

Dramatic times for the Cliff House Chums
—and especially Marjorie Hazeldene—when

“THEY CALLED HER FRIEND ‘THE OUTSIDER!’”

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Incorporating
“SCHOOLGIRLS’ OWN”



**“YOU SHAN’T
EXPEL MARJORIE!”**

*A tense scene from this week’s
magnificent story of Barbara
Redfern & Co.*

A powerful Long Complete story of Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff House School, in which the wonderful loyalty and unselfishness of Marjorie Hazeldene is strikingly illustrated.



They Called Her Friend "THE OUTSIDER"!

As Brave As Ever, But—



"MARJORIE, you're not coming to Hollands' Stores with us?" Barbara Redfern asked.

"No, Babs."

"Well, then we'd better arrange to meet later,"

Mabel Lynn said. "What about the Anglo-American cafe?"

"Yes, rather—and have a feed!"

Bessie Bunter exclaimed, her fat face aglow. "We shall need a snack, you know. Shopping makes me fearfully peckish!"

"Well, then, that's all right," Clara Trevlyn voted. "Got enough money, Marjie?"

Marjorie Hazeldene smiled.

"I think so."

"Would you like some from us?" Janet Jordan questioned. "Marjorie, I'm sure you can't get all the stuff you want for two pounds."

"I shall," Marjorie said quietly, and flushed a little. "That's why I'm going to Middleton's instead of Hollands'. The stock's not so good, of course, but it is so much cheaper there."

Her five chums from the Fourth Form at Cliff House School stared at her a little dubiously. Marjorie Hazeldene, daughter of a struggling Surrey vicar who spent more money on his poor parishioners than on himself, was not a

rich girl even though she attended such an exclusive school as Cliff House. Not one of them—except perhaps plump Bessie Bunter—who was not heaps better off than Marjorie; not one of them who would not have dearly loved to help. But Marjorie, for all her poverty, had a stiff pride, and Marjorie, having saved desperately hard since Christmas, was confident in her power to make her two pounds go as far as three.

They all knew what a struggle it had

By

HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LADLER

been for Marjorie to save that two pounds. They all admired her for having saved it, and they all hoped most fervently that Marjorie would reap her reward in the forthcoming Cliff House-Friardale sale of homcraft work, in the interests of which they were all so busily shopping this afternoon. It was rather a thrill, working for that sale, to Babs & Co.; but for Marjorie it had a most serious side.

For the sale of work, due to take place at Friardale Boys' School in a week, was to be a joint effort on behalf of local charities by both the boys' and the girls' schools. It had been promoted in the first place by the Mayor of

Courtfield, and both boys and girls were working with a willing zest to make it a colossal success.

That zest had been given added fillip by the governors of the two schools concerned who, in order to enhance the value of the articles to be offered, had decided, on the day before the sale, to award prizes for the best exhibit in various sections. In the junior girls' section that prize was to be one of five pounds.

Marjorie wanted that five pounds—badly. She wanted some new spring clothes and didn't wish to call upon her father for the money.

It was indeed with the firm idea, of buying herself new things for spring that she had saved up that two pounds, and it was Barbara Redfern who had suggested, as Marjorie was without doubt the best needleworker in Cliff House Junior School, that she should risk her slender capital in an effort to secure the bigger prize.

Not one girl in Cliff House but believed that Marjorie would secure that prize, and Marjorie herself, shy and modest as she was, knew subconsciously that it was as good as hers. Marjorie's needlework for a girl of her age was something to wonder and to marvel at.

"You're sure," Barbara pressed, "we can't help, Marjie?"

"Quite, thanks, Babs!" Marjorie smiled.

"Well, right-ho! We'll get along," Janet Jordan said. "Meet you in the

Anglo-American afterwards, then, Marjie?"

Marjorie smiled again. Such a happy, sweet, gentle smile it was. With a nod, she left her chums, hurrying on towards Church Street, in which Mrs. Middleton, whom Marjorie had patronised many times in the past, had her shop.

Her eyes lighted up with pleasure as she thought of the sensationally beautiful bedspread clever old Babs had designed.

That bedspread was to be her entry in the junior section of the sale of work.

It would be lovely. For if the design was Babs', the idea for its decoration was Marjorie's. On a ground of soft blue linen Marjorie was to weave the design in yellow-and-white tufted wool in imitation of the famous candlewick work which was now all the vogue. A long job; to most girls a difficult job. But not to Marjorie.

And if she won that first prize—

Her heart leaped. Goodness knows, she needed new clothes, and, goodness knows, she could not ask her hard-up father for more money. How pleased he would be if she won that first prize—and how immeasurably proud to know that she had equipped herself without his assistance.

She laughed softly.

But now here was Middleton's. And what a fine stock of everything Mrs. Middleton had in! For a moment she paused outside the window, staring in with envious eyes. What a marvellous lot of things she could make with all the wools and other things displayed there! And then suddenly she wheeled round with a start as there sounded from up the street a sudden hoarse, frightened shout; the scream of a child; the sudden shrieking of brakes.

"Oh!" Marjorie gasped.

Powerless to move, to do anything, she watched. There was a small girl in the middle of the busy street, innocently stooping to pick up something she had dropped. Round the corner had suddenly appeared a big car—was bearing down upon the child. The car was braking, but its momentum was carrying it on. Another second—

And then, while everybody stood rooted, something happened. Into the roadway dashed a boy—a boy wearing the cap of Friardale Boys' School. One swift swoop he gave.

At the very instant, it seemed to Marjorie, that the car rushed on the child he had caught the little one up, flung her aside, and, desperately throwing himself after her, fell with a crash into the gutter. For one horrible, numbing instant Marjorie thought the car would run over his legs—but no! With skill really superb in that moment of crisis, the driver sharply twisted the wheel.

"Oh, my goodness!" Marjorie muttered.

Her mission immediately forgotten then, she rushed up the street in case she could be of some assistance. A crowd had gathered round the boy and the child, now blotting both out from view. She reached it.

"Oh, please," the boy was saying, "don't make a fuss!" And Marjorie started as she heard the voice. "Dash it, it was nothing!"

"Ken!" almost shrieked Marjorie.

"Who called me?" the boy asked, looking round.

"Ken, I did. I did!" And Marjorie broke through the ring. "Ken, it is you—it is you!" she cried, and, facing the boy, who stared at the sight of her, she caught his arm. "Ken, I saw that! It—it was wonderful!" she said. "If it

hadn't been for you the child would have been killed!"

"Marjorie!" Kenneth Warrington exclaimed. "Well, fancy! But come on, let's get out of this," he added hastily. "You know how I hate being fussed over, and in any case I've got a rather urgent appointment. Please make way there!" he added gruffly; and the crowd, still hardly knowing what to make of this, parted and let them through. "Well, well!" Ken Warrington grinned. "And fancy meeting you!"

"But, Ken, what are you doing here?"

"Take a peek at my cap," Ken Warrington grinned. "Doesn't that tell you anything?"

"Ken, you mean you're at Friardale?"

"That's it!"

"But—but why have you left Northford?"

"Oh, expelled!" the boy said lightly.

"Ken!" Marjorie cried in consternation.

But Ken Warrington only grinned—a trifle twistedly Marjorie shook her head.

"Ken, you—you're still the same?" she said unsteadily.

Very, very happy was Marjorie Hazeldene of the Fourth Form to meet once again her friend of long ago, Kenneth Warrington, now a scholar at Friardale Boys' School. Always had golden-hearted Marjorie liked him, understood him. What a shock then to discover that he was looked upon as a waster, a cad—by her own chums even. Typical of Marjorie that she remained loyal, sticking by him through mounting trouble until—

"Leopards and spots—you know the old saying," Warrington said, with a grimace.

"But how long have you been at Friardale?"

"Oh, four weeks! Surprised, eh?" He chuckled. "Sorry I didn't get in touch with you. Fact is, I didn't think it would be good for you to be associated with such an outsider as I'm supposed to be, so that's why I didn't advertise my presence. You see," he added, looking away, "my bad record came with me to Friardale, and so, as usual, I was condemned in advance. And now," he added suddenly, "I'm bunking Good-bye!"

But he wasn't "bunking." For Marjorie, her gentle face suddenly determined, had caught him by the arm.

"Ken—no!" she cried. "Ken, you've got to tell me things first! How are you getting on at Friardale?"

"Oh, as usual!" He laughed.

"Hated by everybody!"

"Even Jimmy Richmond and his chums?"

"Count them as among my worst enemies!" Ken Warrington said lightly.

Despairingly Marjorie gazed at him. The same old Ken—reckless, self-willed, wayward. The same old don't-care, careless-of-what-anybody-thought boy she

had known ever since childhood days in the Surroy vicarage of her father. Still that same old half-merry, half-scornful expression on his rather too-handsome face; still the same half-laughing, half-cynical gleam in those blue eyes of his. A waster, an outsider, a rotter, a cad—those were but a few of the hurtful names by which Ken Warrington was known.

But Marjorie saw him in a different light. She knew those hidden sterling qualities of Ken Warrington. This was the boy who had just saved a child's life; this was the boy who, two years ago, had dived through the ice near the weir at her father's vicarage to rescue a helpless puppy; who, with a sprained ankle, had braved three miles of raging blizzard to bring help to an exhausted shepherd; who had given his brand new bicycle to a labourer who had found a job miles away from home, and could afford no railway fares. For years Marjorie had known him, and had known those things about him.

"Ken, I've got to talk to you," Marjorie said.

"But, Marjie, I must go now!" he cried.

"Well, meet me afterwards—some-where?"

"All right," he grinned. "On your own head be it. Meet you in half an hour—where?" he asked.

"At the Anglo-American Cafe. I'm seeing friends there, and I'd just love to introduce you. But, Ken," Marjorie added anxiously, "you—you're not in any scrape now?"

"No more than usual," he said, and touched his cap. "Well, bye-bye, Marjorie!"

He swung off down the street with the athletic stride of a boy in a perfect state of physical fitness. Marjorie glowed a little. What a boy! And how proud, in spite of his old associations, she was to know him! But—an enemy of Jimmy Richmond!

She frowned a little, for Jimmy Richmond, of the Fourth Form at Friardale, and his chums were among her oldest friends. But perhaps Ken Warrington was only bluffing, she thought.

She turned into Middleton's. Mrs. Middleton came to greet her with a smile. Marjorie, who knew just what she wanted, ordered her stuff, and Mrs. Middleton produced it.

"Yes, Miss Hazeldene, that will be one pound nineteen and sevenpence," she said. "Will you take it?"

"Yes, please!" Marjorie dimpled.

"I've got to start work almost at once. I—"

And then she gave a little cry as she peered into her handbag. "Oh, my goodness, my money!" she cried. "I—I've brought the wrong purse with me!"

"Oh, miss, that's bad luck!" Mrs. Middleton said sympathetically.

Marjorie looked at her, dismay brimming in her soft brown eyes.

"And—and I did so want to start work at once!" she said, mentally kicking herself for having made such an absurd mistake. "Oh dear! That means I shall have to go back."

Mrs. Middleton smiled.

"Miss Hazeldene—no," she said.

"Why should you! I know you, don't I? I trust you. Take the things. If you'll promise to pay me by Saturday—perhaps you'll be looking down again by Saturday?"

"Oh, yes!" Marjorie cried. "I'm bound to want some more things then. Thank you, Mrs. Middleton! It—it's frightfully good of you!"

"Bless your heart, Miss Hazeldene," that good woman said, "it's a pleasure to be able to do you a little favour. And I hope—I do most heartily hope—

you'll win first prize. A rare pretty thing that bedspread'll be, from all you've told me about it. Here we are, Miss Haldene."

Marjorie flushed and laughed, and, gathering the parcel which Mrs. Middleton handed to her, she tripped out of the shop. Well, here she was—all set now. But how hard she'd have to work to get this entry of hers ready in time! Now, she'd just have to pop across to Rocks for some small, fine carpet needles. Good job she had about two shillings in loose change in her bag.

To Rocks she went, hugging her precious parcel, her mind divided now between her task and Ken Warrington. She purchased her needles, and, with a sense of an afternoon's work well done, made her way, shop-gazing at intervals, towards the Anglo-American Cafe.

Not the Reception She Expected!



"WELL, well!" cried Barbara Redfern. "Look who's here!"

"Jimmy!" whooped Clara.

"And Don!"

"And Lister!" The boys, shopping at the handi-craft counter of Hollands' Stores, turned with a start. As one three caps were removed. And Jimmy Richmond, the leader of the Friardale boys' trio, which consisted of himself, Donald Haybury, and Lister Cattermole, came forward.

"Jolly!" he said. "Fancy running into you! Shopping?"

"Shopped!" Janet Jordan teased. "We've finished. What are you doing?" "Getting together a few odds-and-ends for the old sale of work, you know," Richmond said. "Old Hay here is making a wrought-iron fender with a set of thing-a-jimmies to match, and Lister's buying stuff for some leatherette blotting-pad. My own share in all the giddy turmoil," he added, with a grin, "is going to be a nifty bookcase—yours truly doing the carpentry side of the article, and Douglas Counts, back at the school, the french polishing. What are you doing?"

"Well, I'm knitting a jumper, you know!" Bessie said importantly.

"And I," Clara grinned, "am making rope frames."

"And I," Janet added, "have bought the dinkiest needlework box—quite plain, of course. I'm going to pad it and fit it out myself, though."

"Sounds fine. What about you, Babs?"

Babs laughed. "Well, first of all, I've got to trace the design for what Marjorie's making—the loveliest bedspread you ever saw. After that I'm painting a few water colours for Clara to put in her rope frames; and Mabs is making dolls' clothes for two of the most simply enormous dolls you ever saw!"

"Jolly good!" Jimmy Richmond said. "The idea's caught on. A lot of chaps at Friardale are working like fury, too. I should think everybody in the Fourth will have an exhibit except that outsider, Ken Warrington."

"Ken who?" Babs asked.

"New chap," Richmond shrugged. "Expelled from his last school; joined us four weeks ago. He'd never have got in at all if his guardian hadn't been a pal of Dr. Barrymore, and I wish to goodness he hadn't! One of those microbic specimens, you know—smokes, gambles, and all that sort of thing! No end of a swanking bounder, too!"

Clara grinned.

"One perceives," she said, "he isn't exactly a friend of yours."

"Which," Richmond retorted, "is a compliment. No, he isn't. I don't mind the silly ass smoking if he feels that way, and, I suppose, if he bets it's his own giddy funeral. But a chap who frequents that awful Jay's Club, a chap who borrows another fellow's bicycle and then gets it smashed up, to mention just two of the things this outsider has done—well, I ask you! But don't talk about him!" he added distastefully. "I say, what about a spot of tea?"

"At the Anglo-American?" Babs cried. "Yes, rather! We've arranged to meet old Marjie there; she's gone off shopping on her own, you know. If you've finished—"

The three boys had, as it happened. Leaving a request for their purchases to be sent on to the school, they sauntered out with the girls. They were all most immensely glad to see each other; all had so much to talk about that they were hardly aware of the journey. But suddenly, nearing the Anglo-American Cafe, Richmond paused.

"Hallo!" he muttered.

They were nearly abreast of the establishment which was known as Jay's Club. It was a flashy, glittering sort of place, and its reputation, as everyone knew, was also flashy and glittering. It was a hall in which billiards, darts, and pin-table games could be played, but it was no secret that those activities covered a multitude of secret gambling; also, Fred Jay, its proprietor, was suspected of running quite a profitable little moneyleasing business among his younger clients.

Every decent fellow in Friardale shunned it. And there was a strict rule in force that any Friardale scholar found entering the club's premises was liable to expulsion.

And now out of the door of that club, a cigarette between his lips, was sauntering a boy—a boy wearing a Friardale cap.

"My hat, he's got nerve!" Clara breathed. "Who is he?"

"Ken Warrington."

"Oh!"

They stared with interest at Ken Warrington, the boy who obviously thought so little of rules that he could saunter out of this forbidden place in broad daylight—and, in defiance of all the rules of his school, smoke a cigarette in public. For a moment the boy paused, thoughtfully puffing at his cigarette, and then, as he turned, he saw Jimmy Richmond & Co. He grinned. "Well, well, well, my old and ancient enemies!" he said. "How do, Jimmy? Introduce me to the girl friends!"

Richmond's face expressed his scorn.

"Thanks! I'm rather particular who my friends meet!" he said curtly.

"So!" Warrington's eyes lifted in mocking surprise. He looked in no wise taken aback. "All the same, my dear old James, you ought not to walk about dressed so untidily! Allow me!" he added, and bent forward to pluck a piece of white cotton which, unnoticed by Richmond, he had acquired in Hollands' Stores. "You'll look so much better, you know—"

And there he broke off. For Richmond, at daggers drawn with this boy already, was tensed at once. Jimmy did not know of the existence of that piece of cotton, and neither had Babs & Co. seen it. Imagining that Warrington was about to play some humiliating little trick, he smartly and sharply struck the hand down.

"Hands off!" he said curtly.

Warrington flushed. That blow had hurt! Sudden anger leapt into his

face. Instinctive the action he then took. If Richmond slapped his hand—well, he was entitled to slap his face! And he did—with a stinging force that brought an angry cry from Babs; with a force that sent Jimmy Richmond staggering back a pace.

"Tit for tat!" Warrington said pleasantly. "How do you like that?"

"Why, you rotter—!" Clara Trevlyn broke out.

Richmond's eyes blazed. His voice was rather thick when he spoke.

"You can thank your lucky stars, Warrington, that these girls are present!"

Warrington grinned scornfully.

"Meaning," he asked, "you're afraid to make mincemeat of me?"

"Oh, rats! Don't be a cad!" Babs flamed.

"Meaning," Jimmy Richmond said measuredly, "that I shall expect an apology for that! And if I don't get it—"

"Well, you won't, old boy! So what!"

"I—I'll see you at school!" Jimmy muttered thickly.

Warrington laughed. Then, as the girls indignantly glared, he mockingly swept off his cap, keeping it in his hand until they had passed. Babs looked angry.

"And so," she said, "that's Ken Warrington!"

"That," Don Haybury returned rather grimly, "is a fair everyday sample of him. Can you wonder they don't keep him at the schools he dishonours with his presence?"

The girls looked at each other. They didn't. Deceived by Ken Warrington's cynical manner, none of them had the slightest doubt that he had contemplated some sort of assault on their boy chum in the first place. They were glad to have done with Ken Warrington. Certainly they were all heartily hoping they never saw him again. But perhaps, had they seen the very peculiar expression on that boy's face as his eyes followed them down the road, they would have changed their minds.

"Nice girls!" Warrington was saying. "Lucky blighters, Jimmy Richmond & Co.! Poor old Jimmy! I wonder why he never will see when I'm pulling his leg?"

He shrugged, turning away, really a little fed-up with himself. It was his fault, of course—always it was his fault. And yet he liked and admired Jimmy Richmond. Secretly he would have liked to be like Jimmy Richmond. But there it was!

