

Meet VALERIE DREW, the Famous Girl Detective, Inside

THE SCHOOLGIRL

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EVERY **2^D** SATURDAY

Incorporating
"SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN"



NOT THE MEDAL SHE EXPECTED!

But another taunt from the rival school.

See "Who Stole the Tomboy's Medal?"—the dramatic complete Cliff House story inside.

A Powerful Long Complete story of rivalry between two schools, starring Cliff House's popular Tomboy, Clara Trevlyn of the Fourth.



Who Stole the TOMBOY'S MEDAL?

The Race of the Term!



"CLARA, come on!" Barbara Redfern shouted.

"Clara!" shrieked Mabel Lynn. "She's gaining!"

"Oh crumbs, you know, Clara's running almost as well as I could!" plump Bessie Bunter gloved. "Clara, come on!"

The three chums of Study No. 4 were almost dancing with excitement.

For to-day was the great sports day between Cliff House School and their friendly rivals of Whitechester. It was being held on Whitechester's ground, and the great half-mile race which the crowded spectators were now witnessing was the last event of the day. More than that—it was the winner of this event who would decide one way or the other which of the two schools was to hold the athletic laurels for the forthcoming year.

On Clara Trevlyn, the champion all-round athlete of Junior School at Cliff House, the visitors were pinning their hopes. With two of the four laps which constituted the half-mile on the Whitechester track behind her, she had settled into her stride. Fast was that stride. With an easy, swinging action that was always a winning factor over long distances, it was Clara's chief strength.

Nothing dashing or spectacular about Tomboy Clara Trevlyn, but something very steady and very reliable.

Not, for instance, like the flashily spectacular running of her chief opponent, Judy Croft.

No doubt, in Judy Croft, Whitechester's newest girl, that Whitechester had found a champion; but no doubt, either, that, in spite of her success over short distances, she was no match for Clara Trevlyn in this.

Rather like a rocket Judy had shot off the mark, trusting to her first burst of speed to get her home first. For the first two laps she had led the way, with Clara at first lagging in the rear. But now Clara had come up; now Clara was passing; now Clara held the lead.

"She'll win!" crowed Barbara Redfern, captain of the Cliff House junior school, and her blue eyes shone at the prospect. "Go it, Clara!"

"Oh, well done, Clara!" cried Marjorie Hazeldene, who shared the same study as Clara, and was the Tomboy's especial chum. "But—look at Judy!"

For Judy had put on a desperate spurt. Judy once again was running for all she was worth. Now swiftly she was catching up; swiftly the distance between her and the Cliff House champion was lessening. The race now was obviously between the two, for the rest of the field was strung out a good quarter of a lap behind. Teeth clenched, elbows in sides, Judy simply flew.

Now it was Whitechester's turn to yell.

"Judy!"

"Look! She's closing up!"

But Tomboy Clara had taken Judy Croft's measure, and knew exactly how this race was going to end. She felt fit. She felt fine. Her stride was good, and she was settled in it like a machine.

Judy was coming up—fast. Clara heard her rasping breath; the quick

thud of her feet. Now came the bend, with Judy still closing in, with Clara running steadily. Now Clara, to get the advantage, was running close to the inner rail.

Then—

Judy was up to her Clara gave a sudden gasp as she felt a sharp elbow thrust into her side. Clara, recognising it for the foul it was, let out a cry as, completely thrown out of her stride, she staggered and lost ground. Then Judy, going like the wind, was past her.

"You—you cat!" panted Clara.

Her eyes blazed. Deliberate and calculated had been that foul, slight though it was. Completely had it thrown Clara out of her stride; completely broken up her pacing. Now Judy was ahead, and Whitechester were shouting.

"I say, what happened, Mabs?" Barbara Redfern muttered anxiously.

"Clara slipped, I think!" Mabel Lynn cried. "Oh golly, she doesn't stand a chance now!"

The third lap was finished, the fourth embarked upon. Not quite so fast was Judy running then—impossible to keep up her rocket-like performance. Clara was fourth, yards behind thanks to the foul, and for a moment it looked as if she was out of it. Whitechester were already shouting:

"Judy wins! Hurrah!"

But Whitechester were counting chickens. They did not know the dour, stout, never-to-be-beaten nature of Clara Trevlyn. Spurred by anger as well as the determination to wrest the laurels of victory for her school, Clara had deserted her usual tactics. Now, with a lengthening stride, she was after Judy. Cliff House began to shout again with hope

"Look, she's picking up!"
"Clara! Clara!"

Yes, the gap was lessening, lessening. My hat, Clara was almost level! Clara was running neck and neck! Clara was passing! Again came that fierce burst from Judy. For a moment she leapt forward. But only for a moment. Fierce as her burst—was Clara's was fiercer. And this time Clara seemed to shoot herself forward.

And then, with Cliff House shouting itself hoarse, the Tomboy breasted the tape and was grasped by the arms of her admiring chum, Marjorie Hazeldene.

"Clara, you've won!" shrieked Marjorie delightedly.

"Yes! Glad?" panted Clara "My golly, what a race, though!" And realising she had won she glowed, completely prepared now to forgive Judy for that nasty little foul and beamed at her as she came in. "Good race, Judy," she said. "My hat, didn't you give me a run!"

"Thanks! I tried!" Judy panted curtly, and turned to meet Linda Gay, the Whitechester leader, who rushed up to congratulate the pair of them. "I might have won if you hadn't tripped me coming round the bend!"

"I?" Clara gasped.

"Yes. Oh, you know. Never mind, though; let's say nothing about it," Judy said. "Hallo, Linda! Sorry I didn't pull it off, old thing! But better luck next time. I suppose this means we've lost the day?"

"Yes. Still, only by two points. And in any case," Linda added, with a grin at Barbara Redfern—Babs, with the others, all swarming round their champion now—"we've the hockey match on Saturday, and won't we put old Cliff House through it then! Clara, old thing, congrats!" she said sincerely "A jolly good race and well won!"

"And who," cried Mabs, "is cock of the walk now? Good old Clara!"

"And who," Marjorie Hazeldene enthused—really, Marjorie looked more pleased than if she had won the race—"gets the silver medal for the half-mile? Clara!"

"Hurrah!"

Clara laughed as she tossed back her unruly hair. The race was hers. For the school she had won it, and because she had secured the most points in that race, the whole day went to Cliff House. More because of that than because of her own personal success, Clara was happy. Always with Clara, Cliff House came first; perhaps it was that spirit which had made Clara the best junior games captain Cliff House had ever had.

"Well, I'm glad," was all she would say. "And as for the hockey match, Linda"—she grinned at the junior sports skipper of Whitechester—"well, just wait till we play the match, that's all!"

She paused as Miss Jane Matthews, the headmistress of Whitechester, approached, a gleaming medal in her hand.

"A very, very good race, Clara!" Miss Matthews said. "I congratulate you—most sincerely!" While Clara stood still, glowing with pride, she pinned on the silver medal. "There!" she said brightly. "I'd liked to have given it to one of my own girls, but it was a case of the best girl winning—eh? I congratulate you, Clara!"

She shook hands, and, with a smile, turned away. But from the little crowd now surrounding the beaten Judy Croft a murmur went up. Distinctly from

By HILDA RICHARDS

Illustrated by T. LAIDLER.

among the murmur the word "foul" fell with an unpleasant jarring sound. "Foul!" Babs exclaimed. "Who said that?"

Linda Gay frowned. "Judy, you haven't any objection, have you?" she asked.

"Well, I haven't, really," Judy said. "But Clara did try to foul me going round the bend. It may have been an accident, of course; probably was," she added generously.

Clara stared incredulously. "I? Foul you?" she cried.

"Well, you nudged me—" "Why, you—" And at once that impulsive temper of the Tomboy was unleashed. Hard worked for and honest her victory had been, and to hear it disparaged, when it had been Judy who had deliberately and so unsportingly tried to rob her, put Clara up in arms in a moment. "That's beastly!" she said hotly! "That's a catty thing to say! You know that you tried to foul me!"

"Oh, my hat! Clara—" muttered Babs anxiously.

"Well, it's true!" "It isn't true!" Judy flamed. "It



Clara Trevlyn had run brilliantly to win that medal, and how she prized it! She had won honour for herself and her school. Then the medal vanished. Clara was certain it had been stolen, and she was certain by whom! But nobody else had faith in her suspicions—not even her own chums. Nevertheless, the Tomboy was determined to get it back. And that was the start of the feud between Cliff House and Whitechester.

isn't! You know jolly well you tried to foul me, but I swerved, and you lost your balance! Everybody saw that!"

"Well, yes, we did, you know!" Eva Mann, of Whitechester, said.

"Here, steady on!" Linda Gay put in. "Dash it, I hope we can have a sports day without squabbling! Judy, you shouldn't say such things!"

"I'm sorry!" Judy said, but she didn't look it. There was jealousy in her eyes as her gaze fastened upon the glittering medal which now adorned Clara's blouse. "I didn't mean to say anything! It was Eva Mann here who took me up. I don't suppose Clara did mean to foul, really—"

"Look here—" Clara cried. "Clara, please!" Marjorie Hazeldene said; and Clara paused at the touch of her gentle-faced chum on her arm. "Don't—don't spoil things!"

"No, rather not! Come along to the tuckshop, and let's celebrate, you know!" plump Bessie Bunter said anxiously. "Watching races always makes one so jolly hungry, you know—and thirsty, too!"

"Yes, rather! Good idea!" Babs supported hastily, for she knew what would happen if the now-nettled Clara really got her goat up. "Come on, Clara!"

"This way!" Marjorie said. She took Clara's arm.

"Yes, jolly good idea," said Linda

Gay, nodding, her face clearing a little, as they moved away; but she turned a reproving look upon Judy.

Marjorie clasped her Tomboy chum's arm.

"Oh, Clara, I'm so proud!" she whispered. "And isn't that a lovely medal? But be careful!" she added anxiously. "The pin's loose."

Clara blinked down at herself, her momentary annoyance forgotten now. As swift to disappear as they were to bubble up were Clara's little storms. And Marjorie was right about the pin, and because she prized her medal—a really lovely medal, with a tiny gold strip across the centre, on which her name would be engraved later—she slipped it into the pocket of her blazer which Marjorie handed to her. Then they were at the tuckshop.

"My treat!" eager and hungry Bessie announced, bursting forward. "I'm in fuf-funds, you know!"

"No, mine!" Linda Gay, of Whitechester, corrected. "You're our guests, don't forget! What is it, Clara?"

The shop was fairly crowded, as was only to be expected now that the sports were over, those sports having lasted a little longer than had been anticipated, with the result that the last series of prizes had had to be awarded immediately after the events.

Clara glowed again at the friendly grins which greeted her as she hung up her blazer on a hook near the door.

Oh, proud was Clara at that moment—proud of her medal, proud of her team, proud at having led her side to victory!

Always had Cliff House and Whitechester been the keenest of sporting rivals, and there was no doubt this year that Cliff House were on top.

There still remained, however, the hockey match next Saturday, in which Clara would captain Cliff House.

Tongues wagged in friendly banter and laughing challenge. Everybody now was looking forward to the great match. More and more girls came in, among them pretty Miss Charmant, of the Fourth Form at Cliff House, and ice-cream soda and ginger-beers merrily gurgled. Then suddenly Clara, beaming round, saw Judy Croft.

Judy was standing near the door near the hook on which Clara had hung her blazer. For a moment Clara coloured at the look she gave her—a look of fierce dislike and jealousy. With a slight feeling of unhappiness, she turned to the counter, and, as she did so, she heard a soft thud from behind her, and, turning again, saw Judy Croft stooping to pick up her blazer which had, apparently by accident, slipped from its hook. Just for an instant she glimpsed something that flashed in Judy's hand.

"Oh, goodness," Judy cried, "this place is so full that one can't move

without barging into something! This is your blazer, isn't it, Clara?"

"It is," Clara replied.

"Sorry! I knocked it down!" Judy apologized. "Clumsy of me, but no harm done. Have something with me!" she added generously; and Clara blinked, a little surprised by the sudden cordiality of the girl who a moment before had been regarding her with such hostility.

"Thanks, I've got a drink," she said rather curtly.

"Right-ho! Needn't be so jolly short about it," Judy sniffed. "I wasn't trying to insult you—"

"Now, now!" Linda Gay warned.

"Well, she—"

"Judy, please!" Linda said a little sharply. "My hat! Can't you two forget your squabble? Admitted there was some sort of little accident during the race, but Clara won well. So that puts an end to that, doesn't it? Now have a drink. Here you are," she added, thrusting one in the other's hand.

Judy accepted the drink. Rather to Clara's relief, she gulped it down quickly, and, without another word, left the tuckshop.

Not till then did Clara become her old cheery self once again. She knew she could not have felt normal or happy if Judy had remained, and, becoming engaged then in a conversation with Miss Charmant, at once forgot all about her new-made enemy. Not, indeed, until an hour later, when she was changing in the Whitechester pavilion, preparatory to cycling back with her chums to Cliff House, did she even think of her again; then, in the act of putting on her blazer, she gave an exclamation.

"My medal!"

"Eh? Your what?" asked Janet Jordan, the girl who shared Study No. 7 in the Fourth Form corridor at Cliff House with Clara and Marjorie.

"My medal!" Clara repeated. "It's gone! Somebody's taken it—"

"Oh stuff!" Babs scoffed.

"Somebody's taken it!" Clara insisted. Her face betrayed her angry conviction. Almost without realising what she was saying, she blurted the immediate thought that was in her mind. "It's Judy Croft—"

"Here, I say, that's a bit out-and-outer, you know!" Hazel Brent of Whitechester mildly protested.

"Yes, rather! Practically accusing Judy of being a thief!" Eva Mann indignantly pointed out.

They all stared at her; and Clara, realising she had allowed that unguarded tongue of hers to run away with her, turned a fiery crimson.

But Clara knew she was right. Back with a vivid significance rushed that tiny incident in the tuckshop when Judy had dislodged her blazer from its hook, when she had caught a glimpse of that shining thing in Judy's hand as she had replaced it. She knew now what that shiny thing had been. Her medal!

Judy had taken it!

Perhaps not to steal it, but just out of spiteful malice, because she herself had not won it.

"Oh dear! Perhaps you—you've dropped it somewhere," Marjorie anxiously suggested. "Let's look for it, shall we?"

"Can't be far away," Mabel Lynn said. "Come on, hunt around. Look in that bag of yours, Clara."

Clara looked in the bag while everybody else hunted round, but of the medal there was no sign.

"Why not go along to the tuckshop and ask if it's been found?" Babs suggested anxiously. "Perhaps you dropped it there, Clara."

"Right! I will!" Clara snapped.

She hurried out at once, but she knew that she would receive no news of her medal there; she felt certain that Judy had taken that medal.

All the same, she went to the tuckshop. As she expected, no medal had been found. Firmly unshaken in her belief then, Clara did not pause to think—and even if she had it was very doubtful if she would have pursued any other form of action than that which she took now. Always impetuous was Clara.

Her course from the tuckshop steered her into Whitechester School itself. Rather fierce was her face as she stamped her way to the Fourth Form studies.

She knew her way about, and she knew that Judy Croft's study was Study No. 9. Outside that door she paused; her eyes gleamed as she heard a movement inside. She knocked.

Distinctly she heard the sound of another movement, but there was no reply to her knock.

"Judy!" she cried.

Again no reply.

Clara set her lips. Her hand closed over the handle of the door; angrily she pushed. But the door did not budge.

"Judy!" Clara cried again. "Let me in! I want to talk to you!"

No reply.

Clara breathed hard. She stooped down, peering into the keyhole. As she expected, the key was in the lock, turned on the inside.

"All right!" Clara breathed.

Obviously she could not break into the study. Obviously Judy intended to turn a deaf ear to her presence. But that wasn't going to defeat Clara's purpose, and there was more than one way of interviewing Judy Croft. If she couldn't get in at the door, she could jolly well get in at the window! She was going to get back that medal or know the reason why.

Out of the school Clara hurried. In the quadrangle she glanced up at Judy's window and gave a grim cluck of satisfaction when she saw that it was open at the bottom.

About ten feet above the ground Judy's window stood, its sill projecting from a wall covered with stout and ancient creeper. In a moment Tomboy Clara had caught that creeper; with a nimble surefootedness that stamped her for the gymnast she was, she climbed up.

Breathing a little heavily, her eyes at length came on a level with Judy's sill, and she peered into the room. As she thought, Judy was there.

And Judy—

In a sharp hiss came Clara's breath as she saw her. Judy was standing with her back half-turned towards the window. On the table near her was a small, plush-covered box, and on Judy's palm was a round, silver disc, which Clara recognised at once beyond all shadow of doubt. Her medal!

"Why, you—" she was surprised into exclaiming; and Judy swiftly turned. She plunged at the window. Just for an instant Clara saw the furious, frightened look in her face. The next she cried out:

"Judy—"

She jerked back her fingers as the window slammed down into place. As she made the ineffective movement her foot slipped and back she reeled.

Desperately she clutched at a trailing branch of creeper. With a rending sound it came away in her hand, and Clara, branch and all, went floundering into the soft flower-bed beneath just as Miss Matthews and Miss Charmant

and a crowd of Cliff House and Whitechester girls—among them Babs & Co.—came round the corner of the building.

"My hat, Clara!" cried Babs. She ran forward, Marjorie Hazeldene at her side. Clara, dazed, staggered up.

"Clara, are you hurt?" Marjorie cried.

"Eh? Hurt? No." Clara dusted soil from her clothes. She felt a bruise on her hip, but fortunately she had sustained no greater damage. "I—I—I—" she said, glaring up at the window, and then, catching the questioning, half-angry look of Miss Matthews, gulped. "Oh crumbs!"

"Clara, you were climbing the creeper!" Miss Matthews severely accused. "And look what you've done! Torn off a great branch!"

"I—I'm sorry!"

"But, Clara, why?" Miss Charmant asked.

"Because," Clara blurted, "Judy Croft has got my medal."

"Oh, my hat! You're never keeping that up!" Linda Gay cried.

"It's not a question of keeping it up; it's true!" Clara hotly cried; a sense of her wrongs bubbling up within her. "I tell you she's got it. She wouldn't let me in when I went to her door, but she didn't expect me to climb the creeper, and I saw her with the medal in her hand. She's got it there—now!"

"Clara, you realise," Miss Matthews said, in amazement, "that you are practically accusing Judy of theft?"

"I don't care! She's got it!"

A little silence then. Angrily the Whitechester faction was staring at the Tomboy. Even her own chums looked a little frowning and disbelieving.

