

No. 1 OF A GRAND PLATE GIVEN FREE! OVER £100 IN PRIZES!

The Schoolgirls' Own



NOT WANTED!

"You can clear out, Betty Barton!" exclaimed the snobbish girl. "We've no use for Council School kids here!" (See "Scorned by the School!" in this issue.)

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Presented with the *Scotsman's* Oves, February 26, 1911.



OUR PRINCESS.
H.R.H. THE PRINCESS MARY.

The Schoolgirls' Own GRAND NEW COMPETITION

FIRST £50 PRIZE

SECOND PRIZE £20

THIRD PRIZE £10

50 Prizes of 10/=
100 Prizes of 5/=
200 BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

Note:- The School attended by the winner of the First Prize will be awarded a Basket Ball Set, Cricket Set or Badminton Set, according to choice.

The above splendid prizes must be won by readers of "Schoolgirls' Own" for the following simple competition.

On this page you will find a coupon which contains a space for your name, age, and address, and for the school which you attend.

What you are to do is to cut out this coupon and fill it in. Then you must tell your friends all about the "Schoolgirls' Own," and persuade them to let you have the coupons from their copies. The competitor who sends the largest number of these coupons will receive the FIRST PRIZE of £50, and the other prizes will be awarded to the readers sending in the next largest number, and so on.

Don't forget to fill in the name of your school. Should you be the winner of the First Prize, your school will be awarded a prize in accordance with the above announcement.

Do NOT send in your coupons yet. There will be two further weekly announcements of this contest and two more coupons. When the third announcement appears we shall tell you when and how you are to send your collections of coupons to us.

Bear in mind that you may send in as many of these coupons as you please, but they must not be sent until we announce the closing date of the contest.

The decision of the Editor of "Schoolgirls' Own" must be accepted as final and binding in all matters concerning this contest, and acceptance of this decision is a distinct condition of entry.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

THIS IS THE COUPON YOU HAVE TO COLLECT.

I enter "Schoolgirls' Own" Competition and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name.....

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Twopence

No. 1 of a Grand New Series of Long Complete School Stories, introducing Betty Barton, the Girl from the Council School. Every reader of this story is certain to fall in love with Betty.



SCORNED BY THE SCHOOL!

BY

MARJORIE STANTON.



The Home of the Barton Family.

JUST one little face at the schoolroom window, peering out at the pelting rain!

Such a sweet, pretty face; but oh, how pale and thin, and with what a world of trouble in the bright blue eyes!

Would it never stop—this wintry rain that had been lashing down for two hours on end?

It was after mid-day now, and only this one girl was left behind in the big council school.

All the rest, being better equipped against the storm, had gone dashing homewards, whilst the schoolmistress herself had kept this one scholar back, whispering a well-meant word of advice.

"No, Betty Barton; with those leaky boots of yours, you ought to wait a while. Gracious!" the mistress had said, "it is enough to give you your death, to go paddling through this! And you have only that rag of a shawl to cover your head and shoulders!"

Yes. Only a shabby old shawl, almost as far gone with wear as the leaky boots—that was all Betty had to protect her chestnut hair and her poor clothes from the downpour. And she knew it was kind of the schoolmistress to advise her to wait till the clouds rolled by. Only, would they ever do that?

Poor Betty Barton! No wonder she had sad doubts about the matter. There were so many dark clouds shadowing her life just now, and none of them looked like ever breaking up to let the sunshine through!

Swooo—oooh! howled the wintry wind; and sweet—ish, swish! came the icy rain against the window. The deluge certainly was not going to give over yet awhile, and Betty felt quite desperate.

"It's little Joe and Doris I'm thinking about," was her fretful murmur. "Whatever will they do, waiting there with nothing at all to eat until I get indoors and give them their dinner? Oh, I must make a run for it—I must!"

Spurred to action by that desperate thought, she suddenly made her way into the draughty passages and took her dash for the open.

Across the half-flooded playground; out through the narrow gateway; then off up the mean street as hard as she could go.

On she ran, fighting a breathless struggle with the rough wind, whilst the merciless rain whipped her face and lashed about her shawled figure.

Like all Betty's schoolfellows, the thousands of toilers from mill and factory had already slipped home to the mid-day meal, and just at present the streets were empty.

Betty's world was a wilderness of brick and mortar—nor had she ever known a better one—

down by the canal. She got to the old iron bridge, and that was half-way home, thank goodness! But wet—oh, if she had just been dragged out of that same nasty canal, she could hardly have felt more bedraggled!

Now there was a rather wide street to cross, and Betty had to wait for a motor-car to go by. Its swishing tyres sent fountains of liquid mud over her, and she could not help casting a bitter glance after the speeding vehicle.

That was the magnificent car belonging to the Grandways family. Every week-day it took the two Grandways girls to and from their school, which was called a "Private Academy for the Daughters of Gentlefolk."

There were plenty of folk in this workaday Lancashire town of Ribbleton who said that the Grandways were not such very "gentle" folk after all. In fact, there were people who said that Josiah Grandways had been poor himself many years ago, and had only acquired his wealth by profiteering during the war. He now owned acres of working-class dwellings, and was anything but gentle in his dealing with other people. And Mrs. Grandways never gave a penny to any good cause, except to have it trumpeted abroad by means of the local paper.

The two Grandways girls went to the very best private school in Ribbleton, and were driven about the town like queens in their father's motor-car.

Betty knew all about the Grandways, because her crippled father had a light job at the mill which they owned, whilst her mother did a day's charring, now and then, at the Grandways' palatial mansion at the other end of the town.

Away sped that luxurious car, after bespattering the humble council school girl from head to foot; and she thought to herself: Well to be the Grandways girls on a day like this!

Soft seats to loll at ease upon; costly clothes to one's back, and never the least need to dirty a well-shod foot by slopping along the pavements! Well to be them, indeed! As for herself—

But Betty suddenly banished all the bitterness from her thoughts and looks, as she now came in sight of her humble home.

She saw her mites of a brother and sister on watch for her at the window, and how woeful were their faces!

With a last breathless rush she got to the streaming doorstep, lifted the latch, and darted into the dingy passage.

In a moment, Joe and Doris were about her, half-crying with hunger and all the misery of this cheerless home—cheerless through no fault of their loving parents, but only because misfortune had laid a heavy hand upon them.

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

Every Tuesday

All right, Joe darling! All right, Doris bark at the rain!" "I know I'm late; but just dear!" panted Betty. "I know I'm late; but just We're so hungry!" wailed little Joe. He was holding Betty's rain-splashed hand, and was sorry enough to see how wet she was. Only—poor little chap, he was hungry, and couldn't help saying so! "The fire's out, Bettr," said Doris sadly. "We did try so hard to keep it going, but there was only the bit of coal dust, and it all went black." "Never mind; I'll manage!" Betty cried, forcing a cheery note. "I'll soon get a bit of a blaze, and have dinner on the table for you."

"But you are all so wet," said Doris softly. "You ought to see to yourself first." "I'll manage!" Betty said again, with quite a gay little laugh. It was a favourite phrase of hers, these days; one she had got into the habit of saying, because so often she simply had to manage somehow. Off came her soddened boots. Off came her soddened boots. Catching up a bit of old towelled stocking, she gave her limbs a brisk rubbing; then, finding that her only other stockings were in the wash, she just did a little dance, barefooted, round the room, to show how little she cared!

That made Joe and Doris laugh; and, really, it did mean a difference to them. Betty getting home at last! Quick as lightning Betty got the fire going, and on went the saucepan of stew which mother had left in readiness. Of all Mrs. Barton's many troubles and trials these days, none grieved her more than the need of sometimes being away all day. But it couldn't be helped. Being only able to take casual work as a charwoman, she often had to go to houses that were right at the other end of the town, and that was the case to-day.

But what an able little deputy had mother left behind her in the person of Betty! You should have seen her laying the cloth so quickly for dinner. You should have seen how brisk she was in getting that thin stew bubbling in the pot, without burning it.

Best of all, you should have seen her spooning out all the best scraps of meat, and what few bits of potato there were, into the plates for Joe and Doris, whilst her own plate came in for little more than gravy.

"There you are, duckies, so start away, and I can say Grace whilst you are eating, because you are too hungry to be kept waiting."

Thus Betty; and sure it was no wrong thing for her to tell the kiddies to begin before Grace was said, considering how hungry they were.

All the same, Joe and Doris each waited, spoon in hand whilst Betty shut her eyes for the moment. And when she had given thanks, in the words she had been taught to use, brother and sister alike whispered their simple:

"Amen!" "There, Joe darling, you can do with a big bit of bread like that, I'm sure," said Betty, as she carved the staid crust. "And here's a nice slice for you, Doris!"

"But, Betty, you've hardly got any for yourself!"

"Oh, I'm not hungry to-day!" laughed Betty. "That's why I don't want any meat."

"It must be jolly not to feel hungry!" said Joe, who was already tilting his plate to spoon up the last bit of gravy. "Just before you came in, Betty, I felt so hungry and mis'ble—"

"Yes, I know, you poor old chap! Well, have some more, Joe—come on!"

"I would like a little more, please," faltered

Joe, "only I mustn't be greedy, must I? If there is just a little more, Betty—"

"There's heaps," insisted Betty, ladling the last spoonfuls out of the saucepan. "Now, it's Doris wants any more—"

"Oh, no," said Doris, seeing that the saucepan was empty. "Joe, what a greedy boy you are; you've left none for Betty!"

"Me—I shan't want what I've got," laughed Betty. "So do have it whilst it is still hot, Doris dear—do!" she pleaded, pushing her plate close to her sister's. "Some of it, then!"

"Well, if you really can spare it, Betty—"

"Yes, take all you want!" entreated the unselfish girl, knowing that there really had not been enough to go round.

"Thank you, Betty," whispered Doris, her eyes sparkling gratefully. "Only, I would feel mis'ble if I thought you were going without, just because—"

Gracious! Who's that knocking at the door!"

The knock was a double rat-tat! causing all three children to jump in their seats.

Betty, still without her boots and stockings, went into the passage and opened the street door.

"Where's the missis?" came in a very gruff, loud voice from the man who had knocked.

He was a tall, burly man, with a red face that made him look as if he were always purple with anger. Nor was he in anything like a sweet temper at this moment; that was evident.

Stepping, uninvited, into the passage, he stamped the rain from his waterproof overcoat, then glared at Betty.

"Now, my lass, you heard what I said! Where's the missis?"

"Mother's out, working," answered Betty. "I'll tell her you called, Mr. Bawler. She—"

"You'll tell your mother more'n that," growled the man. "This makes four weeks she's behind with the rent, and it ain't good enough! You can tell her there must be a couple of quid for me by Saturday evening, or we'll have the brokers in!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Betty.

"That's my order, straight from Mr. Grandways himself!" the rent collector almost shouted. "Mr. Grandways has been going through the rents with me, he has, and he says I've got to get after folk as are behind. Two pounds off on Saturday, or out you go—mind that!"

"Mother will do her very best, sir, I'm sure. But—"

"Oh, ah! You're jest like your mother—all promises!" sneered the bully. "You look at this here rent book—"

"I don't want to look at it!" flashed out Betty, on her mettle now. "I shall tell mother how you have threatened us with the brokers. And you—you can tell Mr. Grandways he ought to be ashamed of himself!"

"What?"

"Him, to talk about turning us into the street, when he knows how we are placed—what a struggle it's been for my father and mother!" Betty cried shrilly. "Mr. Grandways knows what father earns at the mills. Only eighteen shillings a week—"

"Ay, and that's more than he's worth!" growled Bawler.

"Dad was worth his five pound a week before he got hurt by the machinery," spoke out Betty. "I know Mr. Grandways thinks it was sort of charity to give poor father a light job after that. But there's plenty of people who say that what father ought to have done was to have gone to

Two-pence

law over his injuries, and then he would have got a proper pension. It was no fault of his that he—"

"Yah, old woman's talk!" shouted Bawler. "Your mother earns something; what does she do with it all?"

This was too much for Betty. She was going to make a very spirited answer, when someone came dashing up to the porch, and blundered into the passage, gasping for breath.

Betty stared at the newcomer in startled surprise. He was Chapman, the fat little grocer from the nearest corner shop, and he had come running here in his apron, and without any hat to cover his bald head.

"Your mother, lass—is she out?" he panted.

"Yes, Mr. Chapman—out working."

"Dearie me; oh, gracious me," gasped the grocer. "Here's an unfortunate business! Betty, lass, I'm sorry, but I've just had it from one of the hands at the mill your father's been ran over—"

"Oh, no, no!"

"Run over in the yard, and took to hospital."

Mr. Chapman went on, breathlessly. "He's not killed—no. But your mother ought to go to him, Betty!"

"She must go to him, at once!" faltered the dismayed girl, who had turned as white as a sheet. "Oh, whatever shall we do? Poor dad—oh, my poor darling dad! But I'll manage somehow!"

The old, old phrase! Even in this terrible crisis, Betty would manage somehow—yes!

"Thank you for letting me know, Mr. Chapman," she said jerkily. "I'll run to mother at once. Don't stop there staring, Mr. Bawler; there's no rent for you, so you can go! Mr. Chapman—"

"My lass, I wish I could leave my shop and seek your poor mother. But—"

"Oh, I know how you are placed. It's all right, thank you all the same. I'll manage!"

And the next minute saw the plucky girl tugging on her damp shoes and stockings, whilst she spoke comfortingly to little Joe and Doris.

"Joe darling; Doris dear, you are going to be very good and brave whilst I am gone, aren't you?"

"Ye—ye—yes, Betty!" they faltered, smearing the tears from their eyes. "We will try to be brave!"

"Of course you will. And I'll be back as soon as possible. My shawl—here it is, and thank goodness the rain is giving over at last! Ta-ta, darlings!"

Fingering the still wet shawl about her head and shoulders, she kissed the tear-stained cheeks of her brother and sister, and then ran to the street door.

"Sha'n't be long!" was her last cheery cry, as she sped away. But, after slamming the street door behind her, the anguish in her heart flooded over, and she ran on and on, through the dreary streets, sobbing to herself:

"Dad—poor dad! Oh, how he must be longing to see mother at his side!"

The Grandways Girls at Home.

BETTY BARTON ran right through the noisy town, her heart thumping wildly.

Soon she was clear of the squalid streets, had darted across wide thoroughfares where the trams glided by, and was in the richest part of the town.

There, in a beautifully quiet road, lined with leafless trees, she found the Grandways mansion.

It stood amidst several acres of stately grounds, and it took her a full minute to race up the broad gravelled drive to the front porch.

There was a bell marked "Visitors." Betty gave it a violent tug, then waited in the huge stone porch, trying to get back her breath.

Whilst she was still panting hoarsely, the glass doors were thrown open, and a pompous footman, in livery, stared down upon her.

"What do you want?" he asked curtly.

"I want mother!" cried Betty. "Dad's been taken to hospital, and she must go to him at once. Oh, please tell mother—let me go to her and tell her! There's not a moment to lose!"

And she was setting foot inside the handsome reception hall, when the footman pushed her back.

"Half a sec.," he cried. "Your mother can't be here—mother of a little urchin like you!"

"Yes, she is here—she's your charwoman—"



BETTY'S SACRIFICE! "Take all you want, Doris!" said Betty Barton. And, hungry though she was, she placed a portion of her own meal on her sister's plate.

"Oh, my stars!" laughed the footman. "Ha, ha, ha! Look here, my gal; you want to go to the back door, you know! Hop it, youngster—sharp! The idea of a little guttersnipe—"

"What's the matter, Saunders?" came a drawing voice from the back of the hall. And next moment the speaker appeared.

It was the elder of the Grandways girls, and she gave Betty a slighting look.

"Pray don't trouble yourself, Miss Cora," said the footman, with a bow. "This is only the charwoman's child!"

"What, Mrs. Barton's kid!" exclaimed Cora Grandways. "Well, the cheek of it! To come rinking at the visitors' bell!"

"Where's mother?" broke in Betty wildly. "I'm sorry if I came to the wrong door; but oh, does it matter so much when I tell you that my poor father is in hospital? Mother—"

"Betty—oh, Betty darling!" broke in another voice at this instant. And Betty spun round, to find that her mother, coarse-aproned and with her sleeves rolled up, had come rushing round to the porch.

"I heard your voice, Betty, whilst I was cleaning the back steps," the excited woman explained. "What's that about your father? Hospital—"

"Yes, mother—an accident! But don't be afraid; only go to him at once! I've ruined all the way here—"

"Bless you, Betty!" the poor distraught mother cried, tearing off her apron and unrolling her sleeves. "Oh, my lass, how good it was of you! I'll go at once!"

"You'd better get permission first, hadn't you?" "Mrs. Grand-broke in Cora Grandways coldly. "Mrs. Grandways is out, but there is the housekeeper—you can see her, you know."

"I won't see any housekeeper! I'm going!" cried Mrs. Barton, half crazily. "Oh, Betty darling, if only I had the money for a cab! I feel I want to fly to father!"

Betty thought of the Grandways' car. From where she was standing, in the porch, she could see the motor in the garage, doing nothing. And, in spite of her dislike of begging favours from these hard-hearted snobs, she cast a look of appeal at Cora Grandways.

"You see how it is, miss," she faltered. "Oh, if you could do something for mother—let her go in the car—we would never forget your kindness!"

For answer, Cora gave a burst of derisive laughter.

"The idea!" she chuckled. "What's to stop your mother from using her legs and walking? It's not raining now. Even if it was, she has nothing to spoil!"

"Come away, Betty lass," quavered Mrs. Barton, who was all of a tremble. "I know what those people are, and I'll be done with them after this!"

"Glad to hear it!" said Cora. "Mr. Grandways will be glad, too, I'm sure! It will mean that you finish with him by paying all the rent you owe!"

"Oh, you cruel girl!" shouted Betty. "Haven't you a scrap of heart, that you can talk about the rent at a time like this! Mother darling, you were right; we must go—"

"Yes, dearie. And let me run on, and you get back to Joe and Doris," broke in the distraught mother, hurrying off down the wide steps. "It's the town hospital, I suppose. Anyway, I'll go there first."

And off she ran, leaving the figure of wild anxiety, whilst Betty was still held there by the sound of a newcomer upon the scene.

She had some desperate hope that it might be someone belonging to the household who had a scrap of pity to offer. But she was mistaken.

"What's all the palaver about, Cora?" drawled the younger Grandways girl, sauntering out from the drawing room.

"Oh, a great joke!" chuckled Cora. "Here's old Mother Barton's kid turning up at our front door as if she were a visitor—ha, ha, ha!"

"What about?" drawled the younger girl, eyeing Betty up and down.

"Oh, nothing!" answered Cora. "That malingerer father of hers—he's met with an accident somehow. You know what he is, Judith; always blundering about the mill. Dad says that he's very little use!"

"Then your dad is a wicked monster!" Betty could not help crying angrily.

"Are you going to stand there, letting that kid shout at you?" Judith said to her sister. "A nice thing we are coming to! Look at the mud she has brought into the hall!"

"Outside!" said the footman, taking the hint

from the snobbish girls. "Now, cut away, sharp, and no more of your impudence!"

There was a peal of merriment from the Grandways girls, and Betty—her heart swelling with indignation—was going to cry shame on them both, but in an instant the footman had hold of her and was thrusting her forth.

"You didn't hear the best of it," she heard Cora laughing to her sister. "The kid actually thought we'd let her mother go driving off in our own car—ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dear—ha, ha, ha!" sniggered Judith.

