

Superb LONG COMPLETE story of
famous Cliff House School:—

“THE PET THEY PROTECTED!”

THE SCHOOLGIRL

No. 514. Vol. 20.
Week Ending
JUNE 3rd, 1939.

EVERY **2^p**
SATURDAY

Incorporating
“SCHOOLGIRLS’ OWN”



**WHILE JEAN AND
JACKIE LED MR. HOBBS
OFF THE SCENT—**

Babs & Co. awaited their
chance to slip into the
mystery house.

(See this week's grand story of the
famous chums.)

Meet Barbara Redfern & Co. of Cliff House School once again in this fine Long Complete story. Their pets play a big part, as does Stella Stone, one-time head girl of the school.



The PET they PROTECTED!

A Strange Stray!



"THEY say it's going to be a record dog show!" Barbara Redfern said enthusiastically. "Over two hundred entries! Just think of it!"

"Just!" Clara Trevlyn gurgled. "And what an honour for the dogs that get prizes! Not, of course," she added, with a proud glance at her pet Alsatian, Pluto, "that any dog will stand a chance in old Pluto's class!"

"Nor in Ting-a-Ling's!" Bessie Bunter said glowingly. "Ting has only to get another two first prizes, you know, and he'll be champion!"

"My Jacques—he am ze champion already!" little Marcelle Biquet put in. "And Stella—she say zat he must win again, which makes him ze champion of champions!"

"And what Stella Stone doesn't know about dogs isn't worth knowing!" Jean Cartwright put in. "We're jolly lucky, if you ask me, to have Stella preparing our dogs for the show."

"And I only hope, for her sake, that

they all win a prize!" Janet Jordan observed.

"Well, if Stella has her way they will," Barbara said.

Chatting happily, six bright-faced girls, with six dogs in tow, were strolling along the lane which linked the famous old school of Cliff House to the near-by picturesque little Kentish village of Friardale.

The six were all girls belonging to the Fourth Form of the old school—of which pretty Barbara Redfern was captain—and the talk was all of the forthcoming Courtfield Dog Show.

As competitors, they all had high hopes—with justification. Certainly the six pets which accompanied them now looked capable of achieving the highest expectations of their fond mistresses, and each of them already had some triumph to his credit.

Pluto, for instance, Clara Trevlyn's magnificent Alsatian, had won a first prize in this same show last year. So had Gyp, Janet Jordan's toy Pomeranian.

Bessie Bunter's artful and slinky-looking little Pekingese had won two challenge certificates, and Babs' retriever, Brutus, had won a second and a third prize.

Jacques, Marcelle Biquet's French

bulldog, had not competed in an English show before, but in his native France had already won two firsts. Even Jean Cartwright's little Cairn terrier, Abbe, who had never before competed in an open show, had earned honours at the Cliff House annual pets' show.

So almost confidently the six girls were looking forward to the great show, that confidence having been given an extra fillip by the fact that Stella Stone, the owner of the new kennels in Friardale, was going to take over the dogs for the next few days, to groom them and train them in readiness for the show. It was to Stella Stone's kennels they were on their way now.

And almost as eagerly as they anticipated their success in the show were they looking forward to seeing Stella Stone again.

Stella had once been head girl at Cliff House, and a very popular and admired head girl at that. Now no longer a schoolgirl, but equipped with highest veterinary honours, she had taken over the old Gable Kennels in Friardale, and, in a locality in which she had been well known as a school-girl, looked forward to making a success of her future.

In that venture she had the whole-

hearted good wishes of Barbara Redfern & Co.; and because it would be such an advertisement for Stella and her kennels if their dogs won prizes in the forthcoming show, they were leaving their pets in her charge until the show was over.

They tramped on, happy in the knowledge they were helping Stella.

Then suddenly, from the hedge which lined one side of the road, came a sharp yelp which made Pluto prick up his ears and swivel swiftly in that direction.

"Hallo!" Barbara exclaimed.

For from a gap forced in the hedge-row another dog had appeared—a little white Sealyham, rather bedraggled and mudstained, and with heaving jaws and lolling tongue. He paused for a moment, and then, seeing the girls, rushed up to them with such ecstasy that his tail seemed to sway his body from side to side.

Pluto growled and, as the stranger neared him, stiffened. Then he stood erect and slowly wagged his tail—a sure sign that Pluto had found a friend. The Sealyham whined a little, and, as the other dogs curiously quested round him, backed away, looking up at Barbara. It was then that the Fourth Form captain noticed his collar.

"I say," she cried, "what's that tied to his collar?"

"A handkerchief, Babsie!" Marcelle cried. "Jacques—arete!" she cried indignantly, as her French bulldog strained forward towards the newcomer.

Babs stared at the dog. Certainly, despite his dishevelled and panting condition, he was a valuable-looking dog. A friendly little chap, too. But in that moment Babs was not studying the dog so much as his collar, round which had been tied a rather nice-looking handkerchief.

"Come on, old fellow!" she said. "Come here!"

The stranger frisked towards her, wriggling in delight. He crept to her feet, and then, throwing himself on his back, extended all four paws into the air, and in that ridiculously comic posture remained still. The chums laughed.

"Funny little chap!" Clara Trevlyn said. "Wonder who he belongs to?"

Babs stooped, ignoring the jealous growl of Brutus, who, as usual, did not like to see his mistress paying attention to another dog. In puzzlement, she peered at the handkerchief loosely knotted to the collar, a great bulge in its middle as though it had contained some small parcel.

The dog wore a crimson collar of a good make, and the handkerchief, when she untied it, proved to be one of fine cream linen, with a most exquisitely hand-worked border, on which was a single initial "G." There was also a small silver plate on the dog's collar, and on that silver plate was a name—"Jackie."

"Jackie!" Babs said; and the dog rolled over and bounded to its feet, looking at her with excited eyes. "That's his name," she said. "Funny, though, his collar has no address! What do you make of this handkerchief?"

"Pretty good one," Janet Jordan said, as she touched it. "Wonder what the initial stands for?"

"Gertrude," Bessie Bunter said promptly, Gertrude being the fat duffer's own middle name. "Hallo, Jackie! I sus-say, Jackie, where's Gertrude?"

But Jackie showed no sign that he

By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER

recognised the name. Tomboy Clara Trevlyn grinned.

"On the wrong track," she said. "Try Georgina, or Georgia. Jackie, where's Georgia?"

Jackie looked at Pluto and barked. Georgia, obviously, was not in his alphabet of names.

"Try Greta," Marcelle suggested. They tried Greta, but Jackie professed no knowledge of Greta. Grace, which was Jean Cartwright's suggestion, he also looked blank at. Janet tried Gladys, with the same result. Gilberta and Gabrielle they tried. Again in vain.

Babs wrinkled up her blue eyes. "Not so easy," she said. "But that hanky hasn't been fastened to his collar for nothing. Still, I suppose it's none of our business. Trot along, boy!"

But "boy" or otherwise, Jackie merely wagged his tail the harder.

"Well, come on!" Clara said, brushing her unruly hair from her forehead. "Old Stella will be expecting us. Good Jackie, then! Go home!" she ordered.

But Jackie cheerily showed no signs of going home. Having made friends with Pluto, he fell into step beside the Alsatian. Jean Cartwright grinned.

When Stella Stone, ex-head girl of Cliff House, took over the ownership of a nearby kennels, Babs & Co. happily rallied round to help her. On their first visit to her—out of the blue came Jackie, the little white Sealyham, bringing mystery and thrilling adventure in his train.

"Seems to have taken a fancy to us," said the tall Scottish girl. "Nice little chap, too! Shall we let him come, Babs?"

"Well, as he seems peaceful enough, why not?" Babs asked. "Anyway, perhaps Stella will know who he belongs to. Good boy, Jackie, then!" she said.

Jackie wuffed happily. Babs took possession of the handkerchief. It was obviously expensive, as Janet said, and might prove a clue as to the stray's owner.

They wended on, Jackie among them, and presently they came in sight of Stella Stone's kennels. Stella herself, looking marvellously pretty with her new hair style, was standing at the gate. She waved and walked to meet them.

"Hallo, girls!" she cried. "I was wondering if you were coming, after all. You've brought the dogs, I see," she added, her eyes sparkling. "But who's this little chap?" she said, staring at Jackie.

"That," Babs smiled, "was what we were hoping you'd be able to tell us, Stella. We picked him up on the road—or, rather, he picked us up," she added, with a laugh. "Ever seen him before?"

"No," Stella said. And, with a critical look: "Nice dog, though, and pretty valuable, I should say. Wouldn't mind him myself."

"Zen it is zat you keep him," Marcelle said firmly.

Stella smiled.

"I can hardly do that," she said. "Still, I'll relieve you of the responsibility. You can leave him with me if

you like, and I'll notify the police. Nice to see you all," she dimpled, "and lovely to have the dogs. How fit they all look! You are really leaving them?"

"Why, of course!" Babs said. "Then that's settled! I've already got their kennels ready—there." And Stella pointed to a long, narrow shed, very spick-and-span in black and white. "This was a barn originally," she explained. "I've had it fixed up with a dozen kennels with a special heating system into the bargain. It's grand to have you as my first customers," she added.

"And grand of you to have us," Babs responded loyally. "But are we really the first, Stella?"

"Absolutely!" Stella smiled. "You see, it's not generally known that Gable Kennels have been taken over, and I'm afraid that old Gable himself hadn't a very good reputation. I've got to fight that down, of course. Apart from that—well, there are one or two people who are big doggy men about here who think I'm too young to run a kennels. And again," Stella confided, "I've got no assistant yet; can't afford one, you know. For the same reason," she added cheerily, "I can't advertise."

"You mean you—you've spent everything in setting up here?" Babs asked, a little hesitantly.

"Practically my last penny," Stella assured her calmly.

"But, Stella, isn't it a jolly big

risk?" Tomboy Clara wanted to know. Stella shrugged.

"I had to make a start, so why not start soon as later? Anyway, thanks to you girls, I've six jolly good dogs to help me to start. What we've got to do," Stella added eagerly, "is to make these dogs so fighting fit and good-looking that they've just got to win prizes. That," she said, with a smile, "is an artful way of getting free advertisement and a reputation at the same time. Even people who think I'm too young can't overlook the handler of prize-winning dogs."

The chums nodded enthusiastically.

"And—and we can help?" Babs asked.

"If you don't mind taking orders—a pleasure," Stella said. "But I'm afraid you'll find me a bit of a martinet, you know! Hallo!" she added, as she saw the handkerchief in Babs' hand. "That's rather nice, Barbara."

"It's not mine," said Babs. "We found it tied to Jackie's collar." She held it out, and then started as the gate behind her clanged open. "Heads up!" she added excitedly. "Look impressed, girls. I believe you've got another two customers, Stella."

Stella turned. The girls, still holding their dogs, swung round, too.

Before them stood a man dressed in rather shabby black and a woman loudly overdressed in green with a red hat.

Babs saw the swift look the man cast at the handkerchief in her hand; she saw the start he gave; she saw him quickly nudge the woman as though suddenly excited about something.

Jackie, standing by Babs' side, gave a low growl.

"Shush!" Babs said, and glanced down at him, mildly surprised to see the fur creeping on his back.

Oh, so Jackie knew this man and woman? And Jackie, if doggy looks were anything to go by, did not like them. Neither did Babs herself, now that she took a second look at them. There was something decidedly shifty in the features of the man, something decidedly furtive in the attitude of the woman. But Stella, anxious to welcome any new client, was hurrying towards them.

"Mr.—er—" she said.

"Hobbs," volunteered the man. "I've come about my dog."

"Your dog?" Stella asked, in surprise.

"That dog," and the man pointed at Jackie, who, as if understanding that was the object of interest, bared his teeth—"that's my dog," he said, "and you've no right to have him here. Hand him over."

Stella flushed. The man's tone, to say the least, was unpardonably rude.

"I'm sorry," Stella said. "I'd no idea whose dog he was. He attacked himself to my friends in Friardale Lane. Still, if he is yours—"

"Well, you aren't arguing about it, are you?" the man asked, with an offensive glare.

"Why, of course not."

"Then what about handing him over?"

Stella stiffened a little. The chums looked at each other, nettled by the attitude of Mr. Hobbs. Again Jackie growled as the man took a step forward—a strangely threatening growl from a dog which should be recognising his master. Babs, suspecting and disliking the man, spoke up.

"Just a minute," she said. "I found the dog."

"Well?"

"And I think it's usual, isn't it, Stella, before you hand over a dog, that you satisfy yourself the right person is claiming it?"

"That's so," Stella agreed.

The man glared.

"If you're disputing—"

"We aren't," Stella said. And, catching the suggestion in Babs' mind, looked at him coolly. "At the same time, I have now accepted responsibility for this dog, and my duty is to hand it over to the police. The dog," Stella added, "doesn't appear to know you."

"I tell you he's mine!" Mr. Hobbs roared.

"Well, then, call him," Babs said, not at all frightened by the man's blustering manner. "Let's see if he knows you."

The man looked at his wife, who had her eyes fixed on the handkerchief in Babs' hand as though hypnotised by it. He turned on the dog.

"Come on, then, boy!" he said coaxingly.

Jackie rumbled in his throat.

"A boy" isn't his name," said Clara Trevlyn quickly. "Why don't you call him by his name?"

The man gulped. The chums had bunched together now, all plainly suspicious. He made a snapping movement with his fingers.

"Rover, then! Rover, old dog!" he said.

Jackie just growled.

"Rover, old dog!"

"The name," Babs said, "is not Rover. Is it, George, old boy?" she added, with apparent artlessness to the dog.

Mr. Hobbs went red.

"I—I didn't mean Rover. I—I've another dog at home like him, and—and his name's Rover," he stammered. "Anyway, he's my dog. Aren't you, George, old boy?" he added wheedlingly, falling into Babs' trap.

Jackie turned his head away.

"George!"

Babs smiled contemptuously.

"It's pretty obvious," she said, "that you don't even know his name. It's not George. I just threw out that name to catch you. And if you don't know the dog's name—well, the dog's not yours," she added.

"That's right," Stella nodded. "You're just trying to claim this dog under false pretences. Well, I just refuse to let him go!" Stella fiercely asserted. "If you still wish to claim him you'll have to go to the police, to whom I shall hand him over!"

The man's eyes glittered.

"Meaning," he suggested, "you're trying to make out I'm trying to steal the dog?"

"Meaning," Stella retorted, "that I know my duty in these circumstances and I'm going to do it!"

"Good old Stella!" Clara muttered gleefully.

For a moment the man showed his teeth. His wife touched his arm anxiously. Then he cleared his throat. His voice, when he spoke again, was quite different from the hectoring tones he had used before.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Perhaps I was a bit short, but—but—well, I was anxious, you see. That dog's the apple of my eye, and I'm willing to pay you for the trouble you've had. Take a quid and hand him over, and let's call it square, shall we?"

Stella eyed him disdainfully.

"If the dog's yours, you can collect him from the police station," she said. "That's all I have to say. Now, sir, will you be good enough to get off these premises?"

The man gritted his teeth.

"Look here—"

"If you don't, I shall call the police myself," Stella said steadily.

"Jim, come on!" the woman said anxiously, and nudged him again, while the man choked.

"All right!" he said thickly. "All right! I'll go! But watch out! You're not finished with Jim Hobbs yet!"

"Jim!" his wife cried.

The man stamped through the gateway. Outside, he paused beside his wife and glared back at them.

"You wait!" he gritted at Stella.

"Phew—what a temper!" Clara murmured as he raged off. "Still, good wheeze of yours, Babs," she added, grinning; "that fairly bowled him out. Wonder why he was so anxious to claim a dog that isn't his?"

"And why," Babs asked thoughtfully, her eyes glimmering, "should the dog have had this hanky attached to his collar? And why," she added, "should Mrs. Hobbs be so interested in that hanky? Did you notice, girls?"

"No. What?"

"Why, all the time she was here she was staring at that hanky as though it hypnotised her. If you ask me, there's some mystery here. Jackie, old boy, where did you get that hanky?"

But Jackie, gazing up adoringly, only wagged his tail. Jackie, unfortunately, was not gifted with speech.

What was the mystery surrounding the stray dog and the linen handkerchief with the initial "G"?

Babs examined it again in search of some other mark, but there was nothing else to be found. It was a mystery indeed!

Mr. Hobbs Takes a Handkerchief!



OBVIOUSLY, there was a mystery connected with the stray dog and the mysterious handkerchief, and it was obvious, too, that Mr. Jim Hobbs and his wife were a vital link

in that mystery. For some minutes after the couple had left, the chums and Stella Stone discussed it.

Jackie, despite his bedraggled appearance, was a valuable dog. Every line of him betrayed breeding; every healthy glint in his bright eyes and every sheen of his well-kept coat showed that he had been carefully tended and looked after. Not the sort of dog, as Stella said, one would expect to find straying about the countryside.

With their own pets housed in the extremely comfortable and hygienic kennels Stella had prepared for them, the next obvious duty was to notify the police and, if possible, ascertain the identity of Jackie's owner.

It was Babs who accompanied Stella on that mission, with Jackie, now carefully secured to a lead, trotting contentedly along the road at her side.

There was no police station in the village of Friardale, but P.-c. Tozer, the local pillar of law and order, had his cottage there, and P.-c. Tozer, when encountered, looked blank. Most certainly he had received no notification of a lost Sealyham, and when he rang up the Courtfield police they hadn't, either.

"Funny!" he said grumblingly. "People oughtn't to let valuable dogs get out of control. But what am I to do with it?" he asked. "I can't keep it here!"

"Perhaps," Stella suggested, "the Courtfield police will take it over?"

"The Courtfield police won't!" P.-c. Tozer said emphatically. "The Courtfield Police Station is being rebuilt! They've no room for stray dogs!"

"Then," Babs suggested—and she looked eagerly at Jackie, for she had taken a liking to the friendly little chap, and somehow hated the thought now of parting with him—"what about Miss Stone looking after him, Mr. Tozer? She's got plenty of room in her kennels!"

P.-c. Tozer looked hopeful.

"That's all right," he agreed. "If you'll do it, Miss Stone? If I get an inquiry about the dog, then I'll refer the inquirers to you. Will you take charge of him?"

"With pleasure!" Stella laughed.

And having watched P.-c. Tozer ponderously write down all the particulars, they led Jackie back to the kennels.

"Well, that's that!" Babs laughed. "Providing his owners didn't turn up, Stella, he's yours after a certain time, isn't he? And it's pretty obvious that the Hobbs people have no real claim to him. Otherwise they would have gone straight to the police. Hallo!" she added, in a whisper. "There they are!"

Stella stiffened. From Jackie, still on the lead, there came a low growl. For just ahead they saw Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs, standing at the corner of the lane. Even as Babs spoke, however, the man muttered something to the woman, and they hurried away.

"Still hanging round," Babs breathed.

And when they arrived back at the kennels, Jean Cartwright also reported having seen them—Mr. Hobbs peering over the hedge.

Still, nobody was worrying about mysterious Mr. Hobbs now. Jackie was safe, and Jackie, obviously, was pleased to be among them. Apart from that, they were keen now to start on the task of helping Stella.

Plump Bessie Bunter was dispatched into the house attached to the kennels to get tea ready, while the rest got down to work.

