

Don't miss

"CLARA'S CLASH WITH THE CHAMPION!"

the grand Long Complete story of Cliff House School inside.

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EVERY **2^D**
SATURDAY

Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



NOT A SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE!

It all depended on whether Clara or Gwen's champion athlete cousin knew more about sports.

(See this week's superb Babs & Co. story.)

A Grand Long Complete story of sporting times at Cliff House School, with Barbara Redfern, Bessie Bunter, Clara Trevlyn & Co. well to the fore.

CLARA'S CLASH *with the* CHAMPION!



Not What Clara Expected!



"It depends on Gwen Cook," stated Clara Trevlyn. "If Gwen can win the hurdles races, then we should just beat Whitechester. Don't you agree, Babs?"

Thus appealed to, Barbara Redfern, the pretty Junior School captain at Cliff House, glanced up. She smiled at Clara.

"You've asked me the same question about three times to-day, chump," she pointed out politely, "and each time I've said 'yes.'"

Tombboy Clara Trevlyn grinned a trifle sheepishly.

"Sorry, Babs," she said, "But if you were games captain you'd get a bit worried and forget things, too. I'm relying on Gwen, you know. She's the best we've got, I think—but she needs a heap of coaching."

"True enough," nodded Babs. "But she's jolly keen, and that counts for a lot. Mabs," she added, "pass my running shoes, there's a dear."

Mabel Lynn, who shared Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form corridor with Babs and plump Bessie Bunter, tossed over the shoes, and wagged her head reassuringly at Clara.

"Gwen will do the trick all right," she said, "Especially with her own cousin coming all the way from Australia to act as coach."

"Yes, rather! And especially," Janet Jordan dimpled, "as he's a world-famous athlete himself. What's his name—Arthur Warwick? Yes, he'll bring Gwen right up to form."

And the rest of the Fourth Form girls

in the sports pavilion on Junior Side nodded agreement.

There was a general feeling of satisfaction in the air, for the greatest junior sporting event of the term was fast approaching—that event the annual inter-school sports between Whitechester and Cliff House for the Jane Matthews Cup and medals.

There was a great deal of rivalry between Cliff House and Whitechester, and if its nature was friendly, that made it no less keen. Last year at Cliff House, Whitechester carried off the honours by a narrow margin of points. This year, on Whitechester's ground, Cliff House were determined to avenge the defeat and reverse the result.

But it was going to be a near thing. Whitechester had a decided advantage in that the sports were to take place on their own ground. To offset that, however, Cliff House now had the services of Arthur Warwick.

On the field of athletics, in faraway Australia, Arthur Warwick, Gwen Cook's cousin, was already a champion. Half a dozen records stood to his credit, and apart from that, he had taken part in the Olympic games. More for a holiday than for any other reason, he had decided to spend a few months in his native England, and Gwen, on receipt of that news, had instantly roped him in as the Cliff House coach. And now—he was coming!

Coming, in fact, this very afternoon. So no wonder Cliff House was excited; no wonder the junior girls were looking forward to their practice.

All at once, the door of the dressing-room burst open, and another girl appeared on the scene, a girl dressed in trim blue shorts and white sweater, her hazel eyes sparkling, her face

flushed rosy red with excitement. It was Gwen Cook of the Fourth herself.

"Babs, he's come!" she blurted breathlessly.

"He—," Barbara Redfern repeated.

"My cousin—Arthur!" Gwen gulped. "He's in the drive now—just getting out of his car! And, oh, isn't he tall and sunburnt and handsome!" She gave an excited little laugh. "You know, I hardly recognised him at first."

Babs smiled.

"Well, you've only seen photographs of him, haven't you?" she asked.

"Yes," Gwen laughed again. "Come on, girls! Come and meet him!"

"Rather, Gwen!"

Their own excitement was almost as great as Gwen's then. For many days they had looked forward to the arrival of Arthur Warwick. From the time he had consented to act as their official coach, in fact, the Junior School at Cliff House had done little else than talk of the coming of such a famous all-round athlete.

As Gwen, with a happy, excited laugh, scampered outside again, Babs, Mabs, Clara, and Janet Jordan followed her.

Near by, on the edge of the drive, was a small, red two-seater car, and near it was a tall, bronzed young man of some twenty-two years, sporting a tiny dark moustache. He waved cheerily to Gwen as she cried his name.

"Gwen!" he cried, and as she ran towards him, caught her up and kissed her.

Babs, Mabs, and Janet raced up. But for some reason the usually athletic Clara had dropped to the rear.

"This is Arthur," Gwen said. "Arthur, this is Barbara Redfern—this is Mabel Lynn—this is Janet Jordan—and this— I say, Clara, come along,

old slowcoach!" she cried. "Arthur will want to meet you more than anybody, seeing you're captain of junior games. Arthur, this is Clara Trevlyn. I told you about her in my letters—remember?"

"Pleased to meet you, Clara," Arthur Warwick said jovially, but paused as he stretched out his hand, looking just a little taken aback at the strange glance Clara fixed upon him. "I've been longing to have a talk with you."

"Have you?" Clara regarded the champion. "And I have been longing to have a talk with you," she announced. "We've met before. I think."

"We?" He shook his head. "I'm afraid I don't understand."

"Yesterday," Clara's expression was unfriendly. "Perhaps you don't remember shooting down Raynes Hill in that little sports car? Perhaps you don't remember the Alsatian dog you nearly ran over. That was my dog, Pluto!"

"Clara!" exclaimed Gwen, and Babs was staring. For she knew all about that incident, of course. Clara had been full of it after she had returned from Courtfield.

Warwick hesitated, shrugged, and then smiled.

"I'm sorry, Miss Trevlyn, but I really do think you've tripped up," he said quietly. "You must be getting me confused with someone else. In the first place, I don't know Raynes Hill from the African veldt. In the second place, I only hired this car this morning from Courtfield, and in the third place, I wasn't even in the district yesterday. And as for running over a dog—or nearly running over him—well," he added, leaving that "well" to express all the immeasurable contempt he could feel for such an action.

Clara stared again—hard this time. Blunt, plain-speaking was Clara, but Clara was never a girl to accuse without good reason. Moreover, Clara never forgot a face. This was the man, she felt certain, who had nearly run down her pet. At the same time, she could hardly call him a fibber to his face. He was Gwen's cousin. And he was their coach.

"Well—" she gulped. "Well, in that case, we—we'll say no more about it," she said. "All the same—"

"All the same, you still have a sneaking half-belief that I was the lout?" He laughed. "Still, never mind; mistakes will happen, eh? I gather that the old dog wasn't hurt after all, so no harm's done. Gwen, my dear, there's something I want to mention now in case I forget. Have any letters arrived for me?"

"Why, Arthur, no!" Gwen said. "Were you expecting one?"

"I was." He frowned a little. "From Uncle Arnold. Uncle said he would write before I left Sydney, and I took the liberty of instructing him to send the letter on to the school, not knowing, of course, exactly where I should land. Still, never mind," he added jovially. "But if a letter comes from him you'll take good care of it, won't you?"

"Oh, yes, of course," Gwen promised, and laughed again, though for a second she did look queerly at Clara, who had withdrawn to the back of the crowd which was now surrounding the new coach. "And, by the way, what about the necklace?"

He blinked. "Necklace?"

"Now, Arthur," she chided, "don't say you've forgotten! You know—the

By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

Maori necklace you wrote and told me you were bringing from Australia."

"Oh, that! Oh, yes, of course!"

"Have you got it—now?" Gwen inquired eagerly.

"Here? Well, I—I haven't had a chance to unpack it. I'm afraid I haven't even touched my trunk yet; but as soon as I do unpack I'll bring it along, of course. Now, what about this training we're going to do?" he added.

"Clara, I have to consult you about that, don't I?"

"Yes," Clara said. But she flushed, and the look on her face told Babs that she was desperately trying to clear from her mind the impression which was on it, and because of which she could not feel so happy and free and easy with the champion athlete as the others. "I'm particularly keen, though, for you to put Gwen through her paces in the hurdles," she said. "Gwen's our big hope for those events."

"Hurdles?" he said, and frowned. "Oh, of course! Feel fit, Gwen?" he asked.

"Fit as a fiddle, Arthur!"



Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, the games captain. With Arthur Warwick to help them, victory over Whitechester seemed assured. But that was before Clara met the champion athlete, before dislike and distrust of him grew within her.

"Then let's go."

Gwen beamed. She looked very happy, very pleased, and proud of this famous cousin of hers as she slipped her hand in his, and, surrounded by an admiring crowd, tripped back to the pavilion. Babs, falling behind, looked queerly at Clara.

"Chuck it off the old chest!" she advised.

Clara flushed. She understood perfectly what Babs meant.

"I'm sorry. I'm trying to," she said. "But, Babs, I'm sure I haven't made a mistake."

"Well, forget about it," Babs advised. "Anyway, it's done with now. We don't want to upset old Gwen," she added.

Clara nodded. No, she didn't want to do that.

They reached the pavilion. More and more girls were gathering around now, among them being plump Bessie Bunter, cutting rather a comic figure in a pair of very short and bulging shorts and a white satin gym blouse. But Bessie, of course, thought she looked absolutely stunning.

"Oh, I sus-say, isn't he nice?" she giggled to Mabs. "You wouldn't think Gwen Cook could have a cousin like that, would you?"

Mabs chuckled as they passed on to where five flights of hurdles had been erected for practice purposes. Warwick paused.

"Clara," he said—"don't mind me calling you Clara, do you?—which,

seeing that we're all going to be friends, girls, means that you must call me Arthur—Clara, what about getting the team together?"

"Right-ho!" Clara said. "Leila, this way; myself and Gwen. That's the team."

"Right! Then carry on!" Arthur Warwick said.

"Give us the off," Clara suggested. "Line up, the team."

He nodded. A nod from Clara; the team took its position, crouching on toes, fingers touching the ground. Clara looked towards Warwick.

"All right?" he asked.

"Oh, fine!" he praised.

"But what about Gwen?"

"Gwen? She's all right," the man said. "Nothing wrong with her, is there?"

Clara glanced critically at Gwen. One thing Gwen always forgot was to dig her toes in the ground. Once she got going Gwen was fine, but Gwen always lost ground in the first few yards because she failed to get the knack of springing away. Gwen's chief fault was that she brought her right foot far too far forward.

Still, Clara wasn't saying anything, though, had she been in the coach's position, she would have remedied that fault at the outset.

Gwen Cook's cousin, wonder athlete from Australia, coming to Cliff House to coach the Fourth Form for their Sports Day with Whitechester School! How excited and keen the Fourth were, especially

"Right!" Warwick said. "Now, get ready! Go!" he cried.

And up at once the whole team rose, Gwen, as usual, just half a pace in the rear. Four or five swift, leaping steps took them to the first hurdle.

Over sailed Clara and Gwen together, both jumping off with the left foot. Down on her right came Clara, but Gwen, as usual, alighted on both feet, pausing for a fraction of a second before she ran on. By the next hurdle she had caught up again; she and Clara again cleared together, and again Gwen jumped on both feet. Clara grunted. Warwick would have something to say about Gwen's action, she guessed.

But what he said when the practice was over was:

"Fine! Didn't know girls could jump so well! Good show, Gwen! Don't you think so, Clara?"

"No!" Clara said bluntly.

"But why?"

"Gwen's fast enough between the sticks, and she clears the jump easily. But she just can't remember to land on one foot."

"Yes, that's a point, certainly," said Warwick.

Clara frowned a little. A point! To Clara, it was one of the first faults which had to be corrected.

"But a point that might lose us the race," she said. "Won't you show her how?"

"Well," he said—"well, one must develop a natural style, you know. I

believe in letting these things work themselves out. Do it all over again, girls, and try to do better, Gwen."

Clara frowned, and so did Babs. Babs' knowledge of how the thing should be done was by no means as great as Clara's, but she was wise enough to know that a fault did not have the happy knack of righting itself, and a keen coach's first job should have been to demonstrate how to put the fault right. Again the practice was done, and again, breathless and panting, they came back to Warwick. He nodded.

"Fine!" he said again.

"But it isn't fine!" Clara protested. "It— Oh, dash it! Until Gwen learns to take off and recover properly she'll always be half a pace behind. You ought to know, seeing that you broke the record in the Olympic Games."

"Hum!" he said, a little uncertainly, though Gwen frowned at Clara.

Clara, when discussing points in sport, was very apt to forget the respect due to an elder.

"Oh, she'll be all right!" Warwick said easily. "She'll grow out of it. And I'll give her some extra tuition a bit later. Now, what about some flat racing. I'd like to see you doing your stuff on the flat."

Clara, rather impatiently, turned away—perhaps to hide her disappointment. Champion he was, but his methods were utterly different from her own, and things which stood out a mile and simply shrieked to every one of her sporting instincts were apparently to be utterly disregarded by this chap. Still, he was in charge.

"Well, what shall we do—the twenty yards?" she asked.

"That's it, I reckon," he agreed. "I'll give the off."

Clara called her runners together. This time she stood by the coach's side and watched. He gave them the off, and away they went. Girls always reserved themselves as they neared the bend of the course, and finished with a really magnificent burst. But he frowned at that.

"Too slow at the start," he said. "Needs a bit more pep at the take off. Do it again."

"But don't you think?" Clara objected, "that the best idea is to save energy for the final sprint?"

He looked at her.

"Well, quite," he agreed smoothly; "but, nevertheless, they seemed a bit slow getting away. Let's have it again."

They did it again—and again. Then, contrary to Clara's planning, he had the bar erected for the jump. The jumpers were practically the same team which had just finished on the flat; but, in spite of their own exhaustion, he put them at the new exercise without even giving them a rest. Apart from that, he adjusted the bar at the three-feet-six mark—much too high, in Clara's opinion, for a starting jump.

She objected.

"Oh!" he said, and gave her a queer look. "Yes, of course. Drop it, then, to three feet."

Clara had it dropped.

It struck her that, however good the fellow might be in action, he hardly knew what he was doing as an instructor. In fact, he didn't seem to be troubling himself at all.

Then while she frowningly watched with Babs and Mabs the efforts of the jumpers, a voice spoke at her elbow.

"Well, well!" it said. "'Tis a small world, what? Fancy meeting you again!"

"Eh?" Clara said, and blinked at Jemima Carstairs—Jemima of the sleek Eton crop, the immaculate clothes, and the inevitable eyeglass. Then she saw that Jemima was staring, not at her, but at Gwen Cook's cousin. He turned.

"Hallo!" he said. "Do I know you?" he asked easily.

"Not actually, what?" Jemima smiled blandly. "But yesterday morning, perhaps, you'll remember being on the London-Lanham train?"

"Well, yes," he said, and regarded her again more keenly.

"Nothing. But I was on that, too, you know," Jemima said. "I spotted you, never guessing, of course, that you were the famous old cousin of our one and only Gwen. Have an interesting journey?" she inquired.

"Oh, very, thanks!" he added, still, staring.

"Didn't change, or anything?" Jemima murmured vaguely.

"Change? No, of course not. The train was a through train."

"Ah, yes—so it was!" Jemima said. But she had that decidedly blank look in her eyes, and began to polish her monocle so vigorously that Babs, who knew that Jemima wasn't the fool she appeared to be, realised at once that that keen mind of hers was furiously at work. "Nice journey, what?" Jemima burbled. "Such frightfully interesting scenery, and all that sort of thing. Did you have a carriage to yourself?"

"No," he said. "I shared it with three other people."

"Oh!" Jemima said. "Still, it was a nice journey, wasn't it?"

"Very," he agreed shortly; and Jemima smiled gently. But when she moved away, Clara and Babs followed her. They stopped her.

"Jimmy—" Babs said. "Jimmy, you old mystery-bag—"

Clara said. "What cheer!" the monocled Fourth Former said absently.

"What do you mean by making all those footing remarks?" Babs inquired.

"Footing? Footling?" Jemima polished her eyeglass. "Footling, were they?" she said. "Ah! But there was a deep, deadly, and grimly earnest significance behind each one. Don't like the new coach, what? Do you, Clara, old Spartan?"

"No, I don't," Clara said bluntly. "Still, what do you know about him?"

"Nothing," Jemima said. "Just nothing. At the same time," she added, giving a thoughtful swing to her monocle cord, "if I were you, I'd keep an eye on him. I have a distinct hunch that he is not an egg of the new-laid variety."

An Absurd Lie!



"SAY, snap out of it, old doldrums!" Leila Carroll urged. "I guess you haven't grunted more than a word all through tea. What's on the old mind, Clara?"

"I'm worried," Clara said.

"About what?" demanded the American junior.

"Gwen."

"Oh!" said Leila, and glanced at Babs, Mabs, Bessie, and Marjorie Hazeldene, who was Clara's especial chum. The little party was gathered for tea in Study No. 4.

"You mean, rather, you're worried

about her cousin, Arthur Warwick?" Babs gently amended.

Grunt from Clara.

"And what Jimmy said?" Babs pressed.

Another grunt from Clara.

"Communicative, I guess," Leila Carroll dryly opined.

Clara shrugged. When Clara was worried she was rather inclined to be irritable, and as captain of the junior team, which would be challenging Whitechester in the great sports day shortly, her responsibilities were sitting heavily upon her shoulders. With the prospect of being helped out of training difficulties by such an expert as Arthur Warwick, Clara, this morning, had been utterly light-hearted.

But there was no doubt about it—apart from the immediate dislike she had formed for the man—Arthur Warwick was more of a hindrance than a help. It seemed to Clara that he just wasn't trying to help.

But Gwen Cook, her affection for him unquestioned, was dazzled. So were a good many other girls at Cliff House.

About what Jemima Carstairs had said, Clara was not worrying much. Jemima said such odd things that Clara's direct brain had long ago given up trying to wrestle with the vaguely dark hints which underlay Jemima's inane remarks. Clara believed in facing facts and grappling with facts. But this certainly was a teaser.

"I wish to goodness he'd never come!" she burst out now.

"Oh, but he's nice, you know!" simpered plump Bessie. "Pass the salt, Clara, old thing!"

"He may be nice, but he's no coach!" Clara exclaimed. "I think Arthur Warwick's coaching is rotten! Either he's no good as a coach or he's not putting his mind to the job!"

"Ahem! Clara—" Babs said hastily.

"Well, Babs, you said yourself—"

"Oh, my hat! Clara—" Babs gabbled.

"Well, don't you think—?" And then Clara, seeing the wild signalling of Babs' eyes, turned. And she jumped.

Standing in the doorway, very pale, was Gwen Cook.

Clara turned red.

"Oh!" she said.

"Thanks!" Gwen said. Her lips were quivering a little. "I heard that, Clara, and if that's the way you talk about my cousin behind his back—"

"Gwen, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to—"

"Yes, you did!" Gwen's eyes flamed. "If you didn't mean it you wouldn't have said it," she said. "You've just taken a silly dislike to Arthur!"

Clara bit her lip.