Then the door was slammed shut, and Betty—with those derisive laughs still echoing in her ears—went blindly down the stone steps, to make all haste back to lonely little Joe and Doris, in that humble, poverty-stricken home which was now overshadowed by a blacker cloud than ever!

The Darkest Hour.

IT was after dark when Mrs. Barton rejoined her three children in the stricken home.

There was a look of pent-up grief in the good woman's face as she entered the house, and for a few minutes Betty felt afraid to ask questions.

She had done her best to make the humble home look as bright and cheery as possible against her mother's return. The cheap oil-lamp had been carefully trimmed and lit, and there was water boiling in the kettle to make a cup of tea.

All tidy was the hearth, too, where Joe and Doris were sitting very quietly together. They were full of anxiety, and they each had a feeling that the best thing was to be as quiet as little mice, for fear of worrying mother.

"Well, Betty—well, my lambs," the poor woman said at last, forcing a cheery tone. "It is not so bad as it might have been. Your dear father is having the best attention!"

"And he'll get well again, mother?" said Betty very wistfully. "Oh, what do the doctors say, mother? Will he get over it?"

"They kept on telling me to hope for the best, my dears," answered Mrs. Barton, looking down upon all three children, who were now clustered about her. "It seems that poor daddy slipped on the greasy setts in the mill-yard, and a lorry nearly went right over him. But—"

"Poor dad!" exclaimed Betty, in horror. "It's as you have so often said, mother; he ought never to have had to be about the mill, all lame as he was with that other accident. How often has he been nearly run over, getting to and from his work!"

"'Twill be many a day now, poor man, afore he sees the mill again!" sighed Mrs. Barton. "They tell me he will have to have an operation at once. I wanted to keep it from you, my darlings, but 'tis no use. Oh, your poor father!"

And suddenly the sorrowful woman crashed into a chair at the table, and, hiding her face in her hands, sobbed aloud.

Betty wanted to run to her and put comforting arms about her. But she did what was perhaps even a better thing than that.

Seeing that Joe and Doris were starting to cry—and what wonder, poor little mites!—Betty drew them apart and whispered hopeful words in their ears.

She said she was sure they would all be very kind to dad at the hospital, and would do their best for him. The doctors were so wonderfully clever they could perform miracles, and so she was positive that dad would come home again, at last, none the worse for his dreadful accident.

Twopence.

"But it is going to be ever such a trying time for mum," Betty told her hushed brother and sister: "so we must be very good—"

"We will be good, Betty—won't we, Joe?" exclaimed Doris. And Joe nodded bravely, whilst he smeared the last tear out of his eyes.

"Oh, yes," he quavered. "I know what you mean, Betty. I mustn't be a trouble to mother, but must let her alone and not worry. And then—"

"Mother would never say you are a worry, Joe darling," said Betty, kissing him. "But between the three of us, we'll make it as well as possible for her. Whenever you are in a bother run to me instead of her and I'll manage!"

Betty "managed" that night by getting Joe and Doris off to the bed they shared in the tiny and Doris off to the kitchen. Mrs. Barton pulled back room over the beds. Mrs. Barton pulled herself together when the children came to her to do say a loving good-night, and she wanted to do everything for them, as usual. But Betty said no.

"You sit still, mother, and have the cup of tea that you ought to have had ages ago! I'll see to Joe and Doris!"

And she had her own way, chatting ever so brightly all the time she was with her brother and sister, getting them undressed and washed for the night, and into their mended nightgowns.

As early as the following day there was comforting news from the hospital.

The operation had been a complete success, and the house surgeon was confident that Joe Barton would yet be seen about again in Ribbleton, hardly any worse for his cruel accident.

Only, it was going to be a slow business—of that, these at home were plainly warned.

Weeks—months, perhaps—might drag by before the patient could get his discharge. And in the meantime how was the home to be kept going?

Mrs. Barton, brave woman that she was, answered that question by taking on extra days at her job of charwoman.

If only it had been possible she would have gone into the mills and worked the whole week through without missing a single day. But that she could not do, having two children so young as Joe and Doris, whilst even Betty was still only a mere schoolgirl.

Only a schoolgirl! It was a thought which gave pain to Betty often enough, these days.

How she wished she had been just a little older, so that she herself could have done something to bring in a weekly wage.

But in one way, at least, she helped the money to come in. By being more than ever a deputy for her hard-working mother, she made it possible for the good woman to go out as often as she did.

The Grandways' house was no longer one of those to which Mrs. Barton went for a day's charring. True to her firm resolve she had finished with those hard-hearted snobs, finding work in other directions. No doubt this was very riling to the Grandways, and they would have hit back by putting in the brokers at once if the rent had been still owing.

But it was not owing, at present. Mr. Chapman, the grocer at the corner, had spoken to the rent collector, when the pair of them met inside the Bartons' home, and the result had been a receipt for all the arrears of rent!

Bluff, big-hearted Mr. Chapman had wiped off the debt out of his own pocket. He had done this as if it were a mere trifle not worth mentioning, in spite of the fact that life was a bit of a struggle for him. In spite, too, of the fact that the Bartons

had a little account with him for groceries supplied.

There was nothing of the Grandways nature about Mr. Chapman! Just a simple, honest tradesman, doing good by stealth, and feeling more than rewarded when he saw the tears of gratitude in Mrs. Barton's eyes!

So Josiah Grandways could not hit back at the poor woman by putting the brokers in. But he meant to have his revenge in another way, Mrs. Grandways having pointed out to him what a bit of impudence it was for a common charwoman to pick and choose her jobs!

Ten days after Joe Barton's admission to hospital, the bullying rent-collector served notice to quit on the Bartons.

"And if you don't go at the end of a week from now," he shouted at Betty—for it was she who answered his knock—"we are going to get a magistrate's order to have you put out! The whole pack of you—furniture and all—you'll be shot into the street, so mind you tell your mother that!"

Betty shut the door in his face, then stared at the official notice which had been thrust into her hands.

"The whole pack of you—furniture and all!" Bawler's words were still ringing in her ears. She took her eyes off the printed sheet, and then gazed around the bare room.

Not much furniture would there be to put into the street! That was her sad thought—one that brought tears to her eyes at last.

For, in spite of mother's heroic efforts, things were getting every day more desperate. She was working her very hardest to provide for herself and the children; but her meagre earnings provided nothing towards the rent.

So, to keep the rent-book straight, she had been smuggling things, bit by bit, to the pawnshop and the dealer's, exchanging many a treasured bit of home for a mere shilling or two.

And now—oh, what a black day this was for the Barton family—there was another knock at the street door, and this time little Betty had to face an angry tradesman.

He was the baker—a different type of man altogether from Chapman, the grocer.

"Taking bread day after day from my shop, and never expecting to pay!" he thundered at Betty. "It's got to stop, my girl! I've put it in the lawyer's hands, and there's a summons coming along! Just tell your mother that!"

A burly policeman delivered the blue paper before Mrs. Barton got home that night. And so both grim documents confronted her, after Betty had paved the way for the shock, by putting arms about the poor woman's neck and kissing her, whispering:

"Don't worry, mother! Oh, mother darling, try not to worry! So long as dad is getting better, we will manage somehow!"

But those two stern documents—one a notice to quit; the other a summons for the baker's bill—they could not be ignored.

Bravely as Mrs. Barton tried to make light of them, at heart she was weighed down by a feeling of utter despair.

A week to find a fresh home to go to, when there was an absolute famine in houses, lodgings, anything that offered needy folks a bit of shelter! It was hopeless. And then the baker's bill. Unless it was paid within seven days, she must appear in court!

"What's it mean?" Doris whispered to Betty, seeing how the distraught mother was staring at



BETTY CONSOLES THE LITTLE ONES!

Seeing that Joe and Doris were starting to cry, Betty drew them towards her, and whispered hopeful words in their ears.

the papers. "They can't send mother to prison, can they?"

"No, Doris; I'm sure they can't do that. But—hush! Don't cry, Joe, darling!" For Joe was whimpering sadly, with his knuckles in his eyes.

"Supposing we have to go to the workhouse, Betty!" Doris said, in a tragic whisper. "Supposing we—"

Rat-tat!

Mrs. Barton gave a nervous cry as the double knock sounded.

"Oh, who's that!" she exclaimed tremblingly.

"Not more trouble, surely!"

"I'll go, mother," said Betty, and she darted into the passage, returning in a moment with a buff-coloured envelope.

"What—a telegram!" quavered the mother, turning whiter than ever. "Gracious, what has happened now? Betty lass—oh, my poor lambs, if this should be bad to the hospital, telling us that poor daddy is bad!"

"Hush!—hush!" murmured Betty, to her brother and sister. "No, mother darling; things have got so bad I am sure they can't get worse! Open the telegram and see!"

Mrs. Barton did so.

With trembling fingers she tore the flimsy sheet from its envelope, and scanned the pencilled message.

Then, with a wild cry, the overwrought woman staggered to a chair and sank down, completely overcome.

Sunshine at Last!

BETTY BARTON darted to her mother's side and picked up the fateful telegram, which had fluttered to the floor.

After hearing that wild cry of her mother's, the anxious girl felt certain that there must be terrible news of some sort.

"What's this, mother? 'Landed in a Lime Street, Liverpool,'" Betty read aloud. "Landed

from America to-day; coming an by car.—UNCLE GEORGE. Oh, mother darling, it is not bad news surely?"

"No, no! It is good news—wonderful news!" cried Mrs. Barton, rising unsteadily to her feet. "Only I have been so strung up, it sent me all to pieces. Your Uncle George—that's your father's brother, who went to America five years ago. I suppose you hardly remember him, Betty. He was down on his luck, and your dad gave him twenty pounds to emigrate with. And now—hark!"

"Yes—hark!" cried Betty, as the unusual sound of a motor-car came from the mean street. "Perhaps that is Uncle George—yes, it is! It is!"

The car had stopped at the kerb. Betty, almost crazy with excitement, dashed into the passage and flung wide the street door, crying wildly:

"Uncle George—oh, is that you, Uncle George!"

"Ay, ay, that's me, my dear!" sang out the car's one passenger, as he strode across the threshold. "And who are you?—Betty, of course! Well, I declare, what a little woman since I saw you last! And your mother—hello, Nell!" he cried, looking towards Mrs. Barton, as she appeared at the living-room door, with Doris and Joe. "All the jolly family, eh—except father? Where's he—where's my brother Joe?"

Then they told him—everything.

George Barton—sun-tanned, well-dressed, prosperous—was simply horror-struck when the tale of dire trouble had been brought to an end.

Sitting in the old armchair, with Joe on one knee and Doris on another, he just gaped in speechless amazement whilst his sister-in-law told how misfortune had pressed upon them.

But as soon as the distressing story came to an end, he dumped the youngsters on to the floor and stood up—a giant of a man, with a hearty voice that seemed to make the very walls shake.

"Notice to quit! Summons from the baker! What the dickens!" he roared, crumpling up the official papers and flinging them in the fire. "Look here, Nell, it's all right! Get that into your dear old noddle! I'm rich. I'm as rich as Grandways or any of them! Got down to my last dollar, then struck ile, as they say over there. So—notice to quit, ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

"George dear—"

"I tel you what, Nell; I give you notice to quit! Out of this house you bundle! If you can't get a fine mansion in Ribbleton—the best part of th' old town—then you shall stay at the Grand Hotel!"

"Oh, hooray!" cried Betty, starting to dance round the room. "Hurrah! Joe—Doris—"

"Boo, hoo! Can't we have something to eat!" howled Joe, throwing aside all restraint. "I'se hungry, I tell you—I'se so hungry!"

"He's hungry—you're all starving!" cried Uncle George. "And here am I, with my pockets stuffed full of money! Oh, hang talking! I'll be back in a jiffy, Nell!"

He rushed into the street as he spoke, and shouting an order to the chauffeur, was driven off, whilst Mrs. Barton—guessing what was in the wind—started to bustle around, singing blithely.

On went the clean table cloth; out came the worn knives and forks, and the cracked plates; and on to the lifeless fire went the last pieces of coal!

When Uncle George came back, it was hardly like the arrival of a motor-car. Rather was it like the unloading of a pantechinon!

The things he had bought all inside half-an-hour!

Betty, darting in and out as she helped with the unloading, found a crowd gathering. People seemed to have guessed the good news, which was now flying all over the town. And Betty had just time for one quiet thought, amidst so much excitement and joy.

She wondered if the Grandways would hear the news to-night, and what they would say about it all!

During the next few days, Betty had many a gorgeous ride in her uncle's car. He had bought it on the spot the same afternoon that he landed in Liverpool.

No school for Betty, these days! At the end of a week there was a formal note from the head mistress asking why the girl was absent. Mrs. Barton handed the note to Uncle George, who just laughed as he crumpled it up.

"Send 'em a polite line, Nell, to say that your daughter is going to one of the best schools in the kingdom," he chuckled.

Then he turned to the astounded-looking Betty. "What do you say, little girl? If I send you to a nice big boarding school, close to the blue sea and the glorious country, do you think you'll be happy?"

"Oh, uncle!"

"You'll be amongst some rich girls there, you know!" he smiled at her. "D'you think you'll keep your end up—eh?"

"Yes, uncle," was the answer. "I'll manage!"

Whereat, Mrs. Barton joined with Uncle George in a burst of laughter, detecting the old, resolute nature in that simple answer; and their hands rested lovingly on Betty's shoulders, whilst she held up her face to be kissed.

What with all the bustle and excitement of moving into the fine mansion which he had bought and furnished, and what with engaging servants, and going twice a day to see the children's father in hospital, it was a wonder that Uncle George had time to bother about that new school for his niece.

But quite suddenly he calmly informed Betty and her mother that the whole thing was settled, and it only remained for them to do a round of the shops, to buy a tip-top outfit for the future member of Morcove School, on the coast of North Devon.

That same day, Betty and her mother, after their visit to dad in hospital—where they found him still mending famously—spent a splendid time, buying everything that a girl at boarding school was likely to require.

On the way home, their car passed the one belonging to the Grandways, but the Grandways girls were not in it.

"I haven't seen them about lately, have you, mother?" Betty remarked. "I suppose they have gone away on one of their visits to friends in London."

Mrs. Barton nodded.

"Very likely, dear," she murmured. "They are allowed to stay away pretty much as they like at that precious Academy for Young Ladies. I shall be sorry to lose my little Betty for a time; but oh, I wouldn't have been happy, sending you to a school of that kind!"

"No," said Betty. "I think, if I were not going to boarding school, I would rather keep on with the Council school than go to the same place as the Grandways girls! What I did learn at the Council school I did learn thoroughly. And there were no snobs there either!"

"I do hope," said her mother, after a moment, "none of the girls will look down on you, Betty darling, because you once went to a Council school. It will be a great shame if they do."

"They won't!" said Betty, with conviction. "If they ask me, I shall just tell them, and, of course, they will feel jolly glad, on my account, that our sudden rise to honest wealth has given me a chance!"

Poor Betty!

How often, in the days to come, did she recall her simple faith in the goodness of other hearts—after that faith had been so sharply shattered!

Off to Boarding School.

BLUE was the sky on the morning that Betty Barton said her last loving good-byes to them all at the railway-station.

No clouds to-day! That was what she was saying to herself when at last she took her corner seat in the corridor train and peered through the window at mother, and Uncle George, and Joe and Doris.

Mother—well, of course, she was looking rather moist about the eyes. But she was smiling, all the same, quite sure that her little girl was going to be so happy in the new, strange world of life at a boarding school.

As for Joe and Doris, they looked simply envious!

"I'd love to be coming too!" Doris cried, for the twentieth time.

"So would I, Betty," said little Joe, "'cos I'm sure they'll give you enough to eat! Uncle George says it's one of the best schools in the country!"

"I'll write and tell you all about it!" sang out Betty, jumping up to stand at the lowered window of the closed door as the whistle blew. "Good-

(Continued on next page.)



SPLENDID NEWS FOR BETTY!

"Betty" said Uncle George, "I am going to send you to a big boarding school. Do you think you'll be happy?" "Oh, Uncle!" gasped Betty.

bye, mother! Good-bye, Joe and Doris, you darlings! Good-bye, uncle, and thank you ever and ever so much!"

"Dear lass!" cried Uncle George, waving his hat like a schoolboy. "She's going to be a credit to you, Nell—that bonny lass of yours!"

The train was gliding away, and Betty was time for one last cry.

"Toll dad he must be here to meet me—at the station—when I come home for the holidays!"

"He'll be here, right enough, Betty!" was Uncle George's shouted answer. "Good-bye—good-luck, little girl!"

And then the express train drew clear of the crowded station, and in a few minutes Betty had dried her eyes and was taking her last glimpse of workaday Ribbleton, with all its narrow streets and giant mills and factories, and the tall chimneys that belched snakes of smoke over the busy town.

It was a famous express which was whirling Betty off to her new life. She was at liberty to wander from one end of the train to another, and there were dining cars in which meals were served.

Betty had such a jolly dinner, later on, with a lady and gentleman who had promised her mother to look after her as far as Exeter.

It was rather late in the afternoon when they got to that important junction, after coming hundreds of miles through the most lovely scenery.

Here the lady and gentleman put their young friend into a slower train, which was soon puffing away across very beautiful country, all amongst rolling hills.

So, just as daylight was giving out, Betty reached the tiny station where she would be done with train travelling, although she knew that a long carriage drive still lay before her.

Such a quaint little, out-of-the-world railway station Betty had never seen before. There seemed to be only one porter, and there were just a couple of dim oil-lamps to lighten the gloom of the evening. The wind blew with a loud swoo—oo! and Betty sniffed at the breeze, scenting the smell of the sea.

A carriage had been sent to meet her, and a very jovial fellow, in the school livery, put all her luggage on board and made her snug for the journey. And then they drove off, with the carriage lamps shining brightly through the dusk.

Up and down the hilly road clip-clopped the horse, at a steady pace. At first, Betty kept her face to the carriage window, trying to take note of the countryside; but it was getting too dark for her to see around the wild hills, and she could only feel that part of the world was very beautiful and romantic.

By and by, the carriage suddenly swung round to pass through a handsome gateway, and a minute later it drew up at the front entrance to the big school.

"Here we are, miss!" cried the jovial driver, getting down and opening the carriage door.

"I'll have your traps out in a jiffy!"

"You've got back all right, Stegless?" called someone who appeared in the lamp-lit doorway.

"Your passenger came by that train?"

"Yes, Miss Jackson!"

Then Miss Jackson, who was evidently an under-mistress, stepped forward and greeted Betty in a very pleasant way.

"How do you do, Betty Barton? I'm so glad you got through without any hitch. Such a long journey you have had. Here is my colleague, Miss Redgrave, another junior mistress. You

will be in her form, so I will turn you over to her."

Miss Redgrave was just as nice to Betty as the other mistress had been. Only, perhaps she was not quite so vivacious. She seemed to Betty, at once, to be a young and pretty mistress, who could have been very bright and jolly, only something had touched her life with sadness.

"How tired you must be, Betty, after such a long journey," said Miss Redgrave, ushering her into the great square hall. "I know what a distance it is, because I come from the North myself."

"Oh, do you?" exclaimed Betty, feeling drawn towards this beautiful young lady. "My home is in Ribbleton—"

"Yes, I know it," said the youthful mistress quietly. Then she added quickly:

"The Form mistress is out for the evening, so I can't do better than take you straight to the study you are to share with some other girls. After a little chat with them, you can get them to take you to the matron. This way, Betty!"

With a hand resting lightly on Betty's shoulders, she led her to a broad staircase, and they went up it together to the second floor.