Pluto, for instance, though in the pink of condition, required stripping—all the dogs had to be fed and brushed, and into each coat was rubbed a linseed oil mixture, which was one of Stella's own pet preparations. Hard work, but happy work.

Then—tea.

Tea was a delightful meal, and Stella, the most charming of hostesses. Despite her long absence from Cliff House, she still knew, apparently, exactly what sort of provisions to get in to satisfy hungry and happy Fourth Formers. Naturally the talk was all of the show, Stella's ambitions and the juniors' hopes, and in the interval, Jackie.

But Jackie seemed supremely unconcerned about his own fate. He had happily accepted his new adopters, and, not yet having had quarters assigned to himself, cheerfully followed them wherever they went. His preference, however, was decidedly for Babs.

"Taken a fancy to you, Barbara," Stella laughed. "Seems to me, if he isn't claimed, you'll have to be the one to adopt him."

Babs laughed as she bent to pat the shaggy little head. As she did so the pocket of the tunic in which she had placed the mysterious handkerchief bulged, and in a trice Jackie had snapped at it, and, with the hanky in his teeth, was heading towards the door.

"Jackie, you little ruffian!" Babs called. "Come back!"

At the door Jackie turned, the handkerchief still in his mouth. He whisked his tail, looking up hopefully at the door-knob. Then, seeing that no one was going to let him out, he came back, dropping the handkerchief at Babs' feet again.

"Funny little beggar," Bessie Bunter said, blinking through her thick spectacles. "He looked as if he were trying to lead you somewhere, you know, Babs."

Babs smiled as she retrieved the handkerchief. It certainly did seem as though Jackie, for a moment, had had a plan in mind. Was his plan to take her back to the owner of the handkerchief?

Might be useful to remember that, she thought.

Tea progressed. Jackie, as if forgetting his brain-wave, slumped down with a contented thump on the carpet again. Then suddenly there sounded a step in the yard.

"Hallo, customer!" cried Stella.

"And, phew! Look who it is!" Clara said, peering through the window.

They all peered as Stella ran towards the door. And their eyes sparkled as they recognised the visitor. A tall, rather slim woman who cuddled an expensive-looking Pekingese in her arms. It was Mrs. Lavenham from Friardale Grange.

Mrs. Lavenham was one of the best known dog-owners in the district, and was, indeed, one of the biggest competitors in the forthcoming show. Apart from a pack of beagles, she kept an extensive retinue of canine pets, and was, in fact, just the sort of customer whose influence would be invaluable.

Now they saw Stella hurry out to

meet her. Now they saw the two talking, and then Stella took the dog away from her. And they heard Mrs. Lavenham's voice:

"Well, Miss Stone, I am doubtful—very. I think, like Major Fields-Croft and Mr. Burnley, that you are very, very young to have such a responsibility. However, your old headmistress, Miss Primrose, has recommended you to me, and so I am going to give you a trial. Get Fan-chan fit for me, satisfy me that you are as capable as Miss Primrose says you are, and you can take over all the veterinary work in my kennels with pleasure."

The chums beamed at each other. "My hat! If Stella gets that contract, she's made," Clara breathed.

They saw Stella delightedly nod. Then, apparently at a request from Mrs. Lavenham, they moved towards the kennels. Into those kennels they disappeared, to return a few minutes later without the Pekingese, that animal, apparently, having been placed in one of the empty kennels. A few more words, and Mrs. Lavenham, with a gracious nod, moved off.

Stella, rosy beaming, came back. "Luck," she said. "Girls, I believe you're my mascots. You saw who that was?"

"Yes, rather! Mrs. Lavenham," Bessie said.

"Mrs. Lavenham!" Stella deliciously laughed. "And do you know how many dogs she's got—forty-one! Fan-chan is her prize Peke. She's exhibiting it on Saturday, and she's handed it over to me to get it ready for the show. And if I satisfy her," Stella said, rosy-cheeked, "she's going to give me control of all her dogs."

They all gleed with her, as excited, as delighted as Stella herself.

If tea had been a happy meal to begin with, in what a boisterous spirit it was concluded. Even Jackie, sensing the gaiety in his friends' mood,

seemed to share the general jollity. Up with alacrity he jumped when, the meal finished, a general move was made towards the door, and as soon as the door was opened scampered along the passage, setting up a yelp which brought answering barks from the dogs in the kennels. Stella laughed as she caught him by his crimson collar.

"Enough of that, me lad!" she said. "If you're going to be a guest here, you're going to behave yourself. Now what about a nice clean kennel, young man, along with the rest of the boarders? Now let me see. Mrs. Lavenham's dog is in Kennel No. 7. You go into Kennel No. 8, Jackie."

"Wuff!" Jackie said, wriggling, and looked up pleadingly, as much as to say, "Don't tie me up."

But Stella, as head of the kennels, stood no nonsense, and into Kennel No. 8 Jackie was placed. Then for an hour they worked, combing, stripping and rubbing, until even Stella at last professed herself as satisfied.

"Fine!" she said. "I'll give them their feed, then shut them up for the night. Will you come along to-morrow some time, before or after lessons, girls?"

"Oh, Stella, we'd love to!" Babs said eagerly.

"Frankly, without wishing to appear too optimistic, I think you all stand an excellent chance of bagging prizes in the show. But it's half-past six now, and gates are at seven, aren't they? It would never do to let Miss Primrose think that I'd detained you so long that you were late."

"Rather not!" plump Bessie said. "But you'll be careful of Ting-a-Ling, won't you, Stella?"

"I'll treat Ting-a-Ling as if he were my own," Stella solemnly assured the duffer.

Bessie beamed, though, to be sure, she did not look altogether happy at leaving her pet. Bessie was very attracted to that little imp of mischief,



"IT'S gone," said Babs, looking up. "Gone? What has?" asked Mabs. "The hanky," Babs told her. "That man Hobbs came here just to get that hanky. Now why?" But Mabs could only blankly stare.

and Bessie's private opinion—dead wrong, of course—was that Ting-a-Ling was miserable whenever she was out of his sight. However, Stella had charge now, and if Ting was going to win prizes, then obviously Stella must continue with the good work she had started.

So Bessie said good-bye to her pet, as did Babs and the others.

Rather more briskly than they had come, they left the kennels and made their way to school. Well before gates they came within sight of that establishment, and as they were about to enter the gate a man and woman came out. Babs stopped.

"Hallo! See who they are?" she breathed.

"The Hobbses," Clara muttered. "What the dickens have they been here for?"

The man and woman turned. For a moment the man started, and then, quickly nodding to his wife, hurried her down the road in the opposite direction.

"Hallo, Babs!" cried a voice at that moment, and out of the gate came Mabel Lynn. Babs' own great chum, who shared Study No. 4 with her and Bessie Bunter in the Fourth Form corridor. "Just wondering where you'd got to," Mabs said. "Had a nice time with Stella?"

"Oh, lovely!" Babs said. "But, Mabs, I—"

"Yes, old thing?"

"Have you seen that couple before?" She pointed to the retreating backs of Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs.

"Why, yes!" Mabs said. "As a matter of fact, I've been showing them round."

"Showing them round?" Jean Cartwright cried.

"Well, why not?" Mabs stared at the tall Scots girl. "Miss Primrose didn't mind. Mrs. Hobbs asked if she could look round the school because, she said, she was thinking of sending her daughter here. Nothing wrong in that, is there?"

"No, of course not," Babs said hesitantly. "Except— But go on, what did they say? How did you meet them?"

Mabs flashed her a wondering look. But the story, such as it was, was soon explained. Mabs, who did not own a pet dog, and therefore had no direct interest in the Courtfield show, had been attending to a matter connected with the Junior School Amateur Dramatic Society that afternoon, and, having finished those duties, had strolled down to the gates on the off chance of meeting her chums again.

It was then that she had found Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs entering the school.

"Well, we got into conversation," Mabs said. "Then they told me about their daughter—a girl of my own age, they said, who would probably be in our Form if she came here. Naturally, as they were interested, I took them round. I mentioned it to Miss Primrose, and she said it was all right. "You took them into the school?" Babs asked.

"Yes, of course! Into our study, too. They liked our study; said it was the snuggest little room they'd ever seen. And they liked that photograph of the Form which is on the wall, and were frightfully interested in you, Babs. And, of course," Mabs said proudly, "I told them who you were—captain, and all that, you know. And then—well, I just strolled back to the tuckshop with them and they treated me to a ginger-beer and went off. But what's the matter?"

"Nothing; but it's funny," Babs said. "What's funny?"

"Well, their coming along here like that when they've been trailing us all the afternoon." And then, while Mabs stared, they told her of their experiences. "They might want to send their daughter to the school, of course."

"Well, I'm bothered if I can see why else they'd want to look round," Mabs said. "They certainly didn't take anything. Oh! Except a copy of the curriculum, but that's free to all visitors, isn't it? I was with them every minute of the time."

Babs smiled. Yet she still had a funny, indefinite sort of feeling, which she could not analyse. Babs was suspicious of the sly and wily Mr. Hobbs; Babs, most definitely, did not trust Mr. Hobbs.

They went into the school. In Study No. 4 Babs took out the handkerchief which she had removed from Jackie's collar. Mabs gazed at it.

"Jolly nice bit of linen!" she said. "Whoever lost that will be feeling sorry, I should say. But what's the idea of tying it round the dog's collar, Babs? To use as a lead, do you think?"

"Hardly!" Babs said. "A piece of linen like that wouldn't be much use as a lead, would it? You'd pretty well be crawling along on all fours with the dog itself if you attached him to this hanky. Besides, it wasn't stretched out, as it might have been if it had been used as a lead. It had a distinct bulge in it, as though something had been wrapped up in it, and dropped out."

"Queer!" Mabs said. "But what are you going to do with it, Babs?"

"Keep it until I find the owner," Babs said. "Remind me, will you, that I've put it in this drawer?" And so saying, she put it in the middle drawer of her own bureau, and, having shut the drawer, paused. "Well, I suppose I'd better see about collecting the impots," she said resignedly.

She hurried off. As captain of the Fourth Form Babs had many duties to attend to. Impots had to be collected and handed to the duty mistress of the day, the blackboard had to be cleaned, and the Form-room inspected, to see that no oddments were lying around. Then the library had to be visited, to be followed by a round-up of books not yet returned.

Cheerfully Babs executed these tasks, however. It was past "gates" when she had finished and returned to her own study. There she found Clara Trevlyn awaiting her.

"Seen 'em?" the Tomboy asked.

"Who?" Babs queried.

"The Hobbs-nobs!" Clara grinned. "They're hanging about outside the school. Just spotted them in the lane from our study window," she said.

"What's the little game, Babs?"

But Babs, obviously, could not answer that question.

She went to Clara's study, but could see nothing then. Some five minutes later call-over bell sounded. Call-over was the signal for the whole school to assemble in Big Hall in order for register to be called and the general routine orders to be given out for the following day. Except when anything exciting was afoot, call-over was usually a boring half-hour.

But call-over had to be obeyed, and with her chums Babs went down to Big Hall. There was nothing exciting that night, and Babs, who knew all the routine in advance, listened with only half an ear to the address Miss Primrose had to deliver. She sighed with relief when dismissal came.

"Well, that's over!" she said. "Just time to do another page of the old snapshot album before supper. Race you to the study, Mabs."

"On!" Mabs cried. "But look here—" bellowed Bessie. "What about me, you cats?"

But the "cats" had broken into a merry gallop, leaving Bessie to waste her protestations in the corridor's empty air. Up the stairs they flew, almost bowling over the lordly Diana Royston-Clarke en route, and with a merry laugh hurtled along the Fourth Form corridor, making a dead heat of it as they breathlessly reached the study door.

"Tie!" Mabs laughed.

"Beat you by a finger-nail, you mean!" Babs corrected, as she grasped the handle of the door. "One to me! Now—" Then she gave a jump. "Mum-my hat!" she cried, as she gazed into the study. "Who's been here?"

Cause for that question, indeed; for Study No. 4, which they had left spick-and-span, presented anything but the neat and orderly appearance they had expected to see. Both the cupboard doors were flung wide; the drawer beneath them had been pulled out, and its dusters and tea-cloths upturned on the floor. With the exception of the lower drawer, every drawer in the bureau had been turned upside down. Even the vases on the mantelpiece had been moved. Babs glared wrathfully.

"Some silly japer—" she began explosively.

"But what silly japer?" asked Mabs quietly. "Whoever's done this must have done it while we were in Big Hall. Well, everybody in the school has been in Big Hall for the last twenty minutes—that is, except the servants. So who's the japer?"

Babs blinked. That was a point she had not thought about yet.

"But the servants wouldn't—" she objected. "Anyway, what's the point of it?"

"Looks," Mabs observed, "as if somebody's been looking for something—in a hurry, too. Better go through our things, Babs."

Babs frowned as she stepped into the room. Leaving the school servants out of the question, then it seemed that some stranger had been here. But why?

"Hey!" Mabs said suddenly.

"What?"

"Look!"

Mabs stared. Babs was pointing at the carpet near the bureau. Recently that carpet had been repaired, a new length having been used to repair a rather threadbare patch. Not yet had the nap worn off the surface, and the carpet still retained every impression. The impression Babs was pointing to was that of a rather large foot.

"A mum-man's!" Mabs stammered.

"A man's," Babs affirmed; and immediately her mind went to Mr. Jim Hobbs.

Mr. Hobbs had already visited this study, had armed himself with a copy of the school curriculum so that he would know the exact time the study was likely to be vacant, and had been hanging around outside with his wife before call-over.

Suddenly Babs thought of the initialed handkerchief. With a sudden catch in her breath, she stooped down, fumbling among the oddments on the floor. Then she looked up.

"It's gone," she said.

"Gone? What has?" Mabs asked, not understanding.

"That hanky," Babs said. Her face was firm with conviction now. "It was that man Hobbs, and he came here just to get that hanky. Now, why?"

But Mabs could only blankly stare.

Two Up a Tree!



"W'RE up against something," Babs announced, "and, if you ask me, it's something big. Mr. Hobbs wouldn't take the risk of burgling the study just to get hold of that hanky if the hanky wasn't awfully important."

Clara, Mabs, and Jean Cartwright, to whom she delivered this argument in Study No. 4 some ten minutes later, looked grim.

They agreed. Though they had no actual proof against either Jim Hobbs or his wife, they had all noted that afternoon at Stella's kennels the fascination that hanky seemed to hold for the two plotters. It became clear now that the raid on Study No. 4 had been planned in order to get hold of it. Why?

"Because," Babs said, "the hanky meant something to them. They didn't want us to have it. And why?" Babs asked, pressing the argument a little further. "Because that hanky was a clue to something. They were scared because the clue might lead us to something, and— My hat!" Babs broke off, and her face flushed with excitement. "I've got it!"

Her chums stared at her. "Jackie!" Babs cried. "Remember—this afternoon—when Jackie took the hanky, and then walked to the door? It was old Bessie who said then that he was trying to lead us to someone," Babs went on, "and the hanky, of course, was associated with that someone. That's it!" she cried excitedly. "That's just it! Don't you see? Somebody tied something in that hanky to Jackie's collar and let Jackie loose. Whatever was in the hanky dropped out—goodness knows where! Jackie, recognising that hanky again, grabbed it up to try to lead us back to its owner."

"Phew!" Jean Cartwright whistled, nodding her curly head thoughtfully.

"And—that's why the Hobbs people wanted to get hold of the dog as well?" Clara stuttered.

"That's it," Babs looked confident. "Because they're afraid of the dog and they're afraid of the hanky. Dog and hanky are two vital clues. Well, they got the hanky, but we've still got the dog; and while we've got the dog we've got the most important clue still."

"If," Mabs put in swiftly, "they haven't already got the dog. How do we know they haven't?"

"We'll soon see," Babs said. "I'll phone Stella presently. In the meantime, we'll have a shot with Jackie at solving the giddy mystery. Take him back to the spot where we found him yesterday, and see if he leads us to the owner of that hanky. Lucky for us that to-morrow is a whole holiday. That means we can start early. But hold on a jiffy. I'd better warn Stella what's happened, and tell her to keep an extra special eye on Jackie."

She flew out, leaving the chums excitedly discussing her remarks between themselves. In a few minutes she was back.

"O.K.," she said "Jackie's still there. Stella says she hasn't seen the Hobbses, but, to make certain, she's going to keep Jackie in the house with her to-night. Immediately after breakfast to-morrow, then, girls, we go off to see Stella."

And immediately after breakfast on the morrow they reassembled, reinforced by Marcelle Biquet and Bessie

Bunter. Again it was a glorious morning, and, getting out their cycles, they reached Stella's kennels in record time. Stella was there—in the yard—the dogs all clustered about her as she exercised them by tossing a ball Jackie was among them. With a glad yelp, he bounded at Babs.

"Stella, anything happened?" Babs cried.

"Nothing—at least, nothing serious," Stella said. "I fancy there was somebody lurking around during the night, because all the dogs started barking like fury. I went down, of course, but could find nothing, except a bowl of water which had been upset near Mrs. Lavenham's Peke's kennel. But this morning—half an hour ago, in fact—I saw the Hobbs people again."

"Where?" Babs asked eagerly. "Outside in the road. I went to the gate, but when they saw me they went off."

"Which way?" Babs asked. "Towards Friardale Woods."

"Roughly," Babs said, "in the direction we first met Jackie yesterday? Right-ho! That's good enough, I think, girls. Stella, can we borrow Jackie for an hour or so?"

Willingly Stella gave that permission, and Jackie, fastened to a lead, evinced every evidence of joy at finding himself in Babs' charge again. Leaving Bessie and the little French girl behind to help Stella, Babs, with Jackie straining at the lead, set off with Clara, Jean, and Mabs towards the Friardale lane.

They soon reached the spot where Jackie had joined them the previous day.

"Now, Jackie," Babs urged, "find, old boy! Go on, find! And she waved towards the hedge as she stooped to untie his lead. "Good doggie, then!"

Jackie whined, frisking his tail. He looked earnestly eager as he stared at Babs and then at the hedge, and then, with a wuff, bounded through it.

"Whoops, after him!" Clara cried.

They pushed through a gap in the hedge, following the dog. Jackie pranced ahead, now and again picking up a stick, shaking it until it broke, and then joyously running on.

Clara Trevlyn sniffed. "Fat lot of good this is!" she said. "The dog thinks it's just a lark!"

"Never mind," Babs advised anxiously. "Come on!"

They went on, at times hopeful, and at other times frankly despairing. Once or twice Jackie stopped and sniffed the ground, and whined eagerly in his throat, and then, as though impelled by some dead seriousness of purpose, hurried on. But no sooner were they beginning to feel that he really had his task in mind than some twig or a fluttering butterfly would send him scampering madly in the opposite direction.

They reached the footpath which connected the Friardale lane with the Pegg-Kenmarsh road. And there Jackie suddenly sat down, and, lifting his head, howled.

"Now what the dickens is the meaning of that?" Clara wanted to know. "Seems to be concerned about something."

And certainly, for the next fifty yards, Jackie gave them all the highest of hopes. He moved more slowly, sometimes pausing to sniff, at others looking round eagerly, as though to make certain they were still following.

Presently they came abreast of Lavenham Meadow, in which the great dog show was to be held on Saturday, and where the big marquees which were to

be erected there had already been dumped.

Jackie suddenly became excited again, and, darting between the barbed wire which surrounded the field, rushed madly on to the grass.