Meantime the chums, with no further thought for the boy who was called the Outsider of Friardale, had reached the Anglo-American cafe.

They marched in. The head waiter beamed as he saw them, and conducted them to a table. Jimmy Richmond grinned.

"Our treat," he said. "Menus forward. Devonshire tea, Babs—or farmhouse?"

"Oh, farmhouse, please!" Babs said.

"Bessie, you?"

"Ahem! Well, I—I'd like both!" Bessie said. "I mum-mean, of course"—catching a dagger-like glare from Babs—"I—I'll have Devonshire tea first—with farmhouse tea to follow, you know!"

The boys, knowing Bessie's little ways, chuckled. As Jimmy Richmond was in funds, it didn't matter, and, anyway, he was just as anxious for the plump duffer to enjoy herself as he was for the others. So Devonshire and farmhouse teas were the order of the day.

"Better order Marjorie's, too, if

she's coming," Richmond said. "Devonshire for her, Babs?" "Oh, yes, please!" Babs said. "Marjorie loves cream."

"Although," Janet Jordan laughed, "it never seems to make her grow any fatter I—hallo, here is Marjorie!"

Marjorie it was, pushing her way through the swing doors. The Cliff House girls beamed; as one the Friar-dale fellows rose to their feet.

Until— "Hallo!" muttered Jimmy Richmond

For after Marjorie came another figure—a figure at the sight of which they all stiffened. Ken Warrington!

"Marjorie!" Babs cried.

"Hallo!" Marjorie laughed. "But wait a moment!" she cried. "Oh, just wait a moment! Babs, I want to introduce you—to a friend of mine—a very, very dear friend!"

Marjorie rushed on, and by the sparkle in her eyes and the flush on her cheeks they could all see that she was enormously excited. "Ken—" she cried.

"Ken? You mean Ken Warrington?" Clara asked. "Is he with you?"

"Why, of course! Ken, this is—"

"Thanks!" Clara said, and Marjorie started. "I don't think you need trouble!" she added curtly. "We've already met!"

The joy in Marjorie's face faded.

"But you don't know Ken—" she cried. "You don't know—"

It was Warrington himself who spoke then.

"They do." He nodded. "I met them with Jimmy & Co.—not long ago. But I didn't know then they were the friends you were speaking about, Marjorie. However," he added, with a shrug, "as apparently I'm not wanted here—"

"But, Ken—no! I asked you to come!" Marjorie cried, and she herself stiffened then. "Babs, what's happened?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing!" Babs said uncomfortably.

"And you're acting like this because of nothing?"

"Well, not—not exactly. He—he smacked Jimmy's face!"

"Ken!" cried Marjorie, wheeling round.

"It's right!" Ken Warrington laughed. "I smacked his face because he smacked my hand—tit-for-tat, you know! Apparently Jimmy thought I was going to punch him in the jaw or something. Actually, all I was going to do was to remove a piece of cotton from his coat."

"Oh rats! Don't tell lies about it!" Jimmy said scornfully.

"Is that the truth, Ken?" Marjorie asked steadily.

"The dead solemn truth, old Marjorie! But, of course," Warrington said carelessly, "you needn't believe it if you don't want to. And I did tell you, didn't I, to leave bad eggs alone? I really think," he added, scrutinizing the flushed faces at the table, "I should make your young life decidedly more cheerful, old Marjorie, if I faded out of it. Good-bye."

He turned, raising his cap. For one second Marjorie halted. Then she looked at her chums. The look had something of disgust and strange quality for Marjorie Hazeldene—bitterness in it. Then swiftly, she also turned.

"Ken! Ken, wait a minute!" she cried. "I'm coming with you!"

"But, Marjorie!" Clara exclaimed. "Marjorie, you idiot—"

But Marjorie did not look back. As Ken Warrington swung open the door she caught his arm. Together they

passed through it, leaving a silence of utter consternation among the Friar-dale and the Cliff House group.

Because of Marjorie's Wish!



"MARJORIE, if you were a boy, you know what I'd call you? An ass!"

Marjorie Hazeldene's steady brown eyes did not falter.

"And why?" she asked.

"For taking up with such an outsider as I am," Ken Warrington said, with a hint of bitterness in his tone.

Marjorie shook her head. She and Ken wore in the quiet Corner Cafe not far from the Anglo-American. Ken himself had suggested this place, and Marjorie had readily fallen in with his whim; for Marjorie most desperately wanted to talk to him.

Her brown eyes were very gentle.

"But you're not an outsider"—she paused—"Ken, we've always been chums—"

"Well?"

"And, Ken, you have said that you'd do anything you could to please me."

He looked at her curiously.

"Well, Marjorie, that still stands. What do you want me to do?"

"I—I want you to do something—big." Marjorie gazed at him seriously.

"Something for your own sake. Those fellows—Jimmy Richmond & Co.—they're nice boys, Ken. They like me, and I like them. We've always been good friends—you see?"

He looked at her keenly.

"You mean, you want me to be like them?" he asked.

"Well, no! You never could be exactly like them, could you? I—I was only thinking that you could try to see their point of view. You know, Ken, you are difficult to understand. You always do show your worst side first,

don't you? Ken, will you try—for my sake?" she added earnestly.

Ken Warrington shifted. More than anyone else in the world had Marjorie the power to exercise influence for good over this wayward lad.

"Ken," Marjorie cried, "won't you?" Worriedly she eyed him, and then, reading something of the thoughts passing through his mind, touched his hand.

"Ken, what is it? There—there are difficulties in the way, aren't there?"

Without speaking, he nodded.

"Ken, tell me about them!"

"Oh, Marjorie, I—I can't!"

"Ken, you can! Please!" And Marjorie shook her head. "Gambling, Ken?"

The half-bitter smile that crossed his lips answered that question.

"If I can help you—" Marjorie said.

"No, no!" He shook his head.

"Marjorie, stop it!" he said, almost roughly. "I'm in a hole—yes, but—but I don't want you to help me out. Never mind. I'll get out of it somehow. But thanks, Marjorie!"

"Ken, you—you'll try? Promise?"

"O.K.!" he said, with a wry smile.

"Promise."

Marjorie's face cleared. She felt she had made headway. In dealing with a boy such as Ken Warrington, one couldn't hope for miracles all at once. But Ken would keep that promise. Oh, if only the others knew him as she knew him! If only Ken himself would allow that better side of his nature to be seen. But here was hope—now.

"And I, Ken," she said, "will do anything and everything I possibly can to help you. You know that, don't you? Oh, Ken, I do want to be able to feel proud of you—to find you chums with Jimmy & Co. instead of at loggerheads! And to-morrow," she added, "you'll come along to Cliff House, won't you? I'd love you to meet some of the other girls and have a look at the things we've started on for the sale of work. I—Ken, I don't want



WHILE Babs & Co. and their boy chums looked at Ken Warrington rather disgustedly, Marjorie dashed forward. "Ken!" she cried anxiously. "Ken, you—haven't been fighting?" Warrington grinned. "What, me? Not likely! It was the other fellow who did all the fighting!"

anything else," she added, as the waitress approached.

"Right!" Warrington said. "Then let me have the bill, please!" And when the waitress handed it to him, he pulled a face and flushed. "I—oh, hum!" he said, and awkwardly dragged some coins from his pocket.

Marjorie at once saw what was the matter.

"Ken, haven't you enough on you?"

"Well—just sixpence short," Ken Warrington confessed with a flush. "Oh, Marjie!"—this as Marjorie handed him a shilling. "Thanks," he said gratefully. "Well, call that a bob I owe you! Here we are, waitress. Keep the change!"

"Sixpence!" Marjorie cried, as the waitress, with a smile, walked off.

"Well, dash it!" Ken said. "I couldn't give the girl a measly tuppence, could I? These people rely on tips, you know. Thanks, old thing, that was frightfully decent of you! Well, here we are! And cheerily he helped Marjorie on with her coat and collected her parcel. "To-morrow, then, at Cliff House."

"Yes, Ken. And—and you won't forget your promise?"

"You know I won't," Ken said softly.

Marjorie flushed. Then, as the bus halted near by, she caught her parcel and with a hasty wave of the hand leapt on it. Ken Warrington, cap in hand, stood watching it until it was out of sight, a curious mixture of emotions on his face.

"Exit the good little fairy!" he muttered. "Leaving behind the ogre! Dear old Marjie—what a sport she is! And what," he added bitterly, "a nice caddish pig I am! Be like Jimmy Richmond & Co., eh? I only wish I could! Still, Ken, you've got to try! Can't let old Marjie down!"

He thrust his hands into his pockets. No, he couldn't do that. And yet—what a mess he was in, still in the grip of that fallow Fred Jay! It was his own silly reckless fault, of course—playing billiards and snooker for money and having to borrow that money from Jay to see him through. Silly ass game, of course! But what was a fellow to do when he hadn't a single pal in his own school?

Before he had met Marjorie, Ken Warrington hadn't cared a button what others thought of him or what scrapes he got into; but that promise had wrought a change in the boy who was named the Outsider of Friardale.

Jay had him under his thumb. To Jay he owed two pounds, and without the faintest prospect of getting two pounds with which to pay it back, it seemed that his good resolutions were doomed from the beginning. Nobody he could borrow it from—of course. Not a thing he had worth selling which would fetch that two pounds.

Down the street he drifted. From force of habit he pulled out his leather cigarette-case, then, thinking of Marjorie, looked at the cigarettes it contained and shrugged. Rats! Being the boy that Marjorie meant him to be didn't mean smoking—a mug's game, anyway. Very deliberately he closed the case; with a half cynical smile on his face dropped it, cigarettes and all, between the bars of the gutter manhole above which he had hesitated. Well, that was that.

But that two quid?

He strode on, racking his brains, allowing his feet to carry him where they would. And presently he came to himself with a start, to find himself jostling with the crowd that was pouring in and pouring out of the huge fairground and circus which that morn-

ing had opened to the Courtfield public.

For a moment he paused, pulling a face as he remembered he had no money. Then, with a jaunty shrug, he strolled in. Well, anything was better than going back to Friardale before necessary.

He paused a moment later among a grinning throng looking up at the platform of a garish boxing booth. On the platform, boxing gloves on his hands, a gay dressing-gown shrouding his supple form, stood a young man, very much Ken's own height and weight. Next to him a fat gentleman in a check suit was haranguing the crowd.

"And now, gentlemen, I give a challenge," he said. "Light-weight Leonard, on my left, known in all the centres of the hemisphere as the invincible, will offer three pounds to any one of you young 'opefuls who can stand up to him for three minutes. Three minutes only, gentlemen! Who'll take it?"

Ken looked at the boxer. He thought of Marjorie. He thought of the two pounds he owed Fred Jay.

"I will!" he cried, and pushing his way through the crowd, sprang lithely up the steps which led to the platform.

Still His Champion!



"BETTER go along and see Marjorie,"

Clara Trevlyn said uncertainly.

She, Babs, Mabs, Bessie, and Janet Jordan had just returned from Courtfield.

They were all in a rather subdued and slightly apprehensive mood. Thanks to the incident at the Anglo-American Cafe, tea with Jimmy Richmond had been a far from happy meal—they all so hated to upset old Marjorie. Apart from that, they were all rather bewildered by Marjorie's championship of the cause of such an outsider.

"Oh dear, I do hope she is still not upset!" Mabel Lynn muttered.

But when they reached Study No. 7, which Marjorie shared with Clara Trevlyn and Janet Jordan, it was to find the same dear, gentle, and forgiving Marjorie already there, bearing no trace whatever of either animosity or resentment. Rather was Marjorie pleased, for Marjorie, standing in front of the table, was busily stitching her lengths of linen together.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, just as if nothing had happened. "Oh, please do come in! Babs, I was just dying to talk to you. You see, I've got all the material—"

"And jolly nice, too!" Babs enthused. "I like the colour, Marjie!"

"Ripping!" Janet Jordan beamed. "But I say, Marjorie—"

"Yes, Janet?" Marjorie asked.

"Well, why—why did you rush off with that outsider Ken Warrington, when—when we—we were expecting you to have tea?" Janet finished lamely.

A delicate flush came to Marjorie's cheeks.

"You don't like Ken Warrington?" she asked.

"I should say we don't!" blunt Clara snorted. "And blessed if we—"

"Thanks, Clara! Please, please don't let us quarrel about it," Marjorie said, rather curtly. "Ken is a friend of mine. I can't very well help you not liking my friends, but on the other hand I'm entitled to make what

friends I like, aren't I? I knew Ken long, long before I knew any of you, and I know his worth. So please," Marjorie begged, yet with a hint of firmness in her tones, "shall we leave it like that?"

Clara shrugged.

"Well, as long as we don't see him, I don't care what—" she began, only to break off at a warning look from Babs. "Well, blow!" she added, turning red.

"That's all right," Marjorie smiled and looked again at Babs. "Barbara, have you the design ready?" she asked.

"Yes, rather! And I've the drawing-paper and everything," Babs said. "I'll run along and get the design, shall I, and transfer it to the material with you? By the way, had tea, Marjie?"

"Yes, thanks," Marjorie said.

"What, with that rot—" Clara said. "Wow! Babs, you clumsy goof, you trod on my toe!"

"Then be quiet!" hissed Babs.

"But— Oh rats! Why should I be quiet?" Clara fiercely shook her head.

Clara might be all sorts of unaccountable blunderers, but she was Marjorie's best chum at Cliff House, and Clara could never be easy in her mind until she had got off her chest the things she wanted to say. "Marjorie," she said shortly, "I don't want to row—you know that—"

"Then, Clara dear, please don't!" Marjorie pleaded, with a hint of distress in her voice.

"But I've got to say what I think," Clara went on. "It's going to be pretty plain, but I'm advising you for your own good. We all know what a good-natured and gentle old idiot you are. I don't want to bust up your friendship with anybody simply because I don't happen to like him, but I'm not going to see an outsider like Ken Warrington hanging round you."

"He's not an outsider! I don't care what you say, Clara—or any of you!" Marjorie added defiantly. "Ken Warrington's my chum, and I'm sticking to him!"

That was flat. It sounded final. In the face of it, there could hardly be any further argument—even on Clara's part.

Clara was silent; Babs, hastily stepping into the breach, made some remark about getting on with it, and rushed off to Study No. 4 to collect the design.

Marjorie looked at Clara, but the look, as usual, was gentle and forgiving, for if Marjorie understood Ken Warrington, she did so understand her Cliff House chums, too.

"Clara," she said, "would you mind holding the end of the material while I cut?"

"Oh, certainly!" Clara muttered, red-eared.

Snip, snip, went Marjorie's scissors until, just as she had finished, Babs whooped in with the design. Eagerly and excitement then—everybody willingly helping to stretch and tauten the sheet while Babs busily transferred the design to her transparent paper, which afterwards had to be tacked on to the blue linen so that it could be embroidered on by Marjorie herself. A skilful job that, but one which was flawlessly accomplished and which, when accomplished, was voted by everybody to be an absolutely expert job.

They laughed and worked. Any differences they might have had were utterly forgotten then. They all loved old Marjorie so; they were all so

keenly anxious to see her get that first prize of five pounds that they would have done anything to help her.

"I must say," Mabel Lynn said, "that you got value for your money, Marjorie. How much did all this come to?"

Marjorie smiled.

"Just under two pounds, and—Oh, my goodness, I mustn't forget, though! I haven't paid Mrs. Middleton for them yet!"—and she went on to tell them of Mrs. Middleton's kindness in allowing her to bring them away.

"You mean, you've still got the money?" Clara asked.

"Yes; of course."

Clara nodded, though for some reason she frowned a little. She said nothing else, however, leaving unspoken the thought that was in her mind. And for the rest of that evening, at any rate, Ken Warrington's name was not mentioned again, and the chums, all enthusiasm for their various tasks, set to work with a will. By the time bed-time came they had all made appreciable progress.

"I'll have to work—and work hard," Marjorie said, with a little sigh, when dormitory bell rang. "There's a fearful lot to do."

"But you'll get through it," Babs consoled.

They went to bed then, but Marjorie was up before rising-bell next morning. An hour and a half's work she managed to get in before lessons, and immediately lessons were over stole another half an hour before dinner.

Afternoon classes came and went, and once again Marjorie retired to the study, in company with Clara and Janet. But hardly had they arrived there than Clara, glancing through the window, gave an exclamation.

"Hallo!" she cried. "Here come the boys!"

"The—the boys!" Marjorie cried.

"Jimmy Richmond & Co. Didn't we tell you we asked them to come over to tea? Come on, let's go and meet them."

Marjorie nodded—a little anxiously, remembering that Ken was also due to call this afternoon. Good-naturedly, however, she put down her work. Outside in the corridor, they joined Babs and Mabs who, spotting the arrival of Jimmy & Co. from the window of Study No. 4, were also on their way into the quad. In the drive they met them.

"What-ho!" Jimmy beamed. "Here we are, eh? Hallo, Marjie!" he added jovially.

"Hallo, Jimmy! Did—did you see Ken?" Marjorie asked.

A little cloud chased itself across Jimmy Richmond's features.

"Warrington," he said, somewhat briefly, "is in detention. He came back to school late last night looking as if—well, never mind. We—" And then he spun round as a hail came from the gates. "Oh, my hat, here he is!" he cried.

Here Ken Warrington was, in all truth—but what a sight! Jauntily he came striding up the drive, one eye completely black, a patch of sticking-plaster on his chin. Marjorie saw him, with a little cry rushed towards him, while the chums, with Jimmy Richmond, Don Haybury, and Lister Cattermole, frowned.

"Ken," Marjorie cried, "what's the matter? Ken, you—you haven't been fighting?"

"What, me?" Warrington grinned. "Not likely! It was the other fellow who did all the fighting! Sorry, old girl, to turn up looking such a wreck,

but I did promise I'd come, didn't I, and I'm afraid, to keep the promise, I had to bring the black eye and all the rest of the works with me. Do you mind—or would you like me to toddle back?"

"Ken, no! Stop!" Marjorie said; but she eyed him in some dismay.

"Ken, what's happened?"

"Oh, nothing much! An immovable object—just met an irresistible whirlwind, you know. But unfortunately I wasn't immovable. Tell me, old Marjie—how's the bedspread progressing?"

"Oh, Ken, fine! There—there's Babs & Co.," she said. "Shall we go and speak to them?"

"Why not?" Warrington countered lightly.

He laughed. With Marjorie at his side, he walked over to the little group, sweeping his cap from his head. But the smile he centred upon Babs and her chums met with no response. "Nice day," he said conversationally.

Richmond's lips curled.

"I must say," he said deliberately, "you've got a cheek. I should have thought even you would have had more decency than to turn up here with the result of some brawl showing all over your face."

"Jimmy—," Marjorie protested.

"Marjorie, thanks! Leave this to me." Warrington smiled—a little bitterly. He was as conscious of his scars as Jimmy Richmond. Actually he had thought very deliberately and seriously himself about turning up, but the fact that he had made that promise to Marjorie, had persuaded him just to give her a look in, and then march out again.