Plenty of lights were banishing the gloom of the great old place, and Betty exchanged glances with several girls who were standing about in the Fourth Form corridor, chatting together. Some gave her a friendly smile at once, and that did a great deal towards driving away her natural nervousness.

"Study Seven—here we are," said Miss Redgrave, knocking at the door.

She turned the handle and pushed the door open, causing two girls to rouse up languidly from their low armchairs.

"Girls," said Miss Redgrave, "here is a new scholar who will share this study with you, and I hope you will be great friends. Come in, Betty Barton, and don't be shy!"

Betty stepped into the room. Remembering how those girls in the passage had been so quick to show friendliness, she began to smile. But it was a smile that froze at her lips.

For here, in the heart of Morcove School—in the very study she was fated to share with them—were the Grandways girls!

Not Wanted!

THE soft click of a closing door was the only sound that broke upon the silence.

Miss Redgrave had gone from the study. Betty Barton was left alone with these two girls.

They stood up, stiff as pokers, whilst the languid looks on their proud faces gave place to an expression of fierce disgust.

"What's this!" gasped the elder of the two at last.

"You know what it is," answered the younger sister. "It is the Council school girl! Our charwoman's kid—come to this school!"

"Then all I can say is," said Cora Grandways fiercely, "she has come to the wrong shop! But what does it mean, Judith? How dare they have Council school girls at a school like this! How dare they!"

"And then, to thrust the kid in on us, like this!" added Judith hotly. "To dump her into this study! My word, we have got to do something about it, Cora!"

"Do something? We'll soon have an altercation!" evoked Cora, slamming down the book she

Two pence

had been reading. "Council school kids—here! It's the limit."

At this instant, and whilst Betty was drawing breath for a spirited word or two, the door opened and several girls drifted in from the passage.

"You don't mind, do you?" they said to the Grandways pair. "Miss Redgrave suggested we should look in and chum up with the new girl."

"Oh, chum away!" said Cora Grandways, with a bitter smile. "There she is! Have you been properly introduced, though?"

"That's right," sniggered Judith, guessing her sister's malicious intention. "Tell them who she really is, Cora!"

"Ladies," said Cora, pointing at Betty, "permit me to introduce you to the new member of the Fourth Form. Our charwoman's daughter, at home!"

"Wh—a—a—t?"

"This is Betty Barton, yes," went on Cora, with that bitter smile of hers. "Her mother used to clean our steps!"

"Oh, no! You're joking!" they all cried blankly.

"Tell them, Betty Barton, whether it's the truth or not!"

"It is true," said Betty faintly. "My people were very poor once. My father was a cripple, and it was a great struggle for mother to keep the home going!"

"So she went out charing?"

"Yes. And I'm not ashamed to admit it!" flashed Betty, on her mettle now.

"And—ahem!" said one tall girl loftily, "did you—er—make the acquaintance of the house-flannel and hearthstone?"

"I went to school—"

"Oh, really!" The girl with the lofty voice pronounced it "rally." "So you have rally had some sort of an education!"

"A jolly good one, as far as it went," answered Betty, feeling deadly calm.

"And how far did it—ah—go?"

Cora Grandways struck in with her sniggering laugh.

"As far as the Council school—ha, ha, ha!"

There was another gasp of amazement from the crowd.

The girls began to move away.

"The Council school! Oh, help!"

"I say, you know, a jape's a jape; but don't carry it too far," said one girl, whose dismay seemed to have a flavour of merriment. "She can't really be a Council school girl. Why, her face is clean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then one of the other girls made a remark in Latin, and there was a great burst of laughter.

"Betty Barton didn't understand that," chuckled Cora Grandways. "They don't teach Latin at the Council school! Speak to her in her own lingo, girls."

"Well, 'ow are yer?" remarked one of the girls, in an awful voice. "'Ow is yer farver and mouver, Betty? My, ain't yer got some lovely clothes on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's yer proper 'at, Betty—the one wiv fevers?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Betty waited until that latest laugh had died away. Then she spoke.

"Miss Redgrave said that some of you would perhaps show me where to find the matron. So, please, if one of you will be kind enough—"

"To be sure, what are we thinking about?"

struck in Judith Grandways. "We must all form up in a line, girls, and make a fuss!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Betty turned very white now.

"Do you mean to say that not one of you mean to be the least bit friendly, now you know I am a girl from a Council school?" she asked scornfully.

"I think that is the position?" said Cora Grandways, turning to the others.

"Exactly!" they nodded.

"All right!" said Betty. "I'll manage!"

And in another moment she would have stalked from the room, only just then Steggles, the porter, came to the open doorway, with all her belongings.

"There you are, miss!" he said.

"Oh, thank you, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't laugh at the poor dear," sniggered Judith Grandways. "No wonder she calls the porter 'sir'! She would have been glad to black his boots for a copper or two in the old days!"

"Here, Steggles," said Betty at the doorway. She had opened her purse and was giving him half-a-crown.

"Thank you, miss! I could bring them right inside—"

"Oh, no, thank you! I'll manage!"

So Steggles went off, whistling, and Betty took a bag in each hand and brought it into the crowded study.

With at least a score of her future schoolfellows looking on, and never offering to help, she got the whole load of luggage into the study.

"So you think of settling down in here, do you?" asked Cora Grandways icily.

"Yes. This was the study Miss Redgrave brought me to."

"And supposing we object?"

Betty looked very steadily at Cora.

"Whether you object or not, I suppose it won't make any difference! You are only the same as me—here to obey orders."

"The same as her!" Cora shrieked. "Did you hear that, girls? This washerwoman's daughter—this kid from a Council school—she puts us on a level with herself!"

"No," said Betty. "I put myself on a higher level, if anything!"

"What?"

"The cheek—the cool cheek of it!"

It was uproar for a moment, and again Betty waited patiently until she could make herself heard.

Then she spoke very calmly, standing erect before them all, and with a sort of pulse beating in her pale cheeks.

"I haven't come here with any big ideas about myself," she said. "I'm a new girl, and I expect to be sat upon a bit, like a new girl anywhere. But I've got a bit of pride. In spite of the step-cleaning, and the Council school, I and my people are as good, any day in the week, as the two of you that I know!"

The Grandways girls bristled with anger.

"What utter rubbish!" shrieked Cora Grandways.

"Our people have been rich for years!"

"And how have you used your riches all that time?" flashed back Betty. "What about all the slums in Ribbleton that your father owns—the slums that helped to make his fortune! Has he ever pulled them down, to build better houses for the poor? Has he ever used his riches to make others happy? For all their poverty, my parents have given far more pleasure to other folk than yours ever have, and I'm proud of them, and I say they always were miles and miles above you!"

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"Our people have been rich for years!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the snobs. Betty felt her heart swelling with righteous anger.

The moment she had set eyes on the Grandways girls, in this study, she had known what to expect from them. But that for these other scholars—from the whole Form, surely!—should be so full of sneers and derision; it was awful!

"Are you all going to be against me then?" she asked huskily. "Oh, surely, in a great school like this, there must be some of you who have a decent spirit!"

There was a spell of frigid silence after that, and then one of the girls gave a hard sign as she shook her head.

"It's the step-cleaning business—"

"And the Council school," chimed in another.

"We can't get over that!"

"No," said a third girl. "We've got no use for Council school kids at Morcove School. It's a jolly disgrace that you have managed to squeeze into the place!"

"Hear, hear!" was the chorus. "And the sooner you clear out, the better for you and for us!"

"I shall not clear out," said Betty. "I wouldn't even if I were free to do so!"

"Then stay!" snapped Cora Grandways, with a savage laugh. "And see the life we'll lead you!"

"Is that a threat?" asked the new girl, in that quiet voice of hers.

"Yes!" was the answer. "A threat you'll see carried out!"

"Very well!" said Betty. And without another word she passed from the room, holding her head bravely erect as she felt the eyes of all fixed scornfully upon her.

Betty's Resolve.

THEY slammed the door shut behind her, sending up a peal of derisive laughter. And what wonder if, as she found herself all alone in the passage, with that contemptuous laughter echoing in her ears, she let her head droop at last, whilst her blue eyes filled with tears.

Her future schoolfellows, and all were united against her!

Whilst she was still drifting about the passage, feeling utterly lonely and disheartened, the door of the study she had quitted suddenly whipped open.

Out of the corner of her eyes Betty saw Cora Grandways come whirling forth to make a rush for another study.

The snobbish girl entered this other room, but was only a few moments there. Then she darted into the passage again, calling:

"Here, Betty Barton! Paula Creel, our Form Captain, wants to see you!"

Although the cry came from Cora it filled Betty's heart and mind with a sense of renewed hope.

The Form captain!

Now, was it possible, Betty asked herself, that a girl in that proud position could fail to be nice?

Surely she must be a scholar who owed her very election to the captaincy to a number of fine qualities—a sense of fairplay, a sporting spirit, and a fineness of character that was above party snobbery!

But Betty's expectations were doomed to another rough shock.

The moment she entered the captain's study she looked in vain for her ideal leader of the Form.

What she saw was a tall, slim girl lolling on a couch, with a very bored look in her eyes, the lids of which had a languid droop.

Paula Creel had tossed aside the book she was reading, and it was lying upon the carpet.

Her right hand toyed with a scented handkerchief, and as she fanned her face with this there was a jingling of gold bracelets.

"Hallo-ee, bai Jove, so stealth you are!" exclaimed the captain, without sitting up. "Let's look at you, bai Jove!"

Cora had not quitted the room, and now a number of other girls came to the open doorway, perhaps to see the fun.

"I am sure she is a girl who will just suit you," said Cora, a remark which puzzled Betty, so nicely was it spoken.

"Yes, I like the look of her," said Paula, with an approving nod. "Quite a bright specimen, bai Jove!"

"She is strong, too," put in Judith.

"And experienced," added Cora.

Then Betty knew that she was to be derided once again, and she spoke with a hint of defiance in her voice.

"I was told you wanted to see me," she said to Paula Creel. "Well, what do you want?"

"Eh, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I ask you plainly, what do you want?"

"Bai Jove! I want a strong girl, don't you know," drawled the captain, sitting up at last.

"A useful person, to do a bit of spring cleaning in day can you give me, bai Jove?"

"You are either as big a snob as all the rest, or else you have been deceived," said Betty sharply. "I'm a new girl."

"A wh-a-a-at!"

"A new girl!"

"Oh, help! Bai Jove!"

"Ha ha, ha!"

With that sudden explosion of laughter dinning in her ears Betty promptly turned her back to the startled-looking captain, and tried to push her way out of the room.

"Stop her! Look out!" chuckled Cora, and she and Judith laid hands on her.

"Steady a bit!" said the elder of the sisters. "We can guess your little game!"

"One they always teach at Council schools!" sniggered Judith. "It's called 'Tell Teacher'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bai Jove! But take a hint from me, you Barton person," said the captain, with that fatu-

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ous smile of hers, "there's nothing of the Council school teacher about our Form mistress. Rather not, don't you know! Miss Massingham believes in tone! Same as I do—rather!"

"But there is the Head Mistress," remarked Cora, who was really in fear of Betty complaining to someone. "Unfortunately she is a Head Mistress who is so—ahem—democratic!"

"Jolly democratic!" said Paula Creed, shaking up a cushion. "And this is what comes of it, don't you know! A—A—what do you call her? A washerwoman's daughter, bai Jove! A—a—a proper common skivvy, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha! What a scream you are, Paula, once you are startled!" chuckled Cora. "I guessed you'd be rather horrified!"

"Horrified, bai Jove! You girls shouldn't spring these japes on me, you really shouldn't. A thing of this sort ought to be broken to me gently!"

school that was a little world in itself—and what had that first hour taught her?

She was to be despised, shunned, just because they knew her to be the child of parents once so poor and needy.

Surely, if she had been the daughter of dishonest folk, the child of common thieves, this hostility could not have been greater!

But that was the only thing they could charge against her—that her mother had worked for a living, and that she herself had once attended a Council school!

Was it not cruel injustice, unspeakable snobbery?

And how long would it all go on? To what cruel means would they resort to carry out that vicious threat which Cora Grandways had voiced on behalf of all?

"Stay at the school—and see the life we will lead you!"



OFF TO BOARDING SCHOOL! "Tell dad he must be here to meet me—at the station—when I come home for the holidays!" exclaimed Betty, waving her handkerchief from the carriage of the train that was to take her to Morcové School.

With a sudden sharp gasp of utter disgust Betty tore herself free of the Grandway girls, and pushed past the others.

This time there was no attempt to stop her, and once again the door was slammed shut behind her, whilst a fresh peal of mocking laughter pursued her.

The thought came to her that she ought to be seeking the matron; but was it a wonder if she felt too upset to feel like meeting anyone else beneath the roof of Morcové School?

Alas for all the joyful hopes that had filled her heart directly she had word from Uncle George that he had meant to pay for her schooling at one of the best schools in the country!

All the happy daydreams that had been hers at the time when she, with her loving mother, made those rounds of the shops, buying an outfit for the school, they were dreams that had been shattered in this very first hour amongst the set of girls who were her future companions!

Her first hour beneath the roof of this great

As those spiteful words went round and round in Betty's mind, she set her teeth.

"Let them do their worst, out of spite and snobbery," she said to herself, with flashing eyes. "Let the whole term go by, without bringing me a single friend! If all the school is to be against me, even from first to last, then I will still manage somehow! I'll manage—alone!"

And in that heroic spirit did Betty Barton embark upon her new life amongst the girls of Morcové School!

(Betty Barton has made a very fine resolution; but do you not feel very anxious as to whether she can manage to keep her end up, with all the school against her? Will she sink or swim; go under at last, owning herself beaten, or rise to a place of honour and esteem in her Form? There will be another magnificent long complete story of Betty Barton, entitled "For Another's Wrong!" in next week's splendid issue of "The Schoolgirls' Own," on sale Tuesday, February 8, price twopence.)

NEEDLEWORK NOTES!



A page of Hints that will be found very helpful by the girl who is handy with her needle.

NEW FROCKS FOR OLD.

WITH the return of spring, and bright days, will come the natural longing for something new to wear—a longing which cannot easily be satisfied in these expensive days.

However, when a new dress is out of the question the next best thing to do is to make an old one look as good as new. This is not a difficult task, and can be undertaken by the most amateur little needlewoman, providing the simple instructions and hints given below are carefully carried out, and a grown-up helps with the cutting.

To overhaul your winter frock successfully, you must give your first attention to the toning up of the material, and the removal of ugly stains. When the material is of a dark texture, pour a tablespoonful of vinegar into a bowl of lukewarm water to which has been added a few drops of ammonia.

Carefully sponge the dress with this liquid, and hang out in the open-air until almost dry. Press on the wrong side with a hot-iron while the dress is slightly damp, and after this simple process you will find the colour and the appearance of the material to be greatly improved.

Lengthening the dress is perhaps the most difficult part of the renovation. When a false hem is impossible, cut a strip of lining or any odd material you have by you, the depth of the hem you require, and the width of the dress. Machine this securely to the edge of the skirt, and press.

The hem of the dress is entirely covered with the new brushed wool trimming, which look smart and is yet inexpensive when worked at home. Face the hem with the trimming so that all defects, faded and worn parts, etc., are entirely hidden.

To work this trimming cast on a pair of steel needles the number of stitches necessary to form the depth of trimming you will require; and knit plain until the strip is the desired length. Attach to the frock firmly before brushing the wool, which is "fluffed" with a small wire brush.

The Sleeves.

The short sleeve is being worn by old and young alike, and when the elbows of the winter frock have become torn through constant rubbing on the school-desk, cut the sleeves off from the elbow, and neatly finish by hemming. Add a band of brushed wool to each sleeve to form the cuff effect.

To the neck of the dress add one of the new round collars. This is merely a straight length of the wool trimming worked to fit the dress, and attached to the neck-band.

When the loose dress has become monotonous it can be drawn into the waist by sewing a slot of the material to both the right and left-hand seams, and through this slipping a sash of ribbon or a narrow patent leather belt in a colouring to tone with the frock.

It is always wisest to knit the brushed wool trimming in a dark shade or it will catch the dust. For instance, a frock of dark blue, trim with a dull shade of red. When the dress is brown in colouring rust-red is a pretty contrast.

NOVELTIES IN BEADS.

ALL sorts of delightful ideas can be carried out with beads and American wire. The pretty necklace sketched on this page is entirely made of linked wire and large Chinese-blue beads. These necklaces are always welcome gifts, and add an attractive touch of colour to the plainest of frocks or blouses.

Buy a dozen and a half—according to the length of necklace desired—of large beads at any bead shop, and a coil of American wire. With the fingers bend the flexible wire into links, shaped as in the small diagram, and between every two inches of link place one of the large beads. This is done by slipping a straight piece of the wire through the bead, and fastening at both ends to the link chain.

When the necklace is about twenty-five inches long, join together, and finish off by adding a tassel of links and beads. This is merely a three-inch length of links with a bead placed at each inch, and an extra large one at the end to give the necklace weight, and hold in position when on the neck.

Bangles of the "slave" variety can be made in the same way as the necklace—smaller beads, of course, being used. These bangles look most attractive when worn with a "best" dress, which boasts short sleeves.

A BEADED BAG.

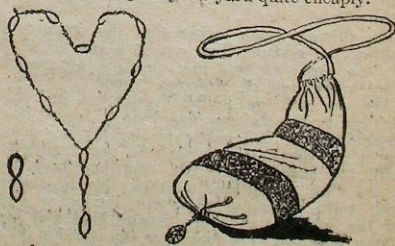
TO possess a bag trimmed with beads is the wish of every girl. On this page you will find illustrated a dainty bag made from a scrap of silk, trimmed with Oriental beads.

To make the bag cut two strips of the material, each about six inches wide and twelve inches long. To these strips stamp by means of a transfer a simple design, which can be outlined with beads, measuring accurately, so that when the bag is joined the design will fit.

Stitch the side seams, and when possible line the bag with flowered silk or shantung. Attach the lining to the bag, by running a double row of stitching along the top to hold the draw-string.

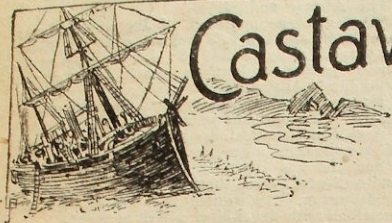
Draw up the bottom of the bag, and finish off by adding a "bobble" of silk and beads—this is made by tightly covering a piece of cottonwool with the silk, and ornamenting with the beads.

When the bag is trimmed with silver or gold beads instead of the oriental colourings, a pretty idea is to have the draw-string of silver or gold tinsel cord which can be bought by the yard quite cheaply.



An easy-to-make Necklace, and pretty bead-trimmed Bag.

A Magnificent New Story of adventure in the Pacific, introducing Jess, the girl castaway; Captain Sorensen, her blind father; Jin, a Malay servant; and a party of jolly British schoolgirls.



Castaway Jess!

BY

JULIA STORM.

(Author of "The Girl Crusoes," "The Island School," etc.)



The Blind Captain,

POOOR little, lonely Jess!

She stood by the great, old-fashioned stern windows of the *Smiling Dawn*, looking out on the blue lagoon, which shone like a mirror under the hot tropic sunshine, musing on the strange fate which had brought her to this lovely but desolate spot.

On a small oil stove, she was stirring a saucepan of gruel, listening for any sound from the inner cabin of the crazy old ship.

For the *Smiling Dawn*, two months ago, had been driven ashore on this Pacific island by a hurricane accompanied by a great tidal wave.