"Hi!" yelled Clara. "Jackie!" yelled Babs.

But Jackie did not look round. Like a hound following a hot scent, he went racing on across the field. Then, all at once, he stopped—with such sudden abruptness that he went slithering along the close-cropped grass on his haunches. Twisting round, he smelt the ground, and finally began to dig.

Clara ran her hand helplessly through her unruly locks.

"The silly dog's crackers!" she cried. "Come on!"

She and Babs clambered through the barbed wire, reaching Jackie, who dug now as if his life depended upon it.

"Jackie!" Babs cried.

Just for an instant his excited little eyes looked up. And then, with paws which moved so quickly that they seemed to blur, went on scratching a hole in the grass.

"Put him on the lead, Babs!" Clara said.

Babs bent down. Rather bewildered herself, she caught the dog and slipped the lead on to his collar.

"Come on, Jackie!"

Jackie whimpered, straining back towards the hole.

"Oh, come on, you young chump!" Clara snorted.

And Jackie, after lagging for a moment, allowed himself at last to be led away. Not until he reached the road did he look back, and then he looked straight in the direction of the hole he had been making.

Secure on the lead now, Jackie ambled down the road, giving no further sign of animation or interest until, three or four hundred yards farther on, they passed Jasmine Cottage, a pretty enough little place tucked away behind a clump of firs—some two hundred yards from the road. Then again he stiffened, his ears cocked alertly towards the building.

"Hallo!" Babs said hopefully. "He's spotted something there. Jackie, what is it, then, old boy?"

"Wurr-ruff!" Jackie said, and made a little leap at the end of the lead in the direction of the house.

"Excited about something there," Jean Cartwright opined, and, shading the sun from her eyes with her hand, stared. Then she started. "Babs—"

But Babs had seen—just for a moment. She had seen a girl's face at an upper window of the cottage. For an instant she caught the flutter of a handkerchief from behind the window-pane. And Jackie made another spring forward.

The chums looked at each other. Had they really seen the face and the waving handkerchief? Then, before any of them could voice a thought, something else happened.

The door at the front of the cottage opened. A woman peered out.

"Oh golly!" breathed Babs. "See who it is!"

Just as if to prove there could be no mistake in the matter, another figure emerged from the cottage immediately afterwards, joining the woman. They were Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs.

"Something fishy—and funny!" Babs decided. "Don't move, girls! This hedge screens us, and they can't see if we stand still. Shush, Jackie!" she whispered, as Jackie strained towards the house. "Quiet!"

They stood still, watching. They saw the man and woman talk together, and then Jim Hobbs nodded his head. Very

intently they were staring at the road, and once Jim Hobbs looked straight at the hedge which screened the chums. From there his gaze went up to the window behind which they had seen the girl. He pointed, and he and his wife disappeared into the shrubbery.

"They've gone!" breathed Jean.

From Jackie came a low growl. Ears alert, he sat staring at the house.

"Old Jackie's on to something," Clara said. "Look how excited he is. And he isn't excited because of Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs—there's something else in that house he wants to come to grips with. Babs, that girl! Do you think there's any connection?"

"Pretty sure!" Babs said. "Funny she hasn't appeared again!"

Jean glanced at Babs.

"Might be the owner of the hanky," she suggested. "I—I wonder if she's being kept a sort of prisoner there?"

Babs nodded slowly. Something like that was in her own mind. If the Hobbses were holding a girl prisoner in the cottage, and Jackie knew that girl, it would explain the Hobbses' anxiety to get hold of the dog and the hanky—both of them being vital clues, which might lead to the girl.

"Well, why not try to find out?" demanded Babs. "Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs have gone now. And see that tree near the window? What price two of us climbing up that and having a look inside?"

"Good idea!" Clara approved. "I'll make one!"

"And me!" Jean said.

"No good!" Babs shook her head. "Too many cooks might spoil the broth. You and Mabs stop here with Jackie. Clara and I will go. Come on, Clara. Now's our chance. Careful, though!"

And Babs herself led the way. They reached the trees which fronted the cottage.

Babs paused.

"Coast clear?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Right—ho, then! This way, I think." And Babs, her heart thudding now, caught the lowermost branch and swung herself up. "Jolly good," she breathed, "and quite safe! Careful you don't make a noise, though, old Clara."

Clara nodded as she swung herself up, and, sitting on the branch, they looked around. Still no sight or sign of the Hobbses.

"Come on!" Babs said.

She clambered up the trunk—easy enough work to a girl of her athletic prowess. Now she was swinging on the branch above. Now, with her heart leaping, she was crawling along the branch towards the window. Then she paused.

"No farther," she said to Clara. "Look!"

They crouched on the bough, staring into the room. They saw a bed, very dishevelled and obviously having been recently slept in. They saw a table, one chair, a little washstand with a mirror above it. But of the girl there was no sign.

"Not here," Clara said disappointedly. "Nothing to see!"

"Isn't there?" Babs was looking keen. "Glance at the window," she advised. "Look, it's been screwed up on the outside!"

Clara blinked. But she saw then that what Babs said was true.

It seemed obvious that the room was some sort of prison.

"If you ask me," Babs breathed, "they spotted her signalling and moved her out in case anyone should come nosing round. They—" And

then she gave a jump which almost caused her to lose her balance as from below them sounded a furious voice.

"Hi!"

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Clara.

"Mr. Hobbs!"

Babs, in dismay, blinked down. Mr. Hobbs it was. Where he had come from they did not know, but there he was now, his face red, his eyes glaring as he angrily shook his fist.

The two chums groaned. They were neatly caught!

Six Dogs Run Wild!



"COME down!" Mr. Hobbs shouted. "Come down this minute!"

Obviously, they must obey. Down clambered Babs and Clara. Mr.

Hobbs, who was carrying a stick, glared as they jumped to the ground.

"Ho, so it's you, is it?" he said.

"Nice sort of goings on for young ladies at a posh school, I must say! What were you doing up my tree?"

"Kik-climbing it!" Babs stuttered.

"What for?"

"We—we like climbing," Clara said feebly.

His eyes narrowed.

"That all?"

"Well"—Babs looked surprised—"what else?"

The man peered at them, obviously uncertain, obviously suspicious, while Clara, taking her cue from Babs, put on her most wide-eyed expression of innocence.

"You were spying through the window!" the man snarled.

"Spying?" echoed Babs. "Th—that's silly! I mean, what is there to spy on?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing—of course not!" Hobbs said. "At the same time, you know you aren't allowed on private property. I could give you in charge for this. Nice show up at your posh school that would be, wouldn't it?"

Babs bit her lip.

"Wouldn't like that, would you?"

Mr. Hobbs sneered.

"No," confessed Babs.

"All right." He glared at them.

"I'm not a hard man," he said, "and I don't want to get you into trouble for a silly schoolgirl lark. On the other hand, I don't trust you, and I might think twice. They say that one good turn deserves another, and if you want me to do you a good turn by not reporting you, you can do me one at the same time. Will you?"

Babs blinked cautiously.

"Well, it depends."

"You can do it." The man looked at her significantly. "That Miss Stone is a friend of yours, isn't she? She's got my dog, as you know. Well, I want that dog. You tell her to hand it over to me and we'll forget about this little business. If you don't—"

"If we don't?" asked Babs.

"Then"—and Mr. Hobbs' face changed—"then look out for yourself! And you can tell Miss Stone to look out for herself, too! Now be off with you, and bring that dog back here before dinner! I shall expect it, mind!" he added warningly as they trotted away.

"And there's no harm," Clara muttered, "in expecting! But, Babs, suppose he does report us?"

"Well, jolly well let him!" Babs said. "I've got an idea he won't, though. It's pretty plain he's engaged in some underhand business in that

cottage, and though we can't prove anything, he can't be too sure of himself. Anyway, we're out of that, thank goodness! Good job," she added, as they reached the road, "he didn't know Jackie was with us!"

She scrambled under the hedge as she said that, where Mabs and Jean were anxiously awaiting them, with Jackie still attached to the lead. From the road, of course, they had seen all that had happened, and were all agog to know what had transpired. They were both disappointed when they heard that no contact had been made with the mysterious girl.

"But she's a prisoner there, all right," Clara said. "The fact that the window was screwed up proves that!"

"Unless," Mabs suggested, "they've been practising A.R.P. or something and have made that into a gas-proof room!"

The others looked doubtful. However, they could do nothing more now to solve the mystery.

They raced back to the kennels, where Stella was grooming the dogs. Happily eager, happily excited, those dogs all swarmed towards them as they approached. Babs' eyes glowed.

"Whoops, they look twice as fit already!" she said. "Look at Brutus! I've never, never seen his coat look like that before! How do you do it, Stella?"

Stella laughed.

"A little knowledge and a lot of hard work," she said. "Don't forget, Barbara, we're after prizes. Anyway, what's happened? Have any luck?"

Babs told her. Stella frowned.

"Not much to go on, is it?" she asked.

It wasn't. But that by no means lessened their determination to get at grips with the mystery. Whatever they might lack in the way of convincing proof, their suspicions were sharp now, and as Babs pointed out, they had something to go on.

For the rest of that morning they helped Stella in grooming and brushing the dogs and training them for the judging ring. At half-past twelve, however, Stella paused.

"Did you get permission to absent yourself from dinner to-day?"

Babs smiled ruefully.

"Never thought of it," she admitted.

"Then," Stella decided, "you must go back. Don't forget, if I'm not your head girl now, I still remember the rules and routines, and I should hate Miss Primrose to feel that I had been encouraging you to break them. I'm sorry, because I was hoping you would have dinner with me. Still, can't be helped."

"But can we come back this afternoon?" Babs asked eagerly.

"Why, of course; love you to. Then we'll exercise the dogs," Stella promised. "But hurry along now, or you'll be late."

There was not much danger of that, however, for well before the dinner-bell rang Babs & Co. had reached the school, and after a wash and brush up in the cloak-room were waiting outside the doors of the dining-hall.

Dinner followed—a cheery meal, despite the fact that a number of the girls, having been granted permission, were absent.

But in the middle of dinner came a rather dramatic interruption.

And as it happened that interruption occurred just as Miss Primrose, following out the usual custom, came round with vinegary-faced Miss Bullivant to ask for complaints. In the doorway she stood with the mathematics mistress when from along the corridor came a

series of yelps and yaps, followed by the muffled thud of padding feet.

And then, while everybody started up, a lithe, black shape came rushing between Miss Primrose's legs, and with one flying leap shot on to the table, upsetting a milk jug.

"My hat, it's Waffles, the Head's cat!" cried Babs. "And—"

No more. For then it happened. Miss Bullivant and Miss Primrose, starting round in consternation, were both swept back as six excited dogs rushed into the room.

The six were led by Ting-a-Ling and Gyp, Pluto a good third.

Pandemonium then. Waffles, the obvious point of the dogs' interest, hissed defiance and leapt on Diana Royston-Clarke's shoulder.

Back reeled Diana, gasping. From her shoulder Waffles darted towards the open window.

"Pluto!" screamed Clara.

"Brutus!" cried Babs.

"And Ta-tut-ting-a-ling's here, too!" yelled Bessie Bunter.

"And Gyp!" cried Janet Jordan.

"And Abbe!" exclaimed Jean Cartwright.

"So am Jacques! Jacques, you wicked choin!" shrieked Marcelle Biquet.

The Fourth Form was in an uproar now. In majestic dignity Miss Primrose regained her poise.

Babs made a desperate lunge at Brutus, and catching that excited animal by the collar, gave him a cuff.

Barking and yapping, the rest of the dogs were making frantic efforts to jump up at the window through which Waffles had disappeared. In frantic haste their owners rushed at them.

Miss Primrose strode forward.

"Barbara!"

"Oh crumbs! I mean— Oh dud-dear! Y-yes, Miss Primrose?"

"I understood," Miss Primrose said wrathfully, "that you had placed those animals in the charge of Stella Stone?"

"Yes, Miss Primrose."

"Then what," Miss Primrose asked, "are they doing in the school?"

Babs shook her head bewilderedly.

"I—I don't know. They were with Stella when we left her an hour ago," she said. "They—they must have got out."

"You're telling us!" murmured Leila Carroll, the American junior.

"And raced back to school, I presume," Miss Primrose said, "and meeting my cat on the way, chased her. I must say," she added witheringly, "that if this is Stella's idea of looking after the dogs, she is not fit to have control. Barbara, you will immediately kennel those dogs."

Babs blinked.

"But I'm sure, Stella—" she said.

"Never mind what you are sure of," Miss Primrose said abruptly. "I am considerably disturbed—not to say bruised. Take those dogs away, Barbara."

"To—to Stella?" Babs asked.

"Certainly not to Stella. Unless Stella can satisfactorily explain this neglect, I refuse to allow her to have control of the dogs. Now please do as you are told."

Babs groaned. Of course, Miss Primrose's wrath was understandable. Apart from her own personal injuries, the headmistress was frightfully fond of her pet cat. In some dismay they led the dogs back to the Pets' House and re-kennelled them.

"Rotten bad luck," Clara said. "Wonder what happened, though? It's not like Stella to let the whole pack get loose—and she's been so jolly care-

ful not to give Primmy any cause for complaint. Funny, though—Jackie not with them," she added.

Funny it might be, but the chums were not concerned with Jackie then. They were all anxious for Stella's sake—for if Stella lost Miss Primrose's favours, then it was a serious look-out indeed for her. In great anxiety they awaited Miss Primrose's instructions, but those instructions did not come for another half an hour. When they did Miss Primrose herself brought them.

She had recovered from her anger now, although she still looked a little severe.

"I have been in communication with Stella, who says that someone let the dogs out of the kennels during her absence," she said. "In the circumstances I will overlook the incident,

locked up in the yard—all of them. I got to Courtfield Towers to find that Lady Courtfield wasn't in—the phone message had been a hoax. When I got back here the dogs were gone, and Miss Primrose was on the phone, utterly furious."

The chums looked serious and a little grim now.

"Seems that Hobbs is behind this, eh?" Babs said. "Of course, it was he who let the dogs loose. He's determined to get hold of Jackie. Pretty obvious that it was his wife who did the phoning while Hobbs himself hung about waiting for you to disappear. And in freeing Jackie, of course, he let the other dogs loose."

"Including Mrs. Lavenham's?" Stella said.

"Oh perhaps," Clara said, "he didn't



THE chums were in the act of looking for the mystery girl when a furious yell came from below. "Oh, my hat!" muttered Clara. "Mr. Hobbs!" The two chums groaned. They were neatly caught.

get Jackie? Getting Jackie might have been his object, but Jackie's a wily little customer. Anyway, gassing won't mend matters. What we've got to do now is to hunt for Mrs. Lavenham's dog. Hallo," she added, and her jaw dropped in sudden dismay. "Oh, mummy hat!"

For a car had driven up to the gate, and out of that car the tall, slim figure of Mrs. Lavenham was descending, and in Mrs. Lavenham's arms was nestling a bundle of bedraggled fur. It was Fan-chan.

Mrs. Lavenham was utterly furious. "Miss Stone!" she cried.

"Oh, Mrs. Lavenham—"

"This—this—" Mrs. Lavenham choked. "Is this how you look after my pet?" she cried. "Half an hour ago the dog came home—in this bedraggled condition—goodness knows what has happened to him! I demand an explanation, Miss Stone!"

Stella turned white.

"I—I'm sorry Somebody let him out."

though I have warned Stella that if anything like it happens again I shall not take so lenient a view of the matter. You may take the dogs back, Barbara."

Very readily the chums did that, anxious for news now. They reached the kennels, to find Stella looking the picture of distress.

"Jackie's gone! Mrs. Lavenham's dog's gone!" she groaned.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Babs. "But Stella, how did it happen?"

Stella shook her head.

"I don't know. Just after you went that fellow Hobbs called again. He said that you had promised to let him have Jackie back by dinner-time, and when I wouldn't let him go he stormed off. Then, just as I was sitting down to my own dinner, I received a phone call from Lady Courtfield. She said she wanted to see me—urgently."

"Yes," Babs said.

"Naturally, I went, le. the dogs

"Then you," Mrs. Lavenham bitingly retorted, "should have seen that he was not let out! If this is how you look after dogs, all I have to say, Miss Stone, is that I withdraw my patronage from this moment. I am sorry now that I was advised to patronise you at all, and I shall have much pleasure in not recommending my friends to place their animals in your careless charge. Good-bye!"

"But Mrs. Lavenham—" cried Babs.

"Good-bye!" Mrs. Lavenham snapped, and while they all blinked in utter dismay, Mrs. Lavenham re-entered her car.

Jackie On the Scent Again!



NO doubt Mrs. Lavenham was in a furious rage—no doubt, either, from her point of view, that she was justified. The withdrawal of her patronage was a stunning blow to Stella. Of all the people in the district Mrs. Lavenham was the one who could have done her the most good—or the most harm.

"Well, there's only one thing for it," Babs said decidedly. "We've got to prove to Mrs. Lavenham that it wasn't Stella's carelessness, as she thinks. We've got to prove to her that people plotted against Stella. And we can only do that," Babs added, "by showing up the shady game those Hobbs people are playing."

"Sounds hopeful!" grunted Clara. "Hopeful or not, that's our cue," Babs said, "and the first step we're going to take in bowling them out is to find Jackie. It's pretty obvious that it was Jackie they came for—and whether they let the dogs out on purpose or not in grabbing him is just beside the point. Clara, you and I will go along. No sense in the whole crowd of us going—apart from which, Stella will want some help to get the dogs looking spick-and-span again. O.K.?"

"O.K.," Clara said. "Lead on."

And Babs led on, leaving her chums behind with Stella.

Babs took the road to the Hobbs cottage. But they had not accomplished more than half their journey when Babs gave a sudden yell.

"Clara, look! Jackie!" she almost shrieked.

Jackie it was. Jackie limping; Jackie covered in mud with a scratch over one eye as if he had been caught on a barb of wire or a thorn in some desperate scramble through a hedge.

He was approaching them from the direction of the cottage, and as he saw them his ears perked up and a glad little rumble came from his throat. Up he came, frisking at Babs' feet. Then Babs made another discovery.

"Hallo!" she cried in sudden excitement. "He's got another hanky tied to his neck."

"It's the same one!" Clara cried. But it wasn't. For this handkerchief, except for creases at one end, had obviously been neatly folded and laundered before it came into Jackie's possession. But it was a handkerchief similar to the one they had already found, and one which bore the same initial "G." in one corner.

Clara stared. "What do you make of that, Babs?" Babs' face was keen.

"Pretty plain," she said. "Jackie's been in touch with the owner of this handkerchief again, and the owner of the hanky," Babs said, "is that girl in

Jasmine Cottage. The way I work it out is that the Hobbses grabbed Jackie all right, took him to the cottage, but Jackie there gave them the slip and got in touch with the girl again, who perhaps helped him to escape.

"Anyway, here he is—which means," Babs added, her eyes suddenly thoughtful, "that the Hobbses are probably searching for him again."

"So what?" Clara asked.

"So," Babs muttered softly, "there's a chance they're not in the cottage. In that case, we might be able to get in touch with the girl. What about it?"

"I'm with you," Clara said. "But what about Jackie? We can't barge up to the cottage with him."

"We'll tie him up somewhere in the road," Babs returned. "This chance is too good to miss."