For Marjorie's sake he was trying to control that somewhat hasty temper of his, but, in spite of himself, felt it rising.

"I really don't see," he said rather tartly, "that you've any right to control my acts, Jimmy Richmond."

"I haven't," Richmond returned scornfully. "At the same time, there are things a fellow must protest against, and coming to a girls' school looking as if you've just come out of a prize fight is one of them."

"So?" Warrington nodded. "And do the girls feel that way about it?"

Babs & Co. flushed, but were silent.

"And while we're about it, what about the detention Soutar gave you?"

Richmond said. "I thought you were supposed to be doing that?"

"Your business?" Warrington asked.

"Well, is it playing the game?"

"Pretty hot for playing the game, aren't you?" Warrington said. He could not repress the sneer in his voice. "It's playing the game, too, I suppose, never to give a fellow a chance, to read into everything he does or says something that's rotten and wrong? I suppose you've never broken bounds in your life, have you, good little Jimmy? I suppose you've never had a black eye?"

"I never," Richmond retorted contemptuously, "had a black eye because I'd been embroiled in some fight in a place like Jay's Club—"

"Jimmy!" cried Marjorie.

"Well, isn't it true?" Richmond flamed.

"It is not!" Warrington said. "Believe it?"

"No," Richmond said bluntly.

Warrington set his teeth. His hands clenched. One step he took forward.

But Marjorie caught his arm.

"Ken, no—no!" she panted. "Ken, come away! Don't row; don't argue!

It's obvious," she said, with rather a bitter glance at Jimmy Richmond & Co., "that these boys aren't willing to give you a chance. Come with me!"

"But, Marjorie—," Babs cried.

"Ken!" Marjorie insisted, and fairly tugged him away.

"But look here—," cried Clara.

"Marjorie, you idiot! You're not wasting your time on that rotter—"

"My time," Marjorie retorted, and flashed round, real and passionate anger in her face now, "is mine to do as I like with. And this rotter," as you call him, "is my friend, who came here because I invited him. Now, Ken, come!" she added, and leaving the chums gasping, she hurried him off down the drive.

Ken Explains!



"MARJIE, I'm sorry, old thing—frightfully, fearfully sorry,"

Ken Warrington said.

"Why not cut with me and have done with it? Richmond's right. Outsiders like me are best left to their own devices."

In Friardale Woods, near the school, Marjorie faced her boy chum distractedly.

"Ken, listen!" she said. "I believe in you. I've faith in you. Oh, I know what's happened! But I do believe now, Ken, you're trying to go straight. But, Ken, be frank with me. Tell me the truth. You—you didn't get that black eye in a fight at Jay's, did you?"

"Honestly, no, Marjie."

"And, Ken, you—you don't go to Jay's?"

Ken was silent for a moment. He looked away.

"Ken!"

"You want the truth, Marjie?"

"Ken, yes."

"Well, I've got to own up. I do—or, at least, I have been going. Oh, I know it was a rotten thing to do, but—but I was caught up. There's no harm in a fellow playing billiards, is there? I've told you I've never had a friend in Friardale, and I only went there—well, because I was so dashed bored with my own company. I hadn't any idea, honestly, when I first strolled into the club that it was against the Friardale rules. You see, I'd never troubled to read 'em. And then—well, I just got caught up," he added. "Jay challenged me to play games for money—"

Marjorie bit her lip. But she understood.

"And now, Ken?"

"Now," Warrington said gloomily, "I'm in a jam. I owe Jay money. I suppose Jay thinks I'm such a good customer that he's holding that over me—threatening to come up to the school, and so on, which, of course, means that I'd be expelled. And you know what that means," he added, with a shrug. "My guardian, old man Thomas, is so fed-up that he says, if I don't make good at this school, he'll send me away to a correctional home."

Marjorie was silent. Her whole heart was in her eyes then.

"And, Ken, the—the black eye?" she questioned.

"Well—," He shook his head. "I was in a fight," he confessed. "A fight at the circus. I was mooning around, trying to think where I could raise the cash to pay off Jay, and accepted a challenge at the fair to keep on my feet against Light-weight

8 "They Called Her Friend 'The Outsider'!"

Leonard for three minutes at a pound a minute. Dear little Leonard put me to sleep in two and a half."

"Oh, Ken!" Marjorie gulped; and the tears came to her eyes—tears of affection, tears of sympathy, as she realised now what an earnest effort the boy was making. "Ken, I'm sorry," she said. "Ken, can—can I help?"

Wearily he looked at her.

"How?"

"Well, if—if I could raise the money?"

"Thanks, no!" He shook his head. "Not that, Marjie. I know your circumstances. Leave it to me. I'll get through all right. But I must go now," he added. "I've got to report to Soutar when my detention's finished, and it's due to be finished any moment. Good-bye, Marjie. And—and thanks," he said softly. "You're a brick."

He turned away. Marjorie, watching him, shook her head as his athletic form disappeared through the trees. Poor Ken! What a fight he was making of it! What a misunderstood boy he was! If only—oh! If only Jimmy Richmond & Co. would rally round.

Meantime, Warrington was striding on towards Friardale School. Without incident he got back to the detention-room. Half his detention task was there—already done. A swift and skilful worker when he liked, Warrington finished it on the stroke of time and, gathering the sheets, took himself off to the room of Mr. Soutar, the unpopular master who was "Duties" that day. He knocked. There was no reply. He walked in. The study was empty.

"Hum!" said Ken.

His instructions had been to wait. With a shrug he seated himself in a chair, and then suddenly started as his eyes fell upon the master's desk. For on that desk was a bundle of new one-pound notes.

"Crazy ass, leaving money about like that!" the boy muttered. "Wonder what he's doing with such a wad?"

And then he remembered. The sports prizes! Soutar was treasurer of the school sports fund, and Soutar had obviously cashed a cheque in order to buy the prizes which were to be distributed among the winners next week.

For some considerable time Ken sat there, awaiting the absent master's return. Impatiently, he began to drum his fingers on the desk. Ten minutes gone by. Where oh earth was the fellow? And then Ken turned as he heard footsteps approaching along the passage.

The door opened. Mr. Soutar came in. He frowned at the boy.

"Hal! Finished, Warrington? Let me see your papers." And then he saw the pile of notes, and hastily catching them up, thrust them into the drawer of his desk, which he locked. "Er! Hem! Yes!" he said, frowning at the detention task. "That is all in order, I think. Thank you. You may go. But, Warrington—"

"Yes, sir?"

"Understand, any more of these intolerable escapades of yours and you will probably be expelled."

"Yes, sir," Warrington said smoothly, and with his old cynical grin quit the study. But he lounged out, not with the memory of the master's warning ringing in his ears, but with the vision of that pile of one-pound notes still in his mind's eye. It was odd to think that two—just two—of those slips of crisp paper would make all the difference in the world to him—would make happy that ripping Marjorie girl-friend of his.

Babs' Plan Fails!

"NOT back yet?"



"No."

Barbara Redfern looked worried. So did the rest of her chums. Tea in Study No. 7 was over now, and ten minutes since Jimmy Richmond & Co. had departed. An hour and a half had Marjorie been missing.

"And just," Clara Trevlyn fumed bitterly, "when she ought to be getting on with her bedspread. Every minute she can spare Marjorie's got to put into that—and here she is, wasting her time being friends with that outsider. How the dickens does she think she's going to get finished?"

Babs shook her head. She, too, looked worried. She was concerned for Marjorie—knowing what her work on that bedspread might mean to her.

"Well," she suggested, "supposing we help instead of standing about gassing? We can do the more simple work—like embroidering the edges. In any case," she added, "she can't be long now. It will be gates in an hour's time."

The others nodded. The suggestion was a good one.

So the bedspread was unfolded. Mabs, Janet, and Babs, being the most careful needlewomen, got to work on it, while Clara alternatively paced the room and stared out of the window into the darkening grounds. They were absorbed in the task when the door opened and Marjorie, a little pale, came in.

She saw at once what was happening. The somewhat uncertain expression on her face melted at once into one of utter gratitude.

"Oh, Babs—Mabs—Janet—how frightfully sweet of you!" she said. "But you shouldn't, you know!"

Babs smiled.

"Only trying to help, Marjorie."

"Thank you, but—" Marjorie coloured. "I—I'm sorry I'm so late," she said. "But I didn't want to come back while Jimmy & Co. were still here. Babs, can I take over now?"

Willingly Babs & Co. surrendered the work. They said nothing of Ken Warrington, since Marjorie herself did not bring the subject up. But Ken Warrington, of course, was in all their thoughts, and they were all, perhaps naturally, connecting him with her absence.

"Well, perhaps we—we'd better get on with our jobs," Babs said hesitantly. "You're sure you can manage, Marjorie?"

"Yes; and—and thank you again."

Babs and Mabs left, joining Bessie, who was somewhat fretfully getting on with her jumper in Study No. 4. Clara and Janet, alone with Marjorie, got out their own work.

For the next quarter of an hour nobody spoke again, though Clara, from time to time, glanced oddly at her gentle-faced chum. But it was obvious from the outset that Marjorie was not concentrating on her work. Once or twice she stopped. Once or twice, with rather a distressed look in her eyes, she sighed. Clara bit her lip.

"Marjorie, you're not getting on very well."

Marjorie coloured.

Another half an hour passed. Clara, still watching her, breathed hard.

"Marjorie, what is the matter?" she asked. "You're not concentrating a bit, you know. What's on your mind?"

"Nothing," Marjorie said.

"Worrying about that rotter?" Clara asked bluntly.

Marjorie flushed.

"Clara, if you are speaking about Ken Warrington—"

"Well, who else?" Clara asked, knowing she was being unpleasant, hating herself for being unpleasant, but just unable, for the life of her, to help being unpleasant. "I do think, Marjorie—"

But Marjorie did not wait to hear what Clara thought. With heightened colour she rose to her feet, almost angrily for her she snatched up her work, and with it in her arms walked to the door. Janet sprang up.

"Clara, you clumsy idiot!" she cried. "Marjorie! Marjorie, old thing—"

"Please let me go!" Marjorie said unsteadily.

And there was such a look of determination in her face, such an unusual fire in her eyes, that Janet, despite herself, gave back, and Marjorie, wrenching open the door, hurried out.

"Oh, Clara, why can't you be quiet?" Janet cried. "Now you've hurt her again!"

Clara was brick red.

"Oh rats! I didn't mean to hurt her," she said. "Dash it, I was only nagging her for her own good. Come on, let's go and find her."

They went out together. To Study No. 4 they hurried, half hoping that Marjorie had joined Babs & Co. But when they reached there it was to find Babs, Mabs, and Bessie quietly engaged. They had seen no sign of Marjorie.

Babs' brows came together when she heard of the latest development.

"H'm! Bothered if I know what to make of it," she said. "You know, Clara, it's not like old Marjorie to stick up so obstinately for somebody who's a thorough outsider. 'Per-perhaps,' Babs suggested, "we have got hold of the wrong end of the stick. Perhaps he's not as black as he's painted. After all, Marjorie has known him a good many years—"

"And we," Mabs put in, "only met him yesterday. Apart from what we've seen—I'll own that isn't very encouraging—we've only got Jimmy's word that he's the sort of fellow he's supposed to be. Not," Mabs added hastily, "that I'm doubting Jimmy's word; but boys aren't as understanding as girls, are they? If Marjorie knew he was a thorough outsider, I should think he'd be absolutely the last person she'd stick up for."

Clara paused. Having such faith in Jimmy Richmond & Co., she hadn't thought of that aspect of the matter.

"But what—" she persisted.

"Babs," Mabs said, "was just making a suggestion as you came in. The suggestion was that we should all go over to Friardale to-morrow afternoon. Never mind Jimmy & Co. We won't call on them. Once we reach Friardale we'll ask old Marjorie to take us to see Ken Warrington, and perhaps, without Jimmy & Co. there—because it's just possible, as Babs said, that it's the sight of Jimmy which gets his back up—try to interest him in doing something for the sale of work. Without Jimmy we might see that better side of his nature. But don't let Marjorie know that we're using her as a sort of decoy. After all, let's give the chap a fair chance."

Again Clara paused. The idea had its points. She nodded.

"O.K., then. Say nothing, eh? Babs, will you fix it up with Marjorie?"

"I'll try," Babs promised. "Better leave it until the morning, though."

In any case, Babs had no opportunity that night, for until call-over Marjorie was not seen again. She looked a little weary and rather anxious. Babs

thought, when the chums bade her good-night, but none of them knew what a worried and fretful night Marjorie spent, thinking first over Ken's difficulties and the monumental task for the sale of work with which she herself was confronted.

"Feeling all right, Marjorie?" Babs asked sympathetically, after rising bell. "You're not looking too good."

Marjorie smiled faintly. "Oh, I—I'm all right, Babs, thanks," she said.

"Like a blow this afternoon?" Babs asked casually. "We're strolling into Courtfield, you know. Thought you might like to come with us. You've got to see Mrs. Middleton, haven't you?"

"Why, yes, but—" Marjorie began.

"You'll come, then?" Babs pressed.

Marjorie would—relieved and grateful to find that her little friction had made no difference in the chums' attitude to herself. Glad, too, of the opportunity to pay Mrs. Middleton that two pounds she owed her.

Before breakfast she worked again on the bedspread—such delicate and painstaking work it was, however, that there was little to show for her endeavours when she had finished, and after morning lessons she put in another hour, and after dinner Babs, Mabs, Bessie, Clara, and Janet joined her.

Quite happy and all very merry and bright they were. For the time being Marjorie's chums had erased the bad Ken Warrington from their minds, intent only on discovering the Ken Warrington of whom Marjorie was so fond. To be sure, Marjorie knew nothing of their ultimate intentions yet, however. That suggestion was to be dropped casually by Babs & Co. after Marjorie had been to pay Mrs. Middleton.

But there a disappointment awaited Marjorie. For both Marjorie and Babs had forgotten that Wednesday was early closing day in Courtfield, and Mrs. Middleton's shop had its shutters up.

"Tough luck," Babs sympathised. "That means you'll have to wait until Saturday, Marjorie. Never mind, I don't expect Mrs. Middleton will worry. Tell you what," she added casually, "I've got an idea. Let's pop over to Friardale and see Ken Warrington."

"Ken!" Marjorie started.

"Why not?" Babs smiled. "He might like to meet us all—without Jimmy Richmond & Co. Jimmy & Co. won't be there, I know."

Marjorie flushed. Her eyes shone. This was the opportunity she needed—and wasn't it just dear of Babs to think of it! She nodded eagerly.

"Yes, let's," she said. She was the first to step out, elated now to feel that Ken was to have a chance to show the sort of boy he really was. Then, all at once, there came an exclamation from Clara.

"My hat—"

"Eh?" Marjorie said.

"I don't think," Clara answered—and her brows met in a frown—"that there's any need for us to go to Friardale, after all. Look at that."

And Marjorie, staring as Clara pointed her finger, turned pale. For across the road was Jay's Club, and in the act of walking into that club was—Ken Warrington!



"KEN, please take it!" Marjorie, desperately anxious to help her chum, had no thought of herself as she held out the two pounds. Ken Warrington flushed. No, no! He couldn't take it! And yet—why not? He could pay it it back, couldn't he?

"Why?" asked Clara bluntly.

"Nothing."

"Meaning," Clara guessed, "you're going to wait for that outsider?"

"No—yes! Oh, please, please don't start all over again!" Marjorie cried distractedly.

"Then," Clara said grimly, "in that case, we'll wait with you."

"But you won't—you mustn't!" Marjorie cried. "Clara—no, please! Please!"

"But—"

"Clara—yes!" Babs anxiously intruded. She could see, in the present disturbed state of Marjorie's mind, and the truculent attitude of Tomboy Clara, that sparks were bound to fly. "Marjorie," she added softly, "if you care to come along—afterwards—we'll meet you at Bennett's tea-rooms near the river. Now, Clara—please!" she added, and threaded her arm through that of the Tomboy's.

Clara glowered. But unwilling she went off with the chums.

Marjorie, pacing restlessly on the opposite pavement, waited until, ten minutes later, Ken Warrington came out again. Rather white Ken looked, as if he had been going through some trying ordeal, and not at all surprised was he to see her. He just smiled twistedly, mechanically raised his cap, and nodded.

"Marjorie, I—I want to talk to you," he said, a little hoarsely. "You saw me go in there?"

"Yes, Ken."

"You know what for?"

"Ken, no—what?"

"To see Jay." Warrington bit his lip. "This morning, Marjorie, I received two letters—one from Jay, the other from my guardian. Jay knows, of course, that I want to break with him. He's doing his utmost to make it impossible. He wrote to me this morning saying that if he didn't get the money I owed him within forty-eight hours, he was coming to see Dr. Barrymore. That, of course, means the sack."

"Oh, Ken!" Marjorie quivered.

"The other letter was from old man Thomas himself. He said that, as he was passing through Courtfield on Friday, he'd be popping in to see me. Realise what that means, old girl! If I can't get out of Jay's clutches, Jay will be staging his show-down about the same time as old man Thomas arrives. And then—"

Hopelessly he shrugged.

"Oh, Ken!" Marjorie cried again, and this time the cry was from the bottom of her gentle heart. "Ken, no! It mustn't—it can't happen! Ken, what can we do?"

"Dashed if I know!" he answered, and shook his head worriedly. "But come in here. Let's have a cup of tea. Don't stare. I've got the money, old thing; sold my footer boots yesterday for three bob—which reminds me, I owe you a bob out of it!"

They entered the Corner Cafe. Ken led the way to the first empty table, removing a newspaper which some previous customer had left behind. The same waitress who had served them yesterday came up, and, remembering the boy, greeted them with a smile.

Ken gave the order.

"Wait until she gives us the tea; then we can talk," he said, and then abruptly stopped. "Phew! My hat!" he whistled, sudden excitement in his eyes.

"Ken, what is it?" mystified Marjorie asked.

But Warrington for the moment did not reply. His eyes had fallen upon the paper. That paper was folded at the "Small Wants" adverts, and one paragraph was suddenly leaping out. That paragraph read:

"Three pounds offered for volume of Staley's 'Surrey,' 1789, in good condition.—Hay's Bookshop, Courtfield High Road."

No wonder Ken whistled! For here was a wonderful stroke of luck indeed! Among the belongings he had not already disposed of was a copy of that same volume, never greatly prized up

They Didn't Understand!



THE chums halted, looking at each other in dismay. Marjorie was the first to recover herself.

"I—I think, if you don't mind, that—that I'll not come any farther," she said unsteadily.

10 "They Called Her Friend 'The Outsider'!"

till now, because Ken himself had picked it up along with several other volumes three years ago at a jumble sale. But three pounds!

He'd go and get it now! But steady on! Now wouldn't do. Hay's Bookshop, like every other shop in Courtfield, would be closed this afternoon. But first thing to-morrow—

"Ken," Marjorie repeated, "what is it?"

