

Magnificent LONG COMPLETE Cliff House story in this issue:

“CHAMPION—BUT WHAT A TEMPER!”

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AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE FOR THE TABLE TENNIS CHAMPION!
Who is Plotting to Make Her Lose Her Temper Again?
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Sport, Mystery, and a Dynamic character are to the fore in



CHAMPION—But

One Thing After Another!



"CHRISTINE! Christine Wilmer!" sang out Barbara Redfern.

"Christine, you slacker, buck up!" added Mabel Lynn, Barbara's best chum and studymate.

"Christine, don't you know Lady Pat's waiting for you?" Clara Trevely called. "How long are you going to be?"

But from inside Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage at Cliff House School came only a fuming, furious snort.

"Christine!" Babs sang out again, a little note of anxiety in her voice this time.

"Eh? What?" And Christine Wilmer, her good-looking face decidedly flushed, looked out into the passage. "What do you want?" she asked, rather crossly.

"Well, Lady Pat's waiting for you to play table tennis, you know," Babs said mildly. "You haven't forgotten, surely, that you and she are in the finals of the Courtfield Championship? Lady Pat is waiting for you now."

"Well, I'm coming!" Christine said. "But somebody's taken my bat. You know jolly well I can't play my best table tennis unless I have my own bat!"

"But who," demanded golden-haired Mabel Lynn, "would take your bat?"

"I don't know. All the same, somebody has. I left it on the table here before dinner; now I've come back, it's gone. I suppose," Christine said rather

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bitterly, "it's no end of a lark for some chump, but it's no joke for me! That's my best bat!"

"It must be somewhere around," Babs said. "Anyway, Chris, old thing, don't look so cross about it," she added anxiously; for Christine's good-looking face bore all the signs and portents of rapidly rising storm. "Look here, why not use mine?"

"I want my own!" Christine insisted. "But Lady Pat is waiting—"

Fierce, furious, electrifying, that temper, changing Christine from the normally nice-natured girl into a girl most unlikable. Time had been when Christine had been known as "Temper" Wilmer, and in those days had not only got herself hated by the whole Form, but had come near to expulsion.

Babs had stuck by her, Babs who, feeling that if Christine could only conquer that wild temper she would be a girl to be proud of, had helped her,

Christine Wilmer, the finest table tennis player at Cliff House, was looked to by the whole school to score a triumph in the big championships. There was no doubting her brilliance—but, unfortunately, there was no doubting her quick and flaming temper, either. And when that temper broke out again it seemed that even Barbara Redfern couldn't hold Christine in check, couldn't prevent that fiery girl from ruining all her chances in the championships.

"Blow Lady Pat!" Christine snapped.

Babs eyed her, while Clara and Mabs grimaced at each other. They knew those signs in Christine Wilmer's face—signs they had not seen for some months now, but signs which always made Christine's chums anxious. A nice girl, Christine; a jolly good sport, and frightfully fond of Babs & Co.—and especially Babs' own self.

But Christine had one most dreadful fault.

Her temper.

suffered with her, and finally, had triumphantly succeeded in helping her to overmaster her worst trait. From that day Christine had never looked back.

Christine, the once despised, was now a firm friend of Babs & Co., and one of the most popular girls in the Form.

And something else, too. In matters of tennis, Christine was not only the Form's idol, but the idol of the school. Three times already had Christine played lawn tennis in junior inter-nationals; twice she had been returned

this Stirring Long Complete story of Barbara Redfern & Co.



What a TEMPER!

as the Southern Counties' girl champion.

On her best form Christine was unplayable, and there was not a single girl at Cliff House, senior or junior, who could hold a candle to her.

At table tennis Christine was equally brilliant. It was thanks to her that Cliff House had reached the Finals of the Courtfield Trophy Table Tennis Championship, to which everybody was eagerly and excitedly looking forward on Saturday, when the matches would be played off at the Courtfield Sports Club.

But it alarmed Babs to see those gathering storm signs on her face now. Christine, in a temper, was just hopeless.

"Look here, let us help search!" Tomboy Clara Trevlyn urged.
"No good!" Christine scowled.
"I've searched—everywhere. And, anyway, it was on the table," she said.
"My hat! I wish I knew what idiot—"

"Chris—remember!" Babs said anxiously, stepping into the study. "No tantrums—please! You know what you promised, old thing! You know the school is looking to you, and you know how jolly proud the Fourth Form is because you're in the finals. Never mind the bat; we'll find it later. After all," Babs said, "it's only a practice match, isn't it? Chris, do use mine!"

Christine gulped. She glanced at Babs. Affection, as well as momentary shame, there was in that glance.

"All—all right," she said unsteadily.
"But don't blame me if I don't play my best game! You know what it is to use a strange bat."

Babs smiled. She did. Good table tennis player though she was, she hadn't half the skill Christine possessed; but to use a bat she wasn't used to, was disconcerting, even to her. How much more, then, to Christine, who, apart from her skill, was a highly temperamental player.

"Well, it's only practice," she said again. "I'll go and get my bat."
And off Babs darted, returning a

By
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Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

moment later with the bat. Dubiously Christine tested it.

"Pretty light," she commented.
"And I'm not keen on the round type of bat. Still, I'll try to manage," she added, smiling at Babs. "Don't think me a grouch, old thing."

The Junior School captain laughed. That was more like it. She tucked her arm in that of Christine's, and the four of them hurried off towards the gymnasium.

The gym, given up to two full-sized tennis tables, was crowded—and practically the entire Fourth Form were there. Quite a shout went up as soon as Christine was seen.

"Christine! Here she is!"
Christine, tennis wizard as she was, was in the full limelight then. In the Cliff House eliminating contests, Christine had laid low her opponents one by one. Seniors, middle school girls, even

Miss Charmant and Miss Belling had been unable to break her winning spell. It was thanks to the superb skill of Christine that Cliff House now found itself in the finals of the doubles and singles of the Courtfield competitions.

Small wonder that the Fourth Form were proud of her.

To be sure, there were one or two other girls who did not feel that way. Lydia Crossendale, Frances Frost & Co., for instance, who were jealous of Christine, and who made it a principle to oppose any of Barbara Redfern's friends, covertly sneered.

"Christine, you are late!" Lady Patricia Northanson said mildly.

Lady Pat, popular Sixth Former and prefect, was captain of the Cliff House table tennis team—that team now consisting only of herself and Christine, with Isabel Mary Drake, of the Sixth Form, and Ida Greenaway, of the Upper Fifth, in reserve.

"I'm sorry!" Christine retorted. "It wasn't my fault. Somebody took my bat."

"Oh, surely not?" Isabel Drake said.
"Well, they did." Christine's eyes glimmered just a little at the memory. "And they've still got it," she said. She stared towards Frances Frost, who, near Lydia Crossendale, tittered a little. "I suppose you know nothing about it?" she added.

"No, sweetheart!" Frances mocked.
"All right—all right!" Lady Pat nodded. "Frances, if you can't behave yourself, get out!" she said. "Anyway, never mind now. Christine, you are playing with me. Isabel, will you give Ida a game on the next table? Ready,

Christine. We won't play for service. You can take it."

"O.K.!" Christine said.

Babs smiled as she stepped back. Now for a fine match! For Lady Pat was the third best singles player in the school—being slightly inferior to Isabel Drake—and at doubles was nearly as good as Christine.

Lady Pat and Christine were, of course, playing together in the championship doubles; in fact, they had simply walked through their earlier rounds. Christine, naturally, was representing Cliff House in the singles.

Though Lady Pat was primarily a doubles player, she was still excellent at singles, and usually gave Christine a good game.

Christine flicked her wrist about, testing Babs' bat. She frowned a little. It had a strange, unfamiliar feel. It was rather light, and the grip was different from her own favourite.

Very highly strung and temperamental was Christine, and little details like this easily upset her. Still, she would do her best.

She caught the little white ball which lay on the table. Then she received a shock.

For, unconsciously glancing down at herself, she became aware that her silver tennis fob was missing.

A trivial thing, of course, but in that nerve-charged moment a vitally significant thing to Christine.

The tennis fob was her mascot. It had been the very first prize she had ever won for her tennis, and she had treasured it with a zealoussness far beyond its worth. In all important games Christine always wore it. Strange as it may sound, she had never lost a game when she had worn it, but had invariably lost when she had left it off. Now it had gone—lost probably in her fuming scrambling on the floor of Study No. 6 to peer under chairs for her missing tennis bat. Upsetting again, that, and suddenly Christine found her nerves all on edge.

"Service!" she called.

And smack! went the ball, just skimming the net. Lady Pat took it, drove to Christine's forehand, and Christine chopped it back. Lady Pat drove again, this time on the backhand. In moved Christine swiftly, and her wrist flashed over in a lightning backhand stroke. But it was the edge of her bat that hit the ball, and the little white sphere shot off at a tangent and hit the wall. There arose a surprised murmur.

"Who says she's champion?" jeered Lydia Crossendale.

Christine flushed. She threw a glare at Lydia. First point to Lady Pat, and all these girls watching! If only she had her own bat! She wouldn't have mistimed that one with her own bat.

She served again—a swift one down the edge of the table on Lady Pat's backhand. The prefect got to it, but only just, and her return shot bounced high. Forward leapt Christine, smashing the ball down Lady Pat's forehand, giving the prefect not a chance of returning it.

Christine's eyes glimmered. That was more like it! One point all!

Now, again! Christine sent down a heavily cut service. With Babs' bat, however, she didn't get the same spin as usual on the ball, and her opponent returned it with ease. Then for a moment—tic, tao, tic, tao! Face to face they stood, Christine attacking strongly, Lady Pat dropping back on the defence, until Christine, trying to drop a short one over the net, put it feebly into the net. The strangeness of Bab's bat had let her down again.

Lydia laughed mockingly.

Christine threw her a glare. Her breath was coming just a little faster then. She felt angry at herself for making that muff of a shot. She felt—unreasonably—angry with Babs because it was her bat which had caused her to make it.

She set her teeth.

Again she served, and when Lady Pat's return came, she drove fiercely, wildly at it. Lady Pat stared at her as the ball flashed high across the net, and on to hit the far wall, without touching the table at all.

"Christine, what's the matter? That's not like you?" she exclaimed.

"That's what she calls her championship form!" Lydia gurgled.

"Oh, shut up, Lydia!" cried Clara Trevlyn.

"Rats! Why should I shut up? My hat, I believe she's getting in a paddy! Go it, temper!" Lydia jeered.

Christine stopped dead, and suddenly her eyes flamed. If there was one word calculated to provoke Christine, that was the one. Temper! For months she had not heard that hateful word applied to her. And now—

Christine had fought her temper. With Babs' help, she felt she had conquered it. But now she knew that she had not. Now she knew, feeling it swiftly rising within her, that the old ghost had only been temporarily laid. Up in a flash it flamed, and when that temper was flaming Christine was hardly responsible for her actions.

She caught up a table-tennis ball, for a moment poised it, and then—smack!—bat clouted ball. With incredible speed and swiftness, that ball sailed straight towards the sneering face of Lydia Crossendale, and—

"Wow!" yelled Lydia, as the ball hit her on the nose. "Why, you cat—"

"Christine!" Lady Pat put down her bat. For a moment there was silence, followed by a mutter from the on-lookers which had in it a note of disgust. "Christine, is that the way to behave?"

"Well, she called me names!" Christine snapped.

"I heard." Lady Pat shook her head. "I do not approve, Christine. But surely you can exercise a little more control? Don't forget, although you are only a junior, when you appear in the finals with me you will be representing the school! Now let's get on with the game."

"Christine, yes!" Babs pleaded.

But Christine did not move. Humiliation, added to her anger, made her mutinous now. Her face inwardly was burning, though her cheeks were white. That Lady Pat, her partner, should talk to her like that—that Lady Pat should tick her off in front of all these others! One phrase of her reprimand stung and sung in her mind:

"Although you are a junior—"

Sharply, sulkily she swung away from the table.

"Christine," cried Lady Pat again, "are you going to play?"

"No!" Christine said, between her teeth.

"What?"

"I said 'No!'" And Christine stared angrily at the prefect. "If that's your attitude towards me I think I'd better not play at all! I might be 'only a junior'—oh, what a world of biting bitterness there was in that phrase—'but I'm not used to being ticked off and insulted!'"

"My hat! The touchy idiot!" Babs cried, and jumped forward. "Christine, old thing, Lady Pat didn't mean that."

"No?" Christine's eyes glowed. Her worst side was uppermost now. "I don't see her hurrying to deny it!" she

sneered. "I might be only a junior, but I helped to get the school into the tennis finals, didn't I? Perhaps," she added, as Isabel Drake came forward to join her chum, "Pat's pretty sorry about that!"

"Christine, you are being ridiculous!" Lady Pat cried, reddening. "What on earth are you talking about?"

"Well, I've heard something! Never mind!" Christine said. "I didn't pay much attention to it at the time, but it looks as if there might be some truth in it. Somebody was saying this morning that you were jolly sorry it was a junior who was in the final—which means, of course, you'd sooner have Isabel playing with you, and Isabel playing in the singles—"

And then suddenly Christine was all a-quiver. With eyes starting, her electrified gaze was fastened upon the bat in Isabel Drake's hands. "You—you—you—"

she choked. "So you had it!"

Isabel blinked.

"I had what, Christine?"

"Don't act!" Christine was openly scornful now. "My bat!" she cried, and Isabel blinked as she looked down at the bat in her hand. "That's my bat! That's why I couldn't jolly well do my best! And you had it all the time! You took it from my study—"

"Christine, how dare—"

"Well, where else did you get it?"

"If you must know," Isabel said angrily, "I got it from Pat's study. I had no idea it was your bat."

Christine choked. She flung round upon Lady Pat.

"So you took it, then!" she cried. "You took it! It's a plot—a plot!"

And suddenly she snatched the bat from Isabel's hands. "You don't want me in the team! You want her—because she's a senior and I'm a junior! Well, all right!" Christine exclaimed, her chest heaving. "Jolly well have her! I'm through! I'm finished!"

"Christine!" Babs panted. "Christine, wait! Listen—"

"Oh, rats! Let the bad-tempered idiot go!" Clara Trevlyn sniffed.

There came an angry buzz of support. And as Christine fled out, slamming the gym door behind her, there came, too, a hiss from the crowd. In a moment, it seemed, Cliff House's idol had become the object of Cliff House's scorn.

Her Worst Side!



"BOTHERED if I know how it happened," Lady Patricia Northanson said a little angrily. "Christine's just an idiot! Isabel, where did you get that bat from?"

"Why, from off the top of your box there, Pat! Where you told me," Isabel Drake replied, and shook her head very puzzledly. "You see," she explained to worried-looking Barbara, "I had been repairing my own bats—I've two, you know—and as the solution wasn't dry, Pat said I could borrow one of hers. Well, I came into this study. Pat said that the bat was on top of her box, and sure enough, there it was. Barbara, you're sure it was Christine's?"

"Yes," Babs said. She was with the two prefects in their study. "It was hers all right, and there's no doubt that somebody must have taken it from Christine's study."

"But why?" Isabel Drake asked. Babs shook her head. "Why indeed?"

"Pat, let me go and talk to Christine?"

Lady Pat shrugged.

"Talk to her, by all means," she agreed. "At the same time, Barbara, you might let her know that we're not going to tolerate this. Tell her, Barbara, that if she likes to come along and apologise, we'll agree to overlook it—this time."

"Yes, Barbara, please do," Isabel said. "She's a silly girl—a foolish girl—when she lets that awful temper get the upper hand! And goodness knows where she got the idea that Pat would sooner have me than herself in the team, because I'm a prefect and she's a junior! Do try to knock that silly notion out of her head at the same time."

"I—I'll do my best," Babs promised. And with a smile she hurried away. But her heart was anxious. Oh, what a chump—what a blundering chump Christine was! To spoil herself after all these months—to crown her really dazzling performances in the previous rounds of the tournament by such an exhibition of temper!

But Babs, knowing Christine, understanding the sterling worth of that real Christine, could understand. Naturally, Christine had been nervy. Naturally, that nervousness had not been improved by the discovery that her favourite tennis-bat was missing, by the fact that she had had to play with a strange bat, by the fact that ill-natured Lydia & Co. had barracked her. Still, Christine would listen to her.

She wheeled into the Fourth Form corridor just in time to see the Hon. Beatrice Beverley coming out of Christine's study. The fair-haired Fourth-former's face was rather troubled.

"Oh, hallo, Babs!" she said. "Going to see Christine?"

"Yes. How is she?" Babs asked. Beatrice shrugged.

"Still feeling sore, I imagine. I—I've been trying to rally her a bit. It will be most awful, won't it, if she lets that silly temper of hers go and spoil all her chances—and the chances of the school? You know, Babs, she is a ripping player—remember how she wiped me out of the eliminating competition?"

Babs nodded, though she glanced a little curiously at Beatrice. The Hon. Beatrice, slightly snobbish and usually

aloof from the rest of the Form, had never revealed herself before as having either Christine or any other girl's interests deeply at heart. Still, she could understand it. Beatrice was a good table tennis player, and Beatrice, sharing the school's opinion that Christine was the best possible choice for the final, was anxious that hers and the school's chances should not be spoiled by Christine's own foolishness. She nodded.

"Well, I'll pop in and see what I can do," she said.

"Good luck!" Beatrice smiled. Babs smiled back, her heart warming a little to the girl she had never very much understood. She reached Study No. 6. She knocked on the door and went in. Christine, straightening the pin of her silver fob, which—to her great joy—she had just found underneath the armchair, flushed a little.

"Oh, Babs, I hope you haven't come to lecture me as well?"

"Chris, sit down," Babs said seriously. "No; I haven't come to lecture you, as you call it. I understand how you felt, but you're dead wrong, you know. Chris, you're sure you left that bat in this study?"

"Positive," Christine affirmed. "All right," Babs eyed her. "Chris, who told you this morning that Lady Pat was trying to push you out of the team to make way for Isabel Drake? That wasn't just a little fib, was it?"

Christine turned red. "No; it wasn't. Somebody did tell me that."

"Who?" "Oh, never mind! The—the information was given to me in confidence. Anyway, it does seem that it's right," Christine said sulkily. "Otherwise—"

"Chris!" Babs shook her head. "No, old thing, don't scowl at the fireplace; look at me. Chris, we've been great pals in the past."