"I am sorry, Clara, to hear you make such an accusation," Miss Matthews said quietly. "However, as it concerns one of my girls it is my obvious duty to set your mind at rest. Let us go and see Judy now. Miss Charmant, I would like you to be present, also."

Miss Charmant looked uneasy. She glanced at Clara, shaking her head. From the Whitechester girls went up a murmur as, almost by common consent, they followed the two mistresses back into the school.

Arriving at Judy's door, Miss Matthews knocked, to be invited at once by Judy's voice to "Come in!" The door was no longer locked. They went in.

"Judy—ahem!" Miss Matthews said. "I—I hate to have to tell you, but rather a serious accusation has been made by Clara Trevlyn. Have you, or have you not, taken her medal?"

Judy looked astounded.

"Good gracious, no!"

"But you know jolly well I saw you with it in your hand!" Clara broke out. "I saw it when I looked through the window—"

"Oh!" Judy said, and shook her head. "I—I'm sorry about the window," she said sweetly. "Seeing you there gave me such a fright for the moment that I didn't realise what I was doing, and so slammed it down. But it wasn't your medal I was examining, Clara."

"Ah! Then you were examining a medal?" Miss Charmant quickly put in.

"Oh, yes, of course!" And Judy, with a disarming smile, took out of the drawer of her desk the little plush-covered box that Clara had noticed before. "This is the medal," she said. "It's one I won for the half-mile at my last school."

Clara stared as Judy, with every appearance of surprised innocence, held up the medal—a bronze one.

"And Clara, seeing this, believed it was her own," Miss Matthews said. She looked relieved, and yet, at the same time, angry. "I trust, Clara, you are satisfied now? And I sincerely hope that you will apologise to Judy for your unwarranted suspicion."

"Yes, that's fair," Linda Gay supported.

But Clara did not apologise. She did not do anything for a moment. With baffled helplessness in her face, she stared at Judy; from Judy to the bronze medal which that girl still held up. The deceit, the cunning of this girl! Of course, Judy knew Clara had seen her with the real medal, and Judy, perhaps expecting this, had exchanged it for one of her own!

Clara choked. Marjorie, seeing the warning signs in her face, nervously edged closer towards her tomboy chum.

"Well, Clara," Miss Matthews repeated, a little sharply, "are you going to apologise?"

"I am not!" Clara blazed. "I—I'm getting out of here!"

And she burst from the room.

Trouble Begins!



VERY unfortunate, that walk-out! No doubt it left the worst possible impression upon Whitechester, and no doubt it even angered Clara's own friends.

They understood the Tomboy, and in that understanding they could make allowances for her. But even so it was a most dreadfully unpleasant ending to what otherwise had been an ideal day.

And Clara's actions caused a feeling of constraint to blow up immediately between Whitechester and Cliff House. By that evening, in fact, it was becoming plainly evident that, on the-part of some Whitechester girls, at all events, bad feeling was rife.

Clara, who had been rather silent since her return from Whitechester, was playing draughts with Babs when the door of the Fourth Form Common-room at Cliff House came open, and Rosa Rodworth, with a red and rather bitter face, came in. She glared at Clara.

"Detention!" she bit out.

"Eh?" Clara said.

"I've got a rotten detention—through you!"

Clara blinked.

"What do you mean—through me? What have I got to do with your silly detention?"

"Everything!" Rosa blazed. When the stormy one of the Fourth was in trouble she always had to blame someone else for it. "If it hadn't been for you and your idiotic medal I shouldn't have smacked Eva Mann's face! Well, I jolly well did, and Eva reported me and Primmy gated me!"

"Oh, my hat!" Babs cried in dismay.

Clara coloured, but she shrugged. Babs looked worried.

It was not long after when there was a new incident. That was when, repairing to the music-room to practise over some new piano pieces which Mabel Lynn's father had sent her that day, they found Diana Royston-Clarke in hot argument with her friend, Margot Lantham.

"But, Diana, you shouldn't have done it!" Margot was saying distressfully.

"Rats! How could I help doing it?" Diana snorted. "Would you stand by and hear your school run down? Do you think I was going to let myself

be called 'one of those Cliff House cats' just because Clara Trevlyn hasn't got decent good manners to own up to a mistake she's made? Oh, here you are!" She glared as Clara came in. "A nice credit to the school you are, I must say!"

Clara stood still, her eyes showing a dangerous glimmer.

"What happened?"

"What happened? I've got a black mark for shoving Hilda Rayne, of Whitechester, in the street! And just because," Diana blazed, "I tried to defend you! A pretty nice kettle of fish you've left over at Whitechester. I must say. Why the dickens don't you go and apologise to Judy Croft?"

"Because," Clara retorted, "I don't apologise for being robbed and called a fibber!"

"But you know jolly well—"

"I jolly well know what I know!" Clara retorted curtly. "None of you need believe it if you don't want to, but it's true. I'm not apologising! That's flat!"

"Just," Diana sneered, "being your usual obstinate, pig-headed donkey self, in fact!"

Clara took an angry step forward; then, as anxious Babs plucked at her sleeve, turned away.

Ten minutes later, when Diana and Margot had gone, Miss Charmant came in. Her pretty face was rather shadowed, and it could not be said that the first glance she threw at Clara was one of approval.

"Clara, Barbara—all of you," she said quietly. "I—I'd like a word with you, if I may? Clara, you still refuse to apologise to Judy Croft?"

Clara crimsoned.

"I'm sorry, Miss Charmant, but I—"

"All right," Miss Charmant bit her lip. "I can't, of course, force you to do anything against your will, but"—she sighed—"I am afraid," she added, with a hint of distress in her tones, "that a rather bad spirit has been created by your action, Clara, and I'm desperately anxious that it shan't go

any farther. If it goes on as it is going on, goodness knows what is going to happen at the hockey match on Saturday. And, Clara, you know who is coming to that?"

"No, Miss Charmant—who?"

"I have just received notification that the Schools' County Selection Committee will be represented," Miss Charmant went on; and Clara's face flushed. "You know what that means, Clara? It would be a thousand pities if the match were spoiled. Please, please," she begged earnestly, "do try to put matters right. You know you will have my support in any friendly measure you may take."

With a pleasant nod she left.

Nice and sweet of Miss Charmant, that, and for a moment Clara did feel ashamed. She ardently wished, in fact, that there had been some loophole of doubt so that she could have brought herself to go and apologise. But this news. Oh, this was great, this was exciting. The selection committee coming to Cliff House—Whitechester match. That, of course, could only mean one thing.

They would be on the look-out for talent for the forthcoming junior hockey match against Sussex. And to play for the county—

"Oh, I sus-say, you know, I wonder if they'll select me?" Bessie Bunter beamed. "Naturally, they will—if I'm in the team. And it does stand to sound, sensible reason, doesn't it," she went on seriously, "that you're not going to leave the best hockey player in the junior school out of it?"

"It does," chuckled Janet Jordan. "That's why Clara's playing."

"Eh? Who said anything about Clara?" Bessie indignantly wanted to know. "I'm talking about me, you know. The selection committee have only to see me once—"

"And they'll never, never forget you—what?" Jemima Carstairs chuckled. "That is, if they survive the jolly old shock!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



NOW came the bend, with Judy still closing in, with Clara running steadily. And then—Clara gave a gasp as she felt an elbow thrust into her side. Judy was determined to win and had not hesitated to foul the Tomboy in order to do so! Had anyone else seen that unsporting act?

"Wonder," Babs mused, "if Linda & Co. know about it?"

Linda Gay & Co. did, for Miss Charmant, anxious to do her own little bit in restoring cordial relations, had phoned up Whitechester, and told them of the honour that was to be paid to the match at once. And Linda & Co. were especially jubilant.

"Of course," Linda said, "it's a ripping chance for you, Judy. You're our best hockey player, and it's high time we had a representative in the county team. The only rival you've got, as far as I can see, is Clara Trevlyn. She is a jolly good player when she's in form. Or perhaps," she added hopefully, "they'll choose both of you."

"Yes, rather! It would be ripping if they did," Hazel Brent put in sincerely. "That would make an end to this silly bad feeling which has sprung up. Old Clara's a nice girl, but she is a silly pighead at times. Judy, you—you're sure you had nothing to do with her losing that medal?"

"Of course," Judy said. "Dash it, I wish everybody would forget about it! And you really think, Linda, I've got a chance?" she added eagerly.

"Oh, yes! As great as the excitement at Cliff House was the excitement at Whitechester. The match, which had already been invested with more than usual importance, because it was to be the crowning clash of the two rival schools, became at once an event of the most paramount interest at both schools. For the time being even the little feud faded into its background.

Clara Trevlyn, indeed, inspired to a new flight of enthusiasm, actually drafted out the team that evening.

"And which just reminds me," she said to Babs, when she passed the tentative list for her inspection. "I want a new set of hockey pads. Come along with me to Hollands to-morrow to get them, Babs?"

The whole Co. went along to Hollands Stores in Courtfield—the Co. being Babs, Mabs, Bessie, Clara, Marjorie and Janet Jordan, Leila Carroll and Jemima Carstairs. They went in the afternoon after lessons, and as usual on these trips, did a little shopping at the same time.

Babs required some new oil paints. Mabs, shining light of the Junior Amateur Dramatic Society, required a new box of make-up. Bessie was eagerly on the hunt for a new cookery-book, and Marjorie had some crochet wool to buy.

Janet, being broke, wanted nothing, though Leila required a reel of film for her cine-camera. Jemima wanted nothing either, but it was at Jemima's suggestion they all called in at Solomon's, the old curio shop in the High Street. Jemima was fond of collecting antiquities, and always believed in giving Mr. Solomon's shop a look in.

As it happened, however, Mr. Solomon had nothing which caught Jemima's fancy this time. But there was something there which made Clara's eyes glisten—a little silver mascot fob formed of two crossed hockey sticks, surrounded with a silver horseshoe.

"Hum, nice!" Clara said admiringly. "I'd like this. How much, Mr. Solomon?"

"To you, Miss Trevlyn, five shillings," Mr. Solomon said, with a smile.

Clara pulled a face.

"Sorry, but five bob's just five bob too much. Got to get some hockey pads," she explained. "Still, if it's still for sale at the end of the week, I'll call in again. I'm expecting some money from home then. But don't keep

it," she added, knowing Mr. Solomon's obliging ways. "I may change my mind, you know. It is a bargain."

A bargain it was. They went out again. As they did, they paused. For three Whitechester girls were standing looking in at the shop window, and the three were Judy Croft, Hilda Rayne, and Eva Mann. Significantly they glanced at each other as the Cliff House chums appeared. Eva Mann pulled a face.

"Oh, who fouled me?" she asked. "And who pinched my ickle medal?" Hilda Rayne mimicked.

Clara flushed.

"Look here—"

"And who wouldn't say I'm sorry for being a naughty, insulting little pig?" Hilda taunted again.

Clara clenched her hands. But Marjorie touched her arm.

"Clara, please take no notice," she pleaded. "Come on!"

She almost shoved the fierce-looking Tomboy on to the pavement, and the Cliff House chums, colour heightened a little, hurried away. As they did so, a burst of jeering laughter floated back from the girls behind them.

"Beastly cats!" Bessie glared. "For two pins I'd give them a piece of my mind!"

"Sure would be useful," Leila Carroll opined. "If only," she added meditatively, "they had their microscopes with them? But they haven't, I guess, so why worry. Let's go to Hathaways, and have tea instead."

The idea was voted good, and having got out of earshot of the Whitechester jeers they were all feeling happier, though to be sure that little incident left its impression, bringing it back rather forcibly that there were still some girls anxious to keep the flames of feud burning.

Thankfully they entered the Hathaway tea-rooms, and, finding a vacant table, sat down and ordered the meal.

But hardly had tea been served than in came Judy Croft & Co. again.

"Those cats have followed us!" Clara breathed.

"Hush, take no notice," Marjorie counselled.

The three looked at the Cliff House chums. Then, with a slight nod, Judy led the way to the table next to them. With a meaning, "do-you-mind?" sort of smile at the chums, the Whitechester trio seated themselves.

"Pretty scruffy sort of place this, what?" Judy Croft disdainfully said. "Well, I mean, it isn't so much the place as the people you find in it."

The Cliff House chums gazed at each other.

"You mean people who don't know their manners?" Eva Mann asked.

"Well, yes."

"Sort of people who accuse you of stealing, and then, when they find out they're wrong, won't apologise?" Eva Mann suggested.

"That's it!"

Clara's face burned. Words trembled to her lips, but again she met the entreating eyes of Marjorie.

"Oh, well, we can't all be perfect," Judy said consolingly. "After all, it does depend such a lot on the school you're brought up in. Did I ever tell you about the girl who fouled me in a race and then turned round and accused me of having fouled her?"

"Oh, no!" Eva Mann said interestedly. "What sort of a girl was she, Judy?"

"Nothing to write home about, of course," Judy said chattily. "That sort never are. Rather a pain in the neck, as a matter of fact! Frightfully plain, of course, and dressed like a

fisherman's wife! But, oh, my dear, the opinion that girl had of her running! Wooderson? Why, he was a child learning to crawl compared with this girl!"

"You don't say?" giggled Hilda Rayne.

Clara gritted her teeth. Had the chums not ordered tea, they would have got up and walked out.

"Clara—" Marjorie anxiously muttered.

"Oh, yes! And then, when she found I was beating her, she gave me a terrific punch in the side as we were going round the bend!"

"Oh, I say, what an awful sport!" murmured Hilda Rayne.

"Naturally, being a Whitechester girl, I made no complaint," Judy went on. "In fact, I let her have the medal which I'd really won, of course. But having so many medals—"

"For beastly cattishness, I suppose?" Clara burst out. She just couldn't stand it any longer.

Judy blinked. She looked round in surprise.

"Hallo, did you hear that?" she asked. "I'm sure some strange animal made a noise. Extraordinary, the things which do crawl into tea-rooms, isn't it? But as I was saying—"

Crash! Clara's chair went back. Clara was on her feet. Up in apprehension jumped Marjorie and Babs both together. But Clara was tried too far by this time. She swept them aside as she stepped over to the Whitechester table.

"You—you cats!" she said, between her teeth. "You may think you're being smart and clever—"

"Well, my goodness, it's Clara!" Judy cried, in mocking surprise. "Well I never! Come to apologise, Clara dear?"

Clara glared.

"I haven't!" she retorted. "I've just come to tell you to keep your rotten insults to yourself!"

"But, Clara darling, aren't you making another mistake?" Hilda reproached. "Who says we were talking about you?"

"Yes, who, you know?" Judy asked.

"You know dashed well you were talking about me!" Clara retorted.

"Well, if the cap fits—" Judy said regretfully. "Funny, isn't it, how a guilty conscience works? Still, as I was saying, this girl—sit down, Clara, old thing, and listen to this story—you'll just love it—as I was saying, this—"

"Are you going to stop?" Clara gritted.

"As I was saying—" Judy unheedingly went on.

"Judy, don't be a cat!" Babs angrily broke in.

"Hallo, another of them!" Judy said. "Well, well! Clara dear, would you like a lump of sugar? It might sweeten that sour temper of yours!"

And with a smile she dipped her hand into the sugar basin. With dainty care she took three lumps and held them on the palm of her hand as if she were offering them to a horse.

That act was the last straw! Impetuously Clara's own hand came up, smacking the outstretched palm of Judy's on the underside. Up in a shower went the lumps of sugar, and Judy, momentarily taken by surprise, went back with a yell, hitting the table. There came a scream from Hilda.

"Judy—oh, my hat!"

Then crash! There was Judy sprawling furiously on the floor. There was the table on its side, most of its crockery smashed.

The manager of the tea-room hurriedly appeared. He glared.

"Please, please!" he gasped. "Is this the way young ladies are supposed to behave? Leave the tea-rooms!"

"But, look here," Bessie spluttered protestingly, "we haven't had our tea!"

"Leave the rooms!"

"But, dash it, it wasn't our fault!" furious Judy protested. "We can't help it if— Oh, I say," she cried, as the door came open, "here's Linda! Linda, please!"

Linda Gay, Eve Clavering, and Hazel Brent came sauntering in at that moment. Linda stared.

"My hat, what's this?"

"These beastly cats—" Hilda Rayne bit out.

"These insulting rotters—" Janet Jordan hotly put in.

"Will you, please," the manager hooted, "leave my shop! If you want to argue, argue outside! Jill," he called to the waitress, "please serve no more Cliff House or Whitechester girls! My shop is barred to you! Now go!"

Linda Gay gasped.

"But, look here—"

"I am sorry!" the manager retorted. "I can make no exception! Please go!"

He held the door open himself.

"Oh, come on!" Babs muttered.

She grabbed Clara's arm. Colouring with embarrassment, she walked swiftly from the tea-rooms, the chums and Whitechester girls following her. But once outside—

"How pleasant that was!" Judy Croft said bitterly. "Linda, are you coming?"

"No. You go on," Linda said; and, as Judy, Eva, and Hilda did so, she turned to Babs. "Babs, we've got to have a talk," she said. "We just can't go on like this! There's been half a dozen rows in the town this afternoon between Whitechester and Cliff House! What was all the fuss about, anyway?"

"Let's go along to the Anglo-American Cafe," Leila Carroll suggested. "We can talk it over there."

Along they went, all very worried. Clara, however, feeling she was guilty, hung a little behind, simmering as she went off down the street. That cat, Judy—that awful cat—

Yet, to do her justice, Clara was more concerned about the actual feud than her own personal feelings. A little inclined to be silent was Clara when, in the Anglo-American Cafe, the chums sat down.

All were agreed that if the rot was to be stopped, it had to be stopped quickly, and especially in view of the importance of the forthcoming hockey match. But how to do it?

It was Babs, thinking hard, who found the solution.

"Wait a minute! I think I've got it!" she exclaimed. "The row's all about the race and the medal. Suppose," she said, "we re-run it at Cliff House?"

Linda's face lit up.

"Oh, Babs, if that's possible—"

"It is, and it shall be!" Babs vowed. "And the time to do it is now—at least, to-morrow," she corrected. "Let Clara and Judy have it out by themselves on the track. I'm certain that Miss Charmant would be pleased to put up a new medal. If you'll tell all the girls you can to come over, Linda—"

"I'll bring the whole blessed school!" Linda promised recklessly. "My yes, anything to end this! You'll give me a ring, then, Babs?"