To her amazement, Ken laughed. "Just something," he said. "See that?" He pointed to the advert. "Three quid, Marjie! Three quid—as good as in your old pal's hand! I've got the book! Gosh, if I could only borrow that two quid now I'd rush off and smack it right in Fred Jay's face!"

"And—and then you wouldn't have to go there any more?" Marjorie asked. "No."

Marjorie gulped. She thought of the two pounds in her bag. That money was Mrs. Middleton's; but there would be no opportunity now to repay it to Mrs. Middleton before Saturday. Saturday was three days away; Ken's own fate was in the balance during the next forty-eight hours.

Should she? Should she? Was the money hers to lend?

But if not here, then whose? Absurd to have qualms in a moment like this. Now at last she could make Ken happy. Now for ever, with that two pounds' aid, could she wipe out the last of his past associations! After all, was it wrong? Wouldn't it be far, far more callous of her, knowing now that it lay in her power to bring happiness to this earnestly striving boy, not to let him use that money? What difference was it going to make? To-morrow it would be back in her purse. Ken might as well use it as leave it in the drawer of her desk.

She leant forward. "Ken, let me lend you the money?"

"Marjorie, no!"

"Ken, please, yes!" Marjorie had taken the plunge now, was determined to press it home. "It would make me awfully pleased! And—and I've got two pounds," she added. "I've got it here. I owe it to Mrs. Middleton, but Mrs. Middleton won't expect it till Saturday, and—and— Oh, Ken, do take it!"

The boy's face worked. "Marjorie, it—it isn't fair!"

"But, Ken, where else are you going to get it?"

"I—I don't know!"

"Then, Ken, please!" Marjorie pleaded. "But you'll let me have it back as soon as you've sold your book, won't you?"

And she held the two pound notes out towards him.

Ken Warrington hesitated. A flush of shame overspread his face. No, no! No, he couldn't take it! And yet—why not? He could pay it back, couldn't he? Why shouldn't he borrow it just for a few hours? And Marjorie? She wanted to lend it.

"Ken, please!" Marjorie pressed. Her hands stretched across the table. Warrington hesitated as he felt the two pound notes crinkling within his own palm. Then Marjorie, with a light laugh, sprang to her feet.

"Ken, come on!" she said. "Marjorie—" he mumbled. "I'm coming with you!" she cried, her eyes shining. "I'm going to see that you get a receipt and everything! If Fred Jay makes any objections I'm going to talk to him!"

Ken Warrington burst out laughing. "Oh, Marjorie, you brack! I'm dashed ashamed! But, Marjorie, I'm proud, too! Let's go!" he cried. With

a gaiety suddenly put on to revive his own feelings. "Let us away to the ogre, and for ever slaughter him with the sword of two pound notes! Waitress, the bill!" he cried gaily.

Marjorie laughed. This silly Ken! But didn't he somehow make her feel—oh, so frightfully proud in this gay humour! The waitress was paid, with the usual lavish tip. Off together they went.

In that happy moment it did not occur to Marjorie that she was breaking her own school's rules by entering Jay's Club though she did frown at the beetle-browed young man with the face of a pugilist who accosted them directly they entered.

"What, you?" he scowled at Ken. "I, Mr. Jay. I," Ken said—"I believe, M. Jay, I am indebted to you for the sum of two pounds?"

"Well, you know that!" Jay scowled. "Will you give me a receipt?"

"You haven't got the money?"

"I have. 'Tis here. Ask not whence it came! 'Tis here!" Ken retorted blandly. "Here is my witness, who will testify to its payment! Receipt, please!"

Mr. Jay coughed. "But, look here, you know, I don't really want it. You know you've been a good customer—"

"I have. But a good customer no longer shall I be!" Ken retorted.

"Please give him a receipt!" Marjorie said coldly.

Mr. Jay glared. Obviously, Mr. Jay did not want to lose Ken Warrington, but, just as obviously, he had no means now of keeping his strange hold upon him. Surlily he returned to his office; in five minutes was back again, waving a slip of paper.

"Well, here's the receipt," he said. "Gimme the dough!"

"Thanks! 'Tis here!" Ken Warrington laughed. "And may you lose it all on your next billiards match, Fred! Thanks for the memories! They've been a lesson! Bye-bye! Come on, Marjorie!"

Joyfully he put the receipt away. He led the way towards the door.

"Marjorie, you—you stunner!" he said. "Oh, my hat, I'll never, never be able to thank you for this!"

"But you can, Ken," Marjorie answered. "Just drop doing things like this." And she cast a look round the club.

"Marjorie, old thing, I'll drop everything under the sun if you ask me!"

"No, please, Ken, don't joke! But you—you'll pay me back to-morrow?"

"To-morrow as ever was!" Ken said lightly. "Meet me under the oak in Friardale Wood at midday, and the money shall be refunded in full. But here we are—the merry old street again. And here— Oh, my hat! Marjorie, quick!"

Hurriedly he tugged at Marjorie's arm as they reached the door. Just a moment too late. For five girls, sauntering up the street, halted, petrified, at the sight of their best chum and the outsider of Friardale. And then Clara Trevlyn blazed out.

"Marjorie—you—in that place!" She turned furiously upon Ken Warrington. "You awful, caddish outsider!" she cried vibrantly. "Fancy taking a girl in here!"

Ken Warrington turned white. So did Marjorie. She caught Ken's arm.

"I think," she bit back, "that you might make sure of your facts before you shout them, Clara Trevlyn! Ken did not take me in here; I went of my own accord. And I'll ask you—all of you," she added, with sudden anger quite foreign to the most gentle-natured

girl in the Fourth, "not to interfere again in my affairs!"

And like some queen, in her new-found fury, Marjorie clutched the boy's arm, and in front of her gaping chums led him away. Ken set his teeth.

"Marjorie, old thing—"

"Ken, good-bye," Marjorie said. "But don't forget, I'll see you to-morrow in the woods."

And there she left him, with strange tumult of emotions at her heart and tears in her eyes, to hurry back to Cliff House School. But there a fresh shock awaited Marjorie. As she entered her study a woman rose to meet her. It was Mrs. Middleton.

She smiled. "Oh, Miss Hazeldene, I—I didn't want to worry you, but—"

"Yes?" Marjorie said, feeling a sudden dread at her heart.

"Could you—could you, Miss Hazeldene, possibly let me have the money you owe me now? If you can, it will help me out of a big difficulty."

Not Ken's Fault!



"WARRINGTON'S an outsider, and Marjorie's a silly fool!"

Clara Trevlyn said savagely. "She can't see where that crafty cad is leading her. I'm not sorry for what I said, and Marjorie herself will realise it's true before very long."

Babs sighed worriedly. Mabs, Janet, and Bessie Bunter looked glum.

The five chums, on their way back from Courtfield, were strolling up the drive towards the school. Not a happy crowd, in any respect.

"And if she jolly well wants to hear it again," Clara went on, "I'll repeat it. That rotter's the absolute limit!"

"Hallo!" murmured Babs.

"Hallo what?"

"Here's Mrs. Middleton."

Clara looked up. The rather forlorn figure coming out of the school was recognised at once. They all paused immediately, connecting her presence with their chum.

"Good-evening, Mrs. Middleton! Been to see Marjorie?" Babs asked brightly.

Mrs. Middleton looked uncertain. "Y-yes," she said.

"She went to your shop this afternoon—I suppose she told you—to pay you the money she owed you," Babs resumed.

The woman looked at her curiously. "Did she?"

"Why yes," Mabs said. "Hasn't she given it to you?"

Mrs. Middleton shook her head. "N-no," she stammered. "I—that is, she says she's had to use it. She—she's paying me to-morrow. I'm sorry. I—I hope I'm not letting out any secret, but—but I do want the money really badly. It—it will be all right, won't it?" she added anxiously.

"If Marjorie says it will be all right, it will be all right," Clara said stoutly.

"At the same time—"

"Come on, I'm going to see Marjorie," she said.

And leaving Babs & Co. to chat to Mrs. Middleton, she hurried on up to Study No. 7.

She threw the door open. Marjorie was there, gazing rather uneasily at the bedspread which she had just spread out. But it was obvious at once, from the look of Marjorie's face, that she had no appetite for the work which that bedspread presented.

She looked up as Clara entered, bit

her lips, and her delicate cheeks stained with colour.

"Oh!" she said.

"Marjorie!" Clara cried.

A pause

"Marjorie, we—we've just seen Mrs. Middleton," Clara went on. "She says you still owe her that two pounds."

"Does she?" Marjorie asked, in a stifled voice.

"Marjorie, you had that two pounds when you went out this afternoon—before you met that rot—before you met Ken Warrington."

"Well?" Marjorie asked, with a trace of resentment.

"Marjorie, you haven't lent it to him?"

Silence.

"Marjie—"

"Well?" Marjorie looked up, defiance gleaming in her eyes now.

"Supposing I have," she cried, "is it any business of yours, Clara?"

"Steady on, old thing—steady on!"

And Ken, in intention, did not let her down. Immediately after breakfast next morning he, risking being late for lessons, dashed off to Hay's Bookshop with the precious Staley's "Surrey" under his arm. Almost boisterously he sailed into the shop; with a confident slam, planked the book on the counter. Old Mr. Hay, through steel-rimmed spectacles, blinked up mildly.

"Staley," Ken Warrington announced, "the little joker you're offering three quidlets for."

The old man shook his head.

"Sorry!" he said.

"Eh?"

"Sorry!" Again the shake. "Thanks for bringing it, but you're too late. See those." And, to Ken Warrington's flabbergasted dismay, he pointed to a pile of similar volumes in the corner.

"Yours is the fifth this morning. The advert brought a regular rush of them. Don't want any more."

"But—but—" Ken stuttered.

Marjorie bit her lip. She had faith in Ken. He would turn up. But she could not still that anxious qualm of fear, she could not altogether dismiss the reflection of what might happen if Ken did not turn up with the money. Mrs. Middleton—she had been so kind, so brave, yet so desperately anxious. No, no, Ken could not fail her! Ken must not! She had—just had—to keep her promise to let Mrs. Middleton have her two pounds to-day.

Five-and-twenty past twelve. Half-past.

Despairingly Marjorie looked round. Where was he?

Then—how her heart bounded!—a stumbling, weary-looking figure came into the glade.

"Ken!" she cried.

Ken it was—but Ken looking breathless, dishevelled, utterly used up. A Ken who was badly limping.

"Ken," Marjorie gulped, "what—what's happened?"

He shrugged.

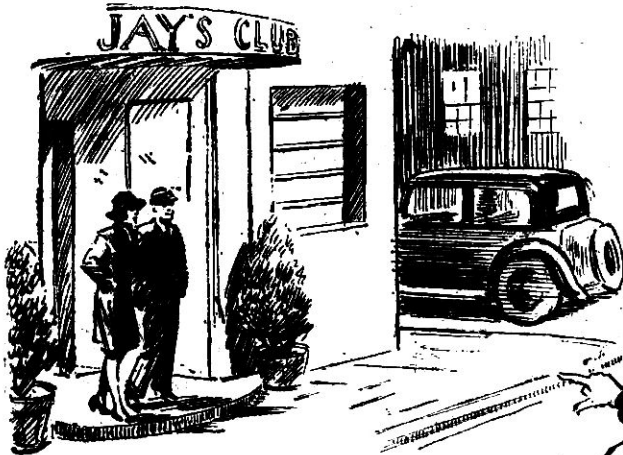
"Oh, nothing!" he said. "Well, if you must know, it was a pony!"

"A pony, Ken?"

"Yes." He smiled bitterly. "One of those fiery fellows from the New Forest. A chappie offered me two quid if I could break it in. I hadn't the faintest idea of how to break a nag in, but I tried, and—well, instead of breaking the pony in it nearly broke me up! And the two quid—" He laughed shortly. "That, if you please, is still in the owner's pocket."

"But, Ken, your ankle—"

"Oh, a sprain, or something! I don't



BABS & Co. stared in amazement as they saw their chum strolling out of the club with Ken Warrington. "Marjorie—in that place!" cried Clara, and she stepped furiously forward. She meant to have this out with Ken.

Clara shook her head. "Marjorie, it is my business, because I'm your chum," she said. "I hate being rough like this, but it's just me, old thing. I don't trust that Warrington worm. Marjorie, why did you lend him that money?"

"That doesn't matter," Marjorie said. "Anyway, he's paying me back tomorrow."

"Sure?" Clara asked.

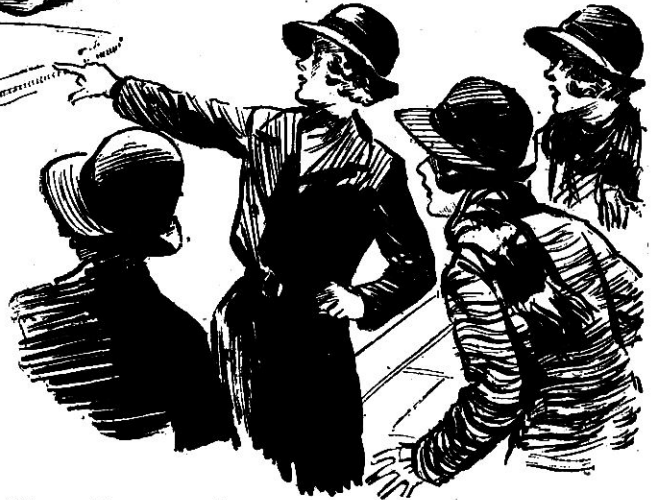
"Positive!" Marjorie retorted.

"All right, I hope he does." But Clara's shake of the head implied what she really thought. "If he doesn't— And she frowned in that grim way in which only Clara could frown. "Marjorie, I'm sorry if I seem a pig," she added, more gently, "but you do understand, don't you?"

"Thank you!" Marjorie said, in a low voice.

And that was all she would say. And that, for once controlling herself with admirable restraint, was all Clara Trevlyn said. She saw Marjorie was worried; she saw she was anxious. Rough and ready, un tactful and blundering might be Clara's ways, but they all had as their inspiration only the anxious desire to protect her chum. She did not trust Warrington. She thought, with Jimmy Richmond & Co., that he was an out-and-out cad.

But Marjorie had no such fear. Ken would not let her down!



"Sorry!" old man Hay repeated.

Like a boy in a dream, Ken Warrington dumbly picked up the book again. That there would be a rush of owners of Staley's "Surrey" was a fact which, until now, he had never visualised. Buoyant his step as he had breezed in, it was almost a totter as he left.

What luck—what beastly luck! And that fine girl Marjie—how was he to face her?

He couldn't—couldn't! He'd got to get that two pounds from somewhere?

But where—where?

Let Down!

QUARTER-PAST TWELVE! Marjorie Hazeldene, standing under the old oak in Friar-dale Wood, looked anxious. Where was Ken?

Twenty past twelve!

know. I don't care!" he added hastily. "Marjorie, never mind me. I ought to be broken up in little bits. I did this to get the money. The book stunt was a flop!"

"Ken!"

And then brokenly he told her. Very upright Marjorie stood, very white.

"And that," he said, averting his face, "is the story. Marjie, I'm sorry. But I still think there's a chance! I—I'll get it yet. Marjie, you don't want it until Saturday, do you?"

Marjorie's reply was characteristic. "Ken, take that shoe and sock off and let me see that ankle!" she ordered.

"MARJORIE!" "Here she is!" "Marjorie!"

Just before dinner Babs, Mabs, and Clara were standing at the steps of Cliff

(Continued on page 14)



OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



How keenly all schoolgirl readers look forward to PATRICIA'S weekly letter. It is always so chummy and newsy—just as you like a letter from a friend to be.

WE had a convalescent in our home for a few days recently.

Yes, you've guessed. It was my small brother with the long name—Heatherington, or Heath for short.

"I feel all funny, mummy," he said very plaintively one day last week in the middle of a game with his toys.

Immediately mother whisked him off to bed, sending me to fill a hot-water bottle and to telephone for the doctor.

The doctor came along, as breezy as you like, and after saying we'd done the right things, had a look at his young patient.

Some very feeble "ninety-nines" issued from Heath's throat and he was scarcely amused when the doctor "listened in" at his chest with a stethoscope.

● The Invalid

Even the thermometer—which the doctor placed under his armpit, not in his mouth—didn't seem to interest him.

So we knew then he wasn't feeling at all good. Then the doctor said, "Feverish cold. Soon be better."

Mother looked at least ten years younger at once, while your Patricia heaved a big sigh of relief.

For when these young people in the family really are unwell, 'tis then you realise how very much they mean to you.

Young Heath was a model patient for about two days. He drank his orange juice and nibbled at his steamed eggs and milk puddings.

Soon he was decidedly better. Then—I'm afraid there is no other word for him—he was a perfect little pest.

He wanted to be a Red Indian in bed, using his sheet as a wigwag. He wanted to be a tram conductor; he wanted to be a pirate with his sword for company.

In fact, he wanted to do everything you can imagine—except stop in bed.

It was as much as mother and I could do to keep him looking at all neat and respectable just for the doctor's visits.

The poor doctor was amazingly patient. He was a "tram passenger," paying his fare, a "squaw," a "rebel pirate," and a "gangster"—all in turn at Heath's request.

But now the young urchin is better and downstairs again. To-morrow he's going into the garden to play—so perhaps the house will seem more like itself again.

● Fresh Cake

One of you very kindly wrote to tell me that if an apple is kept in the cake

tin the cake will keep beautifully fresh. I must certainly try it.

An apple kept in father's tobacco jar is also said to keep the tobacco fresh. Or a potato will do the trick equally well.

I keep meaning to tell my father this, for he's a keen pipe-smoker. But perhaps it wouldn't be much use, after all, for though he has a large tobacco jar, I'm afraid it seldom contains any tobacco.

● From a Cream Carton

You can make such a useful little pencil and pen stand from an empty cream carton, you know.

Clean out the carton thoroughly.

(The family puss-cat would like this job!) Then cut a circle of cardboard to fit in the top tightly, if you haven't saved the lid. Cut or bore holes in this, large enough to take pencils and pens.

Cut out letters from pieces of coloured paper and glue these on to the front of the carton, colouring the rest of the carton with crayons, if you like.



Does your mother play Bridge? If she does, do tell her that the latest pencils for scoring at this popular game are flat, not rounded.

This is so that they won't roll off the table and cause players to hunt desperately between shoes while the game is in progress.

They only cost a ha'penny each, too. So for threepence you could buy mother six as a little surprise gift. They look quite "special" and important when they have a wisp of matching ribbon tied around them.

● Now Longer

Plain and patterned—patterned and plain. This is a very useful little chant for all schoolgirls to remember, especially when thinking of anything to do with dress.

If you've got a patterned dress, you must always trim it with plain material. If you've got a plain one, you must trim it with a patterned.

You can see from

the sketch here how attractive a plain trimming can be on a fancy material.

I hope you do think it's pretty, for now I'm going to try to surprise you. You see, this suggestion in the picture is actually for *altering* a dress: for lengthening it, in fact.

A band of plain material at the hem can "let a dress down" as much as three inches. But it won't have that "let-down" look if you add matching bands to the neckline and to the sleeves.