"Oh, Babs—"

"And you did promise that you would try to control that temper of yours?" Christine bit her lip. That word "temper," coming from any other girl's lips, would have set her aflame. But she merely turned shamefacedly red as Babs said it.

"Well—well—" she mumbled.

"I'm still your chum, Chris. I hoped," Babs said, a little wearily, "that we'd fought that battle to a finish. You know, old thing, I wouldn't tell you a fib, and I am telling you now—straightly—that Pat and Isabel know as little about your tennis bat as you yourself do."

"Somebody else must have put it in Lady Pat's study for Isabel to find—whether for a joke or for some other reason we'll jolly well find out. But, Chris, I've just been talking to both of them. They're just as upset as you are over the silly business. And if you still want to play in the tennis finals—"

Christine looked up. "Babs, you know I do."

"Well, get to it," Babs said. "Lady Pat and Isabel are willing to forget and forgive if you'll just go along and tell them you're sorry. Now, steady!" she warned, as she saw the roses of mutiny immediately mantling the other's cheeks. "Remember, old thing! Chris, for my sake!" she urged. "For the school's sake!"

Christine gulped a little. For a moment she stood still. Temper had gone now; but, despite Babs, it had left a lingering trace of suspicion in its wake. The news that Lady Pat would rather have Isabel Drake in the team than herself still rankled.

Apart from the fact that she was the school's best tennis player, Christine could not forget that a girl in Lady Pat's position would probably rather have a fellow-prefect partnering her. And she could not forget, either, that that fellow-prefect was one of Lady Pat's own great personal friends.

Still, she said nothing. Thinking so much of Babs as she did, she was anxious to please Babs. She smiled suddenly.

"Babs, don't worry!" she said fondly. "You'll go?" Babs asked.

"I'm going—now."

And while Babs' heart leapt, Christine moved towards the door. Head in air, she walked out, a smile on her face. As she reached Study No. 1, however, the door opened, and Lydia Crossendale, in the act of coming out, stopped with a blink. Then she grinned.



CHRISTINE stared at the bat in the prefect's hand. "You—you—" she choked. "So YOU had it!" Isabel blinked. "I had what, Christine?" "Don't act!" Christine was openly scornful now. "That's my bat. You took it from my study!"

6. "Champion—But What a Temper!"

"What cheer, Temper!" she said cattily.

"Why, you—" Christine flamed. But Lydia, with a chuckle, hastily retired, banging the door in her face. Christine clenched her fists. That beastly cat! Temper—temper, was she? That was what they thought of her now! Well, hang Lydia—spiteful, gibing, sneering sneak that she was! Why take notice of a worm like that?

But she did take notice, and, rather ruffled, walked on. Nettled still, she reached the Sixth Form quarters, and, pausing outside Lady Pat's door, hastily fastened her fob, which was in danger of dropping off again. Well, now for it.

And then she heard Lady Pat speak. "Of course, you know, Isabel, that I'd rather have you—I'd rather have you than anybody else. I confess I'm worried. She's so utterly unreliable that I've got a feeling, when it comes to the pinch, she'll let us all down."

Christine clenched her hands. A hissing breath came from her lips.

For Christine, her mind full of her own woes, had no doubt whatever that Lady Pat was talking about her. Not for one moment did it occur to her hot head that she might be referring to something else. Actually, Lady Pat had got completely off the subject of the table tennis finals then.

While waiting for Christine's arrival, she and her chums had naturally drifted on to other topics, and Lady Pat was explaining to Isabel her distaste for the task of producing the next Sixth Form play, with Sarah Harrigan as assistant producer instead of Isabel herself.

But Christine, of course, was not to know that.

"Funny," Isabel said, "I've got the same feeling. But there's no doubt, Pat, that she's the best for the job, even though I'd dearly like to be in it myself—"

And then Isabel wheeled and Lady Pat jumped, as the door was suddenly flung open, and into the room stormed Christine Wilmer.

"Christine!" they both cried. "Thanks!" Christine bitterly cried.

"Eh?" "Thanks! I heard! Oh, you needn't pretend to look astonished!" Christine said scornfully. "You didn't know I was behind the door, did you?"

"Christine, what are you talking about?" Lady Pat asked angrily.

"Oh, don't pretend!" Christine said bitterly. "I heard you discussing me behind my back. Well, go on. If you want Isabel instead of me—have her! A fine pair of rotten frauds you are!" she went on witheringly. "Kidding Babs you wanted me to come and say I was sorry—"

"Christine!" Lady Pat was trembling with anger herself now. "How dare you—how dare you, I say! Explain yourself, please! Show some control, and keep that rotten temper of yours within bounds!"

Christine's eyes flamed. "My temper!" she cried. "My temper! A jolly good get-out word that, isn't it? Pretty handy for you, when I catch you out plotting and scheming, to blame it on to me, isn't it?" she flamed. "Well, hang your rotten tennis finals! Hang both of you! Plan it and play it, and jolly well lose it between you—I don't care! I'm through! I'm finished!"

"Christine!" cried a vibrant voice behind her. It was Babs. "Christine! Oh, my hat! Is that how you apologise?" Babs cried. "Apologise to them!" Christine laughed shrilly. "If there's any apolo-

gising to do, it's they who should do it to me! I'm sorry! I came with the best intentions, and heard these two scheming to dish me and put Isabel in my place! And I'm through!" "Christine," Lady Pat cried, "you will take a hundred lines! And unless—"

"Rats!" And Christine flounced off. Bitter, black mutiny in her face, she raged back to her study, which was, fortunately, empty. So this was it—this was the end! Well, blow them—both of them! And as for the lines—

"Rats to the lines!" she said savagely. "Why should I do her rotten lines? I'm through! Let them get on with it! Let them play their rotten finals! I wouldn't be in them now if they begged me to!"

But she knew, even in the midst of her tirade, that she didn't mean that. Even as she said the words, something within her seemed to contract. For Christine knew, having made the finals possible for Cliff House, that she most desperately wanted to play in them.

A Shock for Christine!



"FINISHED, Mabs?" "Nearly, old thing. Have you?"

"Five more minutes," Barbara Redfern said, and earnestly bent her chestnut head to the task

in hand. And scratch, scratch, went her pen over the impot paper in front of her.

And scratch, scratch, went Mabs' pen at the same time.

The two chums were in Study No. 4. Bessie Bunter was in that study, too, but Bessie, having been over to see her friends, the Bennetts, had consumed rather more tea than was good for her, and was now quietly snoozing in the armchair by the study fire.

Mabs and Babs were writing lines. But they were not, amazing to relate, their own lines. They were the lines given by Lady Pat to Christine Wilmer an hour ago.

Babs had seen Christine, and Christine had flatly declared she would not do those lines.

Christine still believed that Lady Pat was planning to drop her from the table tennis finals in order to replace her with Isabel Drake. Hopeless, in that mood, for Babs to argue with her. Hopeless to try to make her see any other point of view than her own, and, as Christine rather bitterly reminded her, Babs had not heard what she had heard, and so Babs, this time, could not know.

A pretty desperate situation. But Christine, as a rule, responded to good nature, and it was Babs' idea that by doing her lines, and then presenting them to her she might soften the harshness of that turbulent girl's outlook.

"Well, there," she said, straightening up with a little sigh. "That's done. Finished, old Mabs? Oh, thanks! Come on!" Babs added, and gathered the sheets. "We'll take them along to her."

Mabs nodded. They trotted out of the study, just as Bessie Bunter, with a sleepy grunt, turned on her side. At the door of Study No. 6 they halted and went in. Christine, still sitting by the fire, turned towards them a rather petulant face. She flushed.

"Oh, y-yes, Babs!" "Done your lines?" Babs asked. "No."

"Well, don't worry. Here they are." Babs laughed as she placed them on the table. "Mabs and I have done them for you," she said. "Now just run them along to Lady Pat, Chris."

Christine stared. "But, Babs, I told you I wasn't going to do them!"

"That's why," Babs said, "we've done them for you. No, no thanks, old cuckoo! And for goodness' sake," she said anxiously, "map out of it, Chris! What about the finals?"

"I've told you I'm not taking part in the finals!"

"But you are!" Babs corrected. "Now, Chris, don't be kiddish! That's just silly. You've put Cliff House in the finals, haven't you? Who else can play half as well as you can? And what about the Form? What about the school? Chris, old thing, come on!" she urged, and put a gentle arm round the sulky one's shoulders. "Be a sport!"

Christine bit her lip. She looked strangely at Babs. Oh, why was it that she could never lose her temper with Babs? Why was it that Babs always had this softening influence upon her?

"All—all right," she said. "Oh, Babs, you're a brick!"

"And don't forget me," Mabs chipped in, with a chuckle. "I'm half a one, too, you know. I did half the lines."

Christine smiled. With the lines in her hands, she went out. Babs beamed at her chum.

"Done it," she said. "Silly old Christine! What a beastly shame she does let that silly temper run away with her. But I do wish," she added worriedly, "we could coax her out of this silly belief that Lady Pat and Isabel are plotting against her. She won't be really happy until she's convinced of that."

"No," Mabs agreed. "But who the dickens, Babs, told her the lie in the first place?"

"That," Babs said, and her face became rather grim, "is something we're going to find out. Though I'm blessed," she added, with a shake of her head, "if I can see any reason in it. It's not as if anybody could benefit by putting Christine up against Isabel."

"Only," Mabs said, "Isabel herself, because if Christine doesn't play, she'd play in her place. But, of course, it's not Isabel."

Christine herself reappeared then. She looked a little happier.

"What did Lady Pat say?" asked Babs.

"She didn't say anything, because she wasn't there," Christine said. "I gave the lines to Mary Buller instead. And—and thanks, Babs and Mabs," she said awkwardly. "It was jolly decent of you. I—I feel a bit of a brute."

"Then," Babs laughed, "let's forget it, shall we? You're going on with the tournament—"

"Well, yes, if—they want me to."

Babs looked at Mabs. There was an unspoken message in her eyes which Mabs read aright. Christine, in this more melting mood, was an easier subject to handle. Now, Babs thought swiftly, was her chance to consolidate the position, and put everything back on a serene and happy footing once more. Supposing she could prevail upon Isabel to have a chummy word with Christine?

"Christine," she said swiftly, "will you and Mabs go to the Common-room and get the dominoes out?" Dominoes

was one of Christine's favourite indoor games. "I'll join you later."

Mabs nodded, realising aright that Babs had some new little wheeze up her sleeve. Off, with a bright smile, Babs trotted, going her way to the Sixth Form corridor. At the door of Isabel's study she knocked, and, receiving the prefect's invitation to come in, entered.

Isabel, thoughtfully packing new table tennis balls into one of the long cardboard tubes in which they had just arrived, smiled at her.

"Oh, Barbara, hallo! Sit down," she said, with a smile. "Like my collection?" she added, and dimpled at four of the tubes which lay on the table. "Thought I'd better get in a new stock, in case we ran short," she said. "What is it Barbara?"

"About Christine—"
"Oh, what about Christine?"
"Isabel," Babs hesitated, "you—you haven't really got anything against Chris, have you?"

Isabel shook her head.
"Barbara, no. What should I have against the girl? I like her; and goodness knows where she got the silly idea she has in mind now. Naturally," Isabel said frankly, "I'd like to be in the team, but when it comes to a question of the best player for the school—why, then, I've just got to take a back seat."

Babs looked at the table tennis ball containers.

"And—and you'd like to straighten things out with her?" she asked.

"If I could—yes," Isabel frowned. "But it's not easy to do that, Barbara, when she flies off in a paddy at the least thing I say or do. If you've any suggestion—"

"I have," Babs smiled happily, gratefully. "Isabel, I believe she'll come round now. It just wants some sort of—of gesture from you to make her completely happy again. It's awful cheek, I know, expecting you to make the first move, but if you would, I'm sure it would do the trick. Supposing," Babs said thoughtfully, "you gave her a little present?"

"Present?"
"Of say—a tube of those table tennis balls?"

Isabel laughed.
"Well, if you think that would do the trick, take her one with pleasure, and my love," she said, and picked one up. But Babs swiftly shook her head.

"No, Isabel; you make the gift," she said. "She'd appreciate it more coming direct from you. But don't rush off with it all at once," she added. "Wait till she gets settled down in the Common-room. Then would you come along, say, in twenty minutes' time?"

"Right-ho!" Isabel nodded. "I've got to go and see Miss Bullivant, anyway. I'll trot along after that. And thanks, Barbara. It really is a good idea."

Babs smiled. She turned to leave. She did not notice the figure which suddenly leapt away from the door as she approached it.

Feeling pleased with her little scheme, Babs hurried off to the Fourth Form Common-room. It was fairly full, and Christine and Mabs were already engaged in the first game of dominoes.

"Barbara, you playing?" Christine asked, looking up.

"No; I'll watch," Babs said. "I'll take a turn later."

She smiled, her eyes on the door. One or two girls were glancing at Christine. One or two girls were

frowning at Christine, not yet having forgotten her display of the afternoon.

Fortunately, however, Lydia Crossendale was not there, nor, for the moment, were any of Lydia's so-called "set." Ten minutes went by, and then the door opened. But it was not Isabel Drake who entered. It was the Hon. Beatrice Beverley.

She cast a comprehending glance at Christine and Mabs. She looked at Babs with a swift relieved smile. Then she tripped over to her.

"Manage to calm her down, then?" she whispered.

"I think so," Babs said.
"Oh, good old Babs! That's topping."

And Beatrice beamed.
Babs smiled, too. Certainly there was nothing now to suggest that Christine bore even a lingering trace of bad humour. Another five minutes went by. The door opened again. And this time it was Isabel, carrying a new tube of balls in her hand.

"Oh, Christine!" she cried.
Christine, absorbed in her game, looked up. Then she flushed as she saw the visitor.

"No, don't get up," Isabel said. "I

Clara Trevlyn said eagerly. "There's an old bat on the table there. You can try them out."

Christine gulped again. She looked just a little ashamed now. That Isabel, whom she had accused of being her enemy, could act like this. Oh, stuff! She had just been a spiteful, contemptuous little idiot. Babs was right, after all!

And she really did want some new balls. She had been thinking, indeed, of getting a new tube from Hollands in Courtfield.

She returned the tube just as Lydia Crossendale, accompanied by Frances Frost, came into the room. Somewhat enviously the other girls gathered



BABS drew her hand across the insult which had been left for Christine, and then looked at the smudge on her fingers. Here was proof that it had only recently been done. But would that help her to discover the guilty girl and thus quieten her furious chum? She fervently hoped so; for Christine in her present angry mood might do anything.

just brought these along. I thought," she added, "you might like a few extra balls—and I've got such a stock, you know. Would you like them, Christine?"

Christine stared at her wonderingly.
"You mean—you—you're giving them to me?"

"What else?" Isabel asked. "Just a little present," she laughed. "Here we are, Christine."

For a moment Christine hesitated, her face turning a fiery red. Babs touched her arm.

"Lucky old you, Chris!" she cried.
"Well—" Christine faltered, and then drew a deep breath. "If you really mean it—"

"Of course, goose!" And Isabel laughed musically. "And please don't thank me," she said. "I'm sure you'll make better use of them than ever I could—and you'll be using a few between now and the final, won't you? Let me know if I can do anything else for you," she added graciously, as she walked out of the room.

"Well!" Christine breathed, and darted a stupefied look at the tube. "Babs, I—I say, that's jolly decent of her!"

"Oh, let's have a look, Chris!"

round her as she shook six new balls on to the table. Then she stared.
"I say, what's this?" she cried.

For on each of those balls, hastily daubed in some dark colour, was a capital letter.

"Funny," said Babs, and stared.
"M, P, E—there are two E's, Christine—T, R. Blessed if I know—"

"Oh, my aunt!" cried Lydia Crossendale.
"What?"

"Don't you see"—and Lydia suddenly grinned. "They make a word! Here, wait a minute, let me arrange them!" And stepping forward, Lydia caught up the balls, putting them side by side—all but the last one, which Christine held in her hand. "It is—yes!" she cried, and then burst into a peal of laughter.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

For the word, as Christine put down the last ball, was:

TEMPER.
"Jolly cute way of telling you what she thinks of you!" giggled Frances Frost.

But Christine was standing still. Her face had gone a deathly white. Even Babs was startled; even Babs was shaken, wondering all in a moment if there was, after all, something in what

8 "Champion—But What a Temper!"

Christine believed. Then suddenly, passionately, Christine snatched up the balls. With trembling hands she rammed them into the tube again.

"Christine," Babs said, "where—"
Christine was starting towards the door. Too late Babs jumped after her as the door violently closed. Almost at a run Christine stormed up to Isabel Drake's study; without troubling to knock, she slung open the door.

Isabel was there. She turned with a start.

"Why, Christine—"
"You—you cat!" choked Christine. "You awful, insulting, spiteful cat!" And back went the arm which held the tube, forward it shot again, and the six balls jerked out, hitting Isabel in the face. "And that," Christine cried, "is what I think of you—and your insults! And take that, too!" she added tempestuously, as she flung the container after the balls.

Babs is Puzzled!



BUT before Christine could retreat through the door, after that violent outburst, Isabel had jumped forward. With her own anger almost equalling the fury of the Fourth Former, she caught Christine by the shoulders. Her eyes blazed.

"Christine, you—you wretch!"
"Well, you asked for it!" Christine cried.

"I?" Isabel eyed her angrily. "So this is what comes of trying to be kind to you? This is what comes of trying to please you? Christine, I don't want to be harsh. You know, if I reported you for this, Miss Primrose would probably give you a severe detention—"

"Well, hang you, report!" Christine flamed. "I don't care! I've told you—" she shouted, and then started and paused as a new form entered—Barbara. "I—" she said, and tried to shake herself free. "Let me go!" she blazed out.

"Oh, my hat, Christine!" Babs cried in horror. "What have you done?"

But she saw that immediately she asked the question. The little, white celluloid balls, one or two of them still rolling across the floor, told their own tale.

"Christine, you will apologise for that," Isabel said grimly.

"I won't!" Christine flamed.
"Oh, my goodness! Wait a jiffy!" Babs cried in desperation. "Christine, what a hot-headed idiot you are! Isabel, I think you ought to know," she added. "When Christine turned those balls out, each one was lettered, and when the letters were placed together they made up a word—temper!"
"Oh!" Isabel paused. "And you thought I'd done that?" she asked quietly.

