara is out of bounds, you know," Faith said, with a forced ring of regret in her voice.

There came an exclamation from the other end of the wire.

"You mean she has broken out of school—at this time of night?"

"I'm sorry to say so, but yes, Miss Venn."

"Then," Miss Venn said grimly, "this is the end. I warned Barbara before I went away what would happen. I shall expel her."

"Oh, but, Miss Venn——" Faith said dramatically, and grinned as there came a metallic click from the other end of the line.

"And that, I think, cooks your goose, Miss Barbara Redfern!" she murmured, hanging up the receiver. "But just to make everything sure I think I'll go and

"Try again," he urged. "Try again. Everything depends upon rallying her now. If she does not rally——"

"Joyce!" Babs whispered. "Joyce—dear Joyce—it's Auntie Fairy—Auntie Fairy with some new pictures. Joyce, look!" she cried, and then held her breath as the child's eyes flickered ever so little, as her pale lips twitched. "Joyce!" she cried.

A second's most poignant silence. The only sound in the room was Mrs. Randall's sobbing.

With brimming eyes, Babs gazed down at the little one. Would she succeed? Could she rally her from this sleep which the specialist said would be her last, unless she was roused? As Joyce sank back, Babs caught her arm, at the same time rustling the sketch-book she had brought with her.

"Joyce, look—look—H u m p t y - D u m p t y!" she said. "Joyce, tell Auntie Fairy what you want her to draw for you!"

Another silence; but the words, half-broken though they were, must have penetrated to the child's brain. She twisted a little, and a sigh came from the pallid lips. Then suddenly, with the utmost surprise, the big blue eyes opened. They fastened upon Babs.

"Auntie Fairy!" Joyce whispered. "Auntie Fairy—oh, Auntie Fairy, I love you! I have had such a dream, Auntie Fairy! Cuddle me!"

"Joyce!" Babs cried, and, her voice quivering, slipped her arm round the little one. "Joyce—Joyce!"

"Auntie Fairy," Joyce said, "cuddle me! Auntie Fairy, Joyce happy now. Don't leave me, Auntie Fairy—p'case!"

The specialist smiled; the doctor turned his head away. Mrs. Randall looked at the specialist, and then broke down and violently sobbed, as, with a smile, he nodded. The crisis was past.

"Dear—dear Auntie Fairy!" Joyce whispered, and clung to Babs.

Babs gulped, hardly believing now that the miracle had happened. Joyce sighed again, contentedly snuggled against her, and then slowly fell into the first real sleep she had enjoyed for hours and hours. The specialist nodded.

"Excuse me a moment." He came over and made a rapid examination of the little patient. "That is what I wanted to happen," he said. "That is what I hoped for. She's asleep now—a real sleep. When she wakes you'll find, Mrs. Randall, she is much better. And you, my dear"—he gazed at Babs—"you, I do not know how we shall ever thank you."

"I—I did nothing!" Babs stuttered.

"You saved her life," the specialist said. "If it had not been for you, I am thinking, there would have been a different tale to tell. The child's mind was just full of you when she fell into the coma. It required your voice, and yours only, to rouse her from it. Can you see her again to-morrow?"

"Yes," Babs said wearily.

"And oh, miss"—Mrs. Randall stood in front of her—"miss, I—I can never, never thank you!" she cried.

Babs smiled. She put her arm round the woman, and for a few moments Mrs. Randall sobbed on her shoulder. Then, with a look at little Joyce, now sleeping peacefully, she turned.

"I—I must get back," she mumbled.

She went out, glad for what she had done, glad to feel the fresh, cold air of the night again. With her thoughts full of little Joyce, and still with some anxiety at her heart, she made her way back to school. Thank goodness that was over. Thank goodness all was well now. If little Joyce had died——

She shuddered.

ONE GOOD RESOLUTION It is not too late to make

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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.



fern. But again the whir of the bell distracted her attention. Obviously nobody was in Miss Venn's study. Should she answer the bell? For a moment Faith fought between her ingrained curiosity and her hatred of Babs. Well, never mind Babs. Babs was out in any case. She turned her steps towards the study.

Reaching it, she switched on the light, and, picking up the receiver, jumped as Miss Venn's voice came to her ears.

"Why, Miss Venn!" Faith cried. "This is Faith. I heard the bell ringing from the dormitory."

"Thank you, Faith! All the same, you should not have come out of your dormitory. Still, never mind. Will you tell Miss Bullivant that I shall be back somewhere about midnight, and should like my housekeeper to prepare me a cold supper?"

"Yes, Miss Venn."

"How have you been getting on, Faith?"

"Oh, very well, Miss Venn—very well

lock you out. Meantime, Faith, old girl, keep an eye on Mabel Lynn."

With a smile she crept downstairs. The lobby window, which Babs had left unlocked against her return, she securely fastened.

Returning to the dormitory, she slid in softly at the door. Then, with hardly a rustle, she crept into bed. Mabs, dozing at the far end of the room, heard that rustle, but dismissed it only as the action of some girl turning in her sleep.

"JOYCE! JOYCE, it's Auntie Fairy! Look at me!"

Babs spoke in barely a whisper.

Mrs. Randall sobbed softly. The local doctor looked with anxious eyes at the deathly white face of the child in the cot. The great specialist, who had just arrived from London, pursed his lips as first he glanced at his watch, and then at the face of the hardly breathing child. He nodded to Babs as, worried-eyed, she looked at him.

And then, reaching the lobby window, she started back. For the window, when she pushed, would not budge. It was latched on the inside. Someone had locked her out!

Miss Venn's Bombshell!



TAP! Mabel Lynn, half-dozing, jerked in full consciousness with a start. What was that?

Tap, tap! Mabs sat up. She looked at her wrist-watch. Five to twelve. Goodness, Babs was not back yet! The taps again—this time from the direction of the window. Somebody outside was throwing gravel.

In a flash the bedclothes had gone back, and Mabs, standing up, peered through the window.

Then she jumped. "Babs!" she muttered. Babs it was—standing below in a patch of moonlight, apparently locked out.

Out of bed Mabs jumped, never realising that from the farthest corner of the room, the eyes of Faith Ashton were watching her. Quickly she hurried out of the room, and at the end of the passage flung up the window there. She stared down.

"Babs—" "Oh, Mabs, thank goodness! I say, somebody has locked the lobby window! Can you let me in through the servants' entrance?"

"I'll be down," Mabs promised. "Wait for me at the servants' door."

She drew down the window. Again she did not see Faith Ashton, who had come to the dormitory door, who was now speeding back along the corridor in the direction of the servants' quarters.

Breathlessly Mabs hurried, and, negotiating the stairs, found herself in the dark, winding passage which connected the servants' rooms with the rest of the school.

Past Mrs. Carey's room she hurried in pitch darkness. She had nearly reached the end of the corridor when a hissing voice came from behind her.

Mabs halted, turned. And then—what happened? Mabs did not see her assailant in the darkness. But somebody, reaching out of that darkness, hurled herself at her. She received one fierce push in the back, and reeled round. Something crashed into her back, and Mabs felt the edge of a table.

Too late, realising what had happened, she rushed forward. Her desperately groping fingers encountered smooth woodwork. Somebody—and it was not hard to guess who—had pushed her into this room and closed the door.

And Faith, scurrying back along the corridor, gave a chuckle, paused for a moment to peer through the window, and then gave a delighted cry.

For, coming up the drive, was Miss Venn's car.

Babs, waiting at the servants' entrance, would not see that—until it was too late. What hope now for Barbara Redfern—caught red-handed?

Babs, meantime, guessing nothing of what had happened, was standing anxiously by the servants' door. Mabs was a long time, she reflected—but with her utter confidence in Mabs, she did not worry. No doubt Mabs was having some difficulty in getting out of the dormitory, she reflected—some girl awake, perhaps—some mistress snooping round.

Two—three minutes went by. Then, at last, she breathed relievedly.

Ah! Footsteps coming down the passage inside.

She braced herself. A key turned in the lock. The door opened. Babs chuckled.

"Mabs—good old M—" she began, and then froze.

For it was not Mabs who had opened the door. It was—

Miss Venn herself! And behind Miss Venn, Babs had a glimpse of the sneering, triumphant face of Faith Ashton.

"And so," Miss Venn rumbled, "this is how you behave when my back is turned, Barbara Redfern! This is how you heed my warning! I gave you your chance—and this is what you make of it! Go, miss—go to your dormitory at once! And to-morrow," she added, in grinding tones, "to-morrow, at Assembly, I shall expel you!"

you're expelled this morning, then the whole Form's going to kick up a fuss!" Babs looked up wearily.

