

Dramatic times for  
Barbara Redfern & Co. during

“THEIR FEUD WITH THE FIFTH!”

# THE SCHOOLGIRL

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Incorporating  
“SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN”



“UNLESS WE CAN  
FIND THE OWNER OF  
THIS FOOTPRINT—  
the feud between the Forms will  
continue!”

See this week's dramatic Cliff  
House School story.



## A Grand Long Complete Story of the Chums of Cliff House School, starring Barbara



# THEIR FEUD *with*

### Exciting News!



**M**ORE tea, Miss Charmant?" Barbara Redfern asked, with a bright smile.

"Thank you, Barbara!"

"Another jam tart, Miss Charmant?" plump Bessie Bunter pressed. "I can recommend these, you know. I made them myself in cookery classes."

"Thank you, Bessie! They are really excellent, my dear! Clara, would you mind passing the sugar, please? And, Marjorie, I think Mabel wants some more bread-and-butter."

"O.K.!" Clara Trevlyn grinned. "Flora, got everything you want?"

"Thanks!" Flora Cann of the Lower Fifth nodded. "Ripping, this! I must say," she added, with a hint of the superiority her one extra year gave her, "that you kids in the Fourth Form know how to throw a tea-party!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Joan Carson. "Don't they just!" Hilda Hatfield chuckled. "Nother sandwich, please, Babs!"

Tea was in progress in Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor at Cliff House School.

But it was not an ordinary tea this time; the spread was much too lavish. Moreover, it was not frequently that the charming Valerie Charmant, mistress of the Fourth and history mistress of the school, was present on such an occasion; and it was stranger still to see the leaders of the Fourth Form and their great rivals, the leaders of the Lower Fifth, sitting down in perfect harmony to the same meal.

And never before in the Fourth Form's history had Miss Valerie Char-

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mant requested Barbara Redfern, who was the captain of the Fourth, to expressly invite herself and these Fifth Formers. But Miss Charmant had a good reason for that, of course.

"You know," she said now, "I'm glad I've got you girls together, and I do think it's splendid of you, Barbara, to co-operate as you have done!"

Babs dimpled and flushed to the roots of her glistening chestnut hair.

"And I do hope," Miss Charmant added, "that the Fourth and the Lower Fifth will be very good friends in future!"

"But," Flora Cann the tonailed-haired captain of the Lower Fifth, said, "we are good friends, Miss Charmant—really! Naturally, we pull each other's legs, and, naturally, the Fourth is not in it with the Lower Fifth; we're only rivals. You know," Flora added, winking at her two form-mates, "the Fourth have got an idea they can beat us in most things; but, of course, the Fourth, with brains at such a lower stage of development—"

"Says you!" sniffed Tomboy Clara Trevlyn. "Miss Charmant, would you like the salt?"

"Eh? No, Clara. I don't usually eat salt with jam tart!" the surprised Form-mistress said.

"But I thought, you see, you might like a pinch to swallow Flora's yarns!" Clara said; and there was a laugh at Flora's expense, in which pretty Valerie Charmant joined.

"But, Miss Charmant, you did hint," Barbara put in, "about something else—some secret."

"I did," Miss Charmant nodded. "That, as a matter of fact, was why I asked you all together here first. I just wanted to put you all on good terms with each other before I dropped my bombshell, so to speak. I hope you'll be suitably thrilled when it bursts."

The girls eyed her.

"Oh, Miss Charmant, what is it?" Mabel Lynn asked.

"You haven't guessed?"

"No. Please—please do tell us!" Marjorie Hazeldene pleaded.

Miss Charmant laughed.

"Give you three guesses!" she teased. "A feed?" fat Bessie Bunter suggested at once.

"No."

"A trip to London?" Babs hazarded. "No, Barbara."

"Well, then, a—visit to the theatre?" Mabel Lynn suggested.

But again Miss Charmant laughed, merely shaking her head.

"No," she said for the third time. "I'm sorry to tease you, but you're all miles out. Bessie is nearest, but only partly. Barbara, you asked the Fourth to be at the meeting in the Common-room at half-past five?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Charmant!"

"And you, Flora?"

"The Lower Fifth," Flora retorted gallantly, "will be there to a man—I mean, girl!"

The mistress' blue eyes twinkled. Two delicious dimples, the admiration and envy of every girl in the school, appeared in her cheeks. Most attractive Miss Charmant looked when she smiled like that—most marvellously like a schoolgirl herself. No wonder everybody at Cliff House adored her!

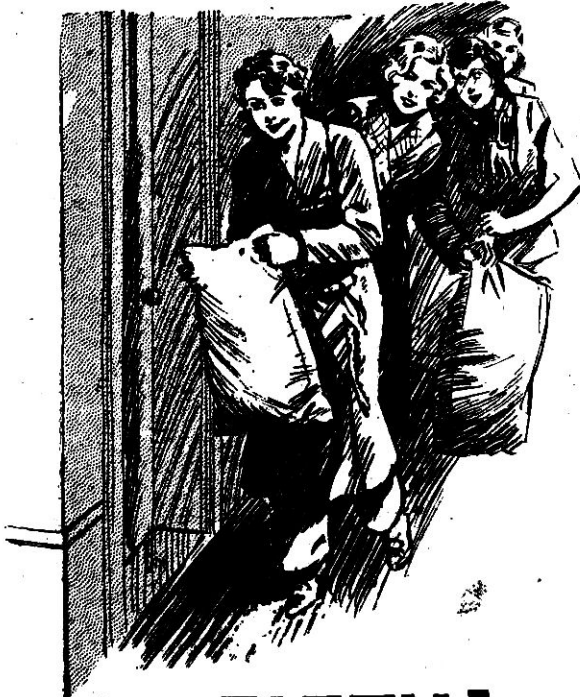
But this secret of hers—what was it? Everybody was on tenterhooks to know.

"There!" she said at last. "Oh, goodness, what a tea! I congratulate you, Barbara, upon your hospitality! It has been delightful—very! But, now everyone is finished, we'll get along. By the sound of things, the girls are already filling the Common-room."

That was obvious. For outside in the corridor came voices; the sound of many footsteps all eagerly making

Redfern, Bessie Bunter &amp; Co.

By HILDA RICHARDS Illustrated by T. LAIDLER



## the FIFTH!

in one direction—the Fourth Form Common-room. They heard girls chatting and laughing, and occasionally a good-natured cry of "Ware, Fifth Form!" or "Ware, Fourth Form!"—for these two Forms could never meet without a display of that friendly rivalry for which they were so noted throughout the school. And for once nobody was inclined to linger over tea in Study No. 4—not even plump Bessie, who usually was the first to sit down and the last to rise.

"Leave the washing-up," Babs suggested. "We'll do that afterwards. Ready, everybody?"

Everybody was; not only ready, but eager and curiously anxious to get to the scene of action. Again Miss Charmant laughed as she rose and led the way out of the study. A crowd of girls, swarming in the corridor, all pounced upon her as she came out.

"Oh, Miss Charmant, what's the meeting about?" Margot Lantham wanted to know. "We're just dying with curiosity!"

"Well, please," Miss Charmant laughed, "keep yourselves alive for another few moments!"

And, tripping along in the midst of the girls, she reached the crowded Common-room, flinging the door open. At once there was a cry:

"Here she is!"

"Three cheers for Miss Charmant!"

"Miss Charmant, what is it?"

"Please, please! Silence, girls!" Miss Charmant laughed, and her eyes twinkled as she looked over the assembly of girls. "Barbara, shut the door!" she said. "Somebody stand guard by it! This is a secret!"

Fourth and Fifth were silent, forgetting even the bantering which had been violently in progress when the Form-mistress entered. Now they were going to know at last!

why I've called you together."

And she did, while the girls listened, shining-eyed and thrilled with interest. Dear old Charmer! Wasn't it just like her to think up a treat like that? For her idea, after all, was very simple. The Lower Fifth and the Fourth combined were going to give Primmy a birthday party, just as the Upper Fifth and Sixth had done last year—but this birthday party was going to be different.

There was going to be tea in Big Hall, a lovely presentation, followed by an entertainment which Miss Charmant had already mapped out and which was to be a sort of cavalcade of events

**Rivalry had always existed between the Fourth and the Lower Fifth. But it was friendly rivalry—until the two Forms banded together in preparing a great surprise for their headmistress. Then a secret plotter went to work, and the friendliness grew into bitterness, the rivalry into a feud.**

during Miss Primrose's long reign as Cliff House's headmistress.

"And the cavalcade," Miss Charmant said, while girls beamed at each other, "is to be a series of little scenes. Every girl in both Forms will have something to do, but because time is short I suggest you form into groups and start work right away. Mabel Lynn, as chairwoman of the Junior Amateur Dramatic Society, I think you should see to rehearsals and so forth."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Charmant!" Mabs said, and looked around. "Do the others agree?"

Everybody did. Even the Fifth realised that Mabs was the best possible choice.

"And the secret," Miss Charmant went on, "is going to be just between ourselves. You all know what next Wednesday is, don't you?"

"No. What?" Mabel Lynn asked. "Think! It's somebody's birthday, isn't it?"

"Birthday?" A mutter went round; then Diana Royston-Clarke gave a cry.

"Y-o-i-c-k-s! I know! Primmy's birthday! I mumm-mean, Miss Primrose!" she cried, remembering that she was referring to Cliff House's headmistress.

"That's it. Fancy forgetting it," Miss Charmant chided. "And Wednesday is an extra special birthday for Miss Primrose, because it is her jubilee—her fiftieth, you know. Now I am going to tell you

"Good old Mabs!" cried Babs, for golden-haired Mabel Lynn was her studymate and especial chum.

"And then there'll be a souvenir programme," Miss Charmant said. "Barbara, I really think you should design that. Now comes the presentation. There will have to be a collector, of course—Hilda Hatfield, what about you for that? When we've got all the money, we'll decide then what to buy. The next question is—and this, in some respects, is the most important—who is to present the present?"

"Oh, the Fifth, of course!" Georgina Skappington of that Form said.

"Rats! The Fourth!" sniffed Clara Tavlyn.

"But we're seniors!" Georgina retorted.

"Only by age. In every other respect," Clara retorted cheerfully, "you're infants! Bags the presentation for the Fourth, Miss Charmant!"

"Why, you cheeky—" "Peace, peace!" Miss Charmant laughed. "No arguments, please. Remember we've all got to work with good will and co-operation."

"Well, then, what about Miss Charmant choosing the girl who's going to make the presentation?" Mildred Tamplin cried.

Everybody wheeled round. Mildred, a rather heavily built girl who not long ago had been dropped from the Upper Fifth to the Lower because of her backwardness, was not often heard in such discussions. Sulky, aloof, never in anybody's good books for any length of time, Mildred usually kept very much to herself.

"Jolly good idea," Flora Cann applauded. "Miss Charmant—yes, you do it!"

Miss Charmant laughed.

"But how am I to know who is the girl best fitted?" she asked. "Wait a minute, though! You all understand, don't you, that apart from making the actual presentation, the girl who is selected for that honour will have to make a speech into the bargain? Now what about this? Supposing each Form selects its best speech-maker—"

Miss Charmant laughed.

"Yes?" everyone cried. "And supposing to-night that girl drafts out the speech she will make with the presentation? Then let me have both speeches. To-morrow morning," the mistress added, "I will give you my honest, candid opinion and you stick to that."

"Jolly good! But, of course, it's just a walk-over for the Fifth!" Rhoda Rhodes smiled.

"Says you!" sniffed Leila Carroll, the American junior of the Fourth.

"So shall we leave it at that?" Miss Charmant asked.

Everybody was agreed for it to be left at that. There followed some further discussion about the entertain-

## 4 "Their Feud with the Fifth!"

ment side. Though the Fourth and Fifth were to work in Co. with each other, most of the items were separate and could be done by independent groups.

There were no costumes in the play except for one scene—the scene which was to be a re-enactment of a Cliff House pageant, in which an earlier Fifth Form had played a leading part. That scene, therefore, was to go to the Fifth.

A good part, that. But the Fourth did not mind. The honours of the party, at the moment, were fairly even.

And so, at last, the gathering broke up, everybody extremely happy and enthusiastic; everybody with some special work to do. Even Bessie Bunter had her own separate job, for Bessie was going to make the birthday cake, Miss Charmant promising to get special permission from Miss Plummy, the domestic science and cookery mistress, for her to use the model kitchen. Bessie beamed. That was a job after her own heart.

"And just wait," she boasted, "till you taste it!"

"We will!" Joan Carson said good-humouredly. "Don't forget to bring your hammers and chisels, girls!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two Forms split up. But at once Babs held a meeting of the Fourth. So many things had to be settled right away, and, most important among them, the selection of the presentation-maker.

The vote of the Fourth was at once for Babs to make that speech, but, as Babs pointed out, she was captain, and a captain making the presentation and the speech might lend to the party a formality which was not in keeping with its spirit. The choice of that great honour finally fell to Peggy Preston.

"And off," Babs said, "you go, Peggy, and prepare the draft for Miss Charmant! No time to waste. If you want a hand with the speech, don't be shy in asking for it."

"I won't!" Peggy promised, with a laugh, and off she dashed.

## First Suspicions!



"FINISHED, Peggy?" Barbara Redfern, looking into Study No. 6, which Peggy Preston shared with Jane Mills and Christine Wilmer, eagerly asked that question.

"Just!" Peggy laughed, beaming up from the table. "Like to read it, Babs?"

"It" was, of course, the speech over which Peggy had laboured ever since the Fourth Form had selected her to be its spokeswoman. In order to help her to concentrate, Christine and Jane had thoughtfully left her alone, and Babs, busy with the various small organisations which the projected birthday party called for, had not found, until this moment, an opportunity of discussing Peggy's labours. But she beamed as the Lancashire junior handed the speech to her.

Babs' face, for the last two hours, indeed, had been a constant beam. For everything was going swimmingly, topping, splendidly.

Mabs, the second of the Study No. 4 girls, had already got her rehearsal group arranged. Bessie, the third of that famous trio, had gone off to see Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper, about the ingredients for the birthday cake.

Rosa Rodworth had been sent off to assist Hilda Hatfield in the collection. Marjorie Hazeldene, that gentle-faced

studymate of Clara Trevlyn, was already making a list of furnishings and props connected with the Fourth Form's scenes in the show.

Babs herself had roughed out the design for the special birthday programme, and was feeling very pleased with the result. Everything, in fact, was going on oiled wheels.

She read through the speech, and her eyes shone.

"Oh, Peggy, it—it's brilliant!" she breathed. "Topping! You know, you ought to be an M.P. when you grow up! Blessed if I've ever read anything neater than that. But you're going to have competition," she added, "because I've just heard that the Fifth have selected Joan Carson as your rival, and you know what fine speeches Joan can make!"

"You like it?" Peggy asked anxiously. "You don't think it can be improved upon?"

"No!" Babs said. "Bothered if I can make a single suggestion. But what about taking it along now? I'd like your opinion on my programme design when you're free."

"Let's go!" Peggy said heartily.

And off they went. But, arriving at Miss Charmant's door, they halted. Outside that door was Joan Carson, the Lower Fifth's Canadiah schoolgirl, her own speech in her hand, accompanied by Flora Cann.

"What ho!" Flora chortled. "The deadly enemies arrive at the same time. Written your speech, Peggy?"

"I have!" Peggy Preston retorted.

"Pretty tough, making a Fourth Form kid write a speech, isn't it?" Flora said sadly. "Must be dreadful, racking the poor things they call brains, for the necessary words. Hope you didn't use too many dictionaries, Peggy."

"Stuff!" Babs retorted. "Just wait till to-morrow, that's all! Have you knocked yet?"

"Three times," Flora said. "Don't think the Charmer's in, though. Shall we leave them?"

"Why not?"

And Babs opened the door, to reveal a study untenanted, Miss Charmant having been called into conference with Miss Primrose. Carefully Joan placed her effort on the desk. Peggy, with a smilingly challenging look at her rival, placed hers beside it. And then they all wheeled as there was a sound outside the door.

"Hallo! Here she is!" Babs said.

But it was not Miss Charmant—or anyone else. Puzzled, Babs went to the door and opened it. Not a soul was in sight.

"Dreaming!" Flora grinned. "Well, that's that! And may the best girl win! So sorry," she added mockingly, "the Fourth won't be presenting the present, Babs!"

"Bow-wow!" Babs said cheerfully.

They hurried off then to the music-room, from which came the unearthly strains of music.

The music was the beginnings of a band which Jemima Carstairs was forming for the party, but whose early efforts seemed to promise anything but eventual success.

From the music-room they went to the Common-room, where Mabel Lynn was trying to superintend two rehearsals at once, and from there to the model kitchen, where Bessie was ponderously weighing out the portions which would go to the making of her cake.

Preparations were going with a swing!

But all immediate attention was concentrated on the result of the speech-making competition. For very obvious reasons, that was recognised as the very

highest honour in the party schedule, and both Fourth and Fifth were on tenterhooks of excitement.

Bed-time came, and with both Forms happy and excited, Fourth and Fifth sought their well-earned rests. Up early in the morning were Babs & Co., and immediately after breakfast Babs and Peggy presented themselves, with Flora and Joan, in Miss Charmant's study. Miss Charmant smiled at Peggy.

"Peggy, thank you! I have read your speech—"

Peggy flushed.

"And I think," Miss Charmant said, "that it is a very fine effort indeed—a very fine effort! But, Joan, I understand you were preparing a speech as well."

Joan Carson blinked.

"Well, I did!" she replied.

"I do not seem to have seen it," Miss Charmant said.

"What?" Joan started. "But—but I left it here last night! Babs and Peggy and Flora were here at the same time."

"All the same," Miss Charmant replied, "Peggy's speech was the only one left on my desk. Joan, are you sure?"

Joan was sure. And Joan was a little resentful, then. Joan had racked her brain in writing the speech, and Joan, at least, had thought it very good indeed. But Miss Charmant hadn't seen it, and when she searched her study there was no sign of it. Miss Charmant frowned.

"It is very strange. Joan, you are sure you put it here?"

"Positive!" Joan said, rather snappily.

"Then what can have happened to it?"

"Only one thing can have happened to it," Joan retorted bitterly. "Somebody must have taken it!" And, though perhaps she did not mean it, she could not help but dart a look at Peggy as she said those words, and Peggy, catching the look, flushed to the roots of her hair. "It almost seems," Joan said, "that somebody's taken it because they wanted to snatch the Fifth's chances of making the speech."

"Oh, Joan," Babs said indignantly, "I say, that's not fair!"

"Well, what else? What—"

"Please!" Miss Charmant said sharply. "Joan, that is rather unworthy. At the same time," she added, "I can understand your disappointment. It is—very annoying. Wait a minute. I have an idea," she added eagerly.

"Supposing, just to decide the question, you and Peggy give your speeches here and now, verbally?"

"I'm willing," Peggy said at once.

Joan Carson flushed. Truth to tell, the suggestion found little enthusiasm with her. Unless she had learned her speech by heart in the first place Joan was not a natural speaker. On the other hand, Peggy could usually be relied upon to make an entertaining speech out of nothing. But Joan, as a Fifth Former, was not going to let it be said that she had refused a challenge which a Fourth Former had accepted.