"Well, who else?" Christine blazed.
"Christine, please! Isabel, you don't know anything about it!" Babs asked.
"Of course I don't!" Isabel flushed. "The balls were perfectly all right when I packed them in the tube. There wasn't a mark on them. If they were tampered with, they must have been tampered with in the interval I went to see Miss Bullivant—which was just before I came into the Common-room. Still," she added bitterly, "I shall know better than to make Christine another present!"

"But look here—" Christine spluttered.

"Are you going to apologise?"

"No!"

"All right!" Isabel's eyes gleamed. "Then, sorry as I am to punish you, Christine, you will take a hundred lines. If," she added, "you care to come and apologise before call-over, I will let you off. Not otherwise."

Christine flung her a savage look. Then, with a shrug, she stormed out of the study. But Babs stayed. Babs, as a matter of fact, had just picked up one of the table tennis balls, and was examining it closely. She looked up suddenly at the ruffled prefect.

"Isabel, do you use poster colours?"
"Poster colours?" The prefect frowned. "That's some sort of paint artists use, isn't it? I'm afraid not, Barbara. Art isn't my strong suit, especially now I'm swotting physics. Why?"

"I just wondered," the Junior School captain said thoughtfully, looking at the ball. "Whoever printed these letters used poster colour. There's not a great deal of that in the school, because the usual colour we use in art classes is just ordinary water colour. Isabel, can I have this ball?"

"You can have the whole lot, as far as I'm concerned," Isabel said. "And if you're going to Christine—"

"Well, Isabel?"
"Just tell her I'm in earnest about those lines—or the apology. And you might tell her, Barbara, if she goes on at this rate she'll be getting herself expelled from the tournament altogether."

Babs nodded. Poor Isabel! She did look so dreadfully upset. With the ball in her hand she went off, her brows rather fiercely corrugated. If she had entertained any doubts before that someone was plotting to drive a wedge between Christine and Isabel, she was utterly convinced now. What further proof could she want?

But who was it? Who, beside herself and Faith Ashton and Peggy Preston, used poster colour?

Faith. Was it Faith? Babs paused—until she remembered that Faith had been in Courtfield all this afternoon, and was there still. That certainly cleared her from a possible list of suspects. It was absurd to suspect Peggy, of course, so that seemed to eliminate every girl in the Fourth. Some girl in one of the other Forms, perhaps. But who? And in the name of all that was mysterious, for what motive?

The clue, such as it was, did not seem to lead to any goal. The more Babs thought about it the more she was thrown back upon one possibility. The answer to the question, she felt, lay with Christine herself. Some girl that morning had deliberately tried to poison Christine's mind against Isabel Drake. Could these other happenings be the work of that girl?

Determined to find out, she went to Christine's study. Christine bit her lip as she came in.

"Oh, Babs, I—I'm sorry—"

"Sorry, old thing? That means you're going to apologise?"

"No, it doesn't!" A momentary scowl flitted across Christine's good-looking face. "I'm not going to apologise! I don't care what you say, Babs—now! Oh, I know you like Isabel, and that you're worried; but you're not the one who's being hit at. She's just dead up against me. She's jolly well doing all this because she wants my place!"

Babs sighed.
"All right," she said soothingly. "Shall we let it go at that—for the moment? Perhaps," she added, "I may prove to you before long that you're wrong; but if you want to believe it, believe it. The only thing I do ask, Babs went on, "is that there shall be no

more talk of chucking up the tournament. And, Chris, old thing, don't forget the lines."
"Hang the lines!" Christine said savagely.

"You're not going to do them?"

"No!" Christine snapped.

"All right!" Babs sighed again. "Then Mabs and I will have to do them for you." She saw the flush that stained the other's cheeks and pressed home her advantage. "If you're keen on running yourself into trouble, and perhaps getting thrown out of the tournament, we aren't," she said. "We've got the school to consider."

Christine glowered.

"Oh rats! Well, in that case, I'll do them!" she said huffily.

"Good girl!" Babs laughed. "Chris, old thing," she added keenly, "won't you tell me who told you this morning that Isabel was trying to bag your place in the table tennis team?"

Christine coloured.

"Babs, you know I can't. I gave my word. Anyway, what's that got to do with it?"

"A lot, I think. Chris, just me?" Babs pleaded.

But Christine shook her head. However much she cared for Babs, she would not break her word.

"Babs, please don't ask me," she said.

Babs nodded. She knew better, after that, than to press the point.

"All right, then. But you'll do the lines, Christine?"

"Y-yes," Christine said. "But—but I won't take them along. The less I see of Isabel Drake the better it's going to be for all of us!" she added grimly. "If you wouldn't mind trotting them in to her—"

"Pleasure!" said Babs. "Bring them along when you've finished them."

And, with a nod, she strolled out, while Christine, drawing paper and pen towards her, started there and then upon her task. In Study No. 4 Babs found Mabs, and in a few moments had put her chum in possession of all the latest developments. Mabs shook her head.

"A queer business," she said. "Dashed queer business! Because, Babs, what can anyone, except Isabel or Ida Greenaway, gain by getting Christine out of the team? And that seems to be the object, doesn't it? But there's one thing we can do," she added thoughtfully, "though I'm bothered if I see a way of doing it. It's pretty certain that Isabel is like a red rag to a bull to Christine at the moment. We've got to keep them apart."

"H'm!" Babs said.

Not until that moment had she thought of that aspect of the situation. That certainly was true. Christine, in her present mood, would be better kept out of Isabel's sight, innocent though that kindly meaning prefect was.

And yet, if that was to happen, what about table tennis practice—and, particularly, what about to-morrow, which was the last half-holiday before the tournament itself? Both Isabel and Christine would want to practise. The only place they could practise properly was the gym—where, of course, they would be together.

"But—well," Babs said, with sudden inspiration, "why worry? You're thinking of practice, of course, Mabs?"

"Yes, of course," Mabs answered. "There's the Friar-dale Hall," Babs said thoughtfully. "That's not used by the village girls in the afternoon. Several of us are members of the Friar-dale Girls' Club, though, goodness knows, we never use the hall. It's got

two table tennis tables, too. Suppose we try it out?"

"Jolly good!" Mabs said relievedly. "My hat! Why didn't I think of that in the first place?"

But she need hardly have reproached herself for that. Except to pay the subscription of a shilling a year, none of the girls at Cliff House ever thought of using the village girls' hall.

There must have been fifty members of the Friardale Girls' Club at Cliff House—and quite a goodly number from the neighbouring schools round about, the subscription being taken out merely to help the village girls to maintain their club, which, without such outside support, would have died a languishing death. Still, for once there was no reason why they should not avail themselves of the privilege of membership.

"Apart from which," Mabs said keenly, "there might be other girls there who would give Christine a game. I believe Gladys Fitch, of Courtfield, belongs to the village club. Don't like her much. Do you? Bit of a swanker she always strikes me. Still, she's one of the finalists for her school, isn't she? It's just likely she might be there."

Babs nodded again. She looked keen then. Like Mabs, she hadn't much use for conceited Gladys Fitch but there was no arguing with the fact that Gladys was a superb table tennis player, and had, in fact, won this same important competition last year. What a rehearsal for the great event if they could persuade Gladys to meet Christine!

And so that plan was decided upon. Christine, when it was put to her, was delighted. Lady Pat, when Babs outlined it to her, nodded her agreement, for Lady Pat was as desperately keen as Babs that there should be no more friction between Isabel and the school champion.

And so next afternoon, immediately after dinner, Christine, Babs, Mabs, and Clara wended their way to the village club premises.

Christine, armed with her favourite bat, and with her famous fob pinned to her dress, was in high feather.

They reached the club—a long, rambling Army hut type of building, very roomy and commodious, which was accommodated in the grounds of St. Mary's Church. They went in, rather surprised to find so many girls there.

Quite a sprinkling of Cliff House there was, and a fair number of Whitechester girls, and several Courtfield girls, and even one or two from distant Kenmarsh. There were two tables, and both of them were occupied at the moment.

"Busy, eh?" Mabs chuckled. "And—I say, Babs, look who's there!"

"Gladys Fitch!" Babs breathed. Gladys Fitch was there. A rather plumpish girl, Gladys, with decidedly unpleasant cast of countenance. Apparently, she had just finished a game, for she was sitting, bat in hand, on a seat, and another girl, her back turned towards Babs, was bending over her. The other girl was easily recognisable as Beatrice Beverley of the Fourth. Clara raised her eyebrows.

"Didn't know Beatrice knew her," she muttered. "Where do we hang our clothes, Babs?"

But Babs did not reply immediately. She was still looking at Gladys Fitch. As she looked, Gladys' glance strayed towards her. She gave a slight start, and then anxiously muttered something to Beatrice Beverley. At once Beatrice swung round, for a moment looking flustered. Then, with a smile, she came forward.

"Whv, Christine!" she cried. "And

Babs! Fancy meeting you here! Going to play?"

"If there's a chance," Christine said. "Oh, yes, there is—of course. I've got the table after this game's finished. Christine, play me?" she added eagerly. "Challenge accepted," Christine laughed. "But I warn you, I'm in form."

She was. Five minutes later the match was played. Christine, on top of herself, easily smashed her way to victory, making Beatrice, good player as she was, appear the veriest novice. Beatrice, with good-natured grace, retired. Clara took her place. No mean exponent of table tennis was Clara, but Clara might have been a child in arms the way Christine treated her. Christine was just wonderful.

Babs glowed. What a champion! On this form Christine could have beaten a professional. She looked round. Really, there seemed nobody worth Christine's attention—until she remembered the crack player of Courtfield. But of Gladys Fitch there was no sign.

"I say, what about challenging her?" she asked eagerly. "Anybody know where she is?"

"She just went to the cloak-room, I think," another girl said.

Babs dimpled. Off she went. The cloak-room was not a large or roomy apartment, and was just full of clothes, supported on great racks strung from one side of the room to the other.

As Babs entered and looked round she heard a voice. It was a voice which came from behind a line of coats a few paces to her right.

"So," it said, "I shan't say good-bye to you, Gladys. I don't think, in the circles, it would be wise if Babs & Co. thought we knew each other, do you?"

The voice was that of Beatrice Beverley.

"Well, perhaps not," came Gladys Fitch's answer. "But—" She paused. "You're sure everything's all right? How will you let me know?"

"Phone you," Beatrice said. "Oh, yes, of course!"

Babs flushed, realising then that she was overhearing conversation not intended for her ears. She hesitated, then, rather wonderingly, retraced her steps. Funny, she thought—jolly funny. What a queer girl Beatrice Beverley could be at times! Why shouldn't she and her chums know that Beatrice and Gladys were friends?

It seemed absurd to Babs, who was too proud of any of her friendships to even dream of making a secret of one of them.

A Serious Warning!



WELL, it wasn't her business, of course—and because it wasn't her business, Babs dismissed that rather peculiar little conversation from her mind.

She strolled back into the games hall, and there she waited until Gladys, unaccompanied by Beatrice, came out of the cloak-room. But Gladys, when she was invited to play with Christine, disdainfully shook her head.

"Thank you—no!" she said. "But, Gladys, if you win your semifinal, you'll meet her in the final of the singles," said Babs.

"All the more reason," Gladys retorted, "why we shouldn't meet beforehand. I should hate," she said, with gentle insinuation, "to give one of your candidates an inferiority complex! Anyway, I'm playing Linda Gay, of Whitechester."

A little red-eared, Babs retired. What

a swanker Gladys was! Still, it didn't matter—for who should enter the room at that moment but Flora Cann of the Lower Fifth, and Flora immediately challenged Christine to a game. While Linda and Gladys used one table, Christine and Flora used the other, and Babs, keenly watching both games, smiled.

For if Christine was playing on top of her form, so was Gladys, her probable opponent. If Christine played against her like this, the result was a foregone conclusion.

A fierce attacking player was Flora, but Christine chopped back her hardest drives with ease, and then attacked in turn, beating the captain of the Lower Fifth all ends up.

"Well, you're too good!" Flora said ruefully. "My hat, I'd like to know who could beat you on that form"—and she gazed challengingly at Gladys, who, finishing her game, left with a faint sneer on her face.

After a few moments Beatrice followed her. Again Babs flushed as she found herself thinking of the peculiar companionship between these two. How very, very odd!

But it was time for the Cliff House chums to be going then. They walked back to Cliff House, Christine joking and laughing, very, very pleased indeed with herself, and in the most serene good humour.

That good humour lasted until they arrived at Cliff House. But it vanished instantly when, meeting Lydia Crossendale and Freda Ferriers strolling across Big Hall, Lydia gave a sudden and affected jump of fright, and, clutching Freda's bony shoulders, pretended to hide behind her.

"Ware, bogy!" she palpitated.

"Has she got it with her, Freda?"

"Got what?" Freda grinned.

"Her temper!"

Christine stopped dead; her face suddenly turned white. She took one furious step towards the tormentor; but Babs caught her arm—she shook her head.

"No, Christine, don't! She's only being catty!"

"But I'm not going—"

"Yes, you are!" Babs said soothingly, and signed to Clara to take Christine's other arm. "You're just going to take no notice, old thing. Lydia's only egging you on."

"I am the girl with the terrible temper!" Lydia chanted.

Christine gritted her teeth; but before she could say anything else Babs and Clara had rushed her off. Still somewhat ruffled, she found herself in Study No. 4.

"Now, tea," Babs said brightly. "Mabs, wake old Bessie up! Hi, Bessie, come out of Dreamland! Here's two boblets, old thing! Go down to the tuckshop and get in some grubbins! Christine, help get the tea," she added—"knives, forks, and all the rest of the stuff. Now, Mabs, cloth, please!"

Christine laughed. That sudden diverting of her energies into another channel had the effect at once of banishing her gloom.

Very busy indeed the cheery Babs kept her until, by the time tea was ready, Christine had completely forgotten the Lydia incident. And, just to make certain that there should be no repetition of that incident, Babs and Mabs and Clara kept Christine after tea, talking table tennis and lawn tennis in the study.

But what happened in the dormitory afterwards spoiled it all.

And the fault again was Lydia's—Lydia, who took such a malicious delight in following up any persecution

to "Champion—But What a Temper!"

which affected a member of Babs & Co.'s circle.

"Yes," Lydia was saying in hushed, shocked tones to Frances Frost—"yes, it's true, you know. It's a new game—a brand new game."

Christine, cleaning her teeth before getting into bed, pretended not to hear.

"They used to call it table tennis," Lydia went on. "Then Christine started playing it, you know. But Christine, of course, played differently from anyone else—oh, my little dears, you should just have seen how she played it! And because," Lydia added, "she played it in this most extraordinary way, they found a new name for her particular game. They altered it to temper tennis. Didn't they, Temper?" she added, with a malicious grin.

"Lydia!" Babs cried sharply. For Babs had seen, as Lydia had seen, that flush mounting the nape of Christine's neck. She had seen the sudden quiver Christine had given as she paused in her tooth-cleaning operations, and she knew that Lydia's story had stung home. But she wasn't prepared for what happened at the end of it. Neither, alas! was Miss Bullivant.

For that mistress entered the dormitory just as Christine furiously jerked her glass of cloudy tooth-water at Lydia—and the water splashed over Miss Bullivant!

"Christine!" she gasped. "Oh mum-my hat!" Christine stutted. "That—that wasn't meant for you, Miss Bullivant!"

"I should think—I should hope it wasn't!" Miss Bullivant said furiously. "Pooh! Give me a towel, Barbara! Who it was intended for does not matter. The fact is"—furiously towelling herself—"that you threw it. I have told you before I will not have such horseplay in the dormitory. Christine, you will take a bad conduct mark and a hundred lines. And the next time anything like this happens," Miss Bullivant hooted—"the next time, Christine, I will detain you! Let that be a warning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Lydia. "And, Lydia, you can take fifty lines for laughing!" Miss Bullivant rasped. Lydia's laugh suddenly froze on her unpleasant face.

"Oh, I say—" she scowled. "And do not answer me back! Take a further fifty lines for daring to protest!" Miss Bullivant raved. "Get into bed all of you—and take that sulky look off your face, Lydia!"

Clara chuckled. Christine gave a twisted sort of smile. Lydia, scowling more ferociously than ever, turned away, while Miss Bullivant, towel in hand and a gleam of wrath to her eyes, impatiently watched the Form as they settled down. Then she switched out the lights.

"Good-night!" she said. "Good-night, Miss Bullivant." Miss Bullivant darted a final searching eye around the dormitory, and then turned to the door.

"Beastly old haybag!" growled Lydia, when the irate mistress had gone. "Still, I must say, if you can't shoot better than that in the tennis final, Temper—Wow!" she ended, spluttering. "Who threw that wet sponge?"

"I did," Clara Trevlyn said, "and I've got my shoe here ready to follow it up. Lydia, please do say 'Temper' again!" she begged sweetly. "I'm aching to aim!"

But Lydia, who knew the Tomboy's little ways, only savagely grunted.

Christine Tries!



"O H! Wuff!" laughed Barbara Redfern breathlessly, and with her face all flushed and hot, and her chestnut curls blowing in the breeze, she patted her chest. "A good run, Chris—jolly good!" she panted. "Enjoy it?"

"Did I?" Christine laughed. And as flushed and breathless as Babs, she looked exceedingly pretty. "But what about going back now?"

Babs nodded. Rising-bell had just gone. Christine and Babs had been up half an hour, however, putting in some excellent work on the Cliff House cinder track. Babs' idea that had been—not because she thought Christine required extra training, but simply to have her out of the dormitory and so prevent any further renewal of hostilities between her and Lydia Crossendale in the morning.

So far, that plan had succeeded admirably.

"Better get in," Babs said. "Chance for us to have a whack at those lines before brekker. Game, Chris?"

Christine smiled. "But, Babs, I don't want you to—" "Oh, stuff! Come on!" Babs said. "Many hands make light work, you know. We'll do them in your study," she added.

Christine smiled. What a world of affection there was in the fleeting glance she bestowed upon Babs then! What a wealth of appreciation in that slight, soft pressure she gave to Babs' arm as they turned their faces schoolwards again. Happy was Christine—and laughing was Christine until, nearing the Fourth Form corridor, a graceful figure came sweeping towards them:

Christine suddenly stiffened; all the happiness faded from her features as she found herself looking into the face of Isabel Drake.