And the tidal wave in its vast sweep had placed the *Smiling Dawn* beyond reach of sinking, for it had carried the great hull over the reefs of the lagoon, over the lagoon itself, and had left the ship high and dry amongst the palm groves.

And in this ship on shore Jess had been almost a prisoner for a whole month, for, in the cabin, lay her old dad, as she called him, blind and almost helpless, overwhelmed by the loss of his ship, which was his only livelihood.

It was the fall of the mainmast in the storm which had wrecked him; a loose block from the wreck of the mast, lashing in the terrible wind, had stunned him.

And when he had recovered consciousness his ship was hard and fast ashore, and he was blind.

None of the crew, who were foreigners, had been lost. But after a week on the island, they had taken the two best boats in the ship, had provisioned them, and had sailed away to make a port two thousand miles away.

They had offered to take Jess with them, and had urged her to leave the old man to his fate.

But Jess had refused, and one other had refused with her. This was Jin, Captain Sorensen's old Malay servant and steward.

"Missy stop, me stop!" said Jin, who adored Jess.

Jin was very old. But he was a good sailor, and his eyes were as keen as the eyes of a cat, by day or by night.

Years ago the old captain had taken Jin from the keel of a capsized Japanese fishing craft in the Sea of Japan. And Jin had never forgotten this, for a Malay never forgets good or evil.

And, later, Jin had led the boat's crew who had rescued Jess herself, a derelict baby on a derelict ship in the North Atlantic.

Goodness knows what had become of Jess's parents. They had probably been swept overboard. Only Jess was there, lying in her cradle, in the deckhouse of a deserted ship.

And Captain Sorensen had adopted the little wail, and had brought her up thus to fourteen.

Jin had been her nurse, and she had lived on the sea, voyaging all over the world, from port to port, as the *Smiling Dawn* found her cargoes.

Jess was thinking of this as she stirred the gruel. Hot tears of indignation filled her eyes as she thought of the crew of cowards who had tried to persuade her to leave Dad and Jin.

She dashed the tears from her eyes with the back of her hand, and looked down pathetically at her faded frock as a faint sigh sounded from the inner cabin.

"Coming, daddy—coming!" she called out.

The gruel was turned out into a spotless cup, and placed on a silvered tray covered by a snowy cloth, for Jess was a rare sick nurse, and knew how to make the plainest food attractive.

Outside the cabin door, she dried her eyes again and schooled her face to a smile before she showed herself. Though daddy was blind, he seemed to know by instinct whether she was smiling or whether her face was sad.

"Here we are, daddy!" she exclaimed, in a cheerful voice that had no false note in it. "Such a lovely cup of gruel! And it is a wonderful morning—so fresh and so clear!"

There was a flicker of a smile on the thin, white face that was half-hidden in the pillows of the standing bedstead, and a strange, luminous light shined in the eyes of the blind man.

"It's Jess, isn't it?" Captain Sorensen asked feebly. "Little Jess!" he added.

"Yes, daddy, it's Jess!" answered the girl, smothering a sigh of relief. "Look! I have brought you your breakfast."

She packed the old captain's pillows with gentle hands, lifting him in bed with wonderful skill.

Jess was only a featherweight herself, and daddy was a heavy-framed man. But she knew how to move him, and to make him comfortable, for the blow on his head, besides depriving him of his sight, had partially paralysed him.

She sat him up in bed, and, with cool, fresh water, washed his face and hands, drying them in a motherly fashion. Then, with comb and brush, she smartened his white hair and beard.

"There, dad!" she said, holding up a small hand mirror. "You look splendid! Now for breakfast!"

And she placed the tray before him, eagerly watching her patient.

Dad was better this morning—better than she had ever seen him since that fatal blow, and her heart leaped at the thought.

Perhaps she would be able to nurse him well again. Then he and Jin could patch up the big whaler, which had been smashed in the fall of the mast, and they could sail away from this island.

Certain it was that they could never save the

Smiling Dawn, or launch her again. That was the work of a hundred skilled workmen when she had the back of the ship was broken when she had been hurled ashore amongst the palms, and already her stout wooden sides and decks were warping and opening under the heat of the tropic sun.

But certain it was that dad was better.

"Where are we, little maid?" he asked.

"We are all safe and sound, dad," said Jess. "The Smiling Dawn is high and dry, right up amongst the trees on the shore of a lovely lagoon!"

The old man nodded as though he understood.

"I remember!" he muttered slowly. "There was a storm that drove us up from the south-east. Then it turned to a hurricane. And where are the crew? I don't hear anyone about the ship!"

This was a facer for Jess. The dim, flickering mind of the old captain was getting its bearings again. He had never asked such questions till now!

"Never mind about the ship or the crew, daddy," she urged gently. "It is good enough that you are better. Now be good, and finish your gruel. You must not worry!"

The old man nodded. He was evidently getting up his heart to ask Jess further questions.

Poor Jess! Her eyes filled with blinding tears.

This was worse than his helplessness. How was she to break it to him that his ship was stranded, and that they were deserted on this lonely Pacific island?

She had lived amongst captains all her life, and she knew that there is no greater sorrow to a seaman than to lose his ship. And the Smiling Dawn had been dad's all.

Jess felt almost glad that dad was blind and that his kind eyes could not be hurt by the sight of that saddest of spectacles—a wrecked ship.

The old man seemed to read her thoughts dearly.

Captain Sorensen was a seaman and a brave man. For a month he had been drowning in the borderland which lays between life and death.

Now, life was coming back to him slowly.

"See, I have finished the gruel, dearie!" he said quietly. "Now I'll take my other grueling, little maid. So the old Smiling Dawn is piled up!"

"Yes, dad!"

Jess was sobbing now, hiding her face at the bedside as though she, too, shared the shame and sorrow of losing the ship.

And, indeed, she did, for the Smiling Dawn was the only home she had ever known.

"Nax, nay, little maid!" whispered the old captain; and, reaching out his hand, he stroked the golden curls. "We won't take that to heart too much. She was forty thousand pounds, dearie, and the smartest ship that sailed the seas. But I was saving only for you. Jack Sorensen was never a money-grubber for money's sake! But we are beggars, my little lass—beggars with all the world before us. We must start again. Now tell me about the crew. Are they drowned?"

"No, daddy," sobbed Jess. "They went away after the first week. We have been here four weeks. They took the boats and sailed away, and they wanted to take me and Jin with them, but we would not go!"

A faint smile crossed the blind man's face.

"So they deserted ship!" he exclaimed. "Well, well, I wish them luck. They were not much of a crowd. But where's old Jin?"

"Jin is fishing out in the lagoon, dad!" said Jess, drying her eyes. "He is getting our breakfast!"

The old man nodded.

"Ay, ay!" he muttered. "Jin was always a rare fisherman, and he's a heart of gold! Stuck by the old ship, he did! So did the little maid. Come, we are not beat yet! And it was all for little Jess! All for Jess!"

He was drowsing again now, after the excitement, for he was still very weak.

And Jess smoothed his pillows, a strange light of love showing in her face.

Soon he was asleep, and his face was peaceful and contented. Jess, through a month of watching and nursing, had learned to value her patient's condition with the skill of a trained nurse.

Dad was better, and he knew the worst now. And he was not dismayed.

Her face was shining as she turned quietly from the darkened cabin, for, strange to say, though he was blind, dad could not bear any light.

Jin's Prophecy.

JESS went to the windows of the outer cabin. These were old-fashioned stern windows, which were shuttered by heavy deadlights against following seas. But now these shutters were thrown back, and the sweet, fresh salt breeze of the trade wind swept through the cabin.

Outside all was blue and white. The fine coral sands, soft as silk, swept up to the stern of the stranded vessel. On either side of her the tall coco palms tossed their plumes in the breeze with a soft rustling.

Beyond the lagoon that was laid out in a floor of jade and amethyst and sapphire, according to the depth of the water, the wall of the coral reef was glistening white with the breaking sprays of the ocean rollers that burst upon it with a deep, organ-like note.

And, over the reef, planed the fishing gulls in great whirling flocks.

Beyond, stretched blue sea, empty of any sail, and blue sky, dappled with the huge trade wind clouds, which the sailors call "wool packs."

Jess waved a tea-cloth from the window.

Across the lagoon a man was rowing, a keen-faced, swarthy old man, whose olive black skin was creased into a thousand wrinkles.

On his head was jauntily perched a Lascar turban, neatly made with a sailcloth crown, painted with the points of the compass and bound round by a scarlet cloth. His jacket was of faded blue serge, and about his waist was wrapped a silken kilt or sarong.

This was Jin, and he signalled that he had had good luck with his fishing, for he threw up the scull of the little boat six times in succession, thereby signalling that he had caught six fish.

Jess and Jin had their own fashion of talking. Jess waved her tea-cloth six times, in answer to the signal, and, using the Morse code, signalled to Jin that dad was wakened and better, and that it was breakfast-time.

So Jin baited no more lines. He laid these in, coiling them neatly, and pulled for the shore.

Then Jess climbed up the cabin stair that led to the deck, and walked along to the ship's galley, to get breakfast ready for Jin and herself.

Soon she had the big frying-pan on in the galley, and Jin, having dragged his boat up on the sand, tramped up to the tall wall side of the stranded

ship, from which hung a long Jacob's ladder, secured to pegs driven in the sand.

Up this Jin came climbing, with his basket of fish.

"Marnin, missy!" said Jin politely. And Jin's rugged old face lit up at the sight of Cinderella as she stood framed in the galley door, her hair, which was the colour of ripe wheat, blowing in the wind, and her blue eyes showing bright as cornflowers by the contrast of her delicate face, which was burned dark by the tropic sun.

The old Malay lay down his basket of fish at the door of the galley, and salaamed.

"Oh, Jin, what a lovely lot of fish!" cried Jess, clasping her hands. "You are a good fisherman!"

Jin's wrinkled face creased into a hundred lurking smiles.

"Ya-as, Missy Jess," he said. "Fish him plenty to-day!"

"Then sit down and rest, Jin, and you shall have a splendid breakfast!" said Jess. "And dad is ever so much better; and he has asked for you, Jin. He is so glad and proud that you would not leave the ship with the rest of the men!"

"Me man!" said Jin simply, "those fallers are sheep! I like to cut their throat!"

And Jin laid his hand on the murderous-looking sheath knife that he carried in his belt.

"Hush, Jin!" said Jess, shaking her finger at him reproachfully.

Jin grinned ruefully. He had never been able to make Jess understand the principles of Malay honour, which is swift to avenge any injury.

But he made a gesture of assent. Jess was a goddess in her own right. What Jess said was always right. Therefore he, Jin, must be wrong.

"Do sit down and rest, Jin!" cried Jess, smiling from the galley window. "You must be tired and hot!"

Jin smiled at this notion. His wiry old frame did not know the meaning of weariness.

As active as a cat, he swung himself into the rigging of the foremast, and swarmed along the stout wire rope he had stretched to take a double awning, which covered a large patch of deck from the sun.

Jess looked out of her galley door anxiously as Jin went through this acrobatic performance twenty feet above the deck.

"Be careful, Jin!" she called out. "One of these days you will fall and break your neck—then what shall I do?"

Old Jin was delighted by this confession of dependence.

"One ob dese day, monkey fall from tree!" he said as, looking very much like a monkey himself, he unfastened the points of the awning and let it fall.

Then, running along the rope like a wire-walker, he sid down the stump of the broken mainmast, and spread the heavy awning so that there was a great cool patch of shadow over the deck.

Jess spread a white cloth on the table which stood on the deck.

She also spread another cloth on a low table which stood close by, for Jin was a Mohammedan, and had his own ideas of eating.

The low table was his kurse, and by the side of it was a tish, or basin of copper, and an ibreek,

a spouted vessel for water, much like a coffee-pot—all for his ablutions before breakfast.

The frying-pan was sizzling now merrily, and a delicious aroma of coffee spread round the galley. Jess had dashed up.

"Jin!" she cried, as she washed her hands and straightened her curls.

"Yaas, missy?"

"Breakfast!" announced Jess.

Jin poured water over his hands, hastily muttering the proscribed prayers.

Then he brought out the meal and laid it neatly on the table, standing dutifully behind Jess.

"Jin!"

"Yaas, missy?"

"Do please take your breakfast and eat it!" said Jess.

"It is not good that the slave eats before the Khanum Effendim!" replied Jin.



JESS COMFORTS HER BLIND FATHER!

"We are all safe and sound, dad!" said Jess. "The Smiling Dawn is high and dry, right up amongst the trees on the shore of a lovely lagoon!"

"Don't be silly, Jin!" said Jess. "I am not a Sultana. I'm only a poor little ship's girl, who is poorer than a ship's boy. Look at my skirt!"

And she pointed to her ragged skirt. Once it had been of blue serge, but sun and sea sprays had faded it to a pale amethyst.

"I am the Princess Ragamuffina!" laughed Jess.

"I am Cinderella."

"Sindaralia!" repeated Jin after her, and, drawing out a penny washing-book from his sash, he noted the name in Arabic characters. "Sindaralia! It is a good name, missy. We will tell the fortune by the sand when you have eaten!"

"When we have eaten!" replied Jess, clapping her hands. "Jin, you dear! It's ever so long since you told fortunes!"

Jin shook his head.

"It is not good to tell the fortunes too often, missy," he said. "He who consults the sands too often asks for evil luck!"



JESS IN A JOLLY MOOD! "Oh, Jin, what a lovely lot of fish!" cried Jess with delight. "You are a good fisherman!"

"And he who lets his coffee and fish stand too long, gets a cold breakfast!" replied Jess promptly. "Now, don't be silly, Jin. Eat your breakfast!" Thus admonished, Jin took his breakfast to his little table.

Jin ate with his right hand, according to the custom of his people, amongst whom fingers were made before forks; but he ate daintily, for the Malay is always a gentleman.

And when he had finished eating, the Malay gathered up the breakfast things and prepared to wash up. Jin would never allow Jess to wash up under any circumstances whatever.

"Never mind about the washing-up, Jin!" said Jess. "Tell me my fortune by the sand!"

Jin hesitated and stroked his grizzled beard.

"Please tell fortunes, Jin!" urged Jess pleadingly. "There is all day to wash-up!"

So Jin set the washing aside, and went to the bin of fine sand which was kept for cleaning, taking a lacquered Chinese tray, marked with emblems of good luck.

He filled this with sand, and brought it back to the low table at which he had breakfasted.

Then, drawing forth his book from his pocket, he consulted the Arabic characters of the name he had written (Sindaralia), and, squatting down before the board, he lifted his hands, muttering "Bi-smi-llah" (In the name of God). Then, with his finger he rapidly traced the Arabic characters of the name he had given to Jess.

"What would you know, missy?" he asked.

"First, when daddy is going to get well!" exclaimed Jess eagerly.

"And second, missy?"

"When I am going to have a new dress!" said Jess, ruefully looking down at her old tattered skirt.

Jin stared at the sand in the tray. Already the zephyrs of trade wind that found their way over

the smooth lagoon was stirring the soft, fine coral sand about, half obliterating some of the characters.

Jin waited in patience till the Arabic writing was almost obliterated.

"Lo, missy!" he began. "Thy father, the Kapudan, is already better. His brain slowly frees itself of clouds, and he begins to understand. But he will be long in mending, for it was a shrewd blow that robbed him of sight and movement. But he will recover slowly, and he will sail a ship once more. I cannot say if it will be this ship. But he will sail a ship, and he will be well and strong once more."

Jess clasped her hands with delight.

"Oh, how lovely, Jin!" she exclaimed. "And if he sails a ship, he cannot be blind. He will get his sight again!"

"That I cannot say, missy. Blind men can do strange things," replied Jin, staring at the tray of sand. "And, for thee, I see propitious omens. Thou shalt no longer be Sindaralia, princess in rags, but thou shalt have robes of honour and rich silks and golden adornments. Nor will it be long before these wonders happen. One, two, three days—no longer!"

"Oh, Jin!" exclaimed Jess. "It can't be true! There are no dressmakers' shops in this lonely island, and my poor old frocks were quite ruined by the seawater. And look at me now!"

She held out her toil-worn hands and her faded skirt.

"Let it be as it may be, missy!" answered Jin stolidly. "The sand says that thou shalt be clothed in the garments of a sultana, and it says also that there shall come to thee three young sultanas who shall love thee well!"

"Three girls?" exclaimed Jess.

Jin nodded.

"Three young lady," he replied, "who have faces like moons."

Jess straightened her curls, which were blowing in the breeze.

"Can you tell me their names, Jin?" she asked. Jin's furrowed brow knitted.

"It is difficult to read the Arabic into the square English letters, missy," he said. "But I read J-O, and I read P-A-T. And there is also the name of a great Khanum Effendim—a great Sultana, wise and learned as Suleiman ben Daoud, the Wise. Now I can read no more!"

Jess passed her hands across her eyes. She did not want to make Jin read any more fortunes.

"Joe and Pat are boys' names in England," Jin, she said, with a sigh. "You could not call Joe and Pat sultanas. I never heard of a sultana who was called 'Joe'!"

Jin laid the tray of sand aside.

"I know not these names," he replied stolidly. "The English names are difficult to me. But I say that you shalt not always be cast away nor poor. Thou shalt wear fine raiment and walk with sultanas!"

"Dear old Jin!" said Jess gently. "Well, I know that your good wishes would make the most lovely fortunes for me. But it is good enough to have them alone. I will not pine for sultanas for friends. I am sure that the only sultanas on this island are those that I am going to make into a bread-and-butter pudding for your supper. You like bread-and-butter pudding, don't you, Jin?"

Jin smiled.

"No piggy in pudden, Missy Jess?" he asked. "Jin!" exclaimed Jess reproachfully. "You know that I never use lard or any sort of bacon fat or any pig in anything I cook for you! I know that you are a good Moslem and that lard is forbidden to you."

"Plenty sultana in pudden?" he asked. "I'll put lots in!" said Jess, laughing. "Jin, you are a piggy yourself. Though you say you are sixty years old, I don't believe you are more than six!"

Jin swallowed the terrible insult of being called "piggy" without a wink.

"You see, missy," he said, "my fortune come true—come true quick!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when, down amongst the coco groves, there came a shrill whistle.

Then a girl's voice, clear and distinct, called "Joe!"

Jess ran to the side of the tall ship, and looked over the rail.

There, down below, she saw the flutter of white frocks amongst the palms, and a glint of sun caught the riband of a shapely Panama hat.

"Hurry up, Joe!" called a girl's voice. "Here is a discovery for you. There is an old wreck of a ship right up here amongst the trees. Oh, do be quick, and tell Winnie to get a move on, or, as sure as me name is Patricia Macdermott—"

"Coming, Pat—coming!" answered a clear, English voice.

Jess ran back from the bulwarks.

She had a glimpse of three well-dressed, smart-looking girls, about her own age, advancing towards the ship, tripping lightly over the ridges of coral rock that jutted through the soft carpet of mould beneath the coco palms.

Then she looked helplessly down at her tattered dress and at her reddened, toil-worn hands.

Jess was afraid. She had met few girls in her life. All that she knew now was that she was ragged and poor and untidy. And behind such girls as these, with their smart dresses, their neat shoes, and their clear, well-bred voices, was—help!

She sank down on the deck, and, hiding her sunburned face in her rough hands, burst into a flood of tears.

But old Jin only smiled.

"Behold, missy!" he said. "The fortune comes true. Here are the sultanas!"

Mike the Monkey.

THE three girlish figures advanced, the sunlight glinting on their white dresses as they passed through the avenues of coco palms that fringed the brilliant coral sand.