A belt of the same colour helps the changed appearance, too—giving it an entirely new, instead of an "altered," look.

Have you ever heard mother grumbling about the way net curtains will stretch when they are washed.

This is one of my mother's little "grumbles." At least, it used to be, for ours not only stretched, but went all sorts of comic shapes.

Now we've discovered a secret. It's quite simple. Instead of hanging them on the line to dry, after they are washed you just wring them tight and then put them on the rails at the windows again. They dry in no time—and in perfect shape, too.

Something to remember now that spring-cleaning is on the way, isn't it?

● New Things

I expect you're beginning to think about Easter now, aren't you?

Somehow, when Easter arrives, I always feel that summer is just around the corner.

Not that it follows, of course. I don't remember it myself, but my father talks of an Easter Monday that he remembers when snow fell solidly all day!

So let's hope that doesn't happen this year.

Most grown-ups feel they ought always to have a new hat at Easter-time. A good many schoolgirls do, too, for it's after Easter holiday that you fish out your "straw" and pack away your felt or "velour" for the summer, isn't it?

It always amazes me round about this time of the year how dark my silk stockings look. In the winter, somehow, they look dead right, but for the lighter days, they appear positively wrong.

So when I buy some new stockings, I must ask for the new spring shades.

I wonder which is your favourite winter vegetable?

I confess that I'm not really keen on any of them—I much prefer summer salad-stuff, and peas and beans—but if I did have to choose, I'd say just plain, homely cabbage.

This question was put to schoolchildren in America not so long ago—and guess what they voted for—

Spinach!

Bye-bye now until next week, my pets.

Your friend,

PATRICIA.



A NEW COAT FOR SPRING

PATRICIA helps you in this very important—and exciting—task, telling you about style, material and fit.

YOU'LL remember that the week before last we chatted about buying a new hat. Last week it was a new dress.

To-day we'll talk about that very important item—a new coat.

If you are going to have a new one round about now—in time for Easter, perhaps—then you're very lucky. It's quite the best time of the year for buying.

The shops are well-stocked, all the newest fashions are in, and sizes are plentiful, so there should be no difficulty in your being fitted "off the peg."

Of course, if a new coat is to be yours, you'll want it to be up-to-the-minute in fashion—so that it will look smart again next year and won't be "dated" the year after. For new coats are luxuries that can't be bought with every single change of fashion.

"SWING" FOR SPRING

The good old 'camel' coat—with big pockets, lapels and a belt—is still a popular favourite. These are hard to beat if you want a sturdy country coat. The same style can also be bought in the most delightful tweeds, with as many colours in them as the rainbow.

For smarter "going-places" wear, remember "swing." Coats that go with a "swing" are the latest. They suit all schoolgirls, tall and short, plump and thin.

We used to call them "swagger" coats, you remember; these were generally three-quarter length. But the new "swing" coats are full-length—which I think is more practical. With the "swaggers," we had to worry over which dress to wear underneath, because so much of it would show. But with the full-length this need no longer bother us.

Before you actually set off with mother to buy the new coat, I'm sure you will both discuss "materials," and colour.

THE EVER-USEFUL TWEED

There are, of course, many materials to choose from, but I doubt if you would recognise them if I gave you all their names.

There are plain and fancy wool cloths, natural, or coloured camel hair. And there are tweeds.

For sheer all-round usefulness, my own vote goes to tweed. They can be inexpensive, they can be obtained in any one colour, or combination of colours, and they are made thick and bulky, or fine and slinky—and they always manage to look "just right."

At one time tweeds tended to be un-colourful. They were considered "safe" in tones of beige and browns. But now they can be as gay as gardens, and look equally well for in-town or for rough country wear.

One that I saw the other day, for example, was a speckled tweed, and woven into it were no less than five colours. There were royal blue, pale blue, yellow, brown and clover red.

Imagine a coat made up of this material. With it you would wear a dress of almost any colour. You could wear a brown hat and shoes, blue hat and shoes, or a cherry red hat with black shoes.

So look for tweeds if you want a really hard-wearing, inexpensive and smart coat.

A PERFECT FIT

When it comes to the actual trying on of the coat, there are one or two things to note.

First and foremost, does it feel good? If you feel comfy in it, then nearly always the coat fits perfectly. The sleeves might be too long, or the hem need taking up—but they're easily altered.

Next look at the fit across the shoulders. If the sleeves are inset, or raglan sleeves (like those in the picture) there will be padding on the shoulders very likely. Make certain that this comes just on your shoulder joint, to give you extra width there, which is smart and flattering.

If the coat has the more ordinary inset sleeves, then be certain the shoulder seam comes exactly at the shoulder, and not an inch or so down your arm.

Study the fit at the neck carefully if it has a tiny collar. Be sure that the lapels lie flat and smooth if you choose a coat of the "popular sporting" type.



Make certain there is no drag over your front when the buttons are fastened. Fit should always be rather loose there, otherwise it spoils the whole set of the coat.

THE BACK VIEW

Now turn and look at yourself in the mirror. Backs, by the way, are interesting this Spring. Some coats have a "bloused" back. Some have the Norfolk jacket types of back, with pleats above the waist-line (this is an American fashion—though it came from England in the first place). Or, again, there are pleats in the skirt part. (The coat in the picture shows an inverted pleat for fullness and smartness.)

When gazing at your back view, you should particularly note the fit over the shoulders. Here the coat should be smooth and flat—though not tight. Just under the arms there should be a slight extra fullness. This gives you arm-room. The waist part can be close-fitting, but the coat should fit loosely again over the hips.

There now, after making certain that the coat of your choice makes you look prettier, I am certain you will be thrilled with it.

It should also give you years of wear, so that eventually you come to regard it as an old friend with whom you'll hate to part.



SUCH USEFUL APRONS

that you can make yourself of strips of material from mother's piece-bag.

Sort these out, and have a good look at them. Some strips of flowered cretonne joined to some pieces of plain material can soon make a large square of material.

When it measures about 27 inches square, you will then be ready to make the apron.

If you may use mother's machine, you can machine all the strips together, and machine down each side and along the bottom. The top part must be gathered up for fullness—by hand. Then, on to this, you sew a band that will tie round your waist at the back.

A TINY "BIB"

If you find any other scraps of material over that you feel you'd like to use up, you can make a pocket with them. Or you can make the tiny waist-bib, such as the girl on the right of the picture is wearing.

It is only a curved piece of material sewn to the band. But it gives that little bit of extra protection which can so often save or prevent a frock from becoming spotted.

If you have ever got splashed right in your middle when standing at the sink washing up, you'll know just what I mean.

DID someone mention Spring-cleaning? Because if so, then may I suggest that these aprons are the very things for the helpful schoolgirl to make herself for this grand turn-out of the year. I'm sure if you fish in mother's piece-bag, you'll come across several oddments of material.

14 "They Called Her Friend 'The Outsider'!"

(Continued from page 11)

House, anxiously watching the drive. Marjorie, dead white, walking like some automaton, had just appeared.

"Marjorie, old girl!" Clara exclaimed.

"Marjorie!" Babs cried. "Marjorie, what's the matter?"

But Marjorie did not reply. As if she had not seen them, she walked straight on, her face terribly white. The chums looked scared.

"My hat! She's ill!" Clara muttered. "Come on!"

They followed her. Up to the study Marjorie went. Like a sleepwalker she entered, like some automaton she moved towards the pile of wools and blue linen in the corner. She picked it up, looked at it, and then began to fold it. The chums paused in the doorway.

"Marjorie, Clara cried, "what are you doing with that?"

"I'm packing it," Marjorie said, without looking up.

"You mean—"

"I'm returning it to Mrs. Middleton. It's not mine," Marjorie said.

"Not—not yours?" Babs stammered. "What on earth do you mean?" And then suddenly enlightenment burst upon all three of them. "Marjorie," Babs faltered, "you—you don't mean that—the money—"

Marjorie did not reply.

"You mean," Clara broke out furiously, "that that cad has let you down? You mean, you're going to let him get away with it? You mean, you're returning that stuff because you can't pay for it—because he hasn't repaid you?"

"I'm taking it back!" Marjorie said tonelessly.

The chums stared at each other. Clara's lips came together.

"Come outside," she said to Babs and Mabs. And when they were in the corridor: "That cad, that rotter," she flashed, "has done this! He's let her down! Well—and she draw a deep breath—"this, for once, is where precious Mr. Ken Warrington doesn't get away with it! Because," Clara said grimly, "I'm going to Friardale, and I'm going right now, and I'm going to tell him, and the whole school, if necessary, what I think of him!"

Clara in Action!



"CLARA!"

Clara Trevlyn, hurrying through the woods on her tempestuous way to Friardale Boys' School five minutes later, halted and turned as a gasping voice fell upon her ears. She stood still as she saw Marjorie, at a stumbling run, hurrying after her.

"Well?" she said.

"Clara, don't! You—you can't!" Marjorie gasped. "Clara, please—please don't! I heard what you said in the corridor. I know where you're going! But it's a mistake—a mistake! It wasn't Ken's fault!"

"Says you!" Clara sniffed.

"Clara, I tell you—Clara, you can't go there! I won't let you go there!" Marjorie cried distractedly. "You've got to listen to me!"

But Clara was listening to nobody. Quickly she looked round, and then, as she saw the old shack through the trees, her eyes glimmered. She caught Marjorie by the arm.

"Come here!" she said.

"But, Clara, you won't—"

"Look in there!" Clara instructed, and as Marjorie, with a rather bewildered

blink, peered through the open door of the shed. Clara, though she hated to do it, gave her a push, quickly slammed the door to, and dropped the outside socket into place. Then, with Marjorie's muffled wail of "Clara!" ringing in her ears, she flew.

Ten minutes later she reached Friardale School, and inquiring the number of Ken Warrington's study, immediately took herself in that direction. It was Warrington's own voice which bade her enter.

Thoughtful, worried, hands thrust glumly into his pockets, he started as she came in.

"Why, Clara—this is a pleasure!"

"Cut out the compliments!" Clara said scornfully. "I've come to talk to you—and talk straight! About Marjorie—"

"Oh!" Warrington bit his lip. "She's told you?"

"No; I've guessed it. Nice, caddish trick, to borrow her money, wasn't it, and then not pay it back? And, I suppose, you knew all the time that she owed that money?"

"I knew—yes." He gritted his teeth. "But Mrs. Middleton won't want it back until Saturday. I can find some way—"

"Mrs. Middleton," Clara bit out, "wants it back—now!" And Ken started. "Marjorie hasn't got it, so what Marjorie's doing is returning the goods she bought from her. And do you know what those goods mean to her Ken Warrington?"

Warrington looked at her strangely. His face had gone rather pale.

"No; tell me."

And Clara did tell him—bluntly, straightforwardly. She explained Marjorie's poverty; how she was hoping to win first prize so that she could buy some new and necessary clothes. All through the recital Ken Warrington stared at her, no expression betraying itself on his handsome face, but inwardly he reviled himself. What a cad, what a selfish rotter he was!

Marjorie had sacrificed all that for him.

"No!" he cried suddenly. "No! Clara, don't—don't go on! I—I didn't know. Marjorie—she did that for me!" he breathed. "She never told me!"

"She wouldn't tell you!" Clara answered scornfully. "She's not that sort. She—" And she paused, being struck, even in her anger, at the distress he could no longer disguise. For the first time it occurred to Clara that perhaps she had misjudged him a little. It was so transparently obvious that he felt most keenly for Marjorie. But she stuck to her guns.

"Well, and what are you going to do about it?" she asked grimly.

For a moment Ken shook his head. Two pounds—two pounds! And then, like an inspiration, came a memory. It was the memory of a certain pile of notes which he had seen on Mr. Soutar's desk—which Soutar had put away in the drawer of that desk. He drew a deep breath.

If he borrowed—just two of those notes! Soutar would never know. On Saturday his guardian would be here. Easy enough to get an advance allowance of pocket money. He could put the notes back—nobody would be any the wiser. But if he were caught—

He shuddered.

Then—expulsion! Dare he? Dare he?

It was for Marjorie's sake. His own selfish skin did not matter now. He looked at Clara.

"I'll be over at Cliff House in half an hour—and I'll have the money with me. I—I've got something I can sell," he

fibbed, telling the first story that came into his mind. "I'll get it."

"Sure?" Clara asked suspiciously.

"On my word of honour. But go now—and—and if you see Marjorie, tell her I'm coming."

Clara looked at him, wondering at the whiteness of his features, noting the slight trembling of his hands. Dislike him as she did, she felt strangely moved in that moment. For once even her fighting spirit was quelled. Without another word she turned.

Ken Warrington set his teeth.

"And now—for it!" he muttered.

He hurried from the study. With a hand that trembled a little he knocked at Mr. Soutar's door. Receiving no answer he darted in. Now! And fumblingly his fingers caught at the vital drawer. Was it locked? No.

Then the drawer was open, and there was the neat pile of one pound notes.

His face was suddenly bedewed with perspiration as he detached the top-most two. Hastily he stuffed them into his pocket. With one eye on the door he closed the drawer of the desk again and darted out. He almost ran down the corridor, hardly daring to breath until he reached the end, where he dropped into a normal walk. And then he gave a start.

For up the stairs a girl was running to meet him. The girl was Marjorie, who, all unknown to Clara, had escaped from the flimsy shack.

"Ken!" she cried.

"Marjorie!" He came towards her.

With a swift backward glance he produced the two pound notes. "Marjorie, old girl, I—I wanted to see you," he gulped. "You see, I've raised the wind. Here, take them, old thing, and thanks a million! Now go!" he added thickly. "I—I've got to fly!"

"But, Ken," Marjorie cried, with shining eyes, "where did you get it?"

"Tell you later. Now go!" he said feverishly. "I've got to dash off!"

And, unable to look the girl in the face any longer he did dash off. But Marjorie, her face suffused with sudden wonderful happiness, laughed.

"Oh, Ken! Dear Ken!" she gulped.

She turned. Not a minute longer would she retain possession of this money. Mrs. Middleton, fortunately, had left her home address. Down to Courtfield Marjorie sped. On that relieved woman she pressed the two pound notes. Then back to school she went, to be met by Clara.

"Marjorie, I'm sorry for—" Clara began.

"Please don't be," Marjorie radiantly laughed. "I don't blame you. But it's all right now. I've paid Mrs. Middleton. You see," she added softly. "I saw Ken, and Ken gave me the money."

"My hat!" muttered Clara dazedly.

"And so," Marjorie said, "we're all happy again, aren't we? And now if you'll ask Babs & Co. to come along. I'm going to work like anything on that bedspread. Fetch them, Clara."

Clara, still dazed, turned away. Marjorie hummed a tune. By-and-by Babs & Co., relieved and pleased that matters were running smoothly again, came along, and for the rest of that afternoon there was a scene of happy and pleasant industry in Study No. 7. And Marjorie, back in her old form, performed wonders with the bedspread. Tea came and went; then prep. It was in the middle of prep that Miss Primrose sent for Marjorie.

Her face was grave in the extreme as she faced the wondering girl.

"Marjorie," she said, "you gave

Mrs. Middleton two pound notes this afternoon?"

Marjorie nodded. "I want to know," Miss Primrose said deliberately, "where you got those notes, Marjorie? They were stolen from Friardale School, and they have been traced to you."

And Marjorie, understanding then, turned deathly white.

The Testing of Ken Warrington!

UNFORTUNATE it was that, back at Friardale, the theft of the notes had already been discovered. Ken Warrington had not known Mr. Soutar's little habit of counting those notes after lessons every day; neither was he aware that this precise-minded master kept a careful record of all their numbers. It required but two minutes to tell Mr. Soutar exactly what had happened when, that afternoon, he ran through the notes as usual. And then—

Sensation at Friardale! The whole school was immediately summoned. Ken Warrington was among them. But he said nothing when the name of the culprit was demanded. After all, he wasn't doing anybody any harm by remaining silent.

But he wasn't prepared—indeed, he never knew till later—that Mr. Soutar, failing to find the guilty party through the special assembly, had immediately phoned his loss, together with the numbers of the two missing notes, to the police.

And the police, acting with remarkable promptitude, had traced those notes almost at once to Mrs. Middleton, who had put them in her account immediately Marjorie had handed them to her. And had, as immediately, rung up Miss Primrose, informing her what had happened.

"Marjorie, you understand?" Miss Primrose said gravely.

Marjorie nodded. Her head was reeling then. She understood, but still she clung with fierce faith to Ken. Ken hadn't stolen those notes. Or, if he had, he had only done it for her sake. She couldn't—she wouldn't—betray him.

"Marjorie, were you in Friardale this afternoon?"

Marjorie hesitated; then she nodded.

"What did you go there for?"

"Nun-nothing," Marjorie said.

"Marjorie!"

"Well, I went—I went—" Marjorie floundered hopelessly. She was going to say, "I went to stop Clara from going for Ken Warrington," but just in time she realised that confession would involve her two dearest chums. "Nothing," she muttered again.

Miss Primrose's eyes glimmered a little.

"Marjorie, I do not think you realise how serious this is," she said. "On your own admission you were in Friardale somewhere about the time this money was stolen. You refuse to give any reason as to why you were there. The police had discovered that you were indebted for the sum of two pounds to Mrs. Middleton. Mrs. Middleton has also told them that when she called at the school this morning, expecting you to pay that sum, you had not got it. Marjorie, I cannot believe ill of you, knowing the sort of girl you are, but you must realise what a terrible responsibility you place upon my shoulders. Will you please tell me what you know about this?"

But Marjorie stood, stubbornly, though white-facedly, silent.

"Very well," Miss Primrose's lips came together. "You realise, Marjorie, the only alternative you are giving me? In the eyes of the law, at least, you are guilty of disposing of money which could only have been stolen. They, at my request, will not punish you, but I must. Marjorie, this means expulsion!"

Marjorie winced. Whiter still her face turned, but immovable her lips remained.

"I feel, Marjorie, that you can explain this," Miss Primrose went on patiently. "Knowing you for a girl of the most upright character, I am going to give you a chance to explain it. I am going to give you, Marjorie, from now until assembly to-morrow morning. If—" Miss Primrose shook her

ton's got something to do with this.

I vote we go and see him now!"

"Come on!" Clara said grimly.

No thought of assembly then. What did that matter when their chum's fate lay in the balance? Babs, Mabs, Clara, and Janet Jordan feverishly dressed and set off. They were almost in sight of Friardale Boys' School when a car came rushing by.

"Hi!" yelled Clara. "Ken, Ken! Babs, Ken was in that car—with a man!"

Ken was. His guardian, who had called to see him that morning, and who had suggested popping over to see Marjorie, was with him. Ken Warrington, knowing nothing of what had happened, was moody and thoughtful, wanting to see Marjorie again, but dreading, somehow, the ordeal the interview would mean. The car sped on.



QUIETLY, her face white, Marjorie continued her packing of the precious wools and linen. And then Clara burst out angrily. "You mean that that cad has let you down?" she cried. "You mean you're returning that stuff because you can't pay for it—because he hasn't repaid you?"

head. "Marjorie, do not make it my most horrible duty to expel you," she said. "Think over it."