"Oh, good-morning!" Isabel said, a trifle awkwardly. "Been out for a run, Barbara?"

"Yes, thanks, Isabel! It was lovely!" Babs laughed.

"Good stuff!" Isabel chuckled, though it was noticeable she addressed her remarks only to Babs—for fear, perhaps, of offending the decidedly temperamental Christine. "Well, good luck!" she smiled; and then, as Miss Charmant appeared at the end of the corridor, hurried off with a nod after the mistress. Babs smiled at Christine.

"Cheery, isn't she?" she asked. "All right," Christine unenthusiastically answered.

To herself Babs grimaced. Obviously, Christine was not altogether in humour with Isabel again.

In silence now they continued on their way up the corridor.

Christine pushed open the door of Study No. 5. One pace she took into the study, and then halted as if she had suddenly been turned to stone.

For on the table, propped up against a pile of books, was a card, and on that card, executed again in poster colour, was a scrawled message.

"Temper Wilmer," it read, "why don't you get out of the tournament and make way for your betters?" There was no signature.

Something like a hiss came from Christine's lips. Her eyes suddenly flaming, she took a step forward.

"That cat!" she cried. "That cat! So this is why she was messing about here this morning, was it? But she's not going to get away with this!"

"Christine!" pleaded Babs. "Christine, what are you going to do?"

"I'm going," Christine raved, "to jolly well ram this down Isabel's neck! I'm going—"

"No!" Babs cried sharply. "Christine, if you do, I'll never, never speak to you again!"

"But she did it!" "She didn't!" Babs' lips set. "Chris, let me look at that card!"

"But, Babs—" "Let me have a look!" Babs insisted. Christine moved to one side, though her eyes were still gleaming.

Babs looked at the card. The poster colour was the same. She drew her hand across the lettering. It smudged, proclaiming plainly that it had only recently been done. But by whom?

"Well?" Christine glowered. "It—it's just been done," Babs said. "Of course it's just been done!"

Christine flamed out. "She did it—then she brought it here. Who else could have done it? Who else would want me to get out of the table tennis finals? Wait till I see her! Just wait—"

There was a knock on the door. It opened. And Christine quivered as if she had received an electric shock when the door opened and into the room looked—

Isabel Drake! "Oh, Barbara," she said, "I meant to ask you—Hallo, what on earth's that?" she added, as she stared at the insulting message.

Christine's lips curled disdainfully. "You don't know!" she asked.

"I? Why, of course I don't—"

"No?" Christine flamed out then. "No!" she cried, and her face was on fire.

"A nice sneaking way of doing things, that is, isn't it? But I tell you now, Isabel Drake, I wouldn't resign from the team if I had fifty rotten anonymous letters! And don't think," she added violently, "you're going to get away with this! If you can do rotten tricks, so can I! I've stood enough—"

"Christine!" cried Isabel furiously. "Oh, please, Isabel!" exclaimed Babs.

And she nodded, desperately hoping that the prefect would understand. "She—she's had a bit of a shock!" she muttered. "Let me talk to her, Isabel, please!"

The note in her voice was one almost of agony.

Isabel paused. But she understood then. As prefect she should have taken action for that outburst. But she remembered in time. Her presence at the moment was only provoking Christine, and, goodness knows, Christine, believing she was the author of the insult, had sufficient cause to forget duty and discipline. She nodded.

"All right, Christine, when you've calmed down I'll talk to you," she said quickly. "Meantime, I know nothing about that insult, whatever you may think."

"Fib—" began Christine; but Babs silenced her with an angry look.

And Isabel left the study. "Well, she is a fibber!" Christine said defiantly at Babs.

"Chris, I'm sorry!" Babs despairingly shook her head. "I thought you knew Isabel better than that. Still, never mind. Now, for goodness' sake, you chump, calm down! I'm going to try to find out who wrote this!"

Babs did—but her investigations led her nowhere. Her one and only clue to the writer of that card was the poster colour. The colour was dark purple—a rather unusual shade—but though Babs made the most careful inquiries, she got nowhere. A sidelight on the

mystery, however, was shed by Miss Ayres, the drawing mistress, when Babs spoke to her.

"Purple poster colour?" she said. "Why, yes! I remember now. A jar of that is missing from the studio. Somebody must have taken it."

So that was where the poster colour was coming from? The unknown artist had stolen it during art class. The discovery, though interesting, didn't get Babs any farther.

Perhaps it was natural that Babs should suspect Lydia Crossendale. But when she made inquiries she discovered that Lydia had been the last out of bed that morning. Seeing that the poster colour had still been wet, and, therefore, freshly executed, that certainly cleared Lydia.

But the incident left its mark upon Christine. In class she was rather brooding—a fact which Lydia & Co. were quick to notice and to comment on in malicious whispers.

After lessons, Babs and Mabs, immediately taking possession of Christine, rushed her off to the bicycle-shed—apparently to help Babs repair a puncture, but in reality to get Christine out of her tormentor's way.

Sauntering back to dinner, Babs looked at her stormy chum.

"Christine, all right now?" she asked anxiously.

"Y-yes, I—I suppose so." Christine bit her lip. "Babs, I'm sorry—sorry about this beastly temper of mine. But that doesn't mean," she added, bitterness in her voice, "that I've forgiven Isabel Drake. I'm only sorry because it makes me feel so rotten—because of you, old thing. Oh, goodness! I—I wish I could keep it under control."

"Keep on trying," Babs counselled. "It's pretty tough, I know. But keep on, old Chris. And"—she frowned—"keep out of Lydia's way."

Christine nodded. They went in. After dinner Christine was the first out of the room, and they did not see her again until afternoon lessons. Then, once again, she vanished, and Babs, who had discovered that Isabel was not using the gym, went in search of her.

She ran her to earth eventually in the library, where she found Christine busily writing.

"Chris, whatever have you been doing?" she asked.

Christine smiled—rather wearily.

"I'm just finishing my lines for Miss Bullivant," she said, and nodded towards the sheets. "Apart from that, I'm taking your advice and keeping out of Lydia's way. That cat passed me a letter in class this afternoon—you didn't see it, did you? I tore it up without even looking at it."

"Good girl!" Babs glowed. "That's the stuff. But"—and she started—"I say, Chris, what have you done with your tennis fob?"

Christine, glancing down at her blouse, jumped.

"Oh, my goodness!" she cried in dismay. "I must have dropped it somewhere." And suddenly, most concernedly, she started up. "It—it must be in the study!" she cried frantically.

"Well, come on; we'll go and look for it," Babs said.

Christine nodded. The loss of her mascot fob was a tragedy which even Babs could not appreciate at its fullest worth. Christine would rather have lost a term's pocket money than that fob—and with the table tennis finals coming off to-morrow the fob had never seemed so important or so significant as it was now. In a perfect flutter she snatched up her sheets of lines and hurried with Babs to Study No. 6.

They searched, but of the missing fob there was no trace.

"But it must be here—it must!" Christine said frantically. "I remember I had it on before I went to the library. Babs, look down the side of the arm-chair there. I was sitting in that. Is it there?"

"No," Babs said. "But, Chris—" "Then perhaps it—it's somewhere about here," Christine said, getting on her knees and looking under the bureau. "I remember now I dropped something behind the bureau and I was rooting about on the floor trying to find it. Babs, no, it—it isn't here!" she cried.

"Then perhaps you dropped it in the corridor," Babs suggested. "Oh, cheer up, Chris! Somebody's bound to have found it. Look here, I'll go and make inquiries," she added. "I— Oh! Is—Isabel!" she faltered.

For the door had suddenly opened. Isabel Drake stood on the threshold—an Isabel whose face was pale and stern with anger. She did not even look at Babs. But she strode straight up to the distressed Christine.

"Christine!" she cried.

Christine stiffened.

"Well, what do you want?"

"You know very well what I want!" Isabel's eyes glimmered. "You threatened, this morning, didn't you, to get

"But surely, Isabel—" Babs started anxiously.

"Barbara, I am sorry. But this time I cannot allow interference," Isabel said. "Christine, obsessed by this foolish idea of hers, warned me she would have her revenge upon me. She has had it. Deliberately she has broken open my box in my study! Deliberately she has taken my bats! She knows as well as I do how difficult it is to play with strange bats. Christine, I give you one minute before I report this matter," she added. "Where are those bats?"

"I don't know!" Christine flamed. "And I don't jolly well care! I haven't even seen your beastly bats!"

"Christine, do not tell lies!"

"Why—"

"I repeat—do not tell—" and then Isabel reeled; Babs gave a cry. For



CHRISTINE stared up at the prefect she suspected of plotting against her. "Well, what do you want?" she asked curtly. "You know very well what I want," snapped Isabel. "You threatened to get your own back on me. Now, apparently, you've done it. What have you done with my table tennis bats?"

have you done with my table tennis bats?"

your own back on me? Now, apparently, you've done it! What have you done with my table tennis bats?"

Too Much of a Temper!



CHRISTINE stared at her.

"Your what?"

"My bats! You know!" It was obvious that Isabel was holding in her anger only by the greatest of efforts. "You forced open my box in my study, Christine. You took from it my favourite bats. I suppose," she added bitterly, "this is your idea of paying me out because you thought I had taken your bat in the first place?"

Christine glared.

"I don't know what you are talking about!" she snapped.

"Christine, don't tell me lies!" Isabel said sharply.

Christine, beside herself and utterly uncontrolled, had lunged out. Her open palm came smack! across the prefect's face.

"Christine—" shrieked Babs.

"You—" Isabel cried, and her hand went up. "You!" she said, and stared at the enraged junior as if she could not believe her eyes. "Christine, you—you hit me!" she stammered.

"And I," rapped a voice behind her, "saw it! Thank you, Isabel, you may leave this matter to me!" And on to the scene, her face like flint, stalked Miss Bullivant. "Christine, why did you do that?"

"She called me a fibber!" Christine passionately declared.

"What? Isabel—"

"I accused her," Isabel said, breathing hard, "of forcing open my box and taking my table tennis bats—"

"And I didn't!" flamed Christine.

"Please modulate your voice!" Miss

(Continued on page 14)

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

How eagerly schoolgirls look forward to PATRICIA'S weekly page! It is always so bright, so chummy and so helpful. She tells you about herself and her family, of things to wear, things to do and things to talk about.



came third in the European Championships.

Daphne, you know, adores the number 13, and it certainly isn't unlucky for her!

But she likes mascots, too. And Daphne has no fewer than 180 tiny elephants which she regards as lucky.

When her friends go to see her off anywhere, instead of giving her flowers, or perhaps chocolates, they give her another elephant instead.

I wonder how many she will have eventually. A very valuable collection, I should think!

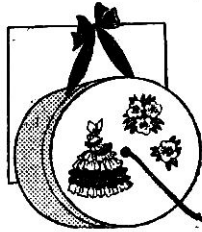
● Always Handy

I don't think any household can have too many string-boxes, do you? I know in our family there is always someone calling out: "String, please!"

So if you're feeling that you'd like to give a little surprise present to mother just about now, what about making this jolly string-box here?

You'll require a round chocolate box or tin—with a lid. Make a hole in the lid first. (If it's a tin you're using, a hammer and nail will very quickly make the hole for you.) Then cover the lid and the box itself with pretty paper, gluing it on smoothly.

Make two more holes in the side of the box, and thread ribbon through, so that it will tie in a bow, and make a loop for hanging up.



Then place string in the box (you can buy a new ball for a penny) and pull one end through the hole in the lid. Decorate the lid of the box with "transfers" or see if you have any "scraps" from Christmas crackers tucked away among your treasures, and glue these on. It will look so pretty when finished—and be so useful, too!

● Cleaned with a Cork

I expect you quite often do little bits of washing at home in order to help mother, don't you?

Things like stockings, woolly jerseys, scarves, gloves, and so on, are quite fun to wash. I always think, especially if you're lucky enough to have lots of hot water—whether it comes from a copper or straight from the kitchen tap.

But nothing is more annoying after getting garments beautifully clean, to

peg them out in the garden—then or discover that the clothes line isn't as clean as it might have been. And so your precious "washing" is soiled again.

Quite the best and easiest way to make sure of a clothes-line being clean, is to take an ordinary cork, make a slit in it with a knife, and rub this along the line.

It cleans it up most magically. And a new cork can be used when the other one is grubby.

● New-Old Fashions

Crinolines, feathers, muffs—how very Victorian everyone is going these days. (I only hope the fashion won't extend to schoolgirls. Can you imagine yourselves with a wasp waist, a "bun" at the back of your head, and a boater hat perched on top! Not to mention undies made of red flannel!)

Even lace has come back into its own again. This is a fashion I'm very pleased to see, for there is nothing that makes quite such a pretty trimming to a dress as lace. It's so easy to wash and iron, too.

As you can see from the picture here, a lace collar, lace cuffs, and wide lace turn-overs on the pockets of a darkish dress, do make it look very sweet—and give it just that "dresy" to go somewhere special.

Lace on velvet or velveteen is particularly smart for best wear—and so fashionable!



● A Tongue-Twister

Have you been listening-in to the "Tongue-twisters" on the wireless (or should I say radio) just lately?

I have been, and I admired some of them so much, that I thought I must try to make some up myself.

To my surprise, I found they were much more difficult to compose than to repeat! For, naturally, I tried to make up one that would be some sort of sentence, even if it weren't too sensible.

Here's—the only one I succeeded in completing:

"With such a choice of chutney, I'll choose a cheap one cheerfully."

See if you can say that three times—quite quickly—without making a mistake. Then try it on your chums.

Bye-bye now until next Saturday, my pets!

Your friend,
PATRICIA.

SO it's nearly Pancake Day again! Don't you just love pancakes? This Patricia of yours does! And so do the rest of the family.

Father always has lemon on his. Mother has no lemon, but lots of sugar. Big brother Brian likes lots of lemon and lots of sugar. Your Patricia likes hers with the juice of half an orange squeezed over them. While small brother, Heatherington, or Heath for short, likes jam, honey, or treacle over his, and no orange or lemon.

You'd never believe that there could be so many small differences of taste in one family, would you?

Talking—or rather, writing—of Pancake Day, makes me immediately think, of course, of Lent.

I wonder if you're going to "give up" anything this year.

Your Patricia has been wondering what little "sacrifice"—if I may call it that—to make. And finds it rather difficult.

You see, I don't take sugar in my tea, coffee, or cocoa, so it wouldn't be very meritorious to give up sugar. I don't eat a lot of jam.

So perhaps I will give up chocolates—which I do love so—and put the money saved in the collecting box of the local hospital.

● Rain Wear

What did I tell you about over-boots and oil-silk hoods to wear in the rain? Haven't they become popular!

Here's one discovery I've made about rain-boots, however, that may interest you.

As you know, these—unlike Wellingtons—are worn over outdoor shoes. But I have found that it is best to wear an oldish pair of shoes with over-boots, and leather ones, if possible.

For even the best fitting over-boots will rub the shoes, and this is particularly noticeable on suede—which can be such a bother to brush up again.

So remember—don't wear suede shoes inside your rubber boots.

● A Young Expert

I expect you have all been reading in the newspapers about that wonderful young skating expert, Daphne Walker, who, although only fourteen, recently

BUYING A NEW HAT

Selecting a new hat is every bit as exciting for a schoolgirl as it is for a grown-up. So here is **PATRICIA** to help in your choice



WHAT with all the wild, miserable weather we have been having ever since Christmas, I think the thought of buying a new hat is distinctly cheering, don't you?

(Even if you're not having a new hat just yet awhile, but are waiting until nearer Easter, there's no reason why this article shouldn't put you in the mood for the thrill!)

Even before you and mother decide what price you're going to pay for your new chappo, you must decide the colour in your mind. But for safety's sake, decide on two colours—just in case.

To do this, you must, of course, consider your coat.

If coat—the one with which you'll wear the hat—is navy blue, then you have a choice of a navy hat, a light-blue one, a royal-blue one, a yellow, or a red-y one. (And red, these days, isn't pillar-box hue only, remember. It can be petunia, magenta, cyclamen or huntin' pink!)

As this is probably going to be a hat "for best," then my own choice would be for a royal blue, or a dashing red—merely because your school hat is probably navy, and we all like a change at times, don't we?

PRACTICAL AND PRETTY

Much as I'd like to see you in pale blue or yellow with navy, I'm not suggesting

these colours, for the simple reason that they will show marks easily. And this new hat we're choosing is going to be **PRACTICAL** as well as pretty.

Off you—and mother—go to your favourite store.

First you have a good look around, studying prices. If you know that mother is going to pay exactly one-and-eleven, then it's no use your lingering at the three-and-eleven counter—unless you think she'll be persuaded. But there's no harm in looking at the more expensive ones, just to see what's smart there.

So back you go to the "young misses" counter, at one-and-eleven, say.

You have an assistant to help you, and you try on several hats.

To your horror, you'll probably find that several are far too small for you. (I've noticed, ever since I was about eleven, that hatters seem to think school-girls have small heads—and they just haven't.)

But don't be dismayed. Providing you're going to like the hat, and providing it isn't too small, the assistants will generally stretch it for you without spoiling the shape in any way.

OFF THE BROW—OR ON

If you have pretty curls on your forehead, then you must show them. So do try on a hat that turns back off the face, instead of pull-down-brim ones. These are gloriously young-looking, and very smart at the moment.

If, on the other hand, these turn-back hats make you look a bit like a startled rabbit, then put them down hastily, and plump for a Juliet cap style, or a sporty-looking "slouch" hat.

Keep calm as you try on hat after hat, otherwise you'll look frightful in any.

Don't hesitate to comb your hair—very lightly, and away from the counter, between each try-on.

Pick the hat up carefully, note where the back should be, then pull it on gently—

from the back of your head, never from the front.

A CAREFUL CHOICE

Even if you select a style which you have never had before, yet it is one which you feel sure will "grow on you," don't hesitate to say you like it.

Be sure it is comfy, be sure the colour will "go" with your best coat, and either match or contrast with your best frock. Be sure it isn't made of material that will spot easily, be sure you feel really good and cheerful in it—then tell mother you like "this one, please."

Having got mother's blessing—for, after all, she's the one who's paying—you should now look at yourself more critically—just to be sure.