They advanced straight to the ship, curiously eyeing her sun-blistered sides and wrecked masts.

The girl who was named Patricia paused at the foot of the tall Jacob's ladder which led up to the deck.

She could not see Jin, who was hidden high above the bulwarks.

"Do you know, girls," said Pat, turning, with one hand on the ladder, "I've a sort of feeling that this ship is inhabited! I can feel there are people about. And look, she cannot have been here long—her copper is still bright!"

And she pointed to the copper sheathing which covered the lower part of the great hull.

"Come, girls," she said, "we'll climb aboard, anyway. They won't eat us for coming aboard their old ship!"

And up she went, followed by her two companions.

When they were half-way up the ladder, which was a climb of forty feet, Patricia Macdermott put the fingers of both hands in her rather wide mouth, and gave a whistle that would have done credit to a street arab. She hung on to the rope ladder the while by twisting her arms in its rungs.

"Where's that rascal, Mike?" she exclaimed.

"Faith, we've lost him entirely. An' what would Mademoiselle Desiree de la Touche say, if she had only heard that whistle?"

Josephine Hardy, hanging on the ladder, laughed.

"She would say, 'Dat ees most unlade-ee like!' That's what Touchy would say," she replied.

"But it was a fine whistle, and— Here comes Mike! The rascal has been pulling oranges off those trees up the valley!"

From amongst the coco palms ran a spider-like figure, sometimes running upright, sometimes on hands and feet.

It was Mike, the pet chimpanzee of these girls.

Mike came racing up to the ladder, making a queer whimpering sound as if he were afraid of being left behind.

Then up the ladder he raced, his long arms grabbing rung after rung, whilst he swung himself up in a style wonderful to behold.

He did not wait for the three girls who were swinging on the long ladder. He leaped up like an acrobat on to Winnie's shoulders, and from there he sprang to the shoulders of Joe.

And from Joe's shoulders he took a flying leap, grabbing the rungs of the ladder just above

(Continued on next page.)



STRANGERS ON THE ISLAND! Jess had a glimpse of three well-dressed, smart-looking girls, about her own age, advancing towards the ship.

Patricia Macdermott's head, giving that young lady a back kick in the face, which nearly knocked her trim Panama hat from her head.

"Arrah, now, Mike, ye rascal!" exclaimed Pat. "Would ye kick your poor mistresses off the ladder? It's a black eye you've put on me, ye son o' calamity!"

But Mike did not stop. He raced up till he had reached the rail of the ship. And there he sat, chattering, as Jin grinned at him from the deck. "Listen, girls!" panted Pat, as she swung herself up the ladder. "There's people here, or Mike would not make that noise. Maybe they are in need of help."

And, climbing swiftly, Pat reached the rail, swinging herself lightly inboard.

She came to a standstill, wonderstruck. For there was Jin, the Malay, smiling and salaming nearly to the deck, whilst on the deck, her face hidden in her hands, sat a ragged little figure in a sun-bleached skirt and blouse, sobbing as though her heart would break.

Pat helped her friends over the rail. Then she stepped forward quickly, stooping over the forlorn little figure.

"What's the matter, dear?" she asked. "What are you doing here, and where does this ship come from? And who is the elderly gentleman with the dyed whiskers?"

Jess looked up.

She saw a handsome, impudent freckled face and a great mop of venetian red hair bending over her. "Oh," she sobbed, "I am so glad you have come!"

Patricia softly stroked the fair hair of this strange castaway.

"What is your name, dear?" she asked.

"Jess!" sobbed the stranger.

"Don't take any notice of us, Jess!" said Pat. "Have your cry out, and we'll feel the better of it. This is Joe, and this is Winnie. And that little gentleman sitting on the rail there is Joe's little brother. You can tell him by the family likeness! And what's this old gentleman's name?" asked Pat, turning to Jin.

"Jin!" whispered Jess, who, in spite of herself, was feeling better for this outburst of her overwrought nerves, as Pat rattled on with her nonsense.

"How do you do, Jin?" said Pat, bowing to Jin very politely. "You must be the Djinn out of 'The Arabian Nights,' and perhaps this is the ship of Sinbad the Sailor!"

Jin grinned all over his face. He perfectly understood Pat's Arabic play upon his name, and he knew all about the famous Es-Sindibad, the porter of Baghdad.

"Me Djinn, all right, sultana!" he answered. "Me look after Missy Jess. Me Slave of Lamp!"

"Please to meet you, Djinn!" said Pat, shaking hands with him. "These girls are Miss Josephine Hardy and Miss Winnie Grey. If I am a sultana, they are almonds and raisins—and they are very sweet. And this is Mike," she added, pointing to the chimpanzee who sat on the rail, blinking amiably on the strange scene. "Ye might think, Mr. Djinn, that Mike is just a monkey, but he's not. He's a prince turned into his shape by a powerful enchantress. And she's taken his manners from him as well, Mike!"

Mike woke up with a start as Pat shrieked at him.

From the pocket of the neat little jacket he was wearing, he had produced a round silver box.

In the lid of the box was a small mirror, and from the box Mike had produced a large and fluffy

powder-puff, with which he had commenced to powder his ugly face, eyeing his reflection with glances in the mirror.

"Faith, girls," exclaimed Patricia Macdermott, "there's going to be trouble about this! Th' monkey has stolen mademoiselle's powder-puff!"

Mike and the Monkey-Nuts.

IT was Mike, the chimpanzee, sitting there on the bulwark of the stranded ship, powdering his ugly face with the stolen powder-puff, who put an end to the tears of Jess, the Castaway.

The tears were natural enough, for poor little Jess had stood a strain of peril and responsibility during the last five weeks that might well have racked the nerves of a far older person.

And Jess was only a girl of fourteen years. Her trials were over. This was not only an inhabited island, but it was inhabited by bright-faced, well-dressed English girls. Behind these there would be medical help for dad.

So Jess was able to smile and then to laugh.

And Patricia Macdermott nodded her approval as she listened.

"Faith, that sounds better, my dear!" she said. "Come an' be introduced to Mike. He is the only boy in our school."

"A school!" exclaimed Jess in wonderment. "How does a school come here?"

"I'll tell ye, my dear, when ye've been introduced to Master Mike, and I've got the powder-puff away from him," answered Pat, stepping across the deck cautiously towards the chimpanzee, who was admiring his face in the tiny mirror that was hidden in the lid of the silver puff-box. "The powder-puff is the property of Mademoiselle Desirée de la Touche, a lady of the French nobility, who condescends to teach us French. We call her 'Touchy,' an' she sets all the fashions on Diamond Island, for that's the name of this island. Come here, Mike!"

The monkey glanced suspiciously at Pat.

Pat went on talking to Jess, but she kept her eye on Mike.

"You see, Jess," she said, "th' rascal knows that he's goin' to get us all into trouble. We came out this mornin' with Touchy for a picnic in th' motor-launch. Touchy is having forty winks under the awning round the corner where yonder point of palms runs out into th' lagoon. An' this rascal, he's stolen Touchy's beauty-box. Unless I get th' box back, there is going to be a lot of trouble with Touchy."

Then Pat tried soft persuasions.

"Arrah, now, Mikey dear," she cooed, drawing an orange from her pocket, "look what Anny Pat has got for dear little Mike! Now, ye just drop that box and grab this nice orange."

Mike's eyes glistened as Pat, holding out the orange, approached him slowly and cautiously.

Pat advanced both hands slowly, one to snatch the powder-box, the other to present the orange bait.

But Mike snatched first. He got the orange, and he kept the powder-box, and, with a huge leap, bounded right over Pat's head as she tried to grab him.

In another second he had jumped for the rigging of the foremast of the Smiling Dawn, which still stood. Then away he went, hand over hand, amongst the raffle and tangle of the rigging, leaving Pat to stare up at him helplessly.

She was going after him, but Jin, the Malay, shook his head. He pointed to the wreck of the other mast.

"You no walk upstairs in the rigging, Missy Sultana," said he. "Not safe! You watch me catchee monkey! You young missies go 'long and hide in galley."

The girls went into the galley, and watched from the window, whilst Jin walked along to his berth in the fore-castle.

He came forth, holding a cup of coconut-shell which he had been polishing for Jess. This he lashed with a long length of line to one of the large belaying-pins in the life rail, to which the running ropes of the ship were made fast.

Into this he poured a handful of the ground nuts which are called monkey-nuts.

Then Jin disappeared from the deck, and Mike, curious to know what was in that coco-shell, came climbing slowly down the shrouds, keeping a sharp eye open for the girls.

He had eaten his orange, but he still clung to Mademoiselle's puff-box. He saw no signs of the

"Well, Mr. Jin," exclaimed Pat. "I call that wonderful! You must have studied monkeys a lot to know, exactly what Mike is thinking of in that fashion!"

Jin smiled.

"Yes, missy," he answered. "Now me show you how stop monkey steal powder-box again!"

Pat gave him the powder-box, and Jin, taking it to the galley, sifted in a good measure of ground white pepper.

"Now, you see, Missy Sultana!" said he. "Dis monkey never, never wan' to steal powder-box again!"

He held out the box to Mike, who, taking it, drew out the powder-puff and dabbed it vigorously on his nose.

The effect was alarming. Mike, caught by the bite of the pepper, exploded in a mixture of sneezings and coughings and chatterings that sounded like the drawing of a hundred ginger-beer corks.



THE VANITY OF MIKE! In the lid of the box was a small mirror, and from the box the monkey produced a large and fluffy powder-puff, with which he commenced to powder his ugly face.

girls, so he hopped across the deck on to the rail and peeped into the trap.

There was a look of absolute delight on Mike's ugly face as he caught sight of the monkey-nuts.

He thrust his paw into the shell and grabbed. Then he tried to withdraw his closed fist from the egg-shaped shell, but it would not pass the narrow mouth of the cup.

He began to chatter angrily, dropping Mademoiselle's silver box to the deck, and trying to pull out his closed fist with the help of the other hand.

Jin came forward like a shadow out of the fore-castle. He had caught his monkey, and now he showed the girls how to release him.

He picked up the fallen powder-box, and restored it to Pat. Then, slipping his hand into his pocket, he brought out a few sticky sweets, holding Mike's free paw the while.

Mike looked at the sweets, and ceased his frightened chattering. He loved monkey-nuts, but he loved sweets better, and his hold on the handful of nuts in the coco-shell relaxed.

Then he pulled his hand out of the trap, looking at it wonderingly.

He bounced round the deck, frightened and annoyed, and not till Pat had caught him and soothed him by nursing him in her arms like an infant would he stop chattering.

"Poor Mike! It was a shame!" sighed Pat. "But he'll never touch Touchy's puff-box any more!"

And, sure enough, Mike would not touch the silver box.

Jin laid it on the hatch, but Mike would not go near it. He had had enough of that Poudre des Violettes de Parme and white pepper. It did not suit his complexion.

And, as he backed away from it, a voice was heard below, crying amongst the tall coco-palms:

"Ptree-cia!"

"Goodness, girls!" exclaimed Pat. "Here's Touchy! She's in chase of us."

(You will read more about Castaway Jess, Joe, Pat, and the monkey in the second instalment of this grand serial, which appears in No. 2 of "The Schoolgirls' Own," on sale Tuesday next. Order your copy in advance.)



COOKERY HINTS.

Recipes for economical Dishes which every reader of "The Schoolgirls' Own" will have no difficulty in making.

SUPPER DISHES FOR THE UNEXPECTED GUEST.

THIS week I am going to give you a few recipes for preparing inexpensive and appetising supper dishes.

You all know the friend who pops in unexpectedly, just about supper-time, and your own agony of mind when you realise that you have nothing for supper.

Being Friday, funds are low, and the larder consequently is not very well filled. And the last time that you visited this particular friend, what a splendid supper she quickly produced for your benefit! How did she manage it? Simply by knowing how to quickly prepare supper dishes.

Next time you want to serve a tempting, and at the same time a cheap little supper, just try one of the following recipes.

POTATO CHEESE.

Required: Half a pound of boiled potatoes, one and a half ounces of grated cheese, half an ounce of butter or dripping, a few browned-breadcrumbs, a little milk, salt and pepper.

Well grease a pie-dish, and thickly sprinkle with the breadcrumbs. Mash the potatoes, and add the cheese, milk, butter, and seasoning. Mix well. Pour the mixture into the pie-dish, and bake in a moderate oven for twenty minutes. Serve hot.

Now this is a very easy dish. Don't you think so? Most girls could manage to make it, so next time mother wants to make something nice for supper, just suggest to her a potato cheese. Don't forget to warm the plates.

FRIED BANANAS.

This is another little dish you could try.

Required: Peeled bananas, flour and fat for frying. Cut the bananas into small pieces, flour them, and fry in the fat until a golden brown. Drain well, and serve with scrambled eggs. Dried eggs serve for this purpose, and are much cheaper. Time for cooking, about twenty minutes.

Here is another nice dish.

HAM SAVOURY.

Required: Four ounces of cooked ham (minced), half an ounce of dripping, yolk of one egg, one small onion, a quarter of a teaspoonful of mixed herbs, pepper, a little milk.

Peel and slice the onion finely, and fry in the dripping until a golden brown. Add the ham. Stir well, and when hot add the beaten egg, milk, mixed herbs, and a little pepper. When the mixture thickens it is cooked. Serve on rounds of toast.

This is a favourite supper a little friend of mine is fond of making for her father when he has been working late at the office. The first time she made it she forgot to stir, and the ham was burned. She doesn't make the same mistake now.

Both of these dishes only cost a few pence per person.

Another tempting supper is as follows:

ANCHOVY TOAST.

Required: Three anchovies, a quarter of an ounce of butter, the yolk of one egg, one small onion finely chopped, a quarter of a teaspoonful of finely chopped parsley, pepper.

Bone the anchovies and chop them coarsely. Fry the onion in the butter until slightly browned. Add the anchovies, parsley, and beaten egg. Season with pepper. Stir until the mixture thickens, pour on to toast and serve very hot. The toast is nicer if buttered, but this is not necessary.

Anchovy Toast makes a charming little supper, and takes about half an hour to prepare. One little tip, don't burn the toast, or your cooking will be a failure. By the way, toast is always nicer if made in front of a fire, and also, is cheaper than using the gas. But the fire must be clear.

All of these dishes are suitable for the amateur cook to prepare, as apart from being quickly and easily done, if you do have an accident the cost is not very great.

Remember that one well-cooked dish is better than a dozen badly done.

Week by week I am going to give a few recipes which you can try and make for yourselves.

Some of you perhaps are Girl Guides, but have not yet gained the cookery badge.

Practise these recipes; they will no doubt help you to gain that distinction.

USEFUL TIPS.

Next week, I will give you recipes for making party dishes, all of which you can do for yourselves. You will be helping mother and at the same time learning to be a good cook.

I am also going to give you recipes for making cakes and sweets, and if there is any little thing you would specially like to know how to make, I should be pleased at any time to give you the recipe.

Cooking is a very fascinating subject, and the more one knows of it the more interesting it becomes.

Don't be disheartened if you do not succeed the first time you try your hand at cooking, but just try again.

Common faults are not allowing enough time, and not weighing the ingredients. The beginner should never guess, but should always carefully weigh or measure all of her ingredients.

If you succeed in making the simpler dishes, you can then tackle the more elaborate kinds.

I know a girl who can ice a cake to look just like those that you buy in the shops. But she did not do this the first time she cooked. First she learned to well cook potatoes and correctly boil eggs. Two of the simplest things to do, but very few girls can do them properly!

Can you?

Just try!

No. 1 of an Enthralling New Series of Stories, dealing with the Girl Guide movement. Whether you are a Guide or not, you are certain to thoroughly enjoy this Complete Tale.

The GUIDES of the POPPY PATROL

BY
MILDRED GORDON.

The Guide Meeting.

"YOU must be smarter, girls! Directly you get the word of command, step back quickly into your positions. Now then, form fours!"

Miss Robson, captain of St. James's Girl Guides, pretty and smart-looking in her neat, well-fitting uniform, surveyed the double line of girls before her with a slight frown.

There was a quick shuffling of feet in response to the Guide captain's orders. The dozen girls who made up the Poppy and Pansy patrols, looking neat and capable in their blue serge uniforms, were quickly in lines of four.

"Well done, Molly!" cried Miss Robson. "You're the smartest girl in the company!"

Molly Marsh, leader of the Poppy patrol, smiled with pleasure at her captain's praise. Molly was a good-looking girl, with a well-knit figure and a frank, happy smile. She thoroughly enjoyed the two hours she spent every week in St. James's Hall with her fellow schoolmates and girl guides.

Many of the girls smiled in friendly fashion at Molly, but to two of them in the Poppy Patrol the praise of their leader was like a whip-lash across their backs.

Rose Neath, the builder's daughter, and her friend, May Atkins, whose father ran the big estate office, had never been friendly towards Molly.

Rose, who was fair and fluffy-haired, had been very anxious to be chosen as patrol leader some weeks before, but Molly had been preferred. Not even the position of second had been offered to Rose.

Though not so vain and spiteful as her friend, May Atkins supported Rose in everything she did. A plump, good-natured, easily led girl, May Atkins' chief reason for being a girl guide was because she liked to be seen about the streets of Rockley in her smart uniform.

"So she ought to be smart," grumbled Rose audibly. "What's the good of a patrol leader who isn't?"

"Of course it's always Molly," May added. "None of us can ever do anything right. It's only Molly Marsh who never makes mistakes!"

Miss Robson turned sharply to the two girls. "Silence, there!" she cried. "I've told you before, girls. You must not talk during drill. Don't fidget, Rose. Keep your head still. And you, too, May; you're not standing right!"

The rebuke sent a hot flush to Rose Neath's fair face. May, on her part, drew in the offending right foot and smiled as she shrugged her shoulders.

"This is all through Molly Marsh," muttered

Rose Neath. "Miss Robson's venting her spite on us."

It was quite untrue. There was not a fairer-minded or kinder-hearted young woman in Rockley than Miss Robson. Though at business during the day, she cheerfully gave up two or three evenings a week to help and instruct her guides.

There was a lot of work to be done apart from the guide meetings. The girls who paid their twopence a week never suspected that their captain often had to dip into her own purse to make up the deficiency in the expenses.

"Now, girls," cried Miss Robson, "you know I don't like telling you of your faults, but you must hear about them if you want to become capable girl guides. Let's start again. As you—were!"

Even Rose Neath and May Atkins were smarter in their movements after that.

Miss Robson took them through all the minor evolutions of drill, and when they had performed "left form" several times to her satisfaction, she marched them round the hall in double file and in fours, and finally, dismissed them.

That was only the first part of the evening's business. While the girls skipped off and a buzz of chatter and laughter broke out, Molly Marsh, as leader of the Poppies, and Maud Rivers, the Pansy leader, stepped across the hall and saluted their captain.

"We're getting on, girls," said Miss Robson, smiling. "I'm sure we could be a lot smarter if we all tried our hardest. We won't do any Swedish drill to-night. You take your patrol in basket-making, Maud. Molly can give the Poppies some needlework to do."

Miss Robson sat down before a little table.

"You're quite sure you can manage the basket-work, Maud?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, miss," replied the Pansy leader, her fine eyes lighting up. "Molly's been very kind. She came round to my house the other night and explained it all beautifully to me."

"Well done!" said the captain, smiling into Molly's pretty face. "That's the proper spirit. Help one another. I wish all the girls would do so."

She turned to Molly Marsh.

"How are you getting on, dear?" she asked. "Still trying hard to gain your first-class badge?"