Marjorie walked out of the study. Expulsion—for her—expulsion because Ken had taken that money for her sake. Well, better she be expelled than he. Better she suffer banishment to her kindly home than he to the harsh correctional institution in which his guardian would immediately place him. For Ken's sake she would keep silent. She must.

She did.

The news got around. Babs & Co. heard it. Marjorie, in danger; Marjorie threatened; Marjorie, accused of being a thief! No, no, no! But in vain they pleaded, in vain they coaxed.

Next morning a haggard Babs called her chums together.

"Marjorie's letting it go," she said. "Marjorie will be expelled! We've got to do something—must do something! If you ask me," Babs said, almost fiercely, "that rotter Warring-

"Ken!" shrieked Clara again.

Ken turned, just in time to see the three girls frantically running down the road. He touched his guardian's arm.

"Uncle," he cried, "wait! Friends of Marjorie's," he added.

Mr. Thomas looked round. He nodded and stopped. Panting and breathless, Babs & Co. hurried up.

"Ken!" Babs cried. "Ken, we were just coming to see you! It—it's about Marjorie—"

Ken started.

Babs nodded and blurted out the news.

With the effect of a blow that news came.

For a moment Ken Warrington was too taken aback to reply. The news stunned him. Back at Friardale he had been worried, but not anxious. This afternoon, he had told himself, while Mr. Soutar was out, he would replace the two pounds. Indeed, he had that two pounds in his pocket now, having already wheedled it out of his guardian.

Aware, like every other Friardale fellow of the hubbub the discovery of the missing money had aroused, he had not known, until this moment, that Soutar had been to the police.

Now—this! Marjorie whom he had risked expulsion to save, was to be expelled because he had taken that risk!

No, no!

He couldn't, he wouldn't, let her suffer to this extent. Marjorie must be saved—and saved now! The only way he could save her was to own up himself. But the irony of it! The bitter, bad luck that dogged him. In a few hours at most that money would have been replaced—

Now!

He'd got to go through with it. He'd got to go now—and face the music. And then—

Even as he came to that decision, Ken Warrington shrank. What a prospect! Expulsion for himself—nothing more certain than that—and with what a future to look forward to! Too well he knew how his guardian would react.

But it was his fault—his fault! Better the grim future than always to have upon his conscience the knowledge that he had betrayed the most loyal friend a boy ever had. He set his teeth.

"Ken, do you know anything about it?" Babs cried. "Ken, if you do—"

"Heaps!" Ken Warrington said bitterly. "But no gassing now! We must hurry! Uncle, will you get there as soon as possible?"

"Certainly. But why?"

"You'll know—soon," Ken answered quietly.

Sharply his guardian gazed at him. But there was something about the boy then which prevented even him asking further questions.

Very upright, very stiff he sat as the girls got into the car and they bowled on, his eyes burning in a face that was as white as chalk.

They reached Cliff House, its grounds deserted. Out of the car he scrambled, followed by Babs & Co.

"Come on!" he muttered thickly.

"Kenneth, where are you going?" his guardian asked sharply.

"Won't be long," Warrington answered. "Come on!" he repeated impatiently.

He hurried on towards Big Hall, leaving his guardian pink-faced and glaring. His heart was sick, but his determination unquenchable. Now he was running up the steps. Now he had reached the big doors which gave on to Big Hall. And for a moment his heart failed him.

The rustle and the muttering of over two hundred girls fell upon his ears. All the school was assembled, and all the school's eyes were upon the platform, on which a rather distressed-looking Miss Primrose was at that moment in the act of leading a girl.

And the girl—

Ken Warrington's breath came in a sharp gasp.

Marjorie Hazeldene!

Ken paused, his hands clenching.

Miss Primrose was speaking now; announcing in distressed accents the reason for Marjorie's expulsion.

But Marjorie was not listening. She had seen him—and with Ken, Babs & Co. For an instant a wild look of alarm flamed in her eyes. She made a frantic gesture with her hand.

But Ken stood his ground. Now Miss Primrose's most dramatic words came. "And, since Marjorie refuses to give any word of explanation, it is my painful and most reluctant duty to declare,

before the assembled school, that she is expelled—"

Something seemed to snap in Ken Warrington's brain. He jumped forward.

"No!" he ringingly cried. "No! Miss Primrose, you can't—you shan't—expel her!"

"Ken!" shrieked Marjorie. "Ken, go away!"

But while Miss Primrose paused in amazement, while the school stared in sudden flabbergasted wonder, he, with Babs & Co. closely following, was determinedly pushing his way forward. No hesitation now; no thought for himself. Marjorie! It was Marjorie who mattered. A gasp went up as boldly he marched up the steps of the platform.

Miss Primrose's eyes almost goggled. "Boy, how dare you! Who are you? Go away!"

"I will go away," Ken said levelly, "when I have put this wrong right, Miss Primrose. I said you can't expel that girl—"

"Ken!" Marjorie cried, in agony. "And you shan't expel her."

Ken Warrington went on, "because she is innocent! If there is any expelling to be done, it should be done to me. Because," he added simply, "I am the one who stole those two pound notes!"

A gasp came from the school. Babs gave a cry.

"You?"

"Yes, me!" The boy smiled bitterly. "I took them," he confessed, while Marjorie looked on the verge of swooning, "because I wanted to repay Marjorie her debt. I never knew until a few minutes ago that Marjorie was going to get it in the neck for what I'd done—and meant to undo this afternoon. Well"—he tossed back his head—"that's the truth! Marjorie, old kid, thanks!" he said huskily. "But you didn't think, you little chump, I was going to let you do this for me? Well, here I am," he added, while the school buzzed. "I've confessed. Now, Miss Primrose, what are you going to do with me?"

"I don't think," a rasping voice at the door put in, and everybody turned to find Mr. Thomas, his eyes blazing, standing there, "that's a question for Miss Primrose to decide, young man. I've heard all this, and a fine disgrace you are! You're coming with me. You're coming back to Friardale. And when," he added, "Dr. Barrymore expels you there, I'll take charge. You utter scoundrel, Kenneth!"

But Kenneth only shrugged. He had saved his girl chum. What else mattered?

And Cliff House, realising that, broke into a cheer. Outsider Ken Warrington might be, but he had all their admiration at that moment.

LATER, IN Miss Primrose's study, to which that agitated headmistress suggested the leading actors in the drama should all retire, passionately, desperately Marjorie pleaded with Mr. Thomas. To her pleadings were added now those of Babs & Co., who, realising at last the good in the outsider, were anxious for him to have another chance. Even Miss Primrose added her good word.

Mr. Thomas weakened, though he was still stern. At Marjorie's request he allowed her to go back to Friardale. There at once he took his erring ward to see Dr. Barrymore. And Dr. Barrymore frowned.

"Well, I am afraid, Warrington, that I should have had to expel you, but—"

"But what?" Marjorie cried.

"But for an incident which has just come to my notice. The other day, in Friardale High Road, a certain boy belonging to this school saved the life of the little daughter of one of the school governors. Was that boy you?"

"It was!" Marjorie cried. "I was there! Dr. Barrymore, it was Ken!"

"Ken!" cried Mr. Thomas. "By thunder!"

"And so," the doctor smiled, "in the circumstances I am going to say nothing about this. I am going, Warrington, to give you one last chance—and only one. I hope, with the help of your very good friends, you will make the most of it. Now go, please! Mr. Thomas, I should be obliged if you would remain behind and have a chat."

And Marjorie and Ken went. Outside, Marjorie took his hand, gazing at him with shining eyes.

"Ken, Ken," she whispered, "it—it's all ended as—as I said it would. Ken, you'll make the most of your new chance now, won't you?"

His eyes were misty as he looked at her.

"Marjorie," he answered, "however could a chap do otherwise, when asked by you? You—you little brick!" he breathed.

And Marjorie happily laughed.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

The SPLIT in STUDY 3!



Dramatic, indeed, are the events which take place at Cliff House School when Lorna Millerchip, niece of Miss Bullivant, deliberately sets out to smash the friendship between little Marcelle Biquet, the French Fourth Former, and her American studymate, Leila Carroll. Dramatic events, yes, involving Babs & Co. and other popular characters—but surprising events, too, with a big photographic competition as a background, as you will see when you read Hilda Richards' latest absorbing story for yourselves. Order your SCHOOLGIRL now.

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(Now read on.)

Tricked!

MAY rode with gritted teeth, bumped and shaken as her horse cantered over the uneven ground. To ride bare-backed was a novelty, but not a pleasant one—and most unpleasant of all for Daphne who, on another horse behind May, could scarcely stay on.

But whether they ran a risk of a bad fall or not, there was nothing for them to do but ride on through the mist in the hope of overtaking the trap, which could be seen dimly ahead.

As the steepness of the slope increased, however, their horses slowed, and Daphne heaved a huge sigh of relief as she managed at last to sit upright.

"Oh, May, where are they taking her?" she cried.

May shook her head, terribly worried, as her face showed. There was no trace of the usually cheerful expression that her friends knew; she looked harassed. Rain streaked down her cheeks; her hat was gone, her hair damp and lank. Daphne, who usually prided herself upon her chic appearance, felt now like a newly bathed Pekingese, and did not look unlike one about the hair.

But neither cared about her personal appearance. They were far too worried for such a triviality. Even to Daphne it seemed a thing of no consequence.

"My golly! Where can they be taking her?" asked May blankly, and rode level with their gipsy girl escort.

She, however, was as perplexed as they.

"I cannot understand why they did not turn into the camp," she said. "It's puzzling."

"I'm not stopping until we catch up with the trap," May said determinedly.

Morsworth, their destination, was forgotten. They did not know the time; they did not know where they were, except on the mountainside, riding up to the lofty peak, fifteen hundred feet above sea level.

Since their horses could not be forced on at greater speed up the slope, May and Daphne had time to think and talk.

"May—May, I see it all now!" said Daphne shakily. "It's all part of a plot against Yin Su. I'm sure it is.

been carried off, apparently by a genuine mistake, because in the royal gipsy dress she resembled the princess who was to become the tribal queen. But was that all bluff?

Whatever the motive, Yin Su was kidnapped; and they seemed no nearer her than they had been when they started to give chase at the foot of the mountain.

The rain was mere drifting mist now; the wind was steadier, and less savage. Nevertheless, the mountain was bleak and inhospitable. The mere thought of having to spend a night there made Daphne shiver.

"Can you see the trap still, May?" she fretted.

May could not, nor could the gipsy girl. So all three drew rein, listening carefully.

"Poor Yin Su, she's certainly seeing

Cleverly, May and Daphne rescue Yin Su from the gipsy kidnappers—only to run into fresh peril in a mountain mist!

And Madame X is behind it—that awful woman with the emerald ring."

"Behind this? How?" asked May, in surprise. "How could she know that we'd go into the gipsy encampment? How could she know that Yin Su would try on the princess' frock, be taken for the princess, and be kidnapped?"

Daphne was not quite sure, but she was, nevertheless, still of the opinion that the mystery woman who had so strangely crossed their path before was to blame for this.

"She knows our plans," she said suddenly, as inspiration came. "She knew we were going to Morsworth, and she bribed the gipsies to kidnap Yin Su. That's what she has wanted all along. It can't be us she's trying to catch. We don't matter. But Yin Su's someone of importance."

May was silent. Even though she wanted to deny the possibility of such a plot, she suddenly realised that Daphne might be right. Yin Su had

England," sighed May. "Right up in the mountains, too. Poor kid, I do hope she isn't too frightfully scared."

Dismounting, May suddenly stooped, examining the ground, and when she looked up her eyes had a shine of hope.

"Look!" she exclaimed, pointing to the soft ground: "Wheel-marks! The trap came this way, and turned left."

The marks were not clear, yet easily enough seen when a close examination was made. They were unmistakable, too, and the gipsy girl wheeled her horse to follow them.

"No; just a minute," demurred May softly. "Go carefully. They may be hiding. If so, we an trap them."

May thought quickly, and a plan came to her—one that might mean

—BY

ELIZABETH CHESTER

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success if they could all carry it out. In a whisper she explained to Daphne and the gipsy girl, whose name they found was Zella.

"Zella, you and Daphne take all three horses," said May. "I'm going to follow these tracks on foot. You go in the other direction, will you?"

The mist was hiding them at the moment; but once they moved the sound of the horses' hoofs would give away the direction of movement. May's soft footfalls would not be heard, however, so that she could hurry along in the wake of the trap.

On level ground the horses had helped them. But climbing up this slope, May would have an advantage over the trap.

"You won't get lost, May?" Daphne asked anxiously.

"I'm not trying to. If I do it will be bad luck," answered May, with a faint smile to encourage Daphne. "But as I can always follow the tracks back to here, I shall be all right."

Then, creeping up the grassy slope, slipping now and then, she set off after the vanished trap.

If it had not been discovered that Yin Su was not the gipsy queen-to-be, there was still a chance that May, making it clear to her captors, could have the Chinese girl freed.

But her conjectures ended suddenly, and all her concentration was given to listening, for ahead she heard voices, and a dozen paces farther on saw the trap.

The horse was grazing, and the man and the gipsy girl stood beside it.

"They have been fooled," the man said, with a laugh. "I can hear their horses going away to the path."

He had been listening at the ground; but it was he who had been fooled.

May looked now for the third figure, Yin Su, and presently saw a girl seated in the trap, her princessly

garb half-hidden under the tarpaulin cape.

The two gipsies were near the cart, and there was no sign of any bonds—or anything at all to prevent the girl in princessly clothes from getting up and making at least an attempt at escape. Yet she did not move.

May, obscured by the mist, took a devious course, and under cover of scrub, crept to within three or four yards of the girl she thought was Yin Su.

The girl turned her head, stretched her hands, and pulled the tarpaulin more closely about her.

May drew back, startled, for—it was not her chum at all.

"Not Yin Su—" murmured May, half-aloud.

She could not believe her eyes at first, and moved a little closer; then, fearful of revealing her presence, she turned back.

Far more quickly than she had arrived, May went down the slope, following the tracks of the trap. She called softly to Daphne, who answered with an eager, relieved "cooec."

"Well?" asked Daphne, as she and Zella rejoined May.

May told her news, and was a little annoyed by Daphne's insistence that she must have been mistaken.

"Bosh!" said May bluntly. "I know Yin Su when I see her, and I say that girl wasn't Yin Su."

"Then what ever has happened to Yin Su?" asked Daphne.

"That," frowned May, really worried now, "is the problem. What do you think?" she asked the gipsy girl.

The gipsy girl pointed down the mountain to where, in the hollow, lay the gipsy camp from which the trap had departed.

"There!" she said. "She must be there. They found she was not me, the one they wanted to kidnap, and have made someone else wear the frock to lead you on a false trail."

"You are going back to that spot now to claim the frock?" May asked.

"No," said the gipsy girl, a flash in her eyes. "I am going to my people. I will bring a score of men, and we will show these rebels who is master! They will rue this," she ended, in ringing tone.

"Well, bring a score for us, too," urged May, "just in case we need them. How on earth Daph and I can rescue Yin Su if they mean to keep her prisoner, I don't know."

But somehow it had to be done.

"You Thief, Yin Su!"

YIN SU sat on a chair in the best fitted of all the gipsy caravans, which, although not luxuriously equipped, was clean, colourful, and comfortable.

An old wrinkled gipsy woman, Leila, was there with the one who had shown such anger, and whose name was Tara, and who seemed to be the leader of this camp.

Yin Su was afraid, still convinced that these people were the English version of the Chinese bandit, even though there was not that liberal show of arms nor the same scrupulous politeness.

"Who are you?" asked Leila. "Do not lie."

"To lie," said Yin Su, her voice a little shaky, although she tried not to seem afraid, "would shame my honourable ancestors, miserable men of low birth and humble origin though they were," she added hurriedly.

"That is a lie to start with," said Tara angrily. "You are rich. Your people have money. Look at your smooth, manicured hands, your careful hairdressing. Yes, you are rich," she ended, giving a nod of satisfaction at her own good judgment. "Your people will pay well to have you back."

Yin Su quaked. "Poverty-stricken father bent of back seeking simple farthings on rich men's footsteps," she said. "Sole of feet like leather of shoes which he cannot afford to buy. This humble, despicable Chinese girl scrub floors—"

"Rubbish! Your hands wouldn't be smooth if you did," said Tara, fixing Yin Su with dark, brooding eyes that seemed to pierce her mind.

Frail Yin Su sat with her hands clasped.

"Used long stick to brush when cleaning floors," she said after thought. "In China all girls forbidden to touch work with bare hands."

Yin Su did not alter her story. She was poor, her people were poor, her ancestors had been poor, the lowest of the low. A whip-round in the family annually might in a year produce three-pence. She herself was unwanted, shunned.

For such was the story she would have told Chinese bandits so that they would think she was not worth holding to ransom.

The gipsies did not accept her story. The more she exaggerated her family poverty, the surer they were that she was a girl of great importance and wealth.

But they could not find out where she lived, nor where she had come from. She seemed to be going nowhere in particular. For Yin Su's Oriental wariness made her willing to mention any destination but the real one, Morsworth.

She did not consider that she was telling lies, but merely being intelligent in true Chinese manner.

"Bah! Either she is a stupid liar,

or else she has lost her memory," said Tara anxiously.

Meanwhile, under cover of the drifting mist, thickened by the smoke from the camp, May Joliphant had crept down amongst the caravans.

From one to the other she went, listening intently, while Daphne kept watch some yards away, ready to give a soft whistle of warning if any of the gipsies noticed May.

In due course May reached the caravan where Yin Su was being questioned. Hearing her friend's voice, a thrill of excitement ran through her, so great that she almost called out.

"Then you shall stay here!" she heard the woman Tara say savagely. "If you are just a working girl, you shall work, and work hard. You shall scrub, and your bare hands will touch work. This isn't China. You can go on pretending you are poor. We know better. But hard work may loosen your tongue."

May crept away and rejoined Daphne, but did not speak until they were out of earshot of the camp.

In a whisper then she told Daphne what she had heard.

"They'll make poor Yin Su work hard!" Daphne exclaimed, with genuine sympathy. "Oh, May! We must rescue her! And now, too! Why, they might take her away again—where we couldn't find her. If they think she is rich, they'll hold her to ransom or something."

"I know, I know," muttered May, biting her lip. "If we butt in, though, we may be captured, too, and that wouldn't help."

"But we must butt in," objected Daphne. "We can't leave her. We can't even go for help, because while we're gone she might be taken somewhere else."

May pressed her hand upon Daphne's knee, warning her to be quieter, for there was more than a chance that their voices might be heard, and as yet the enemy did not suspect that their deception was known.

"There's only one thing to do," whispered May.

"Yes?"

"Use cunning," May said. "Yin Su's pretending to be a humble girl, but they don't believe her. If they go on thinking she is rich they'll hold her to ransom; but if they think she is poor—"

"They'll set her free," nodded Daphne. "Then that's what we must pretend. Let's go and say she is poor."