A FINAL LOOK

See yourself in a full-length mirror, if possible, to make certain it gives you a balanced sort of look. (If you have ever seen a short, plump woman setting off to a garden party in the summer, wearing a hat about the size of a cartwheel, you'll know what I mean.)

Then take the hand-mirror, which I expect will be provided on the counter. Turn your back on the long mirror, and gaze into the hand one. You will now have a view of yourself from the back.

These views are often pretty startling, because we see our own back view so seldom. But as long as the back brim of the hat nestles neatly round the back of your head, and doesn't get in the way of your coat collar, then I think your choice is wise.

Next minute, the hat is yours. Just one little warning. If you're so keen on it, that you ask to wear it, and for your other hat to be wrapped, don't forget to remove the price ticket. I walked round once with one flapping down my back for about half a day. When I thought the hat looked worth at least five times what I'd paid for it, too.

So—happy hat-hunting!

NAMES AND NUMBERS

It's fun to find your personal number—which should be lucky—from your name

DID you know that each letter of the alphabet has its own number?

We start with A, whose number is 1. B is 2, and so on, up to I, which is 9. After I we start afresh, so that J becomes 1 again. See the idea?

Just to make it quite clear, I'll give you the numbers for each letter of the alphabet.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|----|---|
| A | J | S | .. | .. | 1 |
| B | K | T | .. | .. | 2 |
| O | L | U | .. | .. | 3 |
| D | M | V | .. | .. | 4 |
| E | N | W | .. | .. | 5 |
| F | O | X | .. | .. | 6 |
| G | P | Y | .. | .. | 7 |
| H | Q | Z | .. | .. | 8 |
| I | R | | .. | .. | 9 |

With this table in front of you, it is now quite easy for you to give each letter

of your name its appropriate number. These must all be added together. If the result is two or more figures, these must be added again, to reduce them to one, and that is your Name Number.

Just one example. Take a name like Patricia Mary Stanthorpe. (Note that you must use all your Christian names.)

From the table here, I see that Patricia in numbers is: 7 1 2 9 9 3 9 1. Mary is: 4 1 9 7. And Stanthorpe is: 1 2 1 5 2 8 6 9 7 5.

These numbers all added together make 108, and these added together again make 9. So the name number for Patricia Mary Stanthorpe is 9.

I'm quite sure that after finding your name number you'll be wanting to know what it stands for. So here is a list of number meanings.

1. This stands for leadership.
2. You are reserved and dignified.
3. Joyfulness and cheerfulness are yours.
4. You are energetic and have the will to win.
5. You have a tender heart and are affectionate.



6. This stands for home happiness.
 7. A number that indicates nobility and unselfishness.
 8. You are sensible and far-seeing.
 9. The world will be a better place for your presence.
- Now see what your name number is and what it stands for.

(Continued from page 11)

Bullivant said angrily. "Isabel, you have proof of this?"

"I have proof—yes!" Isabel's face was bitter. "The proof is—here!" she cried, and she put her hand in her pocket, withdrew it, and then, opening her palm, displayed an object at the sight of which Christine gave a choked sort of cry. It was her tennis fob. "I don't think," Isabel said scornfully, "even Christine will deny that this is her property. I found it by the side of my box."

Babs stared. She looked at Christine, a little shaken then. The proof seemed convincing, in all truth.

"Christine, you—you didn't?" she muttered.

"Of course I didn't!" Christine cried. "Dash it, do you think I should have worked myself into a paddy if I'd known all the time where my fob was?"

"This is yours?" Miss Bullivant asked.

"Yes, it's mine, but—"

"Thank you. In the circumstances, I don't think," Miss Bullivant said angrily, "that there is any need for us to go into this matter further. Christine, for hiding those bats you are detained for to-morrow. For striking a prefect I shall report you to Miss Primrose. Isabel, if that is her property, give it to her. Now, Christine, what have you done with Isabel's bats?"

"I tell you I haven't seen the wretched bats!" Christine protested.

"Christine!"

"Well, it's true!"

"I see!" Miss Bullivant's lips compressed. "If you do not decide soon to say what you have done with those bats, your punishment will be increased," she said. "Meantime, you are detained to-morrow."

"But, Miss Bullivant—" Babs cried.

"Well, Barbara?"

"I—Oh, my hat! Miss Bullivant, the table tennis finals are to-morrow, and Christine is playing in them! If she's detained—"

"I am sorry. That is Christine's affair."

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

"I am sorry, Barbara. Discipline must come before sport. Christine is detained. Isabel, come with me, please."

Isabel bit her lip. More reproachful than angry was the glance she now turned in Christine's direction. Together they went out. Christine, wretched, white, sank on to a chair.

"Detained!" she muttered.

"Chris—" Babs gulped.

"And no finals—no finals!" Christine clenched her hands. "That was what she was working for, what she has been working for ever since Beatrice—ever since the beginning! She plays in the singles, and in the doubles with Pat now! I—I am out of it and chained to a rotten desk in the class-room. Oh, hang this school! Both the rotten school! I wish I were out of it."

Babs gulped. She hardly knew what to do in that moment.

"But—but, Christine, you—you don't know anything about those bats?"

"No!"

"And what has Beatrice Beverley to do with it?"

"Eh?" Christine started up. "Why?"

"You just let her name slip."

"Well, Beatrice has nothing to do with it—nothing!" Christine said. "Oh, Babs, don't worry me, don't question me! I'm sick to death of them all!" she cried, and stared gloomily into space. "And I thought—"

And then abruptly she got up. Suddenly trembling, she walked towards

the door, threw it open, and went out. As Babs stared after her, the door closed.

Slam!

But it did not close so quickly that Babs had not noticed the glistening tears of wretchedness that shone on Christine's cheeks as she flung herself into the corridor.

AN HOUR later—what a sensation! Half the school was clustered around the notice-board in Big Hall; half the school was reading the stunning news. Christine Wilmer, the hope of the school in the table tennis finals, was deposed. Isabel Drake was in her place—to represent the school in the singles and play with Lady Pat in the doubles.

Something like consternation then.

Nobody approved Christine's campaign against Isabel—who was one of the most popular prefects in the Sixth. But nobody had really seriously thought Christine's temper would lead her to this.

Isabel was good—jolly good—but Isabel was no match for a girl like Gladys Fitch. And she wasn't at her best at doubles.

Nobody, however, blamed Isabel; everybody condemned Christine. Christine, everybody said, with such an honour at stake, with so much dependent upon her, should have known better than to allow such a crisis to happen.

"We might have guessed," Rosa Rodworth said.

"Hot-headed fool!" bitterly complained Margot Lantham.

As disturbed as the Fourth was Isabel Drake herself. When Babs, after tea, went to her study with the object of trying, even at this last moment, to find some way out, she found Isabel strangely nervous and subdued.

"Oh, I'm sorry—sorry!" she cried. "I never expected that she'd go so far. Babs, frankly, I'd give my chances in the physics exam for all this to be undone. I know I can't do as well as she can do. Christine was the one—the only—choice for the school. And I'll do even worse now without my bats. Babs, isn't there something we can do?"

"Well, we—we could go and see Primmy."

"Then let's go!" Isabel said feverishly.

They went—at once. But the headmistress was not to be moved.

"Christine," she said, "acted wilfully and wrongly. Christine is still acting wilfully and wrongly. I am as upset as you, but discipline must come first. Christine must be punished."

"But, Miss Primrose, couldn't you punish her after the match?" Isabel cried.

"I am sorry—no!" And then Miss Primrose bit her lip. "I—I might agree to that if I thought the girl was feeling repentant," she said, "but the fact that she still refuses to disclose what she has done with your bats, Isabel, proves that she is not."

"Miss Primrose, Christine says she hasn't tampered with the bats."

"That," Miss Primrose said, "I refuse to believe."

"But—but if it was proved?" Babs asked. "If you knew Christine had nothing to do with the taking of Isabel's bats?"

"Then," Miss Primrose said, "I should probably change my mind. But as things are—no. That is all. I am sorry."

They went. Out in the corridor, Isabel looked at Babs again.

"Barbara, do have another word with Christine."

Babs nodded. Off she went. Miserable, despondent, she found Christine in her study, and there she told her what had happened in Miss Primrose's study. But Christine shook her head.

"Babs, I swear—on my word of honour—I know nothing about those bats," she said. "Either Isabel moved them herself, or someone else did. Anyway, what does it matter? I'm out of it now. Thanks to my rotten temper!" she added bitterly. "Let it go."

But Babs was in no mind to let it go. Isabel wasn't guilty. She was sure now, despite the opinion in the Fourth, that Christine herself was not. But who—? And in her determination Babs suddenly thought of that name Christine had let slip. Beatrice! Beatrice Beverley! Had she anything to do with this? Was she the girl who, in the first place, had made Christine suspicious of Isabel?

But why—why? Babs puzzled. She was puzzling when bed-time came. In the morning—the day of the tournament—she was still puzzling. She decided to tackle Beatrice, and it was Beatrice herself who gave her an opening.

For, meeting Babs in the Fourth Form passage after breakfast, Beatrice stopped her. She looked very anxious.

"I say, Babs, there—there's no news, is there? Isabel still playing?"

"Still," Babs said.

"What a pity—for the school, I mean. What on earth gave Christine the idea that Isabel was up against her?"

"In the first place," Babs said, "somebody said something to Christine about Isabel." She gazed at Beatrice strangely, as though inviting an explanation. And Beatrice flushed.

"But who?" she asked.

"Well, I don't know. I thought perhaps," Babs said, "you might be able to make a suggestion. Christine once did let your name slip when she was talking about it. Do you know anything?"

For a moment Beatrice did not reply. Then, rather hesitantly:

"Well, now you ask, Christine herself did—did mention the fact to me. But, of course, I—I told her it was all nonsense. But excuse me now," she added hurriedly, "I've got to collect my books."

And off she went. Babs, with a feeling of bafflement, tramped off to her own study. Something had got to be done—something must be done! But what? Suppose, she thought, without a great deal of hope, she saw Lady Pat again?

A feeble, forlorn hope—but anything was worth trying now. No sooner had the suggestion impressed itself on Babs' mind than, intent upon acting upon it, she tramped off. And then, passing the prefects' room, the door of which was slightly ajar, she paused.

For a voice—Beatrice Beverley's voice—fell upon her ears. Beatrice was speaking into the telephone.

"So you got through your semi-final game O.K.," Beatrice was saying. "That's fine, Gladys. Eh? No—no need to worry. I've fixed things a treat. Yes, it'll be all right—everything's all right. Bye-bye, now!"

Babs moved on. Gladys! Who was Gladys? The answer leapt to her mind. Gladys Fitch! So Gladys was in the final of the singles. But what had Beatrice fixed for Gladys Fitch? Why was there no need for that girl to worry? She frowned a little. And then, as if unbidden, came the memory of that conversation she had heard in the cloak-room of the village girls' hall the other night.

Babs Takes a Chance!



VAGUE suspicions were floating in Babs' brain.

Now, what clues had she?

First, that she suspected Beatrice of having poisoned Christine's mind; second, that although Beatrice and Gladys were friends, they had taken very good care that Babs herself should not be aware of that the other night; third, that Gladys and Beatrice were in the habit of having conversations over the phone, and that Beatrice had fixed up something which was obviously pleasing to Gladys on the eve of her most important match. But that didn't prove that Beatrice had been the cause of all Christine's woes.

She returned to Study No. 4 without seeing Lady Pat, and talked the matter over with Mabs. Mabs was frankly dubious.

"It sounds thin," she said—"very thin. But"—and then suddenly she pursed her lips and whistled. "This might not mean much," she added excitedly, "but I've remembered something. You know when you went out for that early morning sprint with Chris?"

"Yes."
"Well, Beatrice also got up before rising-bell that morning."

Babs' eyes widened.
"And if she got up early, that would give her time to paint that rotten insult to Christine," she said. "Golly, Mabs, if only I could discover that pot of poster colour!"

"Or Isabel's bats," Mabs said.
But how could they? Short of searching Beatrice's study, there seemed no way. Meantime, time was getting on.

In the quadrangle girls were already strolling off in twos and threes. An air of hustle and bustle pervaded the whole school. In the Fourth Form class-room, with Sarah Harrigan in charge, Christine Wilmer—a lonely, brooding figure—sat, toying dismally with the sums which had been set for her while she listened with ears she tried to deafen to the cries from outside.

Time was drawing near.
With a last desperate idea of doing something, Babs went to see Miss Primrose. Miss Primrose, however, was not inclined to budge from her verdict of yesterday. Despair in her heart, Babs went off to find Isabel Drake, who was just in the act of saying good-bye to Dulcia Fairbrother, captain of the school, before she left.

Isabel looked pale. It was obvious that she had a bad fit of nerves.

"Well, do your best," Dulcia was encouraging. "Nobody can do more than that. You'll feel fine once you start playing. And remember you and Pat are our best in the school."

"Christine and Pat, you mean," Isabel corrected. "Oh dear! Well, anyway, I'm off now. I feel it will help me if I can get the feel of the place before I play. So-long!"

Babs drifted away. No good speaking to Isabel. Downcast and anxious, she rejoined Mabs, who, in the meantime, had been keeping an eye upon Beatrice Beverley. She had some news to impart, however.

"I heard Beatrice talking to Lydia," she said. "She told Lydia that she would let her have the two pounds she owed her after the finals. Babs, where is she getting two pounds after the match? She had no remittance this morning."

Babs shook her head. But, oddly

enough, her mind went to Gladys Fitch. Beatrice had assured Gladys that she would fix things! Fix what? Fix the singles match? The singles, with Christine out of it, was a foregone conclusion. But why should Beatrice fix a match to dish her own school?

Two pounds!
Golly! Was it possible that Gladys Fitch was paying her for "fixing" the match?

"Wait a minute!" she said swiftly to Mabs—"wait a minute! I've got an idea! Beatrice is still in the school, isn't she? Mabs, hold her until she gets a message on the telephone. No, don't ask me questions now—I'll tell you afterwards! It's just a last desperate bluff!"



"THIS is Gladys," Babs said, speaking through the handkerchief and thus muffling her voice. "I just wanted to make sure that everything was still O.K. You—you are sure that Christine won't be playing?" Heart thumping, she waited for a reply. Babs was laying a trap—the last chance to save Christine Wilmer.

Mabs nodded. Babs dashed off. Passing out through the school gates, she entered the public phone-box at the crossroads and asked, surprisingly enough, for Cliff House.

While she waited, Babs draped her hanky over the mouthpiece to muffle her voice, and thus disguise it—a little trick she had seen in a gangster film.

It was Dulcia Fairbrother who answered the call, and Dulcia herself who went off to fetch Beatrice Beverley when Babs asked for her. Three minutes later Beatrice's voice came over the wire.

"Hallo! Yes?"
"Beatrice, this is Gladys," Babs said, speaking through the hanky. "I—I just wanted to make sure that everything was still O.K. You—you are sure

that Christine won't be playing? She's the only girl that can beat me, and—"

Her heart thumped as Beatrice cut in. "Of course she won't! Didn't I tell you I'd fixed that? Christine is in detention!"

"How did you manage it?" Babs pressed.

"By pinching Isabel Drake's bats," Beatrice chuckled, "and making it look as if Christine had done it. I've got the bats now, hidden in my study—But shush! Don't worry, old thing! And, Gladys—"

"Yes," Babs said, her heart hammering.

"You won't forget about your promise? You'll have the two pounds ready? You said your father is giving you a fiver if you win, and you promised if I got Christine out of it—"

"No, I won't forget!" Babs said. "Good-bye now!"

And down went the receiver. Off, her face flaming, rushed Babs to meet Mabs on the steps. Feverishly she caught her arm.

"Come on! We've still time! Off to Dulcia!"

"But—"
"Quickly!"

And off they went. Dulcia, in her study, stared in surprise as they burst in.

"Dulcia," Babs gasped, "I've just found out! Beatrice Beverley stole Isabel's bats and hid them! They're in her study now! If we're going to convince Primmy we've got to find them—and rush Christine off before the tournament begins!"

Dulcia stared in wonder.
"Barbara, you're sure!"
"Certain!" cried Babs.
"Come on, then," jerked Dulcia, and led the way.

Beatrice, in the act of leaving her study, started as they came in. Dulcia eyed her grimly and came directly to the point.

"Beatrice, what have you done with Isabel's bats?"

Beatrice winced as if struck.
"Is Isabel's bats?" Her face was deathly white. "I—I don't know what you mean!" she gasped. "What should I do with Isabel's bats?"

"Hide them here!" Babs flamed out, noticing that Beatrice had moved between the prefect and the logbox. "And I," she said, "have got a jolly good idea where they are!" And suddenly she had swept Beatrice aside. While a thin shriek came from that girl, she had caught the logbox in her hand and upturned it on the floor.

And then—what a gasp! For with the logs rolled out two tennis bats and—a bottle of purple poster colour!

Beatrice slumped limply against the table.

"So this," Dulcia said grimly, "is the little game, is it? It was you all the time hitting at Isabel—trying to make out that it was Christine! You awful thing!"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Beatrice. "I didn't mean—"

"Didn't you? Well, you can come and tell that to the headmistress," Dulcia said grimly. "Barbara, bring those bats!" And she caught the beaten Beatrice's arm. While Babs and Mabs followed, the scared conspirator of the Fourth was led along. Miss Primrose, in her study, stared at the four when they came in.

"Why, bless my soul! Dulcia—"

Dulcia rapidly explained. Babs, at the same time, held up the bats.

"Goodness gracious me!" Miss Primrose looked angry. "Dulcia, go and fetch Christine. Tell her she is re-

leased. "I only hope," she added anxiously, "that she will be in time to compete in the finals. Beatrice, you will remain here with me."

"Hurrah!" cheered Babs when they were outside again.

Then—what a rush! Christine, as bewildered as Beatrice, was jerked out of detention. While she went to see Miss Primrose, Mabs got her coat, and Dulcia, rushing off to see Miss Charmant, prevailed upon that sympathetic mistress to lend her little sports car. Then off again, packed like sardines, they all went, with Dulcia at the wheel, one anxious eye on her wrist-watch. Could they do it? Could they get there in time?

Then at last the Courtfield Sports Club. In with a breathless rush they all burst. Even as they did so, they heard the announcer's voice.

"Final of the doubles! Cliff House versus Whitechester. Players, take places, please. Match begins in one minute."

"Christine, quick! Off with that coat!" Babs gasped. "Mabs, help her with her shoes!"

