

Meet Barbara Redfern & Co.—and
spectacular Diana Royston-Clarke—in

"SHE WANTED ALL THE LIMELIGHT!"

(Complete
this week)

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EVERY **2^D**
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Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



**"YOU SHAN'T KEEP
ME OUT!" STORMED DIANA.**

And beside herself with anger
the Firebrand pushed at the
gates.

See this week's superb Cliff House
story.

A powerful long complete story of Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff House School,



Something Diana Didn't Expect!



GOOD old Primmy," Barbara Redfern cried. "It really is a lovely idea!"

"Topping idea!" Clara Trevlyn supported.

"Yes, rather! Almost as good as anything I

could think of, you know!" plump Bessie Bunter said. "I say, have they got a tuckshop at the orphans' country home?"

Mabel Lyon laughed.

"They've got some sort of a shop, but whether it's a tuckshop, I don't know. Miss Primrose was telling me all about it this morning—and my, isn't she keen! I do hope the opening concert will be a success."

"It will—with you producing and playing the lead in it, I guess," Leila Carroll chuckled. "Still, step on it, sisters! We've a couple of miles to do yet, I guess."

The reminder was perhaps timely, for certainly Babs, Mabs, Bessie, Clara, and Leila were taking it rather easy as they pedalled along. Unconsciously they had slowed down so as to keep with dear old plump duffer Bessie, whose overweight did not make for speed in cycling. Apart from that, they had all been so busy chattering.

For the five chums from the Fourth Form at Cliff House School were bound for a new destination on this sunny half-holiday. It was a destination indicated by their headmistress, kindly Miss Primrose.

Miss Primrose, among her many other activities, was the president of a London orphanage, and it was due to Miss Primrose's efforts that that

orphanage had now succeeded in acquiring old Marsh Manor, three miles along the Eastbourne road, as a country home for its younger members.

To be sure, the official opening was still a week off, but twenty of the girls—ranging from nine to twelve years in age—were already there, in the charge of a certain Miss King, whom Miss Primrose had appointed.

In order to make the official opening a to-be-remembered event, however, Miss Primrose was organising things on a lavish scale. No less than four peers and peeresses were to be in attendance,

very pleasantly and very proudly conscious of it as she cycled along. The idea for the concert she already had—that idea being an adaptation of a sketch which had recently been performed at Cliff House.

They pushed on, bending all energies to the task of pedalling now. All at once there was a hoak from behind them, and a great black, shining car came whizzing past. As it went a slim, white-gloved hand appeared through the window, airily waving.

"Shucks! See who that was?" Leila Carroll breathed.

One of the most fascinating schoolgirl characters ever to appear in these pages. That is Diana Royston-Clarke, of the Fourth Form. Such an amazing mixture of good and bad. A girl who can be a wonderful friend one moment—a dangerous enemy the next.

Very, very happily Diana sets about arranging a concert with the younger girls of the Country Home for Orphans—until Babs & Co. cross her path. And then—Diana is the old stormy Firebrand once again!

to say nothing of a score of other celebrities, and there was to be a glorious opening ceremony, followed by speeches, followed by lunch, and—in the afternoon—a concert.

It was because of that concert that Babs & Co. were now cycling to the Marsh Manor Country Home.

For Miss Primrose, very, very pleased with Mabel Lyon's handling of the recent Junior School concert, had put the arrangements for the affair entirely in Mabs' hands.

A great honour that, and Mabs was

"No; who?"

"Diana Royston-Clarke!"

"Cutting a dash, isn't she?" Clara Trevlyn grunted.

Cutting a dash Diana Royston-Clarke, the stormy firebrand of the Fourth Form, certainly was. Diana Royston-Clarke usually was cutting a dash. Diana, at that moment, had the free use of her father's car, her father being abroad on business, and Diana liked the feeling of power and superiority the use of that car with its chauffeur gave her.

starring Diana Royston-Clarke.



SHE WANTED all the LIMELIGHT!

And Diana, had Babs & Co. only known it, was also bound for the Marsh Manor Country Home.

The contemplation of that visit seemed to be giving the haughty Firebrand much cause for delight as the car bowled on. Her glorious blue eyes were a-sparkle with delight, her pretty oval face wore its most animated, its loveliest expression. In her slim, gloved hand were a sheaf of papers, and from time to time Diana gazed at those papers and gave a rippling lilt of pleased laughter. Oh, very, very delighted and satisfied with herself was Diana Royston-Clarke.

For Diana, too, was thinking of the opening day of the orphans' country home.

Diana had thought of nothing else since yesterday, when she had made her first visit to the Home.

Though nobody was aware of the fact, Miss Sylvia King, its appointed principal, was Diana's own aunt, and though the haughty Firebrand was just a little inclined to look down on her because Aunt Sylvia belonged to one of the poorer branches of her family, she was undoubtedly glad that she had been made the principal.

Diana loved kiddies. She had already made a hit with the orphans of the Home; she was honestly looking forward to seeing them again. But Diana, as usual, was thinking more of herself than the kiddies.

With a poor-relation aunt installed as the principal of the Home, Diana had formed the idea that she could do pretty much as she liked there—and Diana, always seeking the limelight, always greedy for glory, had already made up her mind that she was going to be marvellously in the picture on opening day—that she was, in fact, just going to be head and shoulders above everybody else!

Miss King, of course, had told her all about Miss Primrose's plans for the

opening, and had also mentioned, without knowing any of the details herself, the suggestion that the kiddies should give a concert.

Diana had immediately fastened on to that. That concert, she vowed, should be organised by herself. She, queening it with the children, should be the queen of the concert at the same time.

"Yoicks!" Diana laughed as she thought of that.

But now here was Marsh Manor—a picturesque, creeper-covered old house, completely renovated, lying well back from the road. As the car turned in at the drive a shriek of happy laughter came to Diana's ears, and a crowd of youngsters near the new tuckshop turned as the car stopped. And then Diana alighted.

"Miss Diana!" went up a delirious shout.

And a score of younger girls came hurtling towards her.

Diana laughed as she stepped out, her papers in her hand. Marvellously pretty she looked in her new tweed costume and her well-groomed mass of platinum blonde hair. And marvellously happy, too, as she saw those admiring faces turned to hers. Diana did so love admiration.

"Hallo!" she said. "Yoicks, what a gathering of the clans! Jenkins, take the car round," she ordered to the chauffeur. "Now, kiddies, you come with me. I've something frightfully important to tell you. This way to the tuckshop."

The girls whooped. With them flocking round her, Diana led the way. She beamed at the tuckshop mistress.

"Give the kiddies what they want, please," she said. "Lemonade, girls?" "Please Miss Diana, can I have ice-cream soda?" Jenny Wilde asked.

"Have what you like. Cakes to go with it, too," Diana said generously, for Diana received an extremely large

allowance from her indulgent father. "After that a bar of chocolate each just to keep the wolf from the door till tea-time comes. Pleased to see me?" she added, dimpling.

"Oh, Miss Diana, we love seeing you!" Jenny breathed, bursting with pride. "It seems ever such a long time since you came yesterday. Are you coming every day?" she added eagerly.

"Every day; sometimes more than once a day," Diana said. "That's fine, isn't it? Won't we just have times together! But now gather round. I want to tell you about the great idea I've got for the concert. Remember, I said we'd talk about the concert to-day?"

"Rather!"

Diana laughed as she unfolded the sheets in her hands.

"Well, here we are. I've written it," she said. "It's a fairy play, really. You're going to be fairies, you know, and I'm going to be the fairy queen. Jenny, you'll be the fairy princess."

"Ooo!" Jenny said, wide-eyed.

Diana laughed again. "And you'll all be dressed in lovely fairy costumes—"

"With wings?" little Meggy Brown asked breathlessly.

"With wings," Diana nodded. "I'll see to those. Then we shall have to start making flowers and things for the fairy garden, you know, and—oh, ever such a lot of things! But come outside and sit on the grass, and I'll tell you all about it. Bring your drinks and your cakes with you."

Eager the rush then. How the kiddies glowed! Diana, herself so enthusiastic, fired them all at once; apart from which they did all admire her so. Eagerly they rushed on to the grass, forming a circle round Diana.

By
HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

Then all at once Diana paused. Just for a second a rather disagreeable expression crossed her handsome face as five girls came cycling in at the gates. The girls were Babs Mabs, and Bessie—the famous chums of Study No. 4—and Clara, and Leila.

"Wonder," she pouted, "what they want here?" And then, as Babs saw her, and waved a hand, she briefly waved back. "Coming over to see my aunt with some message from Primmy, perhaps," she decided. "Well, never mind. Now, kiddies—"

Babs, Mabs & Co. passed on, and Diana launched on a summary of her plans. She was going to be the fairy queen, of course. She was going to produce the show. She was going to do that part of the programme appertaining to the concert. She would hire the costumes, and make all arrangements for the decorations for the stage. With delighted wonder, the children listened.

"And we'll have to have rehearsals, you know," Diana went on—"plenty of rehearsals. Some of you will have words to learn. And then there'll be three songs, the fairies all singing together as a chorus. Won't it be fun?"

Fun—yes. Diana had a way of making anything seem the most glorious thing on earth. There and then Diana insisted upon reading the play. And how they listened! Then suddenly there came a cry:

"Diana!"

It was Babs & Co. again.

"Hallo!" Diana said.
"Coming back to school? We're going."

"Thanks, I've got the car!" Diana said loftily. "Anyway, don't interrupt! I'm busy!"

Babs & Co. laughed. With a wave of the hand, they went off. Diana looked at her earnest hearers and rose.

"Well, there you are!" she said. "The only thing now is to see Miss King and fix things up with her—not, of course, that there'll be the faintest difficulty about that," she added disdainfully, as she thought of her poor relation. "Now, just wait here, kiddies. I won't be a ticklet."

She strode off across the lawn, watched by the admiring group. With a laugh on her lips she plunged into the hall of the new Home, and then suddenly paused.

A small, rather lonely looking girl, surrounded by a heap of paper flowers and odds and ends of wire, was sitting on the bottom stair of the flight which led to Miss King's study, and, as she met Diana's gaze, her little face turned fiery red. Diana smiled.

"Hallo!" she said genially. "I don't think I've seen you before; have I? What's your name?"

"Please, Miss Diana, I'm Snubby!" the little one said.

"Snubby? I say, that's a funny name!"

"Yes, miss. But that isn't my real name, you know," the little girl said. "My real name's Edith Parnell, but they call me Snubby 'cos of my nose!" And she blinked down at that squat little member, which certainly was snubby, and very freckled into the bargain. "I'm making flowers," she added shyly.

Diana smiled, touched by the earnest little face. She looked at the flowers—artificial ones made of paper and wire, of course—and then she looked again. Golly, but these were good—excellent!

There were a few lilacs, a few daffodils, some stuff, most marvelously done, which looked liked gypsophila, and must have taken hours and hours to make one small spray. Quick to appreciate any sort of talent, Diana glanced at the child again.

"But these are lovely!" she said. "Yoicks, you've got a real expert touch, Snubby! Who taught you this?"

"Please, miss, my mother! My mother and me, we used to make paper flowers and sell them in the market, you know. Then mother died, and I went into the Home; but I'm not much good at anything else, you see, so I—I just go on making new sorts of flowers because I like doing it. But I can't make any more now," she said sadly. "Cos I've got no more wire and paper, and I haven't got any money, either. Anyway, it doesn't seem much use now, does it? I shan't ever sell my paper flowers any more."

"No!"
Diana looked at her quickly. What a heart-melting little beggar, she thought. Then suddenly she laughed as a quick inspiration came to her.

"But, Snubby, I want you!" she cried. "Yoicks, I've just been talking about flowers! I want flowers—heaps and heaps—for our fairy-garden scene! Snubby, you're going on making flowers, and you're going to make them for me!"

"Oh, miss, but the—the money—"
"The money?" Diana laughed. "She opened her bag. While Snubby's eyes grew wide, she slipped out a ten-shilling note. "There you are, Snubby! Will that do? Plenty more when you've used all that up, you know; just ask me! Get what you like with that,

and make whatever flowers you think of. Make dozens—make hundreds!" Diana said recklessly, and laughed again as she saw by the look in little Snubby's eyes that she had made a new worshipper. "But don't forget to let me see them," she added.

And leaving Snubby, red-faced, and so quivering with gratitude that she just could not speak, she trotted up the stairs.

She went into Miss King's study, giving only the briefest knock before she opened the door. Miss King, a youngish woman, with a refined, scholarly face, glanced up.

"Oh, Diana, I had no idea you were here—"

"Been here some time," Diana said. "You remember talking about the concert yesterday—"

Miss King looked at her curiously.
"Well, Diana?"

"Well"—Diana laughed—"I've got it going," she said. "I've had a talk to the kiddies and arranged everything. The one thing now is for you, as principal, to give it your official consent and help me to arrange times of rehearsal. And I suggest—"

"Wait a minute—wait a minute, Diana!" Her aunt rose. "I am not aware I gave you authority to organise a concert—"

"Well—" Diana paused. "You don't object?"

"No. At the same time—" Miss King bit her lip. "Diana, I think you ought to know," she said. "but the concert arrangements have already been made."

Diana took a step back.
"What?"

"Miss Primrose has made the arrangements. That is why Mabel Lynn and her friends came over to see me. Miss Primrose has asked Mabel to organise the concert for the opening day, with Mabel herself acting as producer and taking the lead. That," she added, "is what they have just been to see me about."

Diana, for an instant, stood stock still. Very, very different the expression on her face then. Not for a second had Diana dreamed that Miss Primrose might have made other arrangements. A tide of crimson stained her features.

"And you mean to say you're going to let them do it?" she asked.

"Why not, Diana? I think Mabel is very nice. She seems to know the job perfectly. Apart from that, you must remember that Miss Primrose, as president of the orphanage, is my superior. It is her wish."

"I see!" Diana set her teeth. "In other words," she said thickly, "you're backing up Mabel Lynn? In other words, you don't jolly well want me to organise the concert? I might have expected it," she added, in a burst of unfair bitterness. "You've never liked me, have you, Aunt Sylvia—because I happen to be better off than you are, I expect. All right. Butter up to Mabel Lynn. Jolly well knuckle under to Primmy. But I mean to do this. And if"—Diana stiffened—"if I don't run this kids' concert—"

Miss King, looking at her angrily, scornfully asked:

"If, Diana?"

"Well—oh, bother you!" Diana fumed. "Anyway, Mabel Lynn's not getting away with this. Nobody's getting away with it. It's my show, and I'm jolly well going to run it, and I don't care a hoot for Mabel Lynn, Primmy—or you!" she added, almost savagely. "And just for a start," she flamed out furiously. "I'll settle matters with Mabel Lynn!"

"Diana!" her aunt cried furiously as that girl raged towards the door.

But the door went slam! Diana, the Firebrand, with every tempestuous instinct within her vibrantly alive once again, had gone.

She went in such a hurry, indeed, that she even forgot to go back to her admirers she had left congregated near the tuckshop.

The "Gate-crasher"!



TAP-tap-tappy-tap!
In Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor at Cliff House School three typewriters clicked with almost feverish industry.

Mabel Lynn, Barbara Redfern, and Leila Carroll were busy.

They were busy typing the parts of the sketch in which Mabs was to play the all-important lead and produce for the orphans' country home.

Not more than half an hour ago had Babs & Co. returned from the Country Home, but in that half-hour they had completed an amazing amount of work. There were several speaking parts to be doled out among the youthful play-actresses, and as Miss King had promised to bring them over to Cliff House for the first rehearsal after tea, no time was to be lost.

Downstairs in the music-room Clara Trevlyn and Bessie Bunter, assisted by Marjorie Hazeldene and Janet Jordan, were busy getting the stage ready, and Miss Primrose, keen as mustard on the success of the concert, had readily given permission for the three chums to borrow the typewriters from Commercial Class in order to type out the different parts.

"Nearly finished," Babs said. "About another two pages to do. How's it going, Mabs?"

"Oh, fine!" Mabs beamed.
"Me, too, I guess," Leila said, tapping away with fleet and expert fingers—for Leila was the champion typist of Cliff House's Junior School. "Like this little scene between the villain and the gipsy queen, Mabs. Sure wouldn't mind playing the gipsy queen myself if I was out out for it. But what you want for a part like that, I guess, is a girl like Diana. Somebody in mind for it?"

"I haven't decided yet," Mabs frowned as she tapped on. "But Diana would make a lovely gipsy queen. I'll have a word with her about it later. Hallo! Talk of angels!" she cried, as the door burst open. "Diana herself!"

Diana herself it was—but one could hardly talk of angels in the same breath as this Diana who now burst into the study. Crimson and furious her face. Hot foot, she had rushed from the Country Home.

Bang! went the door, as she violently slammed it behind her. The three chums stared at her.

"You—you cheat, Mabel Lynn!" Diana hit out.

"Eh?" astonished Mabs said.
"You—you thief!" Diana choked. "A fine, sneaking, crawly sort of worm you are, aren't you—going behind my back?"

Mabs' eyes flashed. She rose to her feet.

"Diana, what's the matter?"
"You know jolly well what's the matter!" Diana fumed. "Creeping and crawling round Primmy to let you produce the concert!"

"Don't talk bosh!" said Babs. "In any case, what's the concert to do with you?"

"It's everything to do with me!" Diana flamed. "I'd practically arranged the concert. My aunt—that's Miss King, if you don't know—had practically given me permission. I'd got the kiddies worked up to it, when in barge you lot!"

Mabs faced her angrily. "Diana, I didn't know what you were doing," she protested. "How could I know? How could any of us know? It was Primmy's idea, in the first place. Primmy asked me, and, of course, I said yes."

"Oh, of course!" Diana bitterly scoffed. "Trust you to say yes!" she cried. "Trust you and all this crowd to come poking your noses into something I'm doing!"

"Oh, stuff! Don't be a silly ass!" Leila said crossly. "You're behaving like a kid!" "And you shut up, Yankee!" Diana flamed.

Leila flushed. "Leila—Diana, wait a minute!" Mabs cried. "Diana, I'm sorry, really. But, look here, there's no need to go absolutely potty," she said. "What about getting together? What about us all helping each other? Thero's room for us all, D. . . And, goodness knows, I shall want as much help as I can get!"

Diana glared. Her face was bitter. She knew she was being absolutely and thoroughly unreasonable—and the fact that she knew she was being unreasonable, only made her more furious. Join up with these girls—these awful cheats? Join up and help to do the hard work so that Mabs, the one in charge, would get all the credit?