"I'll hurry back and get it fixed right away!" Babs said, and laughed

now to feel that she had found a way out of the difficulty. "Come on, Clara! Let's get your hockey pads, and then fly back! Hang on the phone, Linda!"

Linda laughed. She, too, flew back to Whitechester with her chums. And an hour later Babs joyfully phoned her up. She had arranged everything. To-morrow at three the race would be re-run, and Miss Charmant, sport that she was, had already arranged about a new medal.

It seemed at last there was a promise of the restoration of full harmony between the girls of Cliff House and Whitechester.

next afternoon, as the chums tramped out of dining-hall an hour and a half before the needle test between the two junior champions of Whitechester and Cliff House was to take place. Almost as great the interest in that re-run was there in Cliff House as in the original race.

"Well, we all wish you luck!" Bridget O'Toole, who heard Clara's words, said. "And I hope everything goes off as it should go! We never should hear the last of it if Whitechester grabbed the medal an' all!"

"Leave it to me," Clara said.

Marjorie Hazeldene, by her side, smiled at her radiantly as they entered

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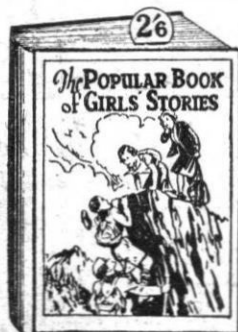
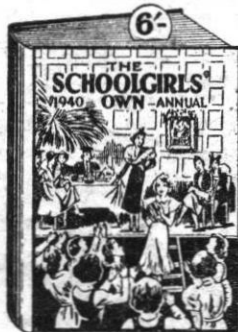


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No Holding Clara Now!



"FEEL fit, Clara?" Barbara Redfern asked, with a smile.

"Topping!" Clara replied.

"And you won't—you won't cause any shindy?"

Babs asked uneasily.

Clara flushed.

"You can't trust me, Babs. Providing Judy doesn't start anything, I promise you I won't. All I want to do is to win that race."

Fit and sparkling Clara looked that

Study No. 7. Babs, Mabs, and Bessie came with them, and it was Bessie who first saw the large parcel on the table.

"Oh, I say, somebody's sent you a cake, Clara!" she cried. "How ripping!"

"For me?" Clara asked; and, as Bessie handed her the parcel, she frowned puzzledly.

It was a perfectly ordinary parcel, addressed to Clara in block capitals, and, owing to the absence of a stamp, had obviously been delivered by hand.

Clara ripped it open, and, with curiosity, the chums clustered round. The parcel proved to contain a shallow box, on top of which was a sheet

of Whitechester notepaper containing another line in block capitals. That line said:

"IS THIS THE MEDAL YOU LOST?"

"Hallo! What luck! Somebody's found it and returned it!" Babs said, with a laugh. "But what a whacking great box to send it in! Open it, Clara!"

They all smiled now.

But when Clara opened that box—Smiles vanished; anger and consternation took their places. The box contained a medal, yes; but what a medal! It was a huge, round cardboard one, half of the front of it taken up by a crudely drawn picture of two girls in running shorts, and one, obviously meant to be Clara, pushing the other off the track.

Above this design were the words:

"Presented to Clara Trevlyn—Worst Sport at Cliff House!"

"Oh crumbs! Who sus-ent that?" Bessie Bunter stuttered faintly.

Clara's nostrils dilated.

"Pretty obvious who sent it!" she rejoined. Her hands had clenched now. "The notepaper proves it came from Whitechester, and only one girl there would think up such an insult—Judy Croft!"

"Clara—" Babs began reprovingly. "Well, who else?" Clara blazed.

"But—but—" Babs stuttered. She was angry and indignant herself; but more than that, she was fearful of Clara's reactions. "It—it might have only been a joke," she tamely faltered. "Joke!"

"Well, you know what I mean."

"No, I don't," Clara retorted. "That's not a joke—that's just an insult! Well, if Judy Croft thinks I'm going to take that lying down—" And she made a stride towards the door. But in a moment Babs and Mabs and Marjorie were barring her path.

"Clara—" Babs said.

"Clara, old thing—" "Rats! I'm going to have this out with her!"

Babs and Mabs looked anxiously at Marjorie. At a moment like this Marjorie was the only one who had influence with Clara.

"Clara," she said now, and pleadingly put her hand upon the Tomboy's sleeve. "Please—please listen!" she added, and Clara, as always, paused. "Don't be silly! Don't go and do anything rash! Oh, Clara, please! You'll have a chance of showing Judy what you think of her by beating her in the race. Save it for that."

"Yes, that's the best way," Babs encouraged.

Clara frowned. Common sense told her she was being well advised. Common sense told her that in her present frame of mind she was liable to do more damage than good to the cause of peace between the two schools.

"There's not the slightest sense at all in making a row," Marjorie pressed gently. "And, after all, you've no real proof that Judy did send it. Think of the school. Think of the race. You know that—" She broke off as Dulcia Fairbrother, the popular head girl of the school, looked in. "Oh, hallo, Dulcia!"

"Hallo!" Dulcia returned; but she flung a curious look at the chums, obviously scenting something amiss. "Clara, you're wanted on the phone in the prefects' room," she said. "Better hurry, because I've left the receiver off."

"Yes, Clara; buck up," Babs advised anxiously.

Clara nodded. Still breathing a little heavily, she left. The chums were glad of the interruption, because it would divert those warring reactions which they knew now possessed their Tomboy chum. In the prefects' room Clara picked up the receiver.

"Hallo!" she said. "This is Clara Trevlyn. Who is that?"

"Hallo, Clara dear! You don't sound very sweet-tempered," a mocking voice came back. "Have you received the medal I sent you?"

The Tomboy's knuckles showed white as her grip tightened on the receiver.

"Is that Judy Croft?"

"Never mind, Clara dear," the voice mockingly went on. "Quite a lovely medal, wasn't it? I do, do so hope we shall see you wearing it in the race this—"

Crash! Down went the receiver. Clara, eyes blazing, stung to swift and violent fury, had slammed the instrument back on the hook. Her face was deadly pale now. That cat—that awful, insulting cat!

If this was going to be a sample of Judy's attitude this afternoon, the sooner it was stopped the better. Judy thought she could get away with this, did she? Judy thought she was scoring all along the line? But was she? Just was she? My hat, she'd put that upstart in her place! She'd just let her see—now—that you couldn't insult a Trevlyn as cheekily as you like! If there was going to be any race this afternoon the air was going to be cleared beforehand. She'd jolly well go over and see Judy—at once!

Never the girl to think before she acted, and robbed in that vital moment of the soothing influence of Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara became all desperate and furious action at once.

She did not return to Study No. 7. She tramped off to, the cycle sheds. There, furiously, she dragged out her bike, and at a speed inspired by the storm which had her in its grip, set off towards Whitechester.

In a quarter of an hour she had come within sight of the gates of that school, outside which a motor-coach, already

laden with Whitechester girls off on the jaunt to Cliff House, was parked. A cry greeted her as she was seen.

"Clara! Whoops, Clara!"

Dourly Clara nodded. She did not see the grinning face of Judy Croft which peered from the window of Study No. 9 as she parked her cycle in a butress of the school wall. She stamped into the school, stormed her way up the stairs, strode straight to Judy's study, and hurled the door open.

"Now—" she said, and stopped.

For Judy's study was vacant. It had not occurred to impetuous Clara until that moment that she might already have left.

And as she paused she heard the squeak of the door hinges behind her. Too late she turned. The door closed with a little slam, and the key grated in the lock.

"Clara Trevlyn, you fool—you utter fool!" the Tomboy told herself furiously.

For she saw that she had walked into a trap. Judy, obviously, was expecting this visit—or, at least, hoping for it. Judy, obviously, had witnessed her arrival in the study.

Judy had made her a prisoner! What was she to do?

She turned to the window, but shook her head. Outside girls were everywhere. In one moment she would be spotted again, bringing down the wrath of Miss Matthews upon her head. Cooler now, Clara realised the nasty position she was in. But she'd got to get out. She must get out!

She looked at her wrist-watch.

Less than an hour before the race began!

She crossed to the door and bent, peering through the keyhole. The key had been left in the lock outside. Vaguely Clara had heard of keys being dislodged by a wire and things. Wait a minute! There was a stunt which Babs had practised once.

And suddenly remembering that stunt, Clara looked round for a sheet of impot paper, found it, and thrust it beneath the door; and then, with Judy's pen, fumbled at the lock so that the key, when it dropped, would fall on the portion of the paper which rested on the floor of the corridor outside, and could then be drawn to safety under the door, and the lock opened from the inside.

Twiddle, twist, and turn. Desperately she worked. But the nib broke, and that was all.

With an aching heart and moist brow, she stood up at last. Oh, great golliwogs, look at the time!

Half an hour only before the great race started!

Short of breaking down the door and causing an uproar, she saw no way out. With sudden, fierce strength, she grasped the door knob, turned, and pulled desperately.

Alas for Clara, however! The knob was loose, and that fierce tug pulled out the screws by which the knob was attached. Back she reeled, the knob in her hand. And then—

Too late Clara tried to stop herself. Back she stumbled—right into Judy's bookcase, and, inadvertently thrusting one elbow through that bookcase, turned with fierce dismay at the sudden splintering sound of glass. In appalled consternation she stared at the wreckage which met her eyes.

"Oh, my hat!"

And then her heart seemed to flutter as she heard a footstep outside the door. The footstep was followed by a voice.

"Goodness gracious! What is going on in there? And this door—I declare it is locked!"

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While Clara staggered back with a groan the key grated in the lock, and the door was flung open. Miss Jane Matthews stared at her.

"Clara Trevlyn!"

Clara gulped.

"You here—in this study! How did you lock yourself in? And— Oh, my goodness!" The Whitechester headmistress jumped as she saw the wreckage of the bookcase. "You wicked girl!"

"It—it was an accident!" Clara panted desperately.

Angrily Miss Matthews gazed at her. "You had permission to come to this study?"

"No, but—"

"I see!" The mistress' lips compressed with a contempt that made Clara inwardly writhe. "At least, I think I see!" she added scornfully. "Not satisfied with insulting Judy yesterday, you are in quest of further trouble? Well, it certainly seems, Clara Trevlyn, that you have found it! This time I shall report you to Miss Primrose. Go, please!"

"But—but—" the utterly dismayed Tomboy blurted.

"Go!" Miss Matthews frigidly ordered.

Clara went, feeling somehow as if she had been whipped. A nice spot of bother for her now when she got back to Cliff House! Inwardly she groaned, and then, realising the time, again jumped. She had only about twenty minutes to get back to Cliff House for the start of the race!

She rushed towards the buttress behind which she had parked her bicycle.

And here the final blow fell. For of her bicycle there was no sign. Somebody had moved it—or taken it! That Judy girl again? The only possible thing for Clara to do now if she were to get to Cliff House in time was to run there!

A Grand Effort in Vain!



"OH, great goodness! You're sure, Barbara, you don't know where Clara is?" Miss Charmant asked anxiously. Babs hopelessly shook her head.

"No. She went to the prefects' room over an hour ago, and that was the last we saw of her."

"But the race?" Miss Charmant cried. "It starts in twenty minutes. Marjorie, please, my dear, run up to your study again and see if she's returned."

Marjorie Hazeldene ran off, her pale face anxious. In the dressing-room on Little Side Clara's chums eyed each other in bewilderment and dismay. Where was Clara?

For well over an hour they had been asking themselves that question. For well over an hour they had been searching high and low. But Clara—well, that girl seemed just to have vanished into thin air.

And now everything was ready. In twenty minutes' time the race would have begun. Judy Croft, with Linda Gay & Co., and Eva Mann and Hilda Rayne, had arrived—Judy looking sparkingly fit and brimful of confidence.

The Whitechester faction was jubilantly hopeful. Already Judy was dressing, attended by a small army of helpers, admirers, and well-wishers. And already the running track was lined. Practically all Cliff House had

turned up to cheer Clara Trevlyn on to victory, and half Whitechester—or more—had turned up as well.

The door of the dressing-room opened. Hopefully, eagerly, they all stared round. But it was not Clara who appeared; it was Miss Primrose. And the look on the headmistress' face showed at once that she was in reverse of good humour.

She was almost snappish, indeed, as she asked:

"Is Clara here?"

"No, Miss Primrose," Babs said.

"Not returned from Whitechester yet, I presume?" Miss Primrose observed.

"Whitechester?" Babs started. "But she's never gone there?"

"She was there," Miss Primrose

The chums looked helplessly dismayed.

"Isn't it obvious?" Judy cried. "Isn't it just like her? She knew, of course, I'd be here, and I suppose she thought it would be a good opportunity to be spiteful. But just wait—"

"Judy, be quiet!" Linda snapped.

"Rats! Whose study is it that's been damaged?"

"Judy, come on!" Linda said, and fiercely caught that girl's arm. "See you later, Babs," she said; "though I must say this is a pretty rotten thing to happen just before the race. It won't exactly make a good impression when the news gets round, will it—whether Clara or Judy wins the race? Here, come on!" she added, as Judy turned back. "No scenes, please!"



CLARA'S eyes gleamed. There stood Judy, with the missing medal in her hand! "Why, you —" she was surprised into exclaiming, and Judy swiftly turned.

stated, "ten minutes ago. I have just received a complaint over the phone from Miss Matthews. And apparently," she added, with a hint of bitterness in her tone, "Clara did considerable damage in the study of a girl named Judy Croft."

"Oh, I say, what's that?" a voice behind Miss Primrose asked; and Judy herself, with Linda Gay in tow, appeared. "I'm Judy Croft, Miss Primrose," she added.

"Oh!" The headmistress turned. "I am sorry, Judy, that one of my girls should do such a thing. Barbara, tell Clara I would like to see her as soon as the race is over."

"Clara again, eh? Well, of all the —" Judy Croft cried furiously as Miss Primrose left.

"Judy, shush!" Linda admonished, but she looked worried. "But what the dickens is Clara doing over at Whitechester when she's supposed to be here?"

They went off, leaving the chums sheepishly and angrily staring at each other.

Nobody spoke. But looks were expressive. They understood Clara all right; but perhaps even gentle Marjorie, her champion, felt that the Tomboy had gone altogether too far this time. She said suddenly:

"I—I think we—we'd better wait and hear what Clara has to say before we judge, don't you? But I wonder where she is? It's nearly five to three."

"Here she comes!" Leila Carroll, standing at the door, sang out. "And, shucks, Babs, she'll never be able to race!"

Anxiously Babs bounded towards the door. She gasped as she saw the panting, half-exhausted figure which was racing across the lawns. Clara!

"Oh, my hat! She's all in!" she cried. "Marjorie, quickly—get some water! Leila, the towels! But she'll

never be able to race like this! Clara, you ninny!" she cried as the Tomboy panted up.

"Am—am I in time?" she hoarsely croaked.

"Three minutes," Babs said. "But—you can't race in that state!"

"What happened?" demanded Mabel Lynn.

"That cat Judy, or somebody, pinched my bike," Clara panted as she sank into a chair. "That— Oh, thanks!" she added, as Marjorie handed her a wet sponge and she rinsed out her hot mouth. "That—that's better!"

"Off with her shoes!" Babs ordered, all brisk urgency at once. "Off with that tunic! Leila, give her a rub down, will you?"

Like a small hive of bees the chums rallied round. Clara sank back, breathing hard. And while they undressed, rubbed, and dried her, she explained. Hardly had she done so than Judy Croft's face appeared at the door.

"Hallo, What about the race?" she said, staring in. "Oh, there you are, you rotten study wrecker! Why aren't you on the track?"

"Because," Babs said, "she's only just come in!"

"You mean," Judy sneered, "she's finking it!"

"Why, you—?" Clara cried, leaping up; but Judy had gone.

"Clara, take it easy!" Babs advised anxiously. "It doesn't matter for ten minutes or so. I'll go along and see Linda and Miss Charmant and ask them to postpone it—"

"And let that cat have the laugh?" Clara furiously retorted. "No fear! Give me that shoe!"

"But Clara—"

"Give me that shoe!" almost blazed Clara.

"But, you're never going to race—"

"I am!"

"Clara, you'll never do it!" Marjorie in anguish cried.

Clara's face set with a fierce determination. She could and would win—or so she told herself. To be accused of finking it by that cat! My hat, wouldn't she show her!

"Clara!" a call came from outside.

Clara clenched her teeth. Ignoring Marjorie and Barbara, she strode outside. A fresh roar greeted her as she tramped to the starting point, where Judy, cool, trim, smiling, was talking to Miss Charmant.

"She'll never do it!" Babs groaned.

But she wondered a little, under the race started, if she had not underestimated Clara's powers.

Bang! went the starting pistol; off shot Judy. Off flashed Clara, and playing Judy's own game of a flying start, caught up with her and passed her, and was three yards ahead before the first lap was finished. Everybody held their breath. What a runner!

What a runner, indeed! And what a race that would have been had Clara been in a less exhausted condition! The flying start, however, was the one big flash in Clara's pan. Lion-hearted and do-or-die her spirit, she had already done too much to be able to keep up that cracking pace.

Second lap. Judy was creeping up. End of the second lap Judy was leading, Clara falling behind. A dismayed groan went up from Cliff House as Clara, plainly, was seen to be flagging.

"Clara, come on!"

"Put some beef into it!" roared Lydia Crossendale.

Clara heard. Her breath was whistling, the muscles in the calves of her legs throbbled. A swirling mist was in front of her eyes.

But that indomitable Trevlyn spirit said "Clara, get on!" She must win—she must! She'd got to win now for the sake of Cliff House, for the sake of her chums!

Third lap now—with Judy going well ten yards ahead. The mist cleared for a moment as Clara braced herself, as with desperation she called up a sprint. And again everybody gasped as they saw her flashing speed. Again they shouted, almost in delirious joy, as the gap between the rivals closed and closed, as Clara passed and ran on, with daylight between her and her opponent! Her name was on everybody's lips.

"Clara! Clara, keep it up!"

"Ah, keep it up! That spirit of Clara's would. That physical energy of Clara's, however, was almost spent. Fiercely she urged herself on. With rasping breath, almost collapsing, she raced along. But now Judy was closing up. Could Clara do it?"

Yes—no! Look! Judy had caught up again. Clara and Judy were running neck and neck! Judy was a shade in front—no, Clara was! No, no, it was Judy!

Everybody was hoarse with shouting.

Fourth lap—and last! Jove, look at that Judy! Her feet were fairly twinkling. But Clara was holding on. "Clara!"

Clara heard the shouts as from a great distance. She knew she was practically all in.

Just half a lap to go now!