"And I think you're mean," Gwen went on. "Beastly and mean! Naturally," she said scornfully, "he doesn't use your silly schoolgirl methods. He's a champion, not a schoolgirl, and he's got Australian ideas of racing, not English. And that's how you treat him—criticise him when he's doing his best; talk behind his back—"

"Oh, my hat!" Babs cried. "Gwen, old thing—"

"You don't deserve his help!" Gwen panted.

"Well, I don't jolly well want it!" Clara retorted, her own temper rising then.

"Then why not tell him so?"

"I will!"

"Clara—Gwen—both of you—please," Babs said, "don't be chumps!"

"Well, she shouldn't have said—"
Gwen blazed.

"And you shouldn't have said—"
Clara retorted.

"I—"
"Please!" Babs interrupted. "For goodness' sake be sensible!"

But Gwen, with a glare, moved towards the door.

"I didn't come here for a row," she said bitterly. "I came to go to Courtfield with you as we arranged this morning. Still, it doesn't matter—now!"

"But, Gwen, we want you to come!" cried Marjorie Hazeldene.

"And I," Gwen bit back, "don't want to come."

And to those words she stepped quickly back, slammed the door, and left them all staring at each other in consternation.

"Phew! High horse, what?" Leila said. "I reckon you've put the old foot in it properly this time, Clara."

Clara, red-eared, grunted. She was shaken herself by the violence of the quarrel.

Anyway, there it was, and no amount of repentance now would remedy the fact. It was in an atmosphere of decidedly unhappy constraint that tea finished.

Poor, silly old Gwen! Hot-headed, bull-at-a-gate Clara!

Tea, at last, was over. With Mabs and Clara, Babs got ready to go out. Bessie, who was helping Miss Plummy in domestic science tasks, was not in their party, and Marjorie, who had some repairs to do, also remained behind.

The trip was not urgent, and if Mabs had been less of a fidget where her amateur dramatics were concerned, wouldn't have been necessary at all.

But Mabs was shortly putting on a new school play, and a rather unusual accessory in the shape of an old-time music box was required as one of the main props. It was the sort of thing, as Mabs observed, which one might find in the first five minutes of a hunt, or might spend weeks in getting hold of.

At the gate they caught the bus, and in twenty minutes they had arrived in

Courtfield. At Mabs' suggestion they decided to try Solomon's, in the high road—Mr. Solomon, with his miscellaneous assortment of old curios and old junk, being the most likely man to have what they required. And, as it happened, they were dead in luck. For when they entered Mr. Solomon's shop and Mr. Solomon was made aware of their requirement, he beamed all over his face.

"Yes, I have it," he cried, "but it is very old and very heavy. If you like it, I will hire it to you for five shillings the week. Come this way."

He swept aside the reed curtain which overhung a door leading to an adjoining room. On a table in front of the door was a music box—one of the old German type.

"See, I show you how it goes," Mr. Solomon said delightedly, winding a handle, and clear, sweet, and bell-like the old-fashioned instrument began to play a simple old tune.

"Oh, ripping!" Mabs said. "Just the thing. My hat, we're in luck! Yes, rather, we'll hire it, Mr. Solomon, and we'll hire it for the whole week. The question now is—Hullo!" Mabs cried with a sudden blink.

"Hullo!" Babs breathed simultaneously.

For they had both happened to look up at the same moment.

And, in looking up, they found themselves staring through the reeds of the curtain. The view afforded was of the shop window, which contained its usual weird and wonderful assortment of odds and ends. Peering through the window from the street was a man.

Arthur Warwick.
"What does he want?" Clara muttered.

"Ah, he is a customer," Mr. Solomon happily murmured. "Scuse, ladies! He is coming in."

That was true. As Mr. Solomon sped out, Arthur Warwick stepped into the shop. They saw the friendly nod he gave; they smiled a little as Mr. Solomon rubbed his hands in a manner which showed his keen anticipation of business. Warwick nodded towards the window.

"The necklace you've got there—marked New Zealand," he said.

"That's native, isn't it?"
"Oh, yes!" Mr. Solomon said.

"Very good native, too, mister. It belonged to a chief named Bim-Bam."

"Oh!" Warwick said interestedly.

"It is made of obsidian," Mr. Solomon went on. "Obsidian is a volcanic glass. Will you have a look at it, please?"

The chums looked at each other, a question in their eyes. They were all suddenly remembering the necklace Arthur Warwick had promised to bring for his Cousin Gwen. Funny, was the instant thought which crossed their minds, that he should be inquiring about this.

Mr. Solomon fished it from the window. They all had a clear glimpse of it as he handed it over the counter. They had more than a glimpse as Arthur Warwick thoughtfully handled and examined it. Then he nodded.

"How much? Ten shillings?"
"It is marked twelve and sixpence," Mr. Solomon demurred protestingly.

"Ten bob," Warwick said. "It's not worth any more. A deal?"

Mr. Solomon shrugged in a way which showed that he was contented to have closed the deal at such a figure.

"I am robbing myself," he complained, "but let it go. You have a bargain, sir."

Warwick grinned. He slipped the necklace into his pocket. Mr. Solomon came back into the room chuckling and looking very pleased with himself.

"Nice man," he said. "Now, Miss Lynn, if you will tell me when you would like the musical box delivered—"

In the interest of that discussion Arthur Warwick was soon forgotten. They were all happy when at last they left the smiling Mr. Solomon and marched off down the road.

Having anticipated a greater difficulty in discovering the object of their search, they had time on their hands, and seeing that there was a summer dress sale in progress at Hollands' famous stores, thither they made their way. A very pleasant and exciting



"I THINK Arthur Warwick's coaching is rotten!" Clara bluntly told the rest of the chums. "Ahem! Clara—"
Babs said hastily, for she had seen Gwen Cook standing in the doorway, and Gwen was staring at Clara in pale-faced anger.

half an hour they spent there—and a rather exhausting one, too. Coming out, Babs fanned herself.

"Plew! What about a cup of tea?"
"All for't," Clara chirped cheerfully. "Let's pop across to the Anglo-American, shall us?"

Towards the Anglo-American they plunged, only to pull up short as they reached the other side of the road. For there, arm-in-arm, the girl smiling happily into the man's face, were strolling two people—Gwen herself, and her cousin, Arthur Warwick!

Clara, her face suddenly embarrassed and overshadowed, drew back. But it was too late then. Gwen had seen them, and Gwen, obviously pleased, proud, and happy to be with her good-looking cousin, cheerily hailed them. The chums stopped as the man and the girl walked up.

"Oh, I say!" Gwen said, beaming. "Isn't it fun meeting you?" She looked at Clara, just for an instant frowned, and then smiled again in a way which immediately proclaimed that she was willing at once to forget any tension there had been between them. "We're just popping in to the Anglo-American for a snack," she chattered on. "Aren't we, Arthur?"

"Yes, rather!" that young man said, and grinned. "Be nice if you'd join us," he said heartily.

"Well, thanks," Babs said, and gave Clara a nudge to jerk her out of the awkwardness she must be feeling. "We'd love it—wouldn't we, Clara?"
"Eh? Oh, yes! Yes, yes!" Clara said, hating the idea really, but determined, whatever happened, that it should not be she to persist in a quarrel which Gwen seemed so ready to forget.

They went in, Clara with some reluctance. At a table they seated themselves, and Arthur Warwick gallantly stepped to help Gwen off with the light summer coat which she was wearing. As it came off, the chums started a little, recognising with a sort of odd little thrill the black necklace which Gwen was wearing. Gwen noticed their stares, and laughed.

"How do you like it?" she asked. "Arthur bought me that—all the way from Australia. It's obsidian, isn't it, Arthur?"

"That's it," Warwick nodded. "Volcanic glass."

"And it belonged to a chief named Bim-Bam," Gwen went on. "Didn't it, Arthur?"

"That's right," the man agreed. "What sort of tea, girls—Indian or China?"

"Oh, Indian, please!" Babs said.

"And there's ever such an interesting story attached to it," Gwen went on, "isn't there, Arthur? Arthur, you tell them."

The chums glanced at him oddly—glanced at him, too, with a certain sense of wonder that he could so deceive his cousin.

If only he knew that, an hour ago, they had seen him buying that necklace at Solomon's shop!

"Mr. Warwick, please!" Mabs begged curiously.

"Well—" Arthur Warwick flushed a little. "Oh, it was nothing. I—I saved the life of Bim-Bam's daughter, that's all, by plunging into a hot spring after she slipped into it. It was Bim-Bam who gave me the necklace in token of gratitude."

"My hat!" cried Clara.

"I beg your pardon!"

"I—I—oh, nothing!" Clara said, but inwardly seethed. What a cad the man was!

"Wasn't he brave?" Gwen cried.

"Fancy, you know! Those hot springs. We've never seen a hot spring," she added to her cousin, "but our geography mistress has told us all about them. Why, you might have scalded yourself to death!"

Warwick laughed. "I might," he said. "As a matter of fact, I was covered with burns for weeks afterwards!"

"Oh, Arthur! And—and did you go to hospital?"

"Well, yes; I had three weeks in there."

"But you never mentioned it in your letters."

"Well," Warwick said, and coughed in a way which suggested he was too modest to mention a fact which would have meant lauding his own courage, "I—I didn't want to worry you. Clara, my dear," he added, in concern, "what is the matter?"

For Clara was quivering now—quivering with disgust. Lies! Lies! And such utterly unnecessary and barefaced lies! She knew, if she sat and listened to it much longer, that she would blurt out the truth.

"I—I—" she said. "Oh goodness! I—I think I—I'll go!" she stammered.

"Go?" Gwen cried.

"Yes. Babs, meet you after," Clara said hurriedly. "I—I've just remembered something." And, with a suggestion of one who is fighting for air, she pushed back her chair and went off.

"Pretty sudden, wasn't it?" Warwick asked. "Gwen, what's the matter with her?"

"Nothing," Gwen said, rather shortly.

"Per—perhaps," Babs awkwardly stammered, "she's feeling the heat?"

"Perhaps," Gwen said.

But she knew—or thought she knew—why Clara had made that abrupt departure. Clara, hating her cousin, simply could not control her rotten feelings while sitting at the same table with him. Sulky, hateful Clara!

"I—I hope I didn't say anything to offend her," Warwick said worriedly. "Barbara, did I?"

It was Babs' turn to flush then. She looked at Mabs, who bit her lip. They knew very well why Clara had left, and if they silently applauded her action, they also felt a little nettled that Clara had left them to face the uncomfortable unpleasantness of the atmosphere which she had left behind her. She tried to laugh.

"Oh, you mustn't mind Clara!" she said. "She's always doing extraordinary things. Shall I pour out," she added hastily, "or will you, Gwen?"

"Thanks, I will," Gwen said shortly.

Not at all a pleasant little meal was that. Gwen was annoyed, and Mabs and Babs felt uncomfortable.

Why on earth had Arthur Warwick told such clumsy lies? If he had forgotten Gwen's necklace, and had bought this one, even intending to deceive her into believing it was the original, there was no need to tell such awful lies about it.

To the relief of all the meal was over at last, though somewhat surprisingly Warwick lingered at the counter going out, and purchased a whole bagful of food, and so far from having it delivered, insisted on taking it with him. Then, rather abruptly, once they were outside he bade them good-bye, and, hailing a taxi, stepped into it.

"Arthur's upset," Gwen said. "Oh, no!?" Babs comforted. "Why should he be?"

"Well, wouldn't you?" Gwen faced her. "Do you think his hide is so thick that he couldn't just see that Clara was bursting to have a row with him?"

"But, Gwen, I'm sure—" Mabs said.

"And I'm sure," Gwen said bitterly. "Oh, it's no good you taking her part! Clara doesn't like Arthur. She's never liked him from the moment she set eyes on him. Oh, Babs, why is it? I always thought Clara was so fair, and—and I—I do like her." Gwen added miserably. "Why can't she like Arthur?"

"Let's get this bus," Babs said hurriedly.

For she saw then that Gwen's next reaction would be one of tears. And how could she comfort Gwen when she shared Clara's distrust herself?

They caught the bus. In silence they rode back to Cliff House. At times the fires of anger burned up in Gwen's cheeks; at others she shook her head with a sort of miserable forlornness. Thoroughly uncomfortable, hardly knowing what to say or do, Babs and Mabs merely exchanged rueful glances.

The school at last was reached. Seeing then that it was near the time when gates were closed, the chums, with Gwen, went into the Common-room. Clara was there, and at the sight of Gwen she flushed a rather guilty crimson, and then uncertainly smiled. More because she felt compelled to make some remark than because she had anything to say, she said:

"Hallo, Gwen!"

Gwen gazed at her. The sight of Clara sent the roses of wrath flushing her cheeks again.

"Pretty shabby trick, wasn't it?" she choked.

Clara shifted uncomfortably.

"Now, Gwen—"

"Pretty mean and pretty beastly," Gwen said, "walking out on my cousin like that. Even if you were spoiling for a row, you might have had a little more self-control."

"Hallo," Lydia Crossendale said interestedly, "what's this?"

"Nothing," Babs said.

"Had a row?" Lydia sneered. The snob of the Fourth Form was always pleased to see trouble among Babs and her friends. "Squabbling, eh?"

"No," Clara said.

"Oh, no! She wouldn't stop and face me, and have a row and get it done with," Gwen said bitterly. "Clara, instead, just gets in a sulk and walks out. And just when my cousin invited her to tea!"

"Oh, I say, that's a bit thick!" murmured Rosa Rodworth.

"Oh stuff! Clara had a reason, surely?" Janet Jordan put in.

"Yes, she had. The reason is, she doesn't like him, and she doesn't jolly well mean to like him—just because he happens to be a champion athlete who knows what he's talking about, and his opinions are different from hers," Gwen bit out. "If that isn't the reason, what is?" she added challengingly.

Clara breathed deeply.

"You want to know?" she said.

"Of course I want to know!"

"Clara!" cried Babs warningly.

But Clara, her own temper in shreds now, was in no mood to heed warnings.

"All right, you've jolly well asked for it!" she said. "If you want to know, I had to walk out because your cousin was telling such awful whoppers! Yes, he was! He told a whopper this morning about not being on Raynes Hill yesterday. He told another this afternoon about that necklace he bought you."

"Clara, you dare—" quivered Gwen.

"Well, you asked for—"

"And you," Gwen said, her eyes suddenly blazing, "asked for this!" And she stepped forwards, smartly smacking Clara's face. "Now!" she cried.

Clara turned deathly white. She looked at Gwen, for a moment clenched her hands, then helplessly she dropped them to her side. And while silence reigned she walked to the door.

Gwen spun round. "Clara—Clara, I didn't mean it!" she cried. "Clara, come back—"

But the door closed and Clara had gone, and Gwen, staring after it, suddenly put her hands to her face and burst into tears.

The Champion Shows His Paces!



"CLARA, I'm sorry," Gwen Cook uttered those words in a hesitant voice the next morning.

The scene was the pavilion once more, and the time was after breakfast. As to-day was a full day holiday at Cliff House the team had all assembled here and were now awaiting the coming of Arthur Warwick before getting into action.

Gwen, very worried and ashamed-looking, came forward just as Clara, for the third time, popped out of the pavilion to look for Arthur Warwick. For Warwick, who had promised to turn up at half-past nine, was already half an hour late.

No doubt Gwen was sorry. Every expression on her face betrayed the fact. Clara had been angry yesterday, but now, in the understanding which had succeeded that anger and her very sincere liking for this girl, she felt a sudden stab of pity.

"O.K.," she said, and smiled. "Shall we forget all about it? You know, Gwen, I don't want to be at logger-heads with you like this, and—well, dash it, it isn't very good for the team spirit, is it? Let's say no more about it, shall we?"

"Oh, Clara, you mean that?" Gwen breathed.

"Of course."

"Then—then thanks," breathed Gwen. "I—I'm sorry," she said again.

"Right-ho," Clara laughed. "Well, what about getting on with something? Don't know what's happened to your cousin," she added. "Still, I'm not waiting any longer. We can tackle some of the less important things. What about the egg and spoon race? Egg and spooners forward."

"Yes, rather! Here I am, you know," Bessie Bunter beamed. "But I don't know why we want to race. It's obvious who's going to win."

"Says you!" Leila Carroll murmured.

"Eh? Well, of course I said it!" Bessie agreed. "Why shouldn't I say it? Really, Leila, I think you're potty sometimes, the way you say things! I say, are we using real eggs?" she added.

"We are," Clara said. "Come on; fall into line now. Spoons forward."

There was a chuckle as the egg and spooners lined up. The crowd surged round. They certainly were an odd collection—plump, bespectacled Bessie, the owlish Terraine Twins, the tall Eleanor Storke, the grave faced Sylvia Sirrett, and lastly little Marcelle Biquet, the French junior.

"Right. Get ready," Clara said. "Eggs in spoons. Bessie, you duffer, you've smashed yours! Oh, my hat! Give her another egg, Mabs." Mabs gave Bessie another egg. Then, from Priscilla Terraine, came a nervous cough.

"Oh dear! I've dropped mine in

Sylvia Sirrett's pocket. Sylvia, dear, I hope it's not broken."

But alas for anxious Priscilla, the egg was! A ripple of laughter went round as Sylvia, with a distasteful grimace, emptied her pocket of the sticky mess, then another egg was produced for her. "Ready! Go!" Clara cried at last.

The race started. But at once there was a disaster. Priscilla cannoned into Ermytrude and up shot her egg. Frantically Ermytrude clutched at it, but instead of catching it, sent it whizzing into Priscilla's face, where it burst. Priscilla almost wept.

"Oh dear! Look at me—"

"Look at her!" her sister cried.

"Thank You So Much," says

HILDA RICHARDS

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



JEAN DALZELL (Preston, Lancs).—So glad to hear from you, Jean, and to know you had such a lovely holiday. I wonder if you have your new pet yet? And what kind of bird will he be—a canary, or a budgerigar, or even a parrot? I'm quite sure you'll love him, whatever kind he is, anyway! Write again, won't you?

MARJORIE BARTROP (Victoria, Australia).—Delighted to hear from you again, my dear, and to know you're still enjoying my Cliff House stories. Yes, I think you must be rather like Clara, your own favourite, in appearance. Quite a number of girls have been temporarily Lower School Captain at one time or another. (One of the latest, of course, was Faith Ashton.) Patricia and our Editor send you their love.

MARY HILL (Bristol).—Many thanks for a charming little letter, Mary. I was so pleased to hear from you. I passed on your good wishes to Pat and our Editor, and they both ask me to send you their love. (Pat was particularly pleased to know you enjoy her pages so much each week.) Juno is keeping very well, thank you, and sends a pawshake to Smutty, as well as one to yourself.

JOYCE FITCH (New Barnet, Herts).—Here's the printed reply I promised you in my letter, my dear! Yes, I shall be featuring Mabs and Diana in future stories, you may be sure. Our Editor sends you his greetings, and hopes you will find time to write to him soon. And

"We are, we is!" shrieked Lydia Crossendale. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Then Marcelle dropped her egg, treading on it, and slipping on the turf, shooting the legs from under Eleanor Storke, and Bessie waddled home an easy first. A yell of laughter went up.