"Well, that's a jolly fair offer," Babs said warmly. "Is it?" Diana laughed scornfully. "And who had the idea first?" she demanded. "Why should I come in with you? It's my show, and you're just trying to swindle me out of it. Still, you haven't got away with it yet," she said vindictively, "and jolly well look out! The game's only just started, Mabel Lynn."

"And what," Babs asked contemptuously, "do you mean by that?"

"Wait and see," Diana sneered, and paused, glaring, and then, feeling the need for action, lifted her foot and viciously kicked the wastepaper-basket across the room, just as the door opened and Miss Bullivant came in. "You'll jolly soon see— Oh!" she added, as she saw the mathematics mistress.

"A disgraceful exhibition, Diana!" snapped Miss Bullivant. "I heard your voice downstairs, and I came just in time to witness that childish outburst of temper. You will pick up the contents of the basket."

Diana gritted her teeth. Diana, now in her worst firebrand mood, was ripe for any defiance. She stood still.

"Diana!" cried the thin-faced mistress.

Still Diana did not move. "Diana, take twenty lines for disobedience! Now refill that basket."

Diana clenched her hands.

"Fifty lines, Diana. If I ask you another time, I shall report you to Miss Primrose."

"Dash it; it's not fair!" Diana flamed out.

"Diana, take a hundred lines! Now for the last time—"

Diana saw there was nothing else for it. Sulkily she stepped forward, bad-temperedly thrust the waste paper back, and slammed the basket upright.

"Thank you! Now go!" Miss Bullivant said

Diana glared. But she went—she went raging.

Miss Bullivant shook her head as the door closed.

"A strange girl," she said. "I am glad I came in when I did. I see you are getting the parts typed out," she added more kindly. "Miss Primrose, as you know, Mabel, is very anxious there should be no hitch, and asked me to see if you require any further assistance."

"Thank you, Miss Bullivant, but we've nearly finished," Mabs answered.

"Very well," Miss Bullivant graciously nodded. "I understand the children will be arriving about five o'clock."

"Yes, Miss Bullivant," Miss Bullivant went off then, while Diana, in an unspeakable mood, raged back into her study. There she sulkily flung herself in an armchair, with glowing, smouldering eyes she stared into the empty fire grate. Those cats!

She rose presently, taking turns up and down the room. She had got to do something about this. She would do something—but what? She felt those kiddies beloved in her; they loved her; were ready to follow her; would do anything for her. It was her right to produce the concert; her right to have the credit; her right—

Then she stopped, staring out of the open window.

For up the drive were approaching those same kiddies, flocking around Miss King, her aunt. Diana paused. What were they doing here? Even as she watched, her own wrongs forgotten in temporary curiosity, she saw Babs, Mabs, and Clara & Co. come out, shaking hands with Miss King, and she heard Mabs' voice:

"Yes, Miss King, we're all ready—parts, stage, and everything. We're

going to hold the rehearsal in the music-room right away."

"Oh, thank you!" Miss King smiled. "Then can I leave the children in your care, Mabel? I am rather anxious to have a chat with Miss Primrose, and also Miss Charmant, who is an old friend of mine. I'll look you up when I'm ready to go," she promised. "Now, girls, please do as Miss Lynn asks you."

Diana drew back. So that was it: was it? Mabs was already holding her first rehearsal—in Cliff House School!

Her hands clenched, and suddenly there was a new light in her eyes. With a soft laugh she left the room.

In the music-room Mabs was impressing upon her young hearers what they were to do, when Diana came in. And at once there was a cry:

"Oh, Miss Diana!" Diana smiled.

"How do?" she said nonchalantly. "Oh, Miss Diana, we're going to do the concert!" Jenny Wilde said. "Miss Lynn's taking us. Are you going to practise for it as well?"

"No, I'm going to watch," Diana said, and took up her post near the piano. "Go on!"

Babs glanced at her sharply. She did not like that attitude of the Firebrand. But Mabs, anxious to get on, ignored her.

"Now, you've got your parts?" she said.

"Yes," Jenny Wilde said. "But please, Miss Lynn, they aren't like the parts Miss Diana gave us. We thought we were going to do a fairy queen play, you know."

Mabs bit her lip.

"Well, this—is this is different," she said, and looked at Diana, who met the look with a sneer. "This is a



"SNUBBY, you're going on making flowers," said Diana. "And you're going to make them for me!" The little orphan gazed at her. "Oh, miss, but—the money—" "The money?" Diana laughed. While Snubby's eyes grew wide, she flipped out a ten-shilling note. "There you are, Snubby!"

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woodland play—about gypsies. Jenny, you're the gipsy queen's daughter."

"She'd look much better as a fairy," Diana interrupted.

"There don't happen to be any fairies in the play," Mabs said curtly.

"Well, there ought to be," Diana retorted.

"Yes, I think there ought to be fairies, you know," little Tilda Marshall put in. "Miss Diana had fairies with wings and things—"

Mabs looked flustered.

"But you must understand," she said patiently, "that this is a different play. Miss Primrose wants us to do this, and so does Miss King. Now, please listen to me. The first scene is in a cottage. Jenny, you are sitting on the bench there doing knitting."

"Well, give her some knitting to do," Diana said.

Babs glared at her. "Jenny can pretend she's got the knitting," she said. "Bother it, this is only a run through. Can't you stop interfering, Diana?"

The younger girls from the Home paused, hardly knowing whether to obey Mabs or Diana.

"Now say your lines," Mabs went on. "But you must stop when there is a knock on the door. We'll pretend the door is the piano, you know, and I'll knock that. Diana, would you mind moving?"

Diana, screened from the kiddies, stood still.

"Rats! There's plenty of piano for you to knock on," she said. "Get on with it!"

Mabs compressed her lips. The little actresses hesitated again. Then Jenny, at a nod from Babs, commenced. Almost at once Diana herself knocked on the piano. Jenny stopped.

"No, please go on," Mabs said.

"But you said I was to stop when the knock came," Jenny returned.

Mabs glared at Diana.

"Please start again, Jenny," she said. "Now—"

Jenny again started. Again Diana knocked. Again Jenny stopped. Mabs choked a little, and Clara Trevlyn, with a gleam in her eyes, stepped round to Diana. Again they started. But this time, when Diana would have knocked, Clara seized her arm. Immediately Diana turned upon her.

"Here, what are you grabbing me for?"

"Don't you think," Clara said contemptuously, "you'd better stop playing the fool?"

"Let go of my arm!" Diana said furiously.

"Oh, please!" cried Jenny. "Don't let her hurt Miss Diana!"

"She isn't going to hurt Miss Diana," said Babs. "But I do think," she added bitterly, flaming round upon Diana, "that if you can't jolly well help, you needn't hinder. Why not play the game?"

"Who isn't playing the game?" Diana asked resentfully.

"Ahom!" There was a cough at the door. Diana swung round. They all spun, for the first time observing the figure which had stood there for the last three minutes. "Diana," Miss Primrose said—for it was she—"will you step this way for a moment?"

Diana scowled. Clara nodded grimly. But Miss Primrose's word was law, and sulkily she soughed forward. In the corridor the kindly headmistress quietly closed the door and looked at her.

"Diana, for your own sake I would not reprimand you in front of the children," she said, "but I have been watching you long enough to observe your efforts to spoil that rehearsal. I

am aware, Diana, having spoken to your aunt, Miss King, that you are labouring under some sense of grievance because you thought you were entitled to produce the play."

Diana's lips compressed. "Well, I had the idea first!" she said mutinously.

"You mean, Diana, you had the idea of organising the concert when you heard that a concert was scheduled for the opening day," Miss Primrose corrected. "If you really wished to organise a concert, your obvious duty was to come and see me, instead of plunging into the project without consulting anyone. Do you not think, my dear girl, it would be much more charitable and reasonable of you to try to help instead of hindering Mabel?"

Diana pouted. "You mean that Mabel is still to remain in charge of the show?"

"Most certainly, Diana."

"Then, thanks," Diana said bitterly. "I'm not helping Mabel Lynn to grab the credit."

"Diana, how dare you!"

"Well, it's not fair!" Diana burst out mutinously. "I don't think it's playing the game!"

"Diana, that is enough!" Miss Primrose's eyes were suddenly steely. "I think you are a very bad-tempered and very petulant girl, and since it is obvious you are in need of a sharp lesson, you may now consider yourself confined to school bounds for the next three days. That is enough! Not another word, girl!"

And Miss Primrose pointed along the corridor. "Go!"

And Diana, heart seething with bitterness, went.

Not Easy for Mabs!



"Oh, what a silly idiot Diana is!" Mabel Lynn said.

"If only she'd realise, with the influence she has with those kiddies, how she could help. Babs, do you think I'd better go

along and see her?" Barbara Redfern frowned.

"Shouldn't worry," she advised. "It will only mean another row. Let her get over it."

Mabs nodded, though a little worriedly. The rehearsal in the music-room was over, and she and Babs had just returned to Study No. 4 for prep, the next rehearsal having been fixed to take place at the Country Home on the morrow.

But the rehearsal, though it had been a success, had not gone with that swing for which Mabs had hoped. The kiddies, enthusiastic enough, had been rather disappointed by the sudden disappearance of Diana, and more than a little anxious when Diana had not reappeared. Liking the play and liking Mabs as they did, it was obvious that their hearts were all with Diana.

Neither Mabs nor Babs had seen anything of Diana since she had been called out of the music-room by the headmistress. But they had heard, of course, of her three days confined to bounds, and though there was no doubt Diana had deserved that, they were feeling rather sorry for her.

With a sigh Mabs got on with her prep. At bed-time she attempted to get a word in with Diana.

"Diana, I'd like to—" she said. "Don't talk to me—cheat!" Diana almost snarled, and turned away.

Mabs didn't. She climbed into bed. Next morning, when she awoke, Diana was already up and out, and when Mabs

saw her again at assembly Diana favoured her with a bad-tempered glare.

Afternoon came and after lessons Mabs, Babs, Clara, Bessie, and Leila again made the trip to Marsh Manor Country Home. Immediately they were surrounded by a flock of eager youngsters.

"Oh, Miss Lynn, where's Miss Diana?" Jenny Wild-asked.

Mabs flushed.

"She—she's busy," she said. "Oh, isn't she coming?" Meggy Brown asked in dismay.

"Well, not—not to-day," Mabs stumbled.

"But to-morrow?" Jenny asked eagerly.

To that Mabs did not reply.

"But she said she was coming, you know," another little girl disappointedly put in. "She said she would come every day. And she's so nice, Miss Lynn; and we do so love acting with her, you know. Please, please do tell her to come next time."

Mabs gulped. Babs & Co. looked at each other. They couldn't disappoint the kiddies by telling them that Diana would not come to-morrow or the next day.

As quickly as they could they veered the talk from Diana; and Mabs, setting the stage in the summer-house, got her cast together.

Again they rehearsed, but Mabs was conscious all the time of the undercurrent of disappointment.

The second day it was worse. Very, very gloomily disappointed were the youngsters when Babs & Co. arrived for the second time without Diana. Little Snubby, whom Mabs met for the first time, was almost in tears.

"But I've made the flowers Miss Diana asked me to make, you know," Miss Diana said she would want them for the concert," Snubby said wistfully; and Mabs bit her lip. "Miss Lynn, she—she isn't ill, is she?"

"Oh, no!" Mabs said. "Just fearfully, frightfully busy. But I'll give her your message, Snubby."

And she tried to give that message, but without success; for when she arrived back at Cliff House and went to see Diana, Diana, chafing under a sense of injury that was rapidly deepening as the days passed, simply shut the door in her face.

Third day—Mabs was almost dreading meeting the kiddies again. Still, it had to be faced; and once again her heart smote her when, arriving at the home, the little actresses showed obvious disappointment at the non-appearance of Diana. Snubby almost wept; Jenny Wilde pulled a face.

"Is—is she over coming again?" she asked. "Miss Lynn it—isn't because Miss Diana doesn't like us any more, is it?" she added in sudden alarm.

"Oh, of course not!" Mabs scoffed.

"But she said she would act, you know. She said we were going to do ever such marvellous things together. Why doesn't she come, Miss Lynn?"

"Well, she—she's busy," Mabs said rather desperately.

"But why is she busy?"

"She—she's busy because Miss Primrose has given her things to do. Now, please don't worry. Let us get on."

They got on, but it was with a certain lack of interest, a certain gloom. Little Snubby, watching the rehearsal wistfully for a time, walked to the gates, stared along the road, and then, shaking her tousled head, came back again.

Mabs tried hard, but even she, enthusiastic as she was, could not find her

best form that afternoon. The rehearsal, so far from going with a swing, was something of a flop, and both Mabs and the rest of the chums were heartily glad when it was all over. With the almost fearful "Please do bring Miss Diana to-morrow!" ringing in their ears, they mounted their machines at last and cycled away.

But as they sped off down the road a bright-eyed girl with platinum blonde hair flying in the wind came cycling towards them, making for the Home. Mabs started.

"Diana!" she cried. Diana cycled up and slipped from her machine; she smiled a little cynically.

"Hallo! Surprised to see me?" she asked, with a sneer. "Rather a shame, isn't it, that my three days of penance are up?"

"Diana, you're going to the Home?" Mabs asked.

"I am," Diana sneered. "Any objection?"

"Diana, don't be silly. I'm glad!" Mabs looked at her. "The kiddies—they've missed you, Di."

"Thanks!" Diana said shortly. "And—and," Mabs stammered, "Di, if you still feel that you'd like to—"

"To help you to grab all the glory for running my concert?" Diana's lips compressed. "No, thanks! I'll go my own way," she retorted. "So-long!"

"But, Diana—"
Diana, however, had mounted her machine. While Mabs bit her lip, and Babs frowned angrily, she pedalled off with a mocking wave of the hand. The chums, in a group, stood and watched her as she approached the Home, and then—
"Diana!"

What a joyful shriek it was which went up! And what, next moment, a scene of excitement as some twenty breathless girls fairly hurled themselves upon Diana! Mabs shook her head.

"There's no doubt," she said, "that they simply idolise Diana. Oh, Babs, if we could only get her to toe the line with us!"

"If—" Babs said, but she shook her head.

"About," Clara Trevlyn opined, with a sniff, "as useful as asking the moon to toe the line! We all know what Diana is."

And, leaving Diana to her triumph, they pedalled away, but Mabs' brow was strangely thoughtful.

RAPTUROUS, ALMOST riotous, that welcome the orphans gave Diana.

Of course, they all had to go to the tuckshop, and there Diana stood lavish treat. Then Snubby's new flowers—what a dear little soul that child was!—had to be inspected; and even Diana, knowing the skill of which the child was capable, felt astonished at the excellence of the work. Snubby smiled at her shyly.

"I did them ever so careful 'cos they were for you, Miss Diana," she volunteered. "Do you like them?"

"Like them? Snubby, you're a wizard!" Diana gurgled. "They're magic—they're marvellous! But we shall want more and more, you know. Any money left?"

Snubby flushed.

"N-no, Miss Diana."
"Then," Diana said, "take this." And this time, to Snubby's gasping and almost quivering joy, she gave her another ten-shilling note. "I love the lilies," she said. "Let's have some more of those, shall we? And some more of those roses—the yellow ones, I think. Now, anybody got any more things to see me about?"

"No, Miss Diana, but—but—" Jenny Wilde looked at her anxiously. "Oh, Miss Diana, you're going to be in the concert with us, aren't you? Oh, we have missed you!"
Just for a moment Diana's eyes flashed.

"Well, you shan't miss me again," she promised, "and I'm going to be in the concert—rather! We're still going to run that concert together, you know. We all thought of the idea, didn't we? And we'll go on now from where we left off. Jenny, by the way, when is Mabel Lynn coming to take you for the next rehearsal?"

"Please, Miss Diana, to-morrow."



ROSEMARY HOCKING (Mayle, Cornwall).—Here's a reply to your sweet little letter, Rosemary—rather delayed, I'm afraid, but I do hope you'll forgive me! Be sure to write again!

"MABS & BABS" (Kyabram, Australia).—I've already answered most of your Cliff House questions by post, my dear. Yes, Dulcia Fairbrother is still School Captain at C.H. My Alsatian, Juno, sends an outsized bark of greeting to Spot—it must be an outsized one to reach Australia, of course!

"KAY" (Liverpool).—Here's the little reply you wanted to see in our paper, Kay. I'm sorry it could not appear as soon as you wanted, but the SCHOOLGIRL has to be printed some weeks in advance, you see. You would be in the Lower Third if you went to Cliff House. Yes, the school is situated on the Kentish coast.

"CURIOUS" (Mitcham, Surrey).—So glad to hear from you, but I'm afraid I haven't sufficient space to answer all your questions here. But if you let me have your address I shall be able to answer them fully by post. Of the "Co.," Clara lives in Surrey—at Trevlyn Towers, a rambling old house which is actually on the Surrey-Sussex border.

"What time?"
"Half-past two," she said. "Miss Diana, you will come, too, won't you?"
Diana smiled. It was a strange smile.

"I'll come—oh, yes, I'll come. And—you'll all do what I want you to do, won't you?"
Jenny laughed.

"Miss Diana, we—we'd do anything for you," she said fervently.

That Diana knew well. And it was the knowledge of that which made Diana so bright and cheerful.

"Well, see you to-morrow, girls!" she cried, and dashed away.

No Pacifying the Firebrand!



MABS, Diana's just come in—looking frightfully bucked with herself, too," Barbara Redfern said. "Now's the time to tackle her! I should say. Got the part?"

"Yes, rather!" Mabel Lynn said, and gathered the sheets of paper off the table. Very busily had Mabs been writing on those sheets, for Mabs had got an idea. The happiness of the girls at the Home seemed bound up with Diana. Diana, as a useful member of

Easter Greetings to You All from—

HILDA RICHARDS

who here replies to a few of her many correspondents.

MARGARET FARRINGTON (Manor Park, London).—So glad to hear from you once again, Margaret. You certainly are a most faithful reader! I'm hoping to feature both Mabs and Marcelle in lots of future stories; you must watch for them. Write again, when you've time, won't you?

PAT CLOYD DAVIDSON (Kensington, London).—What a very enthusiastic letter, Pat! Do you know yet if you're actually to go to South America? It will be awfully thrilling if you do go, won't it? Billy must be a perfect pet. Juno sends him a pawshake, and one to you.

PAT MANN (Bristol).—Many thanks for another nice little letter, my dear. And thank you, too, for your good wishes to Juno; I know she'd like to send you a letter herself, only poor Juno cannot write! The story you read in the "Library" about Diana, actually appeared in the SCHOOLGIRL originally, and in a later story the expelled Diana was allowed to return to Cliff House.