Babs & Co. stood amazed, but glowing with admiration for that determined spirit.

Now the winning tape was looming nearer. Clara saw it as a blur. She stumbled.

She did not see Judy break the winning tape. She only felt herself fall into the arms of Marjorie and Babs, and was only dimly conscious of herself being lowered to the ground.

When the mist cleared from her brain and she sat up, gasping a little, there was Miss Charmant pinning on to the blouse of a victorious and triumphantly smiling Judy Croft the medal for which she had made such a great effort!

She Didn't Understand!



GREAT and fine that effort of Clara's considering all that had preceded it. But glum and gloomy were Cliff House, so confidently anticipating a victory for their champion; and buoyantly excited were Whitechester.

Clara's own chums were saddened. Hopeless then to tell Clara that if she hadn't exhausted her strength beforehand she would have won. That would only have added fuel to the fire of bitterness which already consumed her.

She had let the school down, she felt. More than that, she had played Judy Croft's game to the last humiliating card.

Hard, indeed, for Clara to be happy after that.

Later, in the dressing-room, when she had recovered from her exertions, she sat glumly while her chums gathered round her.

"I'm sorry!" was all she could say. "I'm sorry—I ought to have won!"

"But, Clara, you nearly did. Another three yards—"

"I ought to have won!" Clara stolidly repeated.

You could see she was blaming herself. You could see that not in a hurry would she get over this. And a great surge of resentment came over her as a shadow darkened the dressing-room door and the triumphantly radiant face of Judy Croft looked in.

"What-ho! Still feeling it, Clara?" she crowed. "Sorry, but the best girl had to win, you know! Say, girls, what price the tuckshop—just to toast each other good luck? We're off there now. Don't be long."

She flew out. Clara breathed heavily.

"I'm not going" she stated.

"Oh, but you are!" Babs said. "Clara, snap out of it! You're never going to let Whitechester go home saying you had a fit of the sulks, are you?"

No; Clara wasn't! The mere suggestion roused her from her downcast mood. She went—though without pleasure—with that never-to-be-got-rid-of feeling still that she had let her school down.

Irritated instead of pleased, she felt at the congratulations which were showered on her for her fine effort, though, to be sure, those congratulations held a note of reproof, for the story of her exploits at Whitechester had got round now, and Cliff House were beginning to understand why it had lost this needle match to its rivals.

Rather nettled and sheepishly she stood in the middle of the clamouring group among which she found herself in the tuckshop.

"My treat," Judy was saying. "Let the victor stand the feast. But oh, my hat, that just reminds me—I haven't a bean until I get my allowance on Saturday. Linda, old topper, lend me five bob!" she urged.

"Pleasure!" Linda Gay laughed. "Here we are—I'm in funds. But I want it back on Saturday, Judy. Don't forget!"

Judy took the five shillings. Radiantly she bought drinks.

Linda held up her glass.

"To Judy!" she said.

"Hear, hear!"

"Thanks!" Judy laughed as the toast was drunk. "Hope to repeat the performance next time. Oh, I say," she added, with a mocking glance at Clara, "the loser's got nothing to drink. Ginger-beer forward, please!" she cried, and, grabbing up a glass, came towards Clara. "Now, girls, let's drink to the gallant loser!" she cried loudly. "Mustn't forget the gallant loser. Here you are, Clara!"

She rammed the glass into Clara's hand. But Clara stood still. Hateful those words—but how more hateful the taunting mockery of the expression on Judy's face. She looked down at the glass. Drink to the gallant loser—

"Thanks," she said contemptuously, and, obeying only the dictates of dislike, pushed the glass away, at the same time turning towards the door. A little gasp came from Miss Warner, the Whitechester mistress who had come over with her girls, as the ginger-beer slopped over her dress.

"My dress—"

Clara did not hear that.

"Clara, you— Oh!" Rosa Rodworth cried. "Clara, come and apologise!"

Clara went red. But she didn't understand. She had a sensation as of fighting for air. Unaware of the damage done to the dress, she strode outside. In the tuckshop there was a momentary, stupefied, angry silence,



"CLARA dear, would you like a lump of sugar?" Judy asked mockingly. "It might sweeten that sour temper of yours!" Clara's chums caught their breath. They knew the Tomboy and they knew that a first-class row was on the point of starting.

It was broken by a Whitechester girl. "And that," she cried bitterly, "is what you call a sport! My hat! Of all the rotten bad manners! I only hope," she added, and there was a general mutter of approval, "they don't include her in the hockey team on Saturday. If they do, I'll be dashed if I'll play!"

She Tried to Make Peace!



"YOU will pay for the damage you did in Judy Croft's study. You will also write out a special essay on good manners. Apart from that, I shall put a black mark in your conduct book!" Miss Primrose said angrily. "Now, Clara, you may go!"

Clara Trevlyn turned and went. That was ten minutes later, Clara having met Miss Primrose as she strode out of the tuckshop.

She went back to her study and paused there, braced for a moment as she found the reproachful eyes of Babs, Mabs, Marjorie, Bessie, and Janet upon her.

"Oh!" she said awkwardly. "Er—where's Linda Gay?"

"Linda," Babs said, "has gone. So have the rest of the Whitechester crowd. Gone in a bit of a huff, too!"

"Through me, of course?" Clara asked defiantly.

"Well, what did you expect after not apologising for ruining Miss Warner's dress?"

"I?" Clara stared. "I know nothing about that. I heard somebody calling to me to apologise, but I'll be dashed if I was going to apologise to Judy Croft! What's this about the dress?"

They told her. Clara looked alarmed.

"Honestly, I knew nothing about that," she said. "Oh, great pip! No wonder they're cut up. Of course I'd have apologised if I'd known, but— Oh, is there nothing I can do?"

"Why, yes!" Marjorie said quickly,

"It's never too late to put matters right. Whitechester, as you can guess, old thing, are thinking pretty hard things about you—in fact—but, well, never mind," Marjorie covered up hastily. "Clara, why not go over there and apologise?"

"I will!" Clara vowed. "But, steady on! You can't this minute," Babs said. "Miss Warner is taking some of the girls into Courtfield to tea. Anyway, it's a whole day's holiday to-morrow, so why not go over to-morrow morning? Meantime," she added, "what about deciding on the hockey team?"

Clara brightened a little at that, realising all at once what was at stake. With her prospective list before her, the junior school selection committee was called in at once, and before tea that night the notice was pinned up in the Fourth Form Common-room.

There was a rush to see that notice; and many were the joyous whoops of girls selected; and many were the groans of girls who had hoped they had been selected. But everybody voted it was the best team that could possibly have been fielded. For the team list read:

"Clara Trevlyn (Capt.), Janet Jordan, Barbara Redfern, Diana Royston-Clarke, Jean Cartwright, Henrietta Winchester, Christine Wilmer, Rosa Rodworth, Joan Charmant, Leila Carroll, Brenda Fallace."

Jolly good—yes. A winning combination everybody agreed—even the disappointed ones. Once again, hockey became the topic of the evening—but hockey, this time interspersed with the more personal speculation as to what had come over their captain. And things, the Fourth learnt when Miss Charmant came in, were none too happy at Whitechester. The re-run, instead of restoring harmony, had turned harmony into fresh resentment because of Clara's churlishness. Clara, hurt about that, was frightfully sorry.

She said so, and she relieved apprehensive minds by stating frankly her intention to go over to Whitechester the following morning and apologise in person to Miss Warner.

And after breakfast, with that resolve firm in her mind, Clara set off.

Although her bicycle had been found at Whitechester and returned, she decided to walk. She went alone—refusing the offers of Babs and Marjorie to accompany her. Clara did not believe in taking her gruel with ner chums' assistance; she was going to show Whitechester that she wasn't afraid to face up alone.

For Clara, now, was anxious to get the matter off her conscience. And she wanted more than that to see good relations between Whitechester and Cliff House restored once again. Nothing must mar the serenity of the great match on Saturday—and nothing should, if it was in her power to prevent it.

For the time being even the anger she felt against Judy Croft had faded into the background. It was vividly called back into life, however, when, crossing the woods, she came face to face with Judy, cycling along the narrow path from the direction of Courtfield.

"Well, well, well!" Judy said, slipping from her bike. "What a meeting! And where, pray, is my gallant loser off to now?"

Clara paused. Steady, steady now! she was telling herself. Don't let this cat goad you any more!

"If you want to know," she added curtly, "I'm going to see your Miss Warner!"

"So!" Judy laughed. "Then you can save yourself the trouble. 'Lo, Linda!' she added, as along the footpath in the valley below Linda Gay, Hazel Brent, and three or four other Whitechester girls passed by, waving their hands in acknowledgment of the greeting. "Because, you see," Judy said, turning towards Clara again, "Miss Warner has the day off. Pity, isn't it—especially after the way you spoiled her dress yesterday. Any other assistance I can give you?"

Clara stared at her, desperately fighting down the hostility she felt rising within her. For the sake of the hockey match, peace must be restored between Cliff House and Whitechester, and since that peace depended upon herself and this girl, why not now take this opportunity of trying to force a

(Continued on page 14)

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



Week by week your friend *PATRICIA* writes to you. She tells you all her own news, about things to talk about and things to make—all in that cheery, chummy way so typical of her. No wonder all schoolgirls have taken *PATRICIA* to their hearts and wouldn't miss her weekly pages for anything.

DO you like mushrooms?

Your *Patricia's* family is frightfully keen on them, but of course, they're rather luxuries in the ordinary way—things to have for breakfast on Christmas morning only. For they certainly are costly in the shops.

The very nicest mushrooms are, without doubt, those fresh-picked and eaten right away.

That's what your *Patricia* has been doing this last week-end—mushrooming.

I went, with my small brother *Heath*—whose full name is *Heatherington*, just in case you'd forgotten!—to stay with our old aunt and her ancient parrot, *Napoleon*, at her cottage in *Sussex*.

"There are tons of mushrooms about," aunt said to me, "so you and *Heath* must get up early in the morning and pick some. Then we'll have them for breakfast with bacon."

Good idea, thought I, and resolved I'd tear myself out of bed about seven, for once.

"So I'll set the alarm for you at five," went on aunt casually.

This lazy *Patricia* of yours nearly jumped out of her skin at that.

But I had to do it—for apparently all the village folk get up much earlier than that to look for mushrooms, usually having torches with them, so that they look like rather large glow-worms all over the meadows.

Anyhow, *Heath* and I did get up—not at five, perhaps—but about six, and went mushrooming. We took a basket and a penknife each.

Aunt insisted that we must snip the mushrooms off very gently, not removing the stalks from the ground—so that the "spawn" remained for another time.

Honestly, I've never seen so many mushrooms as we saw that morning. I'm sure I could have set up as a greengrocer—and made a fortune with them. (If I'd had a shop, that is.)

Instead, we just scoffed them for breakfast—and they tasted—well—marvellous, for you can guess what appetites we had after having been up since crack o' dawn—or almost!

Now just a fashion-flash for you all. As it's autumn all the newspapers are full of fashion news, so we must mention it as well, I suppose.



"Bustles are definitely in"—that's the big item of the year.

Personally, I think it's a hideous idea. Most of us are quite plump enough "back-view"—without needing to add to it. But still—we must have these "new notions," I suppose.

Anyhow, just mention it to mother, and see what she says about it—not for you young schoolgirls, of course, but for herself.

Bustles won't "come in" for young people—naturally. But I do think that this year will see a revival of that very pretty fashion—sashes that tie at the back, on party and day dresses.

There's something very young, somehow, and so girlish about this style.

The party dress which I love most as I look back on it now was a filmy white affair with the biggest pink sash I've ever seen. And that tied in a bow at the back.

That was certainly ten years ago! How these fashions do return.

We all know how easy it is to make a very neat, trim little blouse from a summery dress that is too short, don't we?

You just snip off the skirt part, make a hem around the waist of the bodice part, thread elastic through—and there you are.

And these blouses can be so useful. They can be worn with a skirt, with shorts, with a pinafore dress, or with a tunic. And how sweet they look for nearly-best wear, worn with a skirt and tiny jacket to match.

Such an outfit could look sweeter still if you were to save some of the material from the skirt part of the summer dress, and make imitation "revers" on the front of the short jacket.

Then everything would match up beautifully—and you'd have such a reputation for looking well dressed.

● A Puzzle

Here's a little puzzle for you that I've just met. I hope you haven't heard it before.

A man went into a shop and picked up an article.

"How much, please?" he asked.
 "Twopence each," replied the assistant.
 "That will be sixpence for a hundred."
 "Well, I'll take thirty-four," replied the man.

The assistant wrapped them up with the remark:

"That will be fourpence, please."

And here's the puzzle. What was it the man bought?

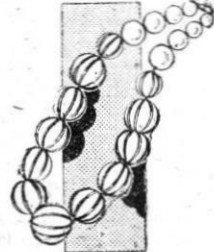
Now don't worry your noddles too much. It's a catch, and not a difficult sum to be worked out by algebra or logarithms, or anything like that.

When you've given up, look at the foot of this column—and there's the answer.

● Bright Beads

Have you any plain wood beads that you sometimes wonder just what to do with?

Well, here's an idea—and it doesn't matter how big the beads are—they can even come off baby's counting frame—for the chunkier necklaces are these days, the smarter.



You can fill a darning needle with coloured wool, silk, or fine raffia and work this around each bead, in as many colours as you like. In fact, the more you mix the colours, the better, for then the beads will "go" with any-

thing and look rather like delicious, multi-coloured "bulls-eyes."

It would be rather a popular idea for a school or church bazaar, I'm thinking.

● "The Perfect Leg"

I know you like figures, so here are some measurements for you that are fun, even if you're not going to let them worry you—as I'm quite sure you won't.

In Hollywood recently, it became necessary to find the "perfect leg." When found, these were the measurements:
 Ankle: 8 inches.
 Calf: 11½ inches.
 Knee: 12 inches.
 Upper leg: 19½ inches.

It was a grown-up leg, of course; so if you've a big sister who's wondering how she'd true up to "perfection," here's a chance for you to check up with her and a tape-measure.

Bye-bye now until next week.

Your friend,

PATRICIA.

Answer to the puzzle or catch: The man bought numerals for his door number—34.



PLANT INDOOR BULBS NOW

be deceived by ridiculously cheap offers, and hope for the best. You'll only be wasting your money. Rather buy a few good bulbs, than twice as many inferior ones.

Almost all bulbs can be grown in pots indoors, of course, but some flower earlier than others. So choose Roman hyacinths, jonquils, narcissi, snowdrops, crocuses, and scilla if you are anxious to see blooms in a few months time. (Tulips and daffodils will flower later.)

You will probably buy fibre for planting the bulbs, all ready prepared, at three-pence or so the bag.

You should spread this on paper and water it slightly, so that it is just moist. Allow it to remain like this for an hour or two while you get the bowls ready.

THE PLANTING

These should not be too shallow for large bulbs, otherwise, they'll not allow enough root growth, which is so important if you are to have healthy top-growth.

Choose deep bowls for big bulbs, and shallow ones for snowdrops and crocuses. And do try to select quite plain ones, or if they are highly coloured, try to visualise how the whole thing will look when the flowers are in bloom.

Next you must get a collection of small pebbles, broken-up crockery or brick, and place a layer of this on the bottom of the bowl. This is for "drainage," you see, without which, the water will just rest on the soil and create a "mould."

On top of the drainage, place a firm layer of your soil mixture.

Then arrange your bulbs, almost touching. Pile up more soil, patting it down gently, until only the tips of the bulbs are showing.

DARK BUT AIRY

Just give a sprinkling more of water, and they're ready to be hidden away in a dark corner.

Choose an airy cupboard or a cellar for this—but please be sure there is ventilation as well as darkness.

IN THE LIGHT

Daily watering will not be necessary while the bulbs are in darkness. But you should feel the soil each day, and here is where the real gardener in you will come out.

You must decide the difference between soil that is just moist—which is right for the bulbs, and soil which is WET—which is wrong.

Keep the soil moist always, and in a week or two the first green shoots will appear above the surface. Then the bulbs can be brought gradually towards the light.

After this they will make amazing progress, and finally may have the sunniest spot in the room, where they'll shoot up like wildfire—and in a month or so will be a pride and delight to you, the family, and friends.

I KNOW it sounds ridiculously early even to mention Christmas—particularly as lots of us are still wondering whether we've had summer yet, or not!

All the same, it's not really too early to think about presents for Christmas—particularly if you are considering giving that most fragrant of all gifts—flowers.

For now is the time to plant indoor bulbs, so that they are in flower by Christmas, for decoration in the home or to give away.

BUY GOOD BULBS

I know it's easy to say that you should pay as much as possible for your bulbs, for in this way you are more certain of no failures. But it is true. Please don't

MASCOT FROM CORKS

Little novelties that all schoolgirls will find easy to make—and enjoyable, too!

I EXPECT your mother saves the corks from bottles, doesn't she?

If so, I'm quite sure she'd let you have one or two.

And here's something you can make with them, aided by a penknife, some safety-pins, oddments of ribbon or cord.

The perky little mascot on the left here would look very saucy on the lapel of a coat at the week-ends, and I'm sure all your chums would admire it.

You should scrub the cork first, and allow it to dry. Then cut a slice off the thick end. Bore a hole through the rest of the cork—with a knitting needle, and another through the thin part of the cork-slice.

Now, with a bodkin, slip a piece of ribbon right through these holes, leaving a loop at the top, and fastening with a bow at the bottom.

You can now paint your "fob mascot" any pretty colour you like. I rather like the idea of a scarlet "fez" hat on top of a black face with blue eyes and a red mouth. (This face can, of course, be as comic as you like, so even you who're not too good at drawing, can attempt it.)

Place a safety-pin through the top loop of ribbon, and pin it up to dry thoroughly while you decide where to wear it.

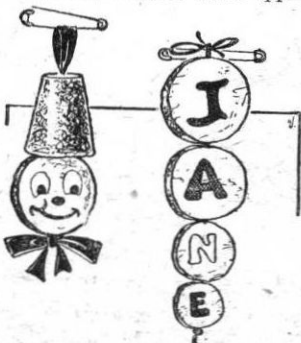
FLAUNT YOUR NAME

The other mascot would appeal

to a girl who has a shortish name—and is proud of it. You cut the cork into as many slices as there are letters in your name, and then paint one letter on each slice of cork, using different coloured paints.

When dry, make a hole through each slice, and thread narrow ribbon or cord through, knotting it at the bottom, and tying a safety-pin to the top piece.