"But, Clara, what's the good?" "We mean it!" Clara retorted, and the others nodded.

Assembly bell rang. Bracing themselves, the chums went. Babs, with Mabs almost in tears, tramped off, too.

Miss Venn was already there. Her eyes fixed immediately upon Babs, and, to Babs' astonishment, she called her out at once.

"Barbara, this way! Faith, I want you, too!"

Babs moved forward. Faith, a lofty smile on her face, darted her a dagger-like glance of triumph as she tripped forward to obey. Miss Venn's eyes flickered from one to the other, and the school, grimly prepared for the worst, became gloweringly silent.

"Barbara Redfern, you know why you are here?"



"AND so," Miss Venn rumbled, "this is how you behave when my back is turned, Barbara Redfern! I gave you your chance—and this is what you make of it!" Faith smiled triumphantly. At last she had succeeded! This was the end for Babs!

"BABS, it wasn't my fault! I tried to get to you, but that cat Faith was—"

Babs nodded miserably as Mabs spoke in Study No. 4.

It was the following morning. It was, in fact, five minutes before Assembly.

The glum-faced group which surrounded Barbara Redfern in her study looked blankly at each other.

For everybody knew now—and the school was ringing with the news. Barbara Redfern, caught by Miss Venn last night out of bounds, was going to be expelled.

And the whole school knew, thanks to a passionate outburst by Mabs, that Faith Ashton was the cause of the expulsion.

"And so," Clara Trevlyn said, between her teeth, "that was her game, Babs. She wanted to get you out of it. There was only one way of getting you out of it—that was to see you kicked out. Well, we're not standing for it. None of us are standing for it. If

Babs bit her lip.

"Yes," she said, in a low voice.

"You know," Miss Venn went on, "that you are guilty of an offence punishable by expulsion. Last night, at midnight, you were out of bounds. You were reported by Faith here as being out of bounds. Where had you been?"

Babs was silent.

"Barbara—"

"I—I am sorry, Miss Venn, but I prefer not to say!" Babs blurted.

"Probably went to a dance!" Faith sneered.

"Faith, silence, please!" Miss Venn spoke sharply. "Barbara, why do you refuse to say?"

"Well, be-cause I don't want to say!" Barbara said.

"Very well. Perhaps," Miss Venn said, "we can get at the truth in some other way. Faith, I believe you told me a few days ago that you were helping a woman and her child at Ivydene Cottage?"

Faith blinked.

"Y-yes, Miss Venn."

"What?" cried Mabs. "Miss Venn, that isn't true! It was—"

"Mabel, please be silent! I am conducting this investigation! Is this true, Faith?"

"Yes," Faith said boldly.

"Thank you!" Miss Venn nodded. "I asked you that fact because it is rather peculiar that when this woman—Mrs. Randall—came here yesterday, you turned her out of the school!"

Faith flushed.

"Well, I—I had my duty to do."

"But you insist that you have been helping her all the time?"

"Yes, of course," Faith said, with a "dare-to-deny it" look at Babs.

But Mabs could stand it no longer then. She jumped up.

"Miss Venn, it's a fib!" she cried. "She jolly well—"

"Silence!" Miss Venn cried. "Silence! Well," she added, when a tense silence had been secured, "there is only one way—one very easy way—of finding out the truth—because, you see," she added, with a smile, "Mrs. Randall, who has been helped, is my sister! It was I who went to London to fetch a specialist for her child!"

Sensation then! While the school muttered, Faith paled, and Babs stared in amazement, Miss Venn went on calmly:

"Mrs. Randall has told me all about this wonderful girl who has risked punishment and expulsion to go to the help of her child—who saved that child's life! I think," Miss Venn cried, "we will have Mrs. Randall's own identification of her helper!" She turned. "Celia!" she called.

The curtains parted, and from behind them came—Mrs. Randall!

And, without waiting for Miss Venn to speak, she lifted a hand and pointed at Barbara.

Faith went white. For a moment she almost seemed to sag.

And then, as the significance of that little scene burst upon the school, a whole-hearted cheer rolled through the Hall. Girls were cheering:

"Babs, Babs, Babs!" Miss Venn was talking, but Miss Venn for once was not even heard. "Babs, Babs, Babs!"

"It's a lie—a lie!" Faith shrieked wildly. "I—I—"

"Silence!" Miss Venn turned contemptuously upon Faith. "Faith," she said, "I am glad I have found you out! You have joked with me—you have deceived me! Clearly enough I see that now. Thanks to my sister—until yesterday I did not know she was in the district—I have been enlightened. Through you, Faith, I deprived Barbara of her captaincy, and Clara of hers. I am not too proud to admit in front of the school that I have been foolish!"

"Hurrah! Three cheers for Miss Venn!" shrieked Babs.

"But," Miss Venn added, while Faith stared, white-faced, "thank goodness, it is not too late to rectify my mistakes! Faith, stand forward!"

Faith, tottering at the knees, stepped forward. Miss Venn stretched out a hand and ripped off her badges.

"That, Faith, is the end of your captaincy!" she said sternly. "If I were in a less benevolent mood, I should expel you! I am sorry that I ever listened to you or was deceived by your advice! My association with this school has shown me that, after all, I was wrong personally to elect a captain!"

"To-night," Miss Venn announced—"to-night, girls, you will return to the old routine, and from now henceforward will elect your own captain. Meantime"

—she paused—"meantime, Barbara Redfern will officiate!"

What a cheer at that! Then:

"And, Barbara," Miss Venn added gently, "I am excusing you morning lessons to go back to Ivydene Cottage with my sister and nurse little Joyce again. I hope, my dear, on your return that you will have lunch with me."

Babs flushed. Babs glowed. Faith, looking stunned, went back to her place. What cheers then! What a roar! And what jubilation at Cliff House! And that night what a slamming victory for Barbara Redfern when the result of the election became known! The rules of Cliff House elections were so framed that the ex-captain must enter her name in the list against the new candidate. All Junior School voted, and the result of the election was:

One hundred and sixteen votes for Barbara Redfern; one for Faith Ashton.

What a howl then!

And what a larger howl when Faith, having discovered that Brenda Fallace was the one who had voted for her, went into the Common-room, and, with some idea of making a gracious gesture, said to Brenda:

"Oh, Brenda dear, thank you for your vote!"

Brenda glared at her.

"Don't talk to me!" she said. "I made a mistake! I put a cross against the wrong name on my ballot paper!"

And Faith, unable to endure the humiliation of the shriek of laughter which followed, went out of the room. She went to Miss Venn, who looked at her steeily.

"Miss Venn, I—I've come to ask you if—if I can go back into the Lower Fifth?" she stammered. "I—I'm sorry for what I've done, but I just can't stop in the Fourth!"

Miss Venn's face was like flint.

"In the Fourth," she said, "you had every opportunity to make yourself the most popular girl! You failed, Faith! Beaten now by your own cunning and hypocrisy, you seek to evade the just retribution for your misdeeds! It was your own suggestion, was it not, that you should come down to the Fourth?"

"Y-yes. But—"

"In order," Miss Venn said sharply, "that, as its oldest girl, you could induce me to take away Barbara Redfern's captaincy and give you her place!"

"Oh, Miss Venn—"

"Well," Miss Venn continued quietly, "having chosen to be in the Fourth, you can stop in, Faith! Now, please go, and send Barbara Redfern to me, so that I may congratulate her on the result of the election!"

And Faith, beaten, staggered out.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

WONDERFUL MOMENTS OF SPEED AND EXCITEMENT FOR THE CLIFF HOUSE CHUMS

WITH BABS & Co to HELP HIM!



Thrills—Drama—Mystery come next week, when Barbara Redfern & Co. set out to help Dick Fairbrother, the motor-racing brother of their adored Head Girl, win the greatest race of his life. There's Jack Trevlyn, brother of Tomboy Clara, of the Fourth Form, to back Dick up and help the chums—but it's mostly Babs & Co. who come to the rescue, for Dick and Jack are dogged by unscrupulous enemies. It's a breathlessly exciting time for them all. Can they win through for the sake of Dulciana and Jack?

Miss HILDA RICHARDS will tell you what happens in her own spell-binding way next Saturday, so order your SCHOOLGIRL in advance.