"All right," she said. "I agree, too."

"Very well," Miss Charmant smiled.

"Well, Joan, as you seem to be the victim in this case you shall have first shot. Now, just pretend that I am Miss Primrose and you are making the speech to me. Go ahead!"

The other girls stood silent as Joan, somewhat flustered, stepped forward.

With a cough, she started, faltered, and started again, desperately trying to memorise the words of the missing speech she had written instead of forgetting all about it and making the bold,



impromptu effort for which the occasion called.

Very badly she halted in places. Several times she repeated phrases, and the whole time, unused to being called upon on the spur of the moment for such a speech, was flustered and uncertain. Miss Charmant nodded when she had finished.

"Thank you, Joan. Now you, Peggy."

Peggy, looking more confident, stepped forward, with a smile. Just to aid her she picked up Miss Charmant's ruler, and, imagining that was the present, fired ahead. Babs glowed as she listened; Miss Charmant smiled. The speech was good—excellent, in fact—almost as good as that which Peggy had written.

"Very, very good, Peggy," Miss Charmant said, when it was finished. "Joan, I am sorry, but I think even you will agree that Peggy is the more suited to fill the bill. Then that's decided. Peggy makes the speech."

"But—but—" Joan stuttered. "Yes, my dear?" "Oh, nothing!" Joan muttered. But her face was bitter as she left the room. Hurt disappointment, smouldering resentment were in her eyes.

Not normally did Joan Carson display an unsporting side to her nature, but her disappointment in the circumstances was very humanly understandable.

Last night she had fretted over an hour on that speech. She had had cause to feel satisfied when she had finished it. Flora had voted it a peach. Someone had stolen that speech—and who was to gain by stealing it except a member of the Fourth?

Outside Miss Charmant's door, Babs and Peggy paused.

"Joan, I'm sorry," Peggy said sincerely.

"So you ought to be," Joan retorted. "What?"

"So you ought to be!" Joan's face flushed. She didn't want to say it. She didn't mean to say it; but something within her was spurring her on against her better nature. "I hope," she said somewhat bitterly, "the Fourth are satisfied now. You're giving the presentation, Peggy Preston, and I hope you enjoy it. At the same time," she added, breathing heavily, "I do think that in a scheme like this the Fourth ought to play the game. That's all."

"But, Joan—" cried Babs.

Joan, however, with a bitter look, had turned on her heel and walked away.

### Sure Proof—Or Was It?



"EITHER," Babs said thoughtfully, "Joan's speech was stolen, or somebody must have shifted it off Miss Charmant's desk by mistake. Flora, you don't think that this was really a trick on our part to get the speaking for the Fourth?"

Flora Cann flushed a little. "Well, no," she said. "But—well, I mean to say, it is jolly funny! We all saw those two papers laid down side by side. And if one were taken away by mistake why should the other be left?"

Babs shook her head. "Anyway," Flora said, "I'll talk to her about it. Meantime, I hope her speech turns up."

They all hoped that, but there was no doubt that the incident had its repercussions. The news got round, and while there was rejoicing in the Fourth there were rather heated feelings in the Lower Fifth.

There were bitter tongues there, as in every Form at Cliff House, which did not want further inducement to wag, and, though no open accusation was made against the Fourth, it was easy to feel that the senior Form did suspect its juniors.

Morning lessons came and went with no further light thrown on the mystery. Afternoon lessons succeeded, and still there was no news of Joan's missing speech. By that time, however, the Fourth had become accustomed to the idea that the honour was theirs, and the Lower Fifth, with their own activities to interest them, had ceased to talk about it, though, naturally, it was still at the back of everyone's mind.

After lessons there were rehearsals again. As far as was possible the groups had been arranged so that there was no overlapping, and girls could get together and rehearse privately in study or gymnasium or library or any other place they so willed.

But there was rather a big finale to the show which included both Fourth and Fifth, and Mabs, managing that, had ordered a rehearsal of both Forms before tea that day. Willingly enough all turned up.

"Now," Mabs said, "let's get this straight. Peggy Preston, where are you? Oh, here! Peggy, you at the piano. Babs, I want you here. Flora, you there. Joan—oh, here you are, Joan! Now, I want you three to sing the first four lines of the song, the rest coming in on the fifth line. That clear?"

"Clear as a jolly old fog at midnight," murmured Jemima Carstairs. "Wouldst like my orchestra to enliven the proceedings, fair one?"

But nobody wanted Jemima's "orchestra." Peggy Preston at the piano was sufficient. Each of the girls was furnished with a copy of the song, and at Mabs' signal Peggy commenced to play. Then up went Mabs' hand, the cue for the leaders to start. Tunefully, harmoniously the three voices blended, at the right moment the chorus coming in.

"Fine!" Mabs beamed. "Really good! Now again—and then we'll try to do it with props." Again the song was sung, and Mabs nodded again. "Now I want a table," she said. "Who's got a small table?"

"Oh, Peggy has!" cried Janet Jordan. "Peggy, that one behind the door. Can we borrow it?"

"Of course!" Peggy said. "I'll come and help you to get it."

"No," Mabs decided; "I shall want you to practise this other song, Pegs. Babs—Flora—Joan—will you go and get it? Meantime, we'll run through the next song. You're not in that."

Babs, Flora, and Joan nodded. While the busy Mabs served out the sheets for the next number, they trotted off. They reached Study No. 6, and Babs, pulling the door open, revealed the small table with a single drawer which stood behind it.

"Here we are," she said; "though I'm blessed if I know why it requires three of us. Flora, grab that end, will you? Joan, open the door. Hi, steady on, Flora!"

This as Flora, boisterously grabbing one end of the table, tilted it on one side.

"Sorry!" Flora grinned, but her sorrow came too late.

For the table drawer, very loose fitting, came shooting out of the table. Too late Joan Carson saw it, too late made a dive. There was a crash, and down went the drawer, spilling its contents on the floor.

"Clumsy thing!" Joan said. "Why

the dickens can't you ever do anything without making a mess of it? Wait a minute, I'll pick the things up. Goodness, what a lot of papers Peggy hoards up!" she laughed, and then suddenly she jumped. "I say—"

"Well, what do you say?" Flora asked good-humouredly.

But Joan said nothing. Rather queer the look on her face all at once. In her hand she held two sheets of paper.

"Well, what?" Babs asked, with a frown.

"I thought," Joan said with a sort of concentrated quietness, "Peggy knew nothing about my missing speech?"

"Well, neither does she," Babs said. "But—" And then she started. "Oh, my hat! You—you don't mean—"

"I mean," Joan said, her lips curling with contempt, "that here is the speech—in Peggy Preston's own drawer. If she knew nothing about its disappearance, what's it doing here?"

In dismay Babs stared as Joan coldly held out the two sheets for her to see. For an instant she was shaken. Just for the veriest flash of time, perhaps, Joan's own suspicion transferred itself to her. Then she flushed. She knew Peggy. She knew her for the soul of honour. No; certainly Peggy Preston would never play such a trick like that!

"How?" Joan flamed. "Oh crumbs! I—I don't know," Babs stuttered. "But, Joan, Peggy couldn't—wouldn't do a thing like that. There—there must be some mistake—"

"Then Peggy," Joan said between her teeth, "can jolly well explain the mistake. Anyway, she's not getting away with this. If she tricked Miss Charmant into giving her the plum part of the party I guess it's about time she was shown up. Come on—"

"But, Joan—" Babs gasped. But Joan, like a whirlwind, was out of the room. In dismay Babs glanced at Flora, who bit her lip. Then she nodded quickly.

"Come on; never mind the table."

Off they rushed. Joan, speeding ahead, entered the music-room, where the second song had come to an end. Peggy, in the act of turning over her music, started as Joan flamed in, thrusting the two sheets under her nose.

"And I thought," Joan said bitterly, "you knew nothing of this? You cheat, Peggy Preston!"

"What?"

"You cheat!" Joan flared. "You awful cheat! You stole my speech so that Miss Charmant would take yours! Yes, you did! Here it is! I found it in your table drawer!"

"Here, what's this?" cried Georgina Skeppington.

"It's true!" Joan faced them, while Peggy, thunderstruck, even now hardly understanding, blinked. "This is the Fourth's way of helping and co-operating!" she cried scornfully. "This is what they call playing the game! Because the Fourth just want everything their own way they've descended to rotten tricks like this!"

"Joan!" cried Babs, bursting in. "Joan— Oh, you idiot, what are you saying?"

"Wait a minute; we ought to get this cleared up," Mildred Tamplin said, coming forward. "Joan, are you sure you found that in Peggy's drawer?"

"I did. Flora will tell you the same. So will Babs, if she cares to speak the truth!"

Babs glared. "I'm not," she retorted tartly, "in the habit of telling lies! Yes, I admit you found it in Peggy's drawer; but that doesn't prove Peggy put it there. And, for goodness' sake," she cried,

"before you start slinging accusations about, give Peggy a chance! Pegs, do you know anything about this?"

Joan paused. She realised then that perhaps she was being hasty. She hadn't meant to act like that, but her bitterness at the discovery of the trick which had been played upon her had overwhelmed every other consideration. She gazed at Peggy now.

"Well, do you?" she asked.

"N-no," faltered Peggy.

There came a sniff from Florence Ellison of the Fifth.

"Jolly good defence—I don't think!" she jeered.

"All the same, I don't!" Peggy retorted spiritedly.

There was silence. The Fifth were remembering with new and vivid freshness their indignation of the morning. Only one girl stood to gain by playing such a trick—and all the evidence pointed to that girl as having played it. Peggy flushed as she saw the grimness of their faces.

"I tell you—" she protested.

"Fibs!" Florence Ellison gibed.

"Rats! Why don't you own up?"

"Yes, own up!" came a shout.

"But if Peggy says she didn't do it—" Babs cried.

"Then who else would do it?" Georgina Skeppington hotly argued.

"Rats! Peggy, you're bowled out. The least you can do is to jolly well go to Miss Charmant and tell her, so that she can make a fresh decision."

"Yes, rather!" came a cry.

"Just a sec!" Babs cried. "Girls, listen—"

But the girls wouldn't listen. There was clamour. The Fifth were both hostile and indignant now. Justice demanded that Miss Charmant should be told; that a new decision should be given. Peggy rose. Her face was white, but it was rather bitter, too.

"I'm not going to own up!" she cried.

"Why should I own up to something I never did? I tell you, I know nothing about it!"

"And you believe her?" Joan asked of Babs.

"Yes, of course I believe her!" Babs retorted.

"All right!" Joan's chest heaved.

"If that's your idea of co-operation, I'm out of this stunt from now on!" she said bitterly. "I'm willing to do my best, but I'm not willing to sit down under this sort of treatment. Either Peggy goes to Miss Charmant and tells her what she did, or I jolly well chuck rehearsals here and now."

"And so," chimed in Georgina Skeppington, "say all of us! Well, Peggy Preston!"

The Fifth looked at her. Peggy, her face flaming, faced them with clenched hands.

"I'm not going to own up!" she repeated.

A pause.

"Then that," Florence Ellison said, "settles it! Come on, girls!"

And, to the gasping dismay of the Fourth Form, the Fifth moved towards the door. It seemed that deadlock had been reached.

### Warning of a Raid!



**D**EADLOCK had. Indignation, swift and furious, ran through the ranks of the Fifth.

Peggy, called on again by the Fourth, stubbornly repeated her defence, and the Fourth, knowing Peggy Preston, just had to believe her. But who had

deliberately stolen Joan Carson's paper? Who had tried to blame that on to Peggy?

"The Fifth are jolly fond of accusing us,"—Rosa Rodworth savagely glowered—"but what about themselves? If Peggy didn't do that, somebody else did. And if the Fifth could jolly well fasten it on to the Fourth it would be to their advantage, wouldn't it? If you ask me, this is just a scheme!"

"Oh, please!" Babs pleaded. "Don't talk rot! The Fifth wouldn't do it. Why on earth should they? Somebody did it—granted; somebody, perhaps, who's got a down on Peggy. Anyway, just slanging each other won't get us anywhere. Look here, I'll trot along and see Flora."

She quitted the music-room there and then. To Flora Cann's study she wended her way. She found that girl alone, looking almost as doleful as herself.

"Dashed if I know what to do, Babs!" she said. "The best thing is to let feeling die down a bit. I can't really believe in Peggy's guilt; but when the whole Form is saying it's a stunt, either of Peggy or the Fourth, what can I do? The only thing I can suggest is that we see the Charmer."

"And tell her about everything?" Babs asked. "No thanks! A fine squabbling set of chumps we should look just when the Charmer's expecting us to pull together and work like anything. But, Flora, somebody's responsible."

Flora answered with a doleful nod.

"But who?" she asked.

"Somebody," Babs answered. "Somebody in the Fourth, or somebody in the Fifth. Somebody, as I said, who might have a grudge against Peggy, or somebody who's trying to ruin the whole show—though why the dickens they should beats me. After all, look facts in the face. Would Peggy have lent us that table so willingly if she'd known those papers were in it?"

"H'm! That's a point," Flora conceded. "Hadm't thought of that. All right," she said, "you see what you can do with your crowd. I'll have a jaw to mine."

Babs nodded. She went off again. But before she reached the music-room whom should she meet but Miss Charmant herself.

"Oh, Barbara, I was looking for you!" that mistress pleasantly greeted her. "Everything going on all right?"

Babs flushed a little.

"Everybody," she answered cautiously, "is working like anything."

"I'm pleased to hear it." Miss Charmant dimpled. "You know, Barbara, I'm most fearfully keen to see this show a great success, and the most delicious part of it is that Miss Primrose doesn't suspect a thing." She laughed. "But now, Barbara, I wonder if you'd do something for me?"

"Oh, with pleasure!" Babs said, at once.

"I've received the collection—a very, very good one, too, thanks to Hilda Hatfield, and I've ordered the present. The present is a very lovely piece of Dresden china from Mullfords in Courtfield. I happen to know that it is a piece which Miss Primrose has had her eye on for a long time. I was wondering, if I gave you the cheque, whether you would care to go and collect it?"

"Oh, Miss Charmant, I'd love to," Babs replied. "And"—with sudden, eager inspiration—"when I get back would it be possible to call a meeting of the two Forms and show them what has been bought? They'd love to have a private view, you know."

"Why, Barbara, that is an excellent

idea!" Miss Charmant said. "Certainly! Will you come along to my study now for the cheque?"

Babs laughed. She felt buoyant again then. An inspection of the present would remind both the Fifth and the Fourth what they were working for. That would bring them together again and establish a better understanding. Willingly she accompanied the mistress to her study, and there Miss Charmant wrote out the cheque and handed it to her, together with a pass for two.

As Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, at the moment, had nothing to do, Babs took her on the trip. They were waiting for the bus in Friardale Lane when another girl joined them. It was Mildred Tamplin.

"Hallo, Babs! Going far?" she asked.

"Courtfield," Babs volunteered.

"You?"

"Oh, only popping into Friardale!" Mildred shrugged. "I've got to go and see my dog at the vet's, you know. Bad luck about Peggy," she added, with a frown. "I'm frightfully sorry about that. But it's silly, of course, to think Peggy would do such a trick. I do hope, Babs, that everything will turn out all right. I like the Charmer—awfully—and I think it would be just too bad if her little scheme was let down. Besides, there's dear old Primmy."

The chums blinked a little. They had never known Mildred to show such interest and concern for other people before.

The bus came along then, and they all boarded it, Mildred dropping off at the crossroads in Friardale. Clara grinned at Babs.

"Bit of a change, what?" she asked.

"Bit!" Babs laughed. "A whacking great change, if you ask me!" she said.

"Still, it's jolly to find her taking such an interest. I only hope," she added, "there'll be no more ructions."

"Well, the meeting ought to set things right," Clara said. "Brain-wave of yours that, Babs."

Brain-wave it was. For when, having collected the present, they bore it back in its wooden box to Cliff House, they found that Miss Charmant had already ordered the meeting—this time in Cliff House's well-equipped gymnasium.

Such a way Miss Charmant had of doing these things—making everyone feel that she was a grown-up school-girl among younger schoolgirls—that it would have been impossible to show either resentment or churlishness before her.

The sight of her enthusiastically pretty face, the earnestness with which she spoke, did much to break down the barriers of hostility between Fourth and Fifth. Apart from that, the Fifth, having been talked to by Flora before the meeting began, were in a much better frame of mind generally.

And what a gasp of delight went up when Miss Charmant, tenderly unwrapping the present, displayed it to view. What a delicious piece of china it was! It took the form of three figures standing on a plinth, two of them dancing girls dressed in the most exquisite lace—all made in china—with a male partner wearing a feathered headdress and carrying a tambourine—every tiny detail modelled perfectly. Miss Charmant beamed.

"You like it?" she asked.

"Oh, we love it!" cried Joan.

"Well, this is it," Miss Charmant laughed. "Miss Primrose will be delighted with it, I know. But she'll be even more delighted, my dears, with your efforts; and I do so hope you will,



each and every one of you, work your utmost for the great day."

Fourth and Fifth looked at each other. There were smiles then. How, in the face of that appeal, could they help but work together and do their best? Wasn't it really up to them to sink their differences and begin again? In a much more friendly and cordial spirit they regarded each other when Miss Charmant had gone.

"Well, are we working together?" Mabs asked.

"We are!" Flora Cann said. "And anyone who tries to throw spanners into the works from now on is going to get it where the chicken got the chopper."

The meeting broke up. Babs, walking out with Clara Trevlyn, Bessie, and Mabs, laughed. Well, thank goodness that danger was averted! Thank goodness, after all, both Fourth and Fifth had come to their senses!

For the rest of the evening there was intense activity in both Forms.

Babs, having finished the rough-out of her programme design, worked industriously in Study No. 4. Bessie, who had not yet received all the ingredients for her cake, was busy in the model kitchen making tiny cakes.

Mabs was taking a rehearsal party in the Common-room, and from somewhere in the school came weird sounds, which showed that Jemima's band was trying to do its manful best.

In the Fifth, Marjorie Hazeldene was measuring the players in the pageant scene for their costumes—details of which had to be sent off by that night's post so that the alterations could be affected—and up and down the two corridors came the sound of chanted lines and snatches of song.

Bed-time came eventually, and happy and excited, both Forms tramped up to their dormitories. Everything once again was going swimmingly.

Babs had contrived a meeting between Joan and Peggy during the evening. And Peggy, anxious to do everything possible to keep the harmony going, had offered to resign the speech-making in Joan's favour, and Joan, doubtful now about her first accusation, was completely won over. She refused, of course. In fact, she not only refused, but she apologised.

"Well, everything's grand, I guess!" Leila Carroll said, with a chuckle, in the dormitory. "Which, of course, is as it should be. Say, Babs, what's the card on your pillow? Invitation to a midnight feed, or something?"