The fob is now ready to flaunt on the bodice of your dress, or the lapel of your coat.



A NEW WAY WITH AN OLD HAT

Some pretty trimmings for your Autumn hats. All young—and all easy to do



NOW that summer's so very nearly over, I expect you're beginning to think about hats again. You'll still wear a scarf, or perhaps a net around your hair at week-ends, of course—but there will be those other occasions when a hat just must be worn.

So here I have had drawn three types of hats that are popular with schoolgirls—because they are smart, and because they are young.

The top hat in the picture is the ever-popular pull-on type that seems never to go out of fashion—because it suits everyone.

If you have a hat like this and feel you'd like to bring it up to date to face a bright autumn, here is a suggestion.

Buy half a yard of ribbon velvet, in any bright colour—green would look rather nice, providing it "goes" with your coat and dresses.

Bring this right round the hat, crossing the ends in front and keeping them in place with a stitch or two. Then buy a little posy of artificial flowers, and sew these right in the front.

OFF THE FACE

The turned-up brim of the hat on the left is one that is particularly becoming to the younger schoolgirl. If you have a hat like this to which you'd like to give a "new" note, you could very carefully cut two slots in the brim. Then through these slots thread a wide bow of ribbon—half a yard would be quite sufficient.

The "pill-box" style of hat, as shown on the right, is one that often appeals to the older schoolgirl. This should be worn well forward over the forehead this year, and to keep it in position ribbon can be sewn to each side of the hat, so that it slips over the back of the hair.

A little posy of flowers on the front of the hat would give it that "little different" look.

You'll also be interested to know that the beret-type of hat is going to be worn a lot again this autumn. Most of us like this style, because it is so comfortable. But it must be gay as well. And nothing brightens a beret like a colourful feather.

(Continued from page 11)

friendly pact between themselves? And while she tried to find words to approach that pact, she took stock of Judy, principally attracted by the new, shining mascot Judy wore on her blouse.

She knew that mascot. It was the one in Mr. Solomon's shop which she herself had envied, and which she had thought of buying for five shillings. It gave her a lead.

"I like the mascot," she said. "Solomon's, wasn't it?"

"Yes. Hope it gets me selected for the Junior County match instead of you on Saturday. That," Judy added mockingly, "would be an awful blow to the Trevlyn prestige, wouldn't it? They tell me you rather fancy yourself as a hockey player. Can you do better on the field than you do on the track, by the way?"

Clara breathed hard. Oh, it was impossible! But she stood for it.

"Judy," she said, "can't we stop this—this squabbling and bickering?"

"Oh, who is?" Judy murmured, in surprise.

"Judy, stop it!" Clara broke out. "Why not let's put an end to it? We don't want our schools to be fighting each other, and that's what it's coming to, owing to this silly quarrel between you and me. Why not own up now that you took my medal for a joke, and hand it back to me?"

Judy laughed. "You still stick to that old story?" she asked.

"Judy, you have got that medal!" Clara accused.

Mockingly Judy laughed. "Now wouldn't she," she taunted, "like really to know that? So awfully tough, isn't it, that we can't see eye to eye on that question? And isn't it sweet to see you looking at me like that? You'd like to half kill me, wouldn't you, Clara Trevlyn?"

Clara felt herself getting out of hand. She knew, if this argument was prolonged a minute longer, she would be smacking Judy's face. Abruptly, without another word, she turned away.

"Good-bye!" Judy called mockingly. Clara quickened her stride, and passed out of sight.

"Good-bye!" Judy sang again, and mounted her machine, turning to wave a mocking hand as she did so. "Good-bye!"

And then, frantically and too late, she clutched at the handlebars as the cycle bumped against a large stone in the path, and the machine skidded on the greasy patch of mud which had collected round the stone, shooting her to one side.

Judy shot off the saddle, and went plunging head-first into a prickly mass of bramble-bushes. She floundered for a moment, and then set up a yell.

"Oh, my hat! Help! Help!"

"Hallo!" cried Linda Gay's voice from a distance. "Help!" cried Judy, frantically and furiously tearing bramble-branches from her clothing, scratching her arms and face. "Help, I—I can't get out!"

A rush of feet. Linda & Co., amazed, appeared on the scene. They gazed at Judy's bicycle, one wheel badly buckled now. They gazed at Judy's red, furious and scratched face. Linda blinked.

"My hat, how ever did this happen?"

"How?" Judy spluttered furiously. "How do you think it happened? You saw me talking to Clara Trevlyn, didn't you? You saw her rowing me? Well, that's how it happened!" she cried spitefully. "Clara, blaming me

for all her troubles, pushed me off my bike as I mounted, and scuttled away. And if," Judy cried, her eyes blazing, "you expect me to play in the same match with her, then you can find somebody else. I wouldn't be found walking on the same ground with such an outsider!"

"Come on; get out!" Linda said grimly. "We're going to see about this!"

Whitechester's Ultimatum!



"HALLO! You're back soon!" Barbara Redfern said, meeting Clara as she came in at the school gates.

"You've never been to Whitechester already?"

"No," Clara said, a little shortly. "Hallo! What's bitten you?" Mabel Lynn asked.

"Nothing," Clara returned curtly.

"But, Clara," Marjorie Hazeldene asked, "why didn't you see Miss Warner? You—you didn't change your mind?"

"No, I didn't. But I found out that Miss Warner was away for the day. You can't very well apologise to somebody who's not there, so I came back."

"Oh! And who told you?" Janet Jordan asked.

"Judy Croft."

Alarm at once registered itself on the faces of Clara's chums. They guessed now the reason for Clara's huffy terseness.

"Clara, you—you didn't have a row with her?" Babs breathed.

"Not exactly," Clara replied. "Oh, don't jaw about it! What about hockey practice instead? We've got the big match on to-morrow, you know Marjorie, get the team together, will you, there's a dear?"

Suspiciously and anxiously Clara's chums gazed at her. Somehow they felt a significance in the mention of Judy Croft. But Clara wouldn't tell lies, and comforted by that knowledge, they let the matter slip. Naturally, Clara wouldn't be in the most pleasant of tempers at meeting that girl.

Certainly Clara's form at the hockey practice did not suggest she had anything on her mind.

At all times Clara was reliable and good. To-day Clara was scintillating. Perhaps it was that taunt of Judy's which rang in her ears, inspiring her to do such great things, for Clara was the Cliff House's centre-half, and Judy was the Whitechester centre-forward, and as such they would be pitting their wits pretty frequently against each other on the morrow.

The opposing practice side was strong—it contained Flora Cann, Joan Carson and Georgina Skeppington of the Lower Fifth—and naturally those three were a tower of strength in the eleven. But Clara just made rings round it. Babs' eyes sparkled as they came off the pitch.

"Oh, Clara, if you play like that to-morrow—"

"I hope," Clara said firmly, "I will. Hallo!" she added, pausing. "There's Linda! Babs, she's beckoning to you."

Linda was. And with Linda was Hazel Brent and Doreen Grayson, the captain of Whitechester's Fourth Form. Urgently Linda was hailing her, and Babs, with a quick look at the suddenly flushed face of Clara—for Clara was still acutely conscious that she had not yet apologised to Miss Warner, and therefore must still be held in some disfavour by the White-

chester girls—broke away. Linda's face was serious as she came up.

"Linda, nothing wrong?" Babs anxiously asked.

"Everything," Linda replied. "I suppose Clara has told you what she did to Judy Croft this morning?"

"No. Why?"

"Well, she met Judy in the woods. They had an argument which ended in Clara pushing Judy off her bike into the bramble-bushes. We rescued her—a fine old mess she was in, too. And," Linda said, shaking her head—"oh, my hat, you should hear the to-do! We've had a special meeting of the sports committee, and—and—well we—" Linda broke off, looking away.

Babs braced herself for the trouble she sensed was coming.

"Yes? Well, what?" she inquired.

"I'm sorry," Linda mumbled—"dashed sorry! Don't blame me; I argued against it. But the committee is wild, and the committee—well, they told me to tell you, Babs, that if Clara Trevlyn plays in your team to-morrow they refuse to turn out. That's all."

THAT WAS all. But what a dismaying bombshell! What a ghastly end to all their efforts to restore harmony! What an utter and complete shattering of all enthusiasm! Either Clara must not play, or there would be no match!

What was to be done?

Only one thing at first. Clara, of course, had to be told. Clara received the news in staggered silence. Then Clara flamed out, declaring she would go and settle with Judy once and for all. It almost took force to restrain her that time.

"The only thing is," Babs said, "to call the committee together. They'll have to know."

Together the committee was called. The bombshell was burst among them. More consternation, more utter dismay, and, naturally, Clara came in for more than a fair share of accusation.

Hopeless for Clara to tell them that Judy had just moulded an accidental circumstance into a weapon with which to strike her stunning blow at her enemy. If they didn't altogether disbelieve Clara about that, there was no doubt, as Rosa Rodworth pointed out, that the feud had been her fault from the first, and they all ought to have foreseen that it might end up in a flare-up like this. The question was—how to meet the crisis?

Clara was their captain. Clara was their tower of strength, the inspiration of the side. Whitechester at all times were hot stuff. Without Clara they couldn't hope to win.

The committee, arguing, wrangling, could come to no solution.

Yet, strangely, all through that meeting hot-headed Clara sat silent and thoughtful. Bitter as the realisation was, she had to face the Whitechester ultimatum. Upon her depended whether the match was to be played or not.

Whitechester thought she was a rotten sport. Whitechester thought she had her knife into Judy for no just reason, and so did most of her colleagues. If it was proved to Whitechester—and to Cliff House—that the boot was on the other foot, that Judy herself was at the bottom of all the trouble—ah, then things might assume a very different complexion indeed!

A grim glimmer of understanding came into Clara's blue eyes as she followed that line of reasoning.

It seemed for once that Clara, never very prolific in ideas, had something on her mind.

It was she who ended the meeting when the meeting, worried stiff, was almost losing its temper. In tones mild and gentle for Clara, she said:

"Let's postpone this, shall we? No sense in talking and talking. Leave matters as they stand at the moment."

"In your hands?" Rosa glowered.
 "In my hands," Clara said patiently.
 "After all, you can't make me resign unless I want to. I've an idea, though, that we may clear this situation up," she added thoughtfully. "Anyway, I'll promise you this—the match shall be played."

"Without you?" Diana Royston-Clarke sniffed.

"Never mind," Clara said, as she rose. "Babs, can I have a word with you?"

The meeting broke up. Back into Clara's study Babs followed her, wondering at that thoughtful look on the Tomboy's face. Clara hesitated as she closed the door. She was still strangely thoughtful.

Her first words rather surprised Babs.

"Babs, you remember yesterday in the tuckshop Judy was broke—so broke, in fact, that she had to borrow five shillings from Linda?"

"Well, yes," Babs agreed.
 "Did she spend all that five shillings?"

"I imagine so," Babs said. "If she didn't spend it all she wouldn't have had more than a few coppers change, I should think."

"Meaning," Clara said, "she never would have been able to afford to buy a mascot from Solomon's for another five bob?"

"Well, no," Babs said.

"But," Clara said, her eyes beginning to glimmer, "when I saw her this morning she had that mascot on. That means that she'd bought it from Solomon, and to buy it from Solomon she must have dug up that money from somewhere. Solomon's is closed now, isn't it?" she added.

"Well, yes," Babs said. "But, Clara, I don't follow."

"Never mind," Clara said. "I've got an idea, that's all. If the idea's a wash-out no harm's done. If the hunch I've got turns up trumps—well, I think there'll be a surprise in store for somebody. Now, Babs, I want you to do something for me. When Whitechester arrive for the match to-morrow I shan't be here. But I want you to hold my place open till the very last minute."

"But, Clara, Whitechester—"
 "I'll see to them," Clara said abruptly.

And that was all Clara would say. Whatever scheme was in her mind was obviously meant to be carried out by herself alone. Babs was puzzled, and, knowing the Tomboy, a little apprehensive. But she was loyal enough to carry out Clara's wishes.

Soon after breakfast next morning Clara, without a word, disappeared, and Babs, gathering the team together, led them to the dressing-room just as the Whitechester party rolled up. An elated Judy, wearing the mascot which had been such a point in Clara's mysterious conversation yesterday, was, of course, among them.

"Hallo! Clara not about?" she asked, as she stepped down from the coach.

"No," Babs said.
 "She isn't playing, then?" Judy asked, her eyes shining.

"Well," Babs said, "does it look like it?"

"And the selectors—are they here?" Judy eagerly asked.

"Yes; there, on the veranda of the pavilion," Bessie Bunter replied. "But, I say, you know, it's a bit thick I'm not in the team! Babs, do you think I might give them an exhibition while you're dressing?"

"After which," Leila said, "they wouldn't want to see the match. We should spend the rest of the morning in reviving them. Think up another one, old Rolypolyskins!"

There was a chuckle—not a very happy one, however. Nobody except Judy was feeling happy, indeed. Cliff House was apprehensive, for what was the home eleven without Clara? Whitechester, because they had, after all, forced Clara out of the match, were a trifle constrained. But Judy was bubbling.



A WORD FROM HILDA RICHARDS

in answer to just a few of her many correspondents

enjoying her pages so much, and she hopes you'll continue to find many useful hints and ideas in her articles.

BETTY CAPLE (Uley, Glos.).—So glad to hear from you, Betty. Yes, Jemima's left eye is rather weak—but she hasn't told anyone whether it is strictly necessary for her to wear her monocle or not! Some of her chums believe it is just one of her little affectations. You'd be a Second Former if you were at Cliff House. My Cliff House stories appear only in the *SCHOOLGIRL*, the "Schoolgirls' Own Library," and the "School Friend Annual," my dear.

PATRICIA JOHNSON (Scunthorpe, Lincs.).—Your nice little letter certainly didn't bore me, Patricia! The age of the Second Formers at Cliff House range from 8 to 11. (There is no First Form.) Lower Third Formers are 12, Upper Third Formers 13, Fourth Formers 14, Lower Fifth-Formers 15, Upper Fifth Formers 16, and Sixth Formers 17 to 18. Most girls leave at 18, though some stay on for a few months. Write again, won't you?

BETTY BLACK (Blackpool, Lancs.).—Thank you so much for writing again—and for a very sweet letter, too. My dog, Juno, who is keeping very well just now, sends a pawshake to Mickey, and one to you as well. Do tell me all your latest news when next you write, Betty. Make it a long letter, won't you?

LESLEY BURMEISTER (East London, South Africa).—I was very pleased to hear from you again, Lesley. It was quite some time since you had written, wasn't it? You can write to Patricia at this office, and I'm sure she will be delighted to hear from you. Yes, you'd be in the Second Form if you went to Cliff House. Bye-bye for the present!

RITA HUTSON (Hove, Sussex).—Here's that printed reply you were looking forward to, my dear. How is Bobbie, your sweet little puss? I'm sure you and your sisters are very fond of him. Do Betty and Audrey both read our paper, I wonder? Give them my love, Rita—and don't forget I shall look forward to hearing from you again soon.

VALERIE McQUEEN (Wallasey, Cheshire).—Many thanks for your delightful little letter, Valerie. You would be in the Upper Third, with Doris Redfern and her cheery friends, if you went to C.H. I'm hoping to feature Jack Trovlyn and Dulcia Fairbrother together again before long. Yes, Jack and Dulcia certainly are very close chums. Best wishes, my dear.

BETTY WILKINSON (Knuttsford, Cheshire).—You would also be an Upper Third Former if you went to C.H., Betty. And I'm sure you'd love being with Doris Redfern, Madge Stevens, and their chums. How are Bouncer and your other pets? Bouncer sounds a very frisky little chap. My Juno sends him a tailwag and a large "woof."

EILEEN UZZELL (Ashbourne, Derbyshire).—You, too, would be an Upper Third Former if you went to C.H. (Goodness, what a large Form it would become if all you nice readers went there!) Patricia was delighted to hear you are

"They're here—they're here!" was all she could breathe, and her eyes went to the seats in which the selectors sat talking to Miss Charmant and Miss Matthews of Whitechest. "My hat! Wait till they see me!" she added breathlessly.

"Shall we go and change?" Linda asked, with a chill in her voice. She had no use for swank, and she was feeling particularly bad about Clara—a girl she had always liked, and who, she knew, would make all the difference in the do-or-die struggle now about to take place.

The whole of Cliff House was feeling something like that, too.

Almost without enthusiasm the Cliff House team changed. Many times that morning already they had questioned Babs as to what was going to happen.

and how Babs' heart leapt as Clara alighted from it! And after Clara, an elderly, bearded man.

"My hat!" she gasped. "Mr. Solomon! What—what on earth has Clara brought him here for?"

Then Babs was conscious that the Whitechester team had paused in their knock-about. They had seen Clara, too. They were frowning.

"Here, Babs," cried Eva Mann, "Clara's coming! Have you been waiting for her?" she added suspiciously.

"I have," Babs said.
 The Whitechester team glowered.

"But you know she isn't playing!" said Hilda Rayne angrily. "If she does I'm jolly well going to walk off!"

"Me, too!"
 "And me!"

"Oh, my hat, just a minute, please!" pleaded Babs desperately. "Please wait until Clara—"

"Why should we?"

"We told you we wouldn't play if she did."

Babs gulped. Fortunately Clara was running up then, Mr. Solomon in tow. The Tomboy's face was very flushed and excited. She disregarded the hostile looks of the Whitechester team.

"Linda," she cried, "please will you line your team up?"

Linda Gay stared.

"But what—"

"Please!" Clara cried; and as the Whitechester girls, with some hesitation, came up, she nodded to Mr. Solomon. "Now, Mr. Solomon, do you see the girl?"

The elderly shopkeeper blinked. He walked down the line.

"Why," he exclaimed suddenly, and pointed at Judy Croft—Judy, who had suddenly stepped back and was averting her head—"that's the girl!" he cried.

"And you've got the medal, Mr. Solomon?" Clara asked.

"Certainly!" The man produced Clara's missing medal from his pocket. "And that is the girl who sold it to me—yesterday morning. You remember, miss?" he added.

Judy's face was the colour of chalk.

"I—I—I—"

"Here, what's this?" Linda Gay cried incredulously.

"What is it?" Clara's eyes were blazing now. "It's a show-down!" she said. "None of you would believe Judy stole my medal, but I knew it all the time. Well, now I've proved it. Judy sold that medal yesterday to Mr. Solomon in order to buy that mascot she's wearing, and Mr. Solomon is here to prove it. And if," Clara cried triumphantly, "she didn't steal it in the first place, how could she have sold it?"