Fun and Excitement Galore—and Mystery as well—if you go—

ON TOUR with YIN SU



FOR NEW READERS.

MAY JOLIPHANT, a cheery English girl, and her less daring chum, DAPHNE YARDLEY have the task of conducting around England a quaint, high-spirited, but most likeable Chinese girl, YIN SU. Yin Su's governess is apparently too ill to accompany the girls. They visit an expensive hotel for a meal, not realising a certain woman wearing an emerald ring has followed them—until May discovers her bag has been stolen. The manager demands payment for their meal. The chums are nonplussed. But a page-boy brings May's bag, which the woman has just given him. Not daring to hope the money is still there, May feverishly opens the bag!

(Now read on.)

Most Puzzling!

TREMBLING with excitement, May Joliphant opened her handbag. The mystery woman with the emerald ring had returned it as mysteriously as she had stolen it, but May could hardly believe that it still contained the five pounds.

There was hardly a sound in the manager's room as May wrestled with the small, difficult fastener. Daphne Yardley was on tiptoe, pale and anxious; the manager was grim, frowning; while Yin Su alone was expressionless and calm.

"The money won't be there," said Daphne, her lips quivering.

But now the bag was open. May looked inside and took out the small notecase, opening it in the one movement.

With something like a squeal of excitement she flung the notecase wide in the air for all to see—and the notes were there!

"Hurrah!" she cheered.
 "They—they're all there?" quavered Daphne, round-eyed.

May, nodding eagerly, counted out five pound-notes, and the manager's grimness went in a flash; for from being girls who had obtained an expensive meal under false pretences, they had once again become rich young customers.

Yin Su's pretty face was radiant for a moment with a smile.

"Ingenious thief failed to find money," she said; "or perhaps sad plight of three charming girls melted heart of stone."

"Goodness knows what!" said May, with a little laugh. "It's the queerest thing I've ever heard for someone to steal a bag, and then return it."

It was so puzzling, in fact, that Daphne was not quite convinced that the notes were real until the smiling manager assured her that they were and gave them change from three of the pound notes.

"I am sorry I was so angry," he said apologetically, "but, under the circumstances—"

"It matters not," replied Yin Su. "This sordid and ill-fitting hotel would arouse the wild rage of a dove."

It was so handsomely and soothingly said that the manager hardly noticed what a left-handed compliment it was. But, in any case, May's sharp exclamation would have distracted his thoughts from it.

Quite excitedly she was pulling out a slip of paper.

Yin Su and her chums went to the circus to enjoy themselves—but they walked into a thrilling mystery!

"My letters have been taken!" she cried. "And this message left—"

"Letters? You don't mean she took your bag just to steal your letters?" asked Daphne in astonishment.

"Well, they've gone," said May; "all except the slip of paper on which I wrote down Yin Su's name, and the time and place we were meeting her. And listen!"

May then read out the message she had found in her handbag.

"Dear Miss Yin Su,—As your name was in the bag, I suppose it is yours. I must apologise for taking it in error. The mistake was really the cloak-room attendant's, as I deposited my heavy coat there and a parcel or two. The bag was returned with the parcels, and I did not notice the error

until I had left the hotel. As your name was inside, I returned it direct by the page, wrapping it up, as there was a large sum of money in it."

May looked up.
 "It's signed, Amelia Smith," she said.

The manager stiffened, and his angry look returned.

"A mistake of that stupid cloak-room girl!" he exclaimed angrily. "She shall be dismissed for this."

"Dismissed? Oh, no!" protested May. "It was a mistake—at least, if what the woman says is true. But I'm sure I had my bag in the dining-room. Aren't you, Daph?"

"Yes, quite sure. Besides, the woman bumped into your chair," said Daphne. "You remember that, Yin Su?"

The Chinese girl bowed her head.
 "Clumsy and incompetent woman did indeed collide with chair," she said; "and deft hand doubtless plucked bag as eagle might unsuspecting lambkin."

But the manager crossed to the door. "I'm afraid you are on the wrong

track," he said. "I can't believe the woman would steal the bag and return it with the money intact. The theft would have been pointless. It is far more likely that you deposited it at the cloak-room."

Then, once again apologising for his anger, and assuring them of the very best attention should they visit the hotel again, he held wide the door.

But May was troubled. She was absolutely certain that she had taken the bag into the dining-room, and that the cloak-room girl could not be to blame.

—BY—
ELIZABETH CHESTER

True, they had put their coats there and Daphne's umbrellas, but not bags. "Let's ask the girl," she decided. "I don't want her to be blamed for something she hasn't done."

The manager hurried away, and the three of them stood discussing it for a moment, trying to remember some detail that would settle once and for all exactly what May had done with the bag; and the more they thought about it the more certain they were that she had taken it into the dining-room.

"And the missing letters—they weren't important," said May. "One from dad, giving his address abroad—Golly!" she added. "How ever can I write to him now?"

"And you put mother's letter there, too," said Daphne, in dismay; "or, rather, their holiday address. Don't say that has gone, too, May!"

But it had. Every letter had gone—even a letter from a schoolfriend—and some bus tickets; though the notes, a few coins, keys, and a small necklet remained.

"But why—why?" asked Daphne, bewildered. "Who can want our letters? Can't they have dropped out?"

"Dropped out—yes, that's the explanation, I suppose," frowned May. "I can't see why anyone should want

to steal them; there was nothing in those letters that would have meant a thing to anyone else—"

She broke off then on hearing a voice, and all three were silent. The manager was talking angrily, and his words made clear that he was speaking to the cloak-room girl.

"You've had one chance; and I said the next would be your last. You gave a handbag containing five pounds to the wrong person, and I might have been sued. Pack your things and go directly the relief comes. You're fired!"

May drew up, a flash of indignation in her eyes; for this was the most unjust dismissal of an employee that could possibly be imagined. Whatever might have been written in the note, they at least were convinced that the woman with the emerald ring was to blame, not this unfortunate girl.

And May did not mean to let the girl suffer for something she had not done.

"You hear that?" she exclaimed.

"The roaring tiger bites as he listeth," murmured Yin Su sadly. "And woe to whomsoever shall cross his path."

"I'm going to cross his path—he's not going to sack that girl!" said May determinedly, and strode down the corridor to the cloak-room.

A Very Good Idea!

WHEN May and the others reached the cloak-room, the manager had gone, and the girl, a handkerchief to her eyes, was in tears.

As she saw them she turned away to dab her eyes; and then, wheeling, mastered her emotion sufficiently to be able to speak.

"Are you the young ladies who say I gave your handbag to the wrong lady?" she asked.

"No, no. We don't think that," said May quickly. "It's all wrong. We jolly well know that that woman took it. You didn't give it to her."

The girl's eyes brightened.

"Oh, miss! Could you tell the manager that?" she asked eagerly. "He's just sacked me. I swear it wasn't my fault."

"Of course it wasn't!" said May indignantly. "What a shame!"

"We'll speak to him," promised Daphne.

"The roar of a tiger is in his voice," said Yin Su. "But sweet music charms even the tiger."

"Sweet music?" said Daphne, in surprise. "You mean we should sing to him?"

"Or put on the gramophone," added May, with a faint smile. "That might work in China, Yin Su, but this is England."

"Simple Yin did not intend that," sighed the Chinese girl. "Would suggest gentle sweetness of voice to manager, not anger."

"Oh, tact!" said May, understanding. "Yes, you may be right. But if tact doesn't do it, then we'll have to be jolly firm, that's all. Because if this girl is sacked for a mistake like that, she might not find it easy to get another job."

"Indeed so," Yin Su agreed. "Yin Su make her illustrious warden of Royal garments of Yan Ku, humble palace where honourable father resides in China."

Yin Su meant well, and she had a kind heart, but even the cloak-room girl was forced to smile at the idea of being offered a job in far-off China.

"Thank you, Highness," she said. "But—but that would be too far. If this had happened half an hour ago I wouldn't be so worried, for I was offered a job as attendant at the circus."

May and Daphne jerked out the echo together.

"The circus?"

"Yes; it wouldn't be a bad job, either," said the girl, with a slightly defiant toss of the head. "Better than being bullied by that—that tiger, as you rightly called him. Only my chance has gone."

"You are sure it has gone?" asked May.

May thought quickly, and then, an idea in mind, looked at Daphne.

"How about our going to the circus this afternoon, if it's not far away?" she said eagerly. "And—taking her along with us, in case the job is still going?"

"Why, yes, of course," said Daphne. "And you, Yin Su? You'd like to see the circus?" asked May.