CHRISTINE EASTWOOD (Greenland, Yorks).—You'd be an Upper Third Former if you went to Cliff House, Christine, and would go into the Fourth at fourteen. Yes, Christine Wilmer is now in the Fourth. She shares Study No. 6 with Peggy Preston and Jane Mills.

"LITTLE MADEMOISELLE" (Devon).—Thank you for a very sweet—little letter. I was unable to publish this reply immediately after I received your letter, as our paper has to be printed some weeks in advance; you will understand the delay, I'm sure. Of course I shall look forward to hearing from you again!

the cast, could make the concert the most stunning success ever. But it was no use, of course, asking Diana to play an ordinary part.

Therefore Mabs had rewritten the part of the gipsy queen. It was a big part now, with the gipsy queen on the stage most of the time, a part every bit as big as Mabs' own, though to be sure, at a pinch, it could be dispensed with altogether.

When Diana saw that, when Diana realised in that part the possibilities of her own glory, then, Mabs hoped Diana, her pride completely satisfied, would be sensible.

Diana, meantime, was striding into the school, laughing, happy. It made her glow to think of the kiddies at the Home—and to think of that dear, aloof, little Snubby, who could neither act nor sing, but who had a simply magic touch in making those wonderful artificial flowers. The kiddies loved her; the kiddies wanted her; the kiddies should have her. And the concert—

Diana's eyes flashed a little as she thought of that. Undoubtedly the kiddies still thought that she was the prime mover in the business; thought because she had been kept busy at school, that Mabel Lynn had just taken over temporarily on her account.

Diana had not disillusioned them, for Diana still meant, somehow, to claim the credit for that concert, to be the prime and only mover in its success.

In the dormitory she changed into her school uniform and trotted down to her study. Margot Lantham, who shared it with her, was not present. Dropping into the armchair, Diana started making plans. Suddenly the door opened. It was Mabel Lynn who appeared.

Diana immediately stiffened. "Well, what do you want?" she rapped.

"Di, take it easy," Mabs said. She produced a sheaf of papers. "It's about the concert, Diana."

"Well?"

"I— I thought," Mabs went on, "that if you'd like a part in the play, Diana—"

Diana looked at her quickly. "What sort of part?"

"Well, a biggish part—the biggest part, I should say, next to the lead. I'm playing that, you know. I've specially written it in. Here it is."

Diana paused. For a moment a flush of curiosity showed in her face. She stretched out a hand.

"Let's look," she said. Mabs handed the part over, breathing a little sigh of relief. Diana took it. She skipped through it, her eyes glimmering a little. Then she looked up again.

"I see," she said. "And if I take this part—I said if, you know—what about the rest of the show? Are you going to hand everything else over to me?"

Mabs stared. "Di, you know I couldn't do that," she protested. "Oh, for goodness' sake don't shout for the moon. I've written that part specially for you—"

"As a sort of sop," Diana sneered, "to make sure of your own triumph! You know jolly well you can't run the play on your own. You know jolly well that as far as those kiddies are concerned you don't just count. But I do, don't I?" Diana went on. "If I'm in the thing the kiddies will do what you want them to do, and then you're the one who gets all the credit!"

Mabs flushed. "Diana, that's not fair. I don't care about the credit."

"No? Then why not back out?" Diana sneered.

Mabs looked a little exasperated. "Really, Diana, this is silly!" she cried. "Are you going to take the part?"

"Are you going to back out?" Diana pressed.

"No."

"Right!" Diana's face flushed. "Then here's my answer, Mabel Lynn. I won't take your beastly part! That," Diana cried, and with the sudden violence which so often blazed to the surface in her thwarted moments, she turned impulsively, and with a contemptuous

flick of her wrist tossed the part on to the fire. "That for your part!"

"Diana!" almost shrieked Mabs. "Diana, you—you—"

And just in the nick of time she desperately dashed forward, snatching at the sheets as the flames commenced to lick them. Then she blazed round.

"Diana, you—you—awful!"

"Get out!" Diana snarled.

"You ill-mannered—"

"Get out!" Diana cried.

And she rushed at Mabs and pushed her furiously by the shoulders. Next second—

Slam!

Mabs, breathless, humiliated, crimson, reeled against the wall in the corridor, and the door of Study No. 10 shut in her face.

She Could Be So Generous!



WHILE Diana—

Really, that was too bad. Really, she was a bit of a pig! It was characteristic of the stormy Firebrand that she was immediately

sorry for her actions. After all, Mabs had been jolly decent; Mabs must have gone to no end of trouble to write that part for her. And she—

Diana scowled—not this time at Mabs, but mentally at herself. She almost went off there and then to tell Mabs how sorry she was.

But quickly that impulse was stifled when Diana thought again of all that Mabs was doing—all that she herself had intended to do. And:

"Eshaw!" thought Diana. "To the dickens with Mabs!" Mabs was no friend of hers! While Mabs persisted in stealing her laurels, Mabs, like any other enemy, must be stamped out.

Mabs, meantime, walked slowly off. She did not go back to Study No. 4, knowing how indignant Mabs would be when she heard of what had happened. That would mean, of course, another row with Diana—with Mabs, this time, as Diana's enemy—and Mabs was sick of rows.

Diana, indeed, half-expected Mabs' return, reinforced by Babs and perhaps Clara, an old enemy of the Firebrand's. The evening wore on, and nothing happened, however.

At bed-time she saw Mabs, and remembered again, and then, finding herself in the act of flashing a half-apologetic smile, hastily turned that smile into a scowl.

Morning came. Diana avoided Mabs and Babs and all of them. After lessons she phoned up her home at Lantham, now entirely deserted except for Jenkins, the chauffeur, who was also acting as caretaker, ordering him to bring the car round to Cliff House School after dinner. Dressed in her most impressive finery, Diana stepped into the car after that meal.

"Marsh Manor Country Home!" she ordered Jenkins.

"Yes, Miss Diana," Jenkins said. The car whizzed away. Shortly after two o'clock Diana reached the Home, and, dismissing the car outside the gate, sauntered up the drive.

The grounds were deserted then, for the orphans were just finishing dinner, and Diana scowled a little petulantly when she found no one ready to shriek a greeting to her. She made her way to the tuckshop, and then she stopped as she saw the little girl who was just emerging from that place.

"Snubby!" she cried. "Mum-Miss Diana!" Snubby stuttered, tongue-tied with delight.

Diana laughed. "Hallo!" she said. "How are the flowers going on, Snubby?"

"Oh, fine, thanks, Mum-Miss Diana! And—and I've got ever such a lot of your money left!" Snubby said, worshippingly eyeing her. "Don't you look lovely!" she breathed.

Diana laughed again. Praise was like a tonic to Diana. She looked well—yes. She knew she looked her best in her new coat, with the dyed ermine collar, and the brand-new suede handbag. All the same, she was conscious of the heat; for if the coat was smart, it was also just a trifle too hot for the decidedly mellow weather.

"I know I feel warm," she said. "This awful coat! Phew!"

"But I think it's a lovely coat!" Snubby said. "And I think it's a lovely fur it has on it, too, you know! I wish I had a fur like that!" she said obviously. "I've always wanted a fur collar!"

"Have you?" Diana asked. Then she paused, a sudden gleam in her eyes. When Diana was pleased, as she was now, Diana could be almost preposterously generous. "And supposing, Snubby, I gave you the fur collar of this coat," she asked, "what would you do with it?"

Snubby's face turned fiery red. "Oh, Miss Diana, I'd put it on my coat! But you—"

"Got a pair of scissors?" Diana asked.

"Yes, of course. But—"

"Give them to me."

Snubby shook her head. "Funny Miss Diana! But she carried a pair of small scissors, and these she fished out. Diana, with a chuckle, removed the coat and took the scissors.

"Oh, Miss Diana—Snubby almost screamed as she saw what she intended to do—Miss Diana, you'll spoil your lovely coat!"

But Diana only laughed again. Diana was spoiling that lovely coat. Snip, snip, snip! went Snubby's scissors, and off came that beautifully dyed ermine collar. While Snubby held her breath and stared with wild eyes, Diana laughingly threw the severed collar towards her.

"There we are!" she said. "Yours, Snubby! Now sew it on to your coat, and mind you make a good job of it! I shall want to see it, you know," she added.

"But—but—" Snubby stuttered.

"Well, take it!" Diana said. "Don't stand staring at it! It's really for you, you know. And it's real dyed ermine, and it cost no end of money. Now go and find the others, Snubby. Tell them I'll be waiting for them in the tuckshop."

Snubby's cheeks burned. If she loved Diana before, she worshipped her in that moment. Almost scaredly, as though even now she was dreaming, she stared at the dyed ermine in her hand, and then, her eyes shining, darted away. Diana looked after her and laughed.

"Dear kid!" she murmured.

She turned towards the tuckshop, to be greeted by a bright smile from Miss Mimms, the good lady in charge of the establishment. Hardly had she got into conversation with the tuckshop keeper, however, than there was a rush of feet, and a dozen eager, breathless young forms burst into the shop.

"Miss Diana!" Jenny Wildo screamed. "Oh, Miss Diana!"

"Oh, hallo!" Diana laughed. "Come in, all of you!" she invited. "I've got an idea!"

"But, Miss Diana, where's Miss Redfern and Miss Lynn?"

"Oh, those!" Diana shrugged. "Never mind them. I'm taking you to-day," she said. "Now, look here, I've got the loveliest idea! You all want to rehearse, don't you?"

"With you, Miss Diana?" Meggy Brown asked eagerly.

"Of course! With me. I'm in charge." Diana laughed again. "Well, we're going to take some cake and chocolates, and some ginger-beer and things, into the woods, and have a lovely little picnic while we do it! How's that for a treat?"

How was it? The kiddies looked excitedly at each other.

"Oh, when? Now?" Jenny asked. "Yes, now—at once!" Diana affirmed. "Don't worry about telling Miss King. It will be all right. Now, come on! Everybody's got to carry something, you know!"

The kiddies laughed, breathless with delight. Diana ordered ginger-beer, lemonade, chocolates, and cakes, and, filling each small pair of arms with bottles or bags of some sort, she led the way out of the grounds, her worshipping flock clustered at her heels. And as she went she chuckled.

In another quarter of an hour, Mabs and Babs and the rest would be here. What a blow for them when they found their little actresses gone!

Diana Goes Too Far!



"I TRUST, Mabel, that rehearsals are going quite well?" Miss Primrose asked graciously.

"Oh, yes, thank you, Miss Primrose," Mabel

Lynn said. "We're just off for another one now."

"And the children—they are enjoying it?" Miss Primrose asked.

"Yes, rather!" plump Bessie Bunter chipped in.

"I am glad." And Miss Primrose smiled. "The happiness of those girls is very dear to me, Mabel, and I do want you to know how much I appreciate all that you and your friends are doing. Er—" She paused. "I trust, Mabel, that Diana has not been interfering again?"

"Mabs gushed a little.

"No, Miss Primrose."

"Very good. Well, my dear, you had better be off, hadn't you—and please give my kind regards to Miss King and my love to the children. Any suggestions you have to make, Mabel, or assistance you may require—do not forget to call upon me. I am very, very anxious that nothing should mar the success of the concert."

And Miss Primrose, with a gracious nod towards Mabs, Babs, Bessie, Clara, and Leila, who had forgathered in the quad preparatory to setting out for the Marsh Manor Country Home, strolled off.

"Nice old Primmy," Leila said. "Sure does look after those orphans. Well, better step on it, sisters; we've none too much time."

That was true. Thanks to Bessie, who had spent a rather overlong time in dining-hall, they were already late. Time was growing scarce now. With no more than two or three more rehearsals to be fitted in, the great opening day would be here.

Thank goodness the costumes had already been altered and the scenery for the stage erected. It all rested now with the youngsters themselves.

They set off. It was nearly ten past two when they came in sight of Marsh Manor, its grounds strangely deserted. Mabs frowned a little.

"Hallo, where are they?"

"Better look inside," Babs suggested. They went inside. But in the big recreation-room there was no sign of the kiddies. They went outside into the garden at the back. Still no sign of them. Mabs frowned.

"Funny!" she said. "Where the dickens— Oh, here's Miss King! Perhaps she knows where they are. Miss King—"

"Good-afternoon," that lady said, approaching. But she looked a little surprised. "I understood you were rehearsing, Mabel. Where are the children?"

Mabs blinked. "Well, that's what we're trying to find out."

"You mean they are not here?"

"No," Mabs said.

"Strange." Miss King frowned a little. "They were all told there would be a rehearsal this afternoon. I haven't seen any of them since lunch-time. I really thought that you were all in the throes of rehearsal somewhere in the grounds. But wait a minute; little Snubby is in the classroom doing some sort of needlework. Perhaps she knows where they are. Let us go and ask her."

She moved off. The chums followed her.

They reached the class-room, where little Snubby, her face eager and earnest, was bending over her coat, stitching away as though her little life depended upon it. She jumped up with a start as the Cliff House five and Miss King entered.

"Snubby, my dear, where are the others?" Miss King asked.

Snubby blinked.

"The—the others?" she said.

"The other girls," Miss King said, just a little anxiously. "They are supposed to be here for rehearsal."

Snubby coloured a little. The others, she knew, had gone off with Diana; she sensed the annoyance in Miss King's voice. And perhaps, with a flash of instinct, she saw trouble in the offing for her lovely and adored Miss Diana.

"Well, I don't know."

"No?" Babs started as she looked at the coat upon which Snubby was working, and suddenly she understood.

"Snubby, did Diana give you that ermine?" she asked.

Snubby turned red.

"Well, she—she told me I could have it," she faltered. "She cut it off her own coat herself."

"Meaning," Babs said, "that she has been here. I saw Diana stepping into her car. She was wearing the coat with that collar on it. Snubby, have the others gone off with Diana?"

"I—I've been sewing," Snubby evaded.

The chums looked at each other. Clara's lips compressed. The fur collar told its own tale then. Diana, obviously, had been here, and because Diana had been here the orphans were no longer present. Miss King looked angry.

"Snubby, where did you last see Miss Diana?"

"In—in the tuckshop," Snubby faltered.

"I see. Girls come along. I think it is perfectly obvious what has happened," said Miss King. "Diana, learning you had this rehearsal on, has taken the children away. We will ask Miss Mimms if she knows anything."

Mabs was looking dismayed. It was getting on for three o'clock now, and she had hoped to run through the sketch at least twice before tea.

Along to the school shop they

tramped. There Miss King repeated her questions to Miss Mimms. Miss Mimms, at least, had none of the scruples which possessed the loyal little Snubby.

"Why, yes; they all went into the woods together," she said. "Miss Diana took them off. I really imagined, Miss King, that she had your authority. She certainly gave the children to understand that she was taking the rehearsal in Mabel's place."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Clara.

Miss King looked furious. It was like high-handed Diana to take off every girl in the place without her permission.

"We'll go to the woods," she said.

Mabs groaned. The afternoon was slipping—slipping. Oh, what an idiot Diana was!

Without further ado they set out for the nearby woods. There was only one footpath which threaded its way through those woods, and Miss King rightly guessed that Diana and her little friends would be found quite near it. They came upon them, indeed, far sooner than they expected. A girlish shriek of happy laughter guided them to the spot.

In a little clearing there was Diana. Round Diana the kiddies were scattered. And Diana, sitting upon the sawn-off bole of a tree, was directing operations with a twig she held in one slim hand, while the kiddies, lined up, were dancing together, evidently to Diana's instructions. They all looked brightly happy—brightly excited.

"And now I say: 'The magic hour of midnight comes.' I wave my wand like this. You trip on," Diana was saying. "Jenny, as the fairy princess, you still lead, of course. Don't forget the little curtsy when you approach the queen, you know!"

"Oh, no, Miss Diana! Will you wave your magic wand now?" Jenny asked earnestly.

"Right!" Diana lifted the twig. "Now off we go!" she said. "The magic hour of midnight comes. . . ."

"Diana!" cried Miss King.

Diana jumped round. The kiddies paused. Into the clearing strode Miss King, followed by Babs, Mabs, Clara, Bessie, and Leila. Diana rose.

"Diana, what do you consider you are doing?" Miss King rapped.

Diana's eyes glimmered.

"Well, what does it look as if I'm doing?" she asked resentfully. "Ask the kids! We're rehearsing, aren't we?"

"Yes, rather!" Tilda Marshall put in. "And it's fun, Miss King. Diana's the fairy queen, you know!"

"Thank you, Tilda, don't go into details," Miss King said. "I am speaking to Diana. Diana, you knew very well that Mabel Lynn was taking this rehearsal!"

Diana's lips curled.

"Well, I've relieved her of the job!" she retorted.

"You had no right," Miss King said. "To do anything of the sort! This is gross interference, Diana! Children, you will immediately come back to the Home with me!"

The children paused, looking at Diana, from Diana to Mabs and their principal. Jenny Wilde pouted just a little disappointedly.

"But, Miss King, we're having such fun!" she protested. "And we do like Miss Diana's concert, you know! Oh, please let us stop!" she begged.

"You will come back with me," Miss King said quietly. "Diana, I shall be obliged if you will remain behind. Children, at once!"

The orphans hesitated, looking towards Diana. Diana clenched her

to "She Wanted All the Limelight!"

hands. If the kiddies had been enjoying her treat, Diana had been enjoying it no less so. She had done wrong, she knew, but she did not care.

"Wait a minute," she said—"wait a minute! Everybody seems to be able to say what they like in this business except the two important parties. I'm one. I thought of the concert; the kids are the other; they're acting in it. Well, ask them now who they prefer to act with!" Diana challenged. "Let's have a bit of fair play!"

"Diana, do not be ridiculous!" Miss King said sharply.

"I'm not ridiculous. Ask them!" Diana repeated. "Go on, ask them! Let's put it to the vote!" she cried recklessly. "Kiddies, listen to me! Who would you rather rehearse with—Mabel Lynn or me?"

"Diana—" cried Babs. "Well, go on! Speak up!" Diana cried. "Let's see who's the real leader!"

There was a murmur from the youngsters. They were looking at Diana, faces flushed. Half a dozen hands upraised at once. No need to wonder who they would vote for if it came to a showdown.

But Miss King, really angry now, caught hold of Jenny Wilde.

"That is enough!" she cried. "Enough! Children, I forbid you to lend yourselves to this farce! Jenny, stand there! Now, please, all line up behind Jenny!"

"Are you going to put it to the vote?" Diana stormed.

"Most certainly I am not going to do anything of the sort!"

"Oh, Diana," sighed Mabs anxiously, "why don't you—"

"Shut up!" Diana snarled.