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Linda, and her face turned scarlet. "Then—then all the time—"

"All the time," Clara said, "you've been barking up the wrong tree! I'll own I haven't been the most helpful sort of idiot, but what would you do if you knew that another girl was sticking to your property, and had got you put out of your own team? It's been Judy's fault all along—Judy, with her rotten lies, her sneaking treachery, and her plots! Well, are you satisfied now?"

"Judy!" Linda cried, and all Whitechester turned on that girl. "Judy, you—you sneaking let-down!"

Judy's face was quivering.

"Hang you!" she cried. "Hang you! How was I to know—I mean—oh rats!" she flared out. "Well, what if I did do it? I did it for the school, didn't I? I did it because I wanted to be the one to catch the selectors' eyes and get the honour of playing in the county team for Whitechester!"

They all stared at her in disgust.

"And you'd have let Clara be barred from her own side?"

"Well—" Judy hesitated.

"I see!" Linda's face was contemptuous. "In that case, Judy, there's only one thing for it. You just don't play, that's all!"

"Oh, but she does!" Clara said. "Let her—please! If Judy fancies her luck, now's the time for her to put it to the test. And, in any case, we want to play you at your fullest and best strength. The only condition we make is that I play for my side as captain."

But that was hardly in the question now, Linda's eyes glowed as she looked at the Tomboy. Really Clara was a sport, and really, considering Judy was

their best player, they would have missed her. She nodded.

"Well, that's jolly sporting!" she said. "We agree. The match is on, then?"

"Give me three minutes to change," Clara said.

She was less than that. But during even that slight interval the news travelled round the field like wildfire. Gloomy Cliff House faces brightened. And what a cheer Clara received when she came out!

Ready for battle was Clara. She'd play the game of her life!

She did.

That match, from the Cliff House point of view, was all Clara. Never had Clara been more on her mettle. Inspired by the knowledge that she was free of suspicion at last—inspired, too, by the fact the selection committee were watching her—she went all out from the first whistle.

But more than anything was Clara inspired by the fact that this was Cliff House's greatest match of the season, that she meant her own side to win, whatever the cost. Marvellous was Clara.

Marvellous, too, in rather a fierce, vengeful way was Judy. Judy, too, was making this the game of her life. Brilliant in this match was Judy, for it was her one hope of saving her face at Whitechester. Judy's big aim was to catch the selectors' eyes. Almost contemptuously she dismissed the shadow that overhung her. She set herself out to overmaster Clara and show the two schools that when it came to real hockey there was only one girl in it.

But—

There was a stumbling block in Judy's way. That was Clara.

It was Clara who checked that first fiery rush of Judy's towards the Cliff House goal; Clara who neatly robbed her, and, carrying the ball into the Whitechester half, scored first blood for Cliff House!

It was Clara, somehow, whom she always found in front of her. Clara smashing up her most scheming tactics, her most brilliant moves. Three times in that first half it was Clara who prevented an almost certain goal, and Clara who led her team off the field leading one—nil.

Second half. Judy was desperate then. She had to score. Bully-off again, and then Whitechester were away. Then Linda got a goal. What

a cheer! It was followed in five minutes by another goal from Babs, led up to by an almost miraculous pass from Clara's stick.

Then, five minutes before the end, Judy got her opportunity. Grabbing the ball in midfield, she raced, with a clear field in front of her, towards the Cliff House goal. It seemed certain that she would score! The match was going to be a draw!

But it wasn't. For even as Judy prepared to shoot a figure raced seemingly from nowhere, swept the ball from under Judy's very nose, and cleared. And Judy, turning, saw Clara Trevlyn. Her temper blazed. Almost before she knew what she was doing she had raised her hockey stick and struck Clara on the arm.

Immediately the game came to a standstill, while a hiss went up from all over the field. Miss Warner, of Whitechester, who was in charge of the game, ran forward.

"Judy, that was despicable, a cad-dish thing to do!" she cried. "Leave the field! Leave it at once!"

"But—but—"

"Go!"

Another hiss as Judy—her cup of bitterness full, and white and quivering—went off, breaking into a run as a storm of cat-calls followed her. Hopeless, then, for Whitechester. And in that last three minutes Cliff House scored two other goals—one from Diana, and the other from Clara. From the pavilion Judy watched them with bitter, brooding face.

And then—

The whistle. The match was ended. Glowering and sick, Judy saw the crowd flock on the field; saw it catch the laughing Tomboy Clara, carrying her shoulder-high; saw she the selectors smilingly coming forward to meet the procession; she heard the head of the committee's words.

"And, Miss Trevlyn, I have pleasure in informing you that you will be selected to play for the junior county team—"

She turned away, quivering. Tempestuously she groped for her clothes. Outside she heard cheers—whole-hearted, rousing cheers—welling up from throats that belonged to both Whitechester and Cliff House.

"Good old Clara! Three cheers for Clara Trevlyn!"

"Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

One moment a storming, vindictive enemy to someone who stands in the way of her ambitions; the next, a tender, compassionate friend to someone in need of help.

That is Diana Royston-Clarke—Firebrand of the Fourth Form—a girl of amazing contrasts. When someone else seems likely to rob her of glory and honour at a big art exhibition, she strikes back ruthlessly. And when Barbara Redfern & Co. stand by the girl Diana is attacking, she turns on them, too. Yet, quite in secret, she is allowing that finer, lovable side of her strange nature to have full play. HILDA RICHARDS has never written a more dramatic, appealing story than—



COMPLETE this week. Another delightful story featuring that likeable girl—

KIT OF RED RANCH



Not a Laughing Matter!

"SO-LONG, Ned! I'll be seeing yer some time."

Kit Hartley flicked her right hand to the broad brim of her hat and smiled good-bye to Ned Ferguson. Ned's father owned a ranch some way across the plain from Red Ranch, where Kit lived with her dad, but the Hartleys and the Fergusons were old friends.

"Yeah, Kit, I'll be seeing yer," nodded Ned. "Come over some time and we've a bit of something to eat. Mebbe we c'd hit some music out of that joanna."

"Love to!" Kit declared. "But say, do you remember?"

"Will I ever forget?" said Ned.

"You mean the feud?" asked Kit. "I'll never forget it, and we'll certainly have to make sure it doesn't start again. It sure was a pop-eyed feud, Ned."

"Yeah, your boys have certainly got numb skulls!" agreed Ned merrily.

Kit ceased laughing.

"Oh, yeah! I had an idea that—"

And then, realising that something like a feud was starting again, or, at any rate, an argument that might lead to one, she just waved a gloved hand in farewell and rode on.

When Kit had come back from school not long ago she had found a state of feud between the Fergusons and her father's men. There had been shooting, firing of stacks, damage—Fergusons against Hartley, six of one and half a dozen of the other.

Kit, with common sense, tact, and shrewdness, had put an end to the feud, and now, chuckling at the memory of how something deadly serious had ended in good humour, she let her horse Pete drift on.

But like a flash of light, next moment Kit turned in her saddle, and Pete jerked his head up. For from behind, unmistakable sound, had come the bark of a six-shooter.

"Now, who* was that?" Kit murmured.

As she spoke she saw. A man with a mouse-coloured shirt and drab breeches stepped down from amongst the trees just up on the mountainside. There was a gun in his hand, and as Kit watched, he brought it down from cheek to shoulder level.

Again there came a ringing report, just as Kit wheeled Pete and rode hard at the man.

She had never in her life seen the man before, but she saw whom it was he fired at—Ned! And the second shot whipped off Ned's hat.

"Hey, you!" yelled Kit.

The man turned to her for a second, and she saw his swarthy, narrow face; then she ducked as he levelled his gun at her, and waited for the report.

**THANKS TO
A MISTAKE**

the old feud between the Hartleys and the Fergusons was renewed. But very soon both sets of rivals were feeling extremely small

**THANKS TO
KIT HARTLEY**

The report did not come, and Kit, looking up, saw that he was gone from sight, having aimed at her just to make her do the very thing she had done while he slipped away.

"Mutt that I am! Might have guessed he wouldn't shoot," Kit told herself as she rode on, standing on the stirrups, hallooing to Ned.

Ned, twice fired at, had taken no chances, but rode out of range—so far, indeed, that Kit's sudden call did not carry to him.

"Well, s'long as he doesn't get a crazed idea it was one of our boys, it's all right. But I'd like to know who it was practising shooting on him," Kit mused, as she turned back for home.

The first thing she did on reaching the ranch was to hail Bill, the foreman. Bill, a burly man with a grizzled moustache, stepped up to her, touching his hat.

"Lo, Miss Kit, what's bitin' yer? Bin ridin' purty hard by the look o' Pete."

"Yes, reckon I have. There was a

greaser on the mountain, takin' a pot-shot at Ned Ferguson. My tip's to go out and get him, if he's still there, before the Fergusons get the idea it might have been one of our boys, and another feud starts."

"I'm kinder busy," he said slowly. "I don't reckon I got time to go huntin' all the guys who want to take a shot at Ned Ferguson."

Kit's eyes glinted.

"Not even if our boys get th' blame?"

Bill grunted.

"Orl right. What's the gink like?" he said.

Kit described him, and with obvious reluctance Bill rode off.

Naturally, when her dad asked where Bill was she had to explain that he was hunting a killer on the mountains.

"H'm!" said her father. "Long as the Fergusons don't see him there, and, getting wrong ideas, shoot at him."

"They won't," said Kit easily. "But mebbe Bill'll see that greaser marksman."

She rather expected Bill back in half an hour, and was mildly surprised when an hour went by without a sign of him. At an hour and a half, Kit grew uneasy.

"Gee, dad! Hope the greaser didn't get Bill!" she muttered.

"Get Bill? Not likely. Not unless there's two of them, one standing behind and the other in front," said her father. "You can rest assured that Bill—say—what's that noise—"

Kit knew what it was—laughter; and

she rushed out into the compound to see what had caused it.

When she did, she pulled up, staring.

A horse came riding into the compound. On its back, arms tied with a lariat, was a rider who sat wrong way round, whose hat was inside out on his head, and who was bedecked with leaves, and blindfolded.

"Hey—set me free, boys! It's me—Bill!" he choked.

Kit was the first to help him. She snatched a knife and severed his bonds, cutting free, as she did so, a sheet of card that hung from his chest. On the back was an advertisement for a patent food, on the front a message in pencil.

"Fergusons ride forward and shoot forward—when you're looking and ready Hartleys."

By

Elizabeth Chester

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

BETWEEN OURSELVES



MY DEAR READERS,—I am feeling very pleased with myself to-day. Oh, but please don't get the idea that it's the smug sort of pleasure people get when they're very self-satisfied with themselves. It's the kind of pleasure you get when you've prepared a surprise for your friends—and a surprise about which they haven't the faintest inkling, and one, moreover, which you're certain they'll like.

For I have prepared a surprise for some friends of mine. The friends are quite well-known to you, too. In fact, they're—

But no! I'm not going to tell you WHO those lucky people are at this stage. Quite contrarily I want to branch off at a tangent.

YOUR LETTERS

during the past few months have shown me how much you love a certain type of story.

You may remember that when I published the first Robin Hood and Lady Fayre stories, I was most anxious to know what you thought of them. They were, of course, such a "different" type of feature from anything else that had appeared in our paper.

Well, I soon knew your opinions. You were thrilled by those tales; you adored Lady Fayre and admired Robin Hood immensely. And you were, quite naturally, very sorry to bid them good-bye.

And then, when we started the "Kit of Red Ranch" series I wondered—not with any qualms, though—exactly how you would regard them. Just as I had expected, you have been revelling in them, too. And so I have learned one very important and very gratifying thing.

You like these unusual stories, providing they have glamour and colour and romance, even though they are so different from the features in our past programmes! In fact, as

some of you have actually said in your letters, you want more of them.

Which, after rather a preamble, brings me back to that surprise I was talking about. YOU are the friends I mentioned; it is YOU who are to have the surprise. And the surprise, needless to say, takes the form of yet another unusual series, quite different from the Kit and Lady Fayre stories, but just as fascinating.

Full particulars will appear NEXT WEEK.

And now to chat about the rest of next Saturday's superb programme. First of all, there is the enthralling, Long Complete Cliff House School story.

"DIANA THE FAIRY GODMOTHER!"

That is the title. The "star" of course, is Diana Royston-Clarke, tempestuous "Firebrand" of the Fourth Form; the girl whose nature is such a strange mingling of contrasts, one moment kind-hearted and tender to those in need; the next, ruthless in crushing all who stand in the way of her ambitions.

In this story Diana's ambitions are centred round an Art Exhibition which is being held near Cliff House. An award is to be offered for the best painting submitted by a schoolgirl, as well as one for open competition.

Naturally, Barbara Redfern, as the finest artist in the Fourth Form, decides to compete. Diana, however, sees a chance of glory for herself by getting a young model, employed by the chums, to paint her. But it is not long before trouble brews, and the model is taken under the wing of the chums. Then it is that the worst side of Diana is revealed. From that moment onwards she sets out to ruin the young model's chances. And yet, all the while, the best side of Diana's nature is causing her to befriend an old artist who seems to have fallen on evil times.

I won't say more about this grand story except that there is a surprise at the end which will really astound you.

As usual, our next issue will contain further thrilling developments in Isabel Norton's fine Girl Detective story; another delightful COMPLETE "Kit of Red Ranch" story; and more of Patricia's Bright and Useful Pages, so do order your copy well in advance, won't you?

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

"Fergusons, is it?"
"Fergusons!" roared Bill. "That's who it is. Ambushed me. Six of 'em wearing black cloaks and masks on their faces, the skunks! And took my gun!"

A roar of anger rose from the boys, and there was a rush to horses.

In another minute they would have charged out of the place ready to sweep down on the Fergusons, and tie up the cap'n or Ned in revenge; but Kit managed to make herself heard.

"Listen, listen, hot-heads!" she called. "The Fergusons think it was one of you took that shot at Ned! That's why they tied up Bill! So wait—before you do anything crazy, let 'em know it wasn't one of us. Then it'll be up to them to apologise to Bill."

Bill gaped at her.

"Apologise! What d'ye reckon this is, Miss Kit? A gel's skule? Apologise! The ginks who tied me have got

to bite the dust; they've got to take it good and proper, and not just say 'pardon, my fault, I'm sure!' said Bill, in a tremble, giving a girlish wriggle that convulsed the cow-punchers.

Kit shrugged her shoulders, though her hands were clenched.

"O.K. Bill. And then it'll be their turn, and they'll do something worse. And then you'll do something for that—and the feud will be on again."

"The feud is on."

"Then count me out!" snapped Kit. She swung to the ranch-house.

"Where you going?" asked Jem.

"To get some bandages made," answered Kit. "To make sure there's plenty of iodine; to look up the fire insurance policy, and to warn the doctor to be on tap. I'll be kept busy if the feud's on. And one thing more, Bill—"

"Yeah?" frowned Bill.

"If you're going to soak people in oil and cover 'em in sawdust—your favourite trick—you'll need a supply of sawdust. I know where there's plenty of it—"

"Yeah? Where?" said Jem.

"You're all cracked," Kit retorted. "If you stand on your heads awhile, enough sawdust ought to fall out to cover all the Fergusons."

With that parting shot she turned on her heel.

Then she marched into the ranch-house, far more worried than cross. But she did not go at once to find bandages, even though there had been a note of seriousness in her grim humour.

The time for bandages might unhappily come; but Kit's hope was that it would not come. Hope alone could not ensure that, however. She would have to plan and act.

"And there's just about one way of fixing it," mused Kit. "I've got to make them laugh at themselves—even Bill!"

A Good Plan, But—!

KIT listened carefully as she paused on the landing of the ranch-house. Not a sound could be heard. It was in the dead of night, and everyone else was asleep.

Soft of tread, Kit reached the entrance door, unlocked it, and passed out into the night, carrying a large tin can.

The watch-dog growled, but soft words from Kit were enough to still him, and she tested the wind.

It was blowing away from the ranch-house towards the open plain—and that was how she wanted it to blow. If it hadn't been in that direction she would have had to postpone her plan.

For Kit's plan was to start a mild fire. It would be a harmless fire; she was only setting light to an old shed that her father had said was to be torn down the next day. But there was an important purpose behind the idea.

In her hand Kit had a tin of kerosene just to get things going, and a box of matches. It was all she needed for the job.

Presently, standing in the shed, she spilled the paraffin, threw down a match, and ran out.

In a moment the flames took hold, roaring and hissing; the wood crackled, steam and smoke arose, and the furnace raged. The heat was terrific, but the wind took it well away from the ranch-house or anything else that could be harmed.

Kit reached the house, put the kerosene tin in her room, and prepared to arouse everybody. Kicking off her boots and putting slippers and a dressing gown over her outdoor clothes, she first woke her father.

"Hey, dad!" she yelled, rapping on his bed-room door.

"Whasser marrer?" he mumbled.

"The old shed's on fire!"

"What?"

He jumped out of bed, and she heard him hurl up the window. Next moment he was yelling at the top of his voice, and firing rounds of ammunition into the air.

Pandemonium broke loose then; lights shone, men rushed out, and the pump and the taps were got going. Buckets clanked, and yells sounded.

Kit ran down in her full outdoor clobber, and joined in.

"Come on, boys—only the shed, luckily," she cried.

"Only the old shed! Mebbe they didn't know it was so old," said Bill.

"They?" asked Kit innocently.

"The Fergusons!"

"Yeah, that's it—the Fergusons!"
out in another puncher.

"Reckon I sawed some figures running away," grunted Jem. "Bout half-dozen—"

"Take half a dozen Fergusons to fire an old shed."

Kit smiled to herself; the scheme was working.

She joined energetically in the fire darning, and with so many at work the flames were soon beaten.

"But it was kerosene all right," said Kit's father grimly. "It was getting a tight hold until I shovelled the earth on it. That fire didn't start accidental."

"We all know that, boss," said Bill. "For all the Fergusons cared, the ranch could have been burned right out," grunted Kit's dad.

Kit intervened as there came a hush. "But you were smashing the shed up to-morrow. It hasn't done any real harm, dad," she said.

Her father turned to her sternly. "Now, Kit, I know you like some of the Fergusons, and I'm not saying they're all bad by a long way, but sense is sense, lass. It's the principle of the thing that counts. Did they know the shed wasn't worth much? No. They reckoned it was valuable, or they wouldn't have fired it."

"Hear, hear, boss!" said Bill, and an approving murmur came from the others.

Kit nodded calmly.

"Well said, dad!" she murmured.

"So what? What do you aim to do?"