Yin Su's eyes sparkled.

"Make elegant whoopee," she murmured. "See terrifying lions meek to trainer's will. Prancing steeds, ludicrous clowns, such as you have mentioned to excite this simple, frivolous person. Yes, yes; eager as the hunting dog straining on the leash, Yin Su would go."

The manager came striding forward,

Your Editor's address is:—
THE SCHOOLGIRL, 200a, Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



BETWEEN OURSELVES

MY DEAR READERS.—In this issue, as you've probably discovered by now, our magnificent series of Faith Ashton stories comes to an end. I'm sure there is no need for me to ask whether you have enjoyed them. I don't think any girl could have done otherwise, do you? But you might drop me a line, telling me which of the four stories you liked best, and why. Will you? Thanks so much.

Of course, with the end of that titanic struggle between Faith and various members of the Fourth Form, Faith will have to lie low for some time. But that doesn't mean our Cliff House stories are going to lack drama and excitement. In fact, next Saturday's story, in its own particular way, is every bit as dramatic—and in some respects far more thrilling—than any of the recent series.

Motor racing! That is the theme. And the story introduces not only Babs & Co.—naturally!—but also two very popular young fellows: Jack Trevlyn, brother of Tomboy Clara, and Dick Fairbrother, brother of Cliff House's adored head girl, Dulcía.

For a vitally important reason, Dick Fairbrother must win a certain motor race. He's fiercely determined that he shall win, and so is Jack Trevlyn, his chum, loyally, unselfishly backing him up. But there are enemies at work who are just as resolved that, by hook or by crook, Dick shall be deprived of victory—even if it means sending him to gaol for a crime he hasn't committed

And that is where Babs and Co. come

in. They rally round Dick Fairbrother, doing all they can to protect him—and Jack Trevlyn, too—from their enemies. Unfortunately someone actually inside Cliff House is in league with the schemers, and this person not only makes the chums' task doubly difficult, but bids fair to wreck their efforts altogether.

You'll love every word of this unusual story, which shows Hilda Richards in her most spell-binding mood.

Next Saturday's programme will include further delightful chapters of "On Tour With Yin Su," another charming COMPLETE story of the young Lady Fayre and Robin Hood, as well as more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages, so you really ought to order your copy in advance, oughtn't you? And now, before saying an revoir, just a few—

LITTLE LETTERS.

MOIRA LAWRENCE.—Thank you so much for your most enthusiastic letter, Moira. I'll certainly see what can be done regarding your suggestion. I wonder what you think of the latest change in our other stories? Do let me know, won't you?

JOAN (Dagenham, Essex).—One of these days we may republish the feature you mention, Joan, but I'm afraid it would not be quite fair on my other readers to do so just yet. Best wishes, and please write again soon.

RACHIK GREGORY (Calcutta, India)—Delighted to hear from you in far-away India, Rachik. Yes, by all means send me your article. I shall be only too pleased to tell you what I think of it.

MABEL CARRIDEW (Stockton).—You would be in the Fourth Form if you went to Cliff House, Mabel. No, my dear, there are no girls in the Fourth older than fifteen. They are then transferred to the Lower Fifth.

And now, everybody—good-bye until next week.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

gave a slight inclination of the head to the girls, and spoke to the attendant.

"Another girl will replace you in ten minutes. You can then pack your things and go," he said.

May turned to him, and managed to control her indignation.

"We are all three certain that the bag was stolen from my chair," she said.

He bowed.

"Nothing is ever stolen here," he said quietly. "I am a man of the world, and people do not steal handbags and return them with the most valuable contents untouched. This girl has made one other mistake. No one here is allowed to make three. Two is the last."

He bowed again and walked away, leaving no doubt that he would not listen to argument; and since they had no proof, there was nothing they could do for the girl.

But May was a girl of action.

"Quick, telephone the circus—find out if the job is still vacant!" she said urgently.

The girl, after a moment's hesitation, obeyed, using the near-by telephone, and her radiant face when she returned gave them the answer.

"If I can get there before the show starts in twenty minutes, I can have the job," she said excitedly. "The only trouble is it's half an hour by train."

"Could a taxi manage it in time?" asked May.

"Yes, I'm sure it could; but it would be very expensive. Ten shillings at least," objected the girl anxiously.

May looked at Daphne and Yin Su. For although she was in charge, the money was theirs to share. Already they had spent a good deal of it, and they did not know how long they were supposed to make it last.

"Yin Su pay for speeding taxi," said the Chinese girl softly.

"But you've only got tennence," pointed out May.

"Yin Su soon have much money from honourable father. Have great kindness please to note down all sums, such as bill for banquet, and in due course honourable debt shall be paid."

"To the circus, then," said May.

A taxicab was hailed, and the three waited for the cloak-room girl, who presently joined them, having left a note to explain to the manager that, not waiting the ten minutes to be sacked when the relief arrived, she had resigned.

At good speed the taxi took them on their way, and Yin Su, with clasped hands, sat back, enjoying every minute of the journey.

The cloak-room girl, who told them that her name was Tilly Johnson, knew the district well, and so was able to point out anything worth noting and seeing—an old castle, the museum, the largest cinema, an enormous park, and the place where a battle in the Civil Wars had been fought.

It was when they had been driving for a quarter of an hour that Daphne looked back through the rear window. There was a car a few hundred yards behind them, a small blue saloon, and Daphne went quite pale with alarm.

"My goodness! Guess who's following?" she breathed.

"A police car?" asked May humorously.

"No; that woman's car—the woman with the emerald ring!" cried Daphne.

May, alarmed, looked back. So far as she could tell it was the same car, although it was of a popular make, and there were so many others similar that it was really hard to be certain that this was the one that the mysteri-



MAY was about to follow her chums into the circus tent, when an old woman seized her arm. "Beware!" the woman whispered tensely. "Go not into the tent. There is deadly peril!"

ous woman, wearing the green ring, had entered at the station. If it was hers, then her following them could not be mere coincidence.

"Let it follow," said May, after discussion. "If it does follow us to the circus, we'll have something to say to her. A good thing if she does, because then we can get this wretched business of the handbag settled."

But by the time they reached the main road leading to the circus there were a dozen cars behind, and it was not easy to make sure that the woman was really following.

Rather to their disappointment, when they entered the circus grounds that car did not follow, although a dozen others did.

"Here we are, Yin Su," said May.

Yin Su stood entranced. There were many tents, and, in an adjoining field, caravans belonging to the circus artistes and staff. The menagerie was housed in a large building, which had once formed part of an aerodrome during the Great War, so that the animals were warm and snug; and queuing up for admission was a large crowd.

"We see lions?" breathed Yin Su. "Also jugglers? Yin Su humble juggler, too. Clumsy, incompetent juggler, who drop many things, yet finds it much pleasing."

"Really!" said May, impressed.

Tilly Johnson, who had arrived in good time for the appointment, asked a "hand," where the boss could be found, and then, making her appearance tidy, went to find him.

"I do hope she gets the job," said May. "Perhaps it's all for the best. It's what she really wanted, and if she gets it, I shan't feel we're to blame that she got the sack."

"Don't lose the bag again. Perhaps I'd better have it," said Daphne anxiously.

"You?" said May. "Didn't you lose your watch once?"

"That was different," objected Daphne. "I think I'd better take charge of the money, May. The woman knows you have it, and perhaps she might make another attempt to get it. Perhaps last time she realised we had seen her, and could have her arrested, and that's why she sent it back."

May, eager to go to the menagerie, decided not to argue, and, taking the notecase from her bag, gave it to Daphne.

Yin Su watched, smiling blandly as Daphne fastened her bag after putting the notecase inside.

"Allow to remove dust," she said, and dusted the bag with a delicately perfumed handkerchief. "Pray make sure important money still safe—not dusted away with handkerchief."

"Oh, how could it be?" laughed Daphne, opening the bag.

Then she started, went pale, and sorted the contents, looking in vain for the notecase which she had put there but a moment before.

"Oh dud-dear, it's gone!" she wailed.

A Strange Warning!

YIN SU bowed her head.

"Careless Yin Su brush too hard with magic handkerchief," she said sadly.

"Maybe money in handkerchief now."

May and Daphne, watching as Yin Su shook her handkerchief, saw something fall from it to the ground—the notecase! Neither English girl could speak; for, so far as they had been able to see, Yin Su had not opened the handbag.

Blinking her amazement, Daphne picked the notecase up, and held it limply.