Fortunately Babs had had the presence of mind to bring Jackie's lead along, and with the dog attached to it once again they went on their way.

Once again they passed Lavenham Field, where half a dozen workmen were busily untying the huge tarpaulin bales which contained the great marquees in which the judging at the dog show was to be held. And once again Jackie strained at the lead and whined in his throat.

"Kim on, animal!" Clara sniffed. "This isn't the cottage."

"Wow!" Jackie said, and looked at them expectantly, and looked at the field again. "Wow!"

"Wants to be off digging," Babs guessed. "Sorry, old chap. No time for larks now. Funny, though, how he seems to have a fancy for this field," she added. "Forward, Jackie, me lad!"

She gave a jerk at the lead. Jackie whined again, and then, falling in with her wishes, pranced along at her side. Presently they came within sight of Jasmine Cottage, and there Babs, tying Jackie to a branch in the hedge, set off with Clara along the winding footpath which led up to it. As they went she suddenly paused.

"Clara—the window—look!"

Clara looked. The window Babs indicated was the one which had been the scene of their adventure yesterday. Just for a moment she saw a girl's face peering through it. Then abruptly the face was withdrawn.

"She's there!" Babs cried. "Come on!"

Hearts beating wildly now, they went in. They reached the cottage door, and there Babs knocked. There was no reply.

"They're out all right!" Clara breathed. "Knock again, though—just to make sure."

Babs knocked again. Again there was no reply.

"Try the latch," counselled Clara.

Babs tried the latch. The door opened.

"Goodie!" Clara chuckled quietly, and swiftly glanced round. "Nobody in sight. Come on, let's go and see the girl."

Boldly they marched through the door, to find themselves in a little parlour which contained two other doors. The first was open, giving a view of the kitchen and scullery which lay beyond; the second was obviously the one which led to the upper floor of the cottage. Babs went towards it and turned the handle. Then she frowned.

"Locked!" she announced.

"Bad luck," Clara said, pulling a face, and banged on the panel. "Hey!" she called. "We're friends! Open this door, if you can!"

They stood still while the echoes faded into silence. Then, from above, they heard quick footsteps.

"She's coming!" Babs breathed.

They waited. Nothing happened.

"Once again," Clara decided, and herself raised her voice. "Hallo!" she cried.

Silence.

"Funny!" Babs frowned. "She's up there all right. We're friends!" she cried out. "We've come to help you!"

Most bafflingly there was no answer. The two chums looked utterly mystified.

"Perhaps she isn't a prisoner after all," Clara said uneasily. "Perhaps—" and she spun round. "Babs, cave!" she cried.

But it was too late. For as Babs swiftly turned, her jaw dropping in dismay, Jim Hobbs stormed over the threshold, accompanied by his wife. He glared.

"Ho!" he said witheringly. "Ho! So not satisfied with trespassing on my property, now you deliberately break into my house!"

"We—we didn't. We—we found the door open," Babs stammered.

"And that, I suppose, entitled you to come in?" the man sneered.

The two chums stood still, utterly crestfallen. They realised that the man and his wife held all the cards.

"What did you expect to find, eh?" Hobbs barked furiously.

"Nothing," Babs said feebly.

"Then why are you here?"

"Well, you—you remember that dog Jackie?" Babs' mind was working swiftly now. She knew that she and Clara were in a tight corner, but it was necessary, if possible, to disarm this scoundrel of all suspicion. "You see," she added, "the dog escaped from the kennels at dinner-time, and we thought it might have come this way. We wondered if you'd seen it."

Narrowly he regarded her. But Babs noticed the fleeting expression of relief which crossed his face for a moment.

"Well, I haven't," he scowled. "But that's no reason why you should come breaking into my house. If you wanted to see me, your job was to wait, and this time you're not getting away with it."

Babs eyed him apprehensively.

"What—what are you going to do?" she asked.

"You'll see," he glared—"you'll see! Now get out of it! Go on! There'll be a row over this! And if I catch you here again, I'll take my whip to you! Get out!"

He stepped aside. For a moment Babs' eyes blazed, and Clara's hands clenched. But, obviously, there was nothing to be gained by holding the man in further conversation, and they both had a feeling of relief when, once more outside, they breathed the fresh air again.

"Narrow squeak," Babs said. "But I don't see what he can do. Funny though—about that girl. Suppose we did see her?"

"We saw her all right," Clara grunted. "And, unless she's deaf, she must have heard us. Why the dickens didn't she answer?"

That was another mystery. Perhaps, in its way, the most puzzling. Every scrap of evidence—the screwed-up window, the locked door, seemed to suggest that the girl was a prisoner against her will, and yet, when she had the opportunity of saving herself, she had remained mute.

Returning to the hedge they released Jackie, and with him trotted off to see

Stella and the chums. Stella had a message for them.

"Miss Primrose rang up five minutes ago," she told Babs. "She says you and Clara are to go back to Cliff House at once."

"Hallo! What's the matter?" Clara asked.

"She didn't say."

The two regarded each other apprehensively. But plainly a summons of that nature was not to be delayed. With some doubt they mounted their bicycles again, and, promising to be back as soon as they had seen the Head, rode back to school. Half an hour later they faced an angry and stern Miss Primrose in her study.

"I have sent for you girls because I have received an incredible complaint by phone from a man named Mr. Hobbs."

"Oh, gee!" muttered Clara.

"Mr. Hobbs accused you of trespass-

"Well, y-yes, I suppose so," Babs mumbled.

"You suppose so? Barbara, how dare you! You did, you mean! You had the unwarrantable effrontery to go into a stranger's house! Really! Have you no sense of what is right? Does the good name of the school mean nothing to you?"

The chums stood crimson and hot.

"From this moment," Miss Primrose said sternly, "you are forbidden to approach Mr. Hobbs' house. And just to impress that on your minds, you are both confined to close bounds until the day after to-morrow. In addition, you will write two hundred times, 'I must not trespass on other people's property.' And if," Miss Primrose rumbled, her eyes gleaming—"if anything like this happens again I shall suspend you! Go!"

Sick at heart, the chums went.

Gated until the day after to-morrow—when the day after to-morrow was

It was with a sense of joy at last that, just before gates, they saw girls drifting back into the school, and Babs, looking out of the study window, saw Mabs and Bessie, and Jean and Marcelle and Janet coming in. And Babs started.

"Hallo! Mabs has got Jackie with her! What's happened, I wonder?"

They watched together. They saw Mabs go into the Pets' House with Jackie. They saw her come out without him. A few minutes later she herself appeared in the study.

"Beastly rotten luck!" she sympathised, when Babs and Clara had told her the news. "Still, I think we've put a spoke in the Hobbses wheel," she added "Of course, you don't know what happened after you left this afternoon?"

"No, what?" questioned Babs.

And Mabs told them. About five o'clock, apparently, Mr. Hobbs had arrived with three dead chickens, and



OVER the table darted the Head's cat, and after Waffles rushed Babs & Co.'s pets. There was a terrific uproar in a moment. But Babs & Co. were wondering in dismay: How had their pets escaped from Stella Stone's kennels?

ing yesterday on his property," Miss Primrose went on. "Apparently he was lenient enough then to tell you off with a caution. In spite of that, he says, to-day you trespassed again, and this time actually broke into his house. That," Miss Primrose went on sternly, "is a charge for which Mr. Hobbs would be justified in coming, not to me, but to the police. I want to know what you mean by it?"

Helplessly the two chums glanced at each other. How could they tell Miss Primrose of their suspicions when they had not an atom of concrete proof to back them up? Babs turned red.

"Well, we weren't doing any harm," she said. "We—we went to see Mr. Hobbs about a dog that was lost."

"That doesn't explain what you were doing in his house, Barbara."

"Nun-no," admitted Babs. "But—but he wasn't there—and—and the door was unlatched, and—and so we went in."

Miss Primrose looked scandalised. "Without permission?"

the day of the dog show itself, when they had hoped to help Stella, when there was so much to be done!

The Trap at the Cottage!



"MY hat, if only we could find out what that rotter Hobbs is up to!" Clara said, through her clenched teeth.

If only—yes. Bowling out Mr. Hobbs in his shady activities would clear themselves. But since that was not possible, the only thing to do was to grin and bear their punishment.

They went to Study No. 4. There they started upon their lines. The school, empty and deserted, seemed an unfriendly place, and they had no mind at all for work.

Tea-time came, and they made tea, and had a snack of cake while they worked. But all the time their minds were on Stella, Jackie, and the pets, and the good time which Mabel Lynn and Bessie and the others were having.

P.-c. Tozer, of Friardale. Mr. Hobbs had declared that, during his escape, Jackie had killed those chickens in his back garden and he denounced Stella as unfit to have charge of the dog.

He had ordered P.-c. Tozer to arrest it. Arresting dogs, apparently, was a point of his profession about which Mr. Tozer had been somewhat vague, though it was obvious that Hobbs' one motive was to get that dog out of Stella's control at any cost.

"And then," Mabs said, "I had a brain-wave. Tozer, obviously, couldn't let Mr. Hobbs complain without doing something. Hobbs himself wanted the dog, of course, but he didn't try to claim it. You bet he knew he couldn't prove ownership. So I trotted out the suggestion that until its owner should be found I'd look after it."

"And they agreed?" Babs cried. "Good for you, old Mabs!"

"They agreed—yes—after we'd paid Mr. Hobbs ten shillings for the value of the chickens killed. Though it's pretty certain Jackie didn't really kill



OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

PATRICIA is your very own friend—young and gay, yet old enough to be wise and helpful, too. She writes to you each week, in that typically cheery way of hers, telling you about herself, her family, things to do, and things to talk about. In fact, hers is just the sort of letter schoolgirls love.

A HAPPY Whitsun to you all, my pets—and let's hope Mr. Weather Clerk is as kind to us as he was at Easter, bless him!

This Patricia of yours will be going away for the week-end. Nowhere very exciting, I'm afraid—but just quietly enjoyable, if you understand.

I'm going with my small brother, who has the long name, Heatherington (or Heath for short) to stay with one of our aunts. She's rather an aged aunt—being my father's eldest sister. And she lives alone in a little cottage in Sussex.

She doesn't have much company—just a woman who comes in daily to do the housework, and a very handsome parrot importantly named Napoleon.

Napoleon is, really, the most conceited parrot I ever did see. If you talk to him, he looks at you most scornfully, and then lifts one claw and proceeds to manœuvre it with his beak.

He likes having his neck tickled—and then sulks when you stop!

All the same, he's very handsome. So I suppose you can't expect that riot of colour and good looks AND good manners as well.

Aunt May (his doting owner) said he used to talk quite fluently.

But now—and then only on very rare occasions when aunt herself coaxes him—he'll say just one sentence:

"You're a little villain, you are!"

Oh, and he'll also dance a jig when the wireless dance music is on. And has that bird got Swing!

● A Speedy Cure

Do you like cucumber and radishes? When I was a small girl I didn't like cucumber a bit. But now I'm nearly-grown-up, I just love it. Isn't it odd how tastes do change?

I'm still not very keen on radishes, for some reason, so when we have them in salad there is always an extra few for the rest of the family.

Radishes give me hiccups, you see. And cucumber does the same for some people, as I expect you've noticed.

So always remember, when eating either cucumber or radish to chew it plenty—as we might say if we were in America.

And if by chance it should give you "hicks"—well, I'll repeat my famous cure.

Fill a cup with water, and place it on the edge of the table. Place your forefingers in your ears, then stoop, and take two sips of water from the cup.

That's all! Your hiccups will have gone, I promise you.

It really is most wondrous!

● Just Dusters

Have you a seat, or some all-weather chairs in your garden at home?

We have two chairs and one seat—which stay there all the year round. They're scrubbed at the beginning of the summer—then the rain does the rest of the cleaning, I'm afraid, apart from occasional dustings.

But, frankly, the seats are jolly hard. So mother decided to be rash and buy some cushions for them.

There was no point in paying for silky covers, so she bought uncovered cushions, and we decided to make the covers ourselves.

We realised we must have a really "tough" material—and yet one that would wash easily.

After lots of hard thinking, I finally suggested to mother: "Dusters."

And dusters it is. We bought eight new dusters—checked ones, they were, at three-ha'pence each. (Those bright yellow ones look quite as gay, incidentally.)

After pairing them off, we joined two together round three sides and fastened press-studs to the fourth side.

Now the cushions slip into their duster covers, and are press-studded into place. They look so gay on the garden seats and chairs—and, of course, are almost as easy as your hands to wash!

While on the subject of cushions, I simply must mention another useful covering.

American cloth! As you know, this can be bought in all colours these days, and it is quite easy to sew, especially with the aid of a machine.

Cushions for the garden—or for a boat, if you're river-minded—look very modern in this material.

American cloth makes me think of patent leather. If you have a bag, or shoes of this, you must know how it tends to crack at times. To prevent this, you should rub it over with Vaseline, and allow it to soak in for some time. The leather will be beautifully soft and supple after this treatment.

● An Interesting Letter

It's not often I quote from letters which I receive. But I had one from Winnipeg, in Canada, the other day which I thought might interest you.

It is from a lady whose two daughters read the SCHOOLGIRL. She says:

"I thought it might be of interest to you to know I personally read and

find a lot of interest in your columns. The ideas for dress I can often adapt and all the grooming ideas are excellent and often followed by the girls around here . . . The temperature here does not tend to help complexions, and usually Noreen, my elder girl (13) has to cream her skin at night . . ."

The writer is referring to the winter temperatures, of course, and it's nice to know that really sensible Good Looks Care is approved of by mothers, isn't it?

Now perhaps you'd like to know what the Winnipeg schoolgirls wear. The writer of this charming letter says:

"Little ribbed sweaters" (or jumpers to us) "with short sleeves and zipped up the front, over swing skirts. Tunic and blouses for gym, and dimndl dresses for best. Wool stockings in the winter, and then straight to ankle socks in the summer, usually. Low heels all the year round, very heavy winter coats and hoods or helmets. Then in the summer: Wash dresses with little jackets."

In Winnipeg, apparently they have six very cold months of the year, four very hot ones, and two "medium."

But in spite of the extremes of temperature, I think the schoolgirls dress in much the same way as schoolgirls here in England, don't you?

● A Frill So Dainty

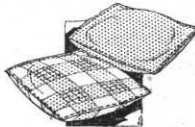
Very often a last-year's dress that has just a "little something" added to it, can look every bit as sweet as the brand-new one. The dress-that-shows-a-petticoat idea is a boon for the girl who's thinking of bringing an oldish frock up-to-date.

With four yards of white, or coloured frilling you can work wonders.

Some sewn around the bottom hem—on the inside, of course, so that the stitches don't show through—will lengthen a too-short dress just a little. Then more frilling sewn to neck and sleeves gives just that "finished" look, which would prevent anyone guessing that the frock had been altered in any way.

Bye-bye, now, my pets, until next week. Have a Happy Whitsun, won't you?

Your friend,
PATRICIA,



THE WAY THEY DO THEIR HAIR

Miss Richards and Patricia have planned this little feature between them, describing to you one of the Cliff House Fourth Former's hair styles each week.

This Week : MARJORIE HAZELDENE



HOW do you like Marjorie's page-boy bob? It is certainly the most flattering style for her calm and gentle type of good looks.

As I think you know, Marjorie's hair is very straight. It is also "as soft as sugar," as she says. So she simply has to curl it up at the ends about three nights a week.

Marjorie uses six curlers, as a rule, and nine for special occasions. They cost three ha'pence a packet of six and look

rather like brown shoe laces with lead in the middle—and are so easy to use.

TWO STYLES

On the morning after doing her hair in the nine curlers, Marjorie finds she can make the page-boy roll. To do this, she combs out the curls and then rolls each one underneath.

But the second day after curling she finds this isn't so easy—so she just combs the curls out to make the ends fluffy. This means that Marjorie has really two hair styles.

Marjorie finds Clara a bit rough as a hairdresser, so generally Mabs or Babs washes her hair for her.

A GOOD SHAMPOO

The shampoo Marjorie uses is not cheap to buy, but a bottle of it lasts a very long time. She pays one-and-six and it lasts

three months. A pine tar liquid shampoo is her favourite, for Marjorie is terrified of her hair becoming "scurfy"—or dandruffy. She realises that this trouble is most noticeable on dark hair, you see.

She doesn't use any particular "rinse"—apart from three slooshings of clear water, the last one of which is nearly cold. (This final one closes up the pores of the scalp and helps to prevent chills—to which Marjorie is rather susceptible.)

The two very slight waves in Marjorie's hair over her temples have been coaxed for a long time now. Each time her hair is washed she presses these with her fingers, while it is damp, and sometimes fixes an invisible "grip" there to keep them in place.

For party occasions she wears two tiny bows attached to grips and slips these into the waves—one on each side.

Next Week : DIANA ROYSTON-CLARKE.

SENSIBLE SUN-BATHING

Everyone admires a rich golden tan—and here Patricia tells you the wise way to acquire it.

AREN'T you just longing to get beautifully brown this year?

Of course you are! There's certainly nobody I know who doesn't admire a lovely tan, both on themselves and on other people!

The joy of being suntanned is not only that it makes girls—and men, too—so much better looking. But that it makes them feel so fit. If—

Yes, there is an "if," I'm afraid. And I expect you know what that "if" stands for.

If the suntanning is done sensibly.

You'll probably notice over the Whitsun week-end the number of young people who will return from their short holiday looking rather like boiled lobsters—and not a bit beautiful.

This is because they will overdo the sunbathing. I think they have an idea that if they return to [their] offices or wherever they work looking much the same as usual, it will be thought they haven't enjoyed themselves!

I hardly need to tell you how silly this is, now do I?

For these young people—and some older ones, too—seem to confuse suntan with sunburn. And burning from the sun is just as harmful to the skin as burning from any other heat would be.

All this very serious lecture is just to impress on you that there is a wrong way of sunbathing.

THE RIGHT WAY

The right way is, of course, just as beautifying as it is health giving.

The face is perhaps the part we want to get brown first, and you should remember that wind will tan this almost as quickly as the sun beating on it.

If your skin is sensitive it is a good plan to dab a little milk all over the face before going out into the strong sunshine. (Girls who freckle easily, particularly, should remember this.)

Don't sit or lie with your face full in

the sun's glare for hours at a time. A few minutes on the first day is quite sufficient and the wind and air will do the rest.

Remember to keep a hat on in the hottest part of the day, otherwise you may find your brain going all muzzy, and even illness may result.

Most of you, I think, know the comfort that sun-glasses can be when the light is very strong. I know I wouldn't be without mine for anything.

Some of the very dark green and brown lenses are very depressing to look through I've found. But there are bright green and bright blue ones, which take the glare out of the light without making the day look drab and cheerless.

START SLOWLY

Brown legs are also a joy, aren't they? Especially when they are that lovely shade which looks as if we're really wearing fine suntan stockings.

If you've been going bare-legged at week-ends for some time now, then you can sunbathe your legs for as much as a quarter of an hour—back and front—on your first sunbathing day.

But if this is the first occasion this year on which you have had the legs uncovered, then please be satisfied with only five minutes. Make it ten the next day, fifteen the next, and so on, until they grow so deeply tanned that you can lie in the sun for almost as long as you like.

I know it's very difficult to carry out these safety-first suggestions on a lovely day, especially when you want to get brown quickly.