The kiddies looked at her sympathetically. Miss King, her temper spent, lined them up and gave Jenny the quick march, and slowly, disappointedly, they filed forward. Diana slouched after them.

"Diana, I do not wish you to accompany us!" Miss King rapped.

"I suppose I can walk through the woods if I like?" sneered Diana.

Miss King glared, hesitated, and then walked on. Diana kept in the rear of the little party until they reached the gates of the Home. Then she put on a spurt.

"Children, go to the classroom—at once!" Miss King ordered. "Mabel—Barbara and you other girls—will you please follow them?" Diana, she said, "if you intend to defy me, I warn you that I shall report you to Miss Primrose!"

"Well, think I care?" Diana sneered. "Please go!"

"I won't go!"

Miss King set her lips. She caught the gate. Diana stepped forward.

"Here, what are you going to do?"

"I'm going," Miss King announced, "to shut you out. I warn you, Diana! You are trying my patience too far! I have no wish to report you, you know that; but I will not tolerate your interference further!"

For a moment Diana wavered. This—this upstart! This awful poor relation! Talking to her like that! She was going to shut her out, was she! As the principal caught the gate, Diana caught it, too.

"No you don't!" she gritted.

"Diana—"

Diana pushed one way, Miss King the other, both enraged now, both crimson with humiliation.

"Diana, how dare you! Let go!"

Miss King cried.

Diana gritted her teeth. Then suddenly a gleam sprang into her eyes.

Abruptly she released her pressure, and Miss King, not expecting that, thudded rather heavily against the gate. Diana tossed her head.

"Well, you asked for it," she said. "Anyway, I will go now—but of my own accord—not because you asked me!"

And, turning, she lounged off down the road, while her aunt, quivering with rage, with indignation, stared after her.

Mabs' Sacrifice!



BUT Diana did not go back to Cliff House. Just a trifle ashamed of the trick she had played on her aunt, but with her mood still bitter and stormy, she went into

Courtfield.

There she spent the afternoon in the cinema, treated herself to tea, and somewhere about six started back for Cliff House School. In the meantime, however, Mabs was almost distracted.

For the rehearsal, in consequence of the events of the afternoon, had not been a success. The kiddies were rather apprehensive, rather miserable. They had been having such a jolly good time with Diana.

"It's no good," Mabs said, going home. "For once we've just got to hand it to Diana. She handles those kiddies better than I do. They like her better; they'd do anything for her, I believe. Babs, if we want to get the best out of this concert, there's only one thing to do."

"And that?" Babs asked.

Mabs shrugged.

"Take Diana's advice. Hand the whole thing over to her."

"And let her do all the crowing?"

Clara grumbled. "My hat!"

"It's not a matter of crowing. It's a matter of making the show a success."

Mabs pointed out. "I don't want to hand over—of course not—but Primmy will be frightfully disappointed if things don't come up to what she expected. I'm going to see Primmy. I'm going to ask her to let Diana take over. It will be better all round in the long run."

Clara scowled. Leila looked sceptical. Bessie suggested that, if anybody else was going to take over, it should be her; but Bessie, of course, was not heeded. But Babs shook her head. Bitterly opposed as Babs was to knuckling under to the Firebrand, there was no doubt that Mabs was right.

Even at the cost of climbing down to Diana it was unthinkable that Miss Primrose's so-called forward-to opening day should not be a success. And Mabs went, as soon as they reached Cliff House, to see Miss Primrose.

The headmistress listened very kindly—but not, Mabs felt, very enthusiastically.

"I see. I understand," she said. "If Diana had conducted herself with a little more restraint over the whole business I might be inclined to agree; but Diana is a wilful, a headstrong, a jealous girl—"

"But, Miss Primrose, don't you see?" Mabs pleaded. "It's not just a case of giving it to Diana. Whatever you may think of her, there's no doubt that all these kiddies love her. They'd do anything for her. They do their best for me, of course; but it's easy to see that there's not the same enthusiasm. Let Diana take over, and I'm sure the concert will be the success of the day."

Miss Primrose gazed at her curiously.

"And you would not mind, Mabel?" "Well, Miss Primrose, of course I mind as far as having to give up the whole thing is concerned; but I do feel, like you, that we have got to put the Home and the kiddies first—"

Miss Primrose's face softened.

"A very, very unselfish sentiment, Mabel. I admire you for it. At the same time—" She paused again.

"Well, I am still not sure. I will give it my consideration."

"But, Miss Primrose, can't you make up your mind—now?" Mabs earnestly pleaded.

"It depends," Miss Primrose said. "If I have no further bad reports of Diana—yes, perhaps. Anyway," she added graciously, "you may tell Diana that you have spoken to me about the matter. You may tell her that when I have considered it, I will send for her. But—Oh, excuse me!" she added as the phone bell rang. "Yes—yes!" she cried into the receiver.

Mabs smiled. With a sense of having lifted a weight from her shoulders, she left the room. Well, that was that, she thought. She tripped down to the Fourth Form corridor, was just about to push open the door of Study No. 4, when who should come tramping along the passage but Diana Royston-Clarke herself.

Diana scowled as she saw her. Mabs stood in her path.

"Diana, would you mind coming into the study a moment? I want to speak to you."

Diana paused.

"So?" she retorted. "Well, jolly well give your orders somewhere else—cheat!"

"It's about the concert," Mabs said levelly—"about," she added quickly, "your taking the arrangements over. I've been talking to Primmy—"

Diana stared incredulously.

"Taking over? Me?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Oh!" Diana said, and the fire faded from her face then. She felt, all at once, just a little ashamed of her attitude. "Oh!" she mumbled. "All—all right, then."

And she stepped into the study—deserted, as it happened, Babs and Bessie being in Study No. 7 along with Clara Trevlyn, Marjorie Hazeldene, and Janet Jordan.

"I've seen Primmy," Mabs reported.

"I've asked her, Diana, to let you take over—everything. That means, of course, that Babs and the rest of us will still be in the play, but we'll be acting under your orders now. Primmy's going to have a word with you about it."

Diana stared at her. Her face went red—red with shame now. For a moment she felt mean and small, and, somehow, rather contemptible. She knew what it must have cost Mabs to do that.

"Well—" she said.

"Well, what?" Mabs asked.

"Oh, I don't know—just well—"

Diana shrugged irritably. "I'm a cat, a beast!" she broke out. "Mabs, I'm sorry—really. I—I had no idea—"

She paused. "You're not leading me up the garden?" she added, with a swift flash of suspicion.

"Diana—no! Don't be an idiot!"

"Well, I'm grateful. I—I couldn't have done what you've done!"

"That's O.K.," Mabs said quietly.

"But, Diana, no more silly tricks."

"None at all, old thing," Diana said humbly.

Mabs smiled. Well, that was that.

Diana went off, eyes shining now, face flushed with triumph, feeling, all at once on top of the world. She had got what she wanted. She, not Mabel Lynn, was going to be the big noise at the concert. She was going to get the credit. She was going to run the show. Yoicks! What a triumph, after all!

She was singing when she went into her study; with a light laugh she tossed her hat and coat on one side.

Tap! There was a knock at the door. In response to Diana's gaily sung "Come in!" Sally, the maid, entered.

"Oh, please, Miss Diana, Miss Primrose would like to see you," she said.

"Thanks!" Diana purred. "I'll be with her in a brace of shakes!"

And she flung a comb through her platinum blonde hair, looked at her very attractive reflection in the mirror, and with the step of one who goes to receive the world she had magnificently conquered, stepped out of the study and along to Miss Primrose. Supremely confident, she walked into the mistress' sanctum.

"You sent for me, Miss Primrose," she said. "I think I know what for, and—well, it's awfully nice of you!"

The expression on Miss Primrose's face did not suggest, however, that she was going to be very nice to anyone at that moment.

"Diana, sit down," she said, rather grimly.

"Certainly," Diana said, and brightly smiled. "It was very good of you, Miss Primrose—and very sporting of Mabel Lynn."

"Diana," Miss Primrose said, "I have not sent for you to tell you that you are to take charge of the concert—"

Diana started.

"No? Then who—"

"Mabel Lynn," Miss Primrose said flintily, "is still in charge of that!"

"But Mabel said—"

"I know. But perhaps Mabel did not tell that there was a condition," Miss Primrose's lips compressed. "The condition was, Diana, that I received no bad reports of you in the meantime. As Mabel Lynn left the room I received a report from your aunt, Miss King—"

Diana stiffened.

"It is a report," Miss Primrose went on, "which I cannot overlook. It is a report which has filled me with considerable anger, Diana. Miss King has told me how you insulted her this afternoon after trying to ruin Mabel's rehearsal."

Diana's lips set then; her hands clenched. Aunt Sylvia—that pauper—she had meant her threat, then! She listened in almost incredulous silence to what the angry Miss Primrose had to say. Just when everything she had fought for was within her grasp, this hateful woman must reach forward and snatch it out! The cheek of it. The pauper aunt of hers to report her—

"And for that, Diana," Miss Primrose said flintily—"for that, I forbid you to have anything more to do with the girls at the Home. The Home is out of bounds to you. You will interest yourself no more in its activities. And if"—she frowned—"if, Diana, you attempt to disobey me in this, I shall send you home. Now go!"

"But—but—"

"Go!" Miss Primrose said. "At once! Tell Mabel Lynn I want to see her."

"To hand the part back to her?" Diana asked thickly.

"I have never yet said that I would take it from her. I only promised,"

Miss Primrose said, "to consider your

taking over. Well, I have considered that now, Diana, and definitely you will have nothing further to do with the activities of the Home. Go!"

Shaking, conquering only with the greatest effort the desire to slam the door, Diana went out. Fooled! Beaten! Mabel Lynn, after all, triumphant. The concert to go on without her. But should it? A vengeful light lit up the Firebrand's eyes.

No, it shouldn't. It jolly well shouldn't. If she was out of it, then everyone else should be out of it, too. She'd teach her telltale, sneaking aunt a lesson. She'd let Primmy see if she could get all her own way with Diana Royston-Clarke! Let them wait—just let them wait!

She went back to Mabs, who looked up eagerly as she came in, and then, recognising the storm signs in Diana's face, she stared.

"Diana, what—"

harsed—trying to explain to the most desperately disappointed Jenny Wilde, little Snubby, Maggy Brown & Co. why Diana was not, after all, taking the brilliant part she had promised.

In spite of their disappointment, the orphans worked with a will, and Mabs, because she felt that the whole thing rested upon her shoulders now, worked harder than she had ever worked in her life before. Mabs, at least, was sparkling.

At the end of the second day—that day having seen the last rehearsal, for the great opening ceremony was to take place on the morrow—Babs said:

"Mabs, don't worry, old thing. It will come all right. With you in the play, it can't help but come all right. You're wonderful! We should all count our lucky stars that you're taking the part! Play up to-morrow as you've never played up in rehearsals, and you



"HERE'S my answer, Mabel Lynn!" cried Diana. "That for your part!" And she tossed the sheets of paper on to the fire. "Diana!" almost shrieked Mabs. "Diana, you—you—"

"Primmy," Diana ground out, "wants to see you!"

"But, Diana, what's happened?"

"Oh, go—go and find out!" Diana raved, and this time she did vent her feelings by slamming the door.

Hang Primmy—hang them all! But she'd spoil that rotten concert yet. If she couldn't take charge, she'd jolly well see that nobody else did. Somehow she'd put a spoke in that. She'd make them all sorry before she'd finished, that they'd ever dreamt of crossing her path.

Strange Diana!



TWO days—two harassing, worrying days for Mabel Lynn; two black and bitter, brooding days for Diana Royston-Clarke—passed.

For the greater part of those two days Diana was in an unspeakable temper.

And Mabs, in those two days, re-

just can't help but make the thing a success."

Mabs smiled. But she sighed. How much better the thing could have been if the kiddies had only found in her the same sort of inspiration they found in the presence of Diana. If Diana, for instance, was only there on the morrow.

But Miss Primrose was firm. There was to be no quarter for Diana Royston-Clarke. Diana, she declared, had sacrificed even the right to be present as a spectator at the great ceremony.

Meantime, Diana, vengeful and bitter, was making plans. If she couldn't run that concert, no one else would, she vowed, and because the whole success of the show depended upon Mabel Lynn, she had got to strike her blow at Mabel.

That went rather against the grain, remembering what Mabs had tried to do for her. But so far as Diana was concerned, it just had to be.

On the morning of the opening day she approached Mabel Lynn. She was frowning a little, and was hating her

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



Here is an Easter letter from your friend PATRICIA. In it she chats about things to interest schoolgirls—all in that chummy way so typical of her, and which has given her so many schoolgirl admirers.

A HAPPY EASTER to you all, my chicks!

Can any of you tell me why it is that we never, by any chance, say "A Merry Easter," as we do a "Merry Christmas"?

Easter is always Joyous, Bright, or Happy, but never "Merry," for some reason.

Anyhow, I do wish you all a joyous, bright, and happy time.

Don't eat too many hot cross buns on Good Friday, will you? I simply adore these things, but goodness, how indigestible they can be when they are eaten piping hot!

So eat them very slowly if you're eating them straight from the oven, remembering Gladstone (I think it was) and chew each mouthful forty-eight times. Then there'll be no tummy-aches to spoil the week-end for you.

● Boiled Eggs

I expect you'll have a boiled egg for breakfast on Easter morning, won't you? We always do in our family—and have done ever since I can remember. They are all coloured, too.

Mother used to colour these herself with mysterious dyes, but nowadays, the shops sell them in various hues, so there's no need for her to do that.

Have you ever noticed the different ways people have of opening an egg?

Some people batter it very, very carefully on top, and then peel off the shell most gently with the bowl of the spoon, placing all pieces on the side of the plate.

But my father makes more of a ceremony still. He insists on placing every scrap of egg-shell into his egg-cup.

This tidiness was a bit of a mystery to me, considering he is such an untidy man in other ways—until I realised that he does it because he hates bits of shell to become mixed up with his neat little pile of salt.

Another way of tackling an egg, is your Patricia's way. I take my bread-and-butter knife, and strike the egg sharply, so that the top comes off in one piece. Then I scoop the egg out of this, before tucking-in to the rest of it.

Father also likes bread-and-butter cut thin with his boiled eggs—he has two! My young brother, small Heatherington, or Heath for short, likes bread-and-butter, too. And it must be cut into "soldiers" for him.

While the rest of our family, that is, nether, big brother Brian, and your Patricia prefer toast.

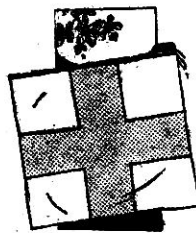
So there you are. You'd never believe

that people could have such different little habits just over a humble breakfast egg, would you?

● First-Aid

Now that we are all A.R.P.-minded, this little first-aid bag in the picture is the very thing for you to make to take to school, Guides, or out hiking.

You need a piece of material measuring 10 inches by 5. Fold it in half and sew up the sides, and sew a zipper along the top. Cut out a cross of red material and sew this on to the front.



In it you can now hold essential first-aid requirements, such as iodine, bandage, safety-pins, lint, and so on—and so be always ready in an emergency.

● Difficult Words

A very famous commentator on the films has compiled a list of words which he thinks are the most difficult to pronounce in the English language.

One of them is anaesthetist; another is esoteric; and another philosphocracy.

They're not easy to pronounce, are they? Anaesthetist is pronounced "an-ess-theo-tist." Esoteric as "ess-o-ter-ic" (with the second "e" as in "echo.") And philosphocracy is pronounced "phill-osoph-okrassy."

I won't tell you what they all mean, because I was always taught that 'tis good for you to look up word meanings in the dictionary. You are supposed to remember meanings more that way.

Though I confess, that when I go to look up the meanings of words, I become so fascinated by all sorts of other words and their meanings, that I quite forget the word I am supposed to be in search of!

● Poor Juno

Oh, I must tell you about Miss Hilda Richards' dog. (Now don't any of you dare say: "Who is Miss Richards?") Most of you know that she has a really wonderful Alsatian as a pet—named Juno.

And Juno honestly is a perfect darling. Everyone adores her, and say they have never met a dog—and particularly an Alsatian—as gentle and sweet-natured as she is. (To which Miss Richards always says, it is the way that dogs are brought up that makes their nature. And I think she's right, don't you?)

Well, Juno gave all her friends and admirers a frightful scare the other day.

One of her hind feet started to swell until the paw part was almost as big as a grapefruit.

Miss Richards was frightfully upset, as you can guess, but thought it must be a sprain. So she bathed the leg, and waited a day to see if the swelling would go down. It didn't—and so the vet. was called in.

He was very clever and said at once that Juno had a poisoned foot, and that an abscess was forming.

The poor pet was in frightful pain and couldn't use that hind leg at all. Miss Richards was told to bathe it three times a day in hot, salt water.

This she did—and now the abscess has burst. And do you know, Juno doesn't even whimper when this bathing is being done, though you can imagine how painful very hot water—with lots of salt in it—must be to a wound, can't you?

Anyhow, young Juno—she still seems a very young dog, though she is over six now—is progressing splendidly, and sends paw-shakes to all her admirers.

She says, too, that it wasn't really so bad, because everybody was so kind to her, and kept asking how the "poor paw" was—and you know how dogs like to be made a fuss of!

● A Smart Belt

Tiny waists are all the fashion again, you know. So don't forget your toe-touching exercises. For this is very waist reducing.

In the picture is a belt that you could make yourself from an oddment of velvet that mother might have to spare from her piece-bag. It is in the very newest corset-style—wider in the front, with lacing instead of the more usual buckle fastening.

Cut the velvet about 4 inches wide at the side, and up to about 6 in the front, making it long enough just to meet around your waist. Make six eyelet holes down the front, and through these thread cord, or velvet ribbon to tie there.

A narrow velvet bow at the neck of your dress, or one of cord to match the belt, would give even the simplest frock a new and up-to-the-minute look.

Bye-bye now, pats, until next week!

Your friend,
PATRICIA.



A SPRING-TIME PROBLEM

All about those horrid "spots" that can spoil the schoolgirl's complexion—especially at this time of the year.



WERE going to be very serious this week.

Because, you see, this is all about those wretched blemishes—spots—that will spoil a schoolgirl's complexion.

In great-grandmamma's day it was the custom for all the young people of the family to have a jolly good "dosing" in the spring-time. "It purifies the blood," grandmamma would say as she tacked out brimstone and treacle—or liquorice powder.

And it wasn't such a bad idea, either, for most "spots," especially spring-time ones, can be cleared away almost like magic, by this good old method.

Once you know that the "inside" is clear and fresh, then you've made a very sound start towards beautifying the complexion. But, of course, you must keep up the good work. Not by taking more and more doses. Oh, no!