"O.K. That'll do for that," Clara grinned. "Now we'll have the three-legged race. Wonder where Arthur Warwick is?" she added, with a frown. "Will the chap never turn up?"

"Oh, of course he will," Gwen said swiftly.

"Dash it. After all, he's not being paid for the job," Freda Ferriers put

in. "You're always grouching. Get on with it."

Clara glared. Gwen looked at her, but rather quickly looked at the gates. Her face was a little anxious.

"Something must have happened to delay him," she said.

Clara grunted.

"What did you say?" Gwen asked.

"Oh, nothing," Clara said, "nothing. Gwen, you and I will be partners in this. Babs, tie our legs together—my right to Gwen's left. Now don't forget, Gwen, step off with your right."

"But shouldn't we step off with the tied legs?" Gwen asked.

"No."

Patricia was delighted when I passed on your compliments to her.

OLWEN BEDDIS (Newport, Mon).—It was lovely to hear from you once again, Olwen, and to know you are still a keen C.H. fan! I was glad, too, to hear you had such a lovely holiday. I'm sure you weren't too keen on having to start the new term at school again! But you can go for more long walks with your chums at week-ends, can't you?

SYLVIA HAYES (Cardiff, Wales).—Thank you for a very sweet little letter, and for telling me all about yourself. You would be in the Second Form if you went to Cliff House; Sylvia. There are fifteen mistresses at the school at present, including Miss Primrose, the Head. The oldest girl in the Fourth is Faith Ashton, who is 15 years and 2 months old. Yes, I shall be featuring Christine Wilmer again some time in the future.

"A BESSIE BUNTER FAN" (Bridgewater, Somerset).—I can see you live up to your pen-name, my dear! You'll be glad to know that Bessie is "starring" in a story next week. Thank you for your other story suggestions, which I shall most certainly keep in mind. I thought your little pencil-sketch of Bessie was excellent—I recognised her at once! By the way, you'd be in the Lower Third if you went to Cliff House.

"COLLEEN" (Co. Galway, Ireland).—I'm afraid I haven't sufficient space here to reply fully to your questions—much as I appreciate your keen interest in my stories! Do let me know your address next time you write—or, if you like, give me a Post Office box number—so that I can reply by post. I shall look forward to hearing from you again!

MARY GEDDES (London, Ontario, Canada).—I was delighted to have another charming little letter from you, my dear. I thought your poem was very good. Congratulations to you, Mary! Thank you for your story suggestions. I hope to be featuring at least some of the girls you mention in future stories. Patricia sends you her love.

"But Arthur was mentioning yesterday afternoon that it's the best way."

"Arthur isn't here," Clara said curtly.

"But—but he's coming," Gwen protested, just a little hurt.

"Is he? Then where the dickens is he?" Clara asked sharply. Model of punctuality herself, she was a little annoyed with the coach for being over half an hour late. "Never mind Arthur. Get on with the washing."

Once again Gwen began to feel those little needles of annoyance pricking within her. Why must Clara always speak so bluntly of her cousin?

But she said nothing, though she was

feeling more than a little hurt when she and Clara moved to the starting line. After all, Arthur did know more about sports than Clara.

And perhaps it was subconsciously paying obedience to the absent voice of her adored cousin that, when Babs gave the signal for "Off," she did put her tied leg forward. Clara, on the other hand, put the left leg forward and they came crashing down together.

From Lydia Crossendale went up a howl of laughter.

"My hat, there's a skipper for you!" she chortled. "What about coaching yourself a bit, Clara Trevlyn?"

Clara breathed fury.

"Rats!" she snapped. "Gwen, you chump, that was your fault. If you'd only stepped off with your free foot that wouldn't have happened!"

Gwen flushed a little.

"Well, I wasn't thinking," she said. "Anyway, Arthur said—"

"Oh, rats to Arthur!" Clara said crossly.

Gwen flushed again. In spite of the fact that she had made her peace with Clara, she felt her temper beginning to rise. She staggered to her feet and Clara, ruffled, moved back with her to the starting line. Then, all at once, Gwen gave a cry.

"Clara, no; wait a minute! Arthur's here!"

Clara looked round as Gwen, stooping, feverishly began to untie the hanky which bound their legs together. In a few seconds she was free, and ignoring Clara then, flew off towards the figure which at that moment was cycling up the drive.

Clara felt resentful. If Gwen was so jolly pleased to see her cousin, she had no right to bolt off in the middle of a practice. She picked up the handkerchief and sauntered across to Babs, Mabs, and Jemima Carstairs. Babs was staring at the newcomer, now approaching with Gwen hanging on his arm.

"I say, what's the matter with him? He's got a black eye and a graze on his cheek," Mabs said.

"Naughty, naughty! Been fighting," Jemima Carstairs chided, and stared through her monocle. "What cheer, Mr. Warwick, did you win?" she asked as he came up.

"Win?" He stared uncomprehendingly. "Oh, you mean this!" And with a laugh he touched his eye. "Sorry for turning up looking such a sight, but I had a spill on the old bicycle on my way here. Nothing serious," he added lightly. "Gwen, old dear, has my letter from Uncle Arnold arrived yet?"

"No," Gwen replied. "But, Arthur, you're sure that bruise doesn't hurt?"

"Not a scrap," he said. "Still, it's funny—about Uncle Arnold, I mean. You're sure, Gwen?"

"Positive!"

"Pretty anxious, what?" Jemima murmured.

"Anxious?" Babs looked at her. "Who is anxious about what?"

"Oh, nothing," Jemima murmured—"just nothing! Nice drop of morning for a spot of training," she observed to the coach. "Which reminds me, old champ, I have a question to ask. What was your time for the half-mile in the Olympic Games?"

He looked at her.

"Time—half-mile? Yes, of course," he said. "Oh, it was—was— Do you know, it's slipped my memory."

"Well, it was a minute and fifty seconds," Gwen said proudly. "Don't you remember writing and telling me about it?"

"Oh, yes, so I did!"

"And he won the mile on the same day, too," Gwen declared. "And beat the world record, didn't you, Arthur?"

He laughed.

"I'm afraid I've got to own to it—yes."

"Pretty hefty performance—what?" Jemima admiringly observed. "And what was your time for the mile, old gladiator?"

Babs glanced at Jemima queerly. It was unusual, to say the least, to find Jemima so eagerly athirst for sports knowledge.

"It was—" He paused, gave a little exclamation, and raised his hand to his eye. "Gwen, old dear, I wonder if I might go and bathe this?" he added.

"But your time—" Jemima persisted.

"Oh, never mind the time! Arthur, come on, and I'll attend to it for you," Gwen said.

And, taking his arm, she hurried him off. Babs blinked a little as she looked at Jemima.

"Tight corner—what?" that girl asked. "Our dear old friend doesn't seem to be much of an authority on his own figures, does he?"

"Well, anyway, let's do something!" Clara interrupted impatiently. "We're just wasting the giddy morning. Hallo, here's Gwen again!" she said. "Gwen, what have you done with your cousin?"

"Just left him in the cloak-room bathing his eye," Gwen said. "He'll be along in a minute or two."

Clara clucked her tongue. Clara was rapidly becoming fed-up. Her own inclination was to let Arthur Warwick go to pot and carry on without him, but, seeing that he was officially present now, it would have been discourteous to do so.

Five—ten minutes passed. No sign of Arthur Warwick. Girls drifted about, talking and chatting.

"Look here, I'm going to see what's happened to him," Clara said to Babs at last. "At this rate, we'll never get a thing done."

"I'll come with you," Babs volunteered.

They slipped away together. To the cloak-room they went. But when they arrived there was no sign of Arthur Warwick.

"Now where the dickens can he be?" Clara fumed.

"Try Gwen's study?" Babs suggested.

To Gwen's study they repaired, and, reaching the door, Clara flung it open. And then she paused.

Arthur Warwick was there. He was sitting in front of Gwen's desk, and before him was a pile of the letters which he had sent Gwen from Australia, and which Gwen always treasured. Near the letters was a book of sports records open at a certain page, and one of the letters was in his hands. He swung round with quite a jump as they came in.

"Well, my hat!" Clara cried. "I say, what do you think you're doing? What about the practice?"

He got to his feet in some confusion. "Er—er—I was just looking through my old letters," he said.

"But we're jolly well waiting for you," Clara said.

"Eh? Oh, yes, of course!" He swallowed. "I'm sorry, I—I became rather absorbed. I—I'll come down now."

"All right," Clara grunted; and as she went off down the corridor with Babs, she looked at her. "Now what do you make of that?"

"You mean, mugging up his own letters?" Babs asked.

"And the records," Clara said. "Funny—eh?"

Funny, it was. Decidedly funny. And Babs, in that moment, remembered how Jemima Carstairs had warned them against Warwick.

They reached the pavilion again, but this time Arthur Warwick was not more than a minute behind them. He laughed as he breezed among the group.

"Now work," he said briskly. "Sorry to have kept you waiting. Clara, what shall we do first?"

"Well, what about hurdling?" Clara asked.

"Hurdling it shall be," he agreed. "Hurdlers forward! Gwen, you're one of them, aren't you? This way, old dear, Clara, you're in the race, too, aren't you? You'd better take them over."

"But don't you think," Clara asked, "you ought to take them over yourself?"

"Oh, yes, please, Mr. Warwick!" Marjorie Hazeldene cried eagerly.

"Show us how you won the hundred and twenty yards," Mabs pressed.

The man paused.

"Well—"

"Oh, please!" went up a chorus.

"Yes, Arthur, do!" Gwen urged eagerly.

There was a clamour. Keen as most of them were to be coached by an Olympic champion, they were keener still to see that champion repeating his deeds for their benefit. Such a stir there was, indeed, that Arthur Warwick could hardly get out of it.

But Babs noticed he did not look too pleased as he stepped to the starting-line.

"Give me 'off,' Gwen," he said.

Gwen gave him off, and Cliff House watched as he ran forward. He reached the first hurdle, seemed to hesitate, and then swept over it, one foot scraping the top. Clara frowned.

"My hat, not much style about that!" she murmured.

"Oh, golly!" Babs cried. "He's knocked the second hurdle flat!"

There was amazement among the on-lookers, a restive movement which told of their disappointment. Everybody was critically watching; everybody ready and anxious to cheer; but, frankly, there was nothing to cheer. For a champion and a record-breaker, indeed, Arthur Warwick was putting up a very poor show.

Clara's face wore open contempt.

"Well, I think he's dud," she said bluntly; and Gwen, hearing that, turned with a crimson-faced start. "And if that's how he won the hurdles at the Olympic Games, I should jolly well think he had no competitors, that's all. Why, he's got no style whatever!"

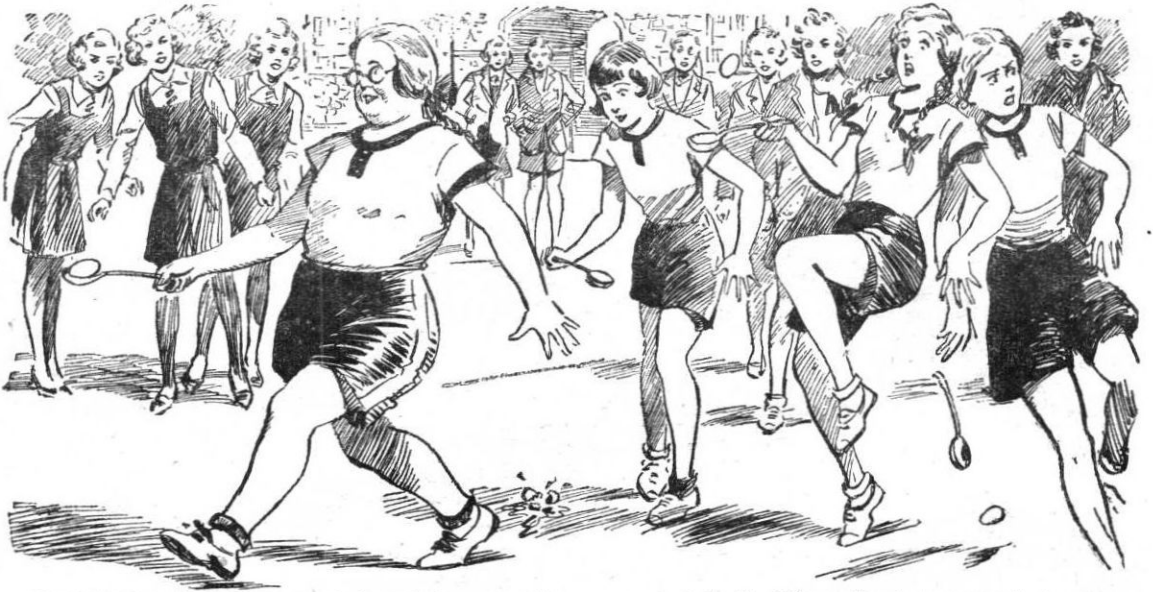
"Can you do better?" Gwen asked angrily. "I think it's jolly good," she said defiantly. "But, of course, nothing Arthur does could ever satisfy you, could it, Clara Trevlyn?"

"Gwen—" muttered Babs.

But Gwen, with a passionate shrug, had turned away again, and now, as Arthur Warwick leapt the last of the five hurdles, she was the only one to clap. Rather blown, he came up.

"Sorry," "Fraud that wasn't my best performance," he said ruefully. "I'm a bit off form at the moment. Lack of training, and not wearing my running togs, you know," he excused himself.

Only Gwen, stoutly loyal, believed in him; only she saw merit in the performance. But perhaps, to her private self, even Gwen was disappointed, and she jumped eagerly at the suggestion,



"READY! Go!" Clara cried, and the egg-and-spooners started off. Minor disasters occurred at once, and if this practice race was any indication of what the real thing would be like, then fun galore was a certainty!

mooted some time later, that the afternoon should be devoted to a hare-and-hounds chase across country. To Babs' surprise, though Babs did not know why she should be surprised, Warwick himself jumped eagerly at the suggestion.

"And I," he decided, "will be the hare. Give me five minutes start."

"But we usually have two hares," Clara objected.

"Do you? Well, we'll just have one this time!" He laughed. "I've a fancy for a good long run again, and once I get started no other hare could keep up with me. I bet you won't see me until the end of the race!"

Gwen glowed. Clara, however, who hated anything in the nature of swank, sniffed a little.

"Then that's on," she said.
And "on" the paper chase was.

"Right, fair sweetheart, right!" Jemima nodded seriously. "One must limber up—what? Keep the old muscles and arteries, and so forth, in fighting order. See you later!"

"But, Jimmy, you cuckoo, where are you going?" Babs demanded.

"Oh, just running," Jemima answered vaguely. "So long!"

She smiled and waved her hand. Then, at the same steady jog-trot, she swung towards the gates. Babs gurgled.

"Well, my hat! Fancy old Jimmy taking to sport! Wonders will never cease! Hallo, here comes Warwick!" she added.

Warwick it was. He came swinging in at the gates as Jemima trotted out of them. Very fit and very fresh he looked in his running kit, and Gwen's eyes glowed again at sight of him. He laughed good-humouredly as he came up.

"All ready?" he asked. "Got the paper bag?" he added, and as a bulky haversack was handed to him he slipped it over his shoulders. "Five minutes start, mind—and then you don't see my heels for dust! Meet back here, eh?"

"If we don't catch you first," Clara said.

"Oh, don't worry, you won't," he said, with cheery confidence. "Let's get going."

They got going, the starting point being the gates. Quite a crowd was gathered to see the start of the paper chase, and Dulcia Fairbrother, captain of the school, was acting as starter and timekeeper. Watch in hand, she sent the hare away, and they all stared after him as, at a smart trot, he swung away up the road, to disappear into Friardale Woods.

Two, three, four minutes went by. Dulcia looked at the eager hounds.

"Get ready!" she said.

They tensed.

"Go!"

And off they went, falling into an easy trot, long-legged Jean going ahead as pacemaker, the rest bunched behind her. At the spot where the coach had disappeared they entered the woods, and there, easily finding the trail of paper, plunged into the trees.

"Bet we see him before he's gone a mile," Clara said.

"Bet you don't," Gwen retorted.

"All right, we'll see."

They swung on through the woods. Warwick, apparently, had kept to the footpath, for the trail ran along it, heading for Friardale Ridge. Clara smiled a little grimly as the end of the wood came in sight. She had no doubt, when they reached the open fields, that the hare would be in full view.

But he wasn't.

Now the trail ran up to the ridge. A little puffed, they toiled after it. On top of the ridge, Clara stared round again and blinked, for there was still no sign of Arthur Warwick, though the paper trail made it obvious he had passed this way. The fellow certainly must have put on speed to get ahead so easily.

Now the trail led across the railway; from there to the factory on the arterial road.

Now they reached Whitechester railway station, and, in the shade near by, paused for a first and much needed breather. Babs puffed.

"I say, it looks as if he's going to do it," she said.

"He will!" Gwen gleed. "Don't forget you're chasing one of the fastest men in the world!"

They started off again, keeping a keen eye on the lookout. Again the trail led on to a footpath, from there half a mile along a by-road, and from there on to another footpath, which ran through an old chalk quarry. Here they met with considerable difficulty, for recent rain had churned up the slippery surface of the chalky ground, and twice Babs stumbled, and Jean once went flat on her face. By the time they had got through it they were all bespattered.

Still no sight of the hare.

In Faith's Farm Orchard they stopped for another breather, rather overcome now. It seemed that Warwick was going to be as good as his word. Then on again, passing the aerodrome, and from there on to the made-up by-road, which ran back to South Copse. They had been running over an hour now.

Jemima Explains a Mystery!



"MY hat, look!"
"Jemima!"
"In running togs!"

Babs, Mabs, Clara, Jean Cartwright, Leila Carroll, Gwen Cook, Joan Charmant, Janet Jordan, and Christine Wilmer, who were to form the pack of hounds, stared in surprise.

It was afternoon, and, all ready for the paper chase, they were outside the pavilion, awaiting the arrival of Arthur Warwick, who had gone down to Friardale for lunch. They all blinked at the figure which now came trotting out of the school.

Jemima Carstairs it was—and Jemima in very neat and natty running kit, eyeglass swinging at the end of its cord, making a steady jog-trot as she came along. They all stared.

For Jemima, who affected to view all sport with a shudder and shrank from all forms of physical exercise, had never been known to adopt running kit, except on compulsory occasions. Certainly, it was astonishing to see her like this.

"What cheer?" she beamed, as she trotted up.

"Jimmy, you're going running?" Babs cried.

They were all hot and tired when at last they found themselves back on the same footpath in Friardale Woods which they had first taken. Desperately now they put on a spurt.

"Oh, my hat, he can't be far ahead!" Clara gasped. "Come on!"

They raced. But they might as well have saved their energy. There was no sign of Arthur Warwick in the wood and no sign of him in the road. A sort of wondering admiration filled Clara for the hare who had not only managed to elude them, but who had completely kept out of sight throughout the chase. Then, at long and weary last, they came within sight of the gates.