"Yes, miss," replied Molly. "I hope to pass in all the subjects by the end of the month. While the girls are doing needlework I thought of training Nellie Adams, the new girl, to pass her tenderfoot test."

"Yes, do, Molly," replied Miss Robson. "And don't forget, dear, come to me if I can help you in anything."

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

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Molly thanked the captain and went across to the corner where the Poppies were awaiting her. In the opposite corner, with merry voices, the Pansies were arranging their chairs in a circle before they began the basket-work. All had their hands, however, were unusually silent and all had their eyes on Molly as she approached.

"I think it's a shame you should talk behind my back like this," exclaimed Grace Ward, who was second in the Poppy patrol. "She's not a bit stuck-up. She's no more Miss Robson's favourite than you are!"

She had turned to Rose Neath. The builder's daughter, still angry at having been called to account for her bad drill, had been endeavouring to turn the Poppies against their leader.

"You can't say Miss Robson makes a favourite of me!" snapped Rose. "Just the other way about. It's through Molly that she's always calling me over the coals."

"How can it be through Molly?" protested Grace Ward.

"Rose is jealous of Molly," remarked Kitty Barnard. "That's the truth of the matter!"

Rose turned a flushed, angry face on her.

"That's right, all side against me," she sneered.

"Molly's everything that's wonderful. She never does anything wrong!"

"She's always fair and just and kind," asserted Grace. "She never says nasty things about other girls."

"Of course you would take her part!" interposed May Atkins, coming to her friend's assistance.

"It was through her that Miss Robson promoted you to be second!"

It was at this point that Molly stepped towards them.

There was a chilly feeling at her heart as she noticed the cold, unfriendly glance that many of the girls gave her. Conscious of Rose Neath's open enmity, she was more anxious than ever to win the good opinion of her fellow guides.

"Come along, girls," said Molly cheerily.

"We've to do needlework to-night. Get the chairs round. When we get properly started I'll have to leave you in Grace's charge while I help Nellie Adams get her tenderfoot badge."

"Right you are, Molly," responded Grace Ward.

There were a few minutes' awkward silence while the needlework was handed round. Usually it was the signal for a buzz of chatter. The silence rather worried the patrol leader.

"You mustn't take too much to heart, girls, what Miss Robson says about the drill," Molly exclaimed at last. "After all, she only wants to make us smart and keen."

"Of course," agreed Grace Ward, anxious to back up Molly. "Some of the girls get whispering together instead of paying attention."

"I suppose that's meant for me?" cried Rose Neath sharply.

"Can't we talk if we like?" added May Atkins.

"We're not like prisoners being drilled!"

Molly's gentle voice prevented Grace from making an angry retort.

"Don't let's quarrel about it," she said. "Let's all help one another to become good guides by all the means in our power. That's what we're here for. Rose and May can do their drill as well as anybody."

That broke the ice. Kitty Barnard began talking about a concert she was going to and the conversation became general.

A few moments later Molly withdrew from the patrol and sought out little Nellie Adams, the tenderfoot.

Training a tenderfoot to pass the test was one of the nine things in which Molly had to show proficiency, in order to gain her first-class badge.

To become a first-class guide had been Molly's ambition since, soon after her fourteenth birthday, she had been promoted leader of the Poppy patrol.

Molly had already passed a number of tests. She had won the colts, the needlewoman's, the Very ambulance, and the child-nurse badges. Very proud she was of these, but there were several things she had to do yet before she was entitled to wear the coveted badge on her left arm.

Nellie Adams, like most of the girls in the patrol, attended the Rockley Council School. Though only eleven, Nellie was a quick, bright girl. Molly had persuaded her to join the guides a few weeks before, and Nellie was as anxious as her leader that she should become a fully fledged guide.

After half an hour's tuition Molly smiled confidently at her pupil.

"Well done, Nellie!" she cried, as they got up from their chairs. "I think if you practise hard you'll be able to pass the test at our next meeting. I'll tell Miss Robson how splendidly you're getting on."

Molly reported the news to the captain there and then.

It was getting towards closing time by then. Miss Robson called the guides into single line before her, had a brief chat with them about the work, told them of the next meeting, and then dismissed them.

"Hurry home, girls," was Miss Robson's parting warning. "It's past nine now."

The homes of Grace Ward, Kitty Barnard, and Nellie Adams, were in Dickson Street, where Molly lived with her father and mother and Jack, the brother who was her junior by two years.

The girls were chatting gaily together when they came within sight of Molly's home. It was a small six-roomed house with a tiny garden in front of it.

"I say, Molly," said Grace, "I wonder if there's anything wrong at your house? Look what a crowd of children there are about the gate."

Molly had already noticed. A strange feeling of trouble had possessed her all of a sudden. Both her father and mother had been worried lately, though what it was that was bothering them neither she nor her brother Jack, who were great chums together, had the faintest idea.

The front door of Molly's home was open. The children were evidently trying to see what was happening inside.

"Run away, you kiddies!" cried Kitty Barnard. "It's time you were all in bed."

The children stared wide-eyed at Molly Marsh.

"You're going to get it!" said the biggest boy amongst them. "There are two policemen in there!"

The words made Molly draw in a quick breath. Two policemen! What business had they in her house?

"Good-night, girls!" said Molly, in faltering tones, and ran up the porch through the open door.

Molly's Father is Arrested.

IT was true enough. The big figure of a policeman blocked up the little passage. Another was standing at the kitchen door.

Twopence

In the kitchen itself stood Molly's father, the light from the gas-jet showing his grey hair at the temples, his face white and worried looking.

Molly's mother was seated in a chair by the table, covering her face with her hands. Jack, his bright, frank face as white as his father's, was standing by the table, an open exercise book in front of him, evidently disturbed while doing his home-work.

Molly brushed past the policeman and threw her arms about her father's waist.

"Daddy!" she cried. "Oh, daddy, what is the matter?"

Molly loved her father. He was always kind and good to her, always had a smile for her, and was always ready to gratify her wishes within the means of his power.

"Molly! My little girl!"

There was a sob in John Marsh's voice as he spoke. He put his arms about Molly's shoulders. Her round hat had fallen from her head. He stooped and pressed his lips to the girl's thick brown hair.

John Marsh was employed as chief clerk in Mr. Atkins' estate office. It was a position he had occupied since he had come back from three years' service in the mud and trenches of France and Flanders.

A few days before, the sum of seventy pounds which he had collected as rents in Rockley had disappeared mysteriously from the estate office to which he had taken it to await Mr. Atkins' arrival. In Treasury notes and silver John Marsh had placed it in one canvas bag and placed it within his desk.

But when he had come to raise the desk-flap to give the money to his employer the canvas bag was nowhere to be seen!

John Marsh had been the only person in the inner office all the time. Several persons had come to the counter in the outer shop to make inquiries about houses for sale, but, of course, they could have had nothing to do with the robbery.

Henry Neath, the auctioneer and estate agent, had been openly suspicious. He shook his head to all his clerk's explanations.

"You'll find that missing seventy pounds by Wednesday, Marsh," he had declared aggressively, "or the matter shall be put in the hands of the police."

And now Wednesday evening had come, and a constable and a sergeant had arrived with a warrant for his arrest.

"It's all right, Molly dear," said the girl's father, finding it hard to speak. "I—I've got to go out for a little while. I'll soon be back again."

Molly clung to her father as if she would not let him go.

"Oh, daddy, they mustn't take you!" she cried, her eyes bright with unshed tears. "They've made a mistake—they must have done!"

"Of course they've made a mistake," little Jack cut in bravely. "Old Henry Neath ought to be punished for saying dad stole the money!"

Molly's graceful, young figure trembled at the ominous words.

"Oh, daddy, you didn't!" she protested. "I know you didn't! How wicked of him to say it!"

"I didn't, my child," said John Marsh, with a gulp, "and that's the solemn truth. Give me time and I'll prove it. Bless you, darling, for your belief in your old father!"

The girl's comforting words had filled him with emotion. For the first time that evening he glimpsed the silver lining that lurked behind the dark cloud.

He looked across to where his wife was seated at the table, her shoulders heaving with her emotion.

"Oh, John dear," she sobbed, "suppose you can't find enough evidence? Suppose— But they mustn't take you and they sha'n't!"

John Marsh gently put Molly from him and laid a hand on his wife's shoulder.

"Come, come, my dear!" he said, trying to speak bravely. "It's not so bad as that. It's a mystery now where the money's gone to, but it won't always remain a mystery."

Mrs. Marsh turned a tear-stained face to his.

"If they take you, dear, we can manage somehow," said she, smiling bravely through her tears. "Don't worry about us, but it will be hard—for you!"

"Cheer up, my dear," said her husband forcing a smile to his white lips. "I'll soon be back again."



THE GUIDE CAPTAIN'S CHEERY WORDS!

"Persevere, dear!" said Miss Robson. "Try your hardest! Even if you fall to-night, it will be practice for you."

The sergeant by the doorway, a stolid witness of the emotional scene, nodded to the suspected man.

"Come along, sir," he said, not unkindly. "We've been time enough."

John Marsh bent down to kiss his wife's forehead. She returned his caress with words of comfort and cheer that brought a proud smile to his lips. Such a wife—and such a daughter!

He braced his shoulders and turned to little Jack, putting out his hand.

"Good-bye, old man," he said huskily. "Keep a stout heart!"

Jack broke into tears as he clung to his father's hand. Molly flung her arms about the clerk's neck. There were no tears in her eyes now.

"Come back as soon as you can, daddy dear," she said bravely. "Don't worry about us. We'll be all right."

John Marsh nearly broke down under that loving embrace, then putting Molly from him, he squared his shoulders and followed the policeman out of the house.

The hour that followed her father's departure was one of the most miserable Molly had ever spent. Mrs. Marsh sobbed and sobbed, and although Molly tried her utmost to comfort her mother, she could do little to stop the grief-stricken woman's crying.

"Molly dear," said Mrs. Marsh, rising to her feet at length, and moving towards the door, "I—I sha'n't be long. I will be with you again in a few minutes."

Molly put out her hand to her brother as soon as their mother had disappeared and, hand in hand, the two sat for a time beside the dying fire.

"What does it all mean, Jack?" asked Molly in a whisper. "How dare Mr. Neath say daddy's stolen his wretched money!"

Jack told her all he knew. He had been there when the sergeant had read the warrant. He had heard his father's explanation to the sergeant.

"Somebody must have taken the money when dad wasn't looking," Molly decided. "Oh, how cruel and wicked it is! What can we do, Jack?"

"I know dad didn't take it, that's all," Jack insisted. "I mean to find out who did!"

They sat talking in hushed voices until their mother came back, her eyes red with crying, and urged them to go to bed.

The following morning it soon became apparent to Molly that the news of her father's arrest was known all over Rockley.

She was in her last year at school. The instant she stepped out of the little house, her sweet face pale and anxious-looking, she became aware that the neighbours had already delivered their verdict on the affair.

Two women a little way down the road, supposed to be sweeping their porches, but engaged in discussing the arrest, stared stonily at Molly as she went past.

That in general was the attitude adopted by her school companions when Molly stepped into the playground. Furtive glances or rude stares met her wherever she looked.

Poor Molly felt like running away and giving vent to bitter tears in a corner. Then the thought came to her that her father was innocent. He had said that he was; and she believed him. It fortified her resolution, gave her courage to keep her head erect and meet the unfriendly glances with steady eyes.

There was some comfort, too, in knowing that all her friends had not deserted her.

Grace Ward and Kitty Barnard ran across to her as she crossed the playground.

"Hallo, Molly, did you do your arithmetic last night?" asked Grace. "Wasn't that decimal sum a difficult one?"

Molly looked at her friends. Kitty was trembling slightly. Grace was unusually pale.

"I did my sums before I went to the guides'," was Molly's answer. There was an awkward pause.

"I—you know my father was taken away last night?" she added nervously. "You—you needn't speak to me unless you want to."

"Oh, Molly, fancy thinking we shouldn't wish to—talk to you!" said Kitty, in gentle reproach. "Besides, you haven't done anything wrong!"

"And my mother said it's got to be proved yet that your father did take the money," exclaimed Grace. "She said it was wrong to condemn anybody until they were found guilty."

The colour rose into Molly's cheeks. She felt she could have hugged her loyal friends but for the prying eyes that were still on her.

"I'm so glad it makes no difference to you,"

she answered, smiling for the first time that day. "Dad would never steal even a penny from anybody."

But it was not long after this that Rose Neath and May Atkins sailed arrogantly past them.

"If you've got cheek to come to school I hope you won't dare to show your face at the guides' again," said Rose spitefully.

"You'll be a disgrace to the patrol if you do," May added.

Molly's lips met together. She was determined to say nothing.

"You're not the only two in the patrol," Grace retorted warmly. "It's for Miss Robson to say."

Rose and May passed on, while Kitty and Grace waxed indignantly about "spiteful snobs."

That was a difficult day for Molly. But for the warm comradeship of Kitty Barnard and Grace Ward she would have been lonely and almost heartbroken.

She had little heart for working up for her first-class badge when she got home from school. She had little heart for the work, but spent all her spare time in comforting her mother, and helping to keep the house tidy.

And so several gloomy days passed. The only news they had of John Marsh was that he had been brought before a magistrate and remanded. Tuesday night came round. Molly was doing some ironing while her mother sat huddled in an armchair staring miserably into the fire when there was a rat-tat at the door.

"It's dad!" shouted Jack, with a happy laugh, and dashed along the passage.

But he was mistaken. It was Miss Robson, Molly's captain.

"Can I come in, Mrs. Marsh?" cried the girl guides' captain cheerily. "I want to express my sympathy during your trouble."

At last Molly's mother roused herself. She got up wearily from her chair.

"Come in, Miss Robson," she said in a toneless voice. "Everybody thinks my husband's guilty. My neighbours pass me in the street. All I know is that if John stole the money not a penny of it has found its way into this house!"

Miss Robson smiled and kissed the poor worried woman.

"Well, that's proof positive that Mr. Marsh didn't steal it," she said brightly. "I know Molly's father well enough. He's a homely man who thinks the world of his wife and his children. He doesn't want money except for you."

"Well, I'm glad to find he's got one friend," said Mrs. Marsh, plucking up courage. "I've been so worried myself—"

Miss Robson had gone to the table and put an arm affectionately about Molly's shoulders.

"I've come to speak to you about to-morrow night, dear," she exclaimed. "Get there as early as you can. If you are ready to pass any tests for your first-class badge we can go into them before the other guides arrive."

Molly shook her head sadly.

"I haven't had much time this week. Miss Robson," she replied. "I wasn't coming. I—I thought some of the girls might object."

"Who might object?" asked the captain sharply. "Tell me!"

Molly shook her head. It was a temptation to get even with Rose Neath and May Atkins and repeat the bitter things they had said to her. But Molly had a noble spirit.

"You can't blame the girls," she said. "If— if dad's a— a thief it isn't likely they'd want to be drilled by me."

Two-pence

"But your father is not a thief," said the captain stoutly. "Besides, no girl guide would be so unfair as to condemn you for the faults of your father."

"All right, then, captain," said Molly; "I'll come to-morrow!"

Molly Tries for the First-Class Badge.

"WELL, girls, what is it?" Miss Robson had only just arrived at St. James's Hall for the guides' meeting. She had come early expecting to find Molly waiting for her. Instead, there were Rose Neath and May Atkins standing by her little table.

"We've come about Molly Marsh, Miss Robson," began Rose boldly. "We object to having a patrol leader whose father's in prison!"

Miss Robson was so astonished that she had no answer ready for a moment.

"I suppose you've heard that Mr. Marsh has stolen seventy pounds from my father?" May Atkins added.

"All right!" she said. "If Molly Marsh remains leader I can see all the girls leaving. Come on, May!"

Rose led the way from the hall, and out into the street.

Molly Marsh, in her uniform, had just turned the corner of Dickson Street. Rose and May flashed a glance in their leader's direction, and then hurried across the road to intercept a party of four girl guides who were on their way to St. James's Hall.

"I say," cried Rose, addressing them, "you're surely not going to the meeting to-night with Molly Marsh there! I've just been along to see Miss Robson and we've had such a row! We never thought she'd stick up for a thief's daughter, did we, May?"

The guides listened with great interest to what Rose told them she had said to Miss Robson. May kept silent. She hadn't the courage to repeat some of Miss Robson's rebuking phrases.

All six girls stared at Molly as she passed them



THE GIRLS WHO DISLIKED MOLLY! "We've come about Molly Marsh, Miss Robson!" said Rose Neath. "We object to having a patrol leader whose father's in prison!"

"I have heard that seventy pounds are missing from your father's estate office," replied the captain coldly. "But I didn't know that it had been proved that Mr. Marsh had stolen the money."

"Of course he stole it!" snapped Rose. "Who else did? Anyway, we're not coming to the meetings if the daughter of a thief's going to be over us!"

"You girls don't know what you're talking about," said Miss Robson, with icy reproof. "You are only children or I should say some very hard things to you about your mean and narrow and spiteful conduct. While you have taken on yourselves the responsibility of judging Mr. Marsh, and judging him guilty without hearing any evidence whatever, allow me to say, as captain, that I will stand no interference with this troop."

"If you—"

"Enough!" exclaimed Miss Robson. "I refuse to discuss this matter further! I am ashamed—utterly ashamed of you girls!"

Rose Neath flushed scarlet.

on the other side of the road and walked on, with her head held proudly erect, towards the hall.

"Hallo, Molly," cried the captain, as the leader of the Poppies came in and saluted. "Where are all the other girls to-night?"

Molly's sweet face was very pale. She looked round the hall. There was only Kitty Barnard and Grace Ward of the Poppies present. Two or three Pansies were standing near Maud Rivers, their leader.

"There are some in the road, Miss Robson," replied Molly. "I expect they'll be here soon."

Seven o'clock came and there were no new arrivals. At ten minutes past the hour Miss Robson called the girls in a line before her.

"It is impossible to do any marching drill to-night, girls," said the captain. "I'm afraid some of the girls have been led away by evil gossip. Take the guides in Swedish drill, Maud, will you, please?"

She turned to Molly and beckoned her to come up to her table.

"I've been thinking, dear," said the captain.

"You've got a good opportunity to-night to pass the tests for your first-class badge. You have passed in nearly everything, haven't you, Molly?"

"There are only two or three things I have to pass in, captain," Molly replied. "I've got to draw a map of the roads of the district, and pass the test in judging heights and weights and distances."

"Very well, dear," said Miss Robson; "sit down at my table. You'll find a pen and ink and plenty of paper. It would be so nice if you could gain your badge!"

Molly's heart warmed to her. She knew quite well why the girls were purposely staying away from the meeting.

"Thank you, miss," she replied, and sat down at the little table.

But she was not at her best for an examination. She was worried about her father. The days were passing and yet he had not come back to them. Her mother had been very tearful that day. Something had been said at home that her father was coming up for trial that day, but so far they had not heard whether he had been proved guilty or not.

And Molly was conscious of feeling very tired and weary as she drew the paper towards her and commenced work on the map drawing.

For a few minutes she sat there biting the end of her pen in thought. She and her brother Jack had practised map-drawing of the district a week or two before and it had seemed quite easy then; but to-night she felt that she did not quite know where to start.

Molly wasted two sheets of paper before she settled down to her task. Yet while she penned the main roads round Rockley, and mapped in the by-roads, with their special places, such as post-office, doctors, surgeries, fire and police-stations, her thoughts were for ever wandering to her father.

