

GIRLS' CRYSTAL^{3!}

AND "THE SCHOOLGIRL"



RIVALS FOR THE *Plantation*

Colourful Jamaica Is The Setting Of This Grand Long Complete Story—
By HAZEL ARMITAGE

RENEE MEANT TO STAY

"HOW wonderful it all is! And what a lucky girl I am!"

Renee Forbes stood outside the entrance to the Excelsior Hotel she had just left, her suitcase in hand. Overhead the hot sun poured its golden heat into the Jamaica street, and, despite the faintly threatening hum of insects around her, Renee was entranced.

With shining eyes she watched the clanging tramcars, the shiny American automobiles. Fascinated, she gazed upon the brightly robed negroes who sauntered past, most of them carrying huge basket-loads on their heads as they made a leisurely way towards the great docks near at hand. The whole scene breathed life, colour, glamour.

Jamaica! This was Jamaica, where she had come to inherit her uncle's prosperous banana plantation which was to be her future home!

Renee's grip tightened on the bag she carried, that bag which contained a copy of her father's will and the necessary papers to enable the plantation to be handed over to her immediately upon her arrival at Kiddlestream, forty miles in the interior.

And now at last she was on her way to Kiddlestream. The station was just along the road and in ten minutes she would be in the train which would take her there.

"Well, here I go," Renee smiled, and stepped out.

Then abruptly she paused. For a car—a rather ramshackle old car—had just slid into the kerb and had stopped opposite her. She heard a voice, "Just a minute, please. Are you Miss Renee Forbes?"

Renee paused. For a moment she blinked at the face which gazed out at her from the driver's

seat—the face of a boy, unmistakably English like herself. He was very little older than she was, Renee decided, and he looked nice in spite of that battered old sombrero of his, that open-necked check shirt.

"That's my name," she said. "But I haven't the pleasure—"

"My name's Short—Jim Short," the boy answered. "You're going to Kiddlestream, aren't you? To join up with Mr. and Mrs. Macfarlane, the managers of your uncle's estate. Is that right?"

She raised her eyebrows a little, wondering at his gruffness, which didn't seem to fit in with the rest of him, she decided.

"You seem to know," she said. "So far you're right. I arrived from England yesterday. And I'm catching a train to Kiddlestream now. But you—"

"I've come to save you the trouble of catching the train," he said. "I come from Kiddlestream, and I'm off back there—pronto!" He opened the door of the car and jumped out. "Hop in!" he said.

"Oh, I say!" Renee cried in delight. "You mean Mr. and Mrs. Macfarlane have sent you to pick me up?"

"Jump in," he said, and allowed himself a grin. She jumped in gladly. This was better than ever. He climbed in beside her, looked at her rather oddly for a moment, and then shook his head. Then, without speaking, he banged the door, engaged gear, and the car, with a protesting shriek, moved off, skilfully negotiated the island in the middle of the road, and went bumping and clanking down the street.

"This is grand!" Renee chuckled. "Do you work on the plantation, Jim? I may call you Jim, mayn't I?"

"If you like," he answered shortly. "Yes, I guess I work on the plantation."

"You're not very informative," she pouted.

"I'm thinking," he said laconically.

"About what?"

"You'd be surprised."

She glanced at him, a little puzzled.

"You seem very cross," she observed.

He did not reply. He seemed to be concentrating on the car. Certainly from the creaks and groans it made it needed all his attention, but that hardly accounted for that grim, intent look upon his face, Renee thought.

With a rattle they passed the station from which her train would presently depart, ripped up a green boulevard, and cut into the back streets of the town. Then Renee was holding her breath in the beauty of the scene which stretched before her.

White road in front; ridged mountains, with a blue mist hanging like gossamer above their peaks, to her back. Grape vines to her right, glowing orange groves to her left.

She breathed deeply of the exotic air as the car, like some ancient chariot, lumbered on. Her heart was singing, her hopes racing high. She only wished that the companion at her side would be just a little more friendly.

And then, with a glance at his wrist-watch, he turned off the road into a track that was no more than a grassy rut in the orange groves. With a clank, the car came to a halt.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "Have we broken down?"

"No."

"Then why have you stopped?"

Again he looked at the watch.

"That train you were catching will be gone now," he informed her. "There's not another till to-morrow. But the boat you came on yesterday won't be sailing for half an hour."

She stared at him in amazement.

"What are you talking about?" she asked. "The boat's going back to England."

"Yes, that's what I figured."

"But—but—" She gazed at him faintly disquieted. "What do you mean?"

"You'll see," he said, and, leaning forward, switched on the engine again, engaged gear, and backed the car into the wide road.

Then, to her amazement, he turned it with its bonnet facing the town again.

"Look here, where are we going?" she cried.

"Back," he said tartly. "You've lost the train, so that's out. Now you're going back—right back—on that boat to England."

"What?"

"I've said it."

She sat, astonishment robbing her of breath. She was filled with alarm. What was the matter with the boy? Was he playing some idiotic joke? But one glance at his set, determined face told her that he was in earnest all right, that he meant what he said—no less. She caught his arm.

"Jim, what's the matter? Are you crackers? I came here—"

"I know—to claim the Kiddlegstream Plantation. A bitter smile twisted his lips. "But you're not going to. You've no right. That plantation is—mine!"