"Show 'em we don't take such things lying down," he answered grimly.

"We're going to start a fire for them."

"That's the spirit, boss! I'm game!"

"And me—"

There was uproar for a few minutes, but Kit waited patiently until it started to die down. Then she butted in.

"There's just one thing, dad," she said quietly. "I think you're being hasty. Just because the shed was set fire to, it doesn't prove it was the Fergusons—"

"Kit, that's enough!" he ordered sternly. "Not another word!"

Kit put her arms akimbo.

"Listen, dad! I know they didn't fire it."

"Oh, yeah?" said Jem. "Well, who did?"

Every eye was on her, everyone was listening, waiting for her next words.

"I did," said Kit.

The hush was not broken for a minute or so; then several laughed.

"You did, Kit? Don't talk bosh!" said her dad. "Seems like you'd say anything to shield the Fergusons. Why should you set fire to this shed. Tell me that? Have you some spite against us?"

"I haven't," said Kit. "But I just wanted to prove how plumb crazy this feud business is. I set fire to a shed, and you all jump to the idea it was the Fergusons. You don't wait to make a proper investigation. It's six of one and half a dozen of the other, and—"

Her father held up his hand.

"Kit," he said huskily, "am I to believe you set fire to your own father's shed?"

"It was worth nothing, but it proved what drivel this feud is!" Kit retorted.

"Yes, I did set fire to the shed! Send someone to my room, and you'll find the kerosene there. And it's a good thing I did do it, because it proves that none of you stop and think. If I kicked over a tin can you rush off and shoot a Ferguson! If I—"

"That's enough," said her father gruffly. "On your word of honour you did this?"

Kit looked at him anxiously, thinking she had never seen him so grim and stern. To own up was not going to be pleasant, even though that was the whole point of her plan.

"Why, dad—"

But there was no time for her confession. One of the boys came rushing up in a state of great excitement.

"It was the Fergusons all right, boss. I've got proof—"

"Proof! What is it?" cried Kit's dad, while Kit herself stared at the cowboy in wonder.

"Why, a dozen cows have been stolen—stolen while the whole ranch was busy with the fire. Guess the Fergusons lit the fire to cover them while they stole the cattle!"

Kit could say nothing; she was completely flabbergasted. But her father wheeled upon her.

"Well, and did you steal the cows, too, Kit?" he asked.

But he did not wait for her answer. He ran forward, shouting.

"Come on, boys! To horses—every man jack of you! Straight to the Fergusons, keeping cover of the hills! We'll catch them red-handed with the haul!"

Kit was numbed. She could not guess the truth—whether the Fergusons had taken the cows or not; but even if they hadn't, they were to be blamed for the theft, and for the fire, too—for her fire!

"My golly!" gasped Kit. "Now I've done it! If they set fire to the Fergusons' shacks in revenge—"

It was just what they meant to do; for she saw Jem ride by with a large drum of kerosene, and someone yelled: "Get plenty of matches!"

Kit hesitated only for a moment; then she ran for her horse, flung the saddle on to him, fastened it, and rode out into the night.

Her destination was the same as

theirs; but she was not going the longer way, taking cover. She was going to ride over the plains, the direct way, and hard as Pete could travel.

If she were to stop a fearful conflagration, and perhaps wounding and killing, Kit had to ride as though in a thousand guinea race!

Ambushed!

"HEY, Cap'n Ferguson!"
Kit had reached the other ranch, and now she yelled at the top of her voice with such lustiness that a window opened. It was Ned who looked out, sleepy-eyed.

"Who's there?" he called.

"Kit Hartley! Jump up! There's trouble brewing!"

"Trouble?"
Briefly Kit explained about her fire and the object of it, and mentioned the stolen cows.

"We haven't stole any cows," said Ned. "Why—"

A running figure showed in the darkness, and next moment a cowboy hurled himself at Kit and took her arms.

"Got you! An' a Hartley! Hey—Mr. Ned! I've got one of 'em! Th' girl!"

Ned stared down as Kit struggled angrily.

"What's wrong, Tim? I know it's Miss Kit! Let her go!"

"Not till she's explained where a dozen of our cows have gone to! It's the Hartleys!"

Kit gave a jump at that. Another dozen stolen!

"My gosh! It's the same gang!" she gasped. "You're blaming us, and we're blaming you! There's a set of crooks arranging this feud. One of 'em pretended to shoot at you, Ned, and now, to turn us against each other, they're stealing the cattle! Quick, Ned!"

His father came to the window and was told what had happened.



"GO on, scram!" the man snarled. "And tell your dad we're goin' to wipe the whole lot of you out!" Tensley Kit and Redwing stared at the rustler who had caught them.

"By gosh, this is mighty serious!" he said anxiously. "What do you figure best to do, Kit?"

"Go out and meet my dad's boys, of course—and don't take any guns. If you're unarmed they won't start gun-play. And the next thing to do is to find Redwing—"

"Redwing—the Redskin gel? What's she to do with it?" asked Cap'n Ferguson.

But Kit was already riding off, making for the hills where her Redskin friend had pitched her solitary camp. For Redwing was the one person who could help now.

With Pete slowing to a walk, sweating and tired, Kit reached the Redskin girl's little camp, to find that Redwing's alert ears had already heard her.

"Miss Kit?" came Redwing's soft voice.

"Lo, yes, it's me. Quick, Redwing! Are you dressed?"

"Started dress soon as heard you, Miss Kit."

Redwing trotted into view, and Kit leaned down and patted her cheek.

"Redwing, could you follow the trail of stolen cows," she asked, "at night?"

The Redskin girl nodded slowly.

"Redwing try," she said.

"Then come on!"

Redwing mounted her horse, which she rode bareback, and presently the two were on their way to the Red Ranch. Kit wasted no time there. She went to the cattle corral and gave Redwing her head.

How her Redskin friend could track in the dark—Kit did not know; but stooping, groping, peering, Redwing picked up the trail, while Kit followed her, leaving the horses to find their own way.

Now and again Redwing hesitated; for a while she did not seem quite sure of her way, but not for long. Then, in sure, confident manner, she followed the trail.

But even for one so experienced in tracking as Redwing, it was not easy to follow the trail. To add to the inconvenience of the darkness, the Redskin girl had to contend with the many imprints of the ranch horses' feet. Quite a number of times she wandered away by herself, but returned a few minutes later with the same impassive look on her face.

"No good!" she said shortly. "Not trail!"

And then they continued to follow the same old track of hoof-marks. And despite the bewildering number of them—all shapes and sizes—it proved to be the right track after all.

It soon became obvious to Kit where it was leading—the hidden stream in a cleft of the hill; and a likelier place for hiding cattle she couldn't imagine. The stream, shallow and winding, ran out of sight, and the cattle could be led along it to the far side.

"Looks like we've tracked them down and—"

Kit broke off, gripping Redwing's arm; for just ahead in the darkness she saw shadowy shapes. The missing cattle!

"And all left on their lonesome, my golly!" she gasped. "All we have to do—"

"Stick 'em up!" said a harsh voice. A torchlight flashed for a moment, and Kit saw a gun levelled at her. Without hesitation her hands went up, and Redwing's followed. Redwing's skill had led them to the cattle—but unguardedness had led them into this ambush.

The thieves—the framers of the feud

—were only a few paces away, but Kit was helpless, too. She could not see them, capture them—or do anything but keep her hands up.

"Smart girls, eh?" sneered the man's voice.

Kit had it on the tip of her tongue to denounce him, to accuse him of mean treachery, but a flash of thought saved her from the blunder.

Of a sudden she saw what was the one thing to do in this crisis and what she must not do. Above all, she must not let them think that she suspected the truth. Therefore she had to make them believe that she thought they were Fergusons.

"All right!" snapped Kit. "You're Fergusons. I know it, and dad knows it. Are you here, Ned?"

There was whispering and then a husky reply:

"Ned's here, all right; but he's not talking to you, smart gel."

Kit had had time to think again, and made artful reply.

"All right, Fergusons; you're not as smart as you think," she said. "Our spies are everywhere. We heard the whole lot of you were riding to our ranch. You'll get a hot reception—really hot. I should reckon there can't be any one left at your ranch at all."

"No, mebbe there ain't!" retorted the voice.

Kit's plan was to get them to go to the Fergusons' ranch. Thinking it empty, they might go there to do more damage and feed the fire of the feud.

"No use keeping me prisoner. I'm going to tell dad you stole the cattle," said Kit.

That was what the man would want her to do—and she was not at all surprised by the answer that she received after some more whispering.

"All right, scrap, and tell your dad we'll wipe the whole lot of you out! Go on—get going!"

Kit needed no second invitation; she ran back and mounted Pete, while Redwing, just as quick, got astride her own horse.

"Where to?" whispered the Redskin girl.

"Fergusons'—quick as we can," replied Kit. "It's a hundred to one the crooks'll show up there—and if they do it's got to be a hot reception!"

"UNARMED? Sez you!" called Bill.

The Hartley cowboys had come a halt, faced by the Fergusons in the darkness, and Cap'n Ferguson had announced that he was unarmed.

"Listen!" he said; and then he told Kit's story of having fired the shed herself.

"And we've lost a dozen cows, too. Did you take them?" he ended.

"We did not!" denied Kit's dad.

"O.K., then. But for Kit we'd have blamed you," said Cap'n Ferguson.

Fearlessly Kit's dad rode among the Fergusons, checking the fact that they had no guns.

"It's right enough, Bill," he called, amazed. "They're unarmed!"

Bill snorted.

"No guns. Well, that's rich. We'd better share out ours. I reckon it's time to get this settled. I reckon—"

A high-pitched whistle came from the darkness, and the sound of horses' hoofs. Then up rode Kit.

"Quick—the lot of you!" she hissed. "I've located the cattle rustlers. It's ten to one they're making for your ranch, thinking you're all away. Cap'n

Ferguson, get back to the ranch and wait there in quiet and darkness. Dad—"

"Waal?" said her father curtly.

"You take the boys and cut off those crooks' retreat once they're past. You can ring 'em round."

"I dessay—if I took it serious. I dessay—"

"Horses, horses!" came a sharp cry from Redwing, who lay with her ears to the ground.

Kit's dad, Bill, and Cap'n Ferguson dismounted and listened, too.

"By gosh, it is! And we're all here. All my crowd's here!" exclaimed Kit's dad. "It can't be any of them!"

"All my whole bunch, too," responded Cap'n Ferguson. "Whoever that lot are—they're strangers! Say, Kit's right. It was a framed feud. And that gang of crooks—"

He gave the command to return to the ranch and wheeled his horse. A minute later, under cover of the hills, the Fergusons were riding for home.

"Cut the crooks off, dad!" urged Kit.

But her father was leading his men out to the plain to get behind the crooks.

Kit waited there with Redwing, and presently flashes stabbed the darkness beyond, and there came the bark of revolvers. Pale and anxious, Kit rode forward.

Ten minutes later she was at the Fergusons' ranch. But there was no scrapping, though the compound contained forty or fifty idle men, talking amongst themselves.

Kit rushed into the house, burst into the large living-room, and there halted. By the fire stood her dad and Cap'n Ferguson, shaking hands, while Bill stood by with folded arms, glaring—glaring at a group of men who sat well roped on the floor.

"Lo, Kit!" said her dad. "There they are. The ruse worked all right. Two of 'em got wounded, but there are the rest."

Kit heaved a mighty sigh and looked at the chagrined, sullen crooks.

"An ugly bunch they are, too," she declared. "Very! And— Aha! Look!" she cried, pointing to one man who had turned away from her.

"That's the one who shot at Ned."

The man made an attempt to rise, which his bonds prevented; but Ned jumped forward.

"Cut him free and give him a gun. We'll shoot it out!" he said heatedly.

But Kit intervened.

"No, you don't, Ned. They're my prisoners by right, and I want them all to go to gaol whole. Let's forget shootin'; the feud's over—although to my way of thinking it was never on."

Her dad looked at her thoughtfully and then slipped an arm about her.

"It was on all right, Kit; and but for you there'd have been burning and bloodshed. You're a wise little girl, and your old dad's just a fool!"

"Bosh!" said Kit, giving him a hug.

"But no one expects a grown man to have the sense of a girl. All I ask is—when you men think it's time to start a feud just come and talk to me."

And very solemnly and contritely Fergusons and Hartleys alike agreed that they would; for after all Kit knew best.

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

ANOTHER fascinating Kit and Redwing story next week—and also some very exciting news about a wonderful surprise.

Further gripping chapters of our thrilling Girl Detective story.



Valerie Drew's HOLIDAY MYSTERY

FOR NEW READERS.

VALERIE DREW, the famous girl detective, and her clever Alsatian dog,

FLASH, are on holiday at Sunnylands Farm, which is run as an hotel by a hard-working, likeable young girl,

DOROTHY DEAN, who is helped by her well-meaning but muddling

UNCLE NATHAN. A secret enemy is trying to drive guests from the farm. Mysterious things happen and suspicion falls upon one of the guests,

JOHNNY JEVONS, a boisterous young fellow who is a confirmed practical joker. Valerie, though puzzled by him, likes him, nevertheless, and after one of the guests leaves because of damage done to her property, she proves Johnny's innocence by exposing one of the maids. This girl leaves, and Valerie is sure she has an accomplice. She suspects a mysterious gipsy woman. Later, a barn at Sunnylands is set on fire, and a clue leads Valerie to this woman, who is named

MRS. LOGAN. She is driving a caravan when Flash, racing after her, leaps in.

(Now read on.)

By

ISABEL NORTON

moments the crunching of wheels ceased altogether. She called through the trees, and Flash answered—a different bark which, sharp with excitement, told her how relieved he was to hear her voice.

A minute later, breaking out from amongst the trees, the girl detective came upon an astonishing sight.

The brightly painted little caravan had stopped, its horse still steaming from its recent burst of energy. Close at hand, wary and watchful, stood Flash, evidently prepared to leap and seize the bridle if the horse moved another foot. He turned his head and gave a vigorous wave of his bushy tail as Valerie appeared, but still did not move. And it was naturally towards the woman herself that Valerie's eyes turned as she walked briskly to the spot.

Wearing a look of resignation, she

Just when Valerie is really getting on the trail, the unknown enemy strikes again—more disastrously than ever!

sat on a little box seat in front, her arms folded across her chest, the reins lying idly in her lap. Her eyes, which were very dark and always had a strange, penetrating quality, looked at Valerie intently.

"I'm glad you've come along," she declared. "I didn't want to sit here all day while that idiot of a dog of yours held us up like this!"

Her appearance of complete composure, which had astonished Valerie considerably, was reflected in her voice.

"I'm sorry if you've been at all inconvenienced," answered Valerie dryly. "But I called after you outside the post office."

"Then I certainly didn't hear you," declared the woman, though just for a moment her eyes avoided meeting Valerie's. "In any case, why should I take any notice of what you want me to do?" she asked quickly.

Her glance was challenging again. Valerie was ready to meet it.

"I've been looking for you for some time, Mrs. Paizi Logan," she retorted. "My name is Valerie Drew, and I ought to explain that I am a detective."

She was watching Mrs. Logan closely as she spoke, ready for any look or gesture which might suggest guilt. For the evidence against Mrs. Logan had been growing blacker than ever of late.

A scarf, dropped outside the room from which Emily, the treacherous maid, had escaped, had led Flash to trail her to the site of a hastily abandoned caravan camp. Mrs. Logan's name had been on the charred envelope found so close to the burnt dance barn. And a rag, such as she might use when painting, had been lying close to the gate, which had been opened to allow a ferocious bull to get free.

"A detective? Then are you the person," Mrs. Logan demanded unexpectedly, "who has been stealing letters from my caravan?"

For the moment Valerie was dumbfounded by the accusation.

Mrs. Logan's letters stolen? Was it really the truth? Valerie found it difficult to hide her own astonishment. If Mrs. Logan had really been robbed of letters, the evidence of the burnt envelope beside the dance-hall barn might be absolutely valueless. Any other person could have used it to fire the thatch!

"You may set your mind quite at rest," Valerie answered evenly. "I am not that kind of detective!"

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so. You certainly don't look it," answered Mrs. Logan, with a generous, unexpected smile. "To tell the truth, I quite took to you at first. I rather like the old dog, too, although he certainly looked as though he would tear me to pieces unless I stopped the van." Her expression suddenly altered. "Can you tell me what you're detecting at Sunnylands?"

Valerie was thinking intently. She still suspected there was something very queer about this woman.

"One thing I'd like to know," she countered, "is why you're so interested in Sunnylands!"

The dark-skinned woman shrugged her shoulders, and, spreading her hands expressively, smiled.

"It's a nice place, with a lot of happy

The Monkey's Prize!

JUST for a moment or two after the caravan had disappeared, a chilling dread came over Valerie Drew.

Her pet was everything in the world to her, whilst all she knew so far of the gipsy woman holding the reins, led her to believe she would stick at little to gain her own ends. What was she likely to do with an unwelcome and uninvited passenger like Flash?

Then, putting on a sharp sprint, Valerie dashed in pursuit. Turning the bend of the village street, she saw the caravan, still going at a fast speed for a horse-drawn vehicle, swerve violently to the right.

A feeling of warm relief suffused Valerie. That road led only to the coast, and there was a long incline up to the cliffs that would slow the horse down considerably.

Valerie, with her keen knowledge of the geography of the district, knew immediately that she could take a short cut through the woods, and, with luck, reach the coast as quickly as the caravan.

Turning from the road, she vaulted a stile, ran across the field beyond, and pressed along a rising woodland path.

Soon, as her path converged towards the road, she heard the grinding of the van's wheels on the broken surface. Then—unforgettable thrill—came a stern, challenging bark. She knew it came from Flash. Within a few

people staying there," she answered. "Is it any crime to be curious?"

Valerie's eyes narrowed.

"I've been asked that very same question before!" she flashed. "Did you tell Emily to ask it if she was ever called to account?"

To her dismay, Mrs. Logan merely stared at her in apparent perplexity.

"Who's Emily?" she asked. "As far as I know, I've never met her."

"Emily," said Valerie, her eyes unwavering, "was an unscrupulous maid working at Sunnylands Farm."

"Then I hope you bowled her out," commented Mrs. Logan pleasantly.

"She was helped to escape," Valerie retorted, "by the very person who had been instructing her all the time!"

"And you let her go? Tut, tut!" said Mrs. Logan, with a faint smile.

"That wasn't so clever, was it? But I'm sure you wouldn't tell me all these things without a reason. What is it?"