"Yin Su, however did you do it?"

"Simple, stupid trick," declared Yin Su modestly.

"Very badly performed. Great magician teach Yin Su that quickness of hand deceives even the most alert eye."

An old woman, bent-backed, with a shawl over her head, paused to stare at them, and Daphne hurriedly put the notecase into her bag; for in a crowd such as this, there were certain to be numbers of pickpockets.

"I'm going to keep my bag squeezed tightly under my arm," Daphne vowed. "It would be just awful if someone else knew that trick. I'd give anything to be able to do it myself, though."

"Some time this unskilled person show you," said Yin Su. "Meantime,

would esteem it great honour to speak with lions."

But they waited for Tilly Johnson, who presently came hurrying back, all smiles.

"I've got the job; and I told the boss everything," she said eagerly. "Thank you ever so much for helping! I should never have been able to get here without you young ladies. And—the boss says he'd like to see you."

Then Tilly explained that she had told the boss about Yin Su—how lovely she was, and—so she believed—a Highness, and, always prepared to honour important personages, he wanted to give her one of the best seats.

"My goodness; we're in luck!" said May. "He'll show us round the circus. Come on, girls! And if he thinks you're a princess, Yin Su, play up!"

Greatly excited, the three girls went with Tilly to see the boss, for it was fun being regarded as important people, and being shown round the circus.

A fat, jolly looking man, dressed in a morning suit, white waistcoat and top hat, he strutted forward, halted, lifted his hat and bowed.

"Welcome, Highness!" he said to Yin Su.

Yin Su, nudged by May, played up. Clapping her head, she gave a little bow.

"This high-born person would see the managerie if such be clean and tidy," she said, with dignity.

"Oh dear!" murmured Daphne apprehensively.

But the boss was not offended.

"Oh, you'll find it clean all right, Highness!" he said.

"Please to make band play as this illustrious person enters arena," added Yin Su, without the trace of a smile. "Otherwise grave insult to revered ancestors."

"Oh, yes, yes!" said the boss eagerly. "That's an idea. We've got a kind of royal box we got cheap, I'll have it swept and fixed up," he declared; for, being a born showman he saw that this would be a profitable piece of advertising that would bring a minor touch of fame to his circus.

Hat swept off his head, he bowed deeply, and backed to the entrance of the large marquee, hissing words to an attendant, who whipped back the flap.

May, always ready for a lark, chuckled; for this struck her as being fun. And Daphne looked quite an inch taller as she walked along, glad that she was wearing her new coat for this important occasion.

A small crowd had assembled, attracted by the boss' subservient manner and Yin Su's quaint appearance. And when, at the Chinese girl's request, the attendant who held back the flap, went on one knee and bobbed his head, a murmur of interest came.

In a moment the rumour spread that Yin Su was a Chinese princess, and a Press photographer who had been taking pictures of the lions came tearing across.

May, bringing up the rear of the procession, looked back, hearing a voice call; and on the fringe of the crowd she saw the shabby old woman whom Daphne had noticed.

The old woman beckoned her, and May, not quite knowing whether to obey her or not, finally decided that she might as well do so.

"Yes?" she asked the old crone, hardly able to see the woman's face for the hood that shadowed it.

"Beware," said the woman in a husky voice. "If the princess goes into

that tent, she goes to deadly peril! If you are her friend, then you must forbid it."

May drew back, her eyes wide with amazement.

"What do you mean, deadly peril? And what do you know about her?" she demanded.

"I am an old woman," was the quivering reply, and, putting a hand on May's arm, the woman gripped it tightly. "I know much that is hidden. Beware!"

At that moment Daphne called to May, who turned towards her. When she looked back the old woman had gone.

Very puzzled, but inclined to think the old woman was eccentric, May pushed through the throng to the tent flap, dazzled for a moment by the brilliant lights.

It was the large marquee they had entered—the Big Top. There was a ring in the centre, and seats were banked all round, while aloft gleamed the tight wires, and the trapezes. Already the clowns were scurrying on, dancing, shouting, playing pranks, dressed in comic clothes, tottering on stilts, rolling, tumbling. And Yin Su stood in delight, her hands clasped.

"Yin Su attempt same?" she asked Daphne. "Most enjoyable merriment and fun."

"What? Go into the ring with the clowns?" asked Daphne, shocked. "Oh, Yin Su! You are being honoured as a princess."

"The poet has wisely written that it takes a great personage to be a fool," pointed out Yin Su. "Much study of English history has revealed to this simple person that most of the kings also great clowns. Not always intentional."

Yin Su gave a little gesture towards the circus boss, who was standing near by.

"Honourable and illustrious Big Nob attend a clown without meaning it," she purred.

But low though her voice had been, the boss heard it, and, frowning, swung round.

"What's that?" he barked.

May and Daphne exchanged looks of consternation.

Yin Su, however, kept perfectly calm.

"Most insignificant and lowly Chinese maiden merely observed that you, Big Shot, deserve crown as circus king. This foolish one read in learned history books of kings with crowns perched upon heads. Crown look well with your own esteemed topper," she added solemnly.

The boss, impressed, beamed and then beckoned them, having dispatched some of his men to arrange the "box" in which important members of his audience were housed—so placed, did they but know it, that they were part of his show, and paying heavily for the privilege.

"Humble and insignificant owner of circus," said Yin Su politely, understanding the ways of a princess. "In due course of time bring forward most savage lion to be patted by this most illustrious-born person on peril of inflicting dire shams on your miserable ancestors by neglecting polite customs."

"Hear, hear!" said May, joining the group. Then, lowering her voice to a whisper, she added:

"Yin Su, have you any enemies?"

Her tone was so impressive that the Chinese girl lost the half smile that had played on her lips.

"Enemies? No, no! Too humble, too unimportant," she said in a low tone that the boss could not hear.

"You are sure? That woman with the emerald ring was not shadowing you?" asked May anxiously. "I'm asking because that old woman who was standing by when you played the note trick is outside. She warned me that you would be in deadly peril if you entered here."

Yin Su's face betrayed no emotion, no surprise.

"Ill-tempered unsocial lion bite Yin Su!" she asked.

"I didn't know what she meant; but she was a sort of gipsy, and said she knew things hidden from other people. A lot of bosh, perhaps," said May worriedly. "But I don't see why she should have made it up."

Yin Su made a light shrug of the shoulders.

"If she has seen a vision of it, then it is to be, and this altogether powerless, trivial person cannot alter the mysterious workings of well-arranged Providence," she remarked. "With great interest, nevertheless, we shall await to see what Providence has arranged as our peril."

And Yin Su calmly walked on towards the royal box.

Two attendants, solemn-looking, and bowing, showed the way up the steps.

The band struck up what was believed to be the National Anthem of China, and Daphne, pink-cheeked with excitement, patted her hair and tried to look as though she was used to this sort of thing.

The chums really were beginning to enjoy themselves, and May looked at Daphne with sparkling eyes.

"Don't let on," she whispered. "This is gorgeous! We're going to have the time of our lives if no one guesses we're a lot of spacers!"

"It was the boss' fault, anyway," said Daphne guardedly. "He shouldn't have jumped to conclusions."

"Quite right," said May, her tongue in her cheek. "Come on, Yin Su. In we go—into the box. Heads back, and all looking regal!"

But as Yin Su stepped towards the box, the boss ran forward. His smile had gone, and his face was marred by a scowl.

"You are a juggler, are you?" he demanded.

"Y-yes!" said Yin Su, startled.

"Conjurer, too?"

"Feebly so, with great clumsiness—"

"Then you're not a princess at all!" he cried. "You're a fraud, a bluff! You're just a juggler!"

His face was red with anger, and May stepped to Yin Su's side.

"You're wrong!" protested May.

"Yin Su didn't bluff you—"

The boss waved his hand at her. "I'm not arguing with you, but with this Chink. I know their crooked ways; and this one is just a juggler. By a piece of luck there's a Chinaman here who knows her. And she's coming with me—"

"She's not," said May defiantly, gripping Yin Su's left arm, while Daphne took her right.

"No, no!" gasped Daphne, and added, under her breath: "My goodness! That old woman's warning—beware—peril!"

But Yin Su, with surprising ease, wriggled her arms free of her chums, and, quite calmly, looked at the irate boss.

THERE is plenty more excitement in next Saturday's chapters of this superb story, so be sure not to miss them. And do, please, let your Editor know what you think of Miss Chester's story, won't you?