"What card?" Babs asked, and then, staring at her pillow, frowned a little as she saw the slip of paper there. She picked it up. On it, in typewritten capitals, was a message:

**"WARE FIFTH. THEY'RE RAIDING YOU AT HALF-PAST TEN TO-NIGHT."**

"Whoops! Shut the door, girls!" Babs cried. "Gather round, everybody." And as the door was shut and the Fourth clustered round her, Babs, her eyes dancing with fun, read out the message. "Forewarned," she chuckled, "is fore-armed. My henchmen, are we going to wait for the Fifth to raid us?"

"I'll say not!" Clara Trevlyn snorted. "Then what are we going to do?"

"Sally forth with a heigh noany no, and smite the merry old Fifth, what?" Jemima Carstairs chortled. "Gird on your armour warriors."

"Arrah! We'll show the Fifth!" Bridget O'Toole said.

"And we'll jolly well show the Fourth!" Flora Cann was saying at the same moment in the Fifth Form

dormitory, as she read the card which she had found on her pillow. "They're going to raid us at half-past ten, are they? Well, this is where the Fourth wake up! Keep your hands on your pillows, girls."

"But I wonder," Georgina Skeppington asked thoughtfully, "who sent the warning?"

"Rats on who sent it! The fact we've had it is enough," Flora retorted. "This is where we put those cheeky Fourth Formers in their places."

And Fourth as well as Fifth, with battle in their minds, settled down to wait for zero hour, all unknowing how disastrously their plans were to crash.

**Not in the Programme!**



"HIST!" warned Barbara Redfern fiercely.

"Oh, really, Babs! Why should I hiss? I'm not a snake, you know!" Bessie Bunter said

warmly.

"Bessie, will you be quiet, you old duffer?"

"Well, I will be quiet if Clara Trevlyn would stop treading on my heels! That's the worst," Bessie glowered, "of having such whacking great feet! Ow! Wow! Who stabbed me in the back?"

"I," Clara Trevlyn said fiercely, "stuck my finger in your back, cuckoo, because I tripped over your silly pillow. Pick it up and get on—and stop jabbering! Do you want the Fifth to know we're coming a mile before we get there?"

"Well——"

"Shush!"

Bessie glared as half a dozen voices

hissed that shush. And in the darkness, with only the faintest shuffling sound, the Fourth Form army, gripping its pillows, wended its way.

It was dark—in-inkily dark. The night, in fact, was ideal to their enterprise. Hardly a sound disturbed the old school, and most certainly the Fourth had not the slightest knowledge that, approaching them from the Fifth Form corridor, their old enemies were on a similar trail.

"Hush!" Babs breathed suddenly.

"Hush what?"

"I thought I heard something."

They all listened, hardly daring to breathe.

"Stuff!" Rosa Rodworth scoffed. "Go on! It was only the wind."

They went on—in- inch by inch. Now they were nearing the junction of the corridors where a grey light filtered through the latticed windows.

Three more steps.

"My hat!" said a sudden voice in front of Babs. "Fourth Form!"

"Flora!" cried Babs. "Oh golly!" And then, as she dimly saw the crowd ahead, as the light shone on the white pillows, she gave an exclamation. "Ware Fifth!" she shrielled.

"Fourth!" cried Flora Cann. "At 'em, girls— Ow!" she gasped, as Babs' pillow descended upon her head.

The surprise on both sides was complete, and perhaps, because of the surprise, caution was forgotten. In the narrow junction of the passage the battle opened in earnest.

Bessie yelled as somebody trod on her toes; Clara shouted as a pillow, well aimed, smote upon her head and burst in a flying smother of feathers which billowed in the air. There was a yell.

"Go it, Fifth!"

"At 'em, Fourth!"

"Hurrah!"

Excitement then! Nobody thought of



"I THOUGHT," Joan said quietly, "Peggy knew nothing about my missing speech?" "Well, neither does she," Babs said. And then she started. "Oh, my hat! You—you don't mean——" "I mean," the Fifth Former said, her lips curling with contempt, "that here is the speech—in Peggy Preston's own drawer!"

the row. Forward rushed the Fourth, intent upon forcing the Fifth back into their own dormitory. Back went the Fifth, shouting, gasping, as they became seized up and got in each other's way. They rallied. Back they came in a vigorous counter-attack, and this time it was the Fourth who gave ground.

In the middle of the uproar there was a sudden crash, a splintering of glass. But nobody noticed that.

Babs found her own pillow torn out of her grasp in the darkness. Desperately she groped round for another. One was at hand. She snatched at it—and, surprisingly enough, the girl from whom she snatched it made no attempt to retain possession of it. Babs shifted her grip and wielded it. And then, as she felt something hard and heavy in that pillow—

"Hey! Hallo!" she cried. "What have I got here? Whoops!" she hooted next moment, and smote the passage with a crash as a pillow swept her feet from under her.

"Oh, wuff!" came Bessie Bunter's gasping accents. "Oh dud-dear! I've lup-lost my specs—spectacles, you know, and some idiot's trodden on my hands! I—Ow!" she added, with a yell, as somebody stumbled over her. "Oh dud-dear! I'm wounded! I'm dead! Here, let me get out of this!"

"At 'em, Fourth!"

"Go it, Fifth!"

Still the battle raged. Babs groped breathlessly for her pillow. She staggered up, only to be smitten down in the very act of rising. Then suddenly there sounded a scandalised voice:

"Girls—girls! Bless my soul—"

"Oh, my hat! Cave! Primmy!"

"Girls—girls, how dare you!" Miss Primrose could be heard, but not seen. "Stand still, all of you! Who has been tampering with the light?"

In dismay Fourth and Fifth halted. From along the corridor there came a snick, but no answering light.

"All U.P.!" gasped Babs.

"Barbara, are you there?"

"Y-yes, Miss Primrose."

"Then kindly switch on the light near you. Now!" And as Barbara switched on Miss Primrose came rustling forward. "My goodness gracious me!" she cried. "Look at this!"

Sheepishly the Fourth and Fifth stared at each other. They were all red, all breathless. On the floor were feathers. In the air were feathers, settling down. And farther along the corridor was the glistening sheen of broken glass.

"A pillow fight, eh?" Miss Primrose's lips came together. "How often have I told you girls that I will not tolerate those jokes on each other in the middle of the night? Barbara, I perceive you are one of the ringleaders. You will take two hundred lines. That also applies to you, Flora! Every other girl will take one hundred lines, and—bless my soul! Who has smashed the electric light?"

For it became obvious then why Miss Primrose failed to find light when she had switched on. The glass shade and the bulb farther along the corridor were smashed to atoms.

"Who has done it?" cried Miss Primrose.

Silence!

"I mean to know," Miss Primrose said, rather angrily, "who has caused this damage. Something heavier than a pillow must have been required to smash that light."

Babs, remembering the hard lump which she had grabbed in the darkness, flushed. Could the pillow which had smashed the electric fitting have been that one?

"I observe," Miss Primrose continued, "that the smashed light is in the portion of the corridor which the Fifth Form are occupying. I must therefore consider that it is a Fifth Form girl. Such a blow," Miss Primrose said sharply, "might have been dealt by some heavy object concealed in a pillow. Hold up your pillows, girls."

The Fifth glowered. But they held up their pillows. Miss Primrose went down the passage feeling each one.

"Thank you," she said. "I am glad to find that it is not among you. Now, please, the Fourth."

Babs gulped. Now what was she to do? But there was no getting out of it. Watched by the glowering Fifth, the Fourth lined up pillows in front of them. Miss Primrose advanced. She picked up Babs' pillow, and then, with a shocked look at that crimson-faced girl, plunged her hand into the slip and drew out a heavy wooden ruler. There was a murmur.

"Oh, my hat! It's Barbara Redfern!"

"Barbara," Miss Primrose thundered, "did you use this on the electric light?"

"No, Miss Primrose. That wasn't my pillow, and I—I haven't been anywhere near the electric light."

"And neither," Rosa Rodworth spoke up, "have any of us, Miss Primrose. The Fifth have been there all along—"

"Meaning to say," sneered Florence Ellison, "you're trying to fasten it on to us again. Play the game, Fourth!"

"Please!" Miss Primrose cried. "Barbara, I demand an explanation!"

"Well—" Babs said. "Oh dear! I—I'm sorry, Miss Primrose, but I know nothing about this. I—I lost my pillow during the—the fun, and snatched this from somebody else's hand."

Miss Primrose looked at her sharply. "You make that statement on your word of honour, Barbara?"

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"I see," Miss Primrose's eyes gleamed. She looked at the unhappy-looking Fourth. She gazed at the glowering Fifth. "It does seem, after all," she said, "that it was a Fifth Form girl who wielded that pillow, and having smashed the electric light, craftily surrendered her weapon to an innocent girl. Who is that girl?"

Nobody spoke.

"Very well," Miss Primrose said, "I shall hold the Fifth Form responsible for the damage. And this week," she added, "you will each have a portion of your pocket money withheld to pay for it. Now go to bed."

And the Fifth went, not, however, without a bitter look towards their rivals. It certainly did seem to the Fifth that, as the incriminating evidence had been found in possession of a Fourth Form girl, they had decidedly got the worst of the deal.

### Rosa Hits Back!



"IT'S funny—jolly funny!" Barbara Redfern said to Mabel Lynn next morning before breakfast.

The two chums were taking a stroll across the lawns

where bright spring flowers were already bursting into bloom. "There's no doubt that it was a put-up job."

"You mean the pillow fight?" Mabs asked.

"What else? I've been talking to Flora. Flora's frightfully sick about things. She says the Fifth feel they've been tricked. I suppose," Babs said,

with a sigh, "some of them blame me, seeing that the ruler was found in my pillow, and you can bet Florence Ellison, and the rest of the Fifth Formers like her, will make the most of it. But this pillow fight. Flora says she received a notice exactly as we did—"

"Oh!" Mabs stared.

"Someone obviously plotted to set us off against each other," Babs went on. "No harm in a rag, of course; but this girl, whoever she was, must have had the smashing of the electric light in view. Apart from that, she must have guessed we'd try to beat each other to it and thus meet in the corridor and kick up a row. That meant, of course, that we'd be caught and punished."

Mabs breathed fiercely.

"Well, if that was her little game, I must say she got away with it jolly well," she said. "But, Babs—who?"

Babs frowned.

"A Fifth Former," she said. "I'm perfectly sure of that now. Whoever busted that light last night must have belonged to the Fifth, for none of the Fourth ever got near it. Naturally, I haven't told Flora I think it's one of her Form—Flora's a bit touchy where the Fifth's good name is concerned. But what on earth is this unknown girl's object?"

Mabs frowned thoughtfully.

"Only one. Only one possible," she said. "She wants to put the Fourth and Fifth at loggerheads."

"But why?"

"Well, ask yourself. Just to bust up Primmy's party."

Babs nodded slowly. Actually, Mabs' opinion was exactly her own. Some hidden schemer was at work; that was obvious now, just as her motive was becoming obvious. But why should anyone want to mess up Primmy's party?

It was a puzzle—and a rather grim puzzle. There had been no fresh outbreak between Fourth and Lower Fifth, but bitter things were being said by certain factions in the Fifth, and there was more than a hint, in some quarters of the Fourth, that the Fifth had plotted last night's affair just in the hope of making the Fourth shoulder the whole blame.

If only they could find the girl who had done those things.

Had Babs and Mabs walked towards the Fourth Form class-room at that moment they might have found her. For in that class-room a girl was busily scrawling words upon the blackboard. As Babs and Mabs turned back towards the school, she turned the blackboard so that those words were hidden, and with a quiet chuckle slipped out of the room.

"And now," she breathed, "let's see what that will do."

She emerged into the corridor just as breakfast-bell sounded. Hungry—for the morning, despite the bright sunshine, still bore a nip in the air—the Fourth gathered in the dining-hall where, at their table, Miss Charmant radiantly presided.

No rumour of the strained relations between the Fourth and the Fifth had as yet reached her, and Miss Charmant, feeling that all her delicious little plots were well on the way to materialisation, was in high good humour. It was that morning at lessons that her first disillusionment came.

That was when, in front of the assembled Fourth Form, she asked Barbara and Janet Jordan to turn the blackboard round. A map had been drawn on the other side, but now—

Miss Charmant stood still, staring and blinking. From the Fourth went up a sound that was very like a hiss.



For on the blackboard, in large letters, was written the following:

**"THE FIFTH DON'T WANT YOUR CO-OPERATION — YOU FOURTH FORM CATS!"**

There was a mutter. Faces were red now. Not a girl there but had the idea that this insult was the Fifth's revenge for the incident last night. If the Fifth believed they were to blame for that, then it was up to the Fifth to have it out face to face, not to openly insult the whole Form in front of their own mistress like this. Miss Charmant spun round.

Very, very seriously she eyed the class.

"Barbara——"

Uncomfortably, Babs stood up.

"I was not aware," Miss Charmant said quietly, "there was bad feeling between you and the Fifth. I thought I asked you to co-operate, Barbara?"

Babs flushed to the roots of her hair.

"Well, we—we are," she said. "At least, we're trying to. But—but——"

"This doesn't look like it, Barbara," Miss Charmant said.

"N-no," stammered Babs.

"There has been trouble between you?"

"Oh dear!" Babs gasped. It hurt her to see the serious distress on the pretty mistress' face. "Well, not—not much," she stammered, "and—and what there was we—we all thought had blown over."

"I see. Thank you." Miss Charmant nodded. Then she picked up a duster and wiped out the offending words. "Please, girls, get out your books," she said, in a constrained sort of voice.

The girls got out their books, sensing the mistress' acute disappointment. One or two of them glared fiercely. They all thought a great deal of Valerie Charmant. Rosa Rodworth set her teeth.

"All right! Let the cats wait!" she muttered.

Morning lessons, in consequence of that notice, were rather subdued. Miss Charmant, preoccupied and thoughtful, was noticed several times to bite her lip and once to sigh worriedly. But she said nothing else.

Lessons came to an end eventually, with much chatter, much discussion. Diana Royston-Clarke was for going off at once to the Fifth Form and telling those girls what she thought about them. Only with difficulty Babs restrained her. Rosa Rodworth insisted upon an apology; but as Babs pointed out, asking for an apology would only further strain matters.

"You mean, then," Rosa flared, in that stormy way of hers, "you're going to let them get away with it?"

"I mean," Babs said wearily, "that no earthly use can come of condemning the whole of the Fifth for what may be only the work of one girl. Wait till after lessons this afternoon, then we can have some sort of meeting and thrash the whole matter out."

But Rosa was not satisfied with that advice. Nor was she inclined to act upon it. Rosa was not a far-seeing or a very forgiving girl, and when Rosa felt that she had been hit, Rosa believed in striking back. She said nothing, however, but with a gleam in her eyes which might have warned Babs had she but noticed it, strolled off to the Lower Fifth class-room.

It so happened that Miss Charmant was taking the Lower Fifth in History for the first period of the afternoon.

Miss Charmant was very thoughtful when she went into the Fifth Form class-room. During the morning, and during

the midday break, she had been thinking with great seriousness about the discovery she had made that morning. Before she started the lesson, she spoke to the Fifth.

"I want to have a few words with you," she said seriously. "Please don't think I'm going to lecture or to nag, but I am very deeply disturbed. Naturally, I know that you and the Fourth are rivals, but I always thought that rivalry was carried out in the friendliest of spirits."

"Well, so it is, Miss Charmant," Flora said.

"Are you sure?" Miss Charmant's steady look made Flora blush. "It does not seem like it. This morning," Miss Charmant went on, "some girl in this room chalked a most insulting message on the Fourth Form's blackboard. That message said that the Fifth did not want the Fourth's co-operation. Is that true?"

For a moment the Fifth looked flabbergasted. This, thanks to the efforts Babs had made to keep the Fourth's rebel spirits away from them during break, was the first they had heard of it.

"Well, whoever wrote it ought to be jolly well ashamed of herself," Flora said indignantly. "And if it was any girl here, she'd jolly well pay for it! We know nothing about it."

Miss Charmant frowned.

"You are sure, Flora?"

"Positive."

"Does any other girl know anything about it?"

"No!" went up a cry.

"Oh!" Miss Charmant looked a little relieved. "Then I am sorry," she said.

"Well, in that case, please don't think any more about it. I hope—I do most sincerely hope," she added anxiously, "that I can rely upon your co-operation with the Fourth!"

"Well, as long as the Fourth are willing to co-operate with us, yes," Georgina Skeppington spoke up.

"That I am sure they will be," Miss Charmant answered. "Thank you, girls. If you discover the girl who wrote that message, deal with her in your own way. I do not ask you to report her to me. Now, please, get out your books."

The Fifth opened their desks. Then from Flora Cann came a cry.

"Oh, my hat! Look here!"

"Flora," cried Miss Charmant, "what is the matter?"

But what was the matter was obvious. For Flora, in throwing back her desk-lid, found a great chalked message which was scrawled on the back of the lid. As Flora's desk was in the front row of the Form, every girl sitting behind Flora could read the message as well. A gasp of indignation went up.

Miss Charmant, hurrying towards the desk, turned pale as she read:

**"IF YOU DON'T WANT OUR CO-OPERATION, WHY NOT RUN THE SHOW YOURSELVES, UPSTARTS?"**

"Flora, the duster," she said. She looked round. "Did any girl here write that?"

"Likely!" sneered Florence Ellison.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Well, why should we write it?" Florence demanded; and there was a murmur of support. "The Fourth wrote it—of course! They just want to run the whole show!"

"Florence!" Miss Charmant cried.

"Florence, please!"

"Well, it's true!" Florence said defiantly.

And it seemed that she echoed the

sentiments of the Fifth. Miss Charmant shook her head as she gazed at their gloowering faces.

To judge by the present signs and portents, her cherished party was going to turn out a frost.

**A Clue!**



**B**UT Miss Charmant was not the sort of mistress to sit down and let events take their course. She saw that something would have to be done if this spirit which was growing between the two Forms was to be curbed.

As soon as history lesson was over, she went to the Fourth, and there she explained what had happened, calling upon the writer of the message on Flora Cann's desk-lid to stand up. After some hesitation, Rosa arose.

"So," Miss Charmant said, "you did it?"

"I did it—yes!" Rosa scowled. "I don't see why they should insult us and get away with it!"

"But you had no authority from the Form?" Miss Charmant questioned.

"No."

"I see." She nodded. "Rosa, you do not want to spoil this party?" she asked.

Rosa turned red.

"No, of course not."

"Then," Miss Charmant said, "I am going to make a suggestion, Rosa. It is not a very nice suggestion from your point of view, but if you have the interests of the party at heart you will carry it out. You must realise how impossible it is to make headway with our plans while this spirit of enmity exists between you and the Fifth. Rosa, I am going to ask you to apologise to the Fifth."

Rosa went red.

"And are the Fifth," she asked, "going to apologise to us?"

"That is not the question. Rosa, will you?"

Rosa paused. But she could not meet that pleading in Valerie Charmant's blue eyes. Even she could not fail to be stirred by the anxiety which was reflected in the faces of the girls about her. Rosa did not believe in apologising; and to apologise to those rotters! But it was for the sake of the party. It was for Miss Charmant's sake.

"All right," she mumbled, "I will."

"Then," Miss Charmant said, "shall we go along now, Rosa?"