But it honestly is worth while. And, incidentally, a tan that is slowly acquired is much more lasting and a much lovelier colour than one which has been rushed.

SO TENDER

I suppose the most delicate parts of our body which we expose to the sun in the



summer are our backs and upper arms.

Please do treat these gently and be content to brown slowly there. If ever you have had scorched back or shoulders you will realise why.

An overdose of sunshine can result in real pain in these parts—not to mention the unsightly "peeling" which often follows.

SUN-TAN OIL

A number of you would like to know whether suntan oil does prevent peeling and whether it does help you to tan.

Well, if the oil is rubbed well into the skin it does help the browning process. But if you use too much and it is left standing on the skin surface, then it merely fries there and can actually make the skin burn more easily than if you don't use it at all.

So I always say, use a suntan oil by all means. It's very good for the skin. But do rub it well into your legs, arms, and neck and persuade a friend to rub it well into your back where you can't reach yourself.

If in spite of all the advice you must have received—from other people, besides me!—you should get scorched and painfully burned by the sun, I want you to remember calamine lotion. This preparation is most soothing to the skin when it feels as if it is on fire, and can be bought at all chemists for a few pence.

Though it is useful to keep by you, I do hope you won't need to use it,

(Continued from page 11)

them," Mabs said. "Anyway, as it turned out, all's for the best. The dog was becoming a bit of responsibility for Stella, and Hobbs now might leave her alone. Apart from which," Mabs added, "Jackie seems to like the change. I've given him Brutus' kennel till after the show, Babs."

Babs smiled. Well, that was good news. She regretted her chums having to pay out to support Mr. Hobbs' lie; but as Mabs said, a change of quarters for Jackie meant that Hobbs would cease to concentrate on Stella's kennels, and leave her in peace.

After prep she strolled down to see Jackie, who looked quite satisfied with his new quarters. He almost quivered in ecstasy when Babs cuddled him.

"Good old Jackie then," she said. "Sweet old doggy! Happy now, eh, old boy? But, oh, Jackie, if you could only tell me what you know about those Hobbs people—and about the girl in the house! Who is she, Jackie?"

Wuff! Jackie said. And not very intelligently lay on his back and shot all four paws into the air.

And so that day ended, and Babs, reviewing dismally the prospect of tomorrow spent confined to school bounds, went to bed, to think and dream of Jackie and Stella and the mysterious girl and the sinister comings and goings of Mr. Hobbs. But just before breakfast on the morrow there was a fresh development.

That was when Bessie Bunter brought in the local "Courtfield Times."

"I sus-say, look at that!" she stammered excitedly.

Babs looked, and whistled shrilly. For the paragraph Bessie was pointing at was one which concerned Stella Stone. Either Hobbs himself had written it or some enterprising local reporter, hunting for copy, had got hold of the story of the escaped dogs from the new Stone Kennels yesterday and had made quite a news item of how the stray dog of the fold had killed three of Mr. Hobbs' chickens.

Babs looked anxious. That news would do Stella an enormous amount of harm.

But that was not all. For, turning to the last page, she discovered there a printed letter by Mrs. Lavenham, in which Mrs. Lavenham discussed the serious question of allowing control of dogs to inexperienced girls. Stella's name was not mentioned, but the letter was couched in such a way that there could be no question as to whom Mrs. Lavenham was hitting at.

"Phew, that's bad!" Babs muttered. "Stella will be cut up if she reads this. The dickens of it is, too, that all the dog-lovers in this part of the world just drink in everything Mrs. Lavenham says about dogs. Oh crumbs! I hope it doesn't do her any harm!"

She wanted to see Stella then, to find out how she was taking the news; but, as she and Clara were under orders to report every hour, that was impossible. That afternoon, however, Mabs, accompanied by Marcie and Janet, went off, taking Jackie with them for exercise. Their news was not reassuring when they came back.

"Poor Stella's down in the mouth," said Mabs. "The news has got round all right. Three people had promised to send their dogs to her for treatment to-day, but from each of them she's had a curt note saying they had changed their minds. And apart from that," Mabs went on to report, "some mean, spiteful piglet chalked a message on her gate which said 'If you want to

lose your dog, leave it here.' Looks pretty black, eh?"

Black it did look. Deprived of the good will of the local dog-owners, Stella might as well close down her business. Grave and serious in the extreme that news, meaning that Stella was virtually being boycotted. And all because of the scheming of the Hobbses!

"And all the while those precious scoundrels are getting away with it," Babs said bitterly. "All of it is their fault. Just because she wouldn't give up a dog which didn't belong to them they're trying to ruin her—"

"And succeeding," Clara put in grimly.

"Well, we can do something about it—we've got to do something about it!" Babs said. "And the one and only thing to do is to show up Jim Hobbs for the tricky outsider he is. Once his little game is exposed people might not be so jolly ready to believe the lies he's told against Stella. And there's only one way to do that," Babs added.

"And that?"

"Get hold of that girl!"

"But how?"

"Well, first get the Hobbses out of the cottage. There's a way of doing that, too," Babs said, eyes beginning to glimmer. "The Hobbses are still after Jackie. I've got half an idea, but it wants a bit of careful thinking out. Once we get them out of the cottage—through Jackie—we can go in and grab the girl."

"And then?" Clara questioned.

"Well, wait till I've had a good think. By the way, Mabs, did you pass the cottage?"

"We did—and Lavenham Field," Mabs said. "Jackie wanted to get to the cottage, and Jackie also wanted to get into the field again. My, how keen he is to dig in that field! But you wouldn't recognise the field now," she added. "They've got the marquee up, and there was a regular army of workmen there, erecting turnstiles and benches and goodness knows what. But what's your idea, Babs?"

But Babs wanted time to perfect that idea before she disclosed it. Before bed-time, however, she called Clara, Mabs, and Jean together.

"I've got it," she said—"or, at least, I hope I have. To-morrow morning—early is the time—long before rising-bell, we'll take Jackie over to the house. Jean, you're responsible for this little act. Outside the cottage you make Jackie bark."

"Well?" Jean asked.

"The idea being," Babs explained, "to attract the attention of Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs. Once they hear Jackie they'll be after him. Once they come out of the cottage let Jackie loose. Chase him, and the Hobbses—if I'm not dead wrong—will join in the chase. That," Babs said, "is our chance. Clara and I will nip into the cottage. Mabs, you remain on guard outside to give cave. Is that agreed?"

"Well, it sounds O.K.," Mabs hesitated. "But, Babs, supposing you and Clara are caught again?"

"Just have to risk that," Babs said. "It's the only way I can see, anyway, to bring matters to a head. The girl is the link in this mystery—though goodness knows why she didn't answer when we tried to rescue her the other day."

"But supposing," Jean objected, "that she doesn't want to be rescued? Supposing, for instance, she isn't a prisoner as we think she is?"

"Then," Babs decided, "that's just bad luck. We've just got to risk it. Everybody game?"

Everybody was. It was for Stella's

sake, for Stella's future. If this trick failed, then all was lost indeed.

Very grim, very earnest, the chums went to bed that night. The Fourth Form, excited at the prospect of the show to-morrow, were busy discussing their dogs' chances. A dozen of those girls had entered their pets, and those girls who had no pets to enter were keen to see the show.

An hour before rising-bell, when the rest of the Form was still fast asleep, the four rose, and, dressing quietly, slipped out.

It was a glorious morning.

With the happily yapping Jackie between them, they slipped out of the school grounds and rapidly strode on towards Jasmine Cottage. Presently that building, snuggling behind a clump of young oaks, came into view, and a small spiral of smoke arising from one of the chimneys showed that the Hobbses were already up. Jackie whined eagerly as they halted on the road side of the hedge.

"Right-ho!" Babs said. "Jean, you stroll that way. Mabs—Clara—creep up the hedge here with me. Good old Jackie," she added. "Do your stuff now! Keep your eyes skinned, girls."

"Kim on," Jean said to Jackie, as he tugged at the lead.

With a nod to the chums she strolled away, while Babs, motioning to her two henchmen, crept along the hedge which bounded one side of the cottage grounds. At a suitable spot they crouched down.

From that viewpoint they watched Jean strolling up the path, in full view of the cottage windows. Suddenly she stopped. They saw her stoop before Jackie, and Jackie, wheeling round, set up a lusty yelping as he faced the house, straining madly at the lead. Clara grinned.

"Now for the fireworks!" she said. The fireworks were not long in coming. Excitedly, shrilly, Jackie barked. Then suddenly the door of Jasmine Cottage was thrown open. On to the garden path came Mr. Hobbs, his wife following. Then swiftly Jean stooped, unleashing the dog.

"You fool!" roared Mr. Hobbs. Jean gave a shriek as she made a dart at the dog. Jackie, with a bark of glee, scampered away.

"He—he's escaped!" cried Jean. "Catch him!" roared Mr. Hobbs.

He started forward as Jean turned, running after the dog. Jackie yelped again, obviously thinking himself the centre of some new and entrancing game. After him went Jean. After Jean thundered Mr. Hobbs, and after Mr. Hobbs his wife. Babs glanced at her chums as the pursuit streamed by.

"Mabs, keep cave!" she said. "Clara, come on!"

Jackie Solves the Mystery!



BARBARA sprinted for the open door of the cottage. By that time Jean, Jackie, and the Hobbses were racing two or three hundred yards away across the fields.

Clara followed, Babs reaching the cottage first. At once she went to the door which led to the bed-room. And her heart leapt as she saw that the key was in it. One swift turn of the wrist, and the lock clicked back. Then, two stairs at a time, she was mounting upwards. A door faced her. She threw it open.

And a girl, slightly older than Babs,

whirled in consternation from the window where she had been standing.

"You!" she cried, and started back.

"Come on!" Babs cried.

The girl paused.

"I—I can't! I—I daren't!" she cried.

"Come on!" Babs insisted. "Quickly! These people are holding you prisoner, aren't they?"

"Yes; but—"

"Then quick, get away now while the coast is clear!"

"But I can't—I—I daren't!" The girl shrank back, her eyes wide. "I tell you I dare not escape, even if I wanted to—"

There came a low whistle outside from Mabs.

"O.K.!" Babs said; but her face was grim then. The girl was a prisoner here against her will. That was enough. She nodded to Clara.

"Grab her!" she cried.

"But—"

"Come on!"

"N-no, let me explain—"

"And now," Babs panted, staring at the girl, "perhaps you'll tell us who you are and how you came to be in that house? And perhaps you'll tell us why you never answered us the other day when we tried to rescue you? By the way, would you mind telling us your name?"

"Jenny Forbes," the girl said. "At least, that's what I'm called. My real name is Genevieve."

Babs started.

"Genevieve! Initial G," she said.

"You have that initial on your hanky?"

"Yes."

"Then no wonder," Clara said. "Jackie didn't recognise any of the 'G' names we called you! Jackie is your dog, of course?" she added.

"Jackie is—is Mrs. Ferring-Smith's dog," Jenny said. "But he and I are very fond of each other. You see, I am Mrs. Ferring-Smith's adopted daughter, at least, I was," she added with a quiver of her lips.

Babs started again. Mrs. Ferring-

At the hearing of her case Mrs. Ferring-Smith had been present in the court. The magistrate had bound Jenny over for three months, and Mrs. Ferring-Smith, interested in her, had offered to adopt her.

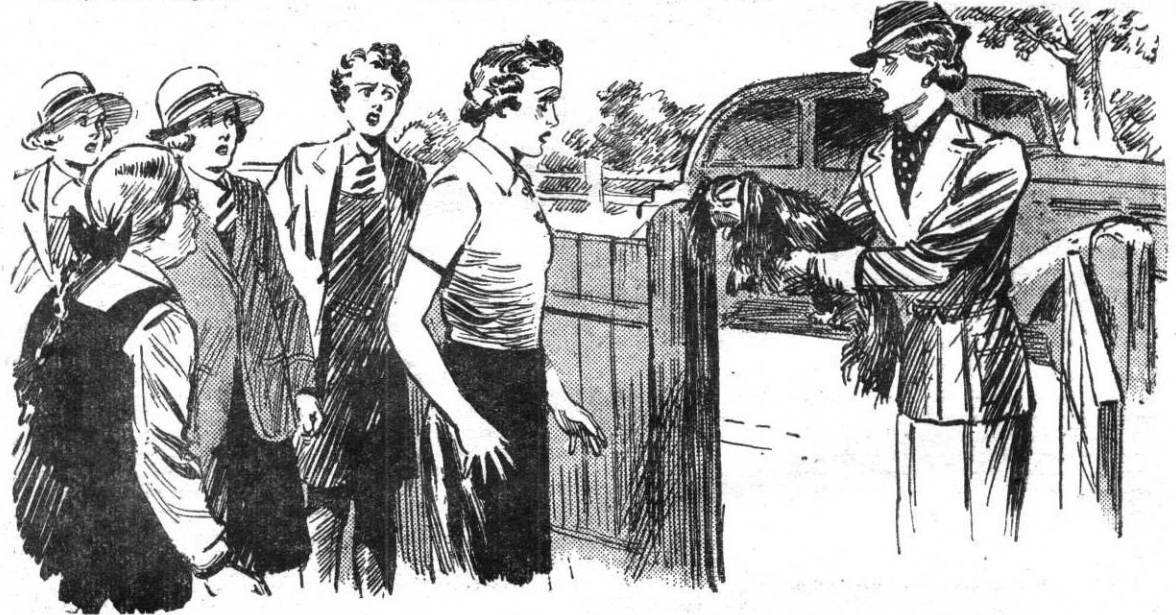
"And so, you see, although I wasn't convicted, I had a shadow over me," Jenny muttered. "Mrs. Ferring-Smith was as sweet and kind as anyone could be. And just as if to show me that she completely trusted me, she gave me the keys of all her valuables, and so on, and—and I was very, very happy."

Babs looked sympathetic.

"But why, then—"

"Well, now I'll tell you," Jenny said; and she went on.

For three weeks she had enjoyed a happy life with Mrs. Ferring-Smith—and with Jackie, Fallsweir's intelligent little pet. Then suddenly Mrs. Ferring-Smith had been called away to attend the funeral of a relative in Scotland, and on the very same day of her depar-



"If this is how you look after dogs," said Mrs. Lavenham furiously, "then I withdraw my patronage from this moment." Stella turned white. "But, Mrs. Lavenham—"

"Good-bye!" the woman snapped.

"No time!" Babs said briefly. "You can explain afterwards. Don't worry, we're not going to hurt you. We're your friends; don't spoil everything! Now," she added, as a more urgent whistle sounded from outside, "outside—quickly!"

The girl gave her a peculiar, almost awed look. But she followed. Down the stairs they went, just in time to meet Mabs in the parlour.

"Back way, Babs!" she said quickly. "They're heading across the field straight for the house. But they haven't got Jackie!"

"Hurry!" gasped Babs.

The girl seemed to have resigned herself now. She looked nervous still, but there was that in her face which seemed to suggest that she had made up her mind to entrust herself to Babs.

She made no protest as Clara caught her hand, propelling her through the kitchen door, and with the others she raced for the road as soon as they had found the screening cover of the hedge. Across that road Babs pelted, heading for Friardale Woods. And not until they were deep within the shelter of the trees did they pause.

Smith? She knew that name. Why, of course, Mrs. Ferring-Smith was the lady who had recently moved into Fallsweir House, not very far from here, and who was to be one of the judges at the Fallsweir's Open Dog Show this morning.

"And—and—" Jenny shook her head. "Oh, dear! How can I tell you?" She gazed at them bewilderedly.

"You see, Mrs. Ferring-Smith gave me my chance," she said. "I—I got into some trouble not so long ago with—the police, and I was brought before the magistrates in the juvenile court."

"Oh!" Babs said.

Then Jenny went on to tell her story. Jenny, before she met Mrs. Ferring-Smith, had been starving. She had been suspected of stealing fruit from a stall, and had been arrested. Actually, she had had no intention of stealing. All that had happened was that she had been standing close to the stall, had accidentally dropped her last remaining coin—a pitiful halfpenny—among a tray of oranges, and had been searching for it when she had been caught.

She had been sent to a remand house.

ture, Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs had arrived, saying that Mrs. Ferring-Smith had sent them to act as caretakers until her return. Unsuspectingly, Jenny had let them in, and Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs had taken up residence.

Now, Mrs. Ferring-Smith was, among other things, a collector of uncut precious stones, and the prize among her collection was a quantity of small Brazilian diamonds.

As Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs seemed to know a great deal about Mrs. Ferring-Smith, it had never occurred to Jenny that they might have a dishonest purpose, and not until she had discovered Mr. Hobbs stealing those uncut diamonds and storing them away in an empty watchcase had she, with a shock, realised they were thieves. To rescue the diamonds she, in her turn, had stolen the watchcase, but had been discovered in the act, and had been pursued by Mr. Hobbs.

And, in danger of being overhauled, Jenny had taken refuge in Jackie's big kennel.

Jackie had been there. Fearing that Mr. Hobbs would find her, she had tied the watchcase containing the diamonds in her handkerchief and fastened it

round Jackie's collar. She could send no message with it, as she had neither pencil nor paper

"Then," Jenny said, "I was caught. Jackie got away, but not before he was seen by Mr. Hobbs. But he didn't know that the diamonds were hidden in the handkerchief. He thought I had hidden them somewhere, and said unless I told him where they were he would denounce me as a thief to Mrs. Ferring-Smith when she returned. That's why he was holding me prisoner."

"And that is why you were afraid to escape?" Babs asked shrewdly. "In case Mrs. Ferring-Smith believed—"

"Yes."

"But why," Mabs asked, "did you tie the second handkerchief to Jackie's collar?"

"Because," Jenny answered, "I wanted to keep Jackie with me when he came. You see, he found me out again. I knew then that he must have dropped the watchcase out of the first handkerchief. I thought, if I could keep him with me, I might escape during the night, and Jackie might lead me to the spot where he had dropped the watchcase. So I tied him to the leg of my bed with the handkerchief, but, unluckily for me, Jackie barked, and up stormed Mr. Hobbs. He grabbed Jackie with the hanky still in his collar, but going downstairs Jackie wriggled out of his arms and bolted for it."

"Good old Jackie!" chuckled Clara.

The question was, however, what was to be done now?

"And Mrs. Ferring-Smith is coming back this morning," Jenny said. "She's coming to judge the dog show. Oh, I can't face her without those jewels! I daren't face her until—until she knows the truth!"

The chums looked at each other. Babs' eyes were thoughtful.

"There's only one thing," she said. "Just one. 'We'll get hold of Mrs. Ferring-Smith. We'll talk to her first and tell her what we know. Meantime, Jenny, just in case you're wanted, you'd better be at the show. Supposing," she added, "you stop in the competitors' cloak-room?"

Jenny did not look reassured, but obviously Babs' scheme was the best.

And so that was decided upon, and with Jenny following them they went off to Stella's kennels to collect the dogs which were to compete in the show that day. None too much time, however. Already the entrants would be arriving.

Very sympathetically Stella welcomed Jenny, as ready to believe her story as the chums themselves. But she looked a trifle worried, a trifle anxious, Babs observed.

They passed into the reception marquee, where each dog was attended by a vet before being allowed to go into the show. Babs went off to find Mrs. Ferring-Smith. But Mrs. Ferring-Smith, she learned to her dismay, had not yet arrived.