And there they almost fell down. A laughing, cheering crowd was outside those gates, and among them, smoking a cigarette, and looking, in fact, just as if he had stepped out of the school, was Arthur Warwick himself. He smiled genially as they puffed up.

"Good run, eh?" he said.
"Arthur, you wonder!" shrieked Gwen. "How long have you been back?"

"I don't know. How long, Miss Fairbrother?"

"Fourteen minutes," Dulcia smiled, "and looking just as fresh as paint when he came trotting out of the woods."

In astonishment they stared at him. Hard and energetically as they had run, the man had just left them standing.

"Tough luck!" he said, laughing. "But I told you you wouldn't see me. What price the bet now, Clara?"

"Well, my hat!" Clara breathed.
"Isn't he a champion?" Gwen crowed.

Clara had to admit that he was "Now what about a ginger-beer, or something?" he suggested. "You look as if you could do with one."

They all felt as if they could do with one, though to be sure amazement was still the pre-eminent sensation of each of them. After him they repaired to the tuckshop, and Gwen, drawing near Clara, touched her arm.
"Well?" she said.

"Gwen, I'm sorry," Clara said honestly. "I didn't think he'd make it."

"And you like him better for it, old thing?" Gwen asked, with just a trace of wistfulness in her tone.

Clara flushed.
"Well, I—I—oh, come on, let's have the ginger-pop!" she said.

They had the ginger-pop. After the refreshment they all made their way back into the school for a change.

They felt better then, though conscious of a certain stiffness, and still rather dry. Thus at Babs' suggestion she, Clara, and Mabs trotted down to the tuckshop again. It was when they were indulging in a second refresher there that Jemima Carstairs, still in running kit, came in.

"What cheer!" she said. "Nice sweltering afternoon for a run—what? Hear you didn't catch the old hare?"
"No!" grunted Clara.

"Thou soundest cross, old Spartan."
"Well, I'm not cross," Clara said. "I'm still trying to figure it all out. I suppose I'm a suspicious old meany, but I've got a funny sort of feeling somehow that we've been swindled!"

"Blessed are the inspiration of hunches!" Jemima said gravely. "How true 'tis, fair Clara, that instinct sometimes serves us better than our eyes. I, too, have a feeling you've been swindled!"

Babs looked at her sharply.
"Jimmy, what do you mean?"

"I mean," Jemima said gently, "there are other ways of casting merry old litter about the fair countryside than by doing it on foot. During my own athletic peregrinations this afternoon, my ancient eyes have beheld wonders, fair beloveds. I even," Jemima added impressively, "saw a hare on a bicycle. Now what do you think of that?"

For a moment they stared, not understanding. Then, as the significance of that last remark smote her, Babs jumped.

"Jimmy, you mean that—that Warwick ran the race on a bicycle?"
"What else?" Jemima murmured. "Easy to have a bike concealed in the woods, methinks."

"Then—then— Oh, my hat, no wonder he kept to the roads and footpaths!" Babs said. "No wonder he showed hardly any trace of the chalk."

Clara's face turned brick red.

"My hat, where is he?"

"In Gwen's study, old thing."

"Then," Clara vowed, "I'm jolly well going to tackle him—the swindler!"

She put down her glass. But Jemima caught her by the arm.

"Whoa, whoa! Stay the old impetuous footstep!" she counselled.

"Caution and clear thinking, old Spartan. Listen to the wisdom of Uncle Jimmy—and don't spoil things!" she added sharply.

They paused.

"Spoil things—"

"Spoil!" Jemima repeated firmly.

"Don't ask me what things, because I don't know," she added. "But, like you, Clara beloved, I have a distinct hunch that things are not what they seem. This morning," Jemima went on, "friend Warwick put up a pretty poor show on the hurdles, didn't he?"

"Rotten!" agreed Clara heartily.

"And when the suggestion of the paper chase was made, he jumped at it, didn't he?" Jemima asked.

"Well?"

"Well, why? The man, obviously, felt himself out of his class in the hurdles. Having a merry reputation and so forth to keep up, he had to do something pretty spectacular, and thus the paper chase. Before lunch he hid his cycle in the woods. Having got the start he ambled off, and hiding the old bike on his return, was thus, most cleverly, able to beat you toiling wanderers all ends up. Plotted and planned that was, me hearties!"

Clara clenched her hands. Babs and Mabs were crimson with indignation, but they were also curious to know more.

"And I, in my innocent athletic rambblings, saw these things," Jemima wound up, "and seeing them, I am now thinking mightily. I am thinking, fair comrades, what is this bad lad's little game? At the same time, we must remember he is Gwen's cousin. Gwen's fond of him; Gwen believes in him. If you accused him now of faking the paper chase he would only deny it, and dear old Gwen would break her tender heart. Observe?"

Clara observed all right, and appreciated the sentiment. But she frowned.

"Well, the fellow ought to be shown up!" she objected.

"Carried!" Jemima agreed. "But shown up for what? There's the core of the apple, old pippin. Deep thinking tells me that the old Warwick wallaby isn't doing all this for fun—or just to deceive Gwen. Wait, watch, and in the meantime, old Spartans, don't spoil the game—my game—this time. And that game," Jemima said

softly, "is to find out what Mr. Warwick's game is. Any help in that direction would be greatly appreciated!"

No Apologies!



"HIST!" Clara Trevelyn said suddenly. "And tell me if you see what I see!"

It was after tea that same day, and Clara, Babs, and Mabs were taking a stroll in Friardale Wood. Not, to be sure, because they still needed exercise, but because they wanted the privacy of those woods to discuss the rather amazing things which Jemima had told them. They had no doubt now that Arthur Warwick was at Cliff House for some underhand purpose.

And it was strange, discussing Arthur Warwick, they should suddenly see Arthur Warwick through the trees. He, with a bulky paper carrier clutched in his hand, was sneaking rather furtively in the direction of the old ranger's cottage.

There was something so stealthy in his movements that they would all have paused to watch if he had been a perfect stranger.

"Did—did he see us?" whispered Mabs.

"I don't think so—but stand still," Babs said. She watched as the man disappeared behind a clump of trees. "Anyway, come on! If there's a chance of finding out his little game, this is it!"

They all nodded.

Cautiously they pushed forward. Now, reaching the clump of bushes, they came within sight of the ranger's cottage, a solidly built old structure with all windows boarded up and used only occasionally for storing the poles and brushwood which the workmen cut every spring for gardening purposes. Rather to their surprise, there was no sign of Arthur Warwick, but Babs, with a quick thrill, noticed that the door of the woodman's cottage was wide open.

"He's in there!" she tensely whispered.

"Come on!" Clara muttered.

They went on, hardly breathing now. They reached the door. Hesitatingly they stood for a moment, straining their ears. But there was no sound from inside the cottage. At last Babs, plucking up courage, stepped forward, peering into the dusty interior.

"No sign of him," she breathed.

"But he must be here."

"Look in the next room," Clara advised.

But Babs, softly, had stepped in. Mabs and Clara followed her. For a moment they stood looking about them in the dusty semi-darkness. Then—
"Clara, look out!" shrieked Babs.

But too late. For even as Clara wheeled towards the door, she saw, for a moment, the figure there—Warwick's figure, it was. Then crash! The door had slammed.

There came the sound of the bar being dropped in its sockets. They glowered angrily.

"The—the rotter," Babs said. "He must have spotted us and bluffed us in here, hiding outside until we were in. What fools!"

Fools, perhaps, they were, but it was rather late to think of that now. The fact was that they were prisoners, the only means of going in or out of the place, the stout door, now so firmly closed against them.

"Charge the door," said Clara grimly.

They charged the door, hurling their shoulders against it. Firm it stood, just mocking their efforts. Panting and bruised they at last gave it up.

"Well, we've got to do something," Mabs said. "It will jolly soon be call-over at Cliff House. Let's try shouting!"

They shouted—and again. Nothing happened.

"Looks," Babs opined, "as if we're here for the night. Oh, my hat, wait till I see that rotter—hallo!" she cried suddenly, for her sharp ears had detected a step outside. "Help!"

"Help!" Clara and Mabs cried. "We're locked in!"

"Great goodness!" a voice outside said, and they jumped. For the voice was that of Gwen Cook.

There came a rattle as the bar outside was lifted out of the sockets. Then Gwen's face, curious and a little bewildered, stared at them.

looked at each other. Babs, her face troubled, frowned.

"I say, I—I suppose we didn't make a mistake?" she asked uneasily.

"We jolly well didn't!" Clara said. "Anyway, come on."

They tramped off, in no hurry to catch up Gwen and so prolong this most unfortunate quarrel. In rather anxious, chastened silence they finally reached the closed gates of Cliff House School. Piper, the porter, frowned at them through the bars as he grumblingly opened them.

"Which it's my duty to report you!" he threatened.

"Well, get on with it," Clara said savagely.

And stormily she strode past the porter into the school. And then, nearing the Fourth Form Common-room, they stopped dead. For, coming down the corridor with Gwen was Arthur Warwick himself, a bandage over his eye.

"You?" Clara cried.

They had made no mistake, and they knew it. Moreover, they were the injured party, for apart from having been imprisoned, they would be reported for being late, with a possible detention to follow.

"Clara, are you going to apologise?" Gwen cried.

"No!" Clara said distinctly.

Gwen breathed hard.

"Then," she burst out, "I think you jolly well ought to be ashamed of yourself. From the first moment you saw Arthur you've been against him—oh, yes you have, and I don't care if he does know it! Instead of looking on him as the man who's trying to help us, you're treating him all along as if he were our worst enemy."

"Well, that's right," Lydia Crossendale nodded.

"And if—" Gwen said.

"No, please; hold on," Warwick said. "Don't let's row, for goodness' sake. Let Clara think it over. Perhaps



"ARTHUR, you wonder!" shrieked Gwen, as they trotted up. "How long have you been back?" "Fourteen minutes," Dulcia Fairbrother told them. In astonishment Clara, Babs, and the rest of the "hounds" stared at Arthur Warwick. He had beaten them all ends up, and looked as fresh as paint.

"My hat, how did you get in here?" "We were locked in," Babs said.

"But who locked you in?"

"Your rotten cousin!" Clara burst out.

"What?"

"Your rotten cousin!" Clara flamed. She was too utterly fed up and furious to think of restraining herself. "Oh, you needn't stare! It was him all right."

"It's a fib!" Gwen cried. "You're just making it up—yes, you are! I left Arthur at Cliff House!"

"You might have left him there, but he's not there now," Babs said. "Gwen, I'm sorry, but it is true."

Gwen turned upon her.

"You, too!" she cried bitterly. "I don't believe it—I can't believe it! You're all against him!"

"But, Gwen—" Mabs protested.

"I tell you," Gwen passionately declared, "I left Arthur at Cliff House. I got a special pass out to go and get some stuff for his eye, because it was hurting him. Somebody else played this trick on you, but you're all so dead set against Arthur that you just won't believe there is another rotter in the world. I'm almost sorry now," she said, "that I let you out! Good-bye!" And she went racing off. The chums

"Me." He smiled at her. "Why not?" he asked lightly.

"You rotter!" Clara flamed out.

"Here, I say, steady on—"

"Well, who shut us up in the ranger's hut?" Clara hooted.

"Well, who did?" Gwen cried. "Not Arthur! He's been here all the time, as I said he'd been here. And if," she cried triumphantly, "you want to prove that—because, of course, you wouldn't take my word or his, would you?—you can go and ask Miss Primrose. He's just come from Miss Primrose's study."

They blinked. Arthur Warwick nodded.

"That's so," he said. "Really, I do not think you ought to blame me for something I haven't done, you know. I've been in this school ever since the end of the paper chase."

"And I jolly well hope, now, you're going to apologise, Clara Trevlyn!" Gwen said.

"Well, that certainly would be the most pleasant ending to the mistake," Arthur Warwick smiled.

There was a murmur from the assembled onlookers, growing in numbers now. Red and embarrassed Clara & Co. were, yet firmly they stood their ground.

she'll change her mind then. In any case, we can't afford to row with the sports so near. If we're going to beat Whitechester, why, then, we've just got to pull together—I say, that's the postman, isn't it?" he added, his eyes lighting up as a figure appeared at the end of the passage. "Gwen, I wonder if he's got that letter from Uncle Arnold?"

"But, Arthur, this—"

"Oh, we'll see about that later," he said laughingly, "when Clara's had a think about it! I say, postman!" he cried, and rather eagerly tore himself away, leaving Clara, Babs, and Mabs facing a glowering crowd.

Gwen's chest was heaving then. "Well, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" she cried.

"Babs, come on!" Clara said.

But Gwen stood in her path.

"Wait a minute, you haven't answered my question," she said.

Clara set her teeth.

"Will you please get out of my way?"

"Not until you've answered. Here, you cat!" cried Gwen.

For Clara, patience utterly exhausted, had pushed Gwen back against the wall.

And while Gwen reeled back, she stormily strode off.



OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

PATRICIA is your very own friend, who writes to you each week. Her letters are cheery and gay, yet full of helpful ideas, too. She tells you about herself and her family—of things to do, things to make and things to talk about—all in that delightful and chummy way which has made her so popular with you all.

THERE'S great excitement in your Patricia's family—for at last we've made up our minds about this holiday question.

Mother has "written off" to a farm that's very close to the sea. So we're going to have a seaside and country holiday in one, after all!

This seems to please everyone.

As you know, this Patricia of yours insists on the sea, while small brother Heath (whose full name is Heatherington) demands 'a'mals.' He'll certainly get plenty of these on the farm.

Mother just asks for a restful time, with a bit of bathing and a bit of walking—on which she's very keen—while father demands golf and a spot of fishing.

So, you see, we're all being catered for. (I didn't mention big brother Brian. He can't get his holiday from the office at the time we're going away, after all. So he's going to the Lake District with some pals later in the year.)

● Busy Days

It's astonishing how busy mother and I have been preparing for this holiday, simple though it sounds.

All young Heath's sunbathing and beach clothes look as if they've been passed through steam for about six weeks—they're so small for him! So these have been packed up for our church jumble sale, and new ones have had to be made.

My own holiday clothes don't seem to have suffered much for their winter rest—probably because I always put them away so carefully, having a Scottish streak in me somewhere!

But I've had to do a lot of hem-turning-up, for dresses are so much shorter this year, aren't they?

I've been doing this to some of mother's dresses, too—generally when she's out, otherwise she'd start protesting, and say I was trying to make her look like a giddy young goat! But she'll like them when she tries them on, I know.

This shortening craze has even infected Olive, our one and only maid.

"Do you think my new costume's a bit on the long side Miss Pat?" she asked me the other morning.

"Well, it's a very nice costume," I said. "But I do think it would look even smarter if you took it up a little, Olive."

"Considering the skirt nearly covers her calf, I thought this was pretty tactful."

"It's my half-day to-day," she went on, "and I'm going home to my sister's—so I'll soon run it up on the machine."

On the machine!

I begged Olive not to do anything of the sort, telling her that it would quite spoil the "tailored look" of her costume.

Inside seams and so on can be stitched by machine, I explained to her. But the whole idea of dressmaking and tailoring is that a garment should look unstitched—

and that none should show through on the right side. (Except ornamental stitching, of course.)

"Hems, in particular, must be done by hand, using slipstitch, so that the stitches are almost invisible."

● Of Many Uses

Have you got a summer dress that fastens all the way down the front?

If you have, you're very lucky. For this type of dress is just the thing for wearing as a coat, as well as a dress, this summer on holiday.

You slip it on over your bathing suit first thing in the morning, button it up, and come down to breakfast. It's a dress.

For going around the town you can still wear it as a dress, undoing some of the buttons if you feel like it—or if you're staying at an unconventional seaside resort.

Then on the beach you undo all the buttons, and your dress becomes a smart beach coat.

What a lot of changing such a garment saves you!

● Garden Grumbles

I think I've told you before how my father likes to grumble, haven't I?

His latest grouse is that the garden will be at its very, very best while we're away.

So—he declares—everything will go to seed—small boys will break in and steal the flowers and the fruit. All the cats of the district will make a circus of our flower-beds—and so on.

We've therefore had to be very firm with him, and tell him that he'd grumble just as much if we planned a holiday for January.

And in any case, Herring, our gardener (with the name like a fishmonger) will be paying his usual visit once a week. So it isn't likely to grow into a sort of mixture between the African jungle and Sahara desert in a fortnight, now is it?

Anyhow, to cheer father up, I've just cut the lawn, extra short, and have promised to do it again before we go away.

I shan't have the grass-box on the mower next time, but shall allow the cut grass to spread itself all over the lawn. This makes a sort of protection for the lawn, and prevents it from becoming all burned up—in the event of a heat-wave.

● Just a Lemon!

You know how keen I am on knowing new ways of keeping moths away from our clothes?

This, of course, is particularly important just now when so many of us are storing away our heavier things in honour of the holidays.

The newest moth-enemy I've heard of is a dried lemon. If you place this in a trunk, or wardrobe, with furs, woolies, and other cold-weather garments, they should emerge in the autumn as fresh as when they were put away.

One word of warning, though. Don't place the lemon directly on a delicate garment. Place it in an old glove or stocking.

● For Country and Sea

Of course you've got a triangle scarf that you're intending to wear on almost every occasion, round your neck and round your head on the holidays.

The plain ones seem to have gone out of fashion a bit. All the very latest have the weirdest patterns over them—some quite fun, and some rather bewildering. (I've got one with about forty different types of wild animals over it. And my friend, Esme, has one with pictures of London, Paris, and New York scattered crazily over it.)

But you want a decoration that you can easily do yourself.

So if you're going to camp this year—or anywhere in the country, for that matter—what about this tent as a decoration?

You just snip out a triangle of contrasting material, and sew it in the corner of the scarf. Decorate it with a flag, and some big stitches to represent the guy-ropes.

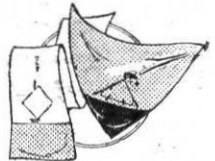
Under it you can sew another triangle of material (but the other way up this time). Stitch it to the scarf along two sides only, leaving the long side, which should be hemmed, loose. There you have a pretty snappy scarf—complete with pocket!

A scarf with a seaside motif can be made in exactly the same way. Instead of the tent you have a sailing-ship. This is a square of contrasting material (I can imagine white on blue, can't you?) sewn on at an angle, with stitches below to represent the sea. A pocket can also be made under this "sailing-boat."

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

Your friend,

PATRICIA.





FOR SUN— AND FUN

Patricia has designed this ideal holiday dress for schoolgirls. It consists of four pieces that can be worn as three different outfits—for "best," for casual wear, and for the beach—looking different each time. It could be made very inexpensively by the home dressmaker, using the pictures here as guide.

ISN'T this just the ideal holiday outfit?

It's perfect for going on motor coach trips, or out to tea. It's grand for shopping in the town, or walking along the prom. And it's ideal for the beach.

Incidentally, it has all the latest fashion points as well! So, if any of you are looking for a new holiday frock, show mother these pictures, and see if perhaps this isn't the very thing she'd like you to have.