You can keep the tummy clean and fresh and the blood pure, by drinking lots of water—between meals—cutting out some of the sweets that you (and all of us!) enjoy so much, and eating extra fruit instead. And also by exercise. This is Nature's very own way of keeping us fresh and fit and beautiful—and Mrs. Nature is very wise and still knows best!

But I'm going to pretend now that you have some stubborn "spots" that seem to refuse to go away. And of course, something must be done about them.

BLACKHEADS

First we'll tackle those unlovely things—blackheads. They are just what they sound, spots with a black head. They tend to come at the sides of the mouth,

or beside the nose, where the skin is a little more greasy.

Now these simply must be removed, one at a time. But you must use care and common sense.

First you must open the pores of your skin so that the blackhead can be removed easily.

To do this, hold a towel over your head, and keep your face over a bowl of very hot water. (The towel over the head is to make a sort-of tent that will prevent the steam escaping.)

After two minutes of this, place your fingers under a clean piece of rag, and gently squeeze at each side of the blackhead. Press gently, and it will all come out.

Treat each blackhead like this—very gently, let me stress again; otherwise you will bruise the skin and leave marks—and then— Burn that rag!

Now come back to the bath-room. Give your face a good wash with soap and water, and then rinse by splashing vigorously with cold water. You may even dab a spot of eau-de-Cologne with your finger to those places where the blackheads were—but not to your whole face, please.

PIMPLES

Pimples are a different form of skin blemish, which cannot be removed in the same way as blackheads. These are generally more of a rash, and can be very distressing.

If they are very bad, then I do suggest that you speak to mother, and you both consult a doctor about them. But if they are not very bad, then pimples will respond to home treatment.

But first you must buy yourself a rubber nail-brush—price threepence, and a bar of extra-good complexion soap.

For goodness sake, don't buy a tablet of highly perfumed soap—that would do no good at all. Consult your chemist, and he will suggest one that contains iodine, sulphur, or other skin-healing properties—and I think you will have to pay at least sixpence for this. (But it will be worth it, for if you save it for your

own use, and only for your face, it will last ages.)

Once a day, you should lather your rubber nail-brush with this special soap and water that is just warm, and rub your face where the pimples are, with it. Use a round and round movement, pressing only lightly, but rubbing briskly.

Then rinse your face with warm water to remove the soap. Afterwards splash it with cold water to which you can add a spot or so of eau-de-Cologne (Not the expensive sort, but the "bath variety," which is quite cheap.)

A dab of calomine lotion, or sulphur ointment applied to each spot at bedtime, will help in removing any that are particularly big or stubborn.

INNER CLEANLINESS

Good as these external "treatments" are, I cannot exaggerate the value of that "inner cleanliness"—wise eating, lots of water to drink, and plenty of exercise. They form the very essence of good health and a lovely skin and clear complexion. When "spots" and blemishes do arise they are Nature's warning that all is not well within.

But if you help her to put things right now, then in a week or so your complexion should be spot-free and radiant, ready to welcome all the lovely, sunny days that are in store.



To the Girl Who Thinks She's Too Short:

YOU'LL LOOK TALLER

—IF you point your toes slightly as you walk. The flat-footed girl always looks shorter than she actually is.

—IF you avoid wearing light-coloured belts on your dresses. Have gay ones, by all means, but beware of pale blues and pinks. Instead, choose royal blues and fuchsia shades.

—IF you keep your school girdle at your natural waistline; never rather low on your hips.

—IF you wear dresses with a fairly straight skirt. Stick-out pleats, and circular skirts will make you look shorter.

—IF you have plain, high necklines, with a neat collar on your summer

dresses. Square and V necks will only break the line of your dress, and take away from your height.

—IF you wear hats with a turn-back brim (for out of school) that show your hair line in front. Off-the-brow hats, they're called.

—IF you avoid big puffed sleeves.

—IF you avoid trimmings that go roundwards. Keep to those that run downwards—always.

—IF you wear a full-length "swing," or swagger coat. The unbelted styles are very slimming and height-giving.

—IF you do not allow your dress to show beneath your coat.

—IF you do not comb your hair too flat on top. Comb it loosely backwards if you have any waves there. Or make some curls as a "top-knot" if you haven't.

—IF you wear bolero jackets and those that come just to the waist. They will suit you better than those that are hip-length, or that in-between length.

—IF you steer clear of large, floppy bows at the waist of your "best" dress. Wear a bow at your neck by all means, but keep to plain things around your "middle."

—IF you select out-of-school stockings that are fairly dark in tone. Choose them in deep sunburn, or in soft shades of London tan. These make the legs look slimmer and longer, while "flesh-tinted" ones with much pink in, are definitely plump-making.

—IF you walk "tall"—that is, with your chin tucked in but your head well up as if trying to touch the sky. You'll feel good that way, too.

(Continued from page 11)

self for the part she was playing. Diana, so strangely ruthless in so many other directions, did not like playing the hypocrite.

But she had steeled herself now.

"Mabs, you're going over to the Home?" she said.

"Oh, Di, yes! I—I wish you were coming, too!" Mabs said.

"Thanks!" Diana looked away. "Well, I'm not allowed to—you know that. But there's something you can do for me, if you will—something I—I promised I'd let the kiddies have. It's at my home in Lantham. Would you come with me and fetch it? It won't take long by car, and I've already sent for it. Will you?"

"Di, of course!" Mabs said softly, and Diana again had to steel herself against the sympathy in the other's eyes. "But—but aren't you gated?"

"Oh, rats to the gating!" Diana said. "Come along now, will you? We'll meet the car in the road."

Mabs nodded. Down to the gate she walked with Diana—just as the car came up the road. Without a word, Diana bundled her into it. Strangely moody and silent she was as the car sped on its way. In just under an hour they reached Redlands, and Diana, taking the key from Jenkins, opened the door.

"All right, Jenkins, you wait here," she said. "Mabs, this way. Will you come up to my room?"

Unsuspecting, Mabs nodded. She followed Diana, her eyes shining with admiration as she observed the magnificent appointments of Diana's home.

Diana led the way up the stairs to her own bed-room—a luxurious little apartment which was in the topmost room of the tower. She held the door open.

"Come in!" she said.

Mabs entered.

"What a lovely room!" she breathed. "Oh, Di, aren't you a lucky thing! Di, I say—" And then she turned quickly as the door snicked to behind her, and there came the sound of a key turning in the lock outside. "Diana!" she cried breathlessly. "Diana, what is—"

"I'll let you out later," Diana said, from the other side. "Sorry, Mabs! Don't want to do this. But the only way I can mess up that concert is by keeping you out of it. Rotten trick—but then, I've had rotten tricks played on me. Bye-bye! Make yourself comfy!"

"Diana!" Mabs shrieked.

But Diana was running down the stairs then. Mabs yelled again.

Diana reached the hall. Quickly she hurried through it and out into the drive. Jenkins, the chauffeur, stared as, breathing a little heavily, she climbed into the car.

"Miss Diana, what about Miss Lynn?"

Diana glared.

"What about minding your own business?" she snapped. "Don't ask questions. Take me back to Cliff House—quickly! And, Jenkins—"

"Oh, yes, miss?"

"When you've done that, go back to Courtfield and spend the day at your working men's club. If I want you again I'll phone you up there."

"Yes, miss. But Miss Lynn—"

"Miss Lynn," Diana retorted, "is all right. Now get along."

And she flung herself into the car, her eyes burning. Well, that was that! If she couldn't have the triumph of the concert, nobody else should.

at Cliff House, stopped as Babs and Clara came running towards her.

"Well?"

"Diana, have you seen Mabs?"

"Why should I have seen Mabs?"

Diana scowled.

"But we can't find her—anywhere! And it's time," Babs said, almost desperately, "to go to the Home. She—she seems just to have vanished!"

Diana sneered.

"Well, expect me to shed tears?" she mocked. "Rats to Mabel Lynn, and you—and the rotten concert! I'm not Mabel Lynn's keeper!"

"Nico-tempered child!" Clara growled, and grimaced after her as Diana rather hurriedly strode on into the school. "But where the dickens is Mabs, Babs?"

Babs shook her head. Where? Not only she, but Primmy wanted to know that. Leila, Bessie, and Marjorie wanted to know it, too. Already Miss Primrose's car was waiting to take them over to the Home, and even as they gazed at each other, Miss Primrose, looking very animated and excited, approached. She looked at Babs.

Barbara, have you found Mabel?"

"No, Miss Primrose."

Miss Primrose frowned anxiously.

"It is very annoying—very vexing," she said. "I thought Mabel understood that she was coming along with us? Still, we cannot wait. Perhaps she is already at the Home?"

"And—and— Oh, dear, Miss Primrose, supposing she isn't?" Bessie stammered.

"Then," Miss Primrose said, "I am sorry, but as the concert all depends upon Mabel, we shall have to dispense with it. But do not let us meet disaster before it occurs," she added. "No doubt Mabel is already there. Hurry, now, my dears!"

Hurry they did; but not without dismay. Babs knew that Mabs would never have rushed off to the Home without warning her chums. Something had happened to Mabs. But what? Unthinkable to disappoint those kiddies! Yet, without Mabs, where were they?

Not one of them could take Mabs' part. If there was no Mabs there was unquestionably no concert.

They reached the home, gaily decorated and glistening in the morning sun. Most of the guests had already turned up, and the ground was alive with fashionably dressed people, who all came flocking towards Miss Primrose as she alighted. But of Mabs there was no sign.

"No," Miss King said, when they told her, "I have neither seen nor heard of Mabel. Oh, I do hope," she said, "she will not be late. The concert is scheduled to begin just after lunch, and we have a heavy day's programme to get through."

"Oh, Miss Redfern," little Snubby said shyly, "is Miss Diana coming?"

"I—I'm afraid not," Babs said gently. "I'm sorry, Snubby!"

"And Miss Lynn—isn't she here, either?" Snubby asked.

"No, Snubby."

"But if Miss Lynn isn't here, how can we have the concert?" Jenny Wildo wanted to know. "Oh, Miss Redfern, do say she'll come!"

Babs worriedly bit her lip. How could she say that?

"Miss Redfern," Snubby asked wistfully, "are you sure Miss Diana won't come?"

"Snubby, I'm frightfully sorry, but—"

"Well, she did promise to see my flowers, you know," Snubby said. "And she ought to see them now. If

Miss Lynn isn't coming, couldn't Miss Diana take her place?"

"Snubby darling, I—I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you don't understand," Babs gulped. "You see—"

But Snubby turned away—perhaps to hide the tears which were in her eyes. While the anxious youngsters clustered round the chums, alternately asking now of Diana and then of Mabs, and looking frightfully disappointed and almost tearful when they heard that if there was no Mabs there would probably be no concert, Snubby drifted forlornly away.

"But Miss Diana said she'd come!" she told herself. "And she will come!"

She went into the hall. There the stage on which the concert was to have been held was covered by curtains. Snubby clambered on to it, and then stood looking about her, the tears springing to her eyes. And certainly the stage looked lovely, covered as it was with bright paper flowers, every one of them made by Snubby's own hands.

Snubby gulped.

"And now—and now she'll never see them!" she whispered chokingly. "And if Miss Lynn doesn't turn up they'll never be used. I—"

And she shook her head. Then, with another choked little sob, she turned.

But as she trailed down the steps of the stage she paused. And a new gleam in her wistful little eyes seemed to suggest that an idea had found its way into Snubby's mind.

"Well, I hope," Diana Royston-Clarke bitterly sneered, "they're getting on with it all right!"

She stood in front of the window of Study No. 10, staring into the grounds of Cliff House.

The morning was fine, and hot with the gleaming sunshine that radiated from above. But the grounds were strangely deserted for a whole half-holiday, and so was the school, everybody, apparently, having gone off to the Marsh Manor Country Home to share in the joyful celebrations of opening day.

A sort of savage satisfaction filled Diana.

Well, here she was, penned up. But she had got her way. Let them make merry at the Country Home. Nobody should steal her concert. She had put paid to that little account, at all events.

She turned away. Well, they had asked for it. They had got it. Bad luck on poor old Mabs, of course, but, after all, it wasn't because she bore Mabs any ill-feeling. Of what would happen when she freed Mabs she did not give a second thought. Diana, in her present mood, just didn't care.

There came a tap at the door.

"Oh, come in!" Diana growled.

The door opened, slowly, nervously. A white little face peered in. Diana straightened with a jerk.

"Snubby!"

Snubby it was, looking almost scared. "Snubby, what—what—" Diana said, and then stared at her. "Snubby, you silly kid!" she cried. "You're crying!"

"Oh, Miss Diana—" Snubby gulped.

"Come here! My goodness, what's the matter?" And Diana's cheeks suddenly burned, realising that she had completely forgotten this little girl. "Snubby, what's happened?"

"Oh, Miss Diana—" Snubby said, and cried softly. "Miss Diana, I—I had to come and see you. They say there won't be any concert, you know—"

"DIANA!"

Diana, walking up the drive

Diana's expression altered slightly. "And—and all the girls are ever so sorry. Jenny's crying." Snubby wept on. "And Miss Diana, I've made heaps and heaps of flowers, and the stage looks lovely, and nobody will ever see them now if—if there isn't going to be a concert, will they? You haven't seen them, Miss Diana."

Diana's face worked curiously. Snubby! This dear kid. Scheming her revenge, she had forgotten all about this lonely, wistful little girl. This girl with the deftly clever fingers who so worshipped her. Snubby—Jenny—all those jolly kids. In hitting back at Primmy she was disappointing these, was breaking Snubby's heart. Oh, what a cat, what a pig. Why had she never thought of this?

"And—and oh, Miss Diana, I know you can do something," Snubby said. "Can't you come and take Miss Lynn's part? If you could, then we can have a concert. Then everybody will see my flowers and everybody will be ever so happy, you know. Miss Diana, can't you—please?"

"And—and you came over here to ask me that?" Diana asked—her voice sounding thickly unreal in her own ears.

"Yes, Miss Diana, 'cos you're ever so clever and lovely, and I know you can do something," Snubby said, with touching faith. "If anybody can save the concert, Miss Diana, you can, can't you?"

Diana did not reply. To Snubby's astonishment she walked to the window. She could save the concert—but could she, could she? Oh, what a cat she was—what a spiteful pig, so intent upon her own little potty triumph that she could let this kid down and a score of others with her. She turned.

"Miss Diana, will you—can't you do something to save the concert?" Snubby asked. "Oh, please—"

A lump rose in Diana's throat. "Snubby!" she choked.

"But, Miss Diana, you can, can't you?" Snubby pleaded. "Oh, what are you doing?" she added in wonderment, as Diana, feverishly snatching at her fountain-pen, started to write on a sheet of paper.

The Firebrand's face was fierce all at once. She did not reply. Instead she wrote rapidly and feverishly. Then, folding what she had written in an envelope, she looked at her wrist-watch and gave the missile to Snubby.

"Snubby," she said, "take that. Take that to Miss Primrose and tell her I sent you with it."

"Yes, Miss Diana; but the concert?"

"Leave the concert to me!" Diana said. "But now hurry, Snubby—hurry! I'm going to be busy, old kid!" she added softly.

"Oh, Miss Barbara, won't there be a concert?"

"Miss Barbara, hasn't Miss Lynn come yet?"

"Miss Barbara, what are we dressed up for if there isn't going to be a concert?"

Babs looked almost haggardly at her chums.

The scene was the wings of the stage, and there, hoping against hope, Babs had already dressed the orphans in their costumes.

Less than a quarter of an hour before the concert was due to commence, and of Mabs, though they hustled high and low, though they had phoned here, there, and everywhere, there was still no sign.

"Please," she said, "don't worry. Something may happen. We mustn't give up hope. I'm sure Mabel will do

her best to get here. Oh dear!" she added as Miss Primrose appeared.

"Barbara, have you found Mabel yet?"

"No, Miss Primrose."

"There are barely fifteen minutes before the concert is due to start."

"I—I know, Miss Primrose."

Miss Primrose shook her head. "I am sorry—very, very sorry," she said, "but I'm afraid, Barbara, we cannot hold out any longer. Events are running strictly to time-table—we are, in fact, a little behind already. I really think, my dear, that we had better call the concert off. Disappointed as I am, it is the only reasonable thing to do."

"But, Miss Primrose, g—give her just five more minutes, you know," Beasie stammered. "M—Mabs is sure to come."

"Very well. Five minutes only. Come and see me, Barbara, on the lawns at the end of that time."

And Miss Primrose rustled away.

told me to tell you— Oh dear!" She thrust an envelope into the amazed Miss Primrose's hands. "Read it!" she cried. "Read—go on!"

"Why, bless my soul!" Miss Primrose said. "From Diana, you said? But how— And then she slit open the envelope. "What is this?"

"Miss Primrose, what is it?" Babs cried.

"I do not know. Extraordinary. I do not follow at all." Miss Primrose looked amazed. "Diana says: 'Miss Primrose, do not cancel concert until you hear from me.' But how," Miss Primrose wanted to know, "may I hear from Diana when Diana is—"

"Here!" cried a voice. "What? Bless my soul! Diana!"

Miss Primrose exclaimed. Diana it was—Diana, leaning out of the window of her father's magnificent car which had suddenly swept up the drive. Diana waved an arm. Quickly she opened the door and stepped out,



"MISS DIANA, will you—can't you do something to save the concert?" Snubby asked. "Oh, please—" A lump rose in Diana's throat. Spitefully she had plotted against the concert for her own ends, and had completely forgotten what that concert meant to the little orphan who so admired her.

The chums groaned. Mabs—Mabs—where was Mabs? The minutes ticked off, however, and still no sign. Clara flung out her hands in despair.

"Well, it's all over," she said. "Washout! Blessed if I know what's happened, but we've got to face it, Babs. Better go and tell Primmy."

Some of the younger orphans, hearing that, began to cry. Hastily Babs darted off towards the lawns, where Miss Primrose was already climbing on to the platform to address the guests. She looked at Barbara and nodded.

"And now," she said, "I must announce a rather disturbing piece of news. In five minutes time we were to have held a concert. But thanks to the disappearance of—"

"Miss Primrose!" piped an eager voice.

"Eh? I beg your pardon!"

"Miss Primrose—please!" And breathless little Snubby came pushing forward. "Miss Primrose, Miss Diana, she—she told me to give you this. She

handing out another girl at the same time. And then what a shout went up.

"Mabs!" almost screamed Babs. "Mabs! Hurrah!"

"Mabel! Bless my soul!"

"Here she is!" Diana shrugged. "I locked her up. I've brought her back. I wanted to spoil the concert, and I would have done if it hadn't been for Snubby. I forgot the kiddies, you see, Miss Primrose."