In thirty seconds Christine was ready. With a swift smile at the chums, she hurried down the gangway. Below, Lady Pat and Isabel Drake were coming forward, the latter looking pale and ill-at-ease. The Whitechester couple were already standing by the table.

And then—
"Pat," cried Christine, striding forward, and the two prefects whirled in amazement—"Pat, I—I'm free to play. Everything's been cleared up. Isabel can—"

Isabel stared at her, then a warm smile touched her lips. She did not question, but said simply:

"Pat, she must play." She patted Christine's shoulder. "Explanations can wait, Christine. Good luck—both of you!"

And Isabel, fine sportswoman that she was, strode towards the gangway, leaving Christine beaming, stammering her thanks. No time for more then. The M.C.'s voice was booming again, and Lady Pat had to go forward and toss for service with the Whitechester captain.

Brimful of confidence now was Christine—happy, laughing. The Cliff House faction among the spectators was gazing at her in wonder. Then a murmur ran round the hall. Lady Pat had won the toss.

"Tako service, will you, Christine?" smiled Pat, and added sincerely: "Glad to have you with me."

Nodding happily, Christine swept up the ball.

Tense silence. Breathlessly Babs & Co. watched. Now for it!

Zip! There was Christine's top-spin service flashing over the net. Back it came from the Whitechester captain. In leapt Lady Pat, cutting it back hard. But the second Whitechester player was there, dropping a short one over the net. And then—

What a gasp! What a cheer from Babs & Co.! For Christine, rushing in, flashed over a lightning backhand drive which left the Whitechester skipper standing.

"One—love," droned the scorer.

Babs' eyes danced
"Oh, watch—just watch!" she breathed "Christine's on top of her form!"

It was true. Never had Christine played so confidently, so dashing; and, with Lady Pat ably backing her up, the result of the doubles final was never in doubt. The Cliff House pair took the first game at 21—9, the second 21—12, and the third 21—7!

"Game and match to Cliff House!"

A burst of clapping, a roar of cheers.

A pause then, until—

"The final of the singles!" came the M.C.'s voice. "Glady's Fitch, Courtfield, versus Christine Wilmer, Cliff House."

Glady's came forward—Glady's looking a little uneasy.

"She's wondering what's gone wrong, I bet," whispered Babs to Mabs. "Just watch Christine now."

There was Christine stepping to the table, cool and confident, a slightly grim look in her eyes, as she faced Glady's.

They tossed for service. Glady's won, and picked up the little white sphere.

"Love all!" called the scorer, and the great game began.

No doubting, watching that first exchange of shots, that Glady's was a brilliant player; no doubting that she was going all out to win. But that was as Christine wanted it. She had asked Babs not to tell Glady's that her plot with Beatrice Beverley had been discovered. Christine did not want to beat a nervous and apprehensive player; she wanted to beat Glady's at the top of her form.

Always an attacking player, Glady's Fitch smashed and smashed with all her strength, driving at all angles. But Christine, far back from her end of the table, chopped back the most vicious of drives with supreme ease.

It was breath-taking to watch those rallies. There was Glady's, right up to the table, smashing—smashing; and Christine, at least fifteen feet from her end of the table, darting from side to side, cutting them back with almost unbelievable accuracy. And always it was Glady's that made the mistake.

And so Christine won that first set 21—16, solely by cool, brilliant defence play.

What a cheer there was!

"She—she's brilliant!" breathed Isabel.

"Wearing Glady's down," judged Lady Pat shrewdly. "Christine is just waiting her moment. Watch!"

Second game. As in the first, Christine relied solely upon defensive tactics until, when the score was 12—10 in her favour, Glady's drives became wild and badly timed. Then what a change came over the Cliff House champion!

Christine served. Glady's put it back smartly, a low, safe ball—or so it seemed. But, look, there was Christine leaping forward, there she was with the swift flash of her bat in a flashing

forehand drive. Zip! The white sphere sped wide down Glady's backhand, with that girl feet away.

"Oh, golly!" gurgled Babs. "It's come! Oh, just watch Christine now! Just watch now!"

They did—and how they cheered. It was smash, smash, smash from Christine's lightning bat, fore-hand, back-hand—terrific speed; wonderful placing. Puffed, hopelessly outplayed, Glady's strove in vain to check her dazzling opponent. Not another point in that game did she take.

The audience was on its feet now, clapping, stamping.

"Christine's got it!" cried Lady Pat, flushed, eyes sparkling. "Glady's can't touch her now!"

It was so. Christine went all out in the last game. She played like the champion she was, giving Glady's not an earthly chance. And when, with a terrific backhand flick, she won the game and match for herself and Cliff House at 21—4, Cliff House rose as one girl and cheered.

"Christine!"

"Good old Christine!"

"Hurrah! Good old Temper!" cried Lydia Crossendale.

But Christine laughed. Her eyes were sparkling, her cheeks rosy, as Isabel came forward. Isabel looked at her with eyes almost of awe.

"Christine allow me to congratulate you!" she said simply. "I have never seen such a wonderful display. Thank goodness," she added, "you took my place!"

"And thank goodness," Christine returned, "I found out in time what a fool I had been, Isabel! I'm sorry—sincerely. I've been a beast, a wretch, thanks to my silly temper! But I promise—"

"Yes, Christine?"

"I promise," Christine said, "that it shall never happen again. You were a brick—a sport. And so," she added, her eyes melting with gratitude, "was old Babs! I feel now that I've got my silly temper under control again. What do you think, Babs?"

But Babs answered with a laugh. She felt that question an altogether too risky one to answer. For the time being—yes, Christine certainly had her temper under control and would endeavour to keep it so. She hoped the cure was permanent.

But she wondered.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.



THEIR FEUD with the FIFTH!

Stirring, exciting times at Cliff House next week, when Babs & Co. come into conflict with their natural "foes," of the Fifth Form. The two rival Forms are co-operating to give a celebration in honour of Miss Primrose, their headmistress, but someone deliberately tries to ruin the affair, and then cunningly schemes so that the Fourth blame the Fifth, and vice versa. A regular "war" wages between the rivals. The whole project is threatened. And then—But read Hilda Richards' magnificent story for yourselves. Remember—it appears COMPLETE in next SATURDAY'S SCHOOLGIRL.

More thrills and excitement for YOU—as well as mystery—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. After various adventures, they discover that a mystery woman wearing an emerald ring, who has been scheming against them, has had their luggage sent to a certain house. They become servants at the house, and learn from a strange girl who is shut up in a room that their luggage is at another house. The chums leave a note saying they have gone after their luggage. When the woman of the house, and the girl, dash away to the hiding-place of the luggage, May & Co. creep after them.
(Now read on.)

hardly escape from the house wearing them, so the first thing they had to do was to change into their own clothes. "I've got the idea!" May said briskly. "We'll hide in Agnes' own lair. But first, you two rush up to our room and bring down our clothes. They'll be searching the garden for us for some minutes, maybe, and that will give us time."

The changes were soon effected, and the chums started discussion again.

"Perhaps better make sure possible hiding-place in room behind red door," suggested Yin Su.

"Yes, perhaps so," admitted May. "Come on: we'll look in there first."

Reaching the landing, May led the way to the forbidden red door.

"Are we really going in?" breathed Daphne, shaking with excitement.

"THAT HOUSE IS HAUNTED!"

And inside was the luggage the chums had to get.

"Come on!" said May.

There was a suite of rooms beyond the red door—sitting-room, bed-room, and bath-room—which suggested that it was a small flatlet used by a boarder.

But although they looked in the large cupboards, they did not find their luggage. They had not expected to do so, but to have failed to look would have been carelessness.

"And now what?" asked Daphne. May went to the window and peeped out warily.

"Aha! They're still searching about with torches," she answered.

Yin Su called to her softly. "Suggest order large suitable carriage for taking luggage when found. Most difficult carrying trunks long miles, one in each hand, for feeble girl such as this."

May frowned heavily, for she had not given that side of the problem serious consideration. She realised now that

even finding their luggage would not help if they could not escape with it.

"You're right, Yin Su," she said briskly. "We'll need a lorry. But when we find it—if we do—what shall we do with it? We've got to pick up that money and further instructions."

"Suggest defer problem till luggage found," said Yin Su. "Suggest further that several large cupboards make comfortable places for hiding here."

Taking up positions in some airy cupboards, they remained in hiding for a quarter of an hour. Then they heard the house being searched. Their upstairs bed-room was searched first, and then the lower rooms.

"They've gone, but without their luggage!" they heard Agnes' aunt exclaim. "What on earth will Madame X say to this?"

"Madame X" whispered Daphne to May. "Who's she?"

"Woman with emerald ring, I should guess," May answered. "Sssh!" she added, as she heard the red door being pushed wider open, and then shut.

Agnes was now in the room, as they could tell by the sounds of her movements, and May, opening her cupboard door slightly, saw Yin Su step out from her wardrobe opposite, a yard behind Agnes.

The Chinese girl gave a shuffle of dainty feet that made Agnes swing round with a gasp, her back to May and Daphne, who also stepped from their cupboards.

"Oh, you—you haven't gone," Agnes faltered.

"We have. We are now somewhere else," said May solemnly. "This is the magic of the East, Agnes; but have no fear."

Agnes gave a nervous giggle. "Don't be silly! Of course you are here—just as much as I am."

"More so I hope," said May.

May meant to learn the secret hiding-place of their luggage from Agnes, and

Sheer Bluff—But It Worked!

"THERE they go," said May Joliphant. "Nice and kind of them to show us the way with their torches."

"Generous and simple-minded people sometimes lead the wise," said Yin Su modestly.

"Sssh!" warned Daphne. But the warning was not necessary. The other two had stopped, for the torch-bearers ahead, Agnes and her aunt, were stopping, too.

"They are hiding," said Agnes' aunt, in clear tones. "Maybe they are artfully waiting for us to lead them to the luggage. I cannot believe that you can unguardedly have given the exact hiding-place. A thing like that could not slip out."

"I didn't tell them, aunt—I swear I didn't!" Agnes protested.

May gave a hurried signal to her friends, and they retreated to the front door of the house, which they had left open.

"Bother! We're no wiser," murmured May, disappointed. "All we know for certain is that the luggage is hidden somewhere outside."

"Where shall we go?" asked Daphne anxiously. "We're supposed to have gone, remember; and I don't think I want to meet Agnes' aunt again."

May thought quickly. They were still in their maids' uniforms, and they could

BY

ELIZABETH CHESTER

ANOTHER SUPERB HILDA RICHARDS STORY

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she knew that bluff was the only way, and, with the mysticism of the East, a strong card to play.

Yin Su realised that, too, and stood with folded arms and inscrutable face.

"No secret can remain hidden from all-seeing eye of Orient," she said softly. "Mystic Yin Su read secret from cards."

Agnes started at that, and looked at the table, where lay the cards with which she had been playing patience.

"No; go on!" she protested, with half-doubtful incredulity. "You don't mean it. Can you tell fortunes from cards?"

Yin Su saw May nod, and, crossing to the table, gathered the cards with her deft, pretty fingers.

"Now," she said, "show you how cards tell secret. I ask you questions. You give no answer. Cards only tell, yet I learn truth."

Agnes, almost awestruck, sat down. "Well, fancy that!" she said.

May and Daphne folded their arms and tried to look inscrutable as Yin Su sorted the cards into two heaps—one red, one black.

"I ask you question; I guess answer," she said. "When I am wrong you take red card. When I am right I take red card and you take black."

"I see," said Agnes eagerly. "But I mustn't answer the questions?"

"No," said Yin Su. Looking intently into space, she began.

"The luggage is in a shed?" she said. Agnes, who seemed too fascinated to realise the significance of this question, at once took a red card. The luggage was not in a shed.

"It is in a house?" asked Yin Su, passing a hand across her brow. Agnes took a black card and Yin Su a red one. The chums were on the trail now. A house was the hiding-place.

Yin Su saw to it that she made enough wrong guesses to give Agnes a nice pile of cards.

But the right guesses mounted up.

The pack was finished, and Agnes gave a little cry of joy.

"I win! Look! I've got six more cards than you!"

Yin Su rose, closed her eyes, passed her right hand across them, and then her left.

"The luggage is in the empty house two hundred yards away, or else the cards have lied!" she said in tremulous, mystic tone.

May and Daphne kept their faces straight with difficulty, and Agnes gaped, bewildered by this wonderful guess. Later, perhaps, it would dawn upon her that she had given Yin Su every item of information needed by drawing a black card. But it had not dawned yet, and she thought it simply magic.

May shrugged.

"But we've known that for ages," she said.

The time had come now for them to take their leave of Agnes, but without giving her a chance to warn her aunt or to follow them. Even though she had been fooled by the trick, she did realise that they knew now where the luggage was, and that they would seek it.

Agnes' expression grew every moment more anxious, and May knew that, simple though she was, Agnes might yet ruin everything for them; she might rush down to her aunt or lock them in this suite.

Yin Su had the same thoughts in mind, and her eyes met May's.

"Suggest," she said, "we look at luggage in crystal, and see if all well with valuable property."

Agnes started.

"In crystal? Golly, can you crystal-gaze, too?"

Yin Su smiled, and made a graceful, magician-like movement of the hand.

"All people, if taught, can see in crystal," she said.

"No? Really? Could I?" asked simple-minded Agnes eagerly.

May tumbled to the dodge. There was no crystal to be seen, but she found a

glass paper-weight that would serve as one.

"Yes, yes! Most excellent crystal!" said Yin Su. "Please to bring very dark, thick cloth or rug!"

Agnes found a rug, and Yin Su held it above her head while she studied the crystal. Every now and then she gave excited cries until May tore the rug away and, similarly covered, looked into the crystal herself.

"Silent! No speaking!" warned Yin Su. "Draw ten deep breaths, and count three hundred!"

"Golly!" said May, after a pause. "There it is—phew—in an empty house!"

Agnes shook with excitement, and almost flung herself in the chair which May vacated for her. Yin Su kindly arranged the rug as the girl held it over her head, and warned her to take ten deep breaths and count three hundred.

"But no pictures can be seen, quick-minded and wonder-brained girl, until the crystal-cup is filled with a red glow of light."

Agnes, holding the rug over her head, drew ten breaths, very deep and even; then she counted to three hundred.

But before she had even reached fifty, Daphne, May, Yin Su, fighting hard with the giggles, tiptoed from the suite, passed through the red door, and then very cautiously crept down the stairs.

Tracked Down!

"THAT'S the house!" said May, in triumphant excitement. "Hurrah!"

It was the journey's end so far as the luggage was concerned; for, thanks to Agnes' innocently given instructions, they had been able to find their way to it with hardly a falter.

The house was in complete darkness, and no curtains were at the windows. Having no light with them, they groped round the house, stumbling against the water-butts, tripping now and then, but failing to find an open door or window.

"My golly, this isn't so clever!" murmured May. "If we can't get in we can't get our luggage, and it won't be long before Agnes and her aunt come in chase!"

Yin Su shook her head.

"Simple Agnes presently begin to understand," she smiled, "but not so simple to tell aunt."

"True enough!" agreed May eagerly. "The less she says about the fortune-telling and crystal-gazing the better. She may be rather a mutt, but not so muttish as to get herself into a row. Only the aunt may come here looking for us, anyway."

"And where are we going to sleep?" Daphne wanted to know.

That was a problem that May had rather overlooked in her hurry to get the luggage, although, having some money in reserve, she did not let it trouble her unduly.

"We've got to go to Morsworth tomorrow morning to collect further instructions," she said easily. "And until then I'm not worrying, so long as we have a bed to sleep on. That's really all that matters."

They made one further tour of the house, and then Yin Su gave a sharp cry.

"Door open!" she said.

It was the back door, and May and Daphne ran to it eagerly. "You go first, May," said Daphne, her eagerness waning a little as the door, swinging wide, creaked.

"I'm not afraid," said May, quite amused. "But what duffers we are not

noticing this was open the first time we looked!"

Yin Su had not spoken again after her first remark, but she was listening, and presently broke her silence.

"Very easily frightened Chinese girl fancy she hear footsteps in the house," she said.

"Footsteps? Oh, no!" gasped Daphne. "Don't say that! How could there be? It's an empty house. There aren't footsteps in empty houses, unless—unless there are g-ghosts, you know."

And she moved back, only to trip against the dustbin, knock off the lid, and then clutch frenziedly at May, who tried to stifle her scream a second too late.

Yin Su picked up the dustbin lid. "Have great kindness to seek shovel," she said quietly. "Beat shovel on dustbin lid and all ghosts vanish. All ghosts hearing. Not like loud noises."

"Well, I must have something of the ghost in me," said May, with a rueful chuckle. "I'm not so fond of shovel-and-dustbin bands myself."

Yin Su could not find a shovel, but she kept possession of the dustbin lid.

"Simple-minded Yin Su deeply puzzled to know why door open itself," she murmured. "First time door closed. Now door open. Maybe house not empty."

That settled it for Daphne. "I'm not going in," she said emphatically. "I don't like it at all. There might be anyone lurking in there in the darkness. It's a terribly risky and dangerous thing to do. You go in, May, and see if there is anyone."

"I like that!" said May; but all the same, remembering that she was British, and had the honour of her country to uphold in the eyes of a Chinese girl, she crossed the threshold.

The house was silent and dark, but May, groping along the wall, found a switch, snapped it on, and was startled and delighted to bring thereby a blaze of light.

She found herself in a completely empty hall, and the dust on the floor was evidence that it had been empty for some time. But it had recently been visited, for in the dust were—muddy footprints.

"Hallo! Look!" said May sharply. Yin Su walked in, armed with the dustbin lid to keep evil spirits at bay, and Daphne followed, her heart thumping.

May opened first the door leading to the left from the small hall, and then the other that led to the right. But both rooms were quite empty.

Gaining confidence, May went to the back of the hall, opened a door there, groped for the light, and then shouted in excitement.

For in the middle of the floor was their luggage.

"Found!" she cheered. "Hurrah!" "Found!" echoed Daphne. "Oh, I can hardly believe it! It's wonderful! Do let's see if everything's all right."

They counted their cases and trunks, and found that the correct number was there. Then, quite puzzled to know why it had been stolen in the first place, and hidden here, they went through it all methodically.