(Please note, I haven't any patterns of this that I can let you have. But mother, or any dressmaker, could copy the ideas from the pictures.)

The whole outfit, consisting of four pieces—sun-top, shorts, dirndl skirt and bolero jacket, would take about six yards of material. That sounds a lot, I know, but you can buy the loveliest patterns for a shilling a yard that wash like a rag. And six shillings is very little for a dress that is really three-in-one, isn't it?

Now I'll describe the outfit for you in detail.

FOR BEST

When you wear the complete four-piece together you would be dressed for any "best occasion."

The sun-top joins the little shorts with buttons. You put these on first, and the shorts take the place of panties.

The fashionable dirndl skirt fastens around the waist, and the fullness conceals the opening that is all down the front.

The smart bolero jacket goes over the sun-top to cover your bare back, and the short sleeves just make you feel that little extra bit "dressed."

FOR LEISURE

When you're in holiday mood, off can come that bolero, giving your arms and back a chance to get really brown.

The dirndl skirt can blow in the sea breeze and even if your shorts show—well, they match and look very sweet.

Just undo a button, or unfasten a hook at the waist and off comes that dirndl skirt, revealing you in your playtogs.

FOR PLAY

Free-and-easy shorts—with the latest turn-ups—and a sun-top that allows the maximum of sun to get to your body—what could be more comfy?

Slip the bolero on if the sun gets too strong, to protect your shoulders, and just button the skirt round you for that homeward journey from the beach.

BEAUTY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A special series of articles to help you look your very prettiest in time for the holidays.

No. 4. Legs and Feet.

WHAT with shorts and swim-suits and sandal shoes—legs and feet are going to be much on show very soon, aren't they?

So, of course, they've got to be looking their very best in time for the holidays.

If you're one of those girls who's a real fire-hugger in the winter, getting right up to it as close as you possibly can, you may have several red, mottled patches on your bare shins now. (They're scorch marks.)

To get rid of these you should rub a lemon over the patches, and allow it to dry on. Then apply cold cream or "Vaseline," working it well into the skin. The marks will go in a day or two, then,

MORE GOOSEY FLESH

Gooseflesh on the legs is as common as on the arms, I'm afraid.

But first I must cheer you up by telling you that this will probably vanish in the sun. Immediately your legs start to tan, they seem to become almost magically smooth and soft.

Just in case, though, the gooseflesh is rather bad and you don't want even to start on your holiday with it, here's what you must do.

Wet your legs with warm water, and

then scrub them with a loofah—you know what these are, don't you!—on which you have rubbed plenty of soap.

Scrub and scrub away at the gooseflesh, being certain to apply more and more soap as it disappears from the loofah. (A stiff nailbrush would do instead.)

Smear "Vaseline" or cold cream into the legs after they are dry—and the gooseflesh will soon vanish.

TOO THIN OR TOO PLUMP

Legs that are too thin can worry the girl who wants to look nice in shorts. For you, exercise is the best thing to develop them. Hopping, skipping, dancing and cycling are all excellent.

But to put on flesh takes time this way—even though the results are good. So to hasten the work, you could rub olive oil into your legs. This will help, I assure you—and at the same time give your legs a beautifully silky feel.

Then there is the girl who is certain her legs are too fat. Pinching is the best thing for these. It hurts, mind, but it really does do good.

To slim rather thick ankles, you should take your ankle between your two hands and wring—just as if you were wringing



out clothes. Do this about six times to each leg, night and morning.

SHAPELY NAILS

Pretty feet are always much admired on the beach. You should start now to get your toe-nails as shapely as possible.

Cut them straight across the top—not even to a round as you do your finger-nails.

Then rub a piece of lemon over and around each nail, and push back the skin to make them shapely. Any bumps or ridges on the nails can be filed smooth.

Hard skin on the feet can be harmful, so this should be rubbed away. Use a piece of pumice-stone for this, and then rub in some "Vaseline" or cold cream afterwards.

(Continued from page 11)

Holding Up The Champion!



"Oh, it's rotten!" Barbara Redfern said restlessly. "Beastly," agreed Mabel Lynn.

"And with the sports coming off to-morrow," Janet Jordan said, biting her lip. "We just can't go on at this rate."

In rather gloomy silence the three eyed each other in Study No. 4.

Two days had passed since the row between Clara and Gwen—two days fraught with anxiety for Babs & Co., with disgust on the part of the rest of the Form. In that two days the rift between Clara and Gwen Cook had deepened wider.

And worse.

For Gwen, at practice, refused to take a single order from Clara Trevlyn; and Clara, on her part, ignored the advice of Arthur Warwick whenever possible.

It was all very worrying, all very disturbing. With such bad feeling in the team, girls could not be expected to feel enthusiastic and do their best.

Several times Babs, Mabs, Janet, and the rest of the Form had tried to bring the two together again. Babs, indeed, for the sake of harmony, had even apologised to Warwick herself—though, to be sure, her conviction remained unchanged.

For Babs, on thinking the matter over, had arrived at a theory which swept away Arthur Warwick's alibi. As Babs shrewdly pointed out to Mabs, Warwick probably had had his car handy near the ranger's hut, and had driven swiftly back to Cliff House, calling on Miss Primrose at once. There he had remained.

Without questioning Miss Primrose as to the length of time Warwick had spent with her—a thing they could hardly do—it was impossible to disprove Warwick's word.

So Babs had let the matter drop and apologised.

But Clara wouldn't. Once she had taken a stand, she could not be budged from it.

It seemed, therefore, that deadlock had been reached. The whole of the junior school was seething. With such confusion in their own ranks, it was not pleasant to hear that Whitechester was going well and enthusiastically with their practices, and, if anything, promising to be a better side than last year.

Rather anxiously Babs had called a meeting of the selection committee to discuss the situation; but because Gwen Cook heard that Clara had been invited she would not come, and because Clara fancied that Gwen would be in attendance she had not come, leaving Mabs, Janet, and Babs—the rest of the committee—to meet on their own. It was that meeting which was in session in Study No. 4 now.

"It's going to be a washout," Mabs said.

"We're just going to look silly," Janet opined, and shook her head gloomily. As Clara's studymate and chum she felt this affair keenly.

"And the worst of it is," Babs said—"that nobody has benefited a scrap from Warwick's training. We should have been better off without him. If only we could persuade Gwen and Clara to see reason, though, then things might be different. We should at least have some sort of harmony in the team."

"We—we might ask Arthur Warwick," Janet Jordan ventured. "Perhaps he could do something."

"With Gwen, yes; but not with Clara," Babs said. "In any case, that's no good. Warwick went to his digs in Friardale half an hour ago."

"Then we're just dished," Mabs said. It seemed they were. No solution of the deadlock had been found when bed-time came; and it was with apprehension and dismay, rather than the thrilled expectancy of the great day before them, that Babs rose on the morning. Never, never had she felt less like going to Whitechester.

There were many grumbles and few smiles in the Fourth Form dormitory that morning; only one girl, indeed, was looking anything like cheerful—that was Jemima Carstairs.

Just as Babs and Mabs were going downstairs she caught up with them.

"What cheer?" she said. "Chippy day for the sports—what? Going to win, old Spartans?"

Babs looked at her.

"Oh, Jimmy, don't be so jolly light-hearted!" she said. "How the dickens can we win?"

"You mean—Gwen and Clara?" Jemima asked.

"What else?"

"And the only way to reconcile Gwen would be to prove to her that she's made a whopping old bloomer where her cousin is concerned, and that Clara's been right all along?" Jemima questioned.

"Yes, of course. But what's the good of talking about that?"

"Quite a lot, forsooth." Jemima's face was thoughtful. "If Arthur Warwick is bowled out for the not-so-good lad he really is, then dear old Gwen has to eat the humble pie—and everything in the garden is lovely!"

"Jimmy, what are you talking about?" Mabs burst out.

"Things," Jemima said. "Deep, sinister, profound things. In my own feeble little way I have been working, old Spartans. Mr. Arthur Warwick is a bad egg through and through—and, what's more, I can prove it!"

"Jemima, you can't!" breathed Babs.

"I can—and will. But," Jemima said keenly, "while I'm doing my little bit, you and Clara and the rest will have to do yours. For once I require some co-operation."

"Jimmy, tell us what you want us to do."

"Right-ho! Then here's the situation," Jemima said. "By-and-by friend Warwick will arrive. By that time I shall have gone off on a little quest—indeed, I'm on my way now. All you have to do is to prevent him from leaving this school at any costs until I return."

"But—but how will that help?" Mabs blurted.

"Ask no questions," Jemima said. "Just do as I say, old Spartans. If Fate smiles upon me I shall return with the proof that Arthur Warwick is a crook. 'Tis but a little thing I ask—and so much depends on it. You trust me?"

They trusted her all right. Jemima in these peculiar situations had a way of turning up trumps.

"Keep him here," Jemima counselled, "at all costs. Remember, at all costs! That's all. See you later."

She strolled off, leaving Babs and Mabs looking at each other. Mabs shook her head.

"Now what silly bee has she got in her bonnet?" she asked.

"I don't know," Babs said; "and I

don't suppose we shall know until she comes back. At the same time, Jimmy's our one hope now—and I, for one, am going to see she's not let down. Let's get hold of the gang, Mabs."

The "gang" themselves—Clara, Janet Jordan, Leila Carroll, and Bessie—were luckily assembled in Study No. 4. Like Babs, they all had faith in Jemima, and the gloom that was on their faces when they met changed to an expression of hope when Babs had explained.

"Well, do we do it?" Babs asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"Right! Then let's go down now and wait for Arthur Warwick; and, whatever we do, don't let him out of our sights."

"I sus-say, here he comes now, you know!" Bessie said, staring through the window. "I can see his car."

"Come on!"

In a body they crowded out of the room, grimly determined now. They arrived in Big Hall just as Arthur Warwick came in. Gwen Cook was waiting there, and she hurled herself at him. He laughed as he caught her.

"Whoops! Feeling all merry and bright?" he asked. "Gwen, has that letter come from Uncle Arnold yet?" he added anxiously.

"Yes—here. It came this morning," Gwen laughed. "A registered one, too. No wonder you've been so jolly anxious! I signed for it."

"Oh, good kid!" he said. But Babs noticed how the bulky registered letter trembled in his hand before he thrust it in his jacket pocket. "Fine!" he said. "I—I'll read it later. What time are you going over to Whitechester, Gwen?"

"Oh, in about an hour!" Gwen said. "Right! Then I'll meet you there, shall I?" he asked. "I'll have to go over beforehand and see what arrangements have been made."

"Oh, but, Arthur, won't you wait, and come with us?" Babs said swiftly.

"I'm sorry; I must get along there."

"Then perhaps," Mabs suggested, "we can come with you?"

He looked a little nonplussed.

"Well—well—" he said. "As—as a matter of fact, I shall have to call back at my digs first. No; I'd better get along on my own."

"Oh, but we don't mind coming to your digs as well, I guess!" Leila Carroll chipped in.

Gwen stared at them suspiciously.

"Jolly friendly and anxious all at once, aren't you?" she said. "You can see Arthur doesn't want you—and I don't jolly well blame him, after the way you've treated him these last few days! Never mind them, Arthur. You go."

Arthur Warwick smiled and nodded.

"But look here—" Babs said desperately.

"Please, I can't stop to argue now," Warwick said. "I've just got to get along. Now, Gwen, you run off like a good kid and get yourself ready. So-long, Barbara—and Clara!" And he actually beamed at that girl. "See you later!"

He raised his hat and stepped down the stairs. Gwen, with a scornful look at the chums, turned away. Babs clenched her hands. How the dickens to stop him?

She had a sudden idea. It was a desperate one, but anything now to delay Arthur Warwick. She spoke rapidly to Clara:

"Clara, get over to the crypt—quickly. Bess, go with her. If I can get Warwick along, use your ventriloquism, Bessie, to make it seem that

there's something in the old chapel. Once we get him in there—"

"My hat!" Mabs said. "You mean to—"

"We'll play the same trick on him as he played on us in the woods. We'll lock him in! You others, come on!"

She flew off, the others on her heels. Arthur Warwick, walking off, abruptly looked round as his name was called.

"Well?" he asked, a little impatiently.

"Mr. Warwick, be before you go—"

Babs panted. "Oh dear—"

"What's the matter?"

"There—there's something we—we'd like you to help us in, as—as you're a man," Babs stammered, not very lucidly. "There's something in the old chapel in the crypt!"

He frowned.

"Well, it's not my business, is it?" he asked impatiently.

"Oh, but—you're so jolly strong and clever, you know, and—we're so jolly funky that we daren't go and investigate by ourselves! Mr. Warwick, would you come along—only for a few moments?" Babs pleaded.

He clicked his teeth, one eye on the gates. Then he looked at the chums, their faces so innocently pleading that he shrugged. Well, after all, it wouldn't take him more than a minute or two. Apart from that, he was flattered by the reference to his strength and his courage.

"Well, let's hurry," he said impatiently. "I don't expect it's anything, really—probably just a rat. Where's the crypt?"

"This way," Babs said.

She led the way back, noticing with satisfaction that Bessie and Clara had disappeared. They reached the entrance to the crypt, and Babs paused as she peered into the gloomy interior. Hidden down there by this time were Clara and Bessie. She coughed.

"The—the old chapel's at the bottom," she said.

"Well, come on," Warwick said. "Bother it, haven't you got a torch?"

"Oh dear, no! Shall I run and get one?" Babs asked.

"No, never mind; I'll strike matches."

He led the way down, the girls following him. It was dark now—inkily dark—and the match he struck only made a misty, yellow blob. Ahead of them came a faint sound.

Then, as they neared the old chapel, there came a muffled groan.

Warwick jumped.

"Hey!" he said, and for a moment paused. "Was—that it?" he asked, with just the suspicion of a tremor in his voice.

"That's it!" Babs said, with a shudder, and silently applauded plump Bessie, who was using her ventriloquial art from behind one of the nearby pillars. "Please—please go on, Arthur!"

Arthur went on, though it was apparent he had little relish for the task now. They reached the stout oak door of the old chapel, and Babs turned the key in the lock. Again came the groan.

"Mr. Warwick, you—you go in!" she said stammering.

Warwick braced himself. But having come so far, he could hardly turn back now. With sudden determination, he pushed the door open, stepping back as again the groan sounded from the interior.

"Wuw—what is it?" quivered Mabs.

"Can't see; but—" He hesitated.

Then, striking a match, he boldly stepped in. It was enough.

"Quick!" hissed Babs.

And bang went the door, and click

went the key! From the darkness near by came a cry in Clara's voice:

"Good work! Got him! Come on, girls—beat it!"

"Hey!" came Warwick's voice.

"Barbara—"

"Come on!" cried Babs.

She was laughing now. They were all laughing. Down there, Arthur Warwick would be safe for hours, if needs be. Up the stairs in a crowd they raced—but, reaching the top, Babs fell back.

For facing them, her eyes full of suspicion, was Gwen Cook, carrying her sports kit case.

"Hallo!" she said. "Where's Arthur?"

"A-Arthur?" stammered Babs.

"Yes. I saw you and the others talking to him from the dormitory window while I was packing my things. Then I saw you walk in this direction. My hat!" she cried, as Arthur's furious tones floated up from the depths. "He's down there!"

"All right!" Gwen panted. "All right!" she said. And suddenly she turned and, without a further word, rushed off across the cloisters.

"Oh, my hat—she's going to do it!" Mabs uneasily muttered.

"Let me out!" came Arthur Warwick's distant voice.

But having got Warwick there, the last thing they meant to do was to let him out. Anxious, however, Babs gazed towards the gates near which Arthur Warwick's little red two-seater car stood. How long would Gemima be?

Then suddenly there was a mutter from Clara.

"Oh, my hat—look out! Here comes Gwen again—with Primmy!"

Gwen it was, Miss Primrose, looking decidedly angry, in tow. She had been as good as her word, then! Sternly Miss Primrose hurried across towards them.

As she did so, Warwick, from below, shouted furiously:



AS Gwen took down the bar and the chums leapt out, she blinked at them.

"Who locked you in?" she asked in wonder. "Your rotten cousin!"

Clara burst out. "Oh, you needn't stare! It was him all right!" "It's a fib!" cried Gwen. "I left Arthur at Cliff House!"

"Let me out, dash you!" came Warwick's muffled voice, and thud, thud, thud! went his fists upon the panels.

Gwen glared.

"You cats—you've locked him in the old chapel!"

"Let me out!" shouted Warwick.

Babs & Co. looked grim. As Gwen moved forward they lined up across the entrance.

"Take it easy, sister!" Leila advised.

"You—" Gwen choked. Bitterly

she faced them "You—you awful

things!" she quivered. "You know

he's got to go to the sports! You know

he wants to be early! I suppose," she

added, her eyes glowing, "this is your

idea of paying him back for the

ranger's cottage business! Anyway,

if you won't let him out, I will!"

"You won't!" Babs said quickly.

"Let me pass!"

They did not move.

"If you don't let him out, I—I'll

fetch Miss Primrose!" Gwen cried.

Nobody replied.

"Let me out! I shall be late for the sports!"

"Barbara!" Miss Primrose cried.

"Clara—all of you! How dare you!

How dare you!"

They stood silent.

"You will each take a hundred lines

for this—this trick! Now go down

and release Mr. Warwick immediately!"

Again Babs flung an almost agonised

glance towards the gates. If only

Gemima would come!

"But—but—"

"At once!" Miss Primrose glared.

"Clara—Mabel—you will accompany

me! How dare you treat a guest of

the school in this way?"

Helplessly, silently, they glanced at

each other. What hopes for their efforts

to maintain their promise to Gemima

now? Glumly Clara and Mabs preceded

the headmistress and Gwen down the

steps.

Soon Arthur Warwick, with Gwen

beside him, came striding from the

crypt. Behind trailed Mabs and Clara.

Fortunately, Miss Primrose had re-

turned to the schoolhouse. With a grim look at the dismayed chums he stepped into his car.

"Well, so long!" he said curtly. "Gwen, see you later!"

The car moved forward. Babs & Co. looked at each other despairingly. What could they do now?

"Dished!" groaned Babs.

"Babs, look!" shrieked Clara.

Babs looked—and jumped for joy. For as Warwick reached the gates another car swept in, and, stopping with a shriek of brakes, swerved right across the drive. In the car was Jemima and a tallish man, who at first sight looked uncommonly like Arthur Warwick.

"Jimmy!" they shrieked.

"Take that car out of it!" Warwick yelled. "Take——" And then he saw Jemima's companion's face as the man turned. Babs saw his jaw drop and his face turn dead white. "You!" he cried.

"Me," the man said, and as the red car stopped and the chums blinked in wonder he leaped out. Four athletic strides took him to Arthur Warwick's car. He leapt in, grasped Warwick, and hauled him out, flinging him on to the grass verge.

For a second he turned. His angry gaze fell upon Gwen's startled face. He smiled with pleasure.

"Gwen, old thing!" he exclaimed.

And Gwen, staring back, suddenly quivered. An extraordinary expression was stealing over her face.