"What? Diana, you—you mean to say you—you kidnapped Mabs?"

"I did!"

"How dare you, girl!" Diana shrugged.

"Well, I dared! And I've undared! Let the rotten show go on!" she said recklessly. "I don't care what happens to me! I'm sorry—not about the concert, but because I was cat enough to forget the kiddies, and Snubby in particular! Mabs, beat it—quickly! They'll be waiting for you."

"Diana, after this you will go home!" Miss Primrose said furiously.

But Diana shrugged. In that moment she honestly did not care. For Snubby's sake, she had undone her deed. Snubby was happy and satisfied. Now Mabs, after all, could have her triumph—that triumph which should have been hers; and while Mabs was rushed off by Babs & Co., she followed them with unshowering eyes.

She was a fool, of course—a sentimental, sloppy idiot. She ought to have been deaf to Snubby. She'd have been sent home, in any event. Now she was to be sent home, without even the satisfaction of knowing her plan had succeeded.

"Diana, I will attend to you after the concert!" Miss Primrose said stoically. "I do not think I ever heard a more reckless, more disgraceful story! Ladies and gentlemen, the concert, after all, will take place!" she added. "Will you please adjourn to the school-room?"

There was a movement. Diana moved aside. Well, here she was—to witness another's triumph! Here were the well-dressed, wealthy, and notable visitors whom she had planned should see her triumph, walking off now, with many a curious glance towards her, in the direction of the school-room! She was a fool—a fool!

A little hand slid into hers; a little face, beaming, with eyes of worshipping admiration, looked up into hers.

"Oh, Miss Diana, you—you're marvellous!" Snubby breathed. "You do lovely things, don't you? Miss Diana, it—it's all right now, isn't it? And they'll see my flowers, and we shall have the concert, and all the girls will be so awfully glad if you go and watch, that they'll be ever so clever! Come and see, Miss Diana!"

The little hand—snug, warm, confiding—was compelling. Diana allowed herself to be tugged forward. Almost without realising how she got there, she found herself seated in the school-room gazing at the curtain.

The band struck up. The curtains moved aside, and then everybody sat still, gazing with admiration at the floral-decorated stage.

And what a mutter went up! Little Snubby blushed shyly.

"Miss Diana, I—I made them—for you!" she said.

"Snubby, you wonder!" Diana breathed.

Marvellous—marvellous they were! And what groupings—what effects! It made her tremble, somehow, to feel the swift quiver of pleasure that ran through little Snubby's frame—this girl she had almost forgotten, almost betrayed.

But now on came Mabs, with the little, costumed orphans at her heels. Now she found the orphans gazing at her—saw their faces suddenly light up. And somehow a great peace fell upon Diana.

She smiled.

The youngsters saw the smile. Happiness radiated from them to the Firebrand. Wonderingly, admiringly Diana watched the play. With her eyes upon them, the orphans were inspired, and even Mabs was amazed.

The play went on faultlessly, clearly. The audience murmured, and Diana smiled again. Oh, it was good! It was fine! Mabs—well, dash it all, Mabs was just the one for this. Mabs was really splendid. Fancy ever trying to spoil a show like this!

Then—crash! The last word spoken, the curtains swished together. There came a burst of applause, and the curtains went back again. Then came a cry.

"Author!"

Mabs, blushing, bowed.

Lady Courtfield arose

"A very, very excellent performance!" she said. "Please allow us all to congratulate you, Miss Lynn! But we would like to know," she added, "where you got your most beautiful artificial flowers?"

"Snubby!" called Mabs.

"Go on!" Diana nudged.

Snubby, blushing and confused, was led to the platform. She got up.

"Please, ma'am, I did them!" she said breathlessly. "But I'd never have done them if it hadn't been for Miss Diana—Miss Diana Royston-Clarke! She paid for them all, and she told me what she wanted; and I'd never been so clever if I hadn't wanted to please Miss Diana, the same as all the other girls did their best acting because they wanted to please Miss Diana! You see, we all love Miss Diana so much!"

"Yes, yes!" came the orphans' eager cry.

Lady Courtfield smiled.

"I really think," she said, "that we should have Miss Diana on the platform. She really seems to be the heroine here. Miss Royston-Clarke," she added, smiling round, "will you kindly say a few words?"

Diana, unaccountably confused, stumbled to her feet. There was a pause.

"Well, there's little to say," she

mumbled, "except that I'm sorry for being the glory-grabbing cat I am! I—I'm glad now if I have helped to make the show a success, and jolly sorry to have ever wanted to do anything else! And now," she added, glancing with a touch of her old defiance at Miss Primrose, "I'm willing to go back to school and take my medicine!"

Miss Primrose, who had been listening to Diana, rose. She smiled.

"Diana, there is going to be no medicine," she said. "I have just been talking to Mabel Lynn, who has expressed the wish that this affair should be forgotten. I want to thank you instead, my dear, for your interest in these children, and for your courage in the last moment of undoing what you had done. I only hope, Diana, that you will give me your word of honour that you will not interfere in the affairs of the Home in future without my permission. Do you give that word, Diana?"

"Yes!" excited Snubby cried.

Diana smiled prettily.

"Snubby," she said, "has spoken for me. I give you my word, Miss Primrose."

"Which," cried Babs, "calls for another three cheers. Hip, hip—"

And the cheers, to Diana's blushing confusion, were given with hearty good will.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

THRILLING, INTRIGUING TIMES FOR THE FAMOUS CLIFF HOUSE CHUMS WHEN THEY MEET THE—



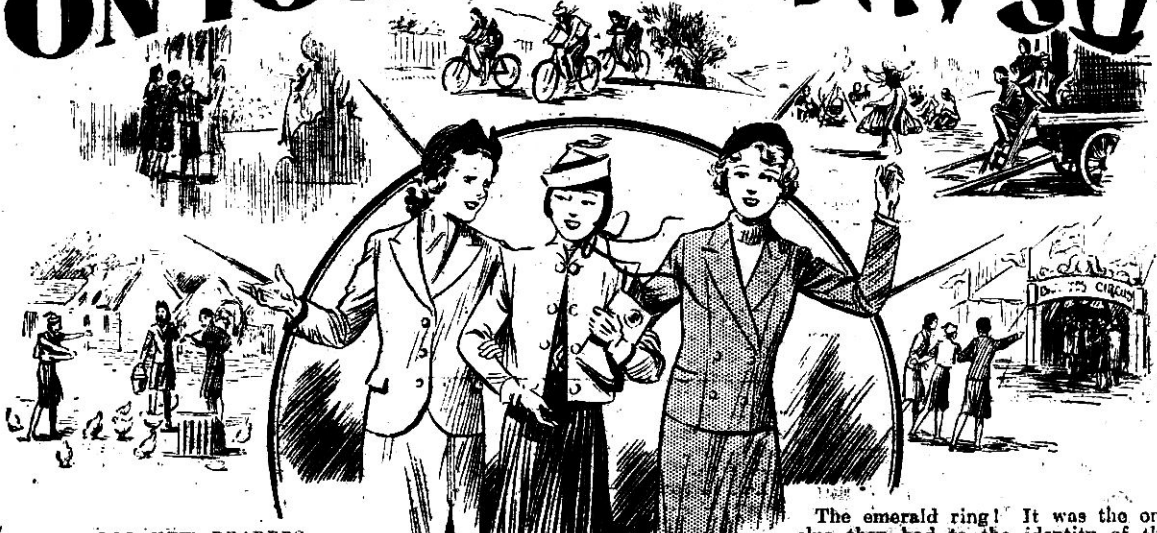
One moment, Barbara Radfern & Co. were making merry in true picnic fashion, carefree, gay, light-hearted. The next—they had been plunged into drama, and a moment later, the most puzzling of mysteries.

WHO	was the Mystery Girl of the woods?
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ON TOUR with YIN SU



FOR NEW READERS.

MAY JOLIPHANT, a cheery English girl, and her less daring chum, **DAPHNE YARDLEY**, have the task of conducting around England a quaint, high-spirited but most likeable Chinese girl, **YIN SU**. Yin Su's governess is apparently too ill to accompany the girls. After various adventures, they discover that a mystery woman wearing an emerald ring, whom they call **MADAME X**, is scheming against them. They join a dancing troupe who are short of members. Yin Su's Chinese dance will save the show, but a note is delivered warning her not to appear. May believes the mystery woman sent it. A governess, **MISS SIMPSON**, comes to take charge of them. May is sure she is a dupe of Madame X. But after the dancing show Yin Su is taken away by her. May looks over a fence they have climbed.

(Now read on.)

"Got You, Miss Simpson!"

ANXIOUSLY May Joliphant looked over the fence opposite the stage door of the Theatre Royal. But she saw at once that Yin Su and the mystery governess, Miss Simpson, might be almost anywhere concealed in the tangled undergrowth. For on the far side of that fence was neglected land, a building site, which no one seemed to want. It had been allowed to become a jungle.

"Can you see them?" asked Daphne anxiously.

"Not a sign, and I shouldn't expect to," answered May worriedly.

When May had heard that the mystery governess and Yin Su had been seen climbing that fence, she had hoped that she would see them. But the hope was rudely dashed. There was no sign of them at all, nor trace of their having been there.

"Oh, May!" groaned Daphne in despair. "Where can she be? Just fancy that governess having the nerve to kidnap Yin Su! And fancy Yin Su going with her!"

It was amazing, for Yin Su was anything but simple-minded, and she could not easily be deceived. She must have been told some cunning story.

"We can search that plot of land, of course," said May, dropping down from the fence. "But if Miss Simpson was kidnapping her, I can't believe that

they'd stay there. If you ask me, she told Yin Su some yarn about them being followed, and scared her; otherwise why should Yin Su willingly climb the fence?"

It had all happened suddenly. While Daphne and May were finishing their dance on the stage with the rest of the Novelty Nine, Yin Su had gone back to the dressing-room to change out of the elaborate Chinese frock in which she had performed with such success.

Daphne and May, for once, had not been alarmed about her safety. In the theatre she had seemed completely secure. When, therefore, they had found on returning to the dressing-room that she was not there, the shock had been tremendous. And when next

At last the Chums know their Governess' Secret—she WAS engaged by Madame X, their Enemy!

they had heard that a Chinaman had sent her a note—and that almost immediately she had disappeared with the governess—they had drawn the inevitable conclusion. Yin Su had been kidnapped!

"To think," said May bitterly, "that that governess fooled me. I was so sure that she was just a mutt, a complete goop. But this proves I was wrong."

"And she was really engaged by Madame X?" asked Daphne, looking blank. "But, May, if you knew that, why ever didn't you suspect her?"

May groaned. For the first time, she explained everything to Daphne, how she had met Miss Simpson at the station, and realised—or thought—that she was a flustered, incompetent woman.

"Then she mentioned that the woman who had employed her was wearing a ring—"

"But if Miss Simpson was kidnapping her, I can't believe that

The emerald ring! It was the one clue they had to the identity of the mysterious woman who had crossed their path again and again.

"Oh, May, fancy your being taken in!"

May's cheeks showed colour then, and she could have kicked herself for her folly.

"She—she didn't admit that it was an emerald ring the woman had," she said in self-defence. "Just a ring. I guessed it might be, and then—after all, that letter I collected from the post office, telling me that Miss Simpson was coming as our governess, must have come from Miss Vesey—"

"Yes, but don't you see?" asked Daphne, surprised that she was proving brighter than May in this matter. "They kidnapped the real Miss Simpson, and this cunning woman took her place. That's what it means."

May and Daphne were silent for a moment. They were still in their stucco frocks, and thus attired they could hardly go in chase of Yin Su, even supposing that they had a clue more tolltale and conclusive than that she had climbed the fence.

"We'd better get back and change," said May briskly. "Then we'll explore that plot, and see where it leads to. They obviously are not there still. Most likely they climbed the fence on the far side—took a taxi, and now—"

She shrugged. Yin Su and the governess might be anywhere.

They turned towards the stage-door, and had walked a yard when a sound at the fence caused them to turn; it was a clattering sound, as of someone trying to climb it from the far side.

May, signalling to Daphne, ducked low and tiptoed forward.

A face peered over, and with a thrill of excitement the two girls recognised Miss Simpson! They hardly breathed as they crouched there, and May's face was grim. She looked at Miss Simpson now with new keenness. Before, she had wanted to giggle when she looked

BY **ELIZABETH CHESTER**

at the flustered face, at the lace-nez glasses twisted at an angle, at the wisps of hair strizzing out from under her hat; but now May took another view of Miss Simpson. She saw something sinister in her.

Miss Simpson scrambled on to the top of the fence. She had not noticed the two girls, and was muttering to herself.

"I know I shall ruin my stockings. Oh dear, oh dear!"

She fell rather than climbed over the fence. She was so clumsy and inept that, even now, May had the feeling that this could not be acting. But the feeling passed, and she concluded instead, that this clowning, as it seemed was deliberate. It meant that they had been seen.

"Got you, Miss Simpson!" cried May, suddenly springing forward.

"What have you done with Yin Su?"

So amazed was the governess that she toppled over on to their side, and

in a moment May had seized one arm and Daphne the other.

The governess did not struggle; she screamed. But only until she saw who it was held her. Then all her resistance waned.

"May," she fattered shakily. "Oh, how dare you! What a shock you gave me! Oh dear, oh dear! But quick!" she ended in desperate, urgent tone. "Over the fence."

May gave a grim laugh, devoid of amusement.

"Oh, no, we don't, Miss Simpson!" she said. "You got Yin Su that way; but we've seen through you."

"Get over the fence!" insisted the governess. "I came back to get you."

"And we've got you. We're holding on to you, too," said May fiercely.

"Where is Yin Su?"

"Yin Su? She is safe—thanks to me," retorted the governess. "Have you seen the Chinaman?"

"Chinaman? No," said May, still

grim. "And you're not going to scare us with any yarn to make us follow you, either. You're coming into the theatre with us, too."

The governess looked from one to the other, amazement in her eyes, and then annoyance, as she failed to throw off May's tight grip on her arm.

"Really! This is preposterous, Maud—"

"Oh, don't fool!" said May curtly. "My name is May, not Maud, as you very well know. There's no need to bluff any longer, Miss Simpson—if that's your real name, which I doubt. The game is up. Either you bring Yin Su back, or else we take you straight to the police."

The governess did not reply; but looked at May intently, and from her to Daphne. Then, with her free hand, she took a folded piece of paper from the pocket of her coat and held it to May with a gesture that was almost contemptuous.

"Very well, if you are quite dense, May," she said. "Read that."

"What is it?"

"The message to Yin Su—the message from the Chinaman."

May eyed the governess warily, thinking that this might be a trick to get free; for she could only open the note by releasing her hold of Miss Simpson.

"Daph, you open it," she said. Daphne unfolded the note and frowned at it.

"Read it," commanded Miss Simpson. "It will prove that I have been shielding Yin Su—and you two girls as well—from peril!"

The Truth at Last!

DAPHNE looked at the note, frowned, and then looked up at the governess. The note was written in Chinese characters, and, not knowing even the meaning of one character, the message conveyed absolutely nothing to her.

"I can't," she said. "It's in Chinese."

"Oh!" exclaimed Miss Simpson in dismay. "Oh dear! Is it really? I didn't know. I haven't read it. Yin Su told me what it said. Apparently it asked her to meet someone outside the theatre—a Chinese. And—"

She broke off, went limp, and then whirled round so suddenly that she tore her arm free from May. With a spring, she clutched at the fence. But before she could escape May had her again.

"No, you don't!" said May in triumph. "Hold her, Daphne!"

Miss Simpson gave a cry of alarm.

"Look out! The Chinaman!"

May, looking in the same direction as the governess, suddenly gasped. For approaching them, turning the corner from the main entrance to the theatre into the courtyard, was a tall Chinaman.

"Oh!" murmured May.

"Leave this to me," whispered Miss Simpson shakily.

May did not try to clutch at her again, for the tall Chinaman was now only a few paces from them, bowing gravely and lifting his hat.

"Charming young ladies," he said softly. "I recognise the pretty frocks as those worn by the dancing girls. Am I wrong in inferring that you are of the same dancing troupe as the Chinese girl?"

"Why, yes, they are," said Miss Simpson, speaking in shrill, excited tones. "The Chinese girl has gone!"

"Gone?" he asked. "Where to?"

"Newcastle," said Miss Simpson.

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



BETWEEN OURSELVES

MY DEAR READERS, — Do please excuse me this week if, instead of saying a few chatty words at the commencement of these notes, I plunge straight into my usual programme details. You'll see the reason near the foot of the second column—Replies to Readers. Quite a lot of letters have arrived during the past few days and I really must deal with them while I've got the space, mustn't I?

First of all, then, we come to next Saturday's magnificent Cliff House story. Complete, of course, and written with all Hilda Richards' fascinating appeal, it is entitled:

"MYSTERY GIRL OF THE WOODS,"

from which you will realise at once that there IS a mystery in the story. A very intriguing mystery, too, around a girl with whom Babs & Co. become friendly. There is also a most romantic young gipsy girl, who tells Babs' fortune in such a way that Babs is almost startled.

If I were to say much more about this superb yarn, I should give away some of its numerous surprises, so I'll just content myself with assuring you that it features a host of your favourites, Babs, Mabs, Bessie, Clara, Jamima, as well as the "Mystery Girl" and the gipsy lass, and—very puzzling this—a strange bell, the ringing of which seems to frighten the mystery girl out of her life.

And now I'll leave you to see if YOU can solve the mystery girl's secret dread of that ringing bell.

As usual, our next number will contain further delightful chapters of "On Tour With Yin Su," another delightful COMPLETE story of Lady Fayre and Robin Hood, more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages, and full particulars of a

wonderful new serial, written by one of your favourite authors, which will be commencing very, very soon.

And to conclude—

LITTLE LETTERS.

Elizabeth Pearson (Glassonlock).—Delighted to know that you are making such a splendid recovery from your accident. I can just imagine how excited you'll be when you can get about again. Best wishes.

Jean Ellenington (Hull).—Thanks so much for your good wishes, Joan. It seems as though you must have anticipated my advice in last week's chat. Write again whenever you like.

Eliane Camilleri (Malta).—Once again I have to thank you for a very charming letter, Eliane; and once again I must reciprocate your very friendly greetings. Do tell me what you thought of the film, won't you? I adored it.

Jean Walker (Birmingham).—I will certainly pass on your suggestion to Patricia, who will, I know, be most grateful to you. I hope she will be able to make use of it later on. Best wishes, Jean.