Daphne was sure that some of her handkerchiefs were missing; but May laughed at the idea of someone's stealing luggage by the trunk-load just to get possession of two or three handkerchiefs.

"It's a bewildering mystery," she frowned. "So far as I can see, nothing that matters has been taken."

"Only my hankies," protested

Daphne, worried. "There was a little blue one I've had since I was eight."

"I should think that that was a hole surrounded by laundry marks," chuckled May. "Don't tell me that was what they have been trailing down, Daphne. Why, I shall be expecting a gang of international crooks after my three-year-old jumper."

Yin Su turned suddenly to the door, crept to it, and then thumped her dustbin lid violently with her left shoe, which she had removed for the purpose.

"Wow! Never mind those old Chinese customs!" implored May.

"Sah! Hear soft footfalls of other person!" said Yin Su gently.

May listened intently and then closed the door.

"There's no one there! It's just imagination," she said. "We've got our luggage, and Agnes' mother can't keep it from us. All we have to do now is to decide where we are going next."

Seated on their luggage, they held a conference, while, in stockinged feet, someone crept down the corridor to their door and stood tightly against it, listening.

"Morsworth is our destination" said May. "And the one problem is where we spend the night. My idea is to get a taxi here to take the luggage away. And then the best thing we can do is to dump it."

"Dump it?" asked Daphne. "Where?"

"Anywhere. In a depository for the time being," said May. "I've been thinking things over; and I don't think we want to be cluttered up with so much luggage. What I'd like to do is to put on some sensible walking shoes, rubber overshoes, thick coat, scarf for my head, and just travel light."

"Yes, dear, I suppose so," said Daphne. "But I don't think we need rough it quite."

"Not quite," agreed May lightly. "Yin Su wants to see England, and that doesn't mean staying in hotels, and visiting museums. Now what I think—"

May broke off because suddenly there came the violent rrr of an electric bell. It rang three times in succession, and was then silent.

The three girls exchanged looks.

"Can that be the front door?" asked May. "Is it Agnes and her aunt?"

"Better go and see," advised Daphne, sitting down on her trunk.

But instead May opened the window and looked out. At the foot of the drive she saw the lights of a car, and then, as the window creaked, a man stepped into view from the porch.

"Evening! Taxi," he said. "I've come to fetch the luggage."

A Dismaying Predicament!

IT was a simple announcement, but in the circumstances most dramatic; for it could only mean that someone else had summoned the taxi to the house.

In the nick of time they had rescued their luggage. Had they been half an hour later, the taxi would have taken it away. That, at any rate, was the only possible explanation that seemed to May to fit in with the facts.

"I say! Talk of touch and go!" she murmured. "Are we in luck?"

"Luck?" asked Daphne fretfully. "I tell you there's someone in this house—someone waiting here—hiding. He sent for the taxi—"

But May smiled, amused rather than perturbed.

"All the better," she said, "for this is where we steal a march on them. They must have sent for the taxi, and although they didn't mean it kindly, we're grateful."

"Grateful?" said Daphne, not quite quick enough to follow May's train of thought. "For stealing our luggage?"

"For sending the taxi, duffer!" retorted May. "For us. Don't you see? We can pack the luggage into the taxi, and not only the luggage, but ourselves, too."

Yin Su saw that, and smiled. "Sometimes the man who digs a pit for the tiger with much cunning himself falls into it with much stupidity," she said.

Looking out of the window again, May called:

"Hi, taximan, there's a whole lot of luggage to go! Can you come in and get it?"

"What, through the window?" asked the taximan, who had been dragged



"GAZE into crystal and see stolen luggage," cooed Yin Su. As Agnes, covering her head, stared at the glass inkpot, May and Daphne crept from the room, leaving Yin Su to follow.

from a warm fire by telephone call, and was not yet at his brightest.

"No, by the door; I'll come and open it," offered May.

Although half afraid that the enemy might be lurking near at hand, she went boldly enough into the corridor and along to the front door, which, with clanking of bolts, she opened.

The taximan stepped inside, and then saw Yin Su, who had followed May to the door.

"Hey! What's all this?" he asked gruffly. "Chinese?"

"Chinese, but quite harmless," May assured him.

The taximan looked about him.

"Empty house, isn't it?" he said.

"Except for us—we hope!" smiled May.

"Mm! Well, I read a book once," the taximan said, "about an empty house and some Chinese, and it didn't half give me the creeps what with strange groaning sounds, and—"

He broke off, looking upwards, for there had come a most uncanny sound. If it was not a strange groaning noise, it was exactly like it.

Yin Su clasped her hands more tightly. Daphne, from the room where their luggage was, gave an urgent call.

"May—May, did you hear that horrible sound?" she quavered. "What ever was it?"

"Oh, nothing!" said May.

But May's heart was beating a little quickly with excitement. The groan did not frighten her, but it proved to her that on the upper floor was someone who had helped to steal their luggage.

Could it be the woman with the emerald ring—the mysterious woman they had referred to as Madame X?

From above came a soft tap-tapping, and the taximan moved back to the door.

"I don't like it," he said, "and I'm not going farther into this house."

May guessed then the cunning motive behind the groan from the upper landing. Whoever was there had heard the taximan's remark about the ghostly noises, and was making some to scare him away, so that he did not remove their luggage.

"Oh, come in!" said May brusquely.

"Don't be such a baby!"

"Baby!" he echoed, huffed.

"Come on, girls, drag those heavy trunks to the door. The taximan's afraid to come in."

Then, with great presence of mind, May called up the stairs, pretending that she knew quite well who was there playing the fool.

"Young Bobby, if you make any more ghostly noises I'll come and box your ears! And so will the taximan!"

Goaded into shame, the taximan crossed the threshold in ponderous, frowning disapproval. He had heard

some more tapping, but, no longer awed, he went to the foot of the stairs.

"If you want a good walloping, young 'un, just groan once more, and I'll come up to you," he threatened.

They all listened, smiling, but no more groans came, and the taximan strode to the luggage-room, and, with an ease that surprised them, lifted two heavy trunks and took them to his taxi. In a few minutes the whole lot was piled on to the roof and grid.

"Wait!" said May softly to Daphne and Yin Su, as she stood at the foot of the stairs. "If that is the mystery Madame X upstairs, we've got her now. She's trapped. We'll see her face to face, and jolly soon find out what her game is."

Warning them to stay where they were, May mounted the stairs. She did not creep up softly, but rushed.

That sudden rush took the groaner by surprise. All May saw, however, was a shadowy shape, and then, as she switched on the landing light, the figure dodged down a corridor. But she dodged at such speed that she nearly lost her balance, and was forced to clutch at the wall for support.

The hand that clutched the wall was a woman's hand, slim and white, and brightly to be seen on a finger was an emerald ring.

May yelled aloud.

"It is—Madame X!" she cried.

Hot on her trail, May sprang round the bend of the corridor, rushed to the end of it, and then, sliding, was brought up against a door that slammed almost in her face. Click! went the key.

"Daph—Yin Su!" she shouted. "I've got her. She's trapped."

Up the stairs in great excitement ran Yin Su, followed by Daphne, and they raced to May as she turned at the handle of the locked door.

"You're sure?" asked Daphne.

"It is indeed the mysterious person!" breathed Yin Su, her almond eyes sparkling.

"Yes, I saw her ring," said May exultantly. "She can't escape from here. We'll keep it up as long as she will if she tries a waiting game; and, my word, I've a jolly good mind to borrow a spanner from the taximan, or a tyre-lever or something, and bust this door open."

But Daphne snatched May's arm, her face tense.

"Listen!" she exclaimed excitedly. "She's opening the window—"

"Golly! Can she climb out?" May asked, in dismay.

The window in the room had undoubtedly been opened, and May listened at the door to see if she could hear the woman escape that way.

"You two can go down and catch her as she is—no," she broke off, "she's speaking to someone, calling out."

"Saying what?" asked Daphne.

"Can't hear; something about house—and waiting—"

May suddenly guessed what was happening, as the taxicab's engine started up.

"Gosh! She's told the taxi to go!" May gasped.

"With our luggage!" cried Daphne, wheeling.

She ran down the corridor, calling to the others to follow, but May remained where she was.

"If we go, she'll get away!" she cried.

"If we stay, the luggage will get away again!" called back Daphne.

Their choice lay between two evils.

"Thank You So Much,"

HILDA RICHARDS SAYS

to ALL her correspondents. And here our popular author replies to just a few of them.



"JOAN" (*Dagenham*).—Thank you so much for a charming little letter, Joan, and thank you, too, for the sweet Christmas card. I'm afraid I'm late in acknowledging it, but our paper has to be printed some weeks in advance, you see. Eunice Hunter of the Second Form is nearly twelve; she is, in fact, the oldest girl in that Form. Many thanks for your other Cliff House suggestions—I'll certainly keep them in mind.

LOIS VALPY (*Erva, New Zealand*).—I have answered all your questions by post, Lois—you'll no doubt have read the letter by the time you see this. Have you received any more film star photos? I can see you are a very keen film fan! Write again when you have time, won't you, my dear? A nice long letter like your first one! I shall look forward to it.

AINE MOORE (*Dublin, Ireland*).—Thank you for your delightful letter, and—if I'm not too late—for your Christmas greetings. I do hope you had a nice time. Jean Cartwright is aged 14 years and 5 months, Aine, and Janet Jordan is 14 years and 7 months. Yes, we had lots of snow in London at Christmas—I expect you were snowed up, too. Bye-bye for the present. Write again, won't you?

DOREEN OASS (*Feltham, Middlesex*).—So glad to hear from you, Doreen. But what a very short letter! Next time you must write pages, and tell me all about yourself. Did you like the stories in the "School Friend Annual," after all? I

believe it has been just as popular as usual this year. I've had many letters from my nice readers mentioning it! Now, you won't forget that long, newsy letter, will you?

JEAN YOUNG (*Ashton-under-Lyne*).—Thank you for a most enthusiastic letter, and a very charming snapshot, my dear. It was sweet of you to send it, and I shall certainly keep it. Midge Stevens is 13 years old, and is, of course, in the Upper Third. You would be in the Second Form if you went to Cliff House. I think you are rather like June Merrett, of the Fourth, in appearance. I passed on your good wishes to Patricia, and she has asked me to send her love.

"DIMPLES" (*Bristol*).—So glad to hear from you, and to know you're still a keen Cliff House reader. Clara's Form position is seventeenth at present. French and German are taught at C.H., and other languages may be taken as extra courses. Don't forget to write again some time and tell me all your latest news, will you?

DIANA CLARRY (*Brisbane, Australia*).—Thank you for a sweet little letter, Diana. You would be a Second-Former if you went to Cliff House. Here are the Form-positions you wanted: Babs—5; Mabs—7; Jemima—12; Diana—16; Lydia—21; Freda Ferriers 31; Bessie 34. (Bessie, as you may have guessed, is bottom.) I shall certainly keep your "Celebrities" suggestion in mind, Diana—though I cannot make any promises.

"THELMA" (*Battersea, S.W.*).—As you so much wanted to see your letter answered in print, my dear, I've squeezed in this short note, though I am answering your questions by post. You've certainly been reading our paper for a long time now. I wonder if you have kept all your copies? Write again when you have time won't you, Thelma? I shall look forward to your letter.

THE chums are faced with a most dismaying dilemma. What will they do? Next week's enthralling chapters of this grand story will tell 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



Cornered!

THE young Lady Fayre, a basketful of wild flowers over her arm, tripped lightly through the wood to the road, humming a song, for it was a sunny morning, and all the world seemed gay.

Here in the woods she would do what she willed. There was no stern baroness aunt, no stern baron uncle to chide her as they did at her home—Longley Castle. Near at hand there was nothing sterner than a rabbit, for the wolves were farther into the depths of the wood.

Only ten minutes before Fayre had laughed and joked with merry Robin Hood, had practised archery under his tuition, and advised Friar Tuck in the spelling of some difficult words.

It would have shocked the Baron le Feuvre, her uncle, had he known that his niece was friendly with the outlaw, Robin Hood; but it would have surprised Robin Hood no less if he had learned that the mystery maid he had met so often in the woods was really the Lady Fayre of Longley Castle.

At the moment, dressed in a shabby green frock, surmounted by a hooded cloak, no less shabby, Fayre looked the part she played—a peasant girl, poor, but happy.

"Oh, none so happy as I
Under th' azure sky!"

That was her song, and, to her surprise, another girlish voice echoed it.

Along the road a dozen paces away a girl, shabby as she was herself, and happy as she was, too, danced and echoed Fayre's song.

"Why, another one happy!" laughed Fayre, and stopped to greet the other girl.

She was slight of build, blue-eyed, brown-haired, and very jolly-looking, even though her clothes showed that she was poor, and her hands showed the evidence of hard toil.

"Why, yes, I am happy. Who is not happy to-day?" said the girl. "Is not

the whole village happy? Are not we all to eat a great feast? Ah, there will be dancing and laughter to-night, I'm thinking!"

Fayre was puzzled. She had not heard of any cause for great festivities. It was not a holiday, it was not a saint's day—just a quite ordinary Wednesday.

"Indeed! But what cause is there for merriment to-day more than yesterday or to-morrow?" she asked.

The girl smiled at her.

"Ah, your father does not work for the Master Mason Brown. He is not helping to build the new abbey."

And she pointed into the distance, where stonework could be seen rising on a hill. It was the magnificent abbey which was to be an earl's offering to posterity.

"To-day," went on the girl, "the master-mason comes to the village with bags full of gold, and all the men who have worked, masons, and all craftsmen, shall be paid their dues."

"Oh!" said Fayre, comprehension dawning. "And there will be money to spend on food—"

"And merriment—"

"And frocks?" asked Fayre.

"Oh, on everything! Happy day!" said the girl. "Not for many weeks have we had money, but now it comes.

"I will—I will, thank you!" she said eagerly.

The girl bade her au revoir, and went on, watched by Fayre until she turned the bend in the road, still dancing with happiness.

"And in truth," mused Fayre, "I will go to the merry-making, if I can but creep from the castle unseen."

The problem immediately before her, of course, was how to creep into the castle. In passing the barbican, and crossing the drawbridge, there would be little difficulty, for the soldiers on guard there did not know the Lady Fayre well enough by sight to realise that the shabby girl was she. They thought the shabby girl was a messenger for her ladyship.

The guard at the barbican halted

THE BULLYING BARON MEANT TO MAKE ROBIN HOOD A PRISONER—BUT THANKS TO FAYRE HE MADE HIMSELF A PRISONER INSTEAD!

To-day I would not change places with a princess—no, to-day I do not envy even the Lady Fayre, who lives in that fine castle, and has, they say, gold plates for her food, and drinks from golden goblets."

Fayre smiled; for poor people thought she lived in greater style than she really did. True, there were gold plates and golden goblets at the castle, but they were brought out only when a bishop, another baron, an earl, or someone else of importance halted on a journey to accept the baron's hospitality.

"Indeed you are wise not to change with her," she smiled. "All happiness to you—"

"And to you, friend. And even if your father does not take a share of the gold," said the girl, "you will be welcome at the feast. Come and make merry!"

Fayre's heart was warmed by the girl's kindness.

her, but let her pass when she showed the wild flowers she had brought, and just as simply she crossed the drawbridge.

But what filled Fayre with some anxiety was the thought of how she would manage inside the castle, now that the hour was so close to dinner-time.

If the baroness should see her, she might ask questions. The baron certainly would. There was the stewardess, too, mistress of the servants. If she were prowling, she would know that a shabby girl, such as Fayre was pretending to be, had now no right there.

With fast-beating heart, therefore, Fayre entered the castle hall, and stole towards the broad, stone staircase that wound up to the higher floors, to the armoury, and above it, to the baron's living quarters.

By good fortune she reached the armoury floor without meeting anyone;

but even as she stepped upon that landing, there came the clatter of heavy steps on the flight of stairs above.

Men were descending—knights and soldiers.

Fayre looked left and right in panic as, among the voices of the men, she heard the baron's.

If the baron should see her, penetrate her disguise—Fayre's heart almost stood still at the thought, for there would hardly be less punishment than the stocks. There might even be a whipping from the baroness for so terrible a crime as this.

But near by was no hiding-place, save the armoury, the mighty door of which stood open, showing gleaming armour, bows, arrows, javelins, swords.

Fayre looked in. No men were there, so she stepped inside, and then, to be quite sure that she would not be seen, she dodged behind a suit of armour arranged on a cross-strutted post.

Her heart beating anxiously, she stood there, waiting until the men had gone past so that she could follow them downstairs.

The voices came nearer, and, to her horror, she suddenly realised that, instead of going down to the banquet-hall for dinner, as she had supposed they would, the men were stopping outside the door.

"In here!" said the Baron le Feuvre. "The armoury is as good a place as any for what I have to say."

He flung wide the door of the armoury, and strode in

"A Message from Robin Hood!"

FAYRE, peeping through the visor of the helmet, saw the burly red-faced baron march to the middle of the armoury, and there pause.

Seven men followed him in—Sir Geoffrey, two more knights, and other trusted soldiers.

"Close the door," said the baron. "What I have to say is secret."

The door was closed, and the men stood in a semicircle about him, their backs to Fayre.

"Listen well, men; mark my words," said the baron. "For if you carry out my plan, this rascal Robin Hood should trouble us no more. The people will turn against him. He is their friend—and they are his friends. It 'twere not so, we should have had the rascal by the heels ere this."

"Tis so," came a chorus of agreement.

Fayre hardly breathed, so keen was she to hear; and because the baron spoke evil of Robin Hood she did not feel that she did wrong to listen.

"My plan is this," said the baron. "The master-mason comes to pay with gold. He shall be waylaid by Robin Hood and his men in green. They will steal the gold. But they will not give it to the poor. Think what riot there will be when there is no gold for the builders, eh?"

Fayre thought instantly of the happy girl she had spoken to, and of the

merry-making and feasting that had been planned. If the gold were not paid there would indeed be riots, and misery, hunger, and unhappiness.

But at the thought of Robin Hood robbing the master-mason she almost laughed. Robin Hood was the friend of the poor; he would not rob them of their wages!

And that same thought came to the mind of Sir Geoffrey.

"But, my lord, Robin Hood, I give leave to doubt, would not rob the master-mason."

The baron laughed, then lowering his voice, spoke huskily in tone of drama—yet not so low that the Lady Fayre did not hear every word clearly.