"Poor daddy!" she sighed. "How can they be so cruel as to keep him? Mr. Neath must know that daddy would never steal the money! I wonder if I shall ever see him again?"

The tears made her eyes misty. They dropped on the sheet before her and blurred her map.

Miss Robson, who had gone to help Maud Rivers and the girls doing the Swedish drill watched her with a sad pain at her heart.

She came across to Molly.

"I'm afraid it's no use, miss," said Molly. "I can't get on to-night."

"Persevere, dear," said the captain kindly. "Try your hardest. Even if you fail to-night it will be practice for you."

Molly resumed her mapping. When Miss Robson came back to her a quarter of an hour she had completed the map.

Miss Robson took the paper and looked it over. Molly thought she could see disapproval in the grave glance.

"Have you got a shilling in the Savings Bank, Molly?" the captain asked.

Molly's round cheeks flushed painfully. She knew that this evidence of thrift was necessary as one of the conditions of badge winning.

"No, miss," she answered, in a low voice. "I did have. Mother—we wanted the money and I drew it out on Monday."

Miss Robson nodded gravely.

She put some questions to Molly about distances and heights in the neighbourhood, and asked her opinion of the weights of various articles she gave her.

"Quite good," said the captain, when the test

was finished. "Now tell me what you would do if you had just rescued someone from drowning."

Molly's answers to this were satisfactory, and so were her statements as to what she would do if a child were to get his clothes on fire.

"You've nearly passed, Molly," was Miss Robson's verdict at last. "I wish I could tell you that you had won your badge, but, as you know, it's necessary to have a shilling in the bank, and I'm afraid this map of Rockley is not so good as it should be."

Molly gave a little sigh of disappointment.

"I didn't feel up to it to-night, miss," she said sadly.

"I know you didn't, dear," replied the captain in sympathetic tones. "Still, you've done very well. It won't be long now before you will get your first-class badge. You've only got to draw another map; and as for the Savings Bank, when your father is returned to you—"

A figure appeared in the doorway, tall, pale-faced and grey-haired. He stood there, looking in like a ghost at the busy girls.

Molly leapt to her feet with an impulsive cry.

"Daddy!" she cried.

She ran across the room quickly and threw her arms about her father's neck as he bent down and put his own arms to receive her.

"My little Molly!" he murmured.

For a minute or so father and daughter remained in that loving embrace, more expressive of their regard for one another than a book full of phrases.

"Daddy's come back, Miss Robson!" cried Molly, with happy face and sparkling eyes. "You said he would! Oh, isn't it splendid!"

The captain advanced and held out her hand.

"I'm so glad, Mr. Marsh," said Miss Robson, with a cheery smile. "I knew it was all a dreadful mistake!"

John Marsh bowed his head sadly.

"Thank you, Miss Robson, for your faith in me," he said, in a low, grave voice. "They've given me my freedom because they could not prove the case against me."

"Then they haven't found the thief?" asked the captain.

"No, not yet," replied John Marsh; "more's the pity. And until they do I suppose I shall be condemned by my neighbours, and my children have the stigma of shame cast upon them!" he added bitterly.

"You must be brave, Mr. Marsh," said Miss Robson.

"Yes, we must be brave, daddy," Molly repeated brightly. "We know how just and true and good you are. The people who are saying unkind things now will be sorry one day when the truth comes out!"

She ran away to get her guide's hat and her coat. A few moments later Molly and her father left the guides' hall hand in hand.

Miss Robson looked after them with sympathetic eyes. What would be the upshot of it all? Would Rose Neath and the other guides come back to the patrol before John Marsh's innocence was fully established, or would they continue to be antagonistic towards Molly, and refuse to remain in a patrol of which she was leader?

To these questions Miss Robson could find no answer; the future alone could tell!

("Earning Her Badge" is the title of the long, complete story of the Guides of the Poppy Patrol in No. 2 of "The Schoolgirls' Own," on sale Tuesday next. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)



The Girl Guides' Corner.



Useful hints and advice that will be appreciated by every girl who is a Guide.

Conducted by "GUIDE CAPTAIN."

Help for Guides.

I WANT to make this little corner one of the most attractive features of our popular paper. My great aim is to help girl guides to become efficient in every possible way.

It may not be always convenient to ask your patrol leader or captain for advice or information dealing with the great girl-guiding movement, so if my girl friends will send me a postcard, explaining their difficulty, I will do my utmost to help them.

Write to the Captain, Girl Guides, "Schoolgirls' Own," Fleetway House, London, E.C.4.

Be Thorough—Be Ambitious.

WHETHER you are darned stockings or playing a piece of music on the piano for a coveted prize, there is only one way to do it—and that is the right way.

Choose the right way, girls, in becoming expert guides. Don't be satisfied with merely winning your tenderfoot badge. Work hard to become a Second Class guide, to add badges to your sleeves, to gain the distinction of a First Class guide, and so in time make yourself thoroughly efficient.

We are all proud of our uniforms. Let us be worthy of them. None of us want to be swankers in a cuckoo patrol. If you try to make yourself the smartest girl in your patrol, you will help on your own company and the whole guide movement.

The secret is thoroughness, girls. Do everything you have to do as well as you possibly can. Never be satisfied with anything if you can do it better. With a little patience and perseverance you can work wonders. After a time it comes natural to do things quickly and perfectly.

Why Snow is White.

WHILE I am writing this little chat with my chums, the grey, heavy clouds overhead are a warning that we shall probably have a heavy fall of snow before long.

I asked Grace, who is a Second Class guide, what snow is, and she replied that it was frozen rain. Little Peggie, who is a brownie, told me with a twinkle in her blue eyes that it was the feathers falling from old Mother Goose in the moon.

Grace was only partly right. Snow is the watery vapour of the clouds, which gradually freezes as it falls to the earth. That is why snowflakes are so light. Scientists say that one rain drop is equal to about ten snowflakes.

Grace could not understand why, when rain-water is colourless, that snow is white, until I explained that the spray of the sea waves, the foam of the waterfall, the steam from a kettle are all white because they are forms of vapour.

Tying Up a Parcel.

I WAS reading the other day about the thousands of parcels the postmen could not deliver at Christmas-time because they were so badly tied up.

Think of the lovely Christmas presents that went astray; think of the thousands of disappointed people whose expected gifts never arrived, because of the carelessness of their senders! I hope none of you were served in that way, girls.

Though every brownie is taught to tie up a parcel, I've a shrewd idea that many of my girl friends are not so careful in this respect as they ought to be. Poor parcels! They often sadly need a good turn done to them.

Put your parcel in the centre of the paper. Double the paper over flatly and neatly, tuck the corners in tidily. When you put the string round it, draw it tight, and make only small knots so that they won't slip. Always remember that your parcel will have to stand a lot of knocking about, and be handled by quite a number of people, before it reaches its destination.

Don't depend on a label alone—write the address distinctly on the paper itself.

A Pointed Question.

HAVE you done your good deed to-day? Remember that girl guides are jolly persons. Keep on smiling.

Try This Little Teaser.

A CANADIAN farmer left seventeen horses when he died. When his will was read, it was found he had left half the horses to his eldest son, a third to the second son, and one-ninth to the youngest son.

The farmer's sons were sadly perplexed in trying to carry out their father's wishes. How do you think they managed it?

"Oh, that's easy," said a friend of the family, when he rode up on his horse one day to find out how they were getting along. "Just borrow my horse while you divide your horses up, and then let me have him back again."

To their surprise, the idea worked excellently. The eldest son had nine horses, the second six, and the youngest two.

Dangers to Health.

FUNNY what a lot of destroying words begin with D. Dirt, dust, damp, defective drains, and doubtful drinking water are some of them. Healthy, happy homes are three H's familiar to hygienic housewives. Every girl guide knows their value, too.

Sunlight, fresh air, and cleanliness will make sure of the three H's and drive all the nasty D's away.

The story of a girl who resolves to make her name on the Films. Every schoolgirl will admire Gladys West for her determination, and will read with great interest of her efforts to climb the ladder of fame.



For Film-Fame and Fortune



BY JOAN VINCENT

The Call of the Film.

"I AM sorry, miss, but I have no situation which I can offer you!"
"But—but can't you give me anything? I don't mind what it is, so long as—"

"No, miss. All my hands are working on short time, and"—the manager of the little blouse factory, in the suburb of Hillcrest made a hopeless gesture—"I simply could not think of taking on anybody at the present moment. I should advise you to try somebody else!"

Gladys West sighed deeply as she thanked the manager, and walked wearily out of the little factory.

Try somebody else!

Had she not been trying all the morning? Had she not walked all over Hillcrest, endeavouring to obtain a situation?

She had offered to take anything for the time being, but kindly managers and manageresses had shaken their heads and smiled gently when she had explained that she had only left school a week before, and had no previous experience to support her application.

It was very difficult, they all said, for a girl of fourteen to find employment when so many skilled workers were looking for situations.

And yet, so far as Gladys West was concerned, the necessity for obtaining employment of some sort still remained.

Managers and manageresses might tell her that they had nothing they could offer her, but she must keep on making applications until she succeeded in her efforts to obtain work.

She simply must find a situation of some sort, if she was to do her duty to her older sister, who had looked after her ever since her parents died.

Weary though she was, and discomfited by the disappointments and rebuffs she had experienced, Gladys West moved on down the main street of Hillcrest.

At length she came to a big factory, which had recently been opened. They had engaged a hundred hands at the start, and the busy workers could be seen moving about in the building. But they had not wanted Gladys.

Close at hand was a hoarding, behind which the newly erected offices of the Shadowland Film Company were still being finished off by the builders, whilst busy clerks worked inside.

Gladys had applied there, too, for a situation, only to be told, as she had been told so often, that they had nothing to offer her.

Yet, as she strolled slowly along, wondering where she should try next, Gladys' eyes strayed to the glaring, multi-coloured posters which still covered the hoarding.

A strange fascination gripped the girl as she gazed once again at the pictured actors and actresses of that new, yet already famous, film company, with studios but a mile away.

Time and again she had paused during the week, drawn by a seemingly irresistible attraction, to look at the posters advertising the films produced by the firm so close to her home. And now, after her week of fruitless search for employment, a sudden wild feeling of envy surged through her.

If only she could have her chance! If only, for just a quarter of an hour, she could show them whether she had ability or not! She had always felt the thrill and the romance of the screen stage.

Gladys West turned away with a hard sigh. It was certain employment she wanted—employment which might not be enjoyable, but which would certainly bring in the money which was needed now more than ever at her home.

A striking clock suddenly brought back to the girl the knowledge that time had passed all too quickly that morning. It was time for her to go home to dinner—to go home, too, to report that once more she had failed in her quest for employment.

Turning, Gladys made her way more quickly through the busy streets, and turned off into the road which led to the small villa where her orphaned brothers and sisters lived.

A light patter of footsteps answered her knock, and the door swung open to reveal the small figure of her little sister, Pansy.

"Hallo, Gladys!" cried the youngster. "Back already? I say, what have you done this morning?"

"I've been walking round, Pansy," said the girl, stepping in and closing the door.

"You haven't got any work yet? I say, what a shame!" said Pansy sympathetically. "I think it must be awfully exciting to go and get work; but Emily says I'll have to wait another six years. I do wish I could grow up all at once!"

A taller figure appeared in the doorway at the end of the passage. Emily West, aged eighteen, and housekeeper to that little struggling family, appeared on the scene.

"Still nothing?" asked Emily.
"Nothing at all, Emily. I've tried every-where," said Gladys despondently.

A hard light came into the older girl's eyes.

"Well, you'll have to get something soon," she said. "Bert tells me this morning that he's got to go on three-quarter time, and that means thirty shillings instead of two pounds. George is only bringing in two pounds three now the overtime has stopped, and I'm making precious little at the needlework myself."

"I know that, Emily," said Gladys impulsively. "I want to help—oh, you know how I want to earn a little money to give you! Since mother died, four years ago last Wednesday, you've worked yourself to death here to look after all of us and keep a home together."

"I have," said Emily slowly. "But I can't work at the needlework like I have done. If you don't start soon, Gladys, I don't know what we shall do! Now, you'd better come and set the table for dinner."

Emily turned and went into the back kitchen. Gladys followed her despondently. She hated coming home like this—just one more hungry mouth to feed from the meagre purse which Emily controlled.

So dejected was she just then that she did not notice that several of the mats had been lifted for cleaning, and placed to one side. But just as she was on the threshold of the kitchen, her foot caught in a projecting fold.

Before she could do anything to keep her balance, Gladys sprawled helplessly on the kitchen floor.

"Oh! Are you hurt?" cried little Pansy, running forward. And then she stopped, her alarmed face breaking into a merry smile.

For Gladys, heavily though she had fallen, had spun round and was sitting up with a most comical look of distress on her pretty face.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Pansy. "You do make me laugh, Gladys, when you do things like that, and you're always tumbling about, too! Ha, ha, ha! Fancy not seeing all those mats there!"

Gladys smiled and got to her feet. Emily, busy at the gas-stove, took no notice. Little Pansy came into the room, still laughing.

"You ought to go on the films, Gladys, really!" she exclaimed. "I'm sure you'd make them

simply scream, if you did a thing like that! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Films!" came an indignant voice from the direction of the gas-stove. "Gladys doesn't want those silly ideas put into her head!"

"Oh, Emily!" exclaimed Pansy. "You remember that everyone said that Gladys was just like a real actress at her school play, and they all thought that she really was one! And remember how they clapped her when she acted at the Guide Concert, too!"

"Pansy, don't talk so foolishly!" said Emily. "I'm not talking foolishly. I think that Gladys was a simply splendid actress, and I'm sure she'd be fine on the films!"

Gladys West's eyes fired. The topic of the films always excited her. She turned suddenly to her sister.

"I would like to have a try, Em!" she said.

Emily wheeled round from the gas-stove. "Fancy you listening to what Pansy says!" she retorted. "Just as though a little slip of a girl like she knows how you'd get on! I know plenty of girls round here who have been to the Shadow-land place—and come back."

"Yes; but I might succeed!" said Gladys. "You succeeding on the films! Oh, I like that!" said Emily scornfully. "What do you know about film acting? Besides, what do they pay the supers, even if they employ them? It's only a few shillings a day."

"Gladys wouldn't be a super. I'm sure they'd give her a jolly big part!" said little Pansy.

"Big part! They don't have to go round looking for stars for the big parts!" said Emily. "Just you drop these foolish notions, young Gladys, and remember that you've really got to do something, if we're not to take in lodgers!"

"May I not have just—just one try?" asked Gladys tremulously.

Emily stirred a bubbling saucepan viciously.

"I don't think you'd better!" said Emily. "Oh, Em!" ejaculated Pansy tearfully. "Think of all the money Gladys would make if you'd only let her go! Why, we might even be able to go to the pictures twice a week!"



AT THE FILM STUDIO! A portion of the scenery moved. A small tear in a piece of painted canvas appeared, and the stoutest, marriagest girlish face that Gladys had ever seen looked through the opening. "Oh, are you hurt?" cried Gladys anxiously.

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

32

"I've simply longed to go and try all this last week, Em!" said Gladys softly. "I haven't been, and there is just a chance, you know."

"Precious little!"
"Well, all the shops are shut on Wednesday afternoon, so it won't be possible to apply at any more of them for a situation. Do let me go to the studios?"

"You can go this afternoon, Gladys, if you'll promise not to wait about there long," she said. "It's wasting an afternoon; but still, I'll let you have your chance, and then you'll understand that there's nothing in it."

"Oh, thanks, Em!" cried Gladys, with shining eyes. "You won't thank me when you come back!" said Emily. "Fancy you really thinking that you'll ever do anything! Still, you must learn your lesson, like all of them. Now come along for dinner!"

To Gladys West, the dinner which followed was surely the longest meal she had ever known!

Pansy talked ceaselessly, but unheard. The washing-up which followed, and to which Gladys had to give a hand, was a long and horribly dragged-out nightmare.

For something seemed to tell Gladys that this was her chance—the chance for which she had always longed.

She was going at last to take her chance at the studios of the Shadowland Film Company—to use any opportunity which a kindly chance might throw in her way!

She was going to film-fame—or failure!

In the Studios!

AHEAD of her, just across the fields, loomed the low, spreading buildings of the film studios—a wonderful, magic palace, as it had always seemed to Gladys West.

With a curious little flutter in her heart, Gladys pressed on along the footpath.

Suddenly she paused, and stepped into the grass bordering the footpath.

The outline of a small white envelope had caught her eye. Stooping down now, Gladys discovered, to her surprise, that a sealed but unstamped letter was lying in the grass.

Quickly she picked it up, looking at the address written in a large, bold hand on one side. Gladys started as she did so.

The letter was directed to the very building to which she was going, and read:

"Personal.

Washington K. Schreen, Esq., Producer,
Shadowland Film Company, Hillcrest."

Gladys turned the envelope over in her hand and looked at it carefully. Yes, the flap was gummed, and everything was in order. Some careless messenger to the studios must have dropped it in the long grass, and not discovered his loss!

The girl looked around her. Outside the studios she saw men moving bulky objects about, carrying lengths of timber through the open gates of the building; but there was no sign of a messenger. Had he already left again? The letter had evidently not been lost for long; but most likely it was urgent.

And then an exceedingly daring thought came suddenly into the girl's head.

Chance had played into her hands and given her

that letter, and now she was going to act on her own initiative!

Men and women who had become "stars" had often had to do something extraordinary to secure a trial.

"And I will do it, too!" exclaimed Gladys, her eyes shining. "I have this letter, and they will let me in when they see it. Then I will ask to see the producer, and ask him if he can let me play a small part. At least I shall have done something then!"

With a beating heart, Gladys West turned once more into the footpath, and hurried on towards the studios.

A uniformed man stood at the main entrance to the buildings.

"Business, miss?" he asked, somewhat brusquely.

"I—I want to see the producer," said Gladys, mustering all her courage. "I have a letter for him!"

The man took the proffered envelope, and read the wording.

"All right, miss. Go straight through there!"

With a strange thrill of excitement, Gladys West went on through a small yard and hurried towards a door, which gave admittance to one of the long, glass-covered buildings.

Bewildered at all she saw, Gladys West passed into the building. Lights and a confusion of noise and bustle were all that she was conscious of at first. Then a raucous voice requesting her to move brought her back to herself, only to find that she had nearly been run down by a man pushing a tremendous truckful of painted scenery.

"You seem strange in here, missy," said the man, pulling up. "Do you want to find anyone?"

"Yes, please," said Gladys eagerly. "I want Mr. Schreen, the producer."

"You'll have no trouble in finding him," said the man, chuckling. "See over there? That little man with the tremendous voice."

Across the vast, stone-floored building came the nasal twang of a loud-voiced American giving commands through a small megaphone.

Gladys looked round again—carefully, this time—before venturing to make her trip across the vast place in which she found herself. It was necessary to step carefully, on account of the yards and yards of cable which dragged across the floor. Men seemed to be hammering and banging on crazy-looking wooden structures on every side.

A tremendous sense of mystification came over the schoolgirl.

"Action! Camera! Go!" came a nasal drawl to Gladys' bewildered ears.

Strong lights stabbed suddenly from the roof high above her head. A little scene, which she had scarcely noticed before, became illuminated as though by bright sunlight. Actors and actresses, hidden by the shadows, appeared and started to move about at the direction of the loud-voiced American with the megaphone.

"So that's how they take a film!" murmured Gladys, pausing to watch with all the wonder of her young eyes.

"Cut!" said the nasal voice suddenly.

A rhythmical whirr coming from the camera ceased. The lights clicked out. The actors and actresses could be seen leaving the little stage on which they had acted.