"It's—it's——" she stammered bewilderedly. "Oh, I believe——"

But Warwick had staggered up and then flung himself upon the newcomer, fists whirling. In vain. The newcomer swerved his head to one side and flashed out his right fist.

Warwick reeled back and collapsed unconscious on the ground.

The chums were gasping. Electrifying moments, these. But the biggest surprise was to come. For, to everybody's amazement, Gwen suddenly hurled herself into the newcomer's arms. She was sobbing.

"Arthur—Arthur! It's you!"

"Arthur!" Babs cried. "But—but that's Arthur, on the ground!"

"Which," Jemima said seriously, "proves how mistaken the best of us can be. That isn't Arthur Warwick—not really, old Spartan. That's just an inferior imitation, with fake moustache stuck on; but because he looks something like Arthur Warwick dear old Gwen was led up the merry old garden."

"You mean, this—this fellow is an impostor?" Babs cried.

"What-ho!" Jemima beamed.

Clara blinked.

"Oh, my hat! No wonder he was such a duffer at coaching! No wonder that—that——" Then she paused as she found Gwen at her side, her arm in the stranger's, looking embarrassed and red. "Oh!" she said.

"Until just now—until I saw my cousin and he spoke, I—I thought——" She broke off. "Clara, would you make it up?"

But Clara laughed, her own face radiant with happiness then.

"I'll make it up," she smilingly promised, "providing you win the hurdles, Gwen. In the meantime," she added, "introduce us to your cousin—the real one this time, and not the fake. And later," she said, turning to Jemima, "we shall want to know all about this."

"The pleasure," Jemima murmured, "shall be yours, old Spartan! In the meantime, will somebody ring for the old police to take charge of this bad

lad?" she added, looking at the still unconscious impostor.

AND LATER, with the real Arthur Warwick in their midst, the story was told.

Warwick, apparently, had met his double on the boat coming across. The man, whose real name was Sidney Jones, very much resembled him, except that he possessed no moustache. They had struck up a friendship together, and during the voyage Arthur Warwick had become pretty confidential. During one of those confidences he had told Jones how, when he reached England, he was expecting a certain letter containing a rather large amount of money from his Uncle Arnold, in Sydney.

For Uncle Arnold, apparently, having once lost his money in a swindling banking concern, would never afterwards deal in either cheques or money orders. He believed in receiving hard cash, and giving hard cash. Thus his arrangement to send his nephew the sum of two hundred pounds in ten-pound notes.

They all saw the story from that point. For Jones, of course, had hit upon the idea of taking Warwick's place, and when they had arrived in England together Jones, by a treacherous trick, had imprisoned the real Warwick in Friar-dale Keep, and there had held him prisoner, waiting impatiently for the letter to arrive.

In the meantime, of course, seeing the letter would be delivered at Cliff House, he had taken Warwick's coaching job—and immediately discovered that it wasn't going to be easy to live up to Warwick's reputation.

It was for that reason he had faked the miraculous paper chase. And because of his lack of knowledge concerning Warwick's sporting records, he had found it necessary to get hold of Warwick's letters to Gwen and read them.

Jemima, in the meantime, had been working for his undoing. For, unknown to Jones, Jemima, on the Lantham train, had seen him adjusting his false moustache in his carriage. That carriage, incidentally, had been empty.

"And so," Jemima said, "when next I saw the lad, there he was at Cliff House, posing as Gwen's cousin. Naturally, I smelt the old mouse, but, having no proof, decided to investigate. So I have watched, and waited, and spied, and last night I found out where dear old Sidney was taking food to our imprisoned Arthur."

"Quite incidentally, old Spartans," continued Jemima, "friend Sidney was

taking food to Arthur when he locked you in the ranger's hut, and it was on one of these food-taking jaunts that he collected that black eye. Arthur nearly escaped on that occasion, and succeeded in dotting the bad lad one. This morning I went off to the rescue, confident I would find the real Arthur. You see now, I trust, why I wanted you to keep the impostor here until I turned up with the original article."

They did see, and beamed upon Jemima. Only Gwen was silent, and Gwen was looking hotly ashamed. For she, not Clara, had made the mistake, though, to be sure, they had been equally taken in.

But harmony was restored again now; Clara and Gwen, once more, were friends. And just to celebrate that friendship, Gwen, at Whitechester, went all out in the hurdles race, and won it, and Clara won the half-mile, and then, together, they helped to win the relay race, by which time Cliff House were ahead, and all were in a happy frame of mind. In the meantime, Warwick, at the eleventh hour, was giving some feverish last-minute coaching behind the scenes to girls who had not yet taken part in their events.

The coaching was hurried, naturally, but the coaching, even so, was good. So good, in fact, that Cliff House scraped home by just two points in the day's events. But two points was enough. For those two points won them the cup and the medals.

"And to think," Clara chortled, at the end of the day, "that we were looking forward to a licking this morning!"

"And to think," Gwen said, fingering her medal, "that you and I were at daggers drawn, Clara! Oh, what a fool, what an idiot, I was!"

"What an idiot, forsooth, you both were!" Jemima said blandly. "Still, why worry? All's well that comes out white in the old washing—what? Not a bad day, after all," she considered. "In fact, considering the clouds of gloomy despair, and so forth, which overhung us all this morning, a very bright and successful day. Clara, fair Spartan, wouldst like a ginger-beer?"

"I would," Clara laughed, "because, Jimmy, I'm going to drink to you and Arthur Warwick, and"—with a fond look at her old enemy—"Gwen!"

Gwen laughed.

"And I," she said sincerely, "to you, Clara!"

"In fact," chortled Babs happily, "let's all drink to each other!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

Good-bye to Babs & Co.—good-bye to all her friends at Cliff House. But what a thrilling prospect is in store for the lovable "duffer" of the Fourth. No wonder Bessie, far from being miserable, is wildly delighted.



BESSIE BUNTER
Leaves CLIFF HOUSE!

Before Bessie finally departs, however, a lot of things happen. There's fun and excitement, and at least one very big surprise; such a surprise that Babs & Co. are left astounded—and delighted. You'll learn why when you read this superb complete story next week. It is one of Hilda Richards' very best.

Another fine COMPLETE Canadian story featuring that remarkable girl—

KIT OF RED RANCH



Spoiled Sophie!

"GEE, Cousin Sophie, could I do with a nice cup of tea! You bet I could, after riding hard all afternoon for dad."

Kit Hartley tossed her wide-brimmed hat on to one chair in the spacious, sunny sitting-room of Red Ranch, flopped down in another, and looked across at her Cousin Sophie, who had come to spend a week at the ranch.

But there was no response to her remark, so she leaned forward and looked her cousin up and down.

Sophie lounged in an armchair wearing a pretty summer frock, silk stockings, and shoes with rather high heels. A faint aroma of perfume surrounded her, and by her side was a box of chocolates. In somewhat affected manner she held a book on her curled-up knees, and even though she was reading, her facial expression suggested that she had set it after a good look in the mirror. That was how it struck Kit, anyway.

Kit waited a moment, then reaching out with her dusty riding boot, flicked the book.

"Hey! That funny sound you heard was me saying something, Fashion Plate," she said.

Sophie gave an affected start, and her eyebrows narrowed in a reproving frown.

"Oh, you, it is, Kit? Did you kick my book?"

"Sort of nudged it," admitted Kit, with a cheery smile. "You're the first gell I've seen sleep with her eyes open. How do you do it?"

Sophie regarded her in ill-disguised scorn.

"I was not asleep. I was reading. At home we consider it rather bad form to interrupt anyone who is reading."

Kit took in a breath. She had heard too much about "good form" from Sophie.

"Is that so now?" she said evenly. "Well, out here, Sophie, it's reckoned mighty bad form to read when there are folk to talk to; and now you're

awake and listening, what I said at first was that I could do with a nice cup of tea. I've been riding hard all afternoon for dad—working."

"Indeed? That accounts for your dusty state," said Sophie.

Kit jumped up, and her eyes glinted. "The word was working," she said. "How about having a try at it, Sophie, in case you get cramp sitting in one place all day. What about that cup of tea? You know where the kitchen is."

Sophie glared, sat up, and seemed breathless with indignation.

"I'm not a servant," she snapped. "Get your own tea! I'm just as much in need of tea as you are."

Kit eyed her measurably, checked what she was going to say, and turned

did so, she looked directly at Redwing and closed one eye.

Kit indicated a chair for Redwing, and she herself took the one opposite. The third chair she moved back against the wall, and then looked up at her Cousin Sophie, who stood staring at her, pink-cheeked.

"Say, do you want a cup of tea, Sophie?" asked Kit calmly.

"Of course I do. You know that!" snapped Sophie.

"O.K. You're welcome. Through the door there, and first left you'll find the kitchen. There's a kettle, a teapot, and here's a cup. I guess you know how to make tea?"

Kit was not fooling. She had had enough of her lazy cousin's insolence, and the time had come to draw rein. Kit stood nonsense from no one, and certainly not from a stuck-up city girl.

Her eyes challenged Sophie's as they met, and Sophie, glaring, stepped back.

"I shall mention this to your father," she said angrily.

"Do; he's with the boys," said Kit. "Turn right, straight on, wade through two inches of mud, push your way through the cows, and you'll find him."

She chuckled; for Sophie was scared of cows—and even more scared of mud.

But to Kit's surprise Sophie turned to the door, paused, and then went out, slamming it.

"Gee!" cried Kit, sitting up. "She's going. Good for her! She's got more spirit than I thought, Redwing."

Redwing lifted her eyes to Kit. Kit

Kit's Cousin Sophie was lazy, helpless, supercilious; she couldn't even boil an egg. But when, unknown to her, a crisis came, Kit decided to change Sophie for her own good—so she stranded them both miles from anywhere!

to the door as it opened. A Redskin girl came through, a pretty girl with copper-tinted skin, and smooth, shiny black hair. She held a tray in her hands, a tray loaded with tea-things, in the centre a fat, blue teapot, from which curled a touch of steam.

"Waal!" said Kit, her eyes shining. "Redwing. You sure are the dandiest little kid. I'd no idea you were getting tea. You're as dog tired as I am."

Redwing put the tray on the table.

"Redskin girl knew Miss Kit like tea," she said softly.

Sophie put down her book, smoothed her frock, and glanced in the mirror. That done, Sophie turned towards the table.

Kit reached the table first, and counted the cups.

"Three cups? Dad's not coming in, Redwing," she said. "You're just having tea with me. But one and one make two, honey."

And Kit put two plates on the table, and two cups and two saucers. As she

was her heroine, and she could not understand a girl who did not feel the same way.

"Bad girl," she murmured.

"Sophie? Oh, she's all right," mused Kit. "She's her own worst enemy. I reckon her mother has just about ruined her. That girl can't lift a finger to help herself. I'm real sorry for her. Gee! If anything should happen to her mother, and her mother's money—well, life would just about break Sophie."

Kit shook her head, frowning. She was genuinely worried about Sophie, more worried even than annoyed; for it didn't seem right to her that a girl should be brought up to be as useless as a doll, not even able to make tea.

Five minutes passed, during which time Kit and Redwing enjoyed their

By

Elizabeth Chester

tea and chatted about their afternoon's ride together, the things they had seen, their horses, and the fun it had been.

Then came a firm step in the passage, and the voice of Kit's dad. The door opened, and Kit saw her father in the doorway, his handsome, bronzed face troubled.

"Kit—just a word with you, gel!" he said.

Kit, surprised, jumped up, thinking for a moment that Sophie had sneaked, and that her father had taken the idler's side against her, unlike him though it was. But she quickly realised that something more serious than that was on his mind when she followed him out.

He walked some yards from the ranch before stopping, and Kit guessed that it was something both important and secret that he had to say.

"Kit," he said, in a low tone, facing her worriedly, "it's about Sophie. We've got to be easy with her, Kit. A big shock's coming her way."

Kit gave a little jump.

"Big shock? Bad news?"

"Yes. Fact is, Kit—"

He hesitated.

"Yeah?" prompted Kit. "Her mother ill, or—"

He dropped his hand on her shoulder.

"It mightn't be a thing that'd hit you hard, but it's a blow that's going to smash a helpless girl like that to pulp, Kit. Her ma's lost all her dough—every cent. She's cleaned up! And that means that Sophie's got to get right down to it and start working."

Kit's eyes rounded, and she took a breath. Even though she had mentioned the possibility of this to Redwing, the thought of its being likely hadn't entered her head. The shock was so great that it kept her silent for a while.

"By golly, dad!" she murmured at last. "What'll she do? She can't boil an egg! Why, she—"

Kit's anger was gone; her resentment against Sophie went, too, and she could only find pity in her heart. For any girl to lose her home and luxuries was terrible. For Sophie it spelled tragedy.

"Dad," said Kit, looking up at him and speaking intently. "There's only one thing for it. She's got to be wakened up. She's got to find herself—grow tough, and like it!"

"But how, Kit?"

"Leave it to me," said Kit, turning back to the ranch.

Kit Takes a Hand!

Kit strolled into the living-room, to find that Sophie was at the table, finishing off tea and cakes. Redwing, however, was not to be seen.

"Lo, starting in?" asked Kit cheerily.

"Yes."

"Where's Redwing?"

"You mean the Redskin girl?" asked Sophie. "I ordered her away."

Kit's brows knit and her eyes gleamed. It was all she could do to check the hot words that came to her tongue; for Redwing was her pal.

"Oh, you did?" she said. "Reckon you don't know she's my pal."

"Your pal!" sniffed Sophie. "A Redskin girl, a coloured person. You'll be expecting me to have meals with negroes next, Kit!"

Unperturbed, Kit sat down at the table and looked at the cake.

"Who cut that?" she asked.

"I did."

"Gee! Can you cut cake?" said Kit admiringly. "I'd no idea you were domesticated, Sophie."

Sophie tossed her head and poured herself out some more tea; but she did not pour any for Kit, even though her cup was empty, so Kit poured her own.

"Sophie, I've got news," she said. "Bad news!"

"What? What news?"

"The cook's gone, and the girl who helps around the house," said Kit. "Means we'll have to rally round, you and I. Which'd you rather do—house-work or cooking?"

Sophie eyed her sharply and furrowed her forehead.

"Me?" she gasped. "You—you mean that? What do you think I am—a menial? We have a cook and two maids at home."

Kit finished her tea and stood up.

"O.K.," she said. "Just as you please, but cooking's not hard work. And, anyway, we want to eat, don't we?"

Sophie did not answer and Kit passed out to the kitchen, smiling. There she told the Chinese cook to take the evening off, as far as the house was concerned, and he hurriedly went. That meant there was no one to get supper unless Kit did it herself—with Sophie's aid.

If Sophie chose not to help, then there would be no supper for Sophie, and there would be no breakfast for her in the morning.

Before supper-time, however, Kit intended to do a little sweeping. Even Sophie would find it hard to strike her air of repose when there was dust flying around her.

Strictly speaking, the place didn't need cleaning, for it had been done that morning in the ordinary course of domestic routine; but Kit knew where to get dust by the bagful, and in the good cause of rousing Sophie she was prepared to bring in a bagful and scatter it about.

The first place where dust was going to be put was in Sophie's room. She could either have it dusty—or dust it.

Kit went out into the yard, called Redwing, and explained what was wanted. Redwing asked no questions, but fetched a bag from a shed, and collected dust. Kit, meanwhile, went up to Sophie's room and rumbled the bed inside, spreading a few crumbs. No girl could sleep in that bed as it was when Kit had finished with it. She could either make it again, or wish she knew how.

Ten minutes later Kit walked into the living-room, armed with brush and

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

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—Last week, you may remember, I told you of one of the numerous "unfortunate" adventures I have had with my charming young niece, Claudine. But did I ever tell you of one that wasn't at all unfortunate?

No? Well, I think I will.

Not only does it make a change—and a change is good for everybody, 'tis said—but it also has a direct bearing on something very dear to all our hearts, the Cliff House chums.

Now to begin at the beginning. The time: last August. The scene: somewhere on the East Coast. The characters: Claudine, your Editor, and several hundred other people.

I was spending a holiday at a big seaside resort. Claudine was spending her holiday some three miles away, at a holiday camp!

What more natural, then, Claudine being what she is, but that she should invite me to spend a day with her, be conducted around the camp, and sample some of its "really gorgeous treats," as my niece described them.

And what more natural—again, Claudine being what she is—that I should agree to the suggestion with some degree of apprehension, wondering what exactly was likely to happen this time!

Well, nothing happened; nothing of an unpleasant nature, that is. I really and truly spent one of the most fascinating days of my life. Never have I been to such a place as that holiday camp. It was teeming with gay, light-hearted life. There was something to appeal to everybody. The food and accommodation were perfect. In efficiency, it worked like a machine. Nothing could go wrong,

it seemed to me—not even one of Claudine's projects.

There was something to do—games to play, outings to take part in, entertainments to watch—every single moment of the day. I was extremely sorry when I had to leave, and I vowed that I'd spend a holiday there myself one of these days.

That's the end of my story, so you'll naturally ask—"Yes, but where do the Cliff House chums come in?" Ah! That's just it. The Cliff House chums—that is, Babs & Co.—are going to have quite a lot to do with holiday camps in the very near future, for they are to spend part of their summer holidays at one.

And don't they have the most enjoyable, exciting time of their lives! Next week you will be given full particulars.

But now to pass on very quickly to next week's programme.

"BESSIE BUNTER LEAVES CLIFF HOUSE!"

That is the title of the chief attraction. A simple title, providing a simple statement of fact, and yet what a wealth of human drama—and fun, too—is covered by those few words.

The dear, lovable old duffer, who has been at Cliff House so many years, who has so many endearing traits to her nature, to leave the famous school!

No wonder it is such a blow to all Bessie's chums. But Bessie is faced with a delightful life in Australia, and for her sake they are pleased. Dear old Bessie is going to be happy, anyway, they console themselves—and won't they have a glorious time within the short while left before she goes!

I won't say any more, except that this appealing story contains at least one really big surprise.

Our next issue also contains further grand chapters of "Brenda's Task of Mystery," another delightful COMPLETE Kit and Redwing story, and more of Patricia's Chummy and Useful Pages, so don't miss it, will you?

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

pan, whistling cheerily. There was dust in the pan, and behind Sophie's back she scattered it, and started brushing.

In a minute Sophie was coughing violently. Shielding herself with an arm, she glared at Kit.

"Must you make all this dust?" she demanded.

"Make it? I'm sweeping it up," said Kit.

"There no need to make all this cloud of it. The servants at home never do."

Kit shrugged and smiled. "Ah, well, reckon I'm not used to this kind of work. If I'm doing it wrong, show me how!"

Sophie took the broom, swept three times, raising clouds, and then paused.

"That's the way," she said. "But I'm not doing housework. I'm here on holiday—such as it is. I'd rather pack my bags and go."

And without another word she walked out of the room. Kit, leaning on the broom, watched her in amazement.

"And, by golly, I bet you would, too!" she mused.