Daphne was never subtle, but May fortunately realised that too obvious deception would be worse than none. Caution was needed, and for several minutes they discussed matters carefully.

As they talked a plan developed, and May grew excited. To make sure that Daphne would not fail, she coached her carefully until she was word perfect, and knew just what had to be said and done.

Creeping away from the camp then, they halted when fifty yards from it and boldly walked forward.

"Yin Su!" called May.

"Yin Su!" cried Daphne.

They both saw a gipsy man appear in the mist, but they pretended not to see him, and May turned to Daphne.

"Oh, where can the little thief be?" she exclaimed crossly.

The man turned back and they walked on, calling the Chinese girl by name, until, out of the mist, the man reappeared, accompanied by the woman.

"Oh!" said May, apparently surprised. "Thank goodness I've found

someone! Have you seen a Chinese girl, please?"

The woman shrugged. "Chinese girl—here?" she asked. "A strange place for a Chinese, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is," said May frownfully. "But it's a likely place for a thief, and that's what she is."

"A thief?" said the woman.

"Yes, a thief," cut in Daphne indignantly. "A fine thing when your washerwoman's daughter robs you! And it was just kindness letting her come to the house—"

"And then to go with the police," added May. "But the police will catch her all right, the little thief. I always said you couldn't trust these Chinese."

"And she was always good for nothing, letting her old mother work while she—well, she might be a lady," said Daphne, "with her manicured hands."

"Talks like a book, too," May added. "But as she spends most of her day reading that's not to be wondered at."

The woman's face wore a heavy scowl. "A thief, and the police after her!" she said sharply.

"Yes. Maybe she is being sheltered by people aiding and abetting her," nodded May. "Perhaps she's just one of a gang. Well, if the police do get her they'll get the lot."

The woman turned to the man and muttered in Romany. Then she turned back to May and Daphne, who had tried not to exchange looks, but to peer about them searchingly.

"My friend says he saw a Chinese girl loitering," she said. "Just there."

She pointed into the mist, and told the man to show the girls where. Beckoning them, he said he would do. He walked forward, and May could think of no alternative but to follow him. It was not as she had planned things, but if they wanted their "act" to seem real they had to behave as they would if it were so. To follow him was all they could do.

"Yin Su!" they cried.

For a minute or two they roamed on, calling, and their hopes sank. Daphne tried to whisper to May that the scheme had failed—that the woman had seen

through it; but suddenly a cry came from behind them.

"Here she is!" called the gipsy woman. "I've got her! Hiding behind the caravan, she was!"

It was all the two girls could do to repress a shout of joy as they saw Yin Su being hustled towards them; but with great self-control they managed not to. Instead, May cried out angrily: "You little thief, Yin Su! Where are the pearls?"

Everything depended upon Yin Su's reaction. If she called out in joy, as a friend, the whole plan was ruined.

Lost in the Mountains!

BUT Yin Su, understanding, played up well.

"Not tell police!" she implored. "Not mean to take precious pearls. Bad gipsy people make me steal."

"It's a lie!" cried the gipsy woman. "We know nothing of it!"

"Of course not. She'd say anything," said May, putting on a black look of anger, and snatching Yin Su's right arm.

Daphne seized her left, and together they dragged Yin Su forward, while she seemingly sought to get a resisting purchase on the ground with her feet.

And thus they went into the mist down the mountainside, until, looking back, they no longer saw the gipsy woman.

"Quiet—don't laugh!" murmured May anxiously.

Not until they reached the other gipsy camp did they end their pretence of capturing a thief. But there they halted.

Yin Su, without a word, clasped May and hugged her. Although she tried to quaver a word or two, she was quite voiceless with deep emotion, and the cheek that she pressed to May's was damp with tears.

"Oh, Yin Su!" said May tenderly. "We thought you were gone for good."

"It was so terrifying!" said Daphne, with a sigh.

Yin Su looked at May with shining eyes, in which tears sparkled still.

"Clever, most wise and kind friend



"YOU wicked girl, Yin Su!" May cried, pretending to be angry and wagging an admonishing finger at the Chinese girl. "What have you done with those pearls?" Yin Su hung her head—but would her captor be deceived by this cunning ruse?

May—and Daphne," she added, stretching out her left hand to Daphne. "Bad Yin Su steal pearls."

She laughed then shakily, and they all laughed. And she told them how the woman had returned to the caravan, called her a thief, and told her that two English girls, daughters of her washer-woman mother's employer, were seeking her. Yin Su had been quick-witted enough then to know who those girls were, and fortunately she had played up.

But before they could go more deeply into the matter they became aware of excitement in the gipsy camp, of muttered words, and the clomp of many horses' hoofs. Then out of the mist, having heard the voices, came the gipsy princess.

When she saw Yin Su she was pleased, and greeted her warmly.

"So you are found. Good!" she said simply. "But now my people will recapture the stolen frock that matters so much to us. And you," she added to Yin Su, "would do well to change from those rags into your own clothes. They are in my caravan."

Yin Su, delighted to find her own clothes, almost purred with pleasure when she changed into them.

"But we can't stay," said May briskly. "We simply must get to Morsworth."

For at Morsworth they were to pick up instructions at the post office from Miss Vesey, the absent governess. A letter would tell them where next to take Yin Su, and contain further money.

So, reluctant though they were to leave the warm caravan, they bade farewell to the gipsy girl, who came to see that everything was all right.

Leaving the gipsy camp, they made for the road, lighthearted and happy again, even though still so far from Morsworth Post Office.

Just ahead was the road, and quite suddenly they saw the glow of car lamps, and the dusky outline of the car itself.

"My golly, a car!" cried May. "We can get a lift—"

The car's rear lamp showed now, for it was being turned.

"Call out—stop them!" pleaded Daphne.

But May halted, snatching Daphne back and pushing Yin Su away.

"Quiet, quiet! My goodness! Don't you realise who it is?" she whispered.

A woman stood by the car, and although they saw her but dimly, they heard her voice quite clearly.

"Wait here; I may not be long," she said.

Then she turned towards them, slim, tall, clad in tweeds; and yet, although differently attired now from when they had previously seen her, there was no mistaking who she was.

They fell back, and Daphne clutched at May, whispering:

"Madame X!"

"Shush!" warned May.

And they all crouched back into the mist.

The woman, looking round at the car, did not notice them, but walked on towards the gipsy camp whence there came sounds of commotion, shouting, jingling of harness, and thump of horses' hoofs; sounds that so held her attention that she did not glance sideways.

Only when she had moved out of sight did May speak.

"She didn't see us—but it was the woman with the emerald ring. I know her walk—I know her build."

"And the car," nodded Daphne.

"The one she had when we saw it before. Oh goodness! May, I was right, you see. She planned this—"

"Never!" said May, but without ringing conviction. "How could she know we'd come here—"

Daphne dragged at her hand.

"She mustn't know where we're going. Come on—over the road, and straight on," she urged.

And May, even though she had planned that they should retrace their steps to the fork road where they had taken the turning, allowed herself to be led in the opposite direction.

The mystery woman had had her car turned so that it headed the way she had come, the way May had intended to go. If they walked along that road there was more than a slight chance that she would overtake them—and they had no wish for her to see them.

"She may guess we went there—but she shan't know where we are going," determined May. "The fork road is straight ahead over this hill in front, and if we keep on we shall cut into it—and well ahead of the actual fork."

In silence they climbed the hill ahead, which seemed to rise steadily. To what height it rose they could not guess, since its summit was shrouded in mist; and they were beginning to wonder if, like the other, its height was mountainous when the ground levelled.

"Hurrah! And now we'll start going down," said May gladly.

She halted for a breath, and they looked about them.

The drifting mist, white and moist, obscured everything beyond a few yards' range, but they did not mind that. In fact, it suited their present purpose well. They wanted to be lost from the mystery woman's sight; and since now they could not see the road, the lights of the car, or even the sounds from the gipsy camp, they felt safe.

"Straight on, is it?" asked Daphne.

May turned from her general survey.

"Why—yes," she said slowly.

But she did not move on; for suddenly she realised that she had lost her sense of direction.

"Where's the road?" she asked. "There!" said Daphne, pointing to her left.

"No, no. The road is there," corrected Yin Su, pointing half-right.

"Both wrong," exclaimed May.

"Because—well, I don't know," she ended uncertainly.

They were silent. None dared to voice the alarmed thought that came to their minds.

"What fools we were to leave the road," murmured May. "Let's get back to it."

She walked to the right, and then, drawing back, formed a plan.

"Listen!" she said. "Let's go in three directions and call in turn, you first, Daph, then you, Yin Su—then me. But don't get out of carshot. Understand? And the first to hear sound of the gipsy camp yell 'Yip, yip, yip!'"

It seemed a good plan, and they separated, calling in turn as they went farther and farther apart. But no one "yipped!" not even when their voices were faint and only just to be heard.

"Come together again!" yelled May.

Yin Su answered, and moved in to join May; then both called for Daphne.

"I've dropped my best hanky!" she shouted.

"Oh, bother!" exclaimed May, and then added: "Oh, well, we might as well go to look for it as do anything else—"

And, rejoining Daphne, they spent twenty minutes or more looking on the ground, amongst bushes, in all directions, but in vain.

"No good," said May. "Let's get on."

They walked for an hour, and then suddenly Daphne stooped.

"There it is!" she cried, pointing to the ground.

"There, what is it?" asked May. "A light—the camp—the road?"

"No—my lost hanky," said Daphne, and walking forward three paces picked up her handkerchief in triumph.

"My goodness, fancy the wind's blowing it all this way!"

Neither May nor Yin Su spoke, but their faces were long and they could not echo Daphne's joy.

"Oh, Daph! Don't you see?" said May dismally. "We're back where you dropped it. We've been walking all this time in a circle. And here we are—back again to the same spot—"

She broke off, biting her lip, and Daphne suddenly slumped down.

"Oh, May, I'm done! I—I can't go on. My shoes hurt!" she said tearfully. "I've got a blister and—"

She covered her face with her hands. Yin Su, very pale, linked her fingers.

"With great calm await guidance of Providence," she murmured.

"If only—" May began, and then broke off, listening intently. "Hark!"

"A dog," said Yin Su, turning her head.

Faintly there came to them the sound of a dog's howl, plaintive, eerie, and May's long face broadened into a smile.

"My golly, a dog! And where a dog is there's a house—people! Come on, Daph, pull yourself together! We'll help you—we must find that dog!"

DO the lost chums locate the unseen dog? And does it lead them to safety? There are thrills and surprises galore in store for you in next week's magnificent chapters, so be sure to order your SCHOOLGIRL at once.

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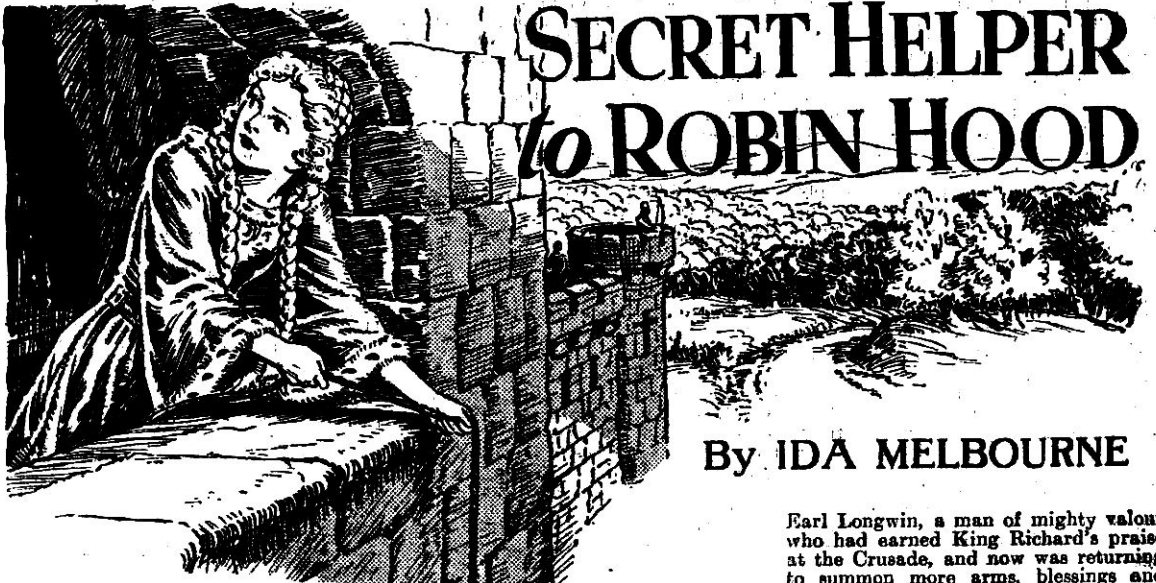
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"How Come You Here, Wench?"

FAYRE, Fayre, bring me my new dancing slippers!" The young Lady Fayre, hearing that command from her aunt, the Baroness le Feuvre, accompanied by a handclap like a pistol-shot, rushed to obey, hurrying across the large, straw-covered floor of the boudoir to find the pretty red and gold dancing slippers.

There were six ladies waiting on the baroness, but she could have found work for twice that number, two of the party usually being in tears in one part of the room or another.

And this, Fayre reflected, was just a dress rehearsal.

What it would be like to-night, just before the Castle Longley ball, defied her imagination. There would be panic then, uproar, tears, even blows for those ladies who were too slow.

Besides, to-night the baron would be dressing in special party clothes of rich velvet and gold lace, and at least half a dozen people would be in the stocks for incompetence, or any other reason that came to his mind. If he could not find his gauntlets—because he was sitting on them—then the hosier went to the stocks.

But Fayre was fortunately not required to assist the baron, her uncle. Her aunt was the worst that afflicted her.

"Fayre!" snapped the plain, strident-voiced baroness. "Warm these slippers. One day you will be old enough to go to a ball. You shall learn how things should be done."

Fayre's eyes sparkled at the mere thought of going to the ball.

"Oh, my lady!" she murmured. "If only it could be to-night. But then—I am too young?" she said with a statement that she managed to voice as a question.

The baroness barked a reply. "Take such idle thoughts from your vacant mind, child. This is to be no childish glee-party, but a ball, a grand affair. Earl Longwin has come back from the Crusade with rich silks, with golden ornaments and vessels, and they do say a Saracen maiden."



"A girl?" asked Fayre eagerly. "I'd like to see a Saracen girl, aunt."

"Silence! You will be abed and asleep before the revelry is half commenced. When you have warmed the slippers and fitted them to my feet, hie you to your own school-room to write the letter of welcome to Earl Longwin."

Fayre fitted her aunt's shoes, and then, casting a sympathetic glance at a comely maid who had her ears soundly boxed for speaking without being spoken to, went gladly out.

The bullying baron meant to have Robin Hood in his dungeons. Instead, thanks to Lady Fayre, Robin Hood was at the baron's banquet as guest of honour—without the baron suspecting!

She did not hurry to her school-room, but paused to take note of all the wonderful happenings in the castle.

It was a magnificent place, strongly built to resist the most desperate and determined siege. Garrisoned by a large force of soldiers, it was equipped with its own dairies, workshops, armoury, woodwork shops, smithies, stables—in fact it was a walled, compact township ruled by the Baron le Feuvre.

The ball, held in the mighty hall, would be a magnificent affair, blessed by a bishop, with barons, earls, knights, their ladies and entourage; while, as guest of honour, there was the Saxon

Earl Longwin, a man of mighty valour who had earned King Richard's praise at the Crusade, and now was returning to summon more arms, blessings and money—especially money.

From all parts of the mighty castle came sounds of hammering, for tables, the latest fashion, were being made, stages were being run up, poles erected for pennants and bunting and bannerets.

Extra stocks and pillories had been ordered for the occasion, and the dungeons had been swept out, as Fayre remembered they had been once before when she was a small girl and a French nobleman had stayed in the castle.

In point of fact the Castle Longley belonged to the Lady Fayre, but the baron had taken possession of it until she came of age, and treated it as his own.

Greatly excited by all the preparations, Fayre stole down to the banquetting hall, where long tables were being ranged, measured by mercenaries for the fitting of cloths, a French fad the baroness rather admired.

"Ah me! If I could but go to the ball," Fayre sighed.

All the gold plates and goblets would be arrayed, and the castle jester would add to the fun of all by eating with the aid of a queer, pronged instrument, instead of with his fingers in the manner of noblemen.

Sighing, Fayre went up to the school-room, where the Venerable Brie, her tutor, was drafting a suitable message of welcome to the Saxon earl.

It would be Fayre's task to copy out that message with graceful writing, suitably illuminated with artful, secret paints, the composition of which the Venerable Brie had learned from certain Irish monks.

"Good sir," said Fayre, as he looked up from the work, to which his poor sight, spectacles not having then been invented, compelled him to bend until his nose almost touched the parchment. "Good sir, pray tell me more of this Saracen maiden. Is she black as ebony, or is she brown? Does she wear snakes as we in England wear a necklet of beads?"

The Venerable Brie did not know, but being a learned man was able to be evasive. In some cases doubtless snakes were so worn, he said; in others not, while many Saracen maids were much darker skinned than others, and some less.

It often puzzled Fayre to know how

he acquired his extensive, faultless knowledge.

"And will she dance at the ball?" she asked eagerly.

"All will dance," answered the Venerable Brie, "except those who prefer not to do so, or who are prevented from doing so by physical infirmity, or by the will of the baron. Why," he ended, giving one of his rare smiles, "last year even the serving wenches danced with the pages."

Fayre's eyes sparkled.

"The serving wenches!" she exclaimed. "Oh, that I could be a serving wench rather than the Lady Fayre. I could dance then; I could have fun! Oh, if only it could be!"

Her voice thrilled, but the Venerable Brie, quite shocked by such a suggestion, wagged a reproving forefinger at her.

"Come, come, it is nonsense you speak. Once a lady, always a lady. You could not be a serving wench!"

But Fayre's eyes had a glimmering, far-away look. She was thinking of the ragged frock in the old wooden chest in her room, of the shabby cloak; how she had often worn them and escaped from the castle unrecognised, her true identity unsuspected! And if she could

do that, why could she not, on the night of the ball, become a serving wench?

The more she thought of the idea the more it gripped her, and five minutes or so later, when the Venerable Brie went in search of the baron to show him the message of welcome to Earl Longwin, Fayre hurried to her bed-chamber.

In a moment she changed from her lovely rich red velvet frock into the shabby frock of dark green and the ragged cloak with its covering hood!

"Yes, they will take me for a serving wench," she assured herself in shaky excitement. "And, after all, I can go to the ball! All that I need now is some dark stain for my face, such stain as Robin Hood can make!"

Robin Hood, friend of the poor, was her friend, too. She knew his secret hiding-place in the wood, and the idea of her going to the ball would amuse him. He would help her. For Robin Hood thought that she was just a poor village girl who roamed the woods.