"Now's my chance!" murmured the girl. "After all, I am doing nothing wrong. The producer may be glad to get that letter, and then I will ask him if he thinks I stand any chance of acting for him."

Taking her courage in both hands, Gladys hurried forward and drew up breathlessly in front of the famous Miss American.

"If you're Mr. Schreou, sir," said Gladys all quivered up the most exciting moment had come. "I've brought you a letter, sir. I was coming here across the studio, and I saw—"

"Say, missy," remarked the producer, looking up at the girl with a queer smile. "I guess some one's would run up."

"Gladys gasped.

"Oh, I—I was just explaining—" she ventured.

"Don't trouble missy? Watch are precious here. You say you've a letter for me?"

"Here," said Gladys. West handed the letter over as she spoke. A sudden doubt assailed her. She had never looked her mission, and had a glimpse of the look of the "wonder woman." Wasn't it rather queer, intercepting a busy man like this to ask for employment?

Fortunately the letter was short. The producer looked up and eyed the girl keenly.

"Say, You want to try your hand missy?" he asked. "You want to act for the movies, I guess."

"Oh, yes, I do, sir!" cried Gladys eagerly.

"That was what I wanted to ask you, if you had a moment. If only you could give me a trial—"

"Oh! You've a lot to say, missy! I'll give you a trial without the talking—you can safely have all the other money to me. I guess you've done a little acting already."

"Yes. At school I took the part of Portia in 'The Merchant of Venice,' and—"

"That Shakespeare guy wore that one, huh? Well, I guess I ain't missing Portia at the moment, but no one's turned up to play Anna in the film I'm doing. Just you step over to the prop, mistress right away, and ask her to make you up."

"Oh, sir! You're going to give me a trial?" asked Gladys, with shining eyes.

"I guess so! It's only a small part, but I'll watch how you figure. Now, just you travel quick, I'll want you on that set over there in half an hour."

The producer crumpled the letter, and thrust it in his pocket, and turned to speak to someone else who had bustled up. With her mind in a whirl at her unexpected good fortune, Gladys West turned away.

Gladys was to be given a chance—a chance for which she had not even had to ask! What luck for the producer simply to look at her and offer her a part right away like that! Why, it was almost unbelievable!

With her brain throbbing, and the hot blood of excitement in her cheeks, the girl turned to hurry away in search of someone who would direct her to the "prop" mistress. She took a step forward, then suddenly paused. From just behind her came a most ominous cracking sound.

At her side was a mighty pile of scenery. It had been placed before. Even as Gladys looked it suddenly shook violently, and another loud crack came to her ears. Then, without further warning, the whole mighty pile collapsed and fell to the floor of the studio.

In the very act of its falling, Gladys had a vision of something which made her blood and-dusty run cold. A plump, girlish figure hung to one of the falling pieces of scenery. And now the whole pile was motionless on the floor of the studio!

"Oh! Someone is under that!" cried Gladys, rushing forward. "A girl! I saw her!"

Other figures came bustling towards the spot, the producer among them. And then a most extraordinary thing happened.

A portion of the scenery moved. A small toy in a piece of painted canvas appeared, and the stouter, important girlish face that Gladys had just seen looked through the opening.

"Oh, are you here, Miss Schreou?"

"I saw you first, can I do anything?"

The plump face smiled slowly from the pile of scenery, and an equally plump figure began to follow it.

"Awfully nice, Mr. Schreou!" said a very pleasant girlish voice. "I've done it again! Oh, that's me!"

Washington K. Schreou looked as though he was going to have a fit.



A SHOCK FOR GLADYS! "I want explanation from you at once!" cried Flora Geringe. "Why did you steal my letter of introduction to the producer at the film studios?"

"Miss Dulce Marshall!" he ejaculated. "I guess I've asked you to leave the scenery alone until we've finished with it."

"Oh, dear! I guess I shall have it alone next time!" said the plump girl, scrambling eagerly forth from the wreckage.

Washington K. Schreou smiled and moved away. Gladys West stood still, staring at the plump girl in a kind of fascination.

"Hallo! Are you the new star who's going to replace Mary Pickford?" exclaimed Miss Marshall suddenly.

Gladys West blushed.

"No, not at all. I've just been given a small part. But it's awfully nice of me to stand staring at you like this. I do hope that you didn't hurt yourself by the fall."

"Talk my dear!" cried the other, laughing. "That wasn't a fall. You mustn't worry yourself about what happens to me in this studio. If you'd only seen me the day I got stuck up on the roof—now, you might have guessed."

"Stuck on the roof?" ejaculated Gladys. "I say, do you have to do those awfully thrilling 'stunts' for the pictures?"

"I don't have to do them; I do them to annoy dear old Washy—that's Mr. Schreen, you know!" laughed the plump girl.

"Then you're not a film actress?"
 "Not likely!" chuckled the girl. "I just come here to pass the time, and have a bit of fun. Of course, I could take parts if I wanted them, because my father's the managing director of the company. But I'd rather not be an actress."

Gladys drew back.
 "Your father's the managing director?" she exclaimed. "Oh, I'm so sorry! I—I—of course, I ought to have seen—"

Dulcie Marshall interrupted her.
 "My dear kid, please don't apologise! I spoke like a horrid snob then, only I didn't mean anything of the sort. I think this is a ripping life, or else I wouldn't spend all my time here, would I?"

"No. But—"
 "No 'buts,' please! I really would act myself, if I was any good, and if I wasn't so lazy. But at present I spend my time looking for budding Mary Pickfords. And, do you know, I really think I've got one in you!"

Gladys West blushed.
 "But you haven't seen me act!" she protested.
 "That's a drawback, certainly! Still, you've got such lovely hair, kid, and such a beautiful manner," said Dulcie Marshall quietly. "As for your eyes—they're just perfect. They will photograph beautifully!"

"Will they really?"
 "Rather! I say! What part has he given you?"

"Anna," said Gladys. "He wanted me ready in half an hour. I've to see the props, someone or other."

"Property mistress, of course," said Dulcie. "Yes, she'll give you a dress and make you up rippingly. You come along with me, and I'll soon show you what's wanted. Don't mind me hanging round like this, do you?"

"I think it's awfully kind of you," said Gladys gratefully.

"Oh, rubbish to that!" laughed the other.
 "Here! Have a choc., will you? I think this is my box. Washy says that I'm getting fatter than ever. Still, I can't exist here without a little nourishment. I'm always doing something that brings about a sinking feeling—you saw one of my sinking feelings just now! Ha, ha, ha!"

Gladys laughed, too, and together the two girls walked away. And the girl who had come to try for just a chance on the films seemed to be walking on air!

Even now it seemed that she was still in some wonderful dream.

But it was no dream. Ten minutes later, dressed already for her part, she sat in the make-up chair, and the familiar grease-paint was being applied to her face!

Denounced!

"SAY! I guess I'm waiting for you, missy!"
 A loud, nasal voice brought Gladys West back to herself, as she was strolling round the studio, with the girl to whom she had taken such a sudden liking.

"Waiting for me, sir?" ejaculated Gladys.

"Oh, I didn't know the half-hour was up yet!"
 "I guess Washington K. Schreen don't have to wait for the clock to pipe out directions!" said the producer. "As you're ready, I'll just show you

what you hev to do, if you'll come here."

"Don't you let Washy worry you!" admonished Dulcie Marshall, in a low voice. "He's always like that—full of steam and brimming over with pep, as he calls it."

"And I'll be much obliged if you'll just fade right out of the picture for a moment, Miss Marshall!"

"Oh, sure thing, Mr. Schreen!" said Dulcie, who evidently liked to mimic the producer's peculiarities of speech.

"You listen right here, missy!" said the producer, turning to Gladys, and waving a sheaf of papers which he had just taken from his pocket. "You jest come on the stage, register emotion, pull up that thar board and hide the family jewels. Then you come on again, register more emotion, and pull them up again. Do you get me?"

Gladys thrilled. Now she was to act her part for the film—a real film, too, this would be!

Yet how strange it all seemed—the make-believe of hiding the jewels, and then getting them again almost at once! But she was beginning to realise already that the films were not taken as presented. From a confused mass of conflicting incidents the finished film would be made, and it was towards that finished film that she had to strain every nerve, every power, to portray the character required.

"Gee! Say, missy"—the producer's voice came to the girl almost as soon as she stepped on the little stage—"I guess you're a duchess now—you're not out for a beanfeast! Turn on a look as though you had a hundred gallopin' Redskins after you! No hurry! Don't stride! Look round a bit to see if anyone's pursuin' you!"

Bewildered by the bustle and the noise of the studio, by the curious eyes which looked at her from everywhere, Gladys felt a sudden sickly horror come over her. How could she play a part like this? It was nothing like stage acting!

Only a little slip of canvas hung behind her. The portion of floor in which she hid the "jewels" was but a few feet square. Everything was unreal, distracting. And ever to her ears came the noisy voice of the producer, yelling this, then that, every order seeming to contradict the last.

She was a failure—Gladys suddenly felt she was that. A wild, mad desire to jump from the stage and flee, screaming from it all, gripped her. Then she remembered that she was taking a small but necessary part in a great film—and she remembered something more.

This was her chance—the chance she had longed to have. She must not throw it away!

"Register emotion! Look as though you meant it! No hurry! Now, I guess we'll have that lot right from the beginning!"

Again to her ears came the endless orders, cross-contradictions, entreaties not to look like a dummy. Were all films like this? Gladys wondered.

But the determination within her still said, "Go on!" She obeyed each new order implicitly. And yet she had the awful feeling that the producer was not satisfied with a single action. How long would it be before he gave up in disgust, and handed her little part to someone else?

An age seemed to pass. Gladys, self-conscious and miserable, went on with the rehearsal, trying to keep each trying little detail in her mind.

The directions were fewer now—the nasal voice sounded bored and impatient.

"Lights!" cried the stentorian voice of the American.

Gladys West, dazed and bewildered at the un-

expected order, was conscious of a sudden fierce glare of dazzling light, which shone on her from above, from the sides, and from below.

Lights! Then, bad as she was, they were going to film her! She was really going to act now for the clicking camera—act a real part, which would be shown in the picture-halls of Britain.

"Are ye ready, missy?" called the producer.

"Ready? Oh, yes. Certainly!" said Gladys bravely.

"All right. No mistakes this time! I'm going to use real film, and it's expensive. Camera! Action! Go!"

The steady purring of a cinematograph camera came to the girl's ears. She walked on to the stage and started to act—in earnest.

Seemingly shut off in a dazzling little world of light, with only the purring of the machine and the orders of the little American for company, Gladys did her very best, trying with all the will power that she had to act the part of the character she was portraying.

But she was a failure—she felt positive of that! This strange film-world was too much for her! Certainly, to judge from the voice, the alert little American was disappointed—very disappointed.

"Cut!" came a brief command; and on that word the camera stopped, and the lights disappeared. Gladys found herself blinking in a little world of bustle, which seemed suddenly to have become grey and dark.

"Say, missy!" The little producer was bustling forward, and holding a slim white hand to the girl.

"Put it there! I guess you did me proud with that scene!"

Beneath her grease-paint, Gladys felt the blood suddenly rush to her head, while her heart pounded wildly. She almost reeled. What did it mean? The reassuring grip of the producer's hand brought her back to herself.

"Have—have I been a success?" gasped Gladys.

"Success! Why, I guess my principal lady wouldn't have put so much pep in it as you did!" said the little man.

"I have done well?" Gladys said, her face breaking at last into a smile. "Oh, I am so glad! I thought I was a failure. When you kept on telling me to do things, I—I thought I was all wrong."

The American chuckled.

"Say, gurlie! What I say when I'm shooting films don't count! I expanded your part to double the length because I thought you were worth it! Come again at nine o'clock to-morrow, and I'll give you a job of sorts, though it won't be a big one!"

"Oh, th-thank you, sir!" faltered Gladys.

"See the cashier," exclaimed the producer, "and leave him your name and address. Hand him this slip, and he'll give you a pound-note for to-day's work!"

A plump figure appeared from somewhere, hugging a large box of chocolates, and wearing a beaming smile.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Dulcie Marshall. "I knew you were going to be a success! You were simply splendid! Come along with me, and I'll show you what you do now!"

In a kind of dream, Gladys changed into her ordinary clothes, and saw the cashier. But it was not until a new, crinkling pound-note was in her fingers that she realised to the full the wonderful luck she had had that day!

Brimming over with joy, she said good-bye to Dulcie, and left the studio.

She seemed to be home in a moment—a long,

happy moment when she walked on air. Emily opened the door.

"Why, Gladys," exclaimed the elder girl, "are you ill? You look yellow, and—and—"

Then Emily broke off, noting at last the sparkle in her younger sister's eyes, the merry smile, the face which radiated joy and happiness.

"Gladys, you—you haven't surely been taken on for the films?" Emily gasped.

"Yes, I have—I have!" cried Gladys, capering into the house, and clutching her hard-worked sister in a fond embrace. "And oh, Em, I am so happy! And so will you be, too!"

Emily gazed at her younger sister, wide-eyed and silent. She seemed unable to think.

"I've earned a pound for you, Em!"

"A pound? A whole pound?" Emily gasped.

"Gladys, you are joking!"

"No! Look! Here it is!" cried the girl gaily.

"Here it is, Emily! You can have it!"

And then Gladys told the story of her adventures.

"I was lucky, of course!" Gladys explained, as the trio sat down at tea. "The producer took me on without a word—wouldn't even let me explain anything. But he was pleased, and I am to go again. Em, aren't you pleased?"

"Pleased! Yes, I am!" cried Emily. "How you did it, I don't know! But I never thought you had it in you! Oh, what a happy surprise this will be for the boys when they come home!"

"Yes, isn't it ripping?" cried Pansy, capering with joy. "Gladys on the films! I say, isn't she just wonderful?"

And then something happened—something which suddenly stilled those excited tongues!

Tap, tap! Bang, bang, bang!

Just the rattle of the door-knocker, yet so loud and so insistent it sounded that the smiles suddenly froze on the faces of those excited girls.

The elder sister left the room. A moment later there came the sound of a loud, indignant feminine voice. Gladys heard someone calling her own name.

Steps came along the passage. A girl of Gladys' own height appeared in the doorway—a girl with glittering grey eyes and cheeks which were red with anger.

"Gladys West! Which of you is Gladys?" demanded the girl.

"I am Gladys!"

"Oh, you are, are you?" The stranger stepped forward, glaring more fiercely than ever. "Then I want an explanation from you at once. Why did you steal my letter of introduction to the producer at the film studios this afternoon?"

"Steal your letter? I don't understand!" said Gladys, in a dazed voice.

"Don't tell me!" cried the girl. "You won't fool Flora Golding that way, my fine girl! You appeared at the studio with my letter of introduction, and gave it to the producer. He was expecting me to play a part, and he took you for me, and you've had the job—you acted while I was still searching for the letter I had lost!"

Gladys West paled.

"That was your letter?" she said, almost in a whisper. "It was an introduction to the producer? Oh, now I understand everything, and I have wronged you, as you say."

And then Gladys told her simple little story—told of the letter she had found, and the daring little plot she had hatched to get into the studios.

The stranger watched her without a word—scarcely without moving a muscle of her face.

"So that's your story, is it?" she exclaimed, as

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

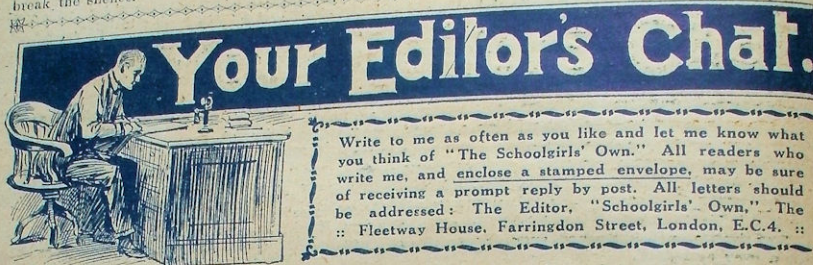
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soon as Gladys concluded. "Very well! You'll tell the producer that tale in the morning. I've seen him already, and he's quite as annoyed as I am! To-morrow morning, at nine o'clock, you'll turn up there to explain things. And, if you take my advice, you'll bring with you all the money you've received to-day!"

Without another word, the newcomer turned and slammed away down the passage. They heard the front door close with a resounding crash. Emily, white and trembling, was the first to break the silence.

"Oh, I knew something would happen!" she murmured, brokenly. "We never have any luck for long! I know you acted honestly, Gladys; but that girl's out to make trouble!" Gladys stood drooping and miserable, saying not a word.

(What will happen to Gladys now? Will she never have another chance? Another long instalment of this grand serial will appear in No. 2 of "The Schoolgirls' Own," on sale next Tuesday. Order in advance.)



Write to me as often as you like and let me know what you think of "The Schoolgirls' Own." All readers who write me, and enclose a stamped envelope, may be sure of receiving a prompt reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, "Schoolgirls' Own," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Unseen Audience.

A GREAT singer who gives his voice to the world can see the effect from time to time in the faces of his spell-bound audiences: he can hear their hand-claps, and know that he has been appreciated. But an author or editor never knows his worth, save by his sales. He never sees the faces of his readers, and can never tell the effect of his work upon them.

Thus I cannot see how you will enjoy this number. Yet I am placing it before you, fully confident that it is in every way the thing you require, although I shall never be able to see appreciation in your faces. Nevertheless, I can picture them in my mind's eye, and can see your compassion for Betty, and your anger that Molly's father should be so unjustly accused. Then, when you turn to the adventure story you will be thrilled with every line, sparing an occasional chuckle now and then. Some of you perhaps have ambitions to become film stars. If you have, then the film story will make a special and direct appeal to you. Anyway, it will interest you greatly. As for the articles, you are bound to like them.

Our Grand Plates.

BUT apart from the stories and articles there are the plates. This week's plate is of our Princess, the patron of all the Guides in the world. We all love and admire her for the deep, unflagging interest she takes in her girls all the world over. She is never too tired to be interested in them; never too tired to help them. This plate of Princess Mary, in her Guide uniform, is one you can frame and hang in your den, so that you can turn to it each day, resolving to become as fine a girl as she, and to make yourself as splendid a Guide as you know how.

With Number Two of THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN there will be presented a magnificent photogravure plate of our Prince, the smiling ambassador of

the Empire, whom you all adore. With Number Three will be given free a splendid plate—our Heroine, Nurse Edith Cavell.

Our Competition.

WHEN you have read the stories you will all turn to the competition. It is a novel competition, and one which you all stand a chance of winning, if you waste no time. Start at once collecting coupons. Ask your Friends for them, and make up your minds to secure as many coupons as you possibly can.

Next Tuesday's Issue.

HAVING finished this week's grand stories and articles your thoughts will turn to what is to follow. You must be wondering how Betty will get on at her new school, and how Molly's father will fare. Who will clear his name? Perhaps Molly? But we can only surmise. Then there is Jess, the castaway. What will happen to her? Will Gladys West really realise her ambition, I wonder? Anyway, next week there will be more about Betty, Molly, Jess, and Gladys, and there will be further interesting developments. In addition, there will be more articles on needlework, cookery, and subjects of Girl Guide interest.

My Post-bag.

WHAT is your opinion of this issue? Well, I want to know. If you write to me I shall know. My post-bag can stand a heavy strain, and Mr. Postman won't mind; so it all rests with you. My address is in the heading above. All readers who enclose a stamped addressed envelope with their letters will receive a postal reply.

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.