There was a breath of relief in the Form-room. Well, that was sporting of Rosa. Off Rosa went, to return re-earred, ten minutes later, but to be amply compensated when Miss Charmant shook her by the hand and thanked her in front of the class. And so, once again, quarrels were patched up, though to be sure their continued repetition had left the ice of the Fourth-Fifth friendship wearing a little thin and in an extremely dangerous condition.

Babs, at least, did not feel so certain that good relations would continue. The unknown schemer was still undiscovered. While her identity remained hidden the peril loomed just as large as ever.

After lessons that day she invited Flora to tea in Study No. 4, and asked Georgina Skeppington along with her. There, seriously, she faced them.

"Some girl—either my Form or yours—is out to kybosh things," she said.

"She's kyboshing them by putting the

two Forms at loggerheads. What we've got to do—and I think this is almost as important now as in pushing on with the show itself—is to find her."

Georgina pouted.

"Well, I'm jolly sure it's not a Fifth Form girl!" she protested.

"And I'm jolly sure it isn't a Fourth Former!" Clara Trevlyn, present at the meeting, countered. "Dash it all—"

"Clara, please, old thing!" Babs begged. "We don't know. It's a jolly mean trick, whatever Form the girl belongs to, and— And then she paused, swiftly wheeling towards the door. "Wait a minute!" she finished in a whisper.

"Why—"

"Shush!"

And Babs, who had heard a sound outside that door, stealthily crept across the carpet. She reached the door, grasped the handle, and flung it open.

But there was nobody there. Quickly Babs stepped into the corridor—just in time to see the flying hem of a skirt and one leg disappear round the corner. Her eyes gleamed then—and suddenly she remembered that similar sound she had heard in Miss Charman's study when she and Peggy Preston and Joan Carson and Flora Cann had been in the act of handing in the draft of their speeches. Like a flash she darted to the corner of the corridor, and then blinked. For of the girl who had been eavesdropping outside the door of Study No. 4 there was no sign.

Babs pursed her lips. Rather angrily she called herself a fool for not having been quicker, and with a feeling of thwarted disappointment, she turned back. But outside the door of Study No. 4 again she halted.

And a sudden flush of excitement came to her cheeks as she gazed down at the floor.

The corridor was lined with strip carpet. The carpet ran along the centre of the floor, with a stained and polished gap of woodwork between the doors and the carpet's edge. The woodwork obviously had been newly polished, and on the polish was the perfect imprint of the sole of a shoe.

Babs stared at it, her heart suddenly thumping. She needed no telling to whom that print belonged—the girl who had been eavesdropping outside the study. A rather distinctive imprint it was, too. Babs caught her breath as she stared at it.

If only she could find the owner of the shoe that had left that print!

There and then she stooped down. From her pocket she took a folded piece of paper. The paper was not transparent, but it was sufficiently thin for Babs to see the marks of the print tracing it when she placed it over the incriminating sole, and with a pencil she made a quick tracing. Well, that was that. But because she believed the clue to that footprint was to be found among the Fifth Form, and not the Fourth, she said nothing of her discovery when she went back into Study No. 4. First find your girl, was Babs' thought; then you can accuse afterwards.

Not, in fact, until Flora & Co., promising to do their best to find out what they could in their own Form, had departed, did she mention the matter. Then, while Mabs and Clara blinked, she displayed the tracing she had made, and showed them the print outside the study, pointing out the distinct patterning with her pencil.

"The girl who made that print was the girl who was listening," she declared. "And if you ask me, when we've caught her, we shall also have

caught the girl who's trying to build up this feud between the Fourth and the Fifth."

Clara nodded.

"Sounds reasonable. But how," she wanted to know, "are we going to do that?"

"Find the shoe," Babs answered. "My own idea is that shoe will be found in the Fifth Form dormitory. It is pretty certain to be an outdoor shoe, which means that the girl who owns it will probably change in the near future. During prep, when there's not much chance of interruption, I'm going to have a look round the Fifth Form dorm, and, just to be on the safe side, Mabs, will you and Clara take a look round the shoes in the Fourth Form dorm?"

Very willingly Mabs and Clara agreed to do that, and shortly after prep bell had rung the three of them sallied forth. While Clara and Mabs went off to the Fourth Form dorm, Babs made her way to the Fifth, and, pushing open the door, breathed in relief when she found it untenanted. Carefully she closed the door; cautiously she switched on the light.

There were plenty of shoes in the Fifth Form dormitory. Every girl had at least one pair standing at the bottom of her bed, and some girls even two. Quickly Babs went along them, turning them soles upwards; but when she had come to the end of the row, she had to confess herself baffled. There were rubber soles in plenty among them, but not one which corresponded with the pattern she had traced that afternoon.

"H'm!" Babs said.

Perhaps, after all, it was some girl in the Fourth!

She made her way to the door again. Carefully she switched off the light; cautiously she opened the door. But as she let herself out of the door, she fell back with a gasp. For, confronting her, an expression of surprise on her face, was Mildred Tamplin of the Lower Fifth.

"Oh!" she said.

Babs coloured confusedly.

"I—I" she said confusedly—"I—I want to look for something."

"Oh!" Mildred said again. "Find it?"

"No," Babs replied.

"Tough luck," Mildred said, and smiled. "I'm just going along to the studio to get some paints," she volunteered. "You walking that way?"

Babs nodded, and breathed thankfully. Really, it was jolly decent of Mildred not to make a fuss about her trespassing in the Fifth Form dormitory. At the end of the stairs she left her, hurrying back to Study No. 4. Mabs and Clara were already there.

"Any luck?" Babs asked.

They shook their heads.

Babs felt baffled then. Either the culprit was still wearing the incriminating shoes, or she had hidden them in her locker.

Clara went off then to do her prep. With a sigh Babs and Mabs got out their books, just as Bessie came in, and the three of them settled down to work. For half an hour the silence was unbroken in Study No. 4, save by the scratch of pens, and an occasional sigh. Then suddenly there was a rush of footsteps in the corridor.

"Well, we'll jolly well show her this time!" Florence Ellison could be heard declaring.

"Hallo!" Babs said, and looked at her two chums. "The Fifth are on the warpath again. What's happened this time?"

Apprehensively she half-rose. The

footsteps came on. Then as Babs pushed back her chair, they halted outside the door. The handle rattled, and violently that door was thrown open. Half a dozen angry Fifth Formers' faces glared into the room.

"Here she is!"

"Babs, you awful cat!"

Babs flushed.

"Here, wait a minute!" she said.

"What are you calling me names for?"

"You know jolly well what for!"

Florence Ellison said spitefully. "Don't act the innocent! Who was in the Fifth Form dormitory half an hour ago?"

Babs started.

"Oh, did Mildred tell you that?"

"Mildred let it slip. It might be your idea of a joke, but it's not ours."

"But hold on!" Mabs cried.

"What's Babs supposed to have done?"

"Who upturned our lockers?" cried Rhoda Rhodes. "Who jolly well threw everything into the middle of the floor? You've admitted you were there. Why were you there, unless you were playing some jape again?"

"But—but I never—" faltered Babs.

"No?" sneered Florence Ellison.

"And you never smashed the electric light last night, and let us get blamed for it, did you?"

"But I tell you—"

"Oh, rats to what you tell us!"

Rhoda burst in. "We know! And I might tell you this, Barbara Redfern—we're jolly well fed-up! Why the dickens should we always be patching up quarrels when you, captain of the Form, are doing your best to provoke them?"

Babs turned redder than ever.

"And why," she asked, "should I try to provoke them?"

"Why?" Florence Ellison sneered.

"That's easy," she said. "Simply because you want your crowd to run the show. And, as far as that's concerned, she added bitterly, "you jolly well can now! We're fed-up! We're through! If the Fourth can't play the game, they can jolly well do without us. As far as your crowd's concerned, we're resigning right now! We refuse to have anything else to do with you! And don't," she added fiercely, "think you're going to get away with this without a smack back! That's all!"

"But look here, all of you—"

cried Mabs.

"Rats!"

And slam! went the door as the Fifth

furiously withdrew.

### Miss Charman's Warning!



IT seemed, between the Fourth and Fifth, that there was open warfare at last.

Incensed, with some reason, were the Fifth to find half the contents of

their lockers turned out higgledy-piggledy in the middle of the floor.

With some reason they suspected Babs, and in the light of this latest incident, the bitter memory of all those past episodes welled up to give point to their bitterness. And this time they meant what they said.

Before bed-time that night there were a dozen girls in the Fifth who flatly declared they would have nothing further to do with the Fourth. That, in the Fourth's turn, provoked anger. Well, said the Fourth, if the Fifth don't jolly well want us, we don't want them! Let them run their rotten show without us. We'll run ours in defiance of them!



And, in consequence, there were wholesale numbers of Fourth Formers who flatly refused to have anything further to do with the Fifth.

It was not a state of affairs which was improved that night when the Fourth, returning to their dormitory, found that flour had been emptied into some of the beds; brushes, combs, and glasses put in others. The Fourth breathed fury.

With every minute it seemed the position grew more and more hopeless. Next morning, when the Fourth and Fifth met at assembly, they just refused to look at each other.

Miss Charmant noticed that. And Miss Charmant, regretting now that she had thought of Primmy's birthday party, immediately called Flora Cann and Babs together after assembly. She said, rather more sadly than angrily:

"I really thought that your two Forms would co-operate and work in harmony. I am disappointed—greatly

had been delivered to her. She came back with that information, and imparted it to Babs.

And at once Babs had an idea. "Where are they?" she asked.

"In Big Hall," Marjorie said. "Goodie!" Babs chuckled.

"Mabs—Clara, give me a hand," she said. "We'll cart them along to the Fifth Form Common-room now. Marjorie will have to fit and try them on the girls, and we can give her a hand. Nothing like a bit of dressing up for fun," she added eagerly; "and perhaps the Fifth might not feel so unfriendly when we've done. Anyway, it's worth trying. Come on."

Mabs, Marjorie, and Clara put themselves at her disposal at once. Anything that would tend to restore harmony was worth trying, they felt. Any fresh excitement was calculated to give a fresh fillip to proceedings; and surely, after helping with the costumes, the Fifth could no longer say that the

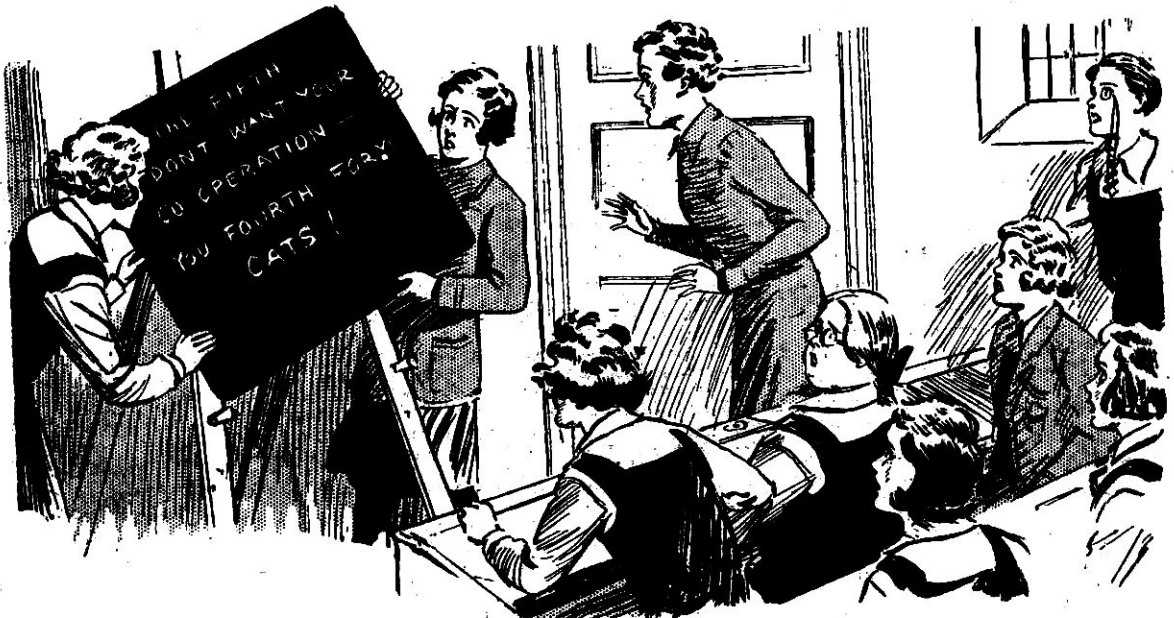
thanks, Misses Fourth! We don't trust you!"

Clara's hands clenched. "Why, you piglet!" Babs said. She was dismayed; but she saw that to insist would only cause a fresh uproar.

Crestfallen, the three went out, to repeat to their own glowering Form-mates their reception at the hands of the Fifth. Up in arms was Rosa Rodworth again, and only with difficulty did Babs restrain her and a few other hotheads from rushing off to the Fifth Form quarters there and then.

Tea-time came, with Bessie Bunter, at least, in marvellous good humour. For Bessie had just returned from the model kitchen, and Bessie, for wonderful once, was almost too excited to eat her tea.

"I've mixed the mixture," she said. "The cake's all ready for the oven. Of course, Mrs. Carey, the housekeeper, has helped a bit; but I must say," Bessie added, "that the cake's marvellous.



A GASP went up as Babs and Janet turned the blackboard and the chalked message was seen. It seemed the Lower Fifth were trying to hit at the Fourth; or, as Babs suspected, was this the work of a single girl? In any case, it was certain to start trouble once more.

disappointed. If this sort of thing continues, I shall very seriously have to think of cancelling the party altogether."

Flora and Babs left. Flora was genuinely distressed. She, like Babs, did not believe that either Form, as a whole, was guilty; but it was difficult to make the crowd feel that, and the rebel elements, having taken up their stands, refused to be budged.

That afternoon the Fourth rehearsed by themselves, and the Fifth did likewise, and those numbers in which the joint effort was required, were left completely undone. Rather half-heartedly Babs rehearsed with the rest, for what was the use of going on with one or two items when the major part of the programme depended upon the co-operation of the two Forms?

Then something happened which, for a time at least, promised to relieve the situation.

It happened during the Fourth's rehearsal in the Common-room, when Marjorie Hazeldene was called out of the room. Marjorie, as wardrobe mistress, had sent and signed the measurements for the Fifth Form pageant scene, and in consequence the costumes

Fourth were deliberately plotting to grab everything.

Eagerly they dived upon the hamper; with a laugh they carried it along to the Fifth Form Common-room. A score of girls, all busily rehearsing, looked round as they came in.

"Ware Fourth Form cats!" said somebody.

"Pax!" Babs sang. "Pax, my children! Behold!" she chortled, and threw back the lid. "Enter the costumes!"

"Ours?" asked Joan Carson eagerly. "Yours!" Babs chuckled. "We've brought them along. Now, what about trying them on right away? We'll give you a hand."

"Jolly good idea," Flora Cann voted, with relief. But immediately Florence Ellison pushed forward.

"Thanks!" she said roughly. "But what do you think we are? We can do the trying-on without assistance from Fourth Form kids! Grab the hamper, girls!"

"But, dash it, we only want to help!" Clara Trevlyn cried angrily.

"Yeah? Like you have been helping?" Rhoda Rhodes scoffed. "No

Babs. I'm going to put it into the mould after tea, you know, and then we're going to bake it. Dud-do come along and have a look at it before it goes into the oven."

"And me?" Mabs asked.

"Yes, rather!" Bessie beamed. The two chums smiled. But after tea they accompanied proud Bessie to the model kitchen. There in a great bowl stood Bessie's cake mixture. It looked good. Bessie, donning her apron, beamed.

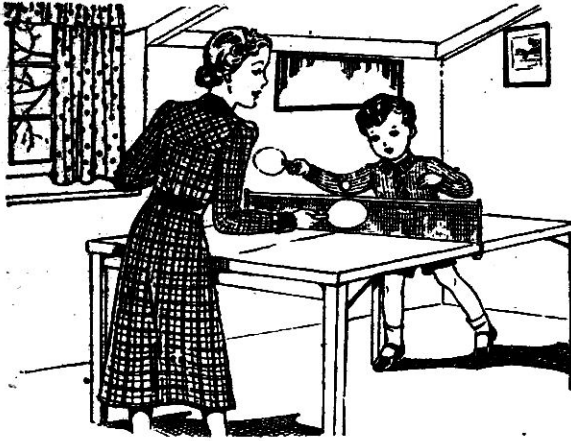
"I'd jolly well like to know," she said, "who could have made a cake better than that. Looks lovely, doesn't it? If you like," Bessie said, lading out a spoonful of the concoction, "you can taste it, Babs. I'd like to know what you think of it."

Babs smiled as important Bessie held out the wooden spoon to her. From the side of the spoon she took a mouthful of the mixture. Then she gave a spluttering cry.

"Oh, my hat! Wow! Mabs, your hanky, please—quickly!" And she dabbed one hand to her mouth. "Mustard!" she cried.

(Continued on page 14)

# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



*PATRICIA is your very own friend, who writes to you on this page each week. She tells you about herself, of things to talk about, things to do and things to wear—all in that chummy and helpful way which has endeared her to so many schoolgirls throughout the world.*

**D**ON'T you all think table tennis is a grand game?

We're all frightfully keen on it at home—from father, to small brother Heatherington—or Heath, for short.

Mind you, we don't call it table tennis—we call it plain, old-fashioned ping-pong, because we're not very expert at the game. Though actually my big brother, Brian, isn't too bad.

I have to play very gently when I play with young Heath, of course, and then let rip when I play Brian.

But though I don't take games too, too seriously—much as I enjoy them—I can't help wishing I were as good at table tennis as Jean Nicoll is.

As I expect you know, Jean is only sixteen, and she is the English champion in both the junior and senior girls' singles.

## ● Table Tennis Tips

Here's a tip from Jean that you might find useful to improve your own game. It is on holding the racket.

The best grip, she says, is the "natural" one. Just lay the racket on the table and then take it up—quite naturally—by the handle.

Place your forefinger up the back of the racket next, and then shift your grip slightly so that your grasp is well up towards the round part of the racket.

In this way, Jean says, you have more control of the racket. And if you try it, you'll see what she means.

It seems to do as it likes, if you hold it near the end of the handle; while by holding it close up to the round part, it seems to become part of the hand itself, which gives you so much more control of it.

Jean's other tip is an old favourite—but a jolly difficult one to follow, I find, in table tennis.

Just **KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL**, she says—yes, in capitals, because it is so important.

Though I always bear this in mind myself when playing, the trouble is that the ball so often goes much faster than my eyes! I wonder if you ever find that!

## ● For Book Lovers

I expect a good many of you are real book-worms, and that there is nothing you like so much as a "good read," especially on chilly evenings by the fire-side.

This Patricia of yours is very fond of reading. I always have been, for that matter. At school we all had to read two selected books each term and have a "test" on them before breaking-up day.

Lots of girls used to find these "home-reading books," as they were called, an awful bore. But I just revelled in them.

There were books by Kingsley, Dickens, Charlotte Yonge—oh, and tons more.