She returned to her chums, clustered round the great ring in which three or four classes were being judged now. Bessie was among them, displaying Ting-a-Ling among the toy breed. Clara was in another section, devoted entirely to Alsatians, and Stella had taken charge of Brutus.

With interest Babs watched while the dogs paraded round the judges, and the judges, stopping the show, examined heads, eyes, teeth, and paws. Then all the dogs were dismissed, and Stella came out.

"I think," she said, "there's a prize waiting for Brutus. It depends upon the final judging, of course." And then

she added, with a quick start: "There's your Mrs. Ferring-Smith, Barbara!"

A woman, accompanied by two stewards, had stepped into the centre of the ring from which the steward was calling out the next classes to be judged—among them Janet Jordan's Gyp and Jean Cartwright's Abbe. A tall woman whose greying hair and upright appearance gave her a sort of majestic distinction. Stella nodded to Jean.

"I'll take Abbe," she said. "I've more experience than you, Jean."

Willingly Jean surrendered the dog. Quickly Stella ran a comb through his coat, her anxious eyes upon the ring in which the dogs were already being assembled. She led Abbe forward.

Babs watched her admiringly. But before she could speak there was a sudden commotion from the entrance behind her. It was a commotion accompanied by a sharp yelp, and then a furious voice.

"Come here, you little wretch!" Babs jumped as if she had received an electric shock. That yelp—Jackie! That voice—Mr. Hobbs!

And then suddenly a white, panting little streak shot between Babs' legs.

"Jackie!" she yelled.

Too late she dived downwards.

Under the ropes went Jackie. Under the ropes dived the desperate Mr. Hobbs. Now, in the ring, dogs waiting to be judged, snarled, and suddenly there was a terrific barking and yapping as Jackie plunged among them. From Mrs. Ferring-Smith went up an incredulous shriek

"Jackie—"
"Wuff!" said Jackie, and leapt up at her, and then frantically started to dig in the ground.

"I say—my hat!" Babs gasped. "Look, that's the same spot he was digging in the other day!"

She and Clara dived under the ropes. But Jackie, digging furiously in the hole already made, with the other dogs yelping and barking around him, made a sudden lunge forward, and just as Mr. Hobbs reached the spot he darted his nose into the hole and brought a dirt-encrusted something to light.

It was a piece of silver chain, and attached to it was a watchcase.

Mr. Hobbs jumped.

"That's mine!" he cried.

He made a desperate grab.

"It's not!" Babs cried. "Mrs. Ferring-Smith, take it!" she screamed.

"Your diamonds are in it!"

As Hobbs, with a desperate cry, hurled himself at the dog, Jackie skipped aside, tore to his mistress, and, dropping the watchcase at her feet, bounded up at her.

Mrs. Ferring-Smith picked up the case and turned it over. As she did so the case burst open, and out of the case showered a set of twinkling stones!

In a moment Babs had reached her,

and had scooped the stones into her hands. Then, as a policeman arrived, intent on stopping the commotion, she pointed.

"That man!" she cried. "He is a thief and a kidnapper!"

And while Jim Hobbs, gasping, stumbled to his feet, and the policeman laid his hand upon his shoulder, Babs, with a breathless smile, nodded to Clara.

"Fetch Jenny!" she cried.

AND JENNY was brought, and there and then, while the whole crowd watched and wondered, explanations were made. And later Mr. Hobbs was led off to the police station.

There could be no question of his guilt, for, apart from his obvious anxiety to grab Jackie, his own name was engraved on the empty watchcase, which he had been so incautious to use as a receptacle for the stolen diamonds.

Before the judging was over that morning, the whole story had spread through the show. Babs & Co. saw to that, and it was Babs herself who made it her business to talk to Mrs. Lavenham, who, of course, was one of the principal exhibitors. Mrs. Lavenham listened, and just before the final judging, Mrs. Lavenham, in front of everybody, sought Stella out. She extended her hand.

"Miss Stone, I am sorry for the things I have said about you," she said. "I had no idea at the time that you were being made the victim of so diabolical a plot. I am sorry if anything I have said has done you any harm, but you may be sure I will make up for it. And for a start," she added, "you may take charge of my kennels immediately."

"Hurrah!" cheered Babs.

Happy Stella! But happier-than-ever Stella, when, later, the judges gave their decision. Brutus—First prize! Pluto—First prize. Ting-a-Ling—First prize. Abbe—First prize, with second and third for Janet and Marcelle.

A week later, when Babs & Co. visited her again, Stella was employing no less than three kennelmaids, and was having a new line of kennels erected. And Stella had also a partner—that partner, Genevieve.

"For Mrs. Ferring-Smith has taken a share in the business," she said. "She's taken it for Genevieve, and we're going to run the kennels together. Business is booming. I'm sure, now, we shall never look back—thanks to you," she added softly.

Babs smiled and blushed.

"Oh, we did nothing!" she said.

"To which," retorted Genevieve cheerily, "there's only one answer, Babs. And that answer, in Clara's words, is 'Bosh'!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

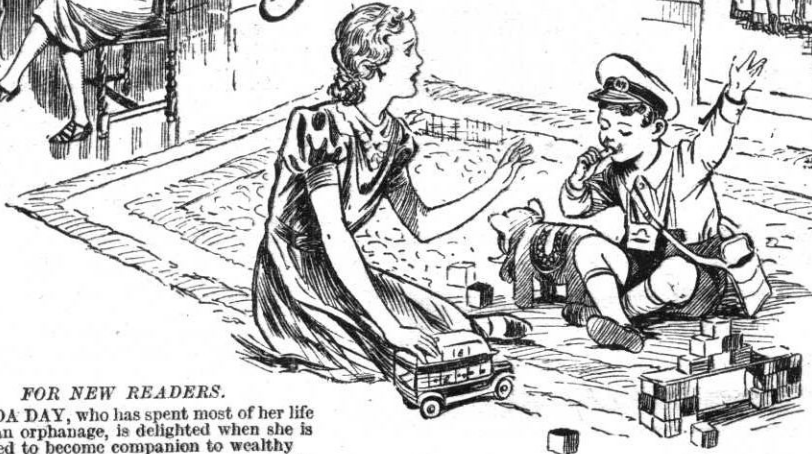
..... Babs & Co., friendly rivals with their great boy chums, Jimmy Richmond & Co., in search of a lost briefcase, receive a series of staggering shocks. For it seems that Jimmy, backed up by his pals, is playing despicable tricks on the girls to prevent them winning the reward offered for the recovery of the case. It is incredible that Jimmy, of all people, should be so mean. And yet—there seems no doubt about it!



That is the bare outline of next week's superb Long Complete Hilda Richards story featuring the world-famous chums of Cliff House School. You'll love it; it'll enthrall and surprise you.

Further chapters of our dramatic and unusual new serial—

Brenda's Task of MYSTERY!



By
**Margery
Marriott**

FOR NEW READERS.

BRENDA DAY, who has spent most of her life in an orphanage, is delighted when she is asked to become companion to wealthy

VERONICA SCHOLES. Veronica lives with her aunt and uncle and her five-year-old brother, Dickie. Part of Brenda's duties consists of looking after the lovable youngster.

On arrival at Fernbank, the Scholes' house, she meets a mysterious boy,

RONALD BENSON, who tells her he is working on her behalf and that for the sake of her future happiness she must remain at Fernbank and do well in her new position. He warns her to let no one know that they are friends and working together.

But owing to her having to slip out on occasions to meet Ronald, Veronica becomes rather intrigued by Brenda's behaviour, and during a rehearsal of a pageant at Fernbank disaster seems imminent.

For little Dickie prances into the room with a striped scarf round his waist, pretending to be a wasp. It is Ronald's scarf! He had lent it to Brenda and Dickie had obviously found it in her room.

Suspicious at once, Veronica demands to know where Brenda got the scarf.

(Now read on.)

For despite her evasiveness earlier this afternoon, she had met a boy in the village—Ronald Benson, that mysterious, but very likeable young fellow who was working in such an inexplicable way on her behalf—and this conspicuous scarf, of black and yellow stripes, was his.

Still smiling, as though surprised and amused, Brenda thought at lightning speed.

Veronica must never know how she had come by that scarf. Nobody must. If anyone realised that it was Ronald's, it would be utterly disastrous.

Time and again Ronald had impressed upon her the fact that if ever anyone discovered they were meeting in secret—especially if Veronica did—it would ruin all his activities for her, and, so he declared, thereby wreck her hopes of future happiness.

And although Brenda understood but very little of what lay behind Ronald's

Brenda managed to laugh. She did not feel in the least like laughing, because she realised that Veronica was bound to be remembering all those other puzzling incidents in which she had been concerned since coming to Fernbank, and knowing Veronica's swift-changing moods, she guessed that Veronica was suspicious! Hadn't Veronica actually shadowed her to the spinney on the occasion of her secret meeting there with Ronald?

"Really," she said lightly, "this is rather like an inquisition, isn't it? No, I wasn't wearing the scarf when I went out, but there's nothing to stop anyone taking a scarf along in their pocket, and putting it on afterwards, is there? And as for where I got it, well—"

She gave a little gesture. "Perhaps one of you would like to phone up the matron of my old orphanage and ask her if she remem-

THE TRAIL OF THE BLACK AND YELLOW SCARF.

It belonged to her mysterious boy friend, but it brought tense moments and thrilling adventure to Brenda.

Has Veronica Triumphed?

"**W**HERE did you get this, Brenda? I thought you said you hadn't met a boy to-day?"

As Veronica, looking across the crowded drawing-room at Brenda, gestured towards the scarf which little Dickie was so proudly and eagerly displaying around his waist, there was no mistaking the keen curiosity in her dark eyes.

Few members of the pageant cast could ignore the sudden tenseness that seemed to have gripped both Veronica and Brenda.

Brenda, suddenly conscious of the attention, forced an apparently amused smile to her face.

"That?" she said, nodding towards the scarf. "Oh, I—I've had it quite a little while. But what's that to do with whether I met a boy this afternoon or not, Veronica?" she asked.

But in her heart, now beating faster than usual, Brenda knew full well that that was the whole point.

words and actions, she believed him, she trusted him implicitly. Disaster was staring her in the face at this very moment. Somehow she must stave it off!

But it was Veronica who returned first to the attack. She straightened up, her own face also melting into a smile—a smile of apology—as she glanced around the rather puzzled gathering.

"Sorry if I seem to be making a mountain out of a molehill, but I'm curious, that's all," she said pleasantly. "Brenda did say she hadn't met a boy, didn't she?"

"Why, yes, that's so," one of the girls agreed. "I thought I'd seen her in the photographer's with one, and she said it was the assistant."

"Are you sure you didn't meet one, Brenda?" Veronica asked, turning towards Brenda. "You didn't go out with this scarf, did you?"

bers me having a scarf like this," she invited.

She was bluffing, of course, and for a moment wondered whether anyone would accept that offer—if Veronica would. But Veronica, conscious of the chuckles that arose, did no such thing. An expression of uncertainty claimed her features.

All the same, one girl put in a very awkward observation.

"I'm sure I've seen a fellow out riding with a scarf like that. I saw him one day this week at the Paddocks. He was just saddling-up as I went out."

"Oh, I dare say there are lots of black-and-yellow scarves about," Brenda said lightly.

Veronica remained silent. Truth to tell, she felt chagrined, baffled. She did not really believe Brenda's explanations. That Brenda was meeting somebody in secret Veronica was absolutely convinced. And

MEET YOUR CLIFF HOUSE FAVOURITES AGAIN

In this superb book-length story dealing with Babs & Co.'s early adventures at the famous school.

It is one of the Four May issues of the

SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY

Now on Sale, price 4d. per volume.

The other three lovely stories are :

- No. 681.** "Morcove's River Holiday!" one of the finest stories of Betty Barton & Co. ever written by Marjorie Stanton.
- No. 682.** "Treasure Trail of the Tremaynes!" Sheila Austin's thrilling mystery-and-adventure yarn.
- No. 683.** "The Schoolgirl Speed Star!" an exciting story of school life and motor racing, by Hazel Armitage.



this scarf seemed to establish that it was a boy. But what boy? And why on earth should they be conducting this furtive friendship? Why on earth should Brenda be so frantically anxious to keep it dark?

"I'd like to examine that scarf," Veronica thought, regarding it through half-closed eyes. "It might tell me something. I'll snaffle it afterwards."

It would be best to appear to let the matter drop now; then Brenda's suspicions would not be aroused.

But at that precise moment, Brenda was making a mental vow that she would recover the scarf herself before Veronica even had a chance to lay her hands on it!

"Pip-pip—please can I be a waspie in the pageant now, Mrs. Ven'bles?" Dickie pleaded. "I've got a waspie's tummy, an' I can buzz-buzz awful well. You listen—"

He gave a demonstration, flapping his arms in the manner of wings, and there were affectionate smiles.

"The dear child," said Mrs. Venables, the pageant producer, patting his head. "And we'd forgotten all about you. Yes, Dickie. You can be a wasp. But I—ahem—I don't think you'd better have that, you know."

She indicated the scarf. Dickie blinked, dismayed and puzzled.

"Why can't I, Mrs. Ven'bles?" he asked. Then, plainly feeling that he stood more chance with Brenda, he ran over to her and seized her hands. "Please say I can, Aunty Brenda. I can, can't I?"

Brenda put her head on one side, determined to give Veronica the impression that she had already forgotten the scarf's significance.

"Well, I don't know, darling," she said. "You see, the rings go that way, but on a real waspie they go the other way. But Mrs. Venables can get you a special costume—just like your dragonfly costume, only lots more exciting."

"And then I will be a waspie, really, truly?" Dickie breathed, round-eyed.

"Really, truly," they told him in chorus.

"Oooo, birfdays, birfdays!" Dickie whooped, clapping his hands and caper-

ing with glee—for "birfdays" was his own pet word for anything superlatively lovely. "Oooo, gorjus! I'se a waspie. Now I can sting Tommy Martin. 'Ray, 'ray!"

But so excited did he get that the scarf came loose, he tripped over it, and, with a thump, measured his length across the floor. Only one thing could console him then. Brenda's fond embrace. But, like all youngsters of his age, trouble soon dispersed. Within a couple of minutes he'd forgotten his tears, and was as happy as a sandboy again.

"There now, that's better," Brenda said, giving him a final hug and placing him on the floor. "Run up to your play-room."

Fondly, she watched him toddle off. Then, all of a sudden, she remembered. The scarf! It had fallen off when Dickie tripped over.

She looked up. Had Veronica—no. It was safe, for the moment. Mrs. Venables had it. She was folding it up, and now tossing it on to the sideboard.

"Well, I don't know what you others think," Mrs. Venables said, looking round at them, "but I don't think we need do any more to-day. Everything went off very well. Supposing we call it off?"

The others agreed. Undoubtedly the rehearsal had been a tremendous success.

As joint hostess with Veronica, Brenda helped to usher the visitors off the premises. But she took care that it was she who was nearer the scarf when they left the room—and she who, last to leave, had a chance to secure it.

Unfortunately, it was only a chance, for Mrs. Venables, hanging back, took her arm and drew her away from the sideboard—just as Brenda, with a jump of horror, spotted a small tab at one end of the scarf, bearing Ronald's name: "R. Benson."

"My dear, your dancing was splendid!" Mrs. Venables beamed. "I simply must give you more of it to do in the show. Most discerning young man Ronald Benson. You don't know him very well? I'll have to introduce you.

And you won't mind if I extend your dance?"

"Golly, no," Brenda replied. "I'll love it!"

Her eyes sparkled. Of course she'd love it. Not only because she always had loved dancing, even though she had never received a lesson in her life, but because it was Ronald who had suggested to Mrs. Venables that she should be given greater scope for her dancing in the pageant.

Another one of Ronald's mysteries, that. And so Brenda was naturally enthusiastic about it on that score alone. She would, she guessed, be helping him in his extraordinary mission connected with—her!

"Amazing, you've never been taught, my dear—simply amazing. You must be a born dancer," Mrs. Venables rushed on volubly, and Brenda was kept so busy "Yesing" and "Noing," and smiling and nodding, that it was with quite a shock that she eventually realised where she was.

Standing by the front door, bidding everybody good-bye—and the scarf still on the sideboard!

Brenda gave a terrific start and the colour fled from her cheeks.

Veronica—she wasn't in the hall!

No need for Brenda to be told where Veronica had gone. And no real need for her to go rushing into the drawing-room almost before she had closed the door upon the visitors.

She drew up before the sideboard, all her fears confirmed. The scarf was no longer there!

Veronica had found it—Veronica had slipped away with it. And her secret—the secret she shared with Ronald—must inevitably have been discovered!

First Riding Thrills!

STRICKENLY, Brenda made her way out of the room.

High and low she had searched even though she had realised how futile that would be, and there was no sign of the vital scarf to be seen.

Veronica had it. That was why. Even at this moment Veronica would be examining it, puzzling over it, pondering. Very soon, there would be a summons to her young mistress' room. And then—

Brenda clenched her hands. She had reached the hall, and was slowly moving towards the stairs when, with a squeal of excitement, little Dickie rushed up and seized her hand.

"Ooo, Aunty Brenda, quick—come with me! I'se got somefink to show you!" he cried, his eyes round and eager.

"I'm sorry, Dickie—" Brenda gulped, forcing a smile, but feeling a frightful churl. "Not—not just now. Later, perhaps. But I'm busy—"

"But this is most frighteningly, 'normously 'portant!" Dickie declared.

"Please, Aunty Brenda—just for a teeny while."

There was such an imploring note in his voice that Brenda's heart melted. Again she smiled, rather twistedly. She sighed. And then, ruffling Dickie's hair, she suffered him to drag her into the garden to the summer-house.

"Look, Aunty Brenda!" Dickie enjoined, and darted over to a heap of rubbish.

He rummaged about in it for some time, finally producing something and holding it up.

"I—I wasn't going to say anyfink, Aunty Brenda, case you was cross, but when nobodies was looking I took this and hidded it here 'cos I fought Aunty Ven'bles' costoom might get lost."

Brenda, eyes fastened on the object, trembled from head to foot in a wave of tremulous relief. For Dickie was displaying—the missing scarf! Veronica hadn't secured it after all. It was here—here—

Laughing, half-sobbing, she darted forward and took Dickie into her arms—and with him the object he had so secretively concealed in his little "den."
"Oh, Dickie, Dickie—you—perfectly scrumptious little darling!" she choked, rocking him to and fro.

MEANWHILE—

Veronica was in her room, standing by the window, frowning. For Veronica had slipped away from bidding the departing guests good-bye in order to get hold of that mysterious scarf—only to find that it had already gone.

Someone had forestalled her. Who? Surely only Brenda.

"But why?" Perplexedly, she shook her head. "Why make such a mystery of it? Why be so dashed secretive? Doesn't want anyone to know she's friendly with a fellow, I suppose, but that's idiotic. No one will jump on her for that. There's something more to it. I know there is!"

But the thing was—what?

Veronica brooded deeply.

This was no isolated case. Ever since arriving at Fernbank, Brenda had been behaving queerly.

Curiosity being one of Veronica's strong points, she was fiercely determined to get to the bottom of the whole thing. But another factor also spurred her on.

"I'd better find out what you're doing, Brenda Day—just in case," Veronica added thoughtfully, "you become a nuisance to my plans!"

With those cryptic words Veronica hurriedly went downstairs, an idea already simmering in her mind.