COMPLETE this week. Another fascinating story of a plucky girl of the Middle Ages who became—

SECRET HELPER

to

ROBIN HOOD

By IDA MELBOURNE



"You Are Under Arrest!"
"MY LORD UNCLE!"

The young Lady Fayre spoke in her meekest tone as she pushed open the door of the Baron le Feuvre's strong-room. It was a room which ordinarily she, being a girl, was forbidden to enter, and, as it was guarded night and day by sentries, and its stout, iron-banded oaken door offered a challenge even to a battering-ram, it was a safe repository for the baron's treasure-chest.

But Fayre had been allowed to pass by the sentries since she was the young lady of Longley Castle; and as the baron and his treasurer were in the room, the door was unlocked.

The baron, on his knees grovelling amongst the gold coins, looked up with a heavy frown.

"Why come you here?" he growled. "Has it not been forbidden?"

"Yes, uncle; but I want to speak to you before you close the chest," said Fayre.

"Be gone!"

In her sleek, rich red velvet frock, adorned with gold, her golden hair trailing down over her shoulders in two neat plaits, her face fresh and lovely, Fayre was a sight to melt the sternest heart, and bring kindly smiles. But the Baron le Feuvre was a man with a heart of granite, and he rarely smiled, save at some jest of his own.

"But, uncle, there are beggars at the barbican," said Fayre gently. "Ragged, hungry, pleading for alms. Dare it be said that beggars have been turned from one of the richest castles of England?"

Her uncle looked at her in surprise. "What! You think I shall give gold to beggars?" he roared.

"They are hungry—"

"Send them away—"

"Cold, ragged—"

"By my halidom!" he thundered, raising his long robe swinging as he clenched his fist. "I'll have them bounded by the guard. Good-for-

nothings, idlers! If they are hungry, it is because they do not work."

"But, uncle—" protested Fayre, quite shocked as she saw the gleaming gold of the over-loaded treasure chest.

"One other word, and you shall be soundly whipped!" cried the baron fiercely. "Hath not your tutor yet instructed you that little girls should be seen but not heard? Then be gone!"

Fayre knew that she must obey; for in the days when Richard Lionheart was on the Throne of England, the word of a baron was as law. In his own castle the Baron le Feuvre was as a king, and if he ordered Fayre to be whipped, then whipped she would be.

"I will go, uncle," she said, backing to the door fearfully.

"And keep you from the barbican!" he called, as she opened the door. "Let the friend of the poor give them alms—their hero, Robin Hood."

The baron laughed throatily, but Fayre's eyes gleamed.

She walked past the guard, and up to her own bed-chamber, and there,

The bullying baron refused to help the poor, so Fayre set out to make him do so—with Robin Hood's assistance!

with folded arms, paced the floor in indignation that so rich a man as her uncle should begrudge a little gold to the poor, so badly in need of warmth, clothes, and food.

The Lady Fayre herself had not a penny to spend; for since she was forbidden to go to the village, or indeed to leave the castle, she had no need of it.

"Robin Hood," she frowned, "the friend of the poor. If he had the gold, he would give it; and if he has it not, somehow he will get it. I will go to him."

Then, her mind made up, she crossed the room to an old wooden chest in the corner, lifted the lid, and from beneath the elegant dresses on top lifted a shabby, dark green frock, a brown cloak with hood, and badly worn shoes.

Sliding the bolting bar of the door, she peeled off her lovely rich frock,

and dressed in these ragged garments, which were such as the village girls wore.

Then, the wide hood shadowing her face, she opened the door and stepped out into the corridor.

The Lady Fayre would not have been allowed to cross the drawbridge alone; for the baron's orders forbade it. But a peasant girl with hooded cloak, bearing a basket, would not be challenged, since messengers, launderers, and others called at times to deliver goods, or to ask orders.

In this guise Fayre was well known to the men at the drawbridge, for she had worn it often when making her daring visits to the wood, where Robin Hood and his merry men had their secret lair.

She was no longer the Lady Fayre of Longley Castle, but a village maid, free to go where she pleased. And since the baroness, her aunt, was out riding, and her tutor was writing down accounts of the baron's adventures during the Crusade, there was no one to inquire the whereabouts of the Lady Fayre.

Without difficulty, Fayre crossed the drawbridge which the guards lowered, giving her familiar nods, and words of welcome.

But outside at the barbican she paused.

A crowd of beggars stood there, ragged, shivering, hungry.

"Alms," came a murmur.

"'Tis but a poor lass," said an old man.

Facing them, Fayre spoke softly.

"Be of good cheer," she said.

"There is a friend of the poor in these parts—Robin Hood—and when he knows your need, he will not let you want. Go to the edge of the wood, a mile down the road, and await him there."

Then she hurried on, heart thumping; for she had acted impulsively, and now wondered whether her words had been overheard by the guard.

Looking back, she saw that the

"Thank You So Much,"

HILDA RICHARDS SAYS

to ALL her correspondents. And here our popular author replies to just a few of them.



DORIS VINCENT (Angus, Scotland):—Yours was such a charming letter, Doris, that I'd have liked to reply by post—only you didn't give your full address. I do answer all my readers' letters myself, and though it is no light task, I love it. Juno is very well, thank you. Yes, she is the only pet I have at present, and such a darling. I'm keeping your C.H. suggestion in mind, my dear, and I'll certainly discuss it with our Editor. Bye-bye for now!

"GLADYS" (Port Elizabeth, South Africa):—It was very nice to hear from you again, Gladys; and thank you awfully for your lovely Christmas card. Do you know, it was the very first one I received this year, though I've had lots since, of course. You'll write again when you have time, won't you?

JOAN STOKES (Slough, Bucks):—I was delighted to hear once again from you, Joan. We're quite regular correspondents now, aren't we? I do hope mother is quite better now. You must be so glad she is home again. I shall look forward to another long newsy letter from you before long—so you won't forget me, will you?

HOPE MURPHY (Tenterfield, Australia):—I've managed to squeeze in a letter here for you at last, my dear! I have answered your Cliff House questions by post, as I haven't sufficient space here. I felt just a teeny bit envious to hear about your lovely summery weather, for over here we are still in the depth of winter! However, spring is something to look forward to in England. Write again, won't you, Hope?

JOAN MARSHALL (Kelghley, Yorks.):—So glad to hear from you again, Joan, and to know you are still such a keen reader of my Cliff House

stories. Were you able to get in touch with a pen-friend, after all? You'll find it very exciting to write to someone living far away in India or Canada! Do tell me more about yourself next time you write.

"ANN" (Hollywood, Victoria, Australia):—You'd be a Lower Third Former if you went to Cliff House, my dear. The best swimmer in the Lower Third is probably Janet Jordan. I wonder if you like swimming yourself? Yes, Leila's parents are very wealthy people; she has no brothers or sisters. Jemima's left eye is a little weak—but no one at C.H. knows whether Jimmy wears her monocle just to correct the weakness or whether it is one of her little affectations!

VERONICA WILSON:—Thank you so much, Veronica, for a charming letter, and a very sweet Christmas card. I don't think I shall be able to answer all your questions here, but I'll answer as many as I can! Your suggestion for the Christmas stories came a little too late—but thank you for the idea, just the same! Isobel Drake is still at Cliff House. Jean Cartwright is 5ft. 6ins. tall. Your list of Fourth Formers was quite correct, except that Matilda Tattersall has since left. Thank you for the other suggestions; I'll certainly keep them in mind, Veronica.

MARY GROSSE (Singapore):—Here's the reply you so much wanted to see, my dear! I was delighted to hear you are such a keen reader of my Cliff House tales. Next time you write, you must tell me all about yourself. I shall look forward to hearing all about your hobbies and interests, Mary! Bye-bye until then.

"MARGARET" (Otago, New Zealand):—Many thanks for a very sweet little letter, Margaret. I was so glad to hear from you. You would be in the Lower Third, you know, if you went to Cliff House. I hope to be featuring your favourite Fourth Formers in lots of stories in the future—you must watch our paper each week! Write again when you've time, won't you, my dear?

the bailiff is due soon at the castle—"Ah! Strange that you know so much of the castle," mused Robin Hood, perplexed. "A simple maid of the woods."

Swiftly Fayre sought to cover her slip.

"I bear messages for the Lady Fayre, who graciously speaks to me," she said.

Robin Hood chuckled.