Kathleen Smith (Nelson).—You are quite right, Kathleen. It was a mistake. The people in the South of England do not celebrate the occasion in question on another day. Congratulations on spotting the slip, and do please write again, won't you?

Christine Green (Ipswich).—You would be in the Fourth Form at Cliff House, Christine, more than a month above the minimum age, but slightly younger than most of the other Fourth Formers. What do you think of our latest features?

"She—" (Victoria, Australia).—I'm afraid that the only part of your signature—which you wrote, my dear, was "She—" However, you inquired about No. 481 of the "Library," so I'm sure you'll realise this is to you. Do please write again, won't you? And let me know your full name.

Well, everybody, that's the end of my postbag for this week—therefore the end of my little chat—so I'll bid you all au revoir until next Saturday.

Your very sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

"Newcastle!" blurted out May and Daphne, aghast.

The Chinaman inclined his head. "Thank you. I am disappointed. Could you perhaps tell me the charming Chinese dancer's name?"

Miss Simpson again did not hesitate. "Wun Fu," she said.

"Wun Fu! Indeed. That is her own name?" he asked gravely.

"Yes," said the governess sharply. "She has a sister Two Fu. She was born in Liverpool, and spent most of her life in Manchester, and now has gone to Birmingham."

"Birmingham?" exclaimed the Chinaman. "But you said Newcastle."

"I meant Newcastle; she will go to Birmingham afterwards," said Miss Simpson hurriedly.

May, who had listened to this dialogue with growing bewilderment, suddenly snatched the note written in Chinese and held it out to the man.

"Could you please read this note to us?" she asked.

He bowed, took the note, and then, having looked at it, smiled.

"I myself wrote this note to the dancing girl," he said. "It is a request that she should meet my wife and myself for tea after the performance."

"There!" exclaimed Miss Simpson. May was taken aback, her bewilderment in no way lessened.

For the man was so open about the message that she could not believe he was an intending kidnapper of Yin Su. Apparently he thought that she was a dancing girl, a professional, touring the theatres in this country; and, that being so, it was understandable that he and his wife should take an interest in her.

"Is that all?" May murmured. "Well, I'm sorry to say that she has gone."

It was a difficult situation. There might be no reason why Yin Su should not accept the Chinese gentleman's hospitality; but, on the other hand, nothing would be lost by refusing it if the refusal could be couched in polite terms.

Naturally, if Yin Su had already left for Newcastle, the invitation could not be accepted. So May left it at that. And the Chinaman, telling them how much he had enjoyed the dancing, and how perfect Yin Su's execution of the Chinese dance had been, bade them good-afternoon, raised his hat, and, obviously disappointed, turned away.

May turned to Miss Simpson. "Now, please, what does all this mean?" she asked.

"Mean? It means that he is a kidnapper. I was warned," said the governess. "That's what it means."

"Who warned you?" May demanded.

"Never you mind," said the governess, with a toss of the head. "You are an extremely impertinent girl. I am your governess, and you are to take my orders!"

May gave a short, almost derisive laugh.

"No, we are not," she said. "Not until you produce Yin Su. Where is she? If you don't tell us, I warn you—we'll go straight to the police."

Miss Simpson sniffed disdainfully.

"I came here to take you to her," she said. "I have a good mind to resign my position here and now—although, having been paid a month in advance, I cannot do that. It would not be in accordance with my principles—"

"Never mind your high principles for the moment, Miss Simpson; take us to Yin Su, please," said May. "And then you can resign at once."

The governess did not reply, but



AS the mysterious governess appeared over the fence, May and Daphne darted forward. "Got you!" May cried. "What have you done with Yin Su?"

tried to climb the fence. Thanks to May and Daphne's help she succeeded, with no more damage than another ladder in her stocking and a slight tear in the lining of her coat. They followed, and Miss Simpson led them through the "jungle." To save their pretty dancing frocks, May and Daphne went very warily, lifting them and holding them away from thorns and prickles.

"Yin Su!" called Miss Simpson shrilly.

She ran on some yards ahead of them, turned left and right, and sought behind a large bush that grew at the foot of an overhanging tree.

There was no reply, and the governess hurried round behind the bush. An instant later, just as May and Daphne reached the spot, she reappeared, her face white, her eyes staring with fright.

"She's gone," she babbled; "I left her there! She's gone! Oh, why did I do it? Oh, why, why, why? They must have been watching. Oh, oh, why did I do—"

A soft call came from behind May and Daphne then, in Yin Su's voice, and next moment from around another bush ran the pretty Chinese girl, her eyes brightly shining.

"Yin Su!" cried May, in tremendous relief and joy.

"Oh, Yin Su!" added Daphne.

There was a glad reunion that might have suggested to an onlooker that they had been parted for weeks instead of minutes. They hugged and laughed and danced.

"I am all right," said Yin Su, smiling. "You think I am ill or in danger, May?"

"I thought Miss Simpson had kidnapped you," said May frankly.

"Miss Simpson? Oh, no, no!" said Yin Su, shaking her head. "Clever governess hide bewildered Chinese girl. A message came in Chinese, asking me to meet someone. Miss Simpson, most wise and intelligent, gave this foolish girl warning of danger, and together we stole away to hiding."

Miss Simpson smiled, heaved a sigh, and sat down on a fallen tree trunk.

"Oh dear, I am so confused, I hardly know whether I am standing on

my head or my heels," she said, fanning her face with her hat. "Such a dreadful moment. My employer warned me that this man would come—and I must, on no account let him know Yin Su's name nor let him see her."

May faced her. The time had come for this matter to be thrashed out.

"Miss Simpson," she said, "I misjudged you. I think now that you did try to save Yin Su from some peril. But there is something we must know, and that is who engaged you. I asked you if she had a ring, and you could not remember what stone it was—"

Miss Simpson's eyes gleamed in triumph, and she wagged a forefinger.

"But I can now. It has been worrying me on and off," she said, "ever since you asked. But now I know, because I saw her again. That ring is—"

May held her breath; Daphne waited with mouth a little agape; yet they all sensed the answer before it came.

"Emerald!" said Miss Simpson, in triumph. "A large emerald ring!"

While the three girls stood silent, she described that ring in detail. There was no possibility of mistake. There could be no two rings exactly alike, of such odd shape. And, therefore, the wearer of that ring was Madame X.

After all, May's first suspicion was correct. Miss Simpson had been engaged by their enemy.

But at the same time it was also clear that she did not realise that Madame X was their enemy or she would not have made such an open confession.

"My golly, then—then you have been engaged by Madame X! But obviously you're not an accomplice," breathed May. "Just a dupe!"

Startling Telegrams!

"JUST a dupe!" echoed Daphne. They were not intending to be offensive or insulting to the governess, but it was hardly a flattering term to use. Miss Simpson, who felt that she had suffered enough, bridled.

"How dare you!" she exclaimed. "I shall report you to my employer!" May laughed.

"Oh, Miss Simpson!" she said. "Don't you see? You have been fooled!"

"I see that you are a very rude girl, May."

"But you have been employed by someone who has no right to employ you!" protested May.

"That may be so," said Miss Simpson haughtily, "but I have been paid in advance to look after you, and whether you girls like it or not, I intend to do so. Henceforth, you take orders from me. Do you understand?"

May and Daphne exchanged looks, and Yin Su pursed her lips.

"I'm sorry, Miss Simpson," said May evenly, "but we must refuse. There's only one thing for us to do now, and that is to get in touch with Miss Vesey."

"Hear, hear!" agreed Daphne.

There and then May explained matters right from the start; how the three of them had met at the station, expected to be joined there by Miss Vesey, a governess; how they had had a telegram to say that she had been taken ill. They left nothing out; they described their adventures in full, explaining how Madame X had overy now and then crossed their path.

"Then we were told to collect a letter at the post office here which would contain instructions and money," ended May. "The money was there, and a letter written by Miss Vesey's nurse. That letter said that a governess was arriving, a Miss Simpson."

Miss Simpson's face was a study. She had shown every emotion from horror to amazement, consternation and anger; but now she was bewildered.

"And—and what about me?" she asked. "I have been the innocent victim of a custardly—I mean, dastardly plot. When next I see that person with the emerald ring—"

May gave a sharp exclamation. "No; don't tell her you've found out the truth, or that we have guessed!" she exclaimed. "Let's fool her. Let's make her think that we haven't suspected, and then—then if she gives you orders—"

"Most ingenious and subtle scheme," smiled Yin Su. "Madame X, of powerful intellect, perhaps not as clever as she thinks. Miss Simpson not dupe or person of simple mind."

Miss Simpson's eyes gleamed. Like most foolish and incompetent people, she did not like to be assailed at that valuation; and she had a burning desire to prove that she was really the opposite. Nothing, as Yin Su shrewdly guessed, would please her more than to double-cross Madame X.

"Ah, that is so!" said the governess keenly. "She may think I am simple and can be used as a catpaw. But I am very shrewd—very. You remember how artfully I misled the Chinaman? I will outwit this Madame X, too. I will learn her plans."

May held out her hand, her eyes shining with excitement.

"Good for you, Miss Simpson! Henceforth we are allies!"

"Allies, fighting the unknown peril," agreed Miss Simpson, in husky, dramatic tone, and looked about her at the bushes as though expecting a Chinaman to jump up, flashing a sword.

"Then back to the theatre!" chirped Daphne. "Don't forget you promised to stand the troupe tea, May."

"I did, and I will," said May. "But first, I'll send a wire to Miss Vesey."

With Miss Simpson they returned to the theatre then, and the troupe was delighted to see them. Hiding their giggles as best they could, the Novelty Nine made Miss Simpson welcome in the dressing-room and begged her to let May, Daphne and Yin Su continue on the stage.

May, after changing her clothes, left them still arguing, and went to the post office armed with a letter she had received from Miss Vesey's nurse. She had also the address of the hotel where Miss Vesey had stayed in London, and from which the first intimation of her illness had been sent.

There was a chance, as May cutely realised, that the letter from the nurse, since it mentioned Miss Simpson's coming, was a fake. However, the hotel address was genuine, and the hotel people would have a note of the governess' present address.

May thought about the telegram she should send, and finally decided upon the best wording of it:

"Letter sent here mislaid, please write again, giving instructions. Has governess named Simpson been sent to take charge of us?"

The telegram was sent, and May returned to the theatre, to find the Novelty Nine, Miss Simpson, Daphne and Yin Su waiting for her to stand them tea out of the five-pound note that had arrived with the letter at the post office.

They were in merry mood, and Miss Simpson's face wore a flush, her eyes sparkled. It was a break in her rather dull, mediocre life, this meeting with stage dancers, and she enjoyed it; but she had been very firm about the girls staying in the troupe—or rather, firm that they should not stay.

Miss Simpson might not have any real authority, but she said that she had a sense of responsibility, that such a thing could not be permitted, that Miss Vesey would not have allowed it, and since telegrams had been received from suitable substitutes, those now girls must take the places of May, Daphne and Yin Su.

"We can discuss it further over tea," said Miss Anderson, the dancing mistress. "And, my goodness! I can certainly do with tea."

"Then off we go!" said May eagerly. "And I'm hostess. Where shall it be?"

The Hotel Metropole was selected as the best place for tea, as May had said that expense was not to be spared. Vere had suggested it, and there had been such a glad chorus of approval that May had agreed instantly to it.

The Hotel Metropole was not a modern place. It was a hydro. People with money who could afford vague ailments went there to have those ailments cured by the waters at enormous expense, and the Hotel Metropole had been built to accommodate their kind. It had a palm lounge, a softly-playing orchestra, ponderous furnishing, and the atmosphere of a dual home of England in the days of Victoria.

The gay, laughing dance troupe caused quite a stir as it swept merrily into the lounge, and Miss Simpson's was not the only "S-sh!" to be heard.

Miss Anderson, who had had tea there before, led them to the palm lounge, where there were deep armchairs, screens, palms, and the strains of sweet music. A veranda gave a view of

lovely hills, behind which the sun would presently set, and the girls thought it was just splendid.

Waiters, with red jackets faced with gold, solemnly moved up chairs, and a semicircle was formed about tables on the veranda.

"May, where did you ask for the reply telegram to be delivered?" asked Daphne, in a whisper.

"At the theatre. And I'm going to phono the call-boy to bring it on," said May, and a minute later she slipped away to the telephone to give that message.

"This place is full of retired admirals and generals," whispered Miss Simpson to Yin Su.

Yin Su's eyes rounded, and she looked with new interest at the waiter.

"And for you, miss?" he asked.

Yin Su rose and bowed, much to his surprise.

"Most noble and illustrious admiral," said Yin Su. "Humble Chinese girl gratified and most deeply honoured to meet one who has helped to make magnificent empire."

The waiter gaped at her, and Miss Simpson coughed discreetly to draw Yin Su's attention to the fact that this man in gorgeous attire was neither an admiral nor a general.

"Hem!" said the waiter. "I—er—"

"You were noble officer in Army or Navy?" asked Yin Su.

"Well, miss, matter of fact, I was in the Army, but—"

"Sir general," said Yin Su gravely, "always my wise father said 'high-born English officer most noble gallant fighter, to whom it is well to lift the hat in respect, an English custom.'"

Yin Su lifted her smart little hat, and bowed.

The Novelty Nine giggled with siphon-like sounds as the waiter blinked and then grinned with sly humour, watching for the head waiter out of the corner of his eye.

He took Yin Su's order, and she looked at the girls in surprise when he had gone.

They explained, amidst merriment, and Yin Su was made to understand that whereas the old gentleman grunting to himself in the armchair on the far side of the room, dressed in dowdy clothes, might be a retired general, the brightly uniformed men were just waiters.

A moment later a page-boy came across the palm lounge.

"Miss Joliphant?" he asked.

"Oh, yes—the telegram?" asked May eagerly. "Ask the boy who brought it to wait, please."

"Two telegrams," said the page.

May took the telegrams from the salver, asked to be excused if she read them, and slit the envelope of one while Daphne and Yin Su eagerly watched her expression. Daphne took the other, not being able to control her patience.

Together they gasped.

"What does yours say?" asked May. "It—it's from the hotel. No address left," said Daphne. "What does yours say, May?"

May was quite pale as she answered:

"Address not found. No such hospital or nursing-home known," she said. "Oh, my goodness! Then—then where ever is Miss Vesey?"

WHAT a startling development this is! What ever can have happened to the real governess? On no account fail to read next Saturday's thrilling chapters of this great story.

Another lovely COMPLETE story of England in the Middle Ages.



SECRET HELPER to ROBIN HOOD

The Baron in a Rage!

THE Lady Fayre, chin cupped in hands, her golden hair hanging over her shoulders in two long plaits, leaped over the balustrade of the stone stairway of Longley Castle, entranced by the music of a minstrel boy's harp.

The minstrel boy, with his sweet Irish voice, sang to the music he played, and there were others besides the Lady Fayre who stood and listened.

Music was rarely heard in Longley Castle, for the Baron le Feuvre, its lord and master Fayre's uncle, had not a musical ear save for the jingle of spurs, the clash of swords, and his own voice telling of his deeds at the Crusade.

But Fayre loved music, and her aunt, the baroness, was one of those in the vast hall below who listened. Music in the last days of the twelfth century, when these events took place, was soft and gentle in contrast with the rough turbulence of the times; and, while its greatest appeal was to the ladies, there were earls and knights who could listen to it without growing restive.

But the sweet music of this harp was intruded upon. The baroness, lean and stern, and somewhat soured, knew the song herself; without warning, she cleared her throat, opened her mouth, and sang.

Fayre winced. It was as though the calm of a summer's day had been broken by a shrieking gale. Even the harpist, in shocked surprise, struck a wrong string, and looked about him sharply as though for a wild animal caught in a trap.

The small crowd that had gathered in the hall melted away, and from the landing on which Fayre stood, leaning over the balustrade, came another sound. A maddened bull could not have produced more volume nor struck greater terror in the remaining servants and attendants in the hall.

For that bull-like roar meant that the Baron le Feuvre was on the war-path. Clad for an official welcome to a visiting bishop, the baron clattered in his mailed armour down the stairs. The baron's red face was even redder than usual, his dark brows were knit, his eyes glittered; and, reaching the balustrade, he pushed Fayre aside and leaned over.

"What goes on down there?" he roared. "The rascal who tortures in this castle without my leave shall go to the—"

He was about to say "torture-chamber himself" when he saw the baroness eyes shut, mouth still open. "Twas aunt singing, my lord," said Fayre gently, hiding a smile.

The baroness looked up. "What rude odd was it cried out?" she called sharply.

The Baron le Feuvre, self-styled hero of the Crusade, was apt to wilt before the baroness' glittering eye.

"I did hear strange music," he grunted.

"I was singing. Was that strange music?" demanded the baroness.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" sighed Fayre. "And it was so lovely—"

The baron descended the stairs to the hall, and faced the harpist.

point of his sword on his mailed right foot, and his left hand on his hip, the baron looked at the baroness in grinning triumph.

"I may not have the last word in my castle, but I have struck the last note on this harp!" he said.

Fayre's hands clenched, a lump rose in her throat at the sight of the stricken harpist's face; and then, overcome by anger, she ran forward.

"Uncle—how could you? How cruel—how wicked—"

As her uncle, astounded by this outburst, turned to her, the harpist came to life. Rage seethed in him; for a moment his judgment was lost, and he thought only of vengeance for this cruel, wanton act.

Eyes ablaze, he clenched his right fist and drove it into the baron's face.

Fayre stood rigid; her heart almost stopped beating as the baron, a trickle

The only music the baron liked was his own roaring voice —so he smashed the minstrel's harp! But Fayre and Robin Hood soon made the baron change his tune!

"Twas this instrument of torture I did hear!" he snarled.

The harpist rose shakily to his feet, his face pale with dread, his eyes wide; for the bullying of the baron was well known. He did not stop to weigh the justice of his actions, but used the full force of his authority and power to servo his mood.

"My lord, I—" faltered the harpist. "By whose leave are you here?" demanded the baron ferociously.

"My lord, I—" "Dare to disturb the serene peace of my castle, rascal?" demanded the baron. "I'll teach you better judgment!"

He drew his sword, and with all the power of his mighty Crusading arm behind it, struck the strings of the beloved harp with its blade.

He struck it, how and where he pleased; and as, though hurling a lie in the baroness' teeth, produced a jangle of sound that robbed the harpist of his colour, and made his knees a-tremble.

One savage blow slashed the harp-strings through; and then, resting the

of red showing on his moustache, lurched back. He was stupefied, blank with amazement, incredulous that one so humble as a minstrel should have struck him.