And Brenda was at that moment playfully hoisting Dickie on to one of the summer-house shelves.

"You've been the goodest boy ever, Dickie," she told him, "and—Why, what is it, darling? What's the matter?"

For Dickie, staring out of the window, had suddenly looked scared.

"Oooo, it's Veronica!" he said in alarm. "Quick! Help me down! Don't tell her 'bout the scarf, please. She'll be as mad as mad. She always is!"

"I won't tell her, Dickie; just you leave this to me," Brenda said.

She did several things at lightning speed. She put Dickie on the floor, she craned on tiptoe to see out of the window—golly, Veronica was only a few yards away!—and, at the same time, she tore at the name tab on the scarf.

A final wrench, and it came away. At that same moment Veronica, pattering up the steps, pushed open the door. She smiled pleasantly.

"So there you are!" she exclaimed. "Playing with Dickie, Brenda? That's fine! But trot along, Dickie. I want a word with Brenda alone!"

Veronica watched her young brother go, and then looked at Brenda again.

"I'm sorry if I seemed funny about that," she said, nodding to the scarf. "Only you must admit, you know, that you are strange at times."

"Well, I—I hadn't exactly realised it," Brenda said. Her heart beating quickly, she held out the scarf. "But there's nothing strange about that, is there?"

Watching Veronica turn the scarf over, and hiding the tab in her hand, she felt certain a spasm of disappoint-

ment momentarily flitted across the girl's face. But Veronica was smiling again when she handed the scarf back.

"Oh, let's forget all about it!" she cried. "Listen, Brenda!" Gaily, she linked an arm through Brenda's and led her out of the summer-house. "I've got a treat for you. Did you know you'll have to ride a horse in the pageant?"

"Why, no," Brenda said. "Nobody told me that. Golly, and I've never been on a horse in my life!"

"That's just what I mean. You'll need some tuition. And I'm going to give it to you. To-morrow morning we'll drive over to the Paddocks—they're quite near here—and I'll put you through your paces. H'm?"

Brenda's eyes sparkled.
"Oh, Veronica, how gorgeous! It's awfully decent of you!"

And once again she marvelled and pondered at the inexplicable change of moods which this girl suffered. One moment unpleasant, the next as friendly as could be.

"Not decent at all. I'm only too pleased to help you, Brenda."

But, turning away her head, Veronica smiled strangely. For it was not so much to help Brenda that she was arranging this outing; it was to help herself discover the identity of Brenda's boy chum.

Veronica remembered how one of the pageant party had said she'd seen a boy wearing a black-and-yellow scarf at the Paddocks. And Veronica was hoping this was the boy, and that to-morrow he and Brenda would be brought face to face unexpectedly, and thereby betray their secret to her!

WHAT TREMENDOUS excitement for Brenda next morning! What a breathless rush! Up early, breakfast, then off to her room to don the riding clothes Veronica had sportingly insisted on her borrowing.

Brenda hardly recognised herself in the mirror. Smart check jacket; neat yellow blouse, with a brown tie; the most immaculate jodhpurs, and jodhpur boots.

The door opened. Veronica, similarly clad, popped in a smiling face.

"Ready? Oh, my dear!" she cried, and stepped inside, eyes roving in

admiration over Brenda's trim figure. "You do look topping! You'll have to hang on to those. They suit you. But come on. Masters is ready!"

And Masters, the chauffeur, saluting when they raced down the steps to the drive, was evidently in a hurry, for they simply flew along the country lanes. In no time, it seemed, they reached the riding-stables.

Brenda was too busily concentrating on what and what not to do to notice how Veronica kept looking about her. But Veronica failed to see anyone wearing another black-and-yellow scarf; nor did Brenda, to Veronica's chagrin, appear to recognise any of the numerous young fellows who kept coming and going.

"Left foot in the stirrup, left hand holding reins on neck, right hand on back of saddle, jerk upwards, swing right leg over—and you're on—you hope," Brenda chuckled, suiting actions to words. "I've got that, anyway," she added triumphantly, from the back of a sleek chestnut. "Oh, hallo, look! Here's Phyllis & Co.!"

Several members of the pageant cast arriving at that moment, Brenda was only too eager to fall in with Veronica's suggestion that she should essay her first ride in their company.

Off they set at a walk. Brenda, surprised at the smoothness, and careful to hold the reins exactly as Veronica instructed, rode with easy confidence. For over half a mile all went well. Then, turning into a field, Brenda's horse stubbornly stopped and refused to budge.

The others went on, not noticing. Veronica noticed, but she went on, too, smiling to herself. Let Brenda be stuck there for a while. It would show her that she'd far more to learn about riding than she seemed to think. She'd soon be shouting for help, or advice.

But Brenda did no such thing, unfortunately. Anxious to solve the problem herself, she tugged on the reins. The horse, a strong-willed animal, threw his head up, and then down, and, taking Brenda by surprise, almost wrenched the reins out of her hands.

They slid loose, and next moment the horse was careering madly away.



"**HOLD** on, Brenda! I'm coming—hold on!" Brenda, fighting in vain to check her galloping mount, heard another horse thundering up. And then her amazing friend was leaning over, making a desperate snatch for her reins.

The Hunt in the Attic!

JOLTED, rocketed, hurled up and down, first into the air, then back on to the saddle with a force that almost drove the breath out of her body, Brenda was borne, helpless and alarmed, across the field.

She tugged on the reins, then gave a cry as she started to fall. Frenziedly she flung her arms around the horse's neck. It saved her, but it did not check the horse's rush.

On and on he pounded. A hedge loomed up: Brenda, clinging on, shut her eyes. She felt herself rising in the air. For an eternity of nightmare time she seemed to hover there, then—Thud! Every bone was shaken as they landed.

Head reeling, Brenda opened her eyes. Open country now. Faster and faster her mount streaked across the turf.

She was panting for breath, dragging weakly on the reins, when, as from a great distance, a voice penetrated her numbing senses.

"Hold on, Brenda! I'm coming! Hold on!"

A thrill shot through her. Ronald's voice! And there—there was Ronald himself. She saw him as she turned her head, racing towards her on a fleet-footed hunter.

Riding like the wind, he drew alongside, snatched at the reins, and jerked them back. Slowly at first Brenda felt her own horse begin to slacken. From a mad gallop it dropped to a canter, a canter to a trot, and finally to a trembling, sweating standstill.

Ronald, leaping to the ground, helped Brenda down. Still dazed and exhausted, she yet managed to grip his hand in gratitude as he made her comfortable against a tree. A few minutes' rest, and she was herself again.

"Golly! I didn't know I'd got to do that for the pageant!" she said, with a rueful laugh.

"Sure you're all right now?" Ronald asked anxiously, as he knelt beside her. "But how did it happen?"

Brenda told him; and he pursed his lips. Then, when she had recounted the incident of his scarf, he gave a long whistle.

"That was a close shave," he said, frowning. "But you don't think Veronica knows it's mine?"

"I don't think so," Brenda said. "But she's bound to guess I've been meeting a fellow, even if she doesn't know it's you."

"She'd jolly well better not know it's me, that's all!" Ronald declared grimly. "But, I say, I'm glad I saw you—though I'd rather you hadn't been in such a tough spot," he grinned.

"I want you to do something for me." "Not sit for another photograph?" Brenda parried.

Ronald smiled. He knew how puzzled Brenda had been by his strange action in getting her to be photographed wearing his scarf around her head; that was how she had come to be in possession of the scarf in the first place. But, beyond not bothering to deny that it was connected with the mystery surrounding her, he would explain nothing.

"Not another photograph," he agreed: "but it's to do with it—and to do with your dancing, too. Did Mrs. Venables say anything about extending your dance in the pageant? She did? Oh, good! Well, I want you to try to find a child's dance frock at Fernbank."

"For me?" asked Brenda, then started at his reply. "A—child's

dance frock?" she ejaculated. "Oh, Ronald, you're getting worse every day! Why a child's dance frock? What has that to do with me?"

"Everything," was Ronald's steady, serious reply. "You'll find it if it's still there—and I believe it is—in the main attic, at the bottom of an old junk-box. Don't let the Scholes know, for goodness' sake; but try to get hold of it to-day. Can you manage that?"

Brenda nodded. She did not understand what significance a child's dance frock could have in the mystery connected with herself; but she trusted Ronald, and if he wanted her to do this, then she would.

So it was arranged. That night she should go up into the attic when the house was asleep, and if she found the frock, signal with a torch from the attic window to Ronald, who would be watching from a hill overlooking the house.

"It shall be done, O master!" Brenda chuckled. "And is that all?"

"Yes, except that I may be introducing you to the lady who's going to produce the dancing side of the show. Another puzzle for you." He grinned.

"But she's an expert; got an academy and all that, where you can practise; so it'll be fun, anyway. But we'd better not hang about here, in case Veronica, or some of the others, bob up," he said, helping her to her feet. "Feel like risking it?"

He nodded towards Brenda's horse, now placidly cropping the grass. Brenda, looking at the animal, set her lips.

"Rather!" she said. "I'm not being beaten by him. Come on."

This time there was no trouble. The horse was a model of good behaviour as they slowly moved away.

"**Y**OU DIDN'T catch sight of his face, then?"

"No. Dash it! Only the back view, and they were too far off for that to be any good. I was just going to race after them when you came along."

Veronica, on the back of her horse, frowned down at her man companion. When Brenda's horse had bolted, she, filled with alarm, had given chase. She'd been hopelessly left behind, and Brenda had disappeared altogether until a few moments ago, when Veronica, frantically searching round, had seen her in the company of a boy.

And, starting to follow, whom should Veronica run into but her mysterious friend!

"H'm!" went the man, and stroked his chin thoughtfully. "Certainly a queer sort of girl!"

"Queer isn't the word!" Veronica said fiercely. "To-day—"

And she recounted the affair of the scarf. The man eyed her keenly.

"I wonder what game she could be up to?" he said. "It's pretty obvious she's up to something. I think, my dear," he advised, a meaning note in his voice, "you'd better watch her very, very closely. And another thing—"

"Yes?"

"Better call me Mr. Jones in future."

"Mr. Jones?" said Veronica. She grinned. "O.K.—Mr. Jones!"

"Better than choosing anything else, you know—too many other Joneses for me to be easily identified. But—look out!"

He dived behind some bushes, crouching down out of sight.

"Those friends of yours are coming along!" he hissed. "Don't forget—stick to that girl like a shadow—and I'm Mr. Jones!"

Veronica, nodding, turned her horse. And then, a disarming expression on

her face, she moved to intercept Phyllis & Co., who were cantering towards her.

LATE THAT night, Brenda crept along one of the moonlit passages of Fernbank, struggling with a small pair of step-ladders.

Her pulses were racing, for she was bound for the attic. The house was still and darkened; everybody else was asleep. But she moved with the utmost caution.

It was a very contented, as well as a very thrilled, Brenda who, halting beneath the skylight, carefully arranged the ladders, and step by step ascended them.

She'd come through a host of dangerous situations lately. First, the scarf; then that frightening adventure with the horse; and now the successful negotiation of this midnight journey from her room with the steps she had managed to smuggle there earlier in the evening.

It was as well for Brenda's peace of mind that she did not dream she and Ronald had been seen together.

But when Veronica had seen her again at the Paddocks, the young lady of Fernbank had readily accepted Brenda's explanation that the horse "slowed down eventually, you know." For Veronica had decided it would suit her plans better to keep quiet.

In quite a friendly spirit they had driven back to the house, and Brenda, putting Dickie to bed, finished her duties for the day. And now here she was, at the scene of exploration.

The skylight, dusty and rusted through lack of use, resisted her efforts to raise it at first. Then, as she exerted all her strength, it creaked upwards.

Now—push again, but careful. Ever so gently. That was it. Now lay the skylight back on its hinges; now haul yourself up; now—over you go!

Standing erect in the attic, she whipped a torch from her pocket and switched it on. Then, just in case anyone should see its reflection from an adjacent corridor, she closed the skylight and flashed the torch about.

Amid a mass of old trunks, tins, boxes, and bundles of papers, she spotted one solitary trunk, as Ronald had said. Warily she stepped over to it and raised the lid. A pile of old clothes lay within. Eagerly she pulled them aside, and there, right at the bottom, was a child's white dance frock, very creased, but still very dainty.

"Got it—good," Brenda murmured. Swiftly shutting the trunk, she crossed to the little window and gave the signal to Ronald. From the near-by hill an answering pin-point of light stabbed the darkness, once, twice.

That was all Brenda waited to see. She'd better not delay any longer. The sooner she was safely tucked up in bed, and the ladders replaced in the cupboard where she had found them, the better.

But when she tugged at the skylight she received a shock. If refused to budge. Again she tugged, laying her torch down and using both hands, but beyond emitting a faint creak the skylight stuck fast!

She was trapped up here—trapped! And now nothing could save her from being caught in these remarkable circumstances when the house was astir next morning!

AN awkward position indeed for Brenda. And the dance frock—why is Ronald so keen to get it? Don't miss next Saturday's intriguing chapters.

Another delightful COMPLETE story of Merry England in the Middle Ages.

SECRET HELPER TO ROBIN HOOD



**"FIFTY GOLD PIECES
REWARD FOR — THE
ARREST OF ROBIN HOOD!"**

**But thanks to Fayre, and Robin
Hood himself, it was the outlaw
who got the reward in the end!**

"Fayre—You Must Betray Me!"

GOLD to bring happiness, gold to bring joy, gold for whoever may need it."

The young Lady Fayre, of Longley Castle, chanted thus merrily to herself as, clad in a dark green, ragged frock and brown, shabby, hooded cloak, she tripped lightly along the lane near to the woods where the famous outlaw, Robin Hood, had his lair.

The gold piece that Fayre tossed into the air, catching the sun's glint, was a rare present from her uncle, the Baron le Feuvre, lord of the mighty Longley Castle. She had been given it because she had done well at her writing under the eye of the Venerable Brie.

And now, in her disguise as a poor girl, Fayre was enjoying freedom.

"Gold for who may need it more than I," murmured Fayre. "And, by my troth, here comes such a one!" she added as she saw a girl approaching her more shabbily dressed than she was herself.

The girl walked with slow, loitering step, hands clasped, head bowed, with an air of dejection. But, seeing Fayre, she pulled up, her face pale, and her eyes wide as though with fright.

"Oh, you did startle me!" she murmured.

"Why so sad, friend?" asked Fayre. "The sun is shining with golden glint."

"Golden glinted," echoed the girl, with a sigh that came from her heart. "Would that the sunshine was indeed gold that I might break off pieces of it to help my poor father!"

"Then your father is in need of money?" asked Fayre quickly, turning the gold piece in her hand and thinking what a joyous surprise she could give this girl.

"Ah, yes, he is indeed!" the girl groaned. "Although the sun shines, our little cottage is dark with sorrow to-day."

Fayre, with no more ado, seizing a moment when the girl's attention was not upon her, tossed the gold piece on the grass. It would not have done to give the coin to the girl, who might have wondered where one so poorly clad as Fayre had got it. She would have feared that it was stolen.

Having tossed the coin aside, Fayre looked in the direction in which she had thrown it.

"Why, look! That surely is something more than sunlight glinting there!" she exclaimed, pointing.

The girl turned, and as she saw that glint of gold a shine came to her eyes. For a moment she was struck breathless with surprise and pleasure by the unexpected sight.

Next moment, with a cry of joy, she stooped and picked up the coin.

"Why, 'tis gold from the skies!" she murmured.

"'Tis an omen of good luck," smiled Fayre, her own eyes shining with happiness. "Now you need frown no more."

But the girl, turning the gold piece in her fingers, shook her head slowly, musing thoughtfully.

By

IDA MELBOURNE

"This piece was dropped by someone rich," she said, with a touch of anxiety. "To keep it now will be stealing, perhaps; and, like my father, I might be sent to prison—"

Fayre jumped.

"Prison! Your father has been sent to prison?" she cried.

"Not yet, but soon he may be. If we do not pay fifty pieces of gold as fine, then he will be. Fifty pieces of gold!" said the girl unhappily. "And all that my father did wrong was to go to the aid of some poor beggar who was being cruelly beaten by a sheriff's hireling."

Fayre's eyes flashed. She had seen how the sheriff's men handled beggars, and their bullying always filled her with fury.

"Your father did the right thing!" she said indignantly.

"Ah, yes, it was brave! But now the sheriff demands fifty gold pieces," groaned the girl. "And how can my father, a butcher, find so vast a sum? Oh, if only I were rich! If only I were like the young Lady Fayre at the castle! If she has a kind heart, surely she will listen to me—surely she will give me gold! She eats from gold plate, they say; she drinks from

goblets of gold. And I need but fifty pieces to save my poor father from a cruel fate."

Fayre listened in sad silence. How little this girl knew of the true state of affairs! Everyone in the village thought that Fayre rolled in gold; that she had bangles of gold, anklets of it; that she had always a sack of gold near at hand. But the truth was that her greedy uncle had complete charge of her wealth until she came of age.

"I fear you will have disappointment," Fayre murmured. "The Lady Fayre is not so rich as people think, nor would her uncle, the baron, let her give the money. But wait!" she cried, as an idea came to her. "There may be another way. There is one who will help the poor always when he can—a man who lives in these woods, kind and brave and noble. Tell him your story, and if he can help, he surely will."

"You mean Robin Hood?" the girl cried. "You know where he is? Oh, take me to him!" Then she frowned. "But how is it that you know where to find him, when the sheriff, even, hunts him in vain?"

That was a question Fayre did not want to answer; for if it were known that she was a friend of Robin Hood's she might be forced to betray his whereabouts.

"Ah, that is my secret—and one you must promise never to tell!" Fayre warned her gravely. "But if you will make such a promise—"

She broke off then in mid-sentence as she noticed a small group of people approaching from the village. Heading them was a man who carried a bell—the town crier.

Fayre drew back from the road and took the girl by the arm.

"'Twill be best for me to go alone," she said. "Wait here, and promise not to say where I have gone lest some sharp eye in this throng may have seen me hurry away. Stay and hear what the town crier has to say, and then tell me."

With that, Fayre left the girl, and hurried into the wood. Her heart was light; for she was sure that Robin Hood's fertile mind would find a way out.

The girl watched her go, a shine in her eyes.

"Finding that gold was a good omen; and now—to meet a friend of Robin Hood—why, I am indeed in luck!" she breathed.

Then she turned as the town crier halted before a cottage and rang his bell. At the top of his voice he bawled out his news.

"Oyez, Oyez!" he called. "Fifty gold pieces reward—"

How the girl started at that! She stood amazed, entranced. Fifty gold pieces reward—

"Fifty gold pieces reward for whosoever shall give information that will lead to the arrest of the outlaw, the enemy of law and order, Robin Hood! Fifty gold pieces reward!"

Fayre, running through the wood, heard the crier's powerful voice, and halted. Then she laughed with mirth. "No one will take those pieces!" she called back lightly. "For who would betray Robin Hood for gold?"

And turning she ran on, blowing the shrill whistle Robin Hood had given her—which was not only a signal to

acquaint him with her approach, but also a device to drive away wolves.

It was after turning this way and that, taking a winding course, that Fayre heard the sound of a hunter's horn.

"Robin Hood!" she called.

"Aho there!" came an answer seemingly from nowhere, and then Robin Hood sprang into view from under a bush:

Clad in green, he was not easily seen, and Fayre jumped with shock as he bobbed up almost under her nose.