I remember once we had to write an essay on "A Favourite Hero in Fiction." Most girls in my Form selected dashing young men like the Scarlet Pimpernel or Bulldog Drummond to write about.

But this Patricia of yours chose the plump and not-so-young, nor so-dashing Mr. Pickwick. I can so clearly remember the opening of my essay.

"My favourite hero in fiction," I wrote, "is never the same for very long. He is generally the hero of the latest book I have been reading, and since I just finished reading 'Pickwick Papers,' my hero at the moment is Mr. Pickwick himself . . ."

And so I went on, all about Mr. Pickwick's charm, sincerity, and sense of humour. And to my surprise, I found I received full marks for this essay. Which does show that it pays to be a bit different at times!

But, on looking back to the time when I first took an interest in books, discovering "Christie's Old Organ" and "Jessica's First Prayer" (have you ever met these sad, sad tales?), I find that I have forgotten so many that I have read.

"Black Beauty," and school tales by Amy Le Feuvre and Angela Brazil, I can still remember—but not all the titles, I'm afraid.

## ● A Book Record

If you also are forgetful over titles, then you really should make yourself this little "Book Record," in which to jot down the names of the books you read, with just a few remarks about each.

It's quite easy to make, and costs practically nothing, for you only require two plain postcards, some sheets of paper from an old exercise book, and a small piece of ribbon or cord.

You cut the paper to the same size as the postcards, making as many leaves to the book as you like—six is quite a good number.

You place the paper between the cards. Jab two holes through all thicknesses, and thread the cords or ribbon through these. Tie loosely, so that the pages turn over easily.

You'll enjoy drawing the row of "books" on the front cover, for they're quite simple to do.

But try to remember that the line representing the top of the books should curve downwards. This gives the effect of the books standing out a little, as you can see from the picture.



Extra pages can always be added to this Book Record if you are a very quick reader. You simply untie the cord or ribbon, and slip further sheets of paper into place.

## ● For Best Wear

I'm sure quite a number of you have a favourite velvet or velveteen dress that you wear for best.

But even the most-loved garment often grows shabby at neck and elbows. And schoolgirls also have a way of growing too big for them, in addition.

So if any of these things should have made mother decide that you really can't wear "the old velvet" as it is, any more, then here is a simple way of altering it to look trim and new again.

Cut a fairly deep piece out at the back and front of the neck, and chop out the sleeves at the armholes. If it should still be too tight for you across the bodice, then you can also make a little opening down the front.

Next, bind round all the raw edges on the wrong side, and make little eyelet holes on each side of the front opening.

Thread coloured ribbon or cord through these, and lace up, just as you would your shoes.

This pinafore dress would look charming over a pretty silky blouse, and could be worn on those "best" occasions, when you want to look your prettiest.



## ● Tongue-Twisting

You remember I made up a silly tongue-twister for you last week?

Well, this week I've made up another—just for fun.

Here it is:

"Shoes, snow-boots, and goloshes splash slushily through sleety streets."

That's a real test of clear speaking, if you like, even if it doesn't make a great deal of sense. Just try saying it three times—or better still, ask a chum to. She'll get into such a knot!

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

Your friend,  
PATRICIA.



# CHOOSING A NEW DRESS

*Last week PATRICIA wrote about a new hat; so this week it's a new dress she helps you to choose—whether it's a shop one or one to be made at home*

**S**o you're going to have a new dress, you lucky young person! (Or if you're not, I expect you will be, before very long.)

The first thing to decide, after your excitement has calmed a little, is the style.

Even the cost can wait for a little while.

You'll want the dress to be fashionable, of course—so let's see what the fashion points are for this spring.

First, the length. Skirts are definitely shorter, even for schoolgirls. If you are over fourteen you can wear a dress that comes just below your knee—only just. If you are under this age it should be knee-length or shorter.

But certainly it should be an inch or two shorter than your coat. (For even the nicest dress looks a bit comie if it shows below a coat. And it spoils the line of the coat, too!)

## FASHION POINTS

The waist-line—whether you have a belt or not—should be rather high. Not under your armpits, of course. Just to give you an idea, place your hands on your hips, just as you do in school. The waist-line should come two or three inches above there.

In all dresses this year the bodice part is interesting. The straight, plain ones have been discarded. And I'm glad, too, for the more decorative bodices is so flattering, both to the girl who's plump and to the one who's decidedly thin.

Shirring, smocking, pleats or embroidery are fashion's fads for bodices this year, so look out for all these.

Necks are generally high and plain, but sleeves often have an extra fullness on the shoulder—which should be square and military looking.

There, so much for fashion points. Bearing these in mind, it is a good idea to look through the fashion pages of mother's magazines to see what style of frock you like. If you are going to have

one made, then I think you're very lucky, for a made-to-measure frock always looks so smart and well fitting, particularly if a good pattern is used.

But we'll pretend you're going to have the thrill of going with mother to buy one at a shop.

In this case, I hope you'll wear your best coat—under which you'll be wearing the new dress eventually—and a nice clean petti, so that you can stand around, "trying on," and still look sweet.

The assistant will probably ask your size, first, in which case it's useful if you know your chest and hip measurements. If you don't, she'll measure you.

Next, she'll probably say: "Is it a silk or a wool dress you were wanting? And about what price?"

As to price, I expect mother will say at once whether she wants to spend ten-and-eleven or twenty-five shillings. That will help the assistant considerably.

But as to material, that can be a teaser if your minds are not already made up.

## WOOL AND WARMTH

A wool dress is lovely for spring wear without a coat, and for winter and autumn wear. They are so pretty these days, too, that they are deservedly popular.

So I'll pretend first that it's a woolly dress you're choosing. These should always be simple in style. Avoid frills and ribbons, but look rather for pleats, pockets, and buttons for decoration.

The wool dress should fit closely to the figure, without being tight, of course, and the sleeves should be comfy.

Don't worry about it if it's too long or that the sleeves need turning up. But do worry if it's on the too-tight side. For a new dress that's "let out" is never quite the same, I've found, afterwards. While one that's turned up or taken in can be as comfy and smart as a made to measure.

Another thing to study in a woolly dress is the material. Does it stretch much when you give it a little pull? If it does, then I should be very wary of



buying it. For a stretchy material will often "bag," just where you sit down, and you just can't help it. After washing or cleaning they tend to stretch again—that is, when they don't shrink!

But a simple wool dress, made of unstretchy material or material that is already fully shrunk, in a vivid colour, or perhaps two, that suits you and fits you, is a joy indeed—one that you'll wear and wear again and hate to part with when the time comes.

## LOVELY IN SILK

A silky dress is perhaps easier to choose. Have frills and fancy buckles and posies of artificial flowers on it by all means—but do beware of too many "trilly" bits.

Artificial silks are made in so many lovely patterns and colours these days that you'll probably be bewildered by the selection.

So try to remember what you will be wearing with your dress and choose a dress that will "match" or "contrast."

Having at last chosen a frock, decided on alterations to be done—if any—and having thanked the assistant for her help, you and mother will be feeling pretty exhausted, I'm thinking.

So probably she'll suggest a cup of tea in the tea-shop near by—which sounds a pretty good idea!



**HAIR-BRUSHES** should be washed every single week, if they are to do their work properly.

**HAVE** just a little lukewarm water in the basin, and to this add a teaspoonful of ammonia. Pat the bristles of your brush up and down in this, and they will soon be snowy-white—without making the bristles at all soft in the process.

**RINSE** the brush by allowing the cold

# VERY PERSONAL

*Some paragraphs about the care of your most personal belongings*

water to run through the bristles. Then shake, and stand upright to dry.

**TOOTH-BRUSHES** should always be left hanging, or else standing upright in a tumbler, when they are not in use. This gives them a chance to drain and dry, so that they are stiff and fresh again when you come to use them. Never keep them lying flat, or they'll grow soft and soggy.

**FACE-FLANNELS** have a habit of growing grubby, even though they are so constantly used with soap and water. After washing, it is a good idea to give your face-flannel a little rub-over with soap all to itself. Then wring it well, and don't forget to give it a shake before hanging it on the side of the bath (or wherever you keep it). Never leave a face-flannel screwed up.

**IF** you use tooth-powder, be sure always to keep the lid firmly in place, for tooth-powder should always be used DRY.

**TO** have your own special tin of tooth-powder is a good idea, and not to let any other members of the family take a dip into it. But if they do want to share, then keep an old tin for yourself, and empty some of the tooth-powder into this for your own use.

**HANKIES** are other very personal belongings that can help to make a school-girl's charm if they are sweet and clean. It's a good idea always to carry a "spare" around with you, even if you do not need to use it that day. So often an occasion arises—like a visit to the headmistress, say—when to have a hankie in your hand which looks soiled and too-well-used might make her think you weren't a very particular young person. And these little touches do matter.

**A VERY** light starching for hankies that are washed at home helps them to keep cleaner and fresher much longer, you know.

(Continued from page 11)

## Sensation in the Dormitory!



ANOTHER such incident was not long in coming.

It came, as a matter of fact, immediately after breakfast next morning, when a party of

furious Fifth Formers invaded the Common-room, where most of the Fourth had foregathered for the usual chatter before assembly. The party was led by Florence Ellison. It consisted of practically all the girls who were playing in the pageant scene.

"Well," Florence cried, "I suppose you think you've been jolly clever, Fourth Form? I suppose you think if you can't have the costumes we shan't have them? But this time," she added vindictively, "you're just not going to get away with it!"

"But what on earth—" amazed Babs cried.

"Oh, chuck 'em out!" advised Christine Wilmer.

"Scat, Fifth Form!"

"No, wait a minute!" Babs was quick to see that something was seriously wrong. "What's the matter with the costumes?" she asked.

"Oh, don't act the innocent!" Florence said scornfully. "You know what's happened to the costumes, or, if you don't, somebody in this room does! The costumes," she added furiously, "have been pinched during the night—just because, I suppose, we're having a dress rehearsal after lessons? We want 'em! We've come here to get them! And if we don't jolly well get them—"

"You'll jolly well go without them—what?" Jemima Carstairs chipped.

"We'll jolly well report you to Miss Charmant!" Florence threatened.

She meant it. There was no doubt, from the expressions on the faces of her followers, that they were in full support.

"But, Florence, we haven't got them!" Babs cried.

"Are you going to hand them over?" Florence repeated ominously.

"Don't be an idiot! How can we?" Clara glared.

"All right," Florence showed her teeth. "That's enough," she said. "No more play-acting, please! Come on, girls."

And with a bitter glare at the Fourth Formers, she flounced out of the room.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Babs.

Angrily, resentfully the Fourth looked at each other. Any kindly feelings they might still have retained towards the Fifth were utterly swamped now. An angry buzz of conversation broke out. It was interrupted, however, by the return of Florence and her supporters, with this time a very pale and rather stern-faced Miss Charmant among them. Her eyes roved over the group.

"Barbara!"

"Yes, Miss Charmant?"

"Do you know who has taken the Fifth Form costumes?"

"No, Miss Charmant."

"Does any girl here know?"

Silence!

"Very well," Miss Charmant said rather sharply. "I think I have warned you Forms that if this spirit of antagonism between you persisted I would cancel the preparations for the party altogether. Apparently, unmoved by either threat or appeal, you still persist in playing tricks. Some girl, or girls, is responsible for this outrage. I give that girl an opportunity now to own up."

She looked round expectantly, grimly. There was silence.

"Well, is she coming forward?" Miss Charmant asked.

Nobody moved.

"I see. Then," Miss Charmant said bitterly, "this is the end. You may cease your preparations from this moment. Until the girl, or girls, responsible comes forward you may consider the party cancelled!"

SUCH UTTER dismay followed that announcement.

It was as if both Fourth and Fifth had suddenly received a douche of cold water. Ignoring each other, going on as if the other did not exist, they were all forcibly reminded, now that it seemed too late, how much they depended upon each other.

In vain they pleaded, urged, cajoled Miss Charmant. The mistress was adamant.

"What I have said I mean," she affirmed. "As, apparently, you cannot agree in any circumstances, it is obviously my duty to remove the bone of contention between you. I have nothing else to say."

She whisked off. The Fifth went with her, leaving a murmuring throng behind them. Gloomily, helplessly, the Fourth gazed at each other.

This—the end of all their efforts!

It was to be expected that some bitterness would be expressed. The girls were utterly sick. Not one of them who hadn't given up a considerable amount of her leisure to the party; not one of them who did not feel the slight to their Form. With dismay Babs thought of her cherished programme, now almost nearing completion. Mabs, thinking of all the work at rehearsals she had put in, sighed. Bessie was almost in tears, for Bessie had planned to make another cake. Even Jemima was gloomy.

"And to think that, just as my orchestra was becoming a dangerous rival to Toscanini, its bright young life should be blighted thus! Ah me—and you—and all of us!"

Nobody, however, was worrying about Jemima's band, private opinion being that the birthday party was likely to be a greater success without it. But it was of no use giving way to despair. If the party was to be saved, something had to be done.

In Study No. 4 Babs called Mabs, Clara, and Leila Carroll together.

"No good gassing," she said. "Action is what is required. The Fourth isn't responsible—neither is the Fifth—as a Form. But one girl is. And it's pretty plain that that girl's object is to mess up the party. Once we lay hands on her we've got the solution to all the mysteries."

"Sure! But where and how does one lay hands on her?" Leila wanted to know.

"We've a clue—just one. The footprint," Babs said. "Now, the girl, whoever she is, must be feeling pretty satisfied with herself. She's busted up the party right enough—but there's one thing she hasn't done. We've still got the present, and the presentation, whatever happens, will take place on Primmy's birthday. Now, if she could be reminded of that—"

"I don't get it," Clara said.

"No?" Babs looked at her impatiently. "Don't you see?" she said. "The girl's object all along has been to kybosh the party. First she gets Peggy blamed for doing something she hasn't done. Then me. Between whiles she's been breeding mischief between the two Forms—which rules out, obviously, that she was hitting at any one girl all the time. Assuming that her object was to ruin everything, she'll naturally be

"Eh?" Bessie gasped.

Babs grimaced. "Mustard—and salt! Somebody's tampered with it! Oh, my hat!" she cried in dismay.

"Mum-mustard!" Bessie stuttered, and a light of alarm sprang into her eyes. She carried the ladle to her lips. Then she, too, spluttered.

"My cake!" she wailed.

Her cake—that lovely cake on which Bessie had lavished so much of her spare time. It was ruined.

Babs' face was grim.

"Bessie, you're sure the mixture was all right before tea?"

"Of course it was!" Poor Bessie was almost in tears. "Oh dud-dear! Oh gud-goodness! What am I to do now?" she cried. "The last thing I did before I came away was to tut-taste it, you know! Sus-somebody's been in here since tea! Somebody's just gone and ruined it!"

"But who?" Mabs asked.

"Those Fifth Form cats! They've done it!" Bessie's eyes suddenly gleamed. "This is another of their rotten tricks! This—!" And then she glared as the door opened, and into the room came Flora Cann, accompanied by Joan Carson and Georgina Skeppington. Her round face suddenly flamed. "You cats!" she cried violently. "You beastly awful cats!"

"Eh?" Flora said in astonishment.

"Who's spoiled my cake?" Bessie raved.

"Spoiled your cake? Well, who has?" Joan Carson wanted to know.

"What's the matter with the old cake?"

For answer Bessie violently jabbed the spoon into the mixture. Then she rushed at Joan.

"Taste it!" she cried.

"What—"

"Taste it!" Bessie glared. "Taste it! One of your crowd did that, so you jolly well taste it!" And Bessie, her anger for once up in arms, violently jabbed the spoon towards Joan's face, and Joan gave a terrific whooping splutter as the mixture splashed all over her mouth.

"There!" panted Bessie. With the ladle gripped like some weapon in her plump hand, Bessie looked ready to commit assault and battery upon the astonished Fifth Formers, when suddenly the door opened and in came Miss Charmant herself. Her lips tightened as she saw the scene in front of her.

"Really!" she cried. "Can't you girls ever agree?"

"We could, if only the Fourth knew how to be sports!" said Georgina Skeppington, shooting the chums an angry glance.

"Oh, but, Miss Charmant—" Babs protested.

"Please, Barbara, do not argue!" Miss Charmant's tone was weary. "I am tired of seeing these continual bickerings between Fourth and Fifth."

"But—but some Fifth Form cat has spoiled my cake!" Bessie blurted.

Miss Charmant looked at her sharply.

"What, Bessie?"

"Well, you taste it," Bessie offered.

Miss Charmant took the ladle that Bessie offered. Very gingerly she tasted the mixture, and her brows contracted.

"And, of course," she said a little bitterly, "nobody will own up to this? Thank you, Bessie, you must throw that mixture away. And, Barbara—Flora!"

"Yes, Miss Charmant?"

"You may tell your Forms," Miss Charmant said, "that if there is another incident like this I shall cancel the party altogether!"



careful not to leave the last stone unturned, and the last stone is the present and the presentation."

"Well, yea. You mean, she'll try to get hold of the present like she got hold of the costumes?" Mabs asked.

"Just that. And there," Babs said, "is our chance, I think. Wait a minute, though. We've got to get the present into this study. Then we've got to get Flora Cann along. Mabs, will you fetch Flora? I'll go and see Miss Charmant and ask if I can borrow the present for a little while."

"But what—" Mabs asked.

"Never mind. You'll see. Fetch Flora."

Mabs nodded. She went off, and Babs followed. In Miss Charmant's study she found the mistress.

Miss Charmant frowned when she came in.

"Barbara, if you have come to ask—"

"Miss Charmant, I've come to ask if I may borrow the Dresden piece for a little while?" Babs said. "You see—and this was perfectly true—I've got an idea of making a sketch of it for the next number of the Cliff House Mag. I—I'll take great care of it."

Miss Charmant nodded. She trusted Babs. There and then she handed over the present, and Babs left. In the passage she met Mildred Tamplin.

"Oh, Babs," Mildred said, "can't—can't you do anything? It's awful to see the party going west like this."

Babs sighed.

"What can I do?" she asked.

"I—I don't know," Mildred confessed. "But I thought you might do something. You do have ideas when things are in a mess, don't you? I say, Babs, is that the present?"

"Yes," said Barbara. "I'm drawing it for the Cliff House Mag."

"Oh, I say, what a ripping idea!"

Babs smiled. She excused herself and rushed off. In Study No. 4, where Flora Cann had already arrived, she put the box containing the present on the table.

"Now shut the door," she said. "Mabs, stand by it, and for goodness' sake don't raise your voices. I've got an idea," Babs said. "It's a pretty desperate idea, but there's just a chance it might come off. Flora, the girl who's been doing all this is either in your Form or in ours."

"Well, in yours, I should say," Flora decided. "The Fifth—"

"Please!" Babs said. "Let's forget all that. What I'm going to ask you to do, Flora, is what we are going to do in the Fourth. You see, we've got an idea that the girl responsible might try to get at the birthday present—that would make her scheme pretty sort of complete, wouldn't it?"

"Well?" Flora asked.