"Not Robin Hood—but men in green; men the master-mason will think are Robin Hood's."

"Hirelings?" asked Sir Geoffrey.

"Us!" said the baron. "The suits of green are ready. Dressed in them we will waylay and rob the master-mason. If any man is afraid, or thinks ill of the plan, let him speak now."

He glared at them threateningly, but none replied. In his castle the baron was as a king, and none had the courage to deny him.

"It is said then. At the sound of the trumpet, leave the castle and meet by the pond in the wood, where suits of green will await every man," he said.

Then, marching to the door, he gave them to understand that all had been said on the matter. Now there remained only action.

With clattering steps and the clank of swords they departed, slamming the heavy door behind them.

The Lady Fayre did not move. Her brow was lined with worry; her eyes were troubled. For only too clearly she saw the cunning of the baron's plan.

Robbed of their wages, supposedly by Robin Hood, the indignant, disappointed people would turn against him, perhaps lead soldiers to him when he was unprepared.

Robin Hood would be betrayed into the baron's hands; though even that misguided vengeance would not give the people their gold. Fayre knew that once the baron had the gold he would keep it.

Creeping from hiding, she went softly to her room, and there paced up and down, thinking deeply.

Robin Hood, her friend, must be saved; the people's gold must be saved. And only she could bring those things about.

Robin Hood was the friend of the poor. He had helped them, given them food and gold. That he had taken both from rich nobles or the clergy did not distress Fayre; for they could well afford to lose it. And had they not in a good many cases taken it themselves from the poor?

If the people betrayed Robin Hood, they would lose their best friend—and so would Fayre.

"Not a minute to lose," Fayre told herself.

There was no time even to have dinner. Robin Hood must be warned of the plan! He must be warned immediately. But since her absence from the table would be noted, she must make some excuse.

Thinking for a while, she presently decided that she must plead sickness. So slipping off the cloak, she hid it, put on her rich red velvet frock over the shabby green one, and then tugged the thick hempen cord that tolled a bell, summoning a handmaid.

A knock at the door sounded presently, and Fayre fell back on to the bed, passing a hand in weariness over her forehead.

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

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—I don't like having to begin my little chat to you with an immediate recital of the following week's programme—even though our programmes ARE exciting, and it's most intriguing to read about them. But this week I'm afraid I really must. If I don't, then I should have to open with replies to readers, and that would be putting the cart before the horse, wouldn't it? From this you'll gather, even without looking at the end of my chat, that I have one or two letters to answer. Very interesting letters they were, too, from such faraway places as Aberdeen, South Africa and Indo-China, so if you'll excuse me I'll pass on to next week's "star" attraction.

"THEIR FEUD WITH THE FIFTH!"

That is the title of the Cliff House story—Babs & Co.'s feud with the Fifth, of course. And a right royal feud it is, too.

The Fourth, and their natural rivals, the Fifth, plan to co-operate in a birthday celebration for Miss Primrose, Cliff House's respected Headmistress. All goes well until one girl deliberately hits against the celebration scheme, and then cunningly schemes so that the Fourth blame the Fifth, and vice versa.

Strife starts at once. A regular "war" wages between the rivals.

The whole worthy project is threatened.

And then—

But you must read Hilda Richards' latest brilliant story for yourselves. You'll love every word of it.

As usual, of course, our next issue will also contain further delightful chapters of "On Tour With Yin Su," another topping complete story of Lady Fayre and Robin Hood, and more of Patricia's Chummy, Helpful Pages. You won't forget to make sure of your copy, will you?

And now for—

LITTLE LETTERS.

"Smiler" (Aberdeen).—Thank you so much for all the enthusiastic things you had to say about our paper in general, and Miss Richards in particular. Babs & Co. are certain to feature in the type of story you suggest before very long, but I will mention it to Hilda Richards, in any case. Best wishes!

Adle Marks (Salford).—So glad you liked the "School Friend Annual," Adle. I certainly agree with your choice of the best stories it contained, but they were all very enjoyable, weren't they?

Muriel Jeffrey (Cape Province, S. Africa).—I will pass your suggestion on to Hilda Richards, who, I am sure, will see that it is carried out in the near future. Miss Richards never neglects a popular character for long, you know, but it naturally takes time to feature them all in turn.

Joyce Payton (Indo-China).—I certainly envied you readers in the sunny tropics during our recent spell of snowy weather. English snow is not always as pleasant as it looks—it's far too damp! But it does make the countryside pretty, we must confess.

Well, good-bye, all of you, until next Saturday.

With best wishes.

Your sincere friend,
THE EDITOR.

"My lady is ill!" asked the servant-girl gently and with sympathy, since Fayre was always kind.

"Have the goodness, Rose, to tell her ladyship that I have a slight sickness and would fain not eat," said Fayre. "Please hurry and return with the reply."

The girl hurried away, and because of the many stairs to be climbed, was gone some minutes. She returned, breathless, to say that the baroness had said that it would do Fayre no harm to miss her dinner, but advised bread and water to be put beside her bed.

Fayre waited for the bread and water to be brought, begged them to be left undisturbed unless she tolled her bell, and fell back on the bed as though exhausted.

But no sooner was she sure that the servant-girl had gone out of hearing, than she sprang up, removed the red velvet robe, and, hiding it, put on again the ragged brown hooded cloak.

Ten minutes later, using the servants' staircase without fear of being seen, since everyone was at dinner, either serving or eating, she made her exit from the castle.

Breathless with running, she entered the wood, and blowing the whistle Robin Hood had given her, pressed on to his nearest hiding-place.

The whistle, shrill in note, was as a charm against wolves, since it pained their ears and sent them snarling from earshot. Furthermore, it was a signal to Robin Hood.

It was a glad moment when the sound of his hunting-horn answered the whistle; and Fayre called out in delight.

"Robin Hood!"

A minute later, from the thicket ahead, there sprang a lithe figure clad in green. Robin Hood, doffing his quaint, pointed, feathered cap, bowed to Fayre.

"Ah, Mystery Maid, we meet again so soon?" he said.

Fayre did not waste time. In low, excited voice, she told him the whole plot, taking care, however, not to let him guess that she had heard it from the baron himself.

"What! The rascal!" cried Robin Hood, his eyes widening. "He would turn the people against Robin Hood, then? Hah! And rob the poor workmen into the bargain."

"Oh, Robin Hood, save the people's wages!" begged Fayre. "They have worked so hard, and they plan to make such merriment, to eat well and drink well, to dance, to be gay. And if there is no gold, why, they will be plunged into despair!"

Robin Hood's eyes had lost their sparkle, and his lips were no longer curved in a smile.

"The rogue!" he said grimly. "A knave's trick; but there's no trick that an outlaw cannot double. To be warned before it is to be forearmed. Mystery Maid—you have done me great service," he added, with a shadow of his usual smile, and he tapped her cheek. "Yes, and a great service to the poor."

Then, signalling her to wait, he turned aside, and she heard him crashing through the thicket with lithe, springing strides, sounding his horn to summon his men.

What they planned, she did not know, but he returned a moment later with a fat, merry-looking man whose hair was out like a monk's—Friar Tuck.

"Mystery Maid, we must beg a favour of you," said Robin Hood.

"Anything that will serve to spoil this evil plan," said Fayre eagerly.

"Very well then. Friar Tuck will write a note which, if you have not too



MAKING certain she was unobserved, Fayre gummed Robin Hood's message to the stocks. It was the only way to save the villagers' gold.

great a fear, you must affix secretly in some place in the village where the sheriff may see it."

What that message was Fayre did not know, but she eagerly agreed that she would do as he asked. Friar Tuck, taking out his flask of water, mixed it with black powder to make ink, sharpened a quill pen, and, finding a scrap of paper in his wallet, laboriously wrote, tongue in cheek.

He alone of the outlaws could read and write, but since the baron himself and even King Richard were illiterate the others had no reason for shame.

Fayre, schooled by her tutor, the Venerable Brie, could write and spell more easily even than Friar Tuck, and at his request, though he wondered at her facility, she gave him aid.

"Sheriff," ran the finished message,— "Robin Hood is weary of being hunted. Do you but come at your most speedy pleasure to where he with his men wait in the road to the castle. Bring a hundred stout men-at-arms, for Robin Hood has nigh on twenty and would think ill of too light a victory."

Fayre dried the ink, flapping the paper in the air, and then rolled it neatly. Robin Hood, with his knife, prised gum from a tree, wrapping it in a leaf so that with it she could gum the notice where the sheriff could see it, taking great care that she was not spotted.

"Tra, la!" said Robin Hood, smiling again. "Methinks the baron and his merry men in green will have a stirring clash of arms with the sheriff's ruffians."

"And the gold will be saved for the labourers?" asked Fayre.

"'Twill be so," Robin Hood assured her.

Fayre, wondering what the rest of the plan might be, hurried to the village, hoping that, whatever it was, it would prove successful.

The village was crowded, and there were sounds of nails being hammered in, of song, of music. A maypole had been erected, rough tables were being fixed to hold the food that would be bought with the master-mason's gold. And because there was so great excitement the sheriff and a posse had ridden in from the town.

From other villages where those building the abbey lived, the men and women and children had assembled here a full two hundred strong.

Fayre moved amongst the throng, heart in mouth, fearing that she was attracting attention, but she soon realised that everyone was in such merry mood that a stranger as she was would pass unheeded.

With her back to the empty stocks, she pressed the message to the wood, first smearing the gum upon the paper. And only when she was quite sure she was unobserved did she move away.

She waited then, some yards from the stocks, until a shout went up.

"Where is the sheriff? A message for him from Robin Hood."

"Ha, ha, ha! Sheriff, a hundred brave men you shall need."

Fayre, her work done, slipped away amongst the crowd and hurried back down the road, hoping that the sheriff would not treat that message as a joke, but instantly summon his men!

Paid Twice Over!

PANTING, slowing, a stitch in her side, Fayre halted when she was half a mile from the village, at the turn of the road where she had a clear view of the castle and of part of the road leading to it.

She felt utterly amazed, for down that stretch of road came three men, one leading, two behind. And between those rear-most men was a pack-mule, well-loaded.

By the foremost man's clothes and square-cut cap Fayre knew who he was—the master-mason; and she knew what the heavily loaded mule carried—gold, the people's gold.

Fayre ran on, alarmed, fearing that at any moment her uncle and his men, disguised as Robin Hood's band, might spring from the hedges! When she had run but fifty paces that fear was realised.

With wild cries, green-clad figures leaped the hedges, and, brandishing staves, fell upon the three men. The mason was knocked from his horse, and lay gasping for breath, the others took to the fields in flight.

"Robin Hood's good wishes, mason!" roared the voice of the baron.

Fayre halted then, bewildered, dismayed. She saw a horse brought forward from the hedge, and the bags of gold slung upon it over the saddle, then covered with a saddlecloth.

Sir Geoffrey, peeling off his green suit as he rode, galloped to the castle; while the men in green gathered round the mason and made sure he did not see the direction the knight took.

"Thieves! Robbers!" cried Fayre, rushing forward, hardly caring, so great was her anger, whether her uncle recognised her or not.

She barely recognised him, so artfully was his head disguised to a likeness of Friar Tuck's. His great bulk made him not unlike the friar, and his face was stained with berry-juice to increase the likeness.

"To the woods, men, to share our spoil!" he cried.

Then he broke off as a cloud of dust in the direction of the village resolved itself into horsemen.

"To cover—hide!" the baron suddenly urged.

They scrambled over the hedge amongst the trees, and stood stock-still in hiding, not guessing who the horsemen were. But Fayre clapped her hands. For at the head of the riders was the sheriff.

As he turned up, Fayre sprang forward in excitement.

"In the wood—in the wood!" she cried. "Just there—"

At her cry the bogus outlaws ran for better hiding-places; but the sheriff's men, putting their horses to the jump, cleared the hedges.

"Friar Tuck—get Friar Tuck!" cried the mason, now helped to his feet.

The Baron Le Feuvre, hesitating between a chance of explaining matters to the sheriff or escape, loitered too late. Half a dozen men sprang on him, raining blows.

"To the stocks with him!" cried the Lady Fayre.

The Baron Le Feuvre struggled fiercely, keeping his head low and the friar's cowl in place. For after this act of highway robbery he dared not be recognised as himself.

"To the stocks with them all!" roared the sheriff.

Four only of the "outlaws" were caught, but those four would be enough to supply the village stocks and pillories.

"The gold—the gold!" called out the mason.

"We'll find it—never fear!" the sheriff assured him. "An hour in the stocks and this fat rascal will talk—"

Fayre followed them to the village in mixed mood. The baron deserved punishment; he deserved to go where he had so often sent others—to the stocks. Yet he was her uncle, and she did not want worse harm to befall him.

When the mason told his story in the village there was uproar. The crowd of people massed about the men in green, and shouts of fury rose.

"Robin Hood, the rascal!"

"Our friend turned enemy—"

"Stealing money meant for us—"

"'Tis Friar Tuck they have captured!"

"To the pillory!"

"Where's our gold?"

Fayre looked at the Baron Le Feuvre's face. Despite the berry-juice he was pale, and there was nothing about him now to suggest the braggart or mighty lord. Hundreds of fists were being shaken at him, voices yelled scorn and abuse, and only the sheriff's armed men kept the crowd from smashing blows on him.

The baron was put in the pillory, and with head hanging, hands and arms

limp, became a target for fruit and vegetables.

Of a sudden, Fayre took pity on him. To the crowd's amazement she sprang between him and them.

"Stay!" she cried, dodging a well-flung apple. "Stay! Do you not see who 'tis? 'Tis the Baron de Feuvre!"

The shouting died, and the sheriff stepped forward, frowning, to stare into the baron's face.

"'Tis so indeed!" he cried, in wonder.

"The baron!—In outlaw green?" came amazed cries.

Fayre's shrill voice rose when their cries died again.

"He was helped by Robin Hood!" she cried. "But the gold?"

The baron spluttered; and the sheriff moved near to hear what he said.

"The gold—safe—safe in my castle!" groaned the baron.

The sheriff drew up, smiling.

"The gold is safe in the castle!" he shouted.

A mighty roar went up from the people then, and there was a rush to free the baron so that he might hasten to secure the gold.

A horse was found for him, and, escorted by the sheriff, the baron, bruised and sore, wiping fruit from his face, cantered back to the castle.

Close behind—given a seat of honour behind the sheriff, since it was she who had first recognised the baron—rode Fayre.

But her heart was heavy, for no sign had come from Robin Hood, and the crowd was still blaming him for the robbery.

"I was captured by the rascal," said the baron, now recovered from the shock and shame, and dressed in his men's clothes—"when stunned, but my men took back the gold from the thieves, and rode it to the castle—"

At the barbican, Sir Geoffrey and others, now in their own attire, awaited him; and when they saw his sorry plight they drew back.

"The gold!" cried the baron. "The bags of gold you wrested from the rascal Robin Hood, who stole them from the mason—"

And he winked heavily to make his meaning clear.

Men rushed to a storehouse and returned, dragging the heavy, locked money-bags.

The whole crowd of two hundred villagers now crossed the drawbridge, invading the castle for the first time, and every man was armed with a club or some weapon.

"The gold!" went up the shout.

"Here are the bags, good fellow!" said the baron to the mason.

"Ah! I'll open them first. Why," ended the mason, "the locks have been broken!"

He opened the bags and shouted in rage, dived in his hands and pulled up earth and stones.

"The gold is gone!" came an angry roar from the people.

"Four hundred pieces!" said the mason.

"Peace!" called Fayre. "The baron has but put the gold in a safe place for keeping!"

"Ahhh!" came a murmur of relief.

The Baron le Feuvre, brows knit, muttered to Sir Geoffrey and the others, who one and all protested that they had not opened the bags.

"'Twas as we found them!" they agreed.

The baron knew that he was defeated. Unless he found the four hundred gold pieces, this crowd would run amuck.

"Peace!" called Fayre soothingly. "The baron has many hundreds of gold pieces in his treasure chest. Four hundred—'tis but a handful to him."

The baron scowled at her, but jumped to action, all the same, horrified lest the mob decided to raid his coffers and take a handful of gold pieces each.

"Four hundred gold pieces!" he roared. "Find the treasurer!"

Good humour returned to the crowd then, and when, a few minutes later, the treasurer and his helpers returned with four hundred gold pieces, a mighty cheer rose from the crowd.

As the baron had the wisdom to distribute the gold on the roadway, he succeeded in luring the crowd from the castle—all but Fayre.

She, taking advantage of the excitement, slipped away to her room, and there changed into her red robe.

In growing anxiety, from her window she looked out upon the fields for some sight of Robin Hood. But there was none.

It was hours later that Fayre, putting on her shabby clothes, once more crept down to the dungeons and climbed through the secret trapdoor to the boat moored in the moat. Very softly she paddled it to the far side, where she moored it, assured that the sentries could not see her.

Reaching the village, with its tables grōaning under goodly fare, and the people dancing and singing, she saw the merry girl she had met in the roadway—now merrier than ever.

"Ah, my friend—you are come to join us?" said the girl. "Hast heard all the merriment, and Robin Hood's joke?"

"His joke?" said Fayre.

"Hood held up the mason the first time," the girl laughed. "All the baron took was dirt and stones, and what was thrown at him. Tra, da! And Robin Hood did but keep the gold safe from the baron—and now, has sent it back to us."

"Sent it back! And you have the baron's gold, too!" Fayre cried.

"Yes, yes—double money for all, with Robin Hood's love," said the girl. "And the baron's grief."

The Lady Fayre sat down on a table edge and laughed—laughed until her sides ached. Then in right merry mood she joined the happy throng, as did some strange friars in sackcloth, whose more normal garb was green.

With one of them Fayre danced, but though she knew his name, she did not even whisper it, for Robin Hood was the man, and enemies had sharp ears.

"Well done!" she said, laughing.

"Well done, young mystery maid!" he said. "And if you should hear the baron's joy when he knows the gold was twice paid, let me hear of it, too."

Fayre heard it, although it did not sound like joy. The baron nearly exploded. He danced, quivered, shook, and smashed a table with his fist.

"By my troth I'll be even with Robin Hood for this!" he roared.

And the Lady Fayre, not daring to laugh, closed one eye in a wink—the eye farther from the baron.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

MEET charming Fayre and gallant Robin Hood again next Saturday, in yet another fascinating Complete story.