"There is something the Lady Fayre does not know, nor the baron, yet," he said. "And that is, Mystery Marian, that the bailiff will not go to the castle with the gold. Poor fellow, he fell from his horse. We picked him up; we picked up the bag of gold, and by my troth, we forgot to put the gold back in the bag."

He roared with laughter, then, turning, cupped his hands and hallowed. From the trees, at his call, came fat Friar Tuck, lanky Little John, and a dozen more.

"The gold, the gold!" Robin Hood said. "There are needy poor who want some of the baron's gold. Throw it on to the grass for the poor—"

Gold pieces seemed to rain on the grass, and Robin Hood picked them up, added three himself, and then showered them into Fayre's basket.

"For the needy poor from Robin Hood and his band," he said.

Fayre's eyes sparkled with happiness, and she was deeply touched as much by his trust as by his generosity.

"It shall be given now—at once," she said. "Thank you, Robin Hood. You are brave and generous."

Bidding him good-bye, Fayre ran back to the road where the beggars, not quite believing that Robin Hood would give to them, waited, their number increased.

"Gold—gold from Robin Hood!" cried Fayre, and scattered coins, which the men stooped to pick up.

A woman with a baby in her arms, given two gold coins, kissed Fayre's hand.

But a tall man, looking not by any means hungry, walked up to Fayre, and snatched the basket.

"So you are the messenger of Robin Hood!" he cried. "I am the sheriff's officer. You are under arrest!"

Triumph for the Baron!

FAYRE, paralysed with fright, could not move as the man flung back his ragged cloak and revealed his embroidered tunic, belt, and sword.

Two others, jumping forward, drew swords, and drove the beggars into the woods.

"Where is Robin Hood?" demanded the sheriff's officer fiercely. "He has robbed the baron's bailiff. This is the stolen gold."

"Did not the baron rob the people of their land?" said Fayre bravely.

"Silence, girl, or you'll be whipped!" snarled the man. "Where is Robin Hood?"

"I know not," said Fayre, tight-lipped.

"You know not? Yet he gave you the gold? Methinks an hour in the stocks will change your mind. To the stocks with her!" the man commanded.

Fayre struggled fiercely; but to no avail, for the man was strong enough to lift her with one hand. The basket was taken from her, she was dragged to the village, where, it being market day, the people had assembled from outlying farms and cottages.

"Have mercy!" she pleaded, tears in her eyes. "Not to the stocks, I beg of you!"

beggars were murmuring amongst themselves, and preparing to follow.

"Poor fellows," she sighed. "No work, no food—yet all that gold in the castle!"

Of the same heart was daring Robin Hood. And when the chance came he took from the rich barons or abbots to give to the needy poor.

The mystery maid, Marian, as Fayre was known to Robin Hood, unaware of her true identity, took care when she reached the path that led into the woods. For only she knew the way to his secret lair; and she had no mind to give his enemies, the sheriff, or the baron's spies, a chance to follow her to his undoing.

There were wolves in the wood; but, although Fayre dreaded them, yet she did not fear for safety, since she carried a shrill whistle which Robin Hood himself had made and given to her.

That whistle was so piercing in tone that no wolf could bear to hear it, but fled howling at its first blast. Putting the whistle to her lips, and keeping a wary eye amongst the trees, Fayre hurried to the spot she knew.

A dozen times she sounded the whistle before she heard an answering cry;

then a green-clad figure came swinging down from a tree.

"Robin Hood!" cried Fayre, in gay delight.

Robin Hood, his bow slung behind his back, doffed his pointed cap with the long feather, and bowed, smiling. As gallant as he was daring and brave, his manners would have set an example to the rough baron.

"Mystery maid, what brings you here?" he asked. "What news of the village? Does a bishop's procession pass through? Is it market day?"

"'Tis market day, yes," said Fayre. "But that is not the news. Oh, Robin Hood, there are beggars outside the castle, hungry, needy, cold. They have walked many, many miles; but the baron will not give them one small coin, even though his coffers are nigh on bursting with gold."

Robin Hood's smile faded, as it always did when he heard the sorrows of the poor.

"And the baron has none to spare?" he asked. "Not even though his bailiff is even now returning with a new load of rents that the poor have paid for their cottages?"

"No," admitted Fayre. "As you say,

But the sheriff's officer had been ordered to show no mercy to Robin Hood, or to his men or allies; and for the first time he had a chance to capture the outlaw.

A spy had informed him that the beggars were awaiting alms from Robin Hood, and cunningly donning ragged garments, he had lain in wait himself.

To have captured a girl who knew where Robin Hood lurked, was something; and his intention was to make her tell all she knew.

From shops and cottages, and from the pens where the cattle were herded, people came hurrying as the news flew round that a girl was to be put in the stocks.

Fayre, blushing, kept her head down, biting her lip to still its quiverings. For if she should be recognised, she would never dare raise her head again in public. Even if not recognised, the humiliation of sitting in the stocks, jeered at and mocked, would be terrible enough.

But someone was in the stocks already, a beggar the sheriff's men had caught picking apples off the ground.

"The pillory," said the sheriff, and Fayre, head bowed, was led there instead.

The pillory was a wooden board, cut lengthways in two. In the middle was a large hole for the victim's neck; on either side, holes for the wrists. The top half being unlocked and raised, Fayre was made to rest her neck in the centre hole; her wrists were positioned, and the upper half then lowered and locked.

Quaking with fright she stood there, unable to lift her head, able only to look at the ground and turn a little to left and right, while her hands hung limply.

She could not see the crowd save for their feet, but she heard their jeering cries. Few knew why she was there; but usually it was for some offence that merited it, so people did not ask questions before jeering.

"Shame on her—"

"Thief!" shouted someone.

A cabbage was thrown, mud, and some tormenting boy tickled her face with a rush.

"Where is Robin Hood?" asked the sheriff, in low tone.

"I don't know," said Fayre huskily.

"Ah! You forget? Then you shall stay here until you remember. In an hour I will ask you again," he jeered.

Fayre, frightened and wretched though she was, refused to play the traitor; for if she did give the needed clue, then Robin Hood might easily be captured.

Fayre closed her eyes, tried not to hear the jeers, and muttered softly, earnestly to herself:

"Robin Hood! Oh, help me, please, brave Robin Hood."

And away in the woods Robin Hood heard—not her wish, but the story told by a beggar who had fled from the sheriff's men.

"What! They have caught the girl! She is in the pillory because she would not betray us!" he cried.

His hunting horn went to his lips to summon his men, and, eyes flashing, he addressed them.

"The mystery maid is in the pillory!" he cried. "She shall not stay there. To the spinney; we go to the rescue, not as men of the woods, but as friars!"

And scarcely ten minutes passed before a score of men, clad in the simple habit of mendicant friars, trudged from the spinney by devious routes to the village, staves in hand.

was sore, her arms seemed numb. Most of the jeering crowd had dispersed, but every now and then some newcomer arrived to hear that she was a thief.

The sheriff, knowing that Robin Hood was the hero of the people, took care that they did not know that it was a friend of Robin Hood he held prisoner in the pillory.

A dozen of his men, armed with swords, were ready for orders should Fayre tell them where to search for Robin Hood, and the sheriff had vowed that he should be caught.

The lowing and bleating of the animals in the pens came to Fayre, and her heart went out to them; for if they were as unhappy, being imprisoned there, as she was in the pillory, then she felt deeply for them.

She hardly dared to think of the panic there would be at the castle if she did not return by sundown; already it was midday, and before long the bell in the castle would toll the baron to dinner.

"Ha!" said the sheriff's officer suddenly. "Here comes a friar to mock you."

A tall friar in sackcloth robe and hood walked near; many others were at the market, studying the animals. But they did more than study, for furtively they opened the pens, and then drove out the cows, pigs, and sheep.

Yells came from the people, and the sheriff sprang forward.

"The cattle are loose!" he shouted. "Shopmen—take in your goods!"

Down the village street came the cows at the trot, a whole herd of squealing pigs running this way and that amongst them.

The tall friar near the pillory leaned forward and spoke softly to Fayre.

"Mystery Maid—when I break the pillory lock, run into the crowd."

"Robin Hood!" breathed Fayre exultantly.

Yells, shouts, cries, and commands rose in confusion, mingling with the bleats, moos, and squeals of the cattle; and panic reigned.

Fayre saw the friar raise a quarter-staff, jam it into the chain that held the pillory, and then lever with all his strength. The chain snapped; the pillory top was lifted.