And the minstrel, suddenly recovering his senses, white with horror at the desperate thing he had done in the heat of the moment, fell back.

Fayre, watching the baron, saw his look change, saw anger return to his eyes, and his right hand tighten the grip on his sword. But even as he swept it up, she jumped forward.

Headless of the risk, she hurled herself between the baron and the cowering minstrel, and clung to the sword arm.

The minstrel looked to the doorway, now blocked by knights who had heard the commotion and come to see what was happening. Then he looked at the staircase—deserted.

Without a thought as to how he could possibly escape, he fled up the stairs,

By IDA MELBOURNE

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even as the baron, swinging Fayre aside as though she were but a dog, rushed to pursue him.

Fayre, hurled aside, tottered against the harp, caught it, let it go, and reeled away; but in letting the harp go, she tilted it in the baron's path.

Over it he went, with a clash of metal, and his mighty sword went scuttering across the stone floor.

The Lady Fayre did not wait to see him rise to his feet; she fled up the staircase in the wake of the minstrel, hearing the baron's furious roar as she reached the landing.

"To the dungeons with them both!"

To Save the Minstrel!

FAYRE caught the terrified minstrel, as, taking a wrong turning, he ran into the armoury, and then out.

"This way!" she gasped. "I am your friend."

"Oh, my lady," he choked, "I—"

"After me—"

Fayre ran up the stairs, lifting the hem of her rich red, gold-embroidered robe, and did not stop until she reached the school-room, where, under the watchful eye of her tutor, the Venerable Brie, she studied reading and writing.

The tutor, as she knew, was not there; he was in the baron's private room compiling a record of the baron's heroics at the Crusade. The room, therefore, was empty, save for the table, some books, and in the corner a great oaken chest.

"That chest—books inside—empty it—hide there!" she cried, and, leaving the minstrel to do the best he could, she ran into her own bed-chamber.

There she paused only long enough to open another chest, and to take from it a shabby green frock, and ragged, brown-hooded cloak. Then, bearing them under her arm, she went into the corridor, and was out of sight before the first pursuers reached the landing.

In the privacy of an empty room,

Fayre slipped off her robe, and then, quaking with alarm, put on the frock and cloak.

There was not one corner of the mighty castle unknown to her, and now, hotly pursued, dreading that she might be flung into the dungeons, and perhaps whipped, she made good use of her knowledge.

By the back staircase used by monials, narrow and steep, she reached a lower floor, where soldiers and servants were gathered discussing the strange happenings.

Hiding her face, Fayre moved amongst them, careful not to attract attention to herself, and, reaching the courtyard, had no more fears. For often enough before she had left and entered the castle in this disguise, being accepted as a village maid who ran errands for the ladies.

But never before had Fayre been so glad to escape from the castle. In the ordinary course of events, she did so for her own pleasure, so that, with no one to watch her, she could roam in the woods, have fun in the village, and even, on occasions, meet that gay, adventuring outlaw, Robin Hood.

It was to find Robin Hood that she went now; for until she heard that the baron's mood was changed, she was an outlaw herself!

Reaching the woods, Fayre paused to gain breath and to compose herself. It was hard to believe that so much had happened in such a little time; that at one moment the minstrel Irish boy had played his sweet music—and the next there was storm and uproar, a flashing sword, and the harp, that lovely instrument, a mass of torn strings.

"Oh, poor harpist!" sighed Fayre. After a moment or two, in calmer frame of mind, she resumed her way through the woods, and the song of the birds, the sweet fragrance of the flowers, chased away her worried frown, and brought the sparkle again to her eyes.

Most girls wandering through the woods had but one ear for the singing birds; the other was attuned for wolves. But Fayre carried with her a whistle

that was a present from Robin Hood. Its shrill note not only caused wolves to slink away, but told Robin Hood that his mystery helper was near.

To-day the whistle did not fail in either of its happy functions; for a rustle in the bushes, and an angry snarl, was proof that a lurking wolf had been sent about on other business, and the call of a hunting horn betokened that the gay outlaw had heard it.

"Robin Hood!" cried Fayre eagerly. Robin Hood, dressed all in green, a short cloak flying from his shoulders, jumped lithely into view, and sweeping off his pointed, feathered cap, bowed low. His handsome face was all smiles at sight of Fayre, and his eyes shone with pleasure.

"Ah, little mystery maid, I was indeed hoping to see you!" he said. "You should have been here some little time earlier this morning, and heard sweet music—"

Fayre bit her lip. "Sweet music," she faltered; the mention of it now hurt.

"A harp—and played by a minstrel greater than the one in the Italian bishop's palace," said Robin Hood.

Fayre's heart jumped.

"This minstrel—an Irish lad?"

"Why, yes," said Robin Hood.

"'Tis the one!" groaned Fayre. "Oh, unhappy boy! Robin Hood, he is in dire peril. His harp is smashed, that lovely maker of music!"

Robin Hood's smile changed to a frown as he heard that.

"Smashed?" he said, aghast. "But—but why—who has done this?"

Then Fayre told him the story—told it as the gossip of the castle—and Robin Hood paced to and fro, arms akimbo.

"That rascal baron shall pay for this!" he fumed. "That poor lad! 'Tis all he has to earn his keep. And now—"

"Now he will be lucky to get free," sighed Fayre.

Robin Hood stood stock-still.

"There is but one other harp I know—the bishop's minstrel has it, and the palace is full thirty miles from here."

Fayre nodded her head, and then, as a thought struck her, looked up.

"Robin Hood—the bishop is coming this way to accept the baron's hospitality."

Robin Hood's eyes gleamed.

"Aha! And he will bring his harpist—"

Fayre smiled back.

"And 'twould be a kindness to take possession of the bishop's harp before it reaches the castle," she said gently.

Robin Hood slapped his right fist into his left palm.

"'Tis an idea!" he cried. "But—one moment—did you not say the lad is still prisoner?"

"He is, but perhaps the Lady Fayre, whose heart is kind, might find a way to set him free," Fayre said. "I can but beg her favour."

Robin Hood took her hand.

"Then 'tis a bargain," he said. "I will find the harp—you the harpist."

Fayre shook his hand, sealing the bargain; and then, light-hearted again, waving farewell, she went back to the lane, her own peril forgotten in the need to help the minstrel. And after all, if she could enter the castle as the mystery maid, the Lady Fayre might still be sought in vain—and the minstrel freed.

The first thing that she saw when she entered the castle was a strange sight. Mounted on the turrets of the drawbridge walls was the broken harp; but Fayre gave it no more than a glance, hurrying through the gateway and across the courtyard, where

groups of soldiers and servants were gathered, laughing and talking, discussing the morning's excitement.

Without further pause than she hurried to the school-room and peeped through the curtain, fearful that the Venerable Bric had returned. Her glances fulfilled her fears. But—he was sound asleep at the writing-table!

On tiptoe, watching him all the while, she entered the room and crossed to the oaken chest. Very slowly she lifted the lid.

"Quick—step out!" she hissed. Then she gave a startled cry and almost let the lid fall. The chest was empty; the minstrel was gone!

The Venerable Bric, suddenly yawning, stretched, and turned towards her. "Methought 'twas another rascal hiding in the chest!" he gasped.

"Another? You—they—" gasped Fayre; and then, remembering the need for disguise, covered her face.

But the Venerable Bric's sight was poor: across the room he could not see Fayre clearly, although he recognised her voice, which in giving that startled cry she had been unable to disguise.

"Fayre. You have returned then?"

"The minstrel?" she quavered.

"What—what has happened to him?"

"The minstrel? The rascal hiding in that chest? I opened the lid, to put in books—and out he sprang!" exclaimed the Venerable Bric. "But he is caught—"

"And now?" asked Fayre tremulously.

"Where he should be! The rascal is in the dungeons!"

FAYRE, still in her shabby frock, had roved as near the dungeons as she dared, but to-day they were well guarded, and many soldiers and servants were going down to them to see the poor minstrel.

Hoping that Robin Hood had had better luck than she, she left the castle. The harp was no longer mounted on the drawbridge turrets, for soldiers had brown turves and stones at it, toppling on the drawbridge, whence it had been thrown by the guards into the roadway.

Fayre sighed as she looked at it, once the minstrel's pride and joy, now orlorn, thrown aside like rubbish.

The thought saddened her, and then—quite suddenly she saw that it was not sad at all, but a most excellent stroke of good-fortune. For if it were there to be taken by who pleased, then why not by Robin Hood? Its weight was too great for her to manage, but others could lend a hand.

Fayre wasted no time in seeking Robin Hood and when she found him, told him that if the harp could be taken he minstrel could perhaps repair it.

Robin Hood smiled. "Come," he said. "I have a surprise."

Leading her by the hand, he reached a glade where his men were assembled. In the centre of the group of merry outlaws sat the fattest of them all on a stout block of wood. With tentative plucking that earned him only mirth from his comrades, Friar Tuck was essaying the art of harp playing.

And what a harp it was! A bishop's mitre surmounted it, and the frame was covered in delicate, rich gold-leaf. Never in her life had Fayre seen anything more magnificent.

"Oh!" she murmured, taken aback. "But that's wonderful, Robin Hood!"

"'Twas nothing," he shrugged. "The Bishop Giacomo has warriors who are sheep. At the first blow of our quarter

staves they fled behind hedges, and we could have taken the fat bishop himself had we any use for him."

Fayre laughed. She felt no scruples about keeping the bishop's harp; for Giacomo was a particularly avaricious man, caring for little but gold.

"Good, good," said Fayre. But presently she frowned as she looked at the harp, and shook her head.

"Even if by some magic the unhappy minstrel be set free," she said slowly, "I doubt if he could take such a harp out of this wood to earn his living. Why—everyone would know that 'tis the bishop's—and that 'twas stolen."

Robin Hood's smile faded. The thought had not struck him; and until this moment he had been planning to surprise the minstrel with this lovely gift. But Fayre's statement was common sense, and, stroking his chin, Robin Hood grimaced.

"You are right, wise maid," he said sadly. "T'will be of no service to him unless we mar its beauty, and mayhap, since the frame is of some different appearance here and there—"

Fayre snapped her fingers, and almost jumped in the air with excitement.

"The minstrel's harp is in the lane—outside the castle barbican," she said.

"Anyone may take it. Three or four good villagers could drag it away, and the wardens would but laugh and be glad."

"That was enough for Robin Hood. "That harp shall be brought here," he said, and called to his men.

Preparing for such needs as this they had hidden in the woods disguised as beggars, friars, pedlars, and others, so that, where their faces were not known, they could wander in the lanes and even in villages.

Selecting four men who had roved to this spot from some more distant part of the country, he bade them put on suitable disguise and fetch the harp.

"And when we have it," said Fayre delightedly, "we have but to change the strings—"

Robin Hood clapped her shoulder and laughed aloud.

"To change the strings and leave the bishop's harp with the broken ones

lying in the road. In a short while he will ride by here; for we ambushed him three miles away by road, although scarcely one away through the woods. He will find his harp—"

Fayre heaved a glad sigh. "Robin Hood—there is a way even yet of saving the minstrel," she cried; and then, lowering her voice, whispered her plan.

Exchange is No Robbery!

THE fat Bishop Giacomo was aggrieved, sulky, and vengeful. He had been assaulted, his men had been assaulted, by thieving rascals who had stolen his harp. What manner of country was this, he asked himself, where good Italian priests could be robbed by quite common people? What were the barons doing? Where were the soldiers who should be sent to escort him?

It was a fine thing when an Italian prelate was robbed by the very people who worked and toiled in the fields in order to keep him in rich garments, servants, rare food, and luxuries.

In ill-temper he came in sight of the castle, and told his interpreter just what to say to the Baron le Fauvre. The loss of the harp must be refunded in gold; a hundred peasants selected at random must be punished as a lesson to the others; an armed force must be sent to scour the country for the robber band.

It was when he was a hundred yards from the castle that he espied something gilded on the ground ahead, and despatching a messenger, learned that it was his harp.

The bishop's fury was boundless. In shrill Italian he vented it on the air, and those around him; then, cantering forward, he reached the castle just as the drawbridge was being ceremoniously lowered with a fanfare of trumpets.

The bishop, ahead of his escort, rode into the castle, where in the courtyard, with troops assembled, pennants flying, armour gleaming, the baron awaited to give him welcome.

Behind the fat bishop came two horsemen bearing between them the broken harp.



IN utter dismay, Fayre stared into the empty chest. The fugitive minstrel had vanished. "What—what has happened to him?" she gasped. Then her heart went cold as her aged tutor replied: "The rascal is in the dungeons!"

"Huh!" grunted the baron. "Why does he think we flung the harp out? For him to bring in?"

Through his interpreter, the bishop explained.

"Sir Baron," said the interpreter, "who threw the harp in the road?"

The baron glowered, puzzled, and in none too good humour; for, not taking too good a look at the harp, he did not realise it wasn't the one he had smashed.

"'Twas done by my command," he said.

"Hah! Who broka da strings?" asked the interpreter.

"I did," said the baron.

It was translated to the bishop, who fixed the baron with dark, glittering eyes, and then cantered his horse forward.

Standing in his stirrups, he shook his fist, and for fully three minutes told the baron what he thought of him. Unable to keep pace, the interpreter missed bits here and there, yet gave the gist of it sufficiently for the baron to understand that this was no high praise or blessing.

"Rascal—thief—robber—vandal—vulgarian," said the interpreter, in mechanical, even tone.

The baron drew up, his face reddening.

"I cut those strings because I hated the sound of them!" he snarled.

"It is the bishop's own harp," said the interpreter.

"What? Nonsense!" said the baron.

The bishop, having the reply interpreted, became calm, although he shivered a little, and his face was white.

"You shall be punished for this," said the interpreter, "unless the damage is repaired within the hour."

The baron in his turn went pale; for the bishop was a man of considerable influence; he had power over Prince John, power with the archbishops, and so could do the baron great harm in a hundred ways.

So the baron's manner now underwent a change; he tried to soothe and placate. The bishop, calming when he saw that his weight was felt, had the interpreter explain about the ambush by outlaws.

When the baron heard that, he denied that he had had part in it, vowing that Robin Hood was his bitterest enemy. But he was perplexed all the same to understand how the minstrel had dared to bring the bishop's harp to the palace.

"Bring the minstrel here!" he roared.

Then it was that from the admiring throng stepped a girl in a ragged brown cloak. A basket of flowers was on her arm, and she tossed blossoms here and there amongst the nobles, soldiers, and clergymen.

Fayre had no fear that she would be recognised, for no one gave her more than a glance, and she had specially covered her face with the stain of leaves and berries.

It was only a few minutes later that the quaking minstrel was brought from the dungeon where, thinking every minute his last, he had awaited the threatened torture and flogging.

Seeing the bishop, he dropped to his knees and pleaded for mercy.

"A minstrel—a harpist," sneered the baron. "And 'twas he brought your stolen harp here?"

The bishop, whose sly look had suggested that he might pardon the lad and ask him to be set free if only to annoy

the baron, changed his manner as he heard the lad's offence.

"You stole the bishop's harp?" asked the interpreter.

"No, no, my lord, no," moaned the minstrel. "I did but play my own harp—"

Fayre stepped forward.

"Please, my lord bishop," she said.

The interpreter leaned to listen to her.

"If it is but the broken strings that cause this sorrow," said Fayre, "there is an ancient man who sells such things."

"What? Where?" demanded the baron, who did not recognise Fayre's disguised voice. "Where is he? Let's end this fuss."



Joyfully Lola Sharman looked forward to returning to her home in Mexico. She would see her gay, laughing father again. And she would start out on her career as a dancer. Then Lola discovered a secret that was to change everything. For her father was—a bandit!

You'll revel in every word of—

THE BANDIT'S DAUGHTER

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GIRLS' CRYSTAL

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Fayre looked at the minstrel.

"The minstrel will know," she said. "Do but send him to the village and he will come back with the needed strings."

The minstrel sprang up. His eyes sparkled, his chest seemed near to bursting.

"Yes, yes!" he cried. "I will go—"

And it took two soldiers to hold him back, so eager was he to be of assistance.

"Wait!" snapped the baron. "Let two horsemen, well armed, go with him, and see that he doth get the strings and return."

The bishop, mollified by this readiness to placate him, calmed down, and said that provided the strings were re-

paired, and the harp made playable, he would say no more about the misadventure.

As the minstrel, mounted behind one horseman and accompanied by another, went through the gates—without having the least idea where harp strings could be found—Fayre lost herself in the crowd, and entering the castle a moment later, mounted to the battlements, which commanded a most magnificent view of the district.

Avoiding the sentries who were neglecting their posts to watch the scene in the courtyard, Fayre climbed on to a stone pillar, and looked down to the lane. Some distance away she saw the two horsemen, and a hundred yards beyond them, something they could not see. Hidden behind the hedge were a score of men in green.

A moment later a wild yell sounded. Before the horsemen could rein up or draw swords, the outlaws were upon them, and with practised skill, brought them from their horses.

On to one of the horses leaped a figure which even from that distance Fayre recognised as Robin Hood—and mounted behind him, as he made for the woods, was the Irish minstrel boy, laughing and cheering in wild delight.

Once again Fayre crept down to the courtyard, where now the baroness was kissing the bishop's ring.

"And your niece?" asked the interpreter.

The baroness frowned.

"The baron saw fit to strike her, and the poor child fled."

"I did not," cried the baron. "I I pushed her away—"

The shocked bishop frowned heavily, while the baron protested that it had been an accident, that were his niece but to return he would welcome her with loving embrace.

It was only a few minutes later when the bishop and baron were in the hall, that Fayre, in her own robes, descended the staircase.

The baroness gave a cry of relief, and the baron, turning a frown into a smile, put out his arms in welcome.

"Uncle—I forgive you!" exclaimed Fayre.

The bishop smiled, patted her head, held out his right hand for her to kiss, and then reproved the baron through his interpreter, praising Fayre for her generosity.

"Uncle, don't be distressed. I forgive you," said Fayre primly, yet kindly, while he stared at her round-eyed. "But don't let such a thing occur again."

And she left it at that.

THAT NIGHT, while the baron entertained the bishop with his jests, singers, dancers, and gleemen, Fayre, dressed in her shabby clothes, stole away to the glade in the wood, where in the moonlight, Robin Hood and his men listened entranced to the sweet music of the repaired harp.

Fayre crept to a place beside Robin Hood, and then, at peace, chin cupped in hands, she sat with her dreams, listening to the lovely music and the minstrel's soft voice. Peace reigned, and she was happy.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

THERE will be another fascinating COMPLETE story featuring these two sp'endid characters in next Saturday's SCHOOLGIRL. Be sure to order your copy well in advance.