"Well, this is the scheme. Go to the Common-room before assembly—most of the girls will be there then. Grouse that Miss Charmant has lent me the birthday present. Rub it in that, in spite of all the rumpus, the Fourth will still present that present and Peggy Preston will make the speech. Just make sure that everybody hears that. That's all."

"And then?" Flora asked.

"Then—wait," Babs said. "Flora, you will do it, won't you?"

"Well, yes. But it seems sort of feeble to me," Flora said.

And feeble it sounded to the others. But Babs knew what she was about. When Flora went off, she hurried to the Fourth Form Common-room, where gloom was still hanging heavily over the Form. Babs smiled.

"Well, one thing," she said, in a loud, defiant voice, "we've still the big honour, girls. I've got Primmy's present

in my study, and Pegs is still going to make the speech. We've scored over the Fifth as far as that's concerned, anyway!"

"Yes, if we wanted to score over the Fifth," Margot Lantham said. "But we don't. What we want is the party."

Babs did not reply to that. Half an hour later she met Flora, who told her that she had made the announcement in the Fifth Form. After that until bedtime Babs was very mysteriously busy.

Babs, with the rest of the Form, tramped upstairs, her face rather anxious and thoughtful. As soon as rising bell rang out next morning she, with Mabs, went down to Study No. 4.

Cautiously Babs opened the door. She gave one look at the floor, and her eyes lit up.

"It's worked," she said. "Look, Mabs, the present's gone!"

Mabs blinked. Babs had left the

"It is not a joke," Babs said. "It is a trap. On the top of the bureau was Miss Primrose's present, and, as you'll see, that has gone. The girl who took it, however, has red ochre on the soles of her shoes. Because, you see," Babs explained, "I sprinkled the study carpet last night with powdered red ochre I found in the studio. Once," she added grimly, "we've found the girl with the stained shoes, then we've found the girl who has the present. And we've also found the girl who has been causing all this bother!"

Miss Charmant gazed at her. But obviously it was her duty then to investigate this clue. She demanded further details, and when Babs gave them her lips compressed a little. Not until this moment had it occurred to Miss Charmant that the feud between Fourth and Fifth might have been engineered by one mean spirit.



"OH, my hat!" gasped Babs, as she tasted the cake mixture. "Mustard!" Bessie and Mabs stared. "Mustard—and salt!" gasped Babs. "Somebody's tampered with it!" No doubt about it. Somebody had ruined the celebration cake on which Bessie had worked so hard.

present all done up in its wooden box on top of the bureau. Sure enough, it was no longer there.

"You mean you meant her to take it?" Mabs asked.

Babs' reply was startling.

"I hoped she would take it!" she said.

"Mabs, will you go and fetch Miss Charmant?"

"But, Babs—"

"Mabs, please, old thing!" Babs insisted.

Triumph glowed in Babs' face now. She did not enter the study as Mabs raced off, but, bending down, examined the carpet in the corridor. Her eyes glowed brighter.

"Got her!" she muttered.

There was a rustle along the passage. Miss Charmant and Mabs came into view. The mistress was looking very puzzled.

"Barbara, you wanted to see me?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Charmant," Babs faced her. "I want you to take us to the Fifth Form dormitory. There is a girl, either in that dormitory or the Fourth, who has red ochre on her shoes!"

Miss Charmant looked astonished.

"Barbara, is this some joke?"

"Very well," she said.

Babs beamed at Mabs. She led the way. Now and again, on the carpet, showed a smear of the telltale red which the secret prowler of last night had carried away on her shoes. They reached the Fifth Form dormitory, and Miss Charmant threw the door open.

"Girls, stand to attention!" she cried.

The Fifth, in the middle of dressing; stared round. Then, as they saw Babs and Mabs, they scowled. Babs, however, only grinned cheerily.

And then her eyes gleamed as she looked down at the carpet. For this carpet, a light, thick-haired one, here and there showed a distinct impression of rubber soles, and the prints of those soles led straight towards one girl's bed.

Which girl?

Babs looked up. Then she paused. The bed was that of Mildred Tamplin! Mildred, the girl who had been so anxious about the strife between Fourth and Fifth. The girl who, in the first place, had so puzzled Babs by her strange change of attitude. But like a flash Babs saw that Mildred Tamplin had not changed. Solicitude for the party had, all along, been

merely a blind to hide her deeper motives. She gave a cry.

"Miss Charmant—look!" And she pointed to the prints, quite plain and visible. "Mildred!" she cried ringingly. "What have you done with Miss Primrose's present you stole from my study?"

"What?" cried Flora Cann.

Mildred's face had paled.

"Mildred!" Miss Charmant cried sharply.

"I—I don't know what you mean," Mildred Tamplin gasped; but her eyes went huntedly to her locker.

"No?" Miss Charmant looked at Babs. "Mildred, sit down on the edge of the bed," she ordered quietly, and the Fifth blinked, wondering what was coming.

Mildred hesitated. Her face was very pale then. Miss Charmant's stern eye, however, was compelling. She sat down.

"Now lift your foot," Miss Charmant ordered.

"But why?"

"Lift your foot!"

Slowly Mildred lifted one foot, while the Fifth looked on, wondering. Then from Babs came an exclamation.

"Look!"

No need to look. For here was the whole distinctive rubber sole, and clinging to its pattern were unmistakable traces of red ochre.

"Mildred, you awful sneak!" Babs cried. "So it was you! You stole the present last night. It was you all the time who has been putting the Fourth and the Fifth against each other! My hat! No wonder you pretended to be upset, you awful sneak! No wonder—"

Mildred's face was livid.

"Hang you!" she flamed. "Hang you!"

"Mildred, quiet!" Miss Charmant rapped sharply, and there was a buzz.

"Why did you do this?"

Mildred's eyes flamed.

"You want to know that, do you?" She gazed at the mistress bitterly. "All right, I'll tell you. I did it because I hate Primmy. I did it because I didn't want Primmy to be made a sickening fuss of! Oh, you don't know, do you, that because of Primmy I've got to leave at the end of the term!"

The girls stared at her. They certainly hadn't known that. But in a way it was true. The last bad report Miss Primrose had sent home of Mildred had been Mildred's undoing—and Mildred had deserved that report. But none knew—not even Miss Primrose herself—what that report had meant to Mildred. Nobody knew that her father, sickened of bad report after bad report, had decided that this one should be the last, and rather than waste time and money on his lazy, good-for-nothing daughter, he had decided that Mildred, at the end of the present term, should leave Cliff House for good.

Only Mildred herself was to blame, but she didn't see it like that.

"Yes, it's all Primmy's fault that I've got to leave," cried Mildred passionately. "Did you think that I was going to leave without getting some of my own back? Yes, I might as well admit it all now! I did it—I did it all!"

"Why, you rotter!" burst out Flora Cann.

"Flora, please!" Miss Charmant's expression was a mixture of distress and anger. "You foolish, spiteful girl, Mildred," she said. "And what did you do with the present?"

"Find out!" retorted Mildred defiantly.

"We will!" cried Babs, and like a flash she was past Mildred. While

Mildred gasped in alarm, she flung open the lid of her locker, revealing a wooden box within!

Instantly Mildred acted. She sprang, gave Babs a terrific push, sending her reeling against the next bed. Then, before anyone could stop her, Mildred had grabbed up the box.

Her eyes were blazing then.

"Well, here it is!" she cried. "Here's your precious present for Miss Primrose! You've got me, perhaps. I'll have to leave now, but I'm jolly well giving you cause to make me leave. If I'm going, there's going to be no birthday-party or present for Miss Primrose. Instead—" and she turned.

"Mildred!" screamed Miss Charmant.

But too late. One terrific thrust of her arm Mildred gave. There was a crash as the box smashed its way through a pane of glass; a further crash as it smashed in fragments in the quad outside.

And for a moment there was a deep, stupefied silence. It was broken, strangely enough, by a laugh from Barbara Redfern.

"Silly Mildred!" she said. "As if I should leave the real present in that box for you to steal—"

Mildred jumped.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"I mean," Babs smiled, "that what you've smashed is just a jam-jar. The real present is still in my study!"

And while Mildred's face turned pasty white, the Fifth Form roared. And the Fifth set up a shout.

"Oh, Babs! Brainy old Babs! Good old Babs!"

AND "GOOD old Babs!" it was from that moment onward. And from the Fourth "good old Fifth!" when rehearsals and all preparations got into full swing again.

Because Miss Charmant still wanted to keep her surprise, Mildred was not reported; but Mildred, unable to face the angry scorn of her Form, left the school before the birthday-party, and Cliff House will see her no more.

And so, at last, happiness and harmony were restored between the Forms. Preparations went on with a rush, and with hearty good will on both sides. And later, when the great day came—

What a day that was—every single thing went off without a hitch, and pleased, happy, proud Miss Primrose, obviously shaken to the core by the devotion of the two Forms, could hardly speak for her emotion when Peggy rose to hand her her present and made her neat speech.

A great day. A glorious day. Bessie's cake was a success. Even Jemima's band managed to get through at least two songs without making a mess of things.

And when at last all was finished, and Dulcia Fairbrother, the school captain, excitedly standing up, called for three cheers for Miss Primrose, it was Flora Cann who afterwards called for three cheers for the Fourth, and the Fourth in its turn for the Fifth. Happy Day. Happy Fourth and Fifth, at loggerheads no longer, thanks to the efforts of Barbara Redfern.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

## MARJORIE HAZELDENE KNEW HIS STERLING WORTH, HIS LOYALTY AND HIS COURAGE, BUT—



*They Called Her Friend* "THE OUTSIDER!"

Gentle and noble-hearted, Marjorie Hazeldene stands by a boy whom everyone else despises. There is, she is sure, more good than bad in the boy. But—is there? Again and again it seems that he has let her down. Through him there is trouble between Marjorie and her dearest chums, Babs & Co., and Jimmy Richmond & Co. of Friardale School; through him Marjorie herself is faced with terrible disgrace. Yet still she has faith in him. Is that faith eventually justified, after all?

Read Hilda Richards' dramatic story in next week's SCHOOLGIRL and see for yourselves what happens to Marjorie during one of the greatest ordeals of her life.



Another fascinating COMPLETE Middle Ages story featuring young Lady Fayre, the—



# SECRET HELPER TO ROBIN HOOD

By IDA MELBOURNE



## A Cunning Plan!

**T**HE Lady Fayre sighed a little wearily, and picked up the roll of parchment from the table in the school-room of Longley Castle.

It was a fair, sunny morning, and Fayre, like any other girl, would rather have been in the castle grounds than in the school-room with her tutor the Venerable Brie. Better still, she would have preferred the woods where Robin Hood and his band made merry.

But there was no chance of escape this morning for Fayre. Her tutor was wide awake, and her aunt, the Baroness le Feuvre, had arranged to give her a lesson in embroidery when her reading task was finished.

Fayre's lesson to-day was reading. She had to read what the Venerable Brie had written—an account of her uncle, the baron's, adventures at the Crusade.

Fayre liked hearing tales of mystery and imagination, and of heroic deeds, but she liked them to have some basis of truth, whereas the baron's account was mostly bragging.

"Read," said the Venerable Brie, stifling a yawn, and stroking his beard. Fayre sighed again and read.

"Then did six Saracens come at me with their swords, holding one in each hand, and never have I seen the like of the Saracens in size and strength, for all were men of seven feet or eight feet in height, and strong enough to break stone walls with their bare fists; yet did I lay about me with such valour as to destroy three with one blow of my sword, and put the others to flight, and would have pursued them but the need arose to go to the aid of my King Richard, who was sore beset—"

Fayre broke off, yawning, and the Venerable Brie caught the yawn and yawned again himself.

"Read," he murmured drowsily. "Charging, I gave my mighty battle roar that doth bring terror to craven hearts—"

Fayre broke off and blinked. She wondered if, reading this fairy tale, she had drifted off to sleep and was dreaming. For the baron's battle roar could be heard now.

When the Baron le Feuvre roared the walls shook.

"By my halidom!" came his roar from the courtyard below. "'Tis an arrow."

Fayre dropped the parchment, crossed to the glass-less window, and looked below.

With the baron were two knights and their squires, and the small group stood about a large, iron-studded wooden door, from which projected an arrow.

"'Twas shot from without!" said the knight Sir Geoffrey, amazed.

The baron pulled out the arrow, and then unwrapped a paper that was affixed to it. But as he could read only simple words at great length, he saw no more than marks upon it.

"'Tis writing!" he cried.

Fayre leaned farther out.

"Uncle, if 'tis writing, mayhap I can read it."

"Come down then, child, and read!" he commanded.

Fayre gladly left the school-room, and almost danced her way down the stone corridor, only easing her gaiety when the stern, grim figure of the baroness approached.

**"A note to Robin Hood from you shall trap that villain!" declared Fayre's bullying uncle, the baron. "Write as I say!" Fayre did write—but not what the baron dictated!**

"Where do you go now?" demanded the baroness. "Have I not commanded that you shall read the account of your uncle's prowess in the Crusade?"

"Oh, yes, aunt; but my lord uncle has summoned me to read a message," said Fayre.

And since there could be no reply to that, she went hurrying down the wide staircase of the castle to the hall, and thence to the courtyard.

As a-c-a-t and d-o-g expressed the limit of the baron's reading prowess, he had frequently to invoke Fayre's aid; but he blamed his eyesight rather than his ignorance for his own illiteracy.

As Fayre looked at the arrow her heart jumped. For she knew whose it was by its special markings—Robin Hood's.

Robin Hood, the friend of the poor, was a friend of hers, although he did

not know her as the Lady Fayre of Longley Castle; he knew her only as the mystery maid in ragged clothes he had met in the wood.

"Well, what says it? My eyes, weakened in the dust of the Crusades, make such small writing a blur," frowned the baron.

Fayre unfolded the paper and gave a little jump of surprise. For the message was for her, not for the baron!

"I—er—it is from Robin Hood," she faltered, and read:

To the Lady Fayre, of Longley Castle.

"My lady, it hath been said that your heart is kind, and if you would prove it so, then take pity on a poor village maid, Nancy Roe, who is fallen so sick that she do need to save her the best wine and white chicken meat for many days. It is blessed to give. On behalf of Robin Hood.

"(Signed) FRIAR TUCK."

Her eyes were shining as she lowered the paper.

"There, uncle!" she said. "How kind a heart has Robin Hood, and he does us honour to suggest we, too, have kind hearts. If it please you, may I get wine and chicken for the poor girl?"

But she saw at once that the baron wore a dark, angry scowl; and whatever kindness of heart he had was not shown on his face.

"Robin Hood! Pah! He expects me—to send wine and chicken! It is a jest; a trick of some sort!"

Fayre shook her head.

"He is very kind, they say, uncle; and we have so much wine—that new butt from Burgundy came but yesterday."

The baron eyed her in amazement. "My new butt? You think I should send my new butt to some chit of a village girl! Are you crazy, too?"

Sir Geoffrey laughed mockingly.

"'Tis a joke sure enough," he said. "Is it like that Robin Hood will come to the castle to take the wine?"

"No, no. I will take it—with my lord uncle's permission," Fayre hastened to add.

The Baron le Feuvre nearly exploded at the idea of his niece going to the village with wine and food. For what the baron had he kept, and what he had

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## BETWEEN OURSELVES



**MY DEAR READERS,**—Claudine has been at it again! Oh, but I'd better explain, for the benefit of new readers, just who Claudine is.

Claudine, girls, is my very own niece, a most charming, generous-hearted young lady, with one abiding fault—she always thinks she knows best. (And, of course, like most people suffering from that form-of self-assurance, she seldom DOES know best.)

Claudine generally lands herself into a pickle, and her latest—shall I call it?—escapade was no exception. But it was, in one very big respect, far, far different from any of her other adventures.

The other week-end I was staying at Claudine's parents' country retreat. The weather was mild, but recent snows had made the district into a series of lakes, bogs, and rushing streamlets, so that when Claudine, with all the confidence in the world, declared that she was going to take a short cut into town to do some shopping, Your Editor put in a word. (You see, I know Claudine's short cuts!)

"Ahem!" I said tentatively. "Ahem! Claudine, but don't you think it would—er—be safer to go by road?"

"Oh, I shall be all right!" Claudine said, drawing on her gloves. "If I find it's too flooded I'll just turn round and come back. But it won't be where I'm going. I know all sorts of short cuts, you know."

"Well, if you're quite sure—" I murmured.

And off Claudine went, at a brisk stride, energetically stabbing the ground with her walking-stick! From the window I watched her disappear down the lane, and silently, sighingly wondered—

Two hours later Claudine returned. She returned in humiliation and dejection. She was covered with mud, soaking wet, and shivering with the cold.

"Good gracious!" her poor mother exclaimed. "What ever have you done? My dear child, you've fallen in the water!"

It was such an obvious disaster

that Claudine had no need to confess to it. Crimson-faced, she rushed up to the bath-room.

"I hope that's taught her a lesson!" her father said somewhat grimly. "Always thinks she knows best!"

But it was we who were taught a lesson, I am pleased to say. For once we had misjudged Claudine. That evening a grateful father called to express his heartfelt thanks for the way in which Claudine had saved his five-year-old daughter from a stream! Claudine was sent for, and reluctantly faltered out the truth.

She had saved that little one from drowning; that was how she had got into her wretched condition. Needless to say, Claudine's parents saw that she was well rewarded. And need I add that I did my share, too?

But I must simply dash on to next Saturday's magnificent story-programme, of which the "star" attraction is:

### "THEY CALLED HER FRIEND 'THE OUTSIDER'!"

A most unusual Cliff House story, this; unusual and memorable. It tells what happens when gentle, noble-hearted Marjorie Hazeldene stands by a boy who, to all intents and purposes, is a disgrace, a wastrel, a person deserving of nothing but scorn and condemnation.

But Marjorie instinctively knows there is good in the fellow. She trusts him. And what happens? He apparently lets her down. Again she trusts him; again things go wrong. There is trouble with her dearest chums, Babs and Clara and Mabs—all of them; there is trouble with Jimmy Richmond & Co., of Friardale School, to which the boy she is helping belongs; there is trouble with Miss Primrose, so serious that it looks as though nothing can save Marjorie herself from disgrace.

On every side that boy has let her down, apparently, and yet still Marjorie has faith in him. Is her faith finally justified? I'll leave Hilda Richards to tell you in her own absorbing way.

As usual, next week's issue will contain further enthralling chapters of "On Tour with Yin Su," another fascinating COMPLETE story of Fayre and gallant Robin Hood, and more of Patricia's Chummy and Helpful Pages, so—order your copy well in advance, won't you?

And now, with best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

not he took by force of arms if necessary. He had never willingly given anything away; and it shocked him to think that such an appeal should be so brazenly made.

"No wine goes from this castle," he thundered. "Not a drop. If Robin Hood wants wine, let him fetch it."

"But the girl, uncle," protested Fayre gently. "She is sick."

"And I am sick—sick of this rascal, Robin Hood," snorted the baron, to the mirth of Sir Geoffrey. "Get you gone, and let no more be said of this."

But as Fayre turned Sir Geoffrey whis-

pered to the baron, who called Fayre back.

"Go," he said. "Bring paper and ink and pen to write."

"Here?" asked Fayre.