"To start with," said Valerie bluntly, "although you dress for the part quite well, you don't talk a bit like a gipsy."

"They never do nowadays," Mrs. Logan answered, with a mocking gleam in her eyes, "except on the films. Besides, who said I was a gipsy? I tell everyone I'm just a wandering painter."

Valerie opened her handbag. Swiftly extracting the piece of scarf and the scrap of paint-stained rag, she dramatically offered them to the woman.

"Yours?" she asked crisply.

Mrs. Logan, to her consternation, accepted them without the slightest sign of embarrassment. Turning them over carefully in her hands, she nodded thoughtfully, then looked up at Valerie. She was still faintly smiling.

"Some of my cleaning rags," she admitted calmly. "Where ever did you get hold of them?"

Valerie remained silent for several moments. If appearances counted for anything at all, the woman was, obviously speaking the truth.

"If you are as innocent as you profess, Mrs. Logan," Valerie answered at length, "how was it that just after the dance-barn roof caught alight I saw you running away?"

Mrs. Logan looked genuinely startled at last. She tried to smile; then, realising how obviously false it must appear, she glanced uneasily away. Fidgeting for a moment with the idle reins, she suddenly turned to Valerie.

"If you saw me," she replied, in a low voice, "I'll tell you what I saw. If I was near to the barn at all, it was—well, for reasons of my own, which are nothing to be ashamed of, I saw a figure. I watched a match being struck and a paper blazing up. If you don't know it already, I'll tell you now, that the thatch was fired deliberately." She paused, biting her lip. "Unfortunately I couldn't get near enough in time to see who did it."

Outwardly Valerie still appeared to be merely blandly thoughtful; inwardly she felt baffled and uneasy.

The woman was being astonishingly frank, unless her story was an invention. But it might be genuine, and the charred envelope, which had first given her Mrs. Logan's name, could easily be a false trail.

"Whoof!" Flash barked unexpectedly.

"Capito!" Mrs. Logan ejaculated at the same moment, in a tone of consternation.

Valerie turned her head sharply. There was a scurry of movement in the undergrowth alongside the road. A small, furry shape bounded into view, raced across the road, and leapt on to one of the caravan wheels. It was a little grey Capuchin monkey.

Valerie stared. She was only vaguely aware of threatening white teeth, a screwed-up, wizened face with bright beady eyes, and an angry, defiant chattering. What she stared at with dilating eyes was something the monkey grasped in its hand, holding it out towards her.

It was a small, round, gleaming brass object, the last thing she had ever expected to see in a monkey's possession.

"Naughty Capito!" Mrs. Logan scolded her pet. "Inside with you at once, and stay there next time! Away with you!"

She thrust a curtain aside, and the monkey vanished instantly into the van.

A moment later, looking up again, she met Valerie's gaze. She still appeared embarrassed and confused.

"I've been looking after him for a friend, and he escaped," she explained, as though anxious to be believed. "I'll have to return him this evening, as he's evidently not to be trusted." She smiled unconvincedly. "I've enjoyed the chat, and I hope you'll be successful in catching whoever you're after. Good-afternoon!"

Valerie remained staring after the caravan as it creaked away along the road and vanished at last from sight.

She was quite sure of one thing, and that was that Mrs. Logan had lied to her deliberately about the monkey. She knew enough about monkeys to realise the meaning of the display of trust and affection she had witnessed. The monkey was Mrs. Logan's pet, and one she had owned for some time.

And what was the little brass object it had been holding?

Valerie could only think of one explanation. It had looked to her exactly like one of the detonators attached to explosive charges used in quarrying.

Her skin seemed to shrink as she thought of what that implied. Did Mrs. Logan possess explosives? If so, for what purpose?

"If only I could find out where that monkey's been playing, and where it picked up that thing!" Valerie breathed; and, calling her pet, she added: "Seek him, Flash—the monkey! See if you can trail him, old boy!"

Flash, quickly understanding what she required of him, started off eagerly into the undergrowth, heading at once towards the cliffs.

At first it was an easy trail for him, but soon he grew obviously confused, and he was vainly trying to follow the scent when they broke from the trees. Seeing a smooth expanse of grass stretching to the edge of the cliffs, Valerie realised she had already reached popular Battleby Cove.

At almost the self-same moment a crowd of people, giving cries of excitement and pleasure at the meeting, came rushing towards her.

Seen from the Sea!

"VAL, you slacker!"

"Caught you at last! Where ever have you been?"

"We looked for you every-

where before we started out to have a dip before dinner!"

Valerie, looking up laughingly as she was surrounded by Johnny Jevons, freckled Marjorie, Peter Passleigh, and a number of the other bright sparks from Sunnylands Farm, knew she was well and truly caught this time.

She couldn't possibly go on looking for a spot where she believed the monkey had picked up the business end of an explosive charge when she wanted everyone to believe that the succession of sinister happenings at the farm had come to an end.

"Is taking Flash for a walk such a terrible crime?" Valerie laughingly countered their jesting reproaches.

"No; but we've a special treat for you, Val, old sleuth, this time!" Johnny responded, his boyish face lit by its most mischievous grin. "You haven't met Charlie yet. Charlie Deeds—Valerie Drew!" he introduced, presenting to Valerie a tall, beaming young man with reddish hair and a little brown moustache. "Charlie's just arrived at Sunnylands after bolting from the French police!"

Valerie looked at the new arrival with a friendly, but slightly critical

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No. 696.

smile. She noticed at once that he appeared to giggle. He had rather sharp features, and a wide grin that showed a lot of teeth. His manner showed that he obviously wanted to appear a very assured young fellow.

"How do you do?" exclaimed Charlie, promptly pumping Valerie's arm. "Does Johnny say these dreadful things about everyone?"

Out of the corners of her eyes Valerie noticed that he was moving his disengaged hand about in a rather furtive and puzzling manner.

"Fancy you being a detective! Are you after anyone down here yet? You don't mind me calling you Valerie, do you? I say, is this old Flash I've heard so much about?"

Valerie found it rather hard to know how to reply, for though Charles Deeds, the newcomer, asked a lot of questions, he didn't seem to want any answers to them.

"Number 'em next time, Charlie, and that'll make it easier!" Johnny suggested. "But who's coming for a swim now?"

"I say—just a minute!" protested Charlie. "It's jolly lucky that we've got a detective with us as things have turned out. I think I've been robbed!"

"What of?" asked Johnny, his mischievous eyes showing that he didn't quite know what to make of this tall, talkative young fellow. "What have you lost, old comrade? Your wool or your wits?"

"Neither," said Charlie, rather sharply. "I've just lost my watch!" He made a great pretence of going through his pockets one by one. "I know I had it only two or three minutes ago. What do you think's happened to it, Val?"

With a smile and a shrug, Valerie started to slip her arms out of her sports jacket, her expression betraying nothing of what was really going on in her mind.

"Sorry, Charlie, but it's pleasure before business this time!" she answered lightly. "I'm having a dip with the others. No need to cart all this stuff down with me when it'll make its own way down. Here goes!"

And, even as Charlie gave a startled cry, she tossed the jacket over the edge, for it to drop from sight.

"Has that idiot gone crackers completely?" gasped Johnny, as Charlie, to everyone's amazement, immediately dashed for the steps down the face of the cliff, and descended at top speed. "Who does he fancy he is—Sir Walter Raleigh?"

Valerie gave the others a gentle but meaning wink.

"It's his watch he's worried about," she smilingly explained, opening her hand to reveal it. "Charlie believed he'd slipped it into my jacket pocket without me knowing what he was doing. He apparently thinks it's still there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" There were peals of laughter from the others at Valerie's revelation—peals which broke out again as, going down the steep flight of steps at the top of the descent, they came on Charlie waiting where the path levelled out, with Valerie's jacket already over his arm. He gaped blankly when Valerie, with her sweetest smile, politely handed him his missing watch.

"No charge this time, Charlie—I always work free first time for the advertisement," Valerie told him chaffingly. "Remember me if you lose anything else, won't you?"

"Very clever indeed!" commented Charlie, his grin rather twisted, and a decidedly odd gleam in his eyes. "Perhaps you'll let me become a pupil, Valerie!"



VALERIE started as she saw what it was the mysterious gipsy woman's monkey held in his paw. It was the cap from a stick of dynamite! "Dynamite!" Valerie mused, utterly perplexed. But she felt vaguely uneasy, too.

Valerie laughed pleasantly, and they all pressed on for the cove.

It was an ideal spot for the present purpose, for there were two sets of tall rocks, humorously inscribed by Johnny in bold letters, "He's" and "She's," which made changing easy. Within a very few minutes everyone was in the water, with Flash, swimming amongst them, having the time of his life.

But, despite her own enjoyment of this sparkling, happy-go-lucky bathe, Valerie was hoping that the party would soon tire of their second dip of the day, and leave her to continue her search.

Her thoughts returned to the cliff-top where Flash had lost track of the monkey after following its scent amongst the trees, and she instinctively glanced in the same direction.

For the moment she was so astonished that she almost forgot to go on swimming.

Unless she was dreaming, she had just seen the top of someone's head raised very cautiously to peep down at the party in the water.

For anyone to look down without showing any more of themselves would involve lying flat on the grass!

What did it mean? Who could be on the cliff-tops behaving so furtively?

Unaccountably disturbed, Valerie took a strong stroke for the shore.

Scarcely had she done so than a startling flash of movement took her eyes back to the cliffs. Dumbfounded, she looked at what was happening.

A piece of solid cliff—the very spot in which the steep steps had been cut to give access to the path—had become loose and was falling!

Even as she saw it starting to drop, the sound of a dull boom, followed instantly by a heavy crashing, came to her ears.

With cries of amazement and horror, the other bathers ceased their frolics and turned to watch.

They saw the gigantic piece of cliff shooting downwards, crushing everything in its path, until, with a mighty concussion, it struck a huge outcrop of solid rock.

There, with a thunderous crashing which reverberated in booming echoes back from the cliffs, the falling mass

broke into clouds of dust, and a hundred flying fragments which came rolling and pitching towards the line of rocks where the bathers had been changing only a few minutes earlier!

Charlie on the Scent!

"IT must have been a landslide," declared Johnny, with conviction.

"But what a mercy it didn't happen when anybody was coming down the steps!" said freckled Marjorie, with a shiver.

"I say, my togs—they're buried!" lamented Charlie Deeds. "Under all that rock—and my poor ticker, too—"

Valerie Drew stood silently with the others, no longer concerned for Charlie's "ticker."

The cliff path appeared ruined for ever!

This cove, which had been so easily accessible to Sunnylands Farm, and so popular because of its delightful situation, could certainly never be used again, unless entirely fresh steps were cut in the solid face of the cliff.

Quite minor, in Valerie's far-seeing eyes, was the fact that several of the bathers had lost clothing which was partially or completely covered by the falling boulders.

With the lure of the water entirely forgotten now, the whole party stood surveying the piles of debris which lay all around. Tons of rock had obviously fallen in the disaster.

"I say, Val"—there was an unusual little catch in Marjorie's voice as she spoke again—"you don't think—I mean to say, I suppose it isn't possible it wasn't just an ordinary landslide—"

She broke off, looking at Valerie anxiously, the full nature of her unfinished question being distressingly obvious in her eyes.

"Course not, Marjorie!" Johnny quite brusquely declared, giving Valerie a deeply significant look as he spoke.

"What's that?" Charlie exclaimed, his eyes glistening with interest. "What could it have been if it wasn't a proper landslide?"

"Marjorie's thinking about the

eagle that's been round here lately, Charlie," Johnny answered, looking quite solemn. "It's a perfect terror to people with moustaches, always wanting to grab them to feather its nest. When it can't go after a moustache it loves pecking the cliffs instead, just to keep its beak sharp."

"You can't pull my leg with cock-and-bull stories like that!" declared Charlie suspiciously. "What's been going on at the farm lately? Why's Marjorie looking so white, anyway? Why's a detective like Valerie staying at the place, pretending to be one of the guests?"

"I beg your pardon, Charlie, but I'm not pretending," Valerie assured him in her sweetest tones. "If you want to know the truth, there were two or three minor scares caused recently by a maid who was at the farm, but that's all over and done with. We found her out, and she's cleared off."

"We might have sent you a wire, of course, if we'd known about you earlier," observed Johnny, gazing up innocently at the sky. "Sorry your mighty nut's turned up too late to help—"

"Well," Charlie grunted, "if there's anything underhanded going on, I'll soon know about it, so you might as well spill the beans now!"

"I think, Charlie, that the best thing for us to think about is getting home," Valerie tactfully interposed. "We'd better dig out all we can in the way of clothing, then scoot along the coast!"

Fortunately the loss of clothing was not considerable, though it was annoying. Charlie, who had suffered more than anyone, seemed anything but pleased at the prospect of returning wearing a towel and Valerie's sports coat.

Valerie, however, was immensely relieved that her companions had, for the moment at least, ceased to speculate on the cause of the fall of rock.

She simply could not forget the impression she had received of someone secretly watching her. She was haunted by it as they hastened along the shore, seeking a possible means of getting back to the top of the cliffs before they were too far away from the farm.

Who had taken that one cautious peep into the cove—and why? Had someone actually been anxious to make sure everyone was safely in the water? Another recollection disturbed her even more.

As though she could still see it grasped in the monkey's paw, Valerie kept on thinking again and again of the gleaming brass detonator and the uneasy suspicions which had brought her hither in the first place.

Could there be any possible connection between that little metal object and the disastrous landslide which had led to their present plight?

Something resembling a path was found at last, but there were several breathless moments before the party safely reached the top.

In a silent, dispirited procession they found themselves back at Sunnylands Farm at last. A big, expensive-looking car stood in the farmyard. A party of four people who had arrived in it stood talking to Dorothy in the porch.

Even at first glance Valerie found herself instinctively liking them, hoping

they were making inquiries which would lead them to become new guests. Approaching, she could not help overhearing their conversation.

"It's an awful pity about the dance hall being—well, out of action for the time being," declared a good-looking young man, talking to Dorothy. "We're all mad about dancing, so we'd hoped there would be plenty of an evening. But as you say the bathing's so good in Battleby Cove, that's a terrific inducement—"

He stopped in the middle of his sentence, staring in amazement at the party which had just returned from the shore.

Their downcast looks and their significantly odd attire instantly proclaimed that something was seriously amiss.

"Val, what ever's happened now?" Dorothy exclaimed in astonishment and alarm. "We expected you all back a long time ago."

Valerie compressed her lips with dismay. There was nothing left for her but to blurt out the truth.

"I'm afraid there's been a bit of a landslide, so we had to come rather a long way home," she answered, trying to sound as matter-of-fact about it as she could. "The steps have collapsed."

There was a heavy, awkward silence following her words. The four prospective visitors stood exchanging startled looks, then whispered ominously together. The young man who had been talking to Dorothy nodded at last, then turned to her with an apologetic smile.

"So sorry, Miss Dean. But if there's no bathing as well it puts quite a different complexion on things, doesn't it?" he said firmly. "I'm awfully disappointed we won't be able to stay at Sunnylands, after all. Perhaps we'll be luckier another time."

Then politely and pleasantly, but obviously with minds made up, the visitors shook hands with Dorothy, and nodded cheerily to the disgruntled bathers.

Biting her lip, Valerie watched four much-needed guests of obviously just the right type walk back to their car.

But something inside her made Valerie leap forward, just as the young man was about to drive away. The very thought of losing four guests like this was repulsive to her, and, if she could, she was going to persuade them, even now, to remain.

"Don't go!" she pleaded, becoming even more persuasive when she was out of earshot of the bathers. "I am sure you don't know half the beauties of the farm. The orchards, the—"

The words froze on Valerie's lips as the young man at the wheel gave a decisive shrug of the shoulders.

"I am sorry," he smiled. "But without good bathing and a dance hall, Sunnylands Farm really doesn't attract us. Good-afternoon!" And, slipping in the clutch, he drove away, leaving Valerie to walk disconsolately back to the farm.

A little wearily she sought out Dorothy, to tell her she had failed to entice the visitors to stay.

"Dorothy, I don't want you to jump to conclusions or make up your mind about anything for the moment," Valerie sympathetically counselled the girl as she stood in the little office a few minutes later. "I've had no chance yet to look at the top of the cliffs. Just hang on here and do nothing until

I've had time to look around, then we'll go into things together and see what is to be done."

She left by one of the rear doors a little while later, and, with Flash trotting dutifully at her side, skirted the ruins and went at top speed along a path amongst the trees which would lead her straight back to the cliff-tops.

Sunnylands Farm, by the loss of its favourite bathing beach, had suffered the most serious blow of all!

Once more she stood on the headland to which, little more than one eventful hour ago, her own uneasy suspicions had brought her.

Approaching the edge of the cliffs, she suddenly halted.

There was a huge crater in the cliff-face which did not resemble those made by a chance fall, but had a far more significant appearance.

In a moment Valerie knew her worst suspicions were confirmed. In quarries she had seen craters exactly like this one after blasting operations had been carried out. There could be only one meaning to her discovery.

The cliff-top had been deliberately dynamited by an enemy who, intended to make it impossible to use the steps in future!

On the point of straightening up again, sick with dismay as she realised that, under more favourable circumstances, she might actually have foiled the enemy on this occasion, she turned her head as a low, warning growl came from Flash.

In the distance, Valerie recognised none other than Charlie Deeds, the inquisitive newcomer to the farm, hastening through the trees.

Realising that he had not observed her as yet, Valerie called to her pet, and, darting behind a convenient clump of bushes, crouched down out of sight.

She saw Charlie reach the cliff-top a few moments later. In silence she watched him peering eagerly from side to side.

In her heart Valerie was very glad indeed that Flash had been able to warn her in time. For if Charlie even suspected the truth, he would certainly blab it out to everyone. Instead of being Valerie's secret, everyone at the farm would know that the sinister enemy had struck yet again.

Valerie caught her breath as Charlie, giving a sudden audible whistle of excitement, stepped towards a stiff clump of grass, felt in it with his fingers for a moment or two, then brought something to light.

Cold with horror, she watched him hold up what appeared to be two small paper-wrapped cylinders which, in evident puzzlement, he turned over and over in his hands.

To Valerie there could be no doubt whatever about what Charlie Deeds had dropped on by accident.

They were two unused explosive charges!

If Charlie, realising what they were, showed them at Sunnylands Farm, he might cause all the guests to depart in a panic within a few hours!

SOMEHOW Valerie must prevent Charlie revealing his startling discovery. But—how? That is the problem. There are thrills galore in next week's chapters of this grand story.