For a minute or two she swept; then putting down the broom mounted the stairs to Sophie's room, pausing outside the door. From inside came the sounds of brisk activity.

Kit rapped on the door, looked in, and then whistled softly.

Sophie, with cases on the bed, half-packed, was taking frocks from the wardrobe.

"Gee, and you're really walking out?" asked Kit.

"I am. When is there a train? I want to borrow the car. There is an old one, isn't there?"

"Oh, yes, there's a car all right!" said Kit slowly. "You don't feel you're letting anyone down, leaving anyone in the lurch? I shouldn't like you to feel that way."

Sophie did not notice the sarcasm.

"No, I don't. I shall be one less to look after," she said. "I've been uncomfortable enough here with only two servants. But goodness, with you having to do everything, it will be misery."

Kit looked her up and down, shook her head, and then scratched her ear; for Sophie was not joking. She meant to go on her way. And she must be stopped!

"Well, I'll fix it about the car," said Kit.

Deep in thought, she strolled down to the yard, and hailed young Jeff, who drove the old car whenever it was used, and at the moment was testing a tube for a puncture by dipping it into a large wooden tub.

"Say, Jeff," called Kit, "how's the auto? What juice is in the tank?"

"Well, about five gallons."

"Can it be emptied?"

"Emptied? Why, I reckon as it could," frowned Jeff. "There's a drain plug at the bottom."

"O.K.! I want it emptied, and then I want just enough put in to reach Windy Gap," said Kit quietly.

Jeff eyed her with furrowed brow, took off his hat, and then replaced it, perplexed.

"But say!" he objected. "If you've got jes' enough petrol to take you along to Windy Gap, what's gonna happen when you get thar? You can't get on no more, and you can't get back. And there ain't a ranch within ten, fifteen mile, Jes' nothing. 'Cept, mebbe, wind and dust."

Kit's eyes had a glint in them as she nodded.

"That's the way I figgered it out,"



"REALLY," protested Kit's lazy cousin from town, "must you make all that dust?" "Make it?" returned Kit, blithely. "I'm sweeping it up!" She did not add that she was doing it in order to cure Sophie of her helplessness.

she said. "So get to it, Jeff, and see it's how I say. Windy Gap—sixteen miles. You know what juice that means. Get it?"

And Kit closed one eye, and took a quarter of a dollar from her breeches pocket. Jeff "got it."

Ten minutes later, Kit packed a haversack in the old car. There was an oil-stove in it, a kettle, milk, tea, eggs, and rashers of bacon, and a frying-pan; bread, knives and forks, potatoes, a tin of beans, and a tin-opener. All that was needed to complete a meal was brains, and a touch of common sense.

Sophie, calling down from her window, asked for a man to fetch her cases.

"I've left a note for uncle," she said to Kit. "He'll be glad enough I've gone, I dare say."

Kit said nothing, but sent up Jeff for the bags, and he dumped them in the car.

"When is the next train, by the way?" asked Sophie.

"The next? To-morrow," said Kit.

"But if you can drive a car, you can hit the trail for the pass. Thirty miles away there's a halt where the express stops. It'll stop there in two hours' time. Reckon you can make thirty miles in two hours?"

Sophie stepped into the car with a short laugh of scorn.

"I most certainly can," she said.

"Good-bye, Kit! I'm sure you'll enjoy the hard work. And give the Redskin a kiss for me. I'll see you some time. Look me up in Toronto."

"Thanks! I'll be sceing you," said Kit, her eyes glimmering.

Sophie got the engine going, grimaced at the noise, and then moved the car off jerkily. She might not be skilled, but she could drive, and Kit waved good-bye to her.

"Did you fix it?" she asked Jeff.

"Sure. Maybe she'll stop half a mile this side, mebbe half a mile t'other. But near enough that old

crook will start coughing and spluttering on Windy Gap, Miss Kit. And by the look of things—" he added, glancing skywards.

"There'll be a wind," nodded Kit. She hurried away, hailing Redwing; but the Redskin girl was already saddling fresh horses from the stables.

"We go 'long, Miss Kit?" she asked.

"Sure," smiled Kit. "Redwing, that girl is going to learn that necessity is the mother of invention, and hunger the father of cooking. There's going to be fun."

Just a Beginner, But—

"HERE we are," said Kit, reining up. "And there's the old car! Jeff fixed it nicely.

She stopped just short of the Gap—and gee, is this windy?"

Kit looked about her with sparkling eyes. It was windy, but grand. The air was keen and alive, and laden with the scent of pine. Birds sang, and the trees rustled with the soft music of Nature.

Far away were the blue hills, and to the right the spreading grasslands. Here on the ragged mountain was broken land, rocky and wild; and at this particular point there was a gap in the mountain through which the wind whistled. Far below rolled the magnificent countryside, with slanting trees and wild scrub to where a silver stream tinkled.

Only one sight marred the harmony of Nature—the old car that was parked in the middle of the trail, loaded with suitcases.

Not a dozen yards from the car was a girl in a pretty frock, that was already a little stained and torn; the wind had blown her hat away and was sending her hair flying—and it was baffling her attempts to light the patent pressure oil-stove.

For an hour and a half Sophie had

been alone, and by the look of things she might be alone there all night. She was hungry, thirsty, and cold.

Kit from the cover of trees, watched her

"Redwing," she murmured softly, "when I get up to her, just you whistle the mare. I want her to think it's bolted. That'll leave me stranded as well as Sophie."

As she spoke, Kit took out a clean handkerchief that was stained with red dye used at the ranch. Wrapping it round her hand and wrist, she got Redwing to pin it for her.

"Oke!" she said "Now for it."

Mounting her mare, she cantered forward, and then gave a shout.

"Sophie!"

Sophie sprang up; she was near to tears of vexation and had but one match left.

"Oh, Kit—Kit!" she cried. "Oh, thank goodness you've come—thank goodness!"

Kit dismounted, and let the horse go free.

"Well, mighty glad I found you, Sophie," she said. "I came to tell you there wasn't enough juice in the tank."

"I found that out," said Sophie hotly. "Oh, that fool boy! Fancy not making sure."

"But I reckoned you wouldn't realise it, and here I am," said Kit.

"And thank goodness. We can leave the car here and go back," said Sophie quickly. "I'll ride behind you. I—oh, look—your horse—"

Kit wheeled. She had heard Redwing's soft horse-whistle, but Sophie had not, and to Sophie it looked as though the mare were bolting.

"After it!" cried Kit, and deliberately stumbled.

Sophie ran as fast as she could, but a shoe came off, and, hopping painfully, she halted.

"Gone!" she cried. "Oh, Kit, what are we to do?"

Kit hunched her shoulders.

"When a horse bolts, it goes back to stables. Reckon that means foot-slogging it back to the ranch. Matter of sixteen miles, and tough going. Or we can—"

Sophie stood as one stunned.

"Sixteen miles? I couldn't walk six."

"O.K., then we'll stay here," said Kit. "But, Kit, we can't stay in this lonely place all night. There may be bears or bandits."

Kit walked back to where Sophie had put the stove, tried to lift it with her left hand, and so drew attention to her bandaged right. Sophie looked at it and gasped. For the first time she showed consideration for another person.

"You've hurt your hand. Badly?"

"Oh, no! Not badly. Cramps me a bit down things, that's all," said Kit. "You'd better shift this stove. Over there, behind that rock, the wind wouldn't blow it out."

Sophie took the stove, and set it up behind the rock. With advice from Kit she got busy with it, and managed to get it going.

"Now what do I do?" she asked. "There are eggs here, and bacon. But whatever do I do with it?"

Kit reached out her right hand and took it back.

"Seems you'll have to do it all," she said. "Snip the rind off the bacon and put it in the pan. Leave a little fat on it. Let it sizzle, and when there's fat flowing, put the bacon in. Know how to crack an egg?"

Sophie knew nothing. But she learned.

The fat sizzled in the pan; the bacon sizzled. Then Sophie cracked an egg, lost it on the grass, tried again, and managed to get the white and yolk into the pan.

"Smells good," murmured Kit. "I'll unpack the knives and forks and plates. How about some tea with it, huh? I'll get some sticks and make a fire."

Kit found dry sticks and soon had a fire blazing, using three forked twigs to make a tripod for the kettle, all the while keeping her eye on the frying-pan.

"What now?" asked Sophie.

"How about slicing the potato and frying it?" asked Kit.

"Is that how fried potatoes are made?" asked Sophie amazed. "Good gracious! I'd never thought about it."

Kit looked at her, and saw the sparkle in her eyes. There was a keenness that had never been there before.

The meal, dished up, certainly looked good. Sophie settled down and tackled her portion with relish.

"Jolly well cooked," murmured Kit.

"Um! I'd no idea it was so easy," said Sophie, in surprise. "I could always get my own breakfast now."

Kit jumped up then, and listened.

"What?" said Sophie, startled.

"A horse."

"Oh! A b-bandit!"

Kit moved forward, put her finger in her mouth, and gave a Redskin signal. A moment later a similar call answered, and then Redwing rode up, leading Kit's horse.

Redwing reined up and slipped from her horse, not looking at Sophie; but the town girl, overjoyed, sprang up and threw out her arms.

"Oh, Redwing—I could hug you!" she cried. "You've saved us!"

"Bring back mare," said Redwing to Kit. "Go now."

But Sophie clutched her arm.

"Oh, please—no! You're a Redskin. We might lose our way if night falls when we're on the mountain. You wouldn't. Please stay!"

"Tempt her with supper," said Kit. "There's another egg, and more bacon and potato."

Sophie looked appealingly at Redwing.

"Please do stay! I'll cook eggs and bacon—I'll, really!"

Kit's right eyelid flickered at Redwing, who smiled.

"Hungry. Redskin girl say 'Yes,'" she said, and squatted down. "Redskin cook?"

"No, no! I can cook," said Sophie quickly. "I did the last lot jolly well. I want to see if I can do it again."

She could, and she did. She excelled herself, frying a tomato and then a piece of bread.

"The way Sophie's behaving now," said Kit dryly, "anyone 'ud think she'd invented cooking!"

"H'm. I reckon I can fry bacon and eggs as good as any I've had," said Sophie.

"You certainly can," said Kit. "Sophie, I was wrong about you. You're not the nunny I took you for. It took a crisis like this to bring you out—and that's all about it."

Sophie smiled.

"It's strange," she said. "If the petrol hadn't given out I might have got that train, and never learned to cook."

Clearly Sophie had not seen through the plot; and she did not even suspect it when they rode back to the shack just before the hour for dad's late supper.

"Kit," she said softly, "don't let on that I went away. Just say we—we've been riding."

And that was what they told Kit's dad when he met them in the gloaming outside the shack.

"Hey, where's cook? Where's my supper?" he asked. "And, say, you've hurt your hand, Kit! Does that mean no cooking?"

Sophie stepped forward.

"Uncle, how do you like bacon and eggs?" she asked.

"Me? I like it a lot," he said—"when I can get it!"

"Then hang around," said Sophie, forgetting her town speech. "There'll be some right along."

Kit met her dad's eyes; they were puzzled.

"Hey, what's gone wrong?" he asked. "Can she really cook?"

"Wait and see, dad," advised Kit. "Sophie's just beginning to live!"

KIT'S HAND got magically well in the night, and when the morrow dawned she was up and ready for the day's work. But so was Sophie. She had remade her bed after a fashion, and rose ten minutes after she heard Kit moving about.

Sophie wanted a cup of tea. But now she had no need to lie in bed fuming, waiting for it; she got it herself.

"You make a pretty good cup of tea, Sophie," said Kit.

And that was enough to set Sophie busy on housework. Kit found her strength and weakness. What Sophie wanted was praise, appreciation. She was vain, but she was as ready to be vain about her cooking, her housework, and her general usefulness as about her prettiness and clothes.

For two days Kit kept the servants out of the way, joining with Sophie in doing the work; then she brought them back and gave Sophie a lull. But to her surprise, Sophie sulked about it—and she might have gone on sulking if a letter had not come from her mother.

Kit guessed what the letter might contain, and she walked about restlessly, waiting to comfort Sophie. But it was not until an hour after she had received the letter that Sophie showed herself. There were tear-stains on her cheeks, and her eyes were red, but her head was up.

"Sophie," murmured Kit, "was it bad news?"

Sophie swallowed hard, and then nodded.

"Yes, pretty bad, Kit," she said. "Bad for poor mother if the worst happens. Kit, we're broke! All we can afford now is a small house, and no servants. I—I've got to go back to cook—and keep house."

Kit met her eyes, her own sparkling.

"Sophie, I take back all I thought at first. You're a swell kid!" she said. "I reckon your mother will be proud of you."

"It's thanks to you, Kit," said Sophie, with a wry smile. "I've had time to think, and I know that you knew I'd be stranded at Windy Gap. I know now why you put the food and stove in the car. Thanks, Kit!"

Kit and Redwing saw her off by the next train, waving until she was gone from sight, sorry she was going. And Sophie, with a sigh, was sorry, too. Then, settling down, she took up her book to read—"Home Cookery for Beginners."

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

BE certain to meet Kit and Redwing again next Saturday, in another really fascinating COMPLETE story. And do tell all your friends about this grand series, won't you?

Further chapters of our dramatic and unusual serial—



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 consist 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.

After many adventures Ronald reveals to Brenda that Veronica Scholes is an impostor—that she, Brenda, is the real Veronica! All along Ronald has been working to prove this.

The fake Veronica does not know who Brenda really is. She imagines that she is just helping Ronald to unmask her.

Ronald and Brenda are seeking the vital proof of Brenda's identity in an old mill when they are locked in by Veronica and Mr. Jones who, the chums suspect, is Veronica's father. It seems Brenda will not be able to get back to Fernbank that night, and as they cannot yet bowl out Veronica, this may mean dismissal for Brenda.

Ronald takes a desperate chance for Brenda's sake. He leaps from a window of the mill on to a broken sail. The sail starts to break.

(Now read on.)

Why Was Veronica Remaining Silent?

"OH, Ronald—Ronald! Go back! It's breaking. Quick!"

There was a note of terror in Brenda's voice as she shouted from the window of the old mill.

For the end portion of the flimsy sail, along which Ronald had swung, was slowly breaking. Pieces of it were falling now, thudding to the moonlit ground thirty feet below.

Ronald heard Brenda's warning, but he heard it too late. There was a loud crack, and the end of the sail broke off. Like a stone Ronald dropped.

A scream tore through Brenda's lips. Instinctively she shut her eyes. How long she remained like that she never knew, but all at once she felt a dreadful coward. Scarce daring to breathe, she opened her eyes and gazed downward from the window.

And then her heart leapt. "Oh, Ronald!" she cried.

For on the ground below Ronald was stirring. He shook his head, forced himself on to one elbow, rested there for a moment, and then, looking up, waved a hand.

"Thank—thank goodness you're all right, Ronald!" Brenda called, a little catch in her voice. "You are all right?" she added anxiously.

"Right as a fiddle," was Ronald's reply.

But his cheeriness was belied next instant by the way he stumbled as he rose. One leg seemed to give beneath him, and only by an effort did he prevent himself toppling over. The effort made, he limped round towards the front of the mill.

"Soon have you out now, old thing."

Her whole future lay in one word—and it was her own little brother who would speak that word.

Brenda heard his unsteady voice as he disappeared.

She flew to the trapdoor; almost tumbled down the ladder. But, quick though she was, Ronald had the huge door unbarred, and open, when she arrived.

In the moonlight she seized his arms. She was trembling with reaction now. He was shaky, too.

"Ronald, you are hurt?" Brenda cried in dismay. "It's that leg. Let me look at it. The ankle, isn't it? I used to know first aid when I was at the orphanage—"

But Ronald shook his head. "I'm O.K.!" he said, through his teeth. "Bit shaken up, and the ankle does hurt a spot, but I'll be right as rain to-morrow. You, Brenda—you've got to get back just as soon as you can!" he added fiercely.

"But are you sure you'll be all right, Ronald? I don't like leaving you like this. Supposing you can't get home? That ankle—"

"My ankle will heal, Brenda," was Ronald's quick, terse reply; "but if you're dismissed from the house you might lose everything."

Brenda, nodding, glanced back into the old mill.

Only too true what Ronald said. Veronica or her father, the mysterious man, had trapped them in the mill so that her absence should be discovered.

And yet when she thought of what was hidden somewhere in that dusty, rubbish-strewn place—the kiddie's story-book which could establish her identity, because she had concealed it there herself when a child, and it would almost certainly bear some of her finger-prints—she writhed with desperate impatience to turn the mill upside down until the book had been unearthed.

Ronald apparently guessed something of her thoughts, for he gave her arm a quick, encouraging squeeze.

"I'll have another search, Brenda. In fact, I've got a hunch where it may be. But, for goodness' sake, don't delay any longer! Veronica's had too big a start as it is. Get going, Brenda—please!"

They clasped hands, and away Brenda raced.

She ran until she was panting for breath, and her legs felt like lead. She faltered, she stumbled, yet forced herself to keep going. The main road—the telephone-booth—and there, silhouetted against the moonlit sky, was Fernbank.

Gulping in great gasps of air, she ran up the drive.

To her surprise, the big building was dark and silent. Had Veronica not yet returned? Was that the explanation? Or had that girl, remembering her own part in to-night's affairs, conscious of her own guilty secret, decided that it would be safer if she delayed causing trouble until the morning, when she would be able to explain that she had "heard" of Brenda's escapade from another source?

Astounded though she was, Brenda did not waste time. She climbed up to the balcony of her room, and, letting

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herself in through the window, hurriedly but stealthily undressed.

Within five minutes she was in bed. There, with fast-beating heart, she sat against the pillow, listening, wondering, half-fearing that Mrs. Scholes might appear.

But, no, nothing happened. All was uncannily silent. And Brenda lay down at last. It was long before she slept. From worrying about the possible fate in store for her in the morning her mind inevitably went to that other, far more stupendous, far more bewildering, subject.

She was the real Veronica Scholes! "This—this house," she found herself drowsily murmuring again and again. "I really belong here. And—and little Dickie is my very own brother." A lump almost choked her then; her eyes filled mistily. "Oh, I mustn't be turned out now! I mustn't—I mustn't! It's all so wonderful it's got to come true—somehow!"

Fiercely she clenched her fists, burying her face in the pillow.

And then, seemingly the very next instant, she was blinking in the warm, dazzling sun of another day.

For just a brief spell her heart was light, and then she remembered. To-day was not as other days. Everything was different. She was different; she was someone totally apart from Brenda Day, the orphanage girl, who had come to Fernbank such a short time ago.

She was Veronica Scholes—and the girl masquerading in her place had it in her power to get her disgraced, humiliated, dismissed!

She wondered, as she hurried through her toilet, how was Renald? His ankle—was it better? And had his search last night succeeded?

Fervently she hoped that it had. Oh, how marvellous that would be! If that long-lost story-book of hers proved as significant as Renald hoped, then she might be saved, no matter what transpired to-day! Veronica could be bowled out—Veronica would be powerless.