"Here—to Robin Hood," said the baron, his cunning eyes glinting. "He shall have his wine and chicken, after all."

Puzzled, but perturbed, Fayre went to do his bidding. She could not believe that the baron had changed his mind, and she feared that some cunning work was being planned.

When she returned with the paper,

ink, and pen, she was more alarmed than ever, for the baron and his knights were in chortling mood, exchanging sly winks.

"Write as I command," said the baron. "Commence. 'Robin Hood. There shall be wine and chicken in a sack that will be hung upon the barbican for you to collect. Our kind heart is melted.' And you shall sign it," he added to Fayre.

Fayre stared at him, growing pale. "It is a trick, uncle," she protested. "You'll lay a trap for him?"

The baron winked at his knights. "The brave Robin Hood has no fear," he said, sneering. "He will come. Poor simple fool! Finish writing, Fayre."

Fayre did so with a sigh. Nodding approval, as he looked it over, the baron flapped it in the air to dry the ink, and then summoned an archer.

Directing the man to fire—whence the arrow had come, he cried halt when five shafts had sung through the air. Taking another arrow from the archer's quiver, the baron affixed Fayre's message to it; and assured now that the previous arrows would have gained attention, ordered this one to be fired.

"And now," he chortled, rubbing his great, ham-like hands, "Robin Hood shall prove his valour. Hey! Bring a sack, load it with logs—fix it to the barbican, and lower the portcullis; raise the drawbridge. Fifty archers to the walls—"

The baron, sending a servant to fix the sack of logs upon the barbican, posted archers at the walls, there to remain hidden until Robin Hood was seen taking down the sack. That would be their signal to let fly.

The Lady Fayre, looking most agitated, clasped her hands tightly.

"He will not suspect a message from the Lady Fayre," winked the baron.

And from the battlements a signalled message came that a man in green in the woods beyond the walls had picked up that last arrow, and was unwrapping the paper from it.

### Fayre Was Even Smarter!

**R**OBIN HOOD, with Friar Tuck and Little John keeping him company, had waited in the woods hoping for some reply to his message. He had no wine or meat to send the invalid himself, so he was hoping that the stories of Lady Fayre's kindness were true.

There was no one with wine to spare in the small village, though there was ample in the castle, but brave as the men were, they could not reasonably attack a castle held by hundreds of soldiers, and protected by a deep moat.

When he saw the arrow, he raised a shout.

"Ah-ah! The Lady Fayre sends back word! I trust she did not read my message to the baron."

He took the paper, and then, unable to read himself, gave it to Friar Tuck, the scholar of the band, who cleared his throat and read:

"Dear Robin Hood,—The hard-hearted baron says 'no.' But believe me, please, I will do the best I can to take wine and food to the poor girl.

"But beware. The baron sets a trap. The sack that hangs on the barbican holds not wine nor meat, but wood, and archers lie in wait to shoot whoever goes to fetch it."

Robin Hood stroked his chin and laughed.

"So-ho! A trap! Well written, Lady Fayre! I'll vow the baron had a thought she had sent some other message than this!"



The baron did indeed think so, and was now crouching on the wall rampart, waiting for Robin Hood to claim the sack from the barbican.

Robin Hood, ever ready for sport, did not turn away into the woods, but rallied his men.

"From the eastern bank of the moat," he said, "we may watch the sack, too; and when the baron puts up his head to see if the bait is swallowed, there shall be archery practice for us!"

Fully a hundred men lined the embrasures of the castle wall, and as the news spread that a trap had been set for Robin Hood, more assembled.

The guards on the uppermost battlements concentrated their attention on the barbican, instead of keeping a watch over the fields; and thus it was that the Lady Fayre, creeping down the castle stairway, found the whole place practically deserted.

She was exceedingly glad to find it so, for she was dressed in the shabby clothes she wore in the woods. No one would have recognised her as the Lady Fayre, not even her aunt the baroness. She looked what she wanted to look—a village maid. Yet because of that questions would have been asked if she had been caught roaming the castle.

There might have been a query regarding the basket on her arm—and what it contained. A flask of wine, a cold chicken, and bread and butter were there, covered with a cloth, and if all went well, Fayre might yet take them to the village without her uncle being the wiser.

Instead of pausing in the hall, Fayre persevered down to the lonely dungeons, which were at the moment free of prisoners, and therefore unguarded.

Knowing every inch of the castle, she crept to the secret trapdoor which gave on to the moat. Below the trap was a simple boat, frail yet sufficiently strong for its purpose—a ferry over the moat.

Dropping lightly into it, Fayre put down her basket, and paddled softly.

She was half-way across the moat when a sentry on the battlements, chancing to look down, saw her, and raised the alarm.

Fayre heard his shout, and dipped her paddle vigorously into the water, knowing that caution must be thrown to the winds.

Crouching to make herself as small a target as possible, Fayre fervently hoped that the sentry would not send down an arrow.

He did not. Instead, he took up a mighty ball of lead and, swinging it high, hurled it down.

Fayre was not expecting that, and when the heavy ball of lead struck the stern of the small craft, she screamed.

So heavy was the impact that the stern dipped into the water, while the lead went clean through the bottom boards. Water rushed in, and Fayre, throwing her paddle away, flung herself into the water.

She struck out, swimming vigorously in the cold water, more afraid of being struck by an arrow than of drowning.

The precious basket, with its load of wine and chicken, went with the boat, gurgling beneath the surface.

At the battlements an archer took aim. But his arrow did not fly; for another came from the woods, knocking his bow from his grasp.

Then a dozen arrows cut through the air, and the sentries on the battlements fell back, yelling for reinforcements.

"Robin Hood—'tis Robin Hood to the attack!" they shouted.

Robin Hood, fleet of foot, ducking low in the long grass and swerving to spoil the aim of any archer who might use him as a target, reached the edge

of the moat as Fayre, clinging to the grass, tried to scramble up.

But the banks of the moat had been so cut that they provided no handhold for swimmers, and had it not been for Robin Hood's timely aid, Fayre might have struggled in vain until exhausted.

Crawling through the grass, Robin Hood found footholds, and then leaned down, stretching out his hands.

"Ah! Mystery Maid, so it is you!" he exclaimed.

Fayre took his strong hands, and while the archers at the walls were driven back by singing arrows sent by Robin Hood's band, she scrambled up the steep bank to safety.

"But the wine and the chicken—gone!" she gasped.

Robin Hood led her beyond arrow's range, and then patted her cheek.

"Brave maid," he said. "So you robbed the baron, eh? You stole from the castle the way I have done before now, but with less fortune?"

Fayre, smiling wanly, brushed water from her face, and smoothed it from her hair.

"I did try, but of no avail," she said sadly. "Didst get the Lady Fayre's message, Robin Hood?"

He looked at her quizzically, still puzzled to know who she was.

"Indeed so," he said slowly. "But how comes it that you, a simple village maid, know so much of Lady Fayre?"

"I am as her maidservant," said Fayre guardedly. "It is her wish that wine and chicken should be taken."

Robin Hood shrugged his shoulders and shook his head, smiling sadly.

"It seems an evil fate watches over the wine," he said.

"It does seem so," admitted Fayre ruefully. "But the baron will give none, and it seems there is an ill-fate that will not allow its being taken."

"'Tis a wonder the wine does not choke the baron," said Robin Hood. "When there are so many have need of it in sickness. Had he a conscience it would turn sour in the mouth."

"Yes, indeed," agreed Fayre, frowning. "It is a pity the wine cannot be turned into water."

And then, as that thought struck her, Fayre's dismal smile waned.

**JUST** as Fayre was wondering if she would ever reach the bank, Robin Hood appeared. Ignoring the singing arrows, he flung himself full-length, grasped her hands, and began to drag her to safety!



mounted and afoot, to attack them, warned Robin Hood that the time had come to move on.

"Remember," breathed Fayre, as she crept away.

"I remember. I shall be waiting," said Robin Hood softly.

Then, while he attracted the attention of the sentries, Fayre took a long course through the bushes away from the castle.

### Free Wine and Food!

IT was half an hour later that Fayre, clad in dry clothes, borrowed from an old cottager, entered the castle by the drawbridge, claiming a mission to the Lady Fayre, and showing a piece of paper with writing on it to the wardens.

She changed into her own rich velvet clothes and went along to the school-room. The Venerable Brie had dozed off, and Fayre, taking care not to awake him, used the ink, pen, and paper to write another message.

"Beware!" she wrote in a hand that was clear, but unlike her own. "Your wine has been poisoned."

At a suitable moment, Fayre crept down to the banquet-hall, and when she was sure that no one was watching, dropped something into the baron's flask of wine and then placed the message in a prominent position.

It was only just affixed when the Baron le Feuvre, returning from his vain hunt of Robin Hood, stamped in, in a furious temper.

"Wine!" he roared. "Wine!" But he paused, seeing the notice, glared at it, and sent for the Lady Fayre, who could not be found. However, the Venerable Brie was located, awakened, and brought down.

The Venerable Brie stared at the message, and then read it aloud shakily.

"Beware! Your wine has been poisoned."

The baron stiffened, turned pale, and gripped the hilt of his sword. In those days such things as poisoning food and drink were fairly common, and there were many with a grievance against the Baron le Feuvre.

"Poisoned?" he choked. "Who—who wrote that message?"

But the Venerable Brie could not say. "Twas someone who writes and spells ill," he said. "The upstrokes are too thin, and the down too weighty, for good penmanship."

"Bah! Penmanship! My wine is poisoned, and you talk of penmanship, dolt! Send for the wine-taster!"

From her hiding-place behind a thick curtain, the Lady Fayre watched and listened, and presently heard the wine-taster being brought to the scene.

The latter, terrified, made a desperate attempt to escape his thankless task.

"My lord, 'twas but this morning I resigned," he said feebly, "and sought a humbler position in your lordship's kitchen. Even though I am owed a month's wages I do not seek them. My palate for wine is lost, and I doubt I should know poison if I tasted it, whereby great evil might befall your lordship."

The baron drew his sword.

"Taste that wine!" he thundered.

"Are you afraid, coward?"

"No, no, no, m'lord!" gasped the man miserably. "But wine upon an empty stomach ill-suits my digestion!"

"If you're afraid of that wine 'tis proof you poisoned it!" snarled the baron.

Proof in those days was rough and ready, and trial went by ordeals, so the wine-taster, turning even paler, poured

wine into the goblet, although such was his state of agitation that he poured even more over the floor.

He raised the goblet to his lips. Unprepared for the mustard, pepper, and strong spices Fayre had mixed in it, he skipped a foot in the air as the potent fluid touched his lips.

Hurling down the goblet, he clutched his mouth, and then, determined that the test should end here and now, threw himself on to the floor.

Not a word was spoken. The baron, pale, stood with folded arms.

"Carry him off," he said thickly. "I might well have been the victim."

Sir Geoffrey sniffed the goblet and shook his head.

"Ah, 'tis but one gobletful!" he shrugged. "Mayhap the butt of Burgundy is not affected."

"Try it," said the baron.

"Try it yourself, my lord," said Sir Geoffrey, adding hurriedly: "My taste for wine is poor. I know not good from bad."

The baron tolled the mighty hall bell, and his steward appeared, looking agitated.

"My lord rang?" he asked

"The post of wine-taster is vacant!" snarled the baron. "Let it be filled."

It was then that Fayre chose to appear on the scene.

"Uncle—uncle," she cried, "did I hear you say that the post of wine-taster is now vacant?"

"I did!" he growled.

"Oh, then it may be that you can find work for the hungry beggars at the gates," said Fayre. "Although maybe they are too simple for such difficult work as wine-tasting."

The baron swung round.

"Bring the rascals in," he commanded.

Five minutes later four beggars were urged into the hall by soldiers. They were unkempt and their clothes were ragged, and Fay herself had to look twice to make quite sure that the tall one with the beard was indeed Robin Hood—as they had schemed.

"Now," said the baron, "at the end of the week you shall each have a gold piece for your labours. You are to taste my wine and give honest opinion of it. But one at a time. Let three begone to the smaller room beyond."

Three of Robin Hood's men were led away, and Robin Hood himself chose to remain, watching with great interest as the large butt of wine from Burgundy, in France, was brought into the banquet hall.

"Drink. Say if you think the wine good of its kind," said the baron.

Robin Hood picked up the golden goblet, bowed, and smiled, while the baron and his knights held their breath in suspense.

Draining the goblet, Robin Hood smiled and put it down.

"Good wine!" he said.

And then, suddenly sagging, he twisted completely round and collapsed.

The baron's eyes bulged.

"Carry him out," he muttered.

"Bring another."

Another of the band entered, beamed, and tried the wine, drinking it with relish, smiling. Then, going suddenly limp, twisted round three times before collapsing.

The baron blanched. His scalp twitched.

"Enough!" he said thickly. "It is proof."

The Lady Fayre, who had crossed to the table at the side already arranged for the meal, gave a sharp cry and stepped back.

"Uncle, what are these blue spots on the cold chicken?" she asked.

The baron leaped forward.

"Blue spots?" he asked.

Then, with wide eyes, he stared at the chicken, oddly marked with spots. It did not occur to him that the spots were made with ink, and he fell back, horror-stricken.

"The food, too!" he gasped.

Fayre cut a snicket from the chicken and tasted it.

"Ugh!" she choked, staggering back.

It was enough. The baron tolled the bell and stormed at the servants.

"On to the fire with the chicken!" he roared. "Pour the butt of wine down on to the grass. Whoever warned me warned in time."

Fayre, turning to him, held up a beseeching hand.

"No, uncle, do not throw it away."

"What! Who would eat such food or drink such wine?" he demanded. "Are you crazy?"

But Fayre smiled grimly.

"Robin Hood!" she cried. "Did he not ask for wine and chicken?"

The baron stared at her, and then let out a roar of laughter.

"Robin Hood by my troth!" he shouted. "He asked for wine and shall have it."

"And the chicken, too," laughed Fayre.

"A sack!" the baron yelled.

"Hammer up the butt of wine! Ho, there, men! A present for Robin Hood!"

The Baron sat down on the nearest chair and hooted with laughter at the rich, delightful idea. Fayre giggled merrily, and Sir Geoffrey and the others held their sides.

The butt was sealed, and the Venerable Brie was brought down to print a message of love and good will from the Baron to Robin Hood, which was painted in three colours.

And just to complete the ceremony men-at-arms were to carry it to the woods, and heralds were to announce the gift with a fanfare.

It took an hour all told, and Fayre was allowed to ride behind her uncle's charger and watch the ceremony.

"But the beggars who tasted the wine, uncle?" she presently asked. "Where are they?"

The baron made inquiry, and learned that they had been carried to the roadway and deposited there. Apparently, not seriously ill, they had hurried away.

For the rest of the day the baron laughed, and Fayre laughed. Then news came that ended his mirth. It transpired that there was merrymaking in the village because Robin Hood had sent wine for the people. The odd thing was that no one was taken ill. In fact, the sick girl in the village grew better, and enjoyed the chicken none the less because of the ink spots on the skin.

Fayre went to see her, and took more delicacies smuggled from the castle; and since she was just a ragged beggar-girl herself she could afford to tell the story of the "poisoned" wine, taking care not to admit the part played by the Lady Fayre.

Since laughter tends to cure, the sick girl grew well even more rapidly than before; and for a week at least there was a long queue of applicants at the castle applying for the post of wine-taster.

Even the Venerable Brie smiled when the Lady Fayre, writing to dictation, put: "'Tis an ill wine that bloweth no man good."

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

**ANOTHER** topping COMPLETE story featuring the young Lady Fayre and courageous Robin Hood in next Saturday's issue.



More fun and excitement for you—

# 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. They put it on a taxi, then trap the mystery woman in a room. But the taxi starts off. Shall they chase after it and let the woman escape?

(Now read on.)

## On Their Way!

DAPHNE did not hesitate between staying to guard the woman with the emerald ring, and following their luggage, which was being driven away in a taxi. She went after the luggage; and Yin Su, pausing but a moment, decided to follow her.

May was left alone in the corridor of the empty house—alone except that on the other side of the locked door, a prisoner of her own volition, was the woman with the emerald ring.

They knew nothing about her except that—that she wore dark clothes, and that on one hand was a remarkable emerald ring. But whoever she was, she had crossed their path; she had stolen their luggage from the station, and had brought it here; and for all May could believe to the contrary, she might do something similar again.

"Listen, please," said May, rapping on the panels. "I want to know who you are, and what you are doing with our luggage, and why you keep following us around?"

There was no reply, and May rapped the panels again.

Then, with but a faint hope of any result, she turned the door handle and pushed. There was no possible reason why the woman should unlock it, and May did not expect to do anything more than demonstrate that she wanted the door opened.

It was a shock to her, therefore, when

the knob turned, and the door swung wide.

But May did not immediately rush in. She was impetuous, but not quite unwarly; and the thought struck her that this might easily be a trap.

The room was in darkness and that fact gave her no chance to know where the woman was. She might spring out suddenly, rush from the room, and lock May in!

So May stepped in very guardedly, keeping one hand on the door knob, while she groped for the light switch.

With a great sense of relief she found it, and turned the switch. It clicked, but no light came.

"Oh, you've taken the bulb out!" said May. "That's it, is it?"

A reply came, but not from inside the room. It came from the corridor behind May.

**Everything was going splendidly for May & Co. And then—Yin Su tried on the costume of a gypsy princess!**

"Good-night!"

A clatter of steps sounded on the staircase, and May, swinging round, rushed on to the landing. Bumping into the wall, she knocked on the switch, which had been turned off, and, leaning over the banisters, saw nothing but the closing of the front door.

"Well, my golly!" murmured May, bewildered.

"Back she went to the room, and at once saw the open communicating door, leading to another room, by which the prisoner had escaped.

"Gone! And, my golly," quavered May, in a tone near to despair, "the luggage, too!"

For it seemed utterly incredible that Yin Su and Daphne, chasing the taxicab, could have caught it. The best that could be hoped for was that they had seen in which direction it had gone.

May went down the stairs two at a time, hurred open the door of the house, and rushed down the drive. Reaching the gateway, she looked along the road, and saw the red light of the taxicab.

It did not move; it did not recede, and May, with a sigh of relief, knew that the cab was standing still.

Running and trotting, she presently saw Yin Su and Daphne when she was within a dozen paces of the taxicab, which they reached a moment later.

"What's happened?" panted Daphne to the driver.

"Happened, miss?"

"Why did you drive off?" asked Daphne.

"Oh! Well, a lady from the upstairs room told me to; told me to drive along to the house next door, and wait at the gate. Here it is," said the taximan, indicating the large gates with his thumb.

May arrived at that moment, breathing hard.

"Take no notice," she jerked out. "Drive on!"

The taximan eyed her in stolid

manner; he had a simple, rubicund face, divided almost in two by a long horizontal moustache, and, as they had already gathered, he was not a man of sparkling intelligence.

"Look here, miss," he said, in an impatient tone, "how many people are giving orders about this here taxi?"

"One, me!" was May's rejoinder. "You take orders from whoever is going to pay you—and that's us here."

"H'm! Well, where to?" he frowned, when he had digested that thought.