Instantly a sheriff's man ran forward with drawn sword; but another friar,

thrusting a quarter-stick between his ankles tripped him; and the man fell on all fours, his sword clattering from his grasp, to be seized by Robin Hood.

Fayre was free; and as she tottered back, stiff-limbed, Robin Hood guarded her way. Desperate need gave use to her limbs, and she ran, stumbling and tottering, pushing through the crowd until at last she was free from all pursuit.

Then she lay down at the roadside, gasping, until she had sufficiently recovered her breath to go on.

Half-dazed, she crossed the castle drawbridge; and with the dinner-bell ringing, made her way to her room. Locking the door, she changed, washed in a pitcher of water, and then, rubbing her wrists and neck, went down to dinner.

The baroness was there alone with her women; every man had gone.

"Fools to leave a roast joint to see such a rascal as Robin Hood!" cried the baroness. "But that is the way of men!"

"Robin Hood?" faltered Fayre.

"Yes. Take your place. Hear the good news. This Robin Hood, the outlaw, has been captured, dressed as a friar. And now he is roped up at our mercy, in the village.

Shouts came from the courtyard, and the baroness crossed to the window to look down.

"There they go!" she said. "With a wagon in which to collect the rascal and his fellows, and bring them here!"

She turned to call Fayre; but Fayre had fled as fast as she could, forgetting that she was in her lovely red frock.

When the baroness looked out of the window again she saw Fayre running after the wagon, saw her catch up with it, clinging on, and then scramble into it, to roll amongst the straw.

Unaware of what was happening since the wagon was at the very tail of the procession, the Baron le Feuvre rode on in triumph, followed by fifty of his men, knights and squires.

Robin Hood was captured; and this army as escort would ensure that not even his brave band could rescue him!

It seemed that the young Lady Fayre's secret friend had met his match at last! For how could even she possibly hope to save him?



EVEN as Robin Hood fired the arrow, Fayre bent down and cut through the ropes around his ankles. No one as yet had realised her clever trick to free the baron's prisoner!

THE LADY FAYRE knew not if one hour had passed or two. Her neck ached with the weight of her head; her throat

Clever Fayre!

ROBIN HOOD, roped and trussed so that he could move neither hand nor foot, lay on the ground surrounded by the sheriff's men.

"He came to rescue the girl—and we have him now," said the sheriff's officer in great glee. "For this a gold piece each for you all, and five for me."

Robin Hood heard the words as he came to. Covering the retreat of his men, he had been struck down from behind, and had not realised his fate until now.

He had saved the mystery maid; and his men had retired in safety, but he himself was a prisoner.

"To-morrow will be a fair day," jeered the sheriff. "A pity you will not see it, Robin Hood."

A roaring shout from the crowd announced the arrival of the baron and his men; for although the baron was hated, he was even more greatly feared, and it would have gone ill with those who did not show respect at seeing him or feign delight.

"So, that's the rogue?" roared the baron, dismounting and giving the outlaw a kick with his mailed foot.

The Lady Fayre climbed down from the wagon, where she had lain concealed by straw.

"Why, uncle, this, then, is Robin Hood?" she asked.

"Huh?" he gasped, staring at her. "You, Fayre? Here?"

"Why, yes, uncle," said Fayre warily. "I did ask if I might come, and you did not answer. Is not silence consent?"

The baron glowered. "Would you trick me with words?" he barked. "Tis no place for a girl! Get you back to the castle!"

"Oh, uncle, please, I have heard so much of this outlaw! Permit me just one glimpse of him, I beg of you!" Fayre implored.

But there was a far more serious

reason why she was desperately anxious not to be sent back to Longley Castle.

She had come here to try to rescue Robin Hood. How she was to do so she did not yet know, but a plan would come, a chance would occur, surely. Yet what good would such a chance be if she were not able to take it?

"Please, uncle!" she begged, laying a hand on his arm.

But the baron roughly shook it off. "Begone!" he rapped. "Back to your chamber! One of my men shall escort you! Do you think I want a niece of mine, disobedient and disrespectful though she be, to fall into the hands of such members of this rogue's band who have escaped my men? Begone, girl, this instant!"

Fayre, pretending to be crushed, lowered her head, but there was an artful twinkle in her eyes.

"Surely—surely, uncle," she murmured, "there would be no danger to me here, with one so strong and brave as you?"

The baron drew himself up with a cough.

"Ahem!" he said, with dignity. "That is true, Fayre, but hardly to the point."

"I should be safer than if I were escorted back to the castle by one of your men, whose heart might not be so strong in valour," Fayre gently pursued. "I—I would rather stay with you, uncle."

"Very well," said the baron. "I will protect you." He preened himself. "But stay close to my side, child. See, this is the rascal outlaw!"

He kicked Robin Hood again. "Oh, no, uncle!" gasped Fayre in horror.

"Hah! I may not kick the outlaw?" the baron asked.

Fayre consoled her anger as she looked at him.

"Tis said that who kicks Robin Hood his foot shall wither in a year," she said.

The baron gave a jeering laugh, but he did not kick the outlaw again, for in common with others at that period he was superstitious.

"There lies Robin Hood," he jeered. "His arrows shall speed no more."

Fayre sighed. "They do say he is the greatest archer ever born in England," she murmured. "A full two furlongs he can send an arrow."

Fayre's mind was clearing. She knew that she alone could save Robin Hood—by subtlety, the use of her wits. Her simple, innocently spoken words had a subtle intention that escaped the baron, who fell into the trap she had laid for him.

"Two furlongs?" he roared. "Ha, ha, ha! No man can shoot an arrow two furlongs. Huh! Such tales the people believe, eh?"

"But 'tis true," said Fayre. "And were his arms but free he could show us—or suffer!"

The baron gave a start, his eyes glinting cruelly.

"Two furlongs? The boasting knave. Robin Hood, is it said with truth you can send an arrow two furlongs?"

"Yes," said Robin Hood, catching Fayre's eye.

"Bah! Liar, fool, braggart!"

"Let him try, uncle. If he fails, why, then—"

"Why, then, we'll have him dragged behind the wagon through the countryside, mocked to scorn before his end!"

the baron gloated. Then he commanded Robin Hood to be raised up.

"Leave his legs bound, set his arms free, and let him shoot an arrow two furlongs; by my halidom, if he does it, he shall be freed!"

"It shall be tried," said Robin Hood. But the Lady Fayre quivered an eyelid at him.

"We should stand well back, uncle," she said. "Let us sight a mark, two furlongs away. Let the men mark it out."

"All right, all right, I know how it should be done," snapped the baron.

He gave his orders, and presently Robin Hood stood at one end of an avenue of men in the roadway, while two furlongs distant the sheriff took up position with his posse.

"A clear space behind me," urged Robin Hood.

With his legs roped securely, yet enabling him to stand, he took aim.

"Watch!" he commanded.

Every eye was on the sheriff; none was on the Lady Fayre, who, with a sharp knife taken from the scabbard of an entranced onlooker, was stooping to cut the bonds that bound her hero's legs.

Robin Hood the while shouted to the sheriff to move back to safety.

"So short a distance cannot be two whole furlongs," he protested. "However, 'tis easy enough to get a new sheriff should my arrow pierce him."

"One—two—three—" called the baron.

The arrow sped. Every eye followed it, and for a moment the Lady Fayre really thought that it had flown the full distance. But no! A groan of disappointment came from the crowd that changed to a murmur of wonder. For the arrow had fallen less than twenty yards short of the distance.

"He fails!" roared the baron. "Ah, ha—the braggart!"

But words died on his lips, for above the roaring of the excited crowd he heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs. And there, galloping away down the road, went Robin Hood, mounted on the baron's own horse, which had been tethered behind the archer.

While the arrow had taken one direction, Robin Hood, his legs free, had taken the other. And only the Lady Fayre had seen him go!

"Clear the streets!" howled the baron, dancing with rage.

Dutifully, the Lady Fayre took her place beside him.

"Uncle," she said, when hoarseness gave him pause for awhile.

"Well?"

"Where has Robin Hood gone, uncle?" she asked in innocent surprise.

But the Baron le Feuvre, judging by his answer, appeared not to know.

"Go to your chamber!" he commanded irritably.

Fayre, who wanted a hearty laugh in private, gladly went; and when she was summoned by her tutor, the Venerable Brie, for a writing lesson she chose her own copybook heading.

"Who laughs last laughs best," she wrote with every sign of loving her work, for Robin Hood had his freedom, the beggars had gold to buy food, and in Fayre's heart was the song of happiness!

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