She went along to Dickie's bed-room. The little fellow greeted her with a boisterous jump, flinging both arms around her neck. Gently she hugged him, and then rather triumphantly sorted out his clothes.

First, to make him don slippers and dressing-gown; then to take him, pick-

a-back fashion, to the bath-room, for washing, toothbrushing, and hair-tidying; then back to his room to complete the dressing, and finally—

With fast-beating heart Brenda conducted him downstairs. Instinctively, her hand gripped his more tightly as she tapped on the dining-room door, for from beyond came a laugh in Veronica's high-pitched tones.

For a moment Brenda braced herself. Then, drawing a deep breath, she went in. Dickie, tearing himself free, rushed to greet his aunt and uncle. Brenda waited at the door, expecting the storm to break.

But to her utter stupefaction, Mr. Scholes nodded, quite pleasantly for him, Mrs. Scholes smiled, murmuring the most friendly "Good-morning, Brenda!" while Veronica—Veronica, glancing up from her plate, gave a gay little flip of the hand.

"Morning, Brenda!" she cried chattily. "Topping day, isn't it?"

Brenda went to her place in rather a daze; sat through the meal in rather a daze, too.

Astounding! Unbelievable! And yet she wasn't relieved, even though it was obvious the Scholes knew nothing about last night. Veronica was purposely keeping the information back—for some treacherous motive, that was certain.

The meal ended. It had been quite pleasant and friendly. Veronica left—apparently to write some letters; Mr. Scholes retired to his study, and Mrs. Scholes, with a kindly smile, touched Brenda's hand.

"Would you get Dickie's best outfit ready, dear?" she asked. "He's visiting the squire this morning, and I do so want him to look nice."

"Why, of course!" Brenda said, at once.

Still apprehensive, wondering how and when Veronica would strike, she left the room. As she reached the stairs the phone rang in the hall and a maid went to answer it. Instantly the girl called:

"Oh, Miss Day, it's for you!"

"For me?" Brenda stopped, heart leaping. She twisted round. "Oh—oh, thank you!" she cried, and rushed to take the receiver from the smiling maid.

Was it Renald?
Renald—yes! A most excited, jubilant Renald.

"That you, Brenda?" his voice rang in her ears. "I say, don't shout the place down. But I've found it! Yes, the book! Got it last night, almost at once. This was my first chance to phone you. And, Brenda, I say—"

Abruptly his voice broke off. It seemed to end in a sort of gasp, and then followed a thumping sound, and a faint click!

"Ronald—Ronald!" Brenda whispered.

Silence. Ronald had hung up. Or—

or—
That gasp—that thump! The way he had so unexpectedly broken off in mid-sentence! No, no! It hadn't been intentional. Something—something had happened to him!

Maddening Delays!

MECHANICALLY Brenda rummaged through the drawers of Dickie's dressing-table, scarcely realising what she picked up, what she glanced at, or even what she had come here to find.

Ronald—Ronald!
Something was wrong! He'd been interrupted at the phone. Attacked? Was that it? Forcibly prevented from telling her any more? It must be that—must be!

And his assailant?
Brenda's eyes blazed with anger, even though her heart felt a fresh stab of dread as she realised who that person must have been.

Mr. Jones—Veronica's father! Of course it was! Who else could it have been? But where was Ronald now? What had happened to him exactly?

She must find out. She must slip out from Fernbank at the first opportunity. And then she forced herself to concentrate on the task in hand.

Now, what had she found, so far? She examined the clothes strung over her arm. Coat, hat, shirt, trousers, socks, tie, pullover—even tiny braces. Oh, good! Everything complete.

Downstairs she sped. Her heart was beating a wild tattoo as she presented the clothes to Mrs. Scholes in the drawing-room, and she had to fight to still the trembling of her hands.

But she managed to smile, just as though nothing was on her mind, and turned towards Dickie, who was fiddling with the knobs of the radio set, unaware that it was switched off.

"Ready, Dickie?" she cried. "Come along, old chap! Best clothes on."

But Mrs. Scholes intervened then. "Just a moment, Brenda," she said. "Dickie, where did you put your 'big boys' shoes—the ones with laces? You must wear those to-day."

Dickie, who did not want to visit the squire, best shoes or not, shook his head.

"Do try to find them, please, dear!" Mrs. Scholes begged, a hand on Brenda's arm. "And hurry, won't you? Oh, Veronica!" she called, as the girl went past the door on her way upstairs. "Veronica, dear, would you mind looking for Dickie's laced shoes? We're almost due to start."

High and low, the search took place. Time was getting on. Brenda began to fret. Oh, if only those shoes could be found! They were the one thing which was keeping her cooped up here, preventing her from making an effort to discover what had happened to Ronald.

"Oh, dear!" she sighed when a complete tour of Dickie's bed-room, the study, and the drawing-room had failed.

"Dickie dear, are you sure—"
But at this point Mrs. Scholes

busted excitedly into the room, waving the missing shoes on high.

"In my room! Quick, Brenda! Put his clothes on! Maud—Maud!" she called, fetching one of the maids pell-mell on to the scene. "These shoes—clean them, will you—quickly? Thank you! And, Veronica—Veronica!" She went back to the door, raising her voice impatiently. "Oh, why don't you answer when I call you, Veronica? Tell Masters to get the car ready at once!"

At long last Dickie was eventually arrayed in all the splendour of his smartest outfit, and was led away by his aunt.

Brenda, watching him go, suddenly remembered. With a little "Oh!" she tore after him and his aunt, overtaking them half-way down the steps, at the foot of which stood the shining black limousine.

"Oh, Mrs.—Mrs. Scholes," she asked breathlessly, "would it be all right if I did some shopping this morning?" For this was her excuse to leave the house and seek Ronald.

"If Veronica doesn't need you, why—of course," was the smiling response.

Brenda tried to sound grateful as she stammered her thanks. But her spirits had sunk. If Veronica did not need her? Oh, golly! Veronica would make sure that she certainly did need her once she knew Brenda wanted to leave the house.

Grimly, Brenda went back indoors; thoughtfully, she closed the door. Then she jumped. For Veronica, standing at the foot of the stairs, had addressed her.

"I say, Brenda," she said most endearingly, "if you want to go anywhere this morning, don't worry about me. I'm going to be busy."

And, with a smiling little nod, Veronica disappeared in the direction of the kitchen.

Brenda gasped. Quite incapable of movement she felt at first. Then, galvanised into life, she raced upstairs.

What was in Veronica's mind? Something cunning, naturally. The girl plainly wanted her out of the way. Was she herself planning to visit that man—her father?

Brenda decided that was about it, and, consoling herself with the reflection that, for once in a while, Veronica's ulterior motives were suiting her own plans, she smiled as she swiftly changed.

Once out of the house, she hurried towards the town.

Where to begin looking for Ronald? That was the problem. From where had he been phoning—his house, the post office, a public call-box?

And where—all Brenda's tormenting fears returned then—where was he now?

Tight-lipped, white of face, but fiercely determined to find him, come what might, she strode on!

And she found Ronald much sooner than she expected. Just past the public telephone-box, half a mile from Featheridge, she came upon him, head in his hands, seated on a tree-trunk.

"Oh, thank goodness, Ronald!" she cried, darting up to him. "Then—then you're all right!"

"You, Brenda!" Ronald rose to his feet, and she realised then that he was unsteady. "You guessed what had happened?" he jerked, breathing heavily.

"Yes," Brenda broke in. "Someone set on you. Oh, but sit down, Ronald. Just look at your head—that awful bruise!" With tender compassion, she helped him back on to the tree, and smoothed the hair away from an ugly

lump on his forehead. "There, now. How do you feel?"

"Bit hazy," Ronald said, grimacing, "but I'll soon be right as a trivet."

He leaned forward, a hand to his head.

"Who was it?" Brenda asked quietly, yet fiercely. "Veronica's father? Oh, the—the brute!" she flared out, as Ronald nodded. "Setting on to you just—just because you know what there're up to."

Ronald, rousing himself, caught at her arm.

"Brenda," he said, "it—it wasn't that. It was the book!"

"The book!" Brenda exclaimed. She stared at him. "He knew you'd got it?"

"Obviously. I'd got it with me when I started to talk to you. Suddenly I heard the door of the box open. I turned. I just saw his face as he sprang at me. I tried to dodge. I—I couldn't. Something caught me a terrific crack on the head, and everything went hazy. Next thing I knew, I was lying half-in and half-out of the box, that rotter had gone, and so"—Ronald's voice reached a note of bitter dejection—"so had the book!"

Mr. Scholes' Accusation!

BRENDAS eyes widened to a look of horror.

"Gone?" she breathed.

"They've got it? Then—then we can't do anything yet. And if they guess what we want it for, we'll never get it back. I'll never be able to prove who I am—"

Her voice broke, and she could say no more. Never had she felt such a stupendous blow. The knowledge of that old story-book had sent her into an ecstasy of dizzy happiness; and now, its theft by the father of the girl who was taking her place had sent her into the uttermost depths of despair. Gone was their only way of proving who she was!

Presently she looked at Ronald; at his white, wretched face, and her heart smote her.

"Oh, Ronald, I'm sorry!" she choked.

"I—I didn't mean to speak like that. It must have sounded as if I blamed you, or—didn't give a thought to

what you've done. You've been wonderful, Ronald—"

"Thanks, old thing." Ronald managed a wan smile. Then he became thoughtful. "But I'm not finished yet. Brenda—I'll get that book back!"

"But—how? Supposing he destroys it? Supposing—"

Ronald shook his head, and, in growing enthusiasm for his own hopes, explained how he reasoned things out.

Neither Veronica nor her father, he was certain, knew the true value of that book to him and Brenda—that they wanted it for her childish finger-prints. But, knowing that it must have some bearing on their scheming, they'd examine it, try to discover its secret for themselves.

"In other words, keep it," Ronald concluded tensely. "And where would they keep it but at the man's house? We know where that is. I'll go there. I'll think of some way of getting in. No matter what I have to do," Ronald vowed, "I'll get back that book. But we daren't take any risks. How are things going with you, Brenda?"

She told him, how nothing had transpired about last night, and how she was certain Veronica was planning something. Jaw hardening, he nodded.

"At all costs, Brenda, keep your end up there! Watch Veronica all you can. Don't give her a chance to pull anything over us."

"I'm not going to," Brenda said, and frowned. "But, Ronald—do you think they know who I am? They must know that I've discovered Veronica isn't who she pretends to be."

"No, Brenda. Somehow I'm jolly sure they don't know who you are. That would just about wreck everything!" he declared. "Things are quite bad enough. Look here, you be getting home, old thing. Oh!" He smiled with pleasure. "You're shopping? Fine! Tien let's go. I'm feeling like a walk—just tingling to be doing something. I'll come as far as the town and then go and scout round that man's house."

It was some ten minutes later that Brenda parted from her friend, and his final words were still ringing in her ears when she returned, more than an hour afterwards, to Fernbank.

"Stick it, old thing! You've got to stay on there, you know. If you do, we'll win through yet. But if you're



BRENDAS blood seemed to run cold. "Ronald—Ronald!" she whispered into the phone. No answer. On the threshold of success, something had happened to her boy friend at the other end of the wire.

packed off back to that orphanage—"

Determined to give no excuse for complaint, but prepared all the same for trouble, Brenda let herself into the house.

But nothing happened. And as time went on her puzzlement increased. Lunch-time came. Veronica did not attend the meal. During the afternoon, Mrs. Scholes and Dickie came back from the squire's; then, just before tea, Veronica appeared, said nothing, did nothing, except to avoid meeting Brenda's gaze as much as possible.

After tea an outwardly placid, harmonious little party settled down in the drawing-room; Veronica to a game of patience, over by the window; Mrs. Scholes to some of her intricate embroidery, by the fire; Brenda and Dickie to a game of ludo, which she so manipulated that Dickie was saved from disaster time after time in most miraculous fashion.

Precisely Mr. Scholes strode in, looking perplexed and annoyed.

"Vera," he addressed his wife, "you haven't taken any money out of my bureau, have you?"

"Good gracious, no!" Mrs. Scholes laid down her embroidery. "Why?"

"Well, I've lost twenty pounds," was the irritable retort. "I'll swear it was there. I remember putting it there this morning, at the back of a drawer. Dickie!" He turned to the baby of the house. "You're fond of going to my bureau and desk. You haven't taken an envelope?"

"Ooo, no, uncle," Dickie avowed, shaking his head.

"Well, the confounded money's gone somewhere!" Mr. Scholes snapped.

"More than likely," said Mrs. Scholes, with a knowing smile, "it's where the money you lost at Christmas was—in your other coat all the time."

She bent over her work, glancing up at him archly, and he, glowering, grunted and strode out, to test the suggestion for himself.

Just as he was closing the door, Veronica, for the first time, emerged from her highly concentrated game of patience.

"Oh, uncle!" she called across the room. "If you're going upstairs I wonder if you'd mind bringing down one of my hankies. You'll find some in Brenda's spare chest of drawers!"

It was such a surprising statement that Brenda opened her mouth to question it. Then she quickly changed her mind. After all, it was not unlikely that Veronica's handkerchiefs were in that chest of drawers, for she herself never used it, and Veronica always found it difficult to know where to accommodate all her belongings.

So, thinking no more about the matter, Brenda resumed the game of ludo with Dickie!

It was not long afterwards that Mr. Scholes returned. Brenda noticed his reappearance, but paid little attention, because she was instructing Dickie where, in his nursery, he could find another game.

Patting his head, she watched him scuttle away as his uncle held open the door. There was a fond, glowing light in her eyes; the strangest of sensations at her heart.

Darling, adorable wee fellow! Her brother! She his very own sister. And to think—

She started. Mr. Scholes, having closed the door, was coming towards her. There was something ominous in

his manner. His wife, looking up, laid down her work.

"Brenda!" Mr. Scholes' voice was harsh. "Brenda, what is the meaning of this?"

He held something out. Brenda stared at it. Then, with a cry, she sprang to her feet. It was an envelope, from which protruded a wad of pound notes.

"This money was in the spare chest of drawers in your room!" Mr. Scholes continued grimly. "I demand to know how it came there, unless you, my girl, put it there! Now I want a straight answer, please. Did you take this from my bureau?"

"No—no!" Brenda cried. In a flash she realised what it meant. She swung round, her eyes darting to Veronica, who hastily looked at the table. "I never even saw it! I—"

Arm half-raised to point accusingly at the impostor who was stealing her place, and now had so cunningly, cleverly schemed to steal her character, Brenda checked herself. Helplessly, her arm slumped to her side.

Oh, what was the use? She couldn't prove what she knew—that Veronica had taken the money and put it in that chest of drawers!

"Oh, my dear girl! It—it can't be true!"

Came a stricken, incredulous cry from Mrs. Scholes, as, dropping her embroidery, she hurried across the room. Startled, she looked at Brenda.

"Brenda! Tell me—did you take the money? For a joke, I mean. For some silly little reason that doesn't matter?"

"I—I didn't take it at all," Brenda vowed, through quivering lips. Then, eyes blazing, "I don't even know how it got in my room! Someone—someone must have put it there!"

"Look at me, girl!" Mr. Scholes, seizing her shoulder, swung her round to face his dark gaze. "Enough of this nonsense! You were in my study this morning when you were searching for Dickie's shoes. So was this money. Now it's gone, and I find it in your room. Can you stand there and deny that you went to my bureau this morning?"

Brenda's heart went cold then, for knowing Dickie's habit of hiding his things in odd places, she had actually glanced in the bureau that morning when searching for the shoes. She made to admit it, then bit her lip. No, no! She daren't. She could tell by Mr. Scholes' manner that he'd construe that frank statement as proof of her guilt.

She must hedge. "I've—I've told you, Mr. Scholes, I never touched your money!" she said resolutely.

While Mr. Scholes breathed heavily, brows more lowering than ever, Veronica, rising, beckoned her aunt. She led her out of the room, and, closing the door, spoke in shocked tones.

"How—how awful, aunty. I'd never have believed it of her."

Mrs. Scholes seemed completely stricken. "Neither—neither would I." She shook her head. "I can hardly believe it now, Veronica. She's always seemed so honest!"

"Of course, we can't keep her, aunty. She'll have to go," Veronica said, and sighed. "Aunty!" She looked hesitant, thoughtful. "I—I don't want to seem catty and unkind, but—but there's one

way of learning if she did go to uncle's bureau."

"Oh!" Mrs. Scholes was both hopeful and dejected. "How?"

Swiftly Veronica explained. Brenda and Dickie had been searching for his shoes in his study. Therefore, if Brenda had gone to the bureau and taken the money, he had almost certainly seen her.

"We'll ask him," Veronica said, unaware that the subject of their discussion had reached the top of the stairs, and, a box of soldiers in his arms, was listening with childish interest. "Just ask Dickie to say 'Yes' or 'No.' And if he says 'Yes'—then out Brenda must go, aunty, mustn't she?"

"I—I suppose so," Mrs. Scholes said wearily.

Dickie blinked from the first landing. He saw his aunt and sister go into the drawing-room, and a puzzled, bewildered look came into his baby face.

Aunty Brenda—going to say goodbye?—Aunty Brenda going away? Must go, Veronica had said. Aunty Brenda must go. But—but why? Oh, why must Aunty Brenda leave him? He loved her. She loved him. He didn't ever want to say good-bye to her—not ever.

But if he said "Yes" she would go, and never, never come back any more.

"If—if I say 'Yes,'" his babyish thoughts took shape. "But—but I've got to say 'Yes' sometimes." His eyes rounded helplessly. "I've have to. I've can't help it. Everyone's has to say 'Yes' sometimes. Oh—oh, Aunty Brenda—"

He spoke the name aloud, in a little sob. Tears welled into his eyes. With a clatter, the soldiers dropped to the landing. He did not heed their broken heads, their broken arms. He did not really know that his own little heart was breaking at this moment.

All he could do was to lean against the wall, knuckles pressed into his eyes, and try to expel his baby grief in a flood of tears!

In the drawing-room, it was Mrs. Scholes who voiced Veronica's suggestion. Her husband, pursing his lips, nodded approval.

So Dickie was fetched to the scene. It took longer than Brenda, torn with distraction, could have believed possible. But then she did not know that Mrs. Scholes had found him, sobbing brokenly, and had had to comfort him, trying in vain to learn what was wrong.

At last—footsteps, whispers. Brenda's heart throbbed. The door opened. There was Dickie.

"Dickie," said Mr. Scholes. "We want you to help us. I'm going to ask you a question, and I want you to answer. Just say 'Yes'—or 'No,' whichever is right. You understand?"

"Ye—" Dickie began, and then, gulping, jerked his head. "Well now," his uncle resumed, dropping on to one knee and putting an arm about the bewildered youngster, "just say 'Yes' or 'No' to this question: Did you see Brenda go to my bureau when you were looking for your shoes?"

"Yes" or "No," repeated Veronica.

WHAT will be Dickie's answer? Brenda's fate depends upon it. You mustn't miss the continuation of this really tense scene—in next Saturday's SCHOOLGIRL.