May had to laugh; for, after all this, they had no immediate destination except perhaps Morworth, where they had to collect their further instructions in the morning.

But she had a ready mind that did not allow doubt to remain long. As the mystery woman might appear at any

BY

**ELIZABETH CHESTER**

## 22 "On Tour With Yin Su!"

moment—and the taximan might then regard her as a more responsible person whose orders should be taken in deference to those of May—the sooner they moved off, the better.

"To the village," said May. "Take us to a cottage where we can sleep the night comfy and have good food, please!"

The taxi-driver knew a cottage where rooms were let, and drove them to it. It was a clean, comfy little place, and a plump, motherly woman, who was the proprietor, cook, and maid-of-all-work in one, welcomed them almost effusively.

A roaring fire blazed in the cosy sitting-room, and she promised to get them a hot meal at once. Her idea was sausages and mashed, and Yin Su thought it would be most suitable.

"I'm sorry I've got no chopsticks, miss," said Mrs. Jones apologetically. "But I've never had Chinese here before; but I dare say my boy could smooth down a couple of bits of firewood, if it would make you feel more at home."

"Most humble Chinese girl gladly use knife and fork," said Yin Su. "Please not trouble industrious son."

May sank down in an armchair and sighed happily, as Mrs. Jones bustled away. Daphne smoothed her hair before the mirror, and Yin Su studied the pictures on the walls.

"Grand!" sighed May. "That woman, Madame X, won't find us here; and I shall sleep like a log."

"I shall dream of her, and the missing luggage," said Daphne. "But don't forget, it's early to rise in the morning!"

And early to rise it was. Morsworth was their destination, a journey of five miles. It was not a great distance, and when the morning proved to be bright and sunny, they all agreed that a walk was exactly what they wanted.

Mrs. Jones had awakened them with hot water and tea, and breakfast was a

delicious meal of crisp bacon, fried eggs, and tomatoes.

Then came the business of choosing what they were to wear. As Morsworth was only five miles away, they could return here if their instructions or change of plans demanded it; so they decided that the very best thing to do was to wear thick, comfortable shoes, walking kit, coats, berets, and the rucksacks which May and Daphne had packed in case they should have the luck to go mountain-eering.

"And now we'll show you English scenery, Yin Su," promised Daphne. "There are some lovely hills between here and Morsworth, so there'll be grand views and everything."

Having paid the bill, they set out with Mrs. Jones' blessings, and the good wishes of her son Alfred, who presented Yin Su with what he thought were chopsticks—made like small wooden hatchets. "We're off; we're on our way!" cheered May when, a mile from the cottage, they were in the open country, with rolling hills and valleys before them, and here and there a spreading forest or lovely wood.

All troubles seemed behind them now; they were free from the woman with the emerald ring; their luggage was safe, and at the post office at Morsworth they would receive further instructions from the governess, and perhaps more money.

They climbed the hilly road, and did not pause until they came to a fork in the road and a signpost which said Morsworth on both arms.

"Mountain road to the right," said May. "That's our way, I should say."

Two miles farther on, with the road narrowing, and climbing higher, May began to have misgivings, for across the sky drifted black clouds.

There was a stillness in the air, and not a house was in sight for miles, only the heaving earth like a stormy sea that had been suddenly petrified.

"I suppose this is the right road?" asked Daphne uneasily.

May hoped so, but did not answer. And then—down came the rain! "Run—run, for goodness' sake!" gasped May.

"Where to?" gasped Daphne. Yin Su's keen eyes had noted a little settlement in a valley.

"Houses," she said. "They were not houses; they were gipsy caravans. But, houses or caravans, they would give shelter from the rain which, carried by a newly risen wind, drove straight at them."

"Gipsies!" cried Daphne. "May—ought we to go there?" "Come on," answered May. "Do you want to be drenched through?"

## A Gipsy Princess!

IT was but a small gipsy encampment, and there was no one in sight when the girls reached it, for the wise gipsies were already under cover, in tents or caravans.

When May was but a dozen yards from the nearest caravan, a gaily painted red and green affair, she heard a voice hail her, and a girl looked out.

"Here—quick, here!" she cried. She was a good-looking girl with dark eyes, and sleek black hair that showed beneath the coloured shawl that was wrapped about her shoulders.

With a welcoming smile, she held open the caravan door, and the three girls tumbled in, gasping.

"The rain came quickly," said the gipsy girl, smiling.

"Sky open—rain fall," said Yin Su sadly.

Well, this is true English weather," said May. "And we said we'd show you England—good, bad, and indifferent." Then she added to the gipsy girl: "Awful cheek our butting in on you like this; we were walking to a place called Morsworth."

The gipsy girl seemed surprised, and eyed them in a puzzled way.

"Morsworth; but you go the wrong way," she demurred.

"Wrong way?" gasped Daphne. "Oh, don't say that, please!"

"The signpost pointed this way," protested May.

"I know, and twenty, thirty years ago it would have been all right," said the gipsy. "They say that then this road went through to Morsworth. Not now. The bridge is gone. There is a big gap, which means you must walk five miles till there's another bridge, or else go back to the signpost and take the left-hand turn."

May looked at Daphne and blinked. "Oh golly! What mutts we were!"

The gipsy girl laughed. "What matters it? You will get there some time."

But that was not how they viewed it, and Daphne, wringing out her scarf, and brushing rain from her coat, looked quite dismal at the prospect of another five miles in this bad weather. Besides—

"Besides, we've got to get to the post office this morning," she pointed out.

"Still, this afternoon might do as well," May said.

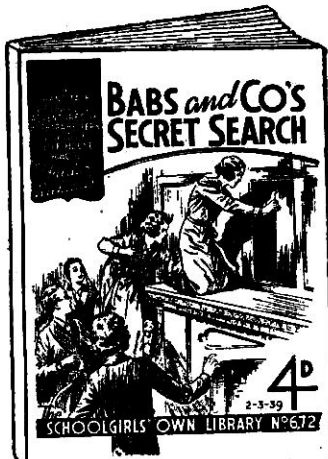
Yin Su took stock of the caravan, where flowers had been neatly stacked, and of the bed on which was stretched a frock of bright, gay colours, beautifully embroidered. It made an instant appeal to her Oriental mind, and she fingered the material quite lovingly.

"Most exquisite and noble frock fit for fine princess," she murmured.

The gipsy girl nodded her head gravely.

"This afternoon it will be worn by the new queen," she said.

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"The new queen?" exclaimed Daphne, thrilled. "And who is she?"

The gypsy girl hesitated, laughed shyly, and then tapped her chest.

"I am," she said. "Although I am young, yet because of tradition, I am the queen. Yet I would rather anyone else had the job."

Daphne was startled, almost shocked, to hear such a thing.

"Oh, but I'd love to be a queen," she said.

"With enemies and quarrels and strife? No, no," said the gypsy girl. "I don't want it. I wish anyone were queen but me."

Yin Su picked up the frock, which had been seldom worn. Daphne and May, who had always thought gypsies to be poor, could hardly believe that this rich garment was indeed a gypsy frock; for there were jewels on it, pearls, and the finest golden embroidery.

"I, humble, unimportant person, Yin Su," said the Chinese girl, "would esteem it a great honour to wear so noble a frock."

"Then try it on," said the gypsy girl.

"Isn't it unlucky?" asked Daphne, and shuddered as a sudden roaring burst of storm rocked the caravan, and a flash of lightning made the interior for one moment a vivid blinding green.

"Unlucky—no, no! It is lucky. Who wears the frock of a gypsy queen shall have luck always," said the gypsy girl.

"Then let me try it on afterwards," begged Daphne.

But first it was Yin Su's turn, and the gypsy girl, as soon as Yin Su had removed her thick coat and frock, slipped it on to her.

It was a tightly fastened frock, and with it went a beaddress and a heavy veil.

Yin Su, eyes gleaming, paced up and down in graceful manner, and felt herself to be a queen.

"Most noble, august, and high-born queen," she said, bringing both hands to her forehead, "orders humble and miserable subjects to kneel."

"Meaning us?" chuckled May.

"You've got a hope!"

"Command bring mighty queen bags of gold and precious jewels," said Yin Su. "Command—"

But she was interrupted by a knock on the door. An old gypsy woman, a shawl wrapped about her head, looked in, and the girl stepped out.

"I will be back in a minute," she said to the chums.

They saw her hurrying to another caravan, and Yin Su swept up her queenly hands.

"The great feast shall commence," she said, clapping her hands. "Bring in the roast oxen—for each person one—also many fruits—oranges and lemons and—"

Once again there was a rap on the door.

"Open!" commanded Yin Su; and May humorously tugged the door wide.

A girl looked in a girl rather older than they, with black angry eyes. She glared at Yin Su, then suddenly, springing forward, seized her wrist and dragged her through the door.

May and Daphne were too overcome with astonishment to protect their friend for a moment, and Yin Su went stumbling down the steps.

It was really not more than a few seconds later that May jumped forward to the door, which had been partly closed, and grabbed the handle. But pull and twist it though she did, the door would not open wider.

"That girl's holding it shut!" she said furiously. "Tug, Daphne!"

But even as she called "tug" she de-

liberately stepped aside, keeping the door-handle twisted.

The girl outside, hearing May's shouted command to Daphne, tugged all the harder. Consequently, when May suddenly released her grip the door slammed shut.

The jerk was so great that May's adversary lost her grip and her balance on the steps, and went lurching back.

Pulling the door open wide, May sprang out, heedless now of the rain.

"Yin Su!" she cried  
In the pretty, princely frock, over which someone had thrown some oiled rainproofed sheeting, Yin Su was being hurried to a waiting horse and trap.

### The Kidnapping!

"STOP!" cried May desperately, cupping her hands to her mouth. "She's not the princess; she's a Chinese girl!"

But a strong-armed man, waiting by the trap, hoisted Yin Su into it and quickly followed her, helping up the girl who had snatched Yin Su from the caravan.

"Yin Su!" screamed Daphne, running through the rain after May, shouting and waving her arms.

But for Yin Su, sitting on the driving seat of the trap, between the man and the girl, escape was impossible. Looking back at her friends, as alarmed and bewildered as they, she was carried at spanking pace along a path over the grass.

It was utterly useless for May and Daphne to run in pursuit; they could never hope to overtake the trap.

Breathing hard, May stopped and turned a white, amazed face to Daphne.

"Well, my goodness! What ever—," she said blankly.

"Yin Su—where ever are they taking her?" Daphne wailed. "May, we've got to get her back. We've got to follow! Don't you see—they think she's the princess?"

May saw that clearly enough now, for it was the only possible explanation of this strange kidnapping.

"We'll have to follow them as long as we can!" she gasped. "Come on, Daphne!"

They ran past the line of caravans, from the end one of which a gypsy girl

emerged, a long shawl wrapped about her head and shoulders.

"Oh, thank goodness!" cried May, recognising her. "They've taken her—and the frock. Our friend!"

The girl, whom they had met before, realising that something was amiss, ducked her head to the stinging rain and ran to them. Her alarm was almost greater than theirs when she heard the startling story of the kidnapping; but not because she feared for Yin Su's safety.

"They have taken the wrong girl, but they have the frock!" she cried in anger. "And without that there can be no ceremony. Did I not say that it would mean strife, this coronation? And already it has started!"

"Oh, bother the silly coronation!" fretted May. "It's our friend we're worrying about. We're in charge of her."

The trap was now, at least, a quarter of a mile away, the horse keeping up a steady trot. How on earth they could catch it, May did not know; but the gypsy girl, with a keen expression in her eyes, took May's arm.

"You can ride horses!" she asked.

"Y-yes," said May hesitantly.

"Then it is our one hope of catching them, and catch them we must," said the gypsy girl. "This way with me."

Daphne and May had both ridden, but only staid horses, and their experience was not great, although they had taken a course in jumping.

But one thing they were accustomed to was saddles. The horses, tethered on the leeward side of the caravans, and sheltered with macintosh sheets, were not saddled, nor were saddles available.

The gypsy girl, hurling off a macintosh sheet, sprang at the first horse she untethered so that she was half-across its back, and then swung herself round, astride.

"Come on!" she said.

May turned to Daphne.

"Can you manage?" she asked.

Daphne had two attempts at jumping on, but succeeded only when May clasped her hands as a foothold for her, and gave her a final, hoisting jerk.

Daphne mounted, May herself scrambled on another horse. With only rope halters as reins, Daphne looked



"LOOK! Yin Su! Those people are kidnapping her!" May cried in alarm. "Quick! After them!" She and Daphne sprang out of the caravan and went tearing to the rescue of their chum.



as happy as if she had been mounted on a tiger; but she had grit. It was the only way of saving Yin Su, and she must not funk it.

"Come on!" called the gipsy girl, and, slapping her horse, sent it trotting forward.

Following Daphne, May quickened speed to keep up with their companion, and presently, bumped and jolted, every minute expecting to slide off, the two girls drew level with the young gipsy princess.

"Oh dear—oh dear!" gasped Daphne. "I know I'll come off—"

"Stick it!" urged May. The rain cut down at them, seeming almost sharp; and the wind shrieked, fluttering the horse's manes, and whispering the steaming rain from their necks and flanks.

So dense was the mist of rain that they could not now see the trap on the path ahead. But the path wound only up to the mountain, and there was no turning.

"Poor Yin Su! She'll be scared out of her wits," chattered Daphne; the words jerked from her at intervals by the jolting movement of the horse.

Her legs hung limply, and she felt at the horse's mercy without stirrups or saddle to steady her.

"Thank goodness—no jumps!" gasped out May.

The horses' hoofs thudded the soft turf as the gipsy girl took a course beside the hard path, and speed increased on a stretch of level going.

Ahead, the horse pulling the trap was feeling the grade of the mountain road, and slowing. Soon he would be going at a walk. But, however slowly he went, Yin Su's fears were not lessened; for, looking back she saw only mist and rain, and no sign of her friends at all.

For the hundredth time she tried to speak and explain; but her words were drowned by the tarpaulin muffled about her, and the roaring wind and hissing rain.

Yin Su, philosophic, taking life as

it came, consoled herself with the sublime thoughts of Chinese wise men.

"The goat in a leopard's skin," she reminded herself, "needs the tearing claws of the leopard to defend himself against the merciless tiger, but has them not; neither has he the use of his own horns deadened in his false apparel."

Likewise, thought Yin Su, she who is dressed as a princess, and is kidnapped as such, should have a princess' royal hauteur to encourage her against her enemies.

When she was lost in consideration of the learned sayings of Lin Fu, she became suddenly aware that the trap had swung from the path, and was bumping down a grassy slope into a hollow that was ordinarily hidden from view.

In that hollow were more caravans, the air above them thick with smoke that the downwind would not let escape. Horses whinnied, sheltered fires crackled, and voices sounded.

Then two men and a gipsy woman ran forward, shouting.

What they said Yin Su did not know, since she had not learned Romany talk. So when they presently addressed her, she could only bow.

"So the princess does not speak Romany?" sneered the man.

Yin Su inclined her head gravely.

"Most miserable person, dressed in princely robes, very humble insignificant no-one," she said softly. "Not high-born elegant princess of royal blood."

The man sitting beside her gave a startled exclamation, and whipped off the tarpaulin.

"She's not the princess!" he cried. "Not our queen!"

"Who is she? Why is she dressed in those clothes? Let us see her face!" cried the woman angrily.

Yin Su, bowing to the rain, rose, wrapping the tarpaulin about the lovely frock to spare it from ruin.

"Chinese girl," she explained simply, "who foolishly was so vain as to assume garments of higher-born, more noble person."

"Chinese girl!" A crowd of gipsies had gathered about the trap now, and all were muttering, whispering, pointing, arguing, completely baffled by this unexpected climax. And of them all no one was more astounded than the man who had lifted Yin Su into the trap, unless perhaps it was the girl who had dragged her from the caravan.

But they did not argue long. Yin Su was lifted down, and taken to the largest, most gorgeous caravan, in which sat a middle-aged woman, whose dark eyes fixed themselves with hatred upon the frock as Yin Su was hustled in.

"So, my rival, you're here?" she said; and then saw Yin Su's pretty, delicate, oval Chinese face.

Her eyes blazed; she stormed; she clenched her fists, raising them over her head, and becoming so shaken with passionate rage that Yin Su drew back, quaking.

Knowing nothing of gipsies, she took them to be bandits.

Yin Su clasped her hands in earnest entreaty, and spoke in a most humble and pathetic tone.

"Oh, most elegant and noble lady," she said, "the miserable, wicked servant-girl, fetcher of water, scrubber of floors, has done most evilly to

assume the beautiful garment of a princess. Were her whole riches not a miserable four pennies she would happily pay for the damage. But not even her father, a mere herder of pigs, could count more than three pennies by the sale of all his worldly goods; and her ill-natured relations would be happy indeed to hear that she was captured by bandits that they can be rid of her idle, expensive, useless person."

It was such a long, poetic speech compared with what the gipsies usually heard that they were awe-struck and silent. The effect was quite different from what Yin Su intended.

"Here!" said a man at last, breaking the silence. "Who is this Chinese girl? Look at her soft hands—a drudge, is she? Scrubber of floors—"

The dark-eyed woman whose caravan this was, after eyeing Yin Su's trembling form, turned to the others and made a sweeping gesture of dismissal.

"Begone!" she exclaimed. "I will speak to her alone—except for you, Rita," she added to another woman.

The rest were hustled from the caravan, and the door closed. With folded arms and stern expression, the woman faced Yin Su, whose heart palpitated with dread.

"Now rich Chinese girl," she began. "Not rich—" protested Yin Su.

"I say you are rich; and you shall stay here! You shall stay here until we get a reward for returning you to your rich father. You shall—"

But her words were interrupted by a rapping on the caravan door, accompanied by a man's voice raised in an excited shout.

"Three riders are coming up the mountain!"

Yin Su's eyes sparkled.

"My friends! They come to save me!" she exclaimed. "Oh, but you cannot keep me prisoner now. You—"

The woman snatched her arm, opened the caravan door, and almost hurled her out.

"We'll make sure they don't get you," she said mockingly. "Not until money's paid as a reward!"

With a hand pressed over her mouth, Yin Su could not shout. She could hear the clomp of the approaching horses' hoofs, but, completely helpless in the grip of the gipsy woman, could not give her friends a warning.

A moment later, May, Daphne, and the gipsy girl came level with the camp.

"Here is the rival camp; this is where they will have taken her," said the gipsy girl.

She dismounted, and May, too, slipped from her horse. But as they did so, there came the crack of a whip, the clatter of a horse's hoofs, the grinding of wheels, and from the cutting that led to the gipsy camp emerged the trap.

The man and the girl sat in it as before; and between them—

"Yin Su!" cried May.

"There she is! Stop!" cried Daphne. But the man and girl paid no heed; nor did the girl who sat between them, dressed in the gipsy princess' frock, a tarpaulin covering her almost completely, yet sufficiently open for the frock to be seen.

"After them!" cried May, flinging herself on to her horse.

WILL May & Co. be able to rescue their kidnapped chum, after all? On no account miss next week's instalment of this splendid story.



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