Doffing his feathered cap, Robin Hood, handsome and smiling, bowed to her.

"Welcome, Lady Fayre," he said. "My sharp ears heard the town crier's bell. Is it news of some rich baron's arrival? We could do with gold."

"You have no gold?" asked Fayre.

"No more than a few simple pence," he said.

Fayre sighed at that, and then told him the sad story of the butcher who

had been arrested for going to the aid of a beggar.

Robin Hood's eyes clouded.

"Fifty gold pieces! 'Tis but robbery of the poor," he exclaimed. "How should a humble butcher have such a sum, except, perhaps, his whole life savings?"

"'Tis so," admitted Fayre.

"Fifty gold pieces," mused Robin Hood, stroking his chin. "Mayhap we shall have need to assault the castle and open the baron's coffers," he added, a twinkle in his eyes.

The crier's bell sounded again, and Robin Hood pricked up his ears.

"What cries he?" he asked.

"A reward for your capture," said Fayre. "Fifty gold pieces—"

"Fifty gold pieces—for me!" Robin Hood exclaimed. "'Tis the very sum needed. If the girl but knew my hiding-place the money would be hers."

Fayre jumped.

"Oh! But surely—" she began, in alarm.

Robin Hood looked down his nose for a moment, silent. Then he suddenly laughed. It was a merry laugh, and he patted Fayre on the back.

"Tra-la!" he chanted. "We shall have fun. My Lady Fayre, go you to your friend. The fifty gold pieces shall be hers. She shall say where I am. Fayre, you must betray me, so that I shall be captured!"

"No! I will not do it," said Fayre indignantly. "No, Robin Hood. I will not betray you for gold, not even to help that girl."

"And I say you shall," he answered gravely. "Bound with ropes, I shall be handed to the sheriff."

"No!"

"Yes—but with ropes so tied that I can free them!"

And, Robin Hood, laughing again, took Fayre by the shoulders and turned her to face the way she had come.

"Begone," he said. "Bring them back half-way to here, where there is a tree-trunk across the path. I will be there, tied up!"

And giving Fayre an encouraging push, he turned and darted off through the trees. A little bewildered and alarmed, Fayre did not move for a moment or two; and then, since Robin Hood knew his own business best, she turned and ran to the road.

Tricked!

"MY lord Sheriff! I have news of Robin Hood!"

It was the butcher's daughter, Emilia, who gave that cry as she ran to the sheriff in the village. He stood with a posse of his men, ready to act on any information given as to the outlaw's hiding-place.

There was a stir of excitement amongst the men, but from the hostile crowd of villagers came a hiss. Robin Hood had proved himself their friend, and their sympathy was with him.

"Shame!"

"Traitor!"

Fayre pushed forward after the girl. She had explained matters to her, and the girl, who had most anxiously awaited her return, was over-joyed to hear Robin Hood's decision.

"'Tis so, lord sheriff," said Fayre. "We were in the woods but a short while ago—"

"Robin Hood and his men had quarrelled," added Emilia.

"They have tied him up!" resumed Fayre. "And if he has not escaped, there he lies still."

Some of the crowd moved indignantly forward, but the sheriff's posse stood round the two girls protectingly.

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

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—Hurrah for Whitsun!

I can almost hear your whoopees of delight in greeting of the year's second Bank Holiday, for even if the weather isn't too kind to us—and we've all been hoping that it is—there's something most exciting about Bank Holidays, isn't there?

There's a sort of festival spirit in the air, I always think. Bank Holidays are so different from other holidays. To begin with, almost everyone else is on holiday, the same as you. There are hundreds of similarly happy faces to meet you wherever you go; and hundreds of other people, young and old, bent on enjoying themselves.

I haven't quite decided what I intend to do on Whit Monday. It all depends on my niece Claudine. You know her, of course—that very charming, well-intentioned young lady who has the unfortunate habit of doing the wrong thing at the right moment!

Claudine wants me to go to a fair with her. Well, I love fairs—I love the roundabouts, the helter-skelters, the chair-o'-planes, the coconut shies, the shooting galleries, the crazy kitchens, where you can smash as much crockery as your skill will permit at three balls for twopence; in fact, all the fun that is going.

But—I'm dubious. Claudine makes such a difference. One never knows what Claudine is going to do next; or, for that matter, how she will do what she has suddenly set her heart on. I've never been to a fair with my niece. I've been almost everywhere else, and that's the trouble.

I know how dangerous and embar-

assing Claudine can be in the most harmless of places, and thought of escorting her, or being escorted by her, through the crowded, raucous pandemonium of the average fair-ground—brrrrr!

Dare I—

By the time you read this I shall have made up my mind. The chances are I shall give in, as always, for Claudine is really most likeable, and most persuasive. I'll probably go to the fair—in which case there should be lots to tell you about at some future date.

But at the moment I must rush on to next week's grand programme of stories.

"WE DON'T TRUST YOU,
JIMMY RICHMOND!"

That is the title of Hilda Richards' magnificent complete story of the famous Cliff House chums, and a most dramatic tale it is, too. Barbara Redfern & Co., not trusting their old friend, Jimmy Richmond, of Friardale Boys' School! Sounds incredible, doesn't it? What ever can be the reason?

Well, there is a very excellent and convincing reason, you may be sure—as you'll learn for yourselves next week. Babs & Co. are quite justified in feeling Jimmy is not to be trusted, for the once straightforward young fellow seems to have changed completely—for the worse.

It is a disturbing and unpleasant situation for the chums; a situation which will keep you fascinated from beginning to end. And there is plenty of mystery and adventure activity, too.

Next Saturday's issue will also contain further enthralling chapters of Margery Marriott's fine serial; more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages, and another topping COMPLETE story of Lady Fayre and Robin Hood.

This will be the last time we shall meet Lady Fayre—for the present, anyway—but look out for full details next week of a wonderful series of Canadian Ranch stories.

Cheerio until next Saturday. With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

"Lead us to him," said the sheriff, who wore chain mail under his red tunic, and carried a heavy sword.

"And the fifty gold pieces?" asked Fayre.

The sheriff took a bag from his saddle.

"This bag of gold is yours if we capture Robin Hood," he said.

"Then follow us," said Fayre.

She and the butcher's daughter walked ahead of the posse, followed by a large crowd. Reaching the woods, Fayre halted, and, as the path was narrow and the branches of trees hung low, the sheriff and his men dismounted. Leaving a man to guard the horses, the sheriff followed Fayre and Emilia into the wood.

Fayre ran ahead, and did not stop until she reached the fallen tree-trunk. Her heart was in her mouth; for even though this was Robin's own plan, she feared for his safety. Once he was in the grip of the sheriff's men, how was he to escape?

Looking right and left, she did not at first see him; then, clambering over the mighty tree-trunk, she almost trod on him.

Robin Hood lay quite still, hands and ankles bound with rope, but his cheery smile and his wink stilled her fears.

"Here he is!" cried Fayre, pointing to the bound outlaw.

The sheriff ran forward with his men.

"Ha, rascal—at last! Yes, 'tis indeed Robin Hood!" he exclaimed in triumph.

The men prodded Robin Hood, mocked him, and then hauled him to his feet.

"Who has betrayed me?" cried Robin Hood, in well assumed anger.

"Hail, men! Friar Tuck, help!"

"Silence him!" snarled the sheriff.

And he dealt Robin Hood a blow on the side of the head that dazed the outlaw.

"Not so rough!" protested Fayre.

"Rough as I please," retorted the sheriff.

"Take him, men! Let two remain here lest other outlaws come to his aid."

Fayre touched his arm.

"The bag of gold," she murmured.

"We have done the work!"

The sheriff eyed her with a grim smile.

"Well done, my simple wench," he said.

"Here are two pennies for you."

"Pennies!" cried Fayre, staring at the coins.

"Fifty pieces of gold is the reward."

"Indeed so!" gasped Emilia.

"The town crier did say so."

A scoffing murmur came from the sheriff at that, and from his posse, too.

"Five pieces it was," he said.

"And all of us here shall divide it."

"Hear, hear!" agreed his grinning men.

"But I will be generous. One piece of gold for you two maids to share.

And now begone," added the sheriff.

"If you had sense of duty you would not ask reward for the capture of an outlaw."

Fayre took the piece of gold, her cheeks reddening.

"Why, you are no better than knaves!" she cried.

"'Twas fifty that was promised, and to us—"

The sheriff made a threatening movement.

"You call the sheriff knave? You insult an officer of the king? The penalty for that, my girl, is the stocks! Begone, or we'll take you off with Robin Hood."

Fayre's eyes blazed; but the hot words that came to her tongue were swallowed.

Robin Hood, carried by four men,



"HERE is Robin Hood—your prisoner!" Fayre cried, waving to the sheriff. It was as well the sheriff was not close enough to see the twinkle in Fayre's eyes, or he would have known it was all a trick—with Robin Hood's consent.

caught her eye; his own were ablaze with anger. Now was the time for him to free himself from his bonds!

But the sheriff's lieutenant stood guard over him, the point of a dagger at his breast.

"One word, Robin Hood, and it shall be the end of thee," he said.

Prince John has offered a hundred guineas for your capture, alive or dead."

Fayre, white-faced, stood back. She saw now the cruel trick that had been played. The sheriff had offered half of the reward he himself would receive—and even that half he did not intend to pay!

Robin Hood was trapped. Emilia was robbed of her reward. The very worst had happened.

Turning, Fayre suddenly ran into the wood, determined to find Friar Tuck, Little John, and the others of Robin Hood's band. For only a daring rescue could save the outlaw now.

But not a sign of the outlaw band did Fayre find in their lair, nor any clue to where they had gone. And it occurred to her that this must be in accordance with some plan of Robin Hood's.

Naturally, he had planned to be aided in his escape, and most likely he had told his men to wait somewhere in ambush.

"I hope so indeed. I hope so," said Fayre tremulously. "But if the outlaws attack may not the sheriff take desperate measures to keep his prisoner?"

For the outlaws to attack might be the very worst thing possible. The sheriff cared not whether he had Robin Hood dead or alive, for the reward would be the same, and an outlaw had no rights.

Fayre, frantic, ran back through the wood, blaming herself for this tragic happening. And all had been in vain. That was the most pathetic part of it. Robin Hood's noble, daring sacrifice had helped no one.

"Who can rescue him now? Oh, for an armed force, for soldiers!" groaned Fayre. "Would that I were old enough to take the castle as mine in act as it is by rights, and I could send some soldiers! Would—"

And then a strange, daring thought came to her. She ran in a new

direction now, making for the castle, and, reaching it, crossed the draw-bridge without question.

The guards did not realise that she was the Lady Fayre, but, having seen her often in this guise, took her to be a village maid who ran the Lady Fayre's errands.

Up to her bed-chamber she went, hardly noticed by the servants and soldiers who thronged the castle. And there, with all possible speed, she changed her shabby clothes for the rich raiment more befitting her station.

Letting her golden plaits swing behind her back, Fayre went down the corridor in search of her uncle. In her red velvet, gold-embroidered frock she looked quite different from the village maid who had betrayed Robin Hood, and soldiers who passed her in the corridor saluted.

There was no difficulty in finding the baron. His roaring voice could be heard in the armoury, where he was rating the armourer for a broken sword.

"Uncle!" cried Fayre, bursting in.

The red-faced baron swung round to her, and the armourer, mopping his brow, moved back in relief.

"Well, what is it?"

"'Tis exciting news from the village," said Fayre eagerly. "The clever sheriff has done a brave and gallant thing. He has captured Robin Hood, they say."

The baron drew up, startled.

"Not so!"

"Indeed so. Prince John will be mighty pleased," went on Fayre in the same excited tone. "Mayhap the sheriff will now become an earl and be given land. 'Tis good news, for it was doubtless a brave deed to capture Robin Hood. And likewise he shall have the hundred guineas reward the prince has offered."

Fayre watched her uncle's face. He was greedy, vain, and jealous. Also, he disliked the sheriff. What was passing in his mind now could easily be guessed therefore.

"So?" said the baron. "By some base trickery he captured the knave. Or mayhap 'tis not Robin Hood at all."

Fayre was leading up to the remark that she now made.

"Ah, yes—and it is perhaps more

difficult to keep Robin Hood than to take him prisoner. There will be an ambush most likely, and the sheriff will lose the hundred guineas."

"There was no need to make further hints.

"To arms! Two hundred men!" shouted the baron. "To arms! If the outlaws try to take their leader back, we'll drive them off, and give a fitting guard to so awful a rascal!"

Fayre slipped away, heart thumping with excitement. For the baron, although not a clever man, was a good soldier. In a few minutes he had assembled horsemen, archers, men-at-arms. Trumpets sounded in the castle, and from the courtyard came the clatter of pained feet and the clump of horses' hoofs.

Fayre, while all that excitement was filling the air, changed back into peasant's clothes, and, thus attired, followed the small army from the castle.

The Baron Pays—Dearly!

ROBIN HOOD, roped to a horse's back, was more helpless than before; but he had not given up hope. He lay still, as though stunned, but watched the hedgerows as the triumphant cortège wound its way along the lane.

"He was awaiting the attack of his men, lying in ambush." Soon it would be made. And then—

Without warning it came. Over the hedges jumped men in green, rushing to the attack. The sheriff's men drew swords, and used them with slashing force against the stout quarter-staves of the outlaws.

"Stand back!" shouted the sheriff's lieutenant, and poised his dagger over Robin Hood. "For I swear that Robin Hood dies if so much as another blow is struck by an outlaw!"

Robin Hood gritted his teeth. "Strike, outlaws!" he shouted, and swung his left arm across his chest.

But the outlaws did not strike. They

knew that their leader was at the lieutenant's mercy. Tied to the horse, Robin Hood would be an easy victim, even though he might parry the first blow.

"Fall back!" ordered Little John. The outlaws sprang suddenly back to the hedges; and as they did so, fat Friar Tuck shouted a warning.

"The baron!" Down the road in a cloud of dust came the baron's horsemen.

An arrow sang through the air from Little John's bow. The lieutenant, his arm wounded, yelled and dropped his dagger. Friar Tuck, armed with a sword he had taken from one of the sheriff's men, leaped in, dodging sword-cuts, and with a slash, severed the reins of the horse on which Robin Hood lay trussed.

Next moment, as Robin Hood's heels pressed the animal's quarters, it shot forward.

He was free from the sheriff's men; for his outlaws stood aside for the horse to bolt through, and then closed up again. But the baron and his men were charging towards the scene now, and the outlaws jumped away. They could not argue with lances rushed at them at break-neck speed.

After the clattering runaway they went; but hanging to its bridle was Little John. A strong knife cut Robin Hood free in a twinkling.

Robin Hood, struggling up, shook the loose bonds from his wrists and ankles, and dropped off the horse's back.

"Free!" he chortled, as he clambered over the hedge. "But our work is not yet done. We have still to get the gold!"

"UNCLE!" CRIED FAYRE. "There are two woodmen with news of Robin Hood!"

It was some hours later in the day. The baron, having failed in his intention of capturing Robin Hood from the sheriff, was like a bear with a sore head.

All the satisfaction he had derived from his enterprise was that he had taken the bag of gold from the sheriff, and if Robin Hood were not found, the baron would keep the gold—until there was need of it.

He swung round to Fayre now, frowning angrily, and saw that she had a bow in her hand and a quiver of arrows attached to a belt.

"What means this?" he demanded. "I do but practise archery, my lord uncle," said Fayre meekly. "Twas your own wish, you may remember."

"Um! What news of Robin Hood?"

"Two woodmen with a wagon," said Fayre. "They seek word with you in private. They are at the drawbridge and wish to cross."

"Let them cross, then!" he grunted. He pushed past Fayre to give the order himself, and she, left alone in the room, did a little skip of glee.

"Good luck to you, brave Robin Hood!" she murmured, and then followed the baron.

The two woodmen, with their wagon, led the horse over the drawbridge. They were roughly clad, and the baron spoke to them with contempt, as he did to people whom he considered beneath him.

"Well, what news of Robin Hood?" he demanded.

"Good lord," said one man, "we have word of him. There is said to be a reward of fifty gold pieces."

"Let me but put my hands on Robin

Hood, and it shall be a hundred," said the baron.

"He's here—trussed like a chicken!" said one of the men.

And to the baron's surprise they jumped to the cart and unloaded the wood. There, hidden behind it, clad in green, and bound at ankles and wrists, was a smiling figure—Robin Hood!

"Ah, baron, we meet again!" he said, with a rueful smile. "These daring woodmen have served me ill when I supposed they were my friends."

"Robin Hood!" cried the baron, amazed.

He thumped a mighty hand on the outlaw's shoulder.

"The men have earned their money," cried Fayre. "Oh, well done indeed!"

"Give them the gold," said the baron to the chancellor. "For this I shall have more than gold from the prince!"

The woodmen took the gold, and, overjoyed, turned their horse and led it back over the drawbridge.

Fayre lifted her hand and pointed to the gate.

"Look!" she cried.

Every head turned to the gate. The baron, expecting to see a swarm of outlaws, ordered his men to run to the defences. The moment they had gone, Robin Hood shook free the loose bonds from his wrists, and wrested the bow from Fayre, who screamed, as though with fright, and—seemingly—fainted in front of her uncle as he charged forward.

The baron stumbled and fell, and Robin Hood, now armed with bow and arrow, shuffled his feet from the rope and sprang free.

There were yards of rope about him, which he trailed as he ran to the castle wall. By the time the soldiers could be brought back from the drawbridge, where they had mustered to resist the supposed assault, Robin Hood was within a few yards of the wall. There he paused, fitted a loop of the rope to an arrow, and fired it—high over the wall.

The baron, scrambling past Fayre, charged in pursuit, but he slowed in wonder as he saw the outlaw being hauled up the wall by the rope.

"Au révoir, baron!" called Robin Hood, as he squatted on the wall. "Make the reward more worth the effort next time!"

Fayre, with eyes dancing, watched him go over the wall, knowing—as the baron did not—that on the other side were half a dozen of his men who had hauled him up.

Outside in the lane stood the woodmen's wagon, awaiting the real woodmen, who would soon arrive in fury, for they had been robbed of their wagon and its load! But, as they would later receive ten pieces of gold as reward, their anger would be quite appeased.

The drawbridge had been raised to baffle the outlaws—and by the time it had been lowered, Robin Hood and his men were well away!

It was the next day that Fayre met Emilia again. Emilia was smiling. She had reason to smile, for the fine of fifty gold pieces had been paid, and, in addition, she had received a handsome present from Robin Hood.

Thus was Fayre's happiness complete.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

THERE will be another lovely COMPLETE story of these two fascinating characters in next week's issue. Order your copy now.



Make this
Frock and Bolero
for Yourself

**FREE
PATTERN**

for this pretty school
or holiday outfit, also
for a pretty frock for
"best" given in—

BESTWAY
Fashion Book No. 182

**SUMMER
FASHIONS
FOR GIRLS IN
THEIR 'TEENS**

6d at all Newsagents and Bookstalls or 7d. post free (Home or Abroad) from BESTWAY, Bear Alley, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

S.C.L. 37

Printed in England and published every Saturday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription rates: Inland and abroad, 11s. per annum; 5s. 6d. for six months. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—Saturday, June 3rd, 1939.