Going swiftly down the corridor, Fayre made for the stone stairs. But reaching them, she paused. Someone was mounting them, heavy of tread, with steps she knew only too well.

"The baron!" she muttered.

The baron it was. He saw her; he stared and halted.

"So-ho!" he exclaimed, glaring. "And how come you here, a peasant-girl? Speak, wench! How come you in my castle?"

Cause for Alarm!

FAYRE'S heart went icy cold. The red-faced, burly baron, in his magnificent purple cloak, wrapped about a white, belted robe, completely barred her way.

True, his sight was not too good, yet, even so, was it possible that he could fail to recognise her at such close quarters?

"What do you do here, wench?" he repeated. "Who are you? Speak!"

"I—I but run an errand for—the Lady Fayre, my lord baron," said Fayre in harsher tone than her own normal voice.

The baron leaned his head forward, narrowing his eyes as he stared at her closely, and Fayre, terrified that she would be recognised here and now, and her plan ruined, pulled a face. She twisted her features, crossed her eyes, and assumed such a hideous expression that even seeing it but dimly the baron winced with distaste.

"But you are an ill-favoured wench," he grunted. "Waste not your time asking my steward's leave to attend at the banquet. A face such as yours would give ill-digestion to the best roast."

Fayre giggled in a silly manner, wriggling her shoulders, and the baron, with a gesture of disdain, pointed to the stairs.

"Begone, idiot!" he commanded. Fayre scuttled forward as though he were likely to cuff her in passing, and she did not stop running, nor giggling, until she was in the courtyard.

"All the same, mayhap, he'll see me waiting at the banquet, but with comelier face," she chuckled.

And her heart was gay as she crossed the courtyard, where there was a vast confusion of shouting, of running to and fro, of sawing and hammering. Unchallenged, she passed over the draw-bridge, which to-day was being kept down, so many were the wagons and men and supplies passing to and fro across it.

Dancing down the lane, the Lady Fayre, now a mere village maid to outward appearances, made for the woods, wherein, hunted in vain by the sheriff and the baron's soldiers, lurked that daring young outlaw, Robin Hood.

Robin Hood, who had need sometimes of disguises to go into villages and towns, knew the secret of dyes that made a fair man look dark. With such a dye Fayre herself might not be recognised even by her own aunt!

It would be best of all to dance, but next best it would be fun to be an extra serving wench, carrying pitchers of water, flagons of wine, loaves of bread, and delicious honey.

Into the sunny, soft green wood she went, where birds gaily sang and the spirit of spring made even the air sparkle. There were wolves; but she had a whistle, devised by Robin Hood, with a shrillness that sent them snarling away, ears twitching. And that whistle also warned Robin Hood that she was near.

An answering call came from a hunting-horn two minutes later, and into view sprang the green-clad, smiling outlaw himself. With a bow of welcome, he swept his pointed, feathered cap from his head to the green, fresh grass.

"Aha!" he smiled, his eyes twinkling

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

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—With almost every post I receive there is generally at least one letter written in rather plaintive, entreating terms such as these:

"Please, Mr. Editor, when are we going to have another story featuring So-and-so? She's my special favourite at Cliff House, and it seems ages and ages since she played a big part in a story—"

And that is where we encounter one of those little problems which all Editors have to face now and again; the problem of how to give every reader what she wants, all the time!

I'm sure you know that if I had my way I would feature every one of the Cliff House favourites—from Babs to Diana Royston-Clarke, from little Dolores Essendon of the Second Form to Miss Valerie Charmant—every single week of the year. But, of course, that's so obviously impossible that it rather makes you smile to imagine it, does it not?

I do, however, try to do the next best thing, and that is to "star" all your favourites in turn. In this way every reader has her special heart's desire fulfilled from time to time, and is able to look forward with eager anticipation to the next "starring" of her favourite.

And I'm sure that all the Cliff House stories enthrall you, even if those featuring your own pet character make an extra appeal.

So to all those readers who often wonder why Diana or Clara or Leila Carroll or Jemima Carstairs seem to have been left out in the cold for

rather a long time, I would just say this:

Hilda Richards hasn't forgotten your favourites; she will definitely give them a story of their own just as soon as it is their turn again.

And meanwhile, both Hilda Richards and myself thank you, one and all, for your most enthusiastic, understanding, and—even in your disappointment—delightfully friendly letters.

But now I simply must deal with next week's fine story programme, or there won't be any space left at all.

"THE SPLIT IN STUDY NO. 3!"

is the title of the Cliff House story. It features two very popular girls, Marcelle Biquet, the petite and attractive French Fourth Former, and her great chum, Leila Carroll, of America.

In Study No. 3 these two have lived in perfect harmony for a very long time, but the intervention of another girl, Lorna Millerchip, Miss Bullivant's niece, disrupts that harmony in dramatic fashion.

Lorna is determined to break up the friendship between Marcelle and Leila; determined to take Leila's place in Marcelle's affections. Cleverly, she makes use of the fact that Leila has entered for a photographic contest in which most of the school is taking part. And only too well does her plot succeed.

It seems on the surface that Lorna's only desire is to bring about a split in Study No. 3—but at the end of the story there is a big surprise which puts quite a different complexion on everything.

Next Saturday's issue will also contain further fascinating chapters of "On Tour with Yin Su," another delightful COMPLETE story of the young Lady Fayre and gallant Robin Hood, together with more of Patricia's Chummy and Useful Pages—so do order your copy well in advance, won't you?

With best wishes.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

with pleasure at seeing her. "Come, come, well met, sweet maid, for here we are discussing what we shall wear at the baron's ball."

Fayre nearly fell back. "The baron's ball?" she repeated. "You have not heard of it?" said Robin Hood, amused.

"Heard of it?" said Fayre, who had kept it always secret from him who she was. "Why, 'tis my dearest wish to go, Robin Hood."

He smiled at her, and then took her by the hand and led her through the trees to where the rest of his merry, green-clad band was gathered.

"I shall go as the Baron Poof," said fat Friar Tuck. "No, as the Bishop de Woolf; the bishops are better fed."

"Hear them," said Robin Hood, laughing. "And you might think they could go."

Fayre sighed sadly. "You are not really going, then, Robin Hood?" she asked.

"With men-at-arms on guard, and every face closely scanned? Why, 'twould be putting ourselves in the dungeons," he said, shaking his head.

Fayre was silent, thoughtful. And suddenly a daring idea came into her mind.

"I have it. The Earl Longwin!" she cried.

"The Earl Longwin?" echoed Robin Hood. "Rumour has it he is returning from the Crusade."

"And the baron has never seen him face to face," nodded Fayre, in excitement. "Nor his knights and followers. I—I have heard it from sound source—from the Lady Fayre."

"The Lady Fayre—you seem to speak often with the Lady Fayre," mused Robin Hood. "And she does seem to give you fair speech and warning of the castle's doings. But this Earl Longwin, is—"

Fayre saw it all in a flash. "The baron expects Earl Longwin," she said, speaking rapidly. "How should he know if it is Earl Longwin or not?"

"Ah! By his rich clothes," said Robin Hood.

"And can only this Earl Longwin wear those rich clothes?" asked Fayre. "Methinks they would fit Robin Hood as well, while the Earl Longwin cooled his heels in—in some other place. Perhaps—perhaps in the ruined Castle of Munworth."

Robin Hood did not speak, but stared at her round-eyed; then he gave a hearty roar of laughter and slapped his knees.

"Earl Longwin from the Crusades—me!" he said, thumping his chest. Fayre danced.

"The Saracen maid with a black skin—me!" she said. "Earl Longwin's priest—Friar Tuck!"

Robin Hood gave a shout of joy; and his men, as they heard the grand idea, cheered wildly. For one and all had thought with yearning of the grand banquet, of the dancing and music and the fun of the baron's ball.

"'Twill be done. I'll find the road they must take. We'll waylay them, lead them to the ruined castle, and take their place!" cried Robin Hood. "And the mystery maid shall be the Saracen charmer."

For twenty minutes or so they talked of it, and made plans; then Fayre, fearing that her absence from the castle might be noted, returned there with great speed.

In the confused courtyard she passed through unnoticed and mounted to her room, where by the simple process of donning the rich red velvet frock, she became again the Lady Fayre, and not Maid Marion of the Woods.



"WHAT means the army of soldiers?" Fayre asked of her venerable tutor. "'Twould seem the baron means to fight." "He does," was the tutor's reply. "He means to fight the rascal Robin Hood!" Fayre's heart turned cold with horror.

Then, from the school-room window, she looked down as trumpets sounded, horsemen rode in with shining armour and pennants flying, and foot soldiers marched with mighty stamping and the jingling of chain-mail to take up positions.

"Why, good sir," she said, turning to her tutor, "it might be thought that the baron expected an onslaught of the castle, rather than visitors."

The Venerable Brie stroked his beard, and smiled slyly.

"The baron doth indeed expect an onslaught," he said.

"Of the castle?" asked Fayre, amazed.

"Nay, of his guest, the Earl Longwin."

Fayre's quick mind guessed the answer, but the alarm it gave her made her ask the question.

"Onslaught from whom?"

"From that rascal Robin Hood."

"And the soldiers are going to fight Robin Hood?" gasped Fayre, her heart leaping.

"Yes. A hundred soldiers; mounted, archers, men-at-arms," said the Venerable Brie, with relish. "If Robin Hood has planned to attack the Earl Longwin's retinue, he will have to reckon with two armies. He will be attacked front and rear—"

"He—he might be killed?" gasped Fayre in panic.

The Venerable Brie's eyes glinted. "Yes; for the baron has vowed that to-night Robin Hood shall be the guest of honour, alive or dead!"

Such Revelry—for Fayre!

As she heard the dread words, the Lady Fayre almost swooned.

"Oh, why did I not think of this!" she moaned in deep distress.

"You? What has it to do with you?" asked the Venerable Brie.

But Fayre did not answer him. She stood with clasped hands, staring wide-eyed from the window at the assembled troops in the courtyard.

Her heart was heavy with despair; and she knew she would never forgive herself if harm came now to Robin

Hood, as surely it must. For it had been her suggestion that he should waylay the Earl Longwin; and if only she had given the matter fuller thought, she would surely have known that an escort would be sent to bring the earl safely to the castle.

"What can I do?" she whispered to herself. "How can I save him?"

Her mind was in a whirl. It was too late to warn Robin Hood now. According to their plan, he was on the move to encounter Earl Longwin; and in the courtyard, the troops were assembling, roared at by the red-faced baron, whose voice carried all but half a mile.

In a few minutes, they would be on the march, the mounted unit hurrying forward, the foot soldiers in reserve.

If they left the castle, Robin Hood was doomed.

"And all because I want to go to the ball," said Fayre miserably. "Oh, poor Robin Hood! The soldiers must not leave!"

A desperate plan to lower the drawbridge and drop the portcullis came to her; but she knew that it would be a hopeless project. Quickly lowered, both could be as speedily raised.

And then, as she looked at the Venerable Brie, an idea came. She walked to her table, sat down, and, selecting the dirtiest piece of paper, wrote on it.

Since she could not warn Robin Hood, the one thing she could do was to ensure that the baron's men did not go to the earl's aid.

Either they must be detained in the castle, or else—sent on some fool's errand.

So now, taking care that the Venerable Brie did not see what she wrote, she scrawled a message in disguised handwriting, a plea for help from some other guest.

From the west, the direction opposite that from which the earl would arrive, a bishop was coming.

If a message were brought from him, calling for aid, then the baron would surely ride to his rescue! And if the message claimed that Robin Hood was attacking him, then the baron would no longer fear that the outlaw would be attacking the Earl Longwin in quite another place!

Fayre wrote her message:

"Send help, I beg; we are attacked by the evil Robin Hood. We cannot last much longer. We are five miles from your castle on the Langfrey road. (Signed) WOGAN, Bishop."

Folding the message, Fayre went into the corridor, there to devise some means of sending it off.

It must appear to come from outside the castle, otherwise the baron might suspect that it was a hoax. Yet for her to run outside and arrange for it to be sent in would take time.

With Robin Hood in her mind, she thought instantly of his own favourite weapon—the arrow!

From the castle battlements, an arrow could be dispatched bearing the message. And since there was nothing to distinguish a plain arrow used by a castle archer from any other, the baron would suppose that the arrow had been sent from a messenger who had tried to fire it into the castle itself.

All that remained now was to fire that arrow from the battlements—or since she could not herself shoot such a distance, to persuade some archer to do so.

At top speed, holding up the long hem of her rich red velvet frock, Fayre ran up the stone staircase to the castle battlements, where archers were posted as sentries, having a magnificent view of the spreading countryside.

A young archer saluted her, and Fayre looked at the road, a hundred and fifty yards away, where a pedlar rode on his mule.

"Ah, to think Robin Hood could shoot an arrow to that man from such a great distance as this," she said.

The young archer, a little huffed, spoke scoffingly of Robin Hood and the legends about him, saying that to shoot an arrow such a distance was a matter of ease. And being doubted by Fayre, he became grim, and took an arrow from his quiver.

"Don't hit the pedlar, nor his mule!" begged Fayre.

The archer promised to drop his arrow three yards in front of both.

"But wait—I must tie my handkerchief about the arrow for luck," said Fayre.

It was the message she affixed, the archer being more concerned with judging the distance and the wind than whether it was paper or rag that was tied to the arrow.

Taking careful aim, he let fly, and the arrow, singing through the air, struck the soft ground some four yards in front of the alarmed and angry pedlar, who stood up and shook both fists.

"Oh, 'twas wonderful—wonderful!" said Fayre with wide-eyed admiration that made his cheeks redden. "You must indeed be the champion archer of all the castle."

And leaving the young archer proud and happy, Fayre went down the stone stairway at such speed that she nearly knocked over Sir Geoffrey, who was on a landing, secretly practising a gavotte step that he usually blundered.

The baron was already leading his men from the castle, and Fayre, lifting the hem of her frock, chose not to hear the baroness calling angrily in rebuke from a window.

It would be only a matter of minutes now before the baron saw the arrow in the roadway; and he would be sure to notice the message attached to it. As he was unable to read, and his followers

were similarly handicapped, he would need Fayre's aid, so she meant to be on the spot.

The guard at the barbican had orders not to let her pass from the castle, however, so with what patience she could muster, Fayre had to wait.

It was hardly a minute she waited, however, for a horseman came clattering back.

"The Lady Fayre! Find the Lady Fayre, or the Venerable Brie!" he called. "There is writing to be read!"

As he reined up his horse, Fayre stepped forward.

"Writing?" she said. "Where found you this, Sir Giles?"—for it was a knight who had brought back the message.

"In the road. 'Twas attached to an arrow!" he exclaimed. "Here comes his lordship."

The baron, cantering up on his charger, shouted at Fayre.

"Read to me what it says! It may indeed be urgent."

Fayre, pretending to have some little difficulty in reading the writing, faltered it out slowly.

"Send help I beg; we are attacked by the evil Robin Hood. We cannot last much longer. We are five miles from your castle on the Langfrey road."

Then she added:

"It is signed, Wogan, bishop."

"Bishop Wogan!" roared the baron, his face growing redder. "The rascal Robin Hood has thought him richer prize than Earl Longwin, has he? Five miles! By my halidom, it will mean hard galloping; but we'll get the rascal. Dead or alive, he shall be my guest to-night—in the dungeons!"

Fayre's eyes sparkled. The plot had succeeded, and she wanted to cheer.

"Hurrah!" she cried.

The baron, a little surprised, nevertheless gave approval as he wheeled his horse.

"Hah! You have at last come to know he is evil. You are glad to know he is to be my guest to-night, eh?"

"I am indeed, uncle," said Fayre, looking radiantly happy.

Then she cheered again as in a cloud of dust, the baron and his mounted men rode away, followed by the infantry at the trot. For it was to the west they turned, not to the east, where Robin Hood lay in wait for Earl Longwin!

"EARL LONGWIN!"

The trumpets sounded in the Castle Longley, and swords flashed in salute, all in honour of King Richard's Courier and Emergency Tax Collector.

Dusk had fallen, and flares were alight all along the walls and marking the broad drive to the gateway of the keep.

In splendid sparkling chain mail, with purple velvet cloak and the crusade cross of England, Robin Hood rode through the gateway on a black charger.

Cheers rose, and the Baron le Feuvre yelled most loudly of all to welcome his guest of honour, while the baroness showered flowers down from her bower window.

A long stream of men followed, the foremost soldierly, the latter looking more like villagers dressed in uniform.

In point of fact the men in armour were Saxon villagers. They had fought lustily for the right to wear that armour when Earl Longwin and his men had been led to the ruined castle.

One at a time they had crossed the drawbridge, specially repaired, and one at a time had been seized and robbed of arms and armour.

Now, still in the ruined castle, with the portcullis lowered and well guarded, and the drawbridge raised, they were helpless prisoners.

In splendid fettle, light of heart, confident of their good arms should emergency arise, Robin Hood and his men and friends entered the castle.

And in the middle of the procession was what the baron regarded as the piece de resistance, the Saracen maiden.

Carried by four men, who supported the poles that bore her litter, the Saracen maiden, almost quite black, lounged at her ease wearing about her neck a harmless grass snake dyed exciting colours.

The Saracen maiden was the Lady Fayre, heart thumping with anxiety as she rattled her bangles and jewels, and hoped that all would be well.

The baron greeted her in friendly manner; the baroness was rather more distant, although relieved to find the Saracen maid was indeed black and not comely.

There was much saluting and shaking of hands; and "Earl Longwin," speaking in a deep, gruff voice, requested that as proof of friendship and peace, all arms should for the night be stored in the armoury.

The baron willingly agreed, and thus the great evening began.

Other earls, barons, knights, bishops, and noblemen had already arrived, and the Lady Fayre, carried on her litter into the banqueting-hall, saw such a glittering array of wealth and colour and beauty as made her hold her breath.

Robin Hood, gay and merry, his skin dyed, had but little fear of being recognised.

The night wore on, the excitement grew, the revelry increased. And with it increased Fayre's happiness, too.

She danced with Robin Hood, with the baron, Sir Geoffrey, even with some pages and a bishop.

But beyond midnight, when her eyes were sleepy, she heard a sound of commotion and a violent, lion-like roar from the baron.

Standing close to the supposed Earl Longwin, now without headdress, he pointed a shaking hand at him.

"Robin Hood! Robin Hood! His dye is running down his face. I know the rascal. I—"

A brand dropped by the portly priest of "Earl Longwin"—really Friar Tuck—caused the straw on which the baron was standing to flare into flame, and such was the commotion and running to and fro for water, that when it had all died down Robin Hood and his men had gone.

Locking the door of the banqueting-hall behind them, they got free of the castle before the news and warning of the truth had spread.

But the Saracen maiden did not wait to see it all. She was in the Lady Fayre's bed-chamber, scrubbing her face. After that, in sheer exhaustion and happiness, she fell upon her bed and slept and dreamed of the most deliciously happy evening of her life.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

MEET the young Lady Fayre and gallant, reckless Robin Hood, in another enthralling complete Ida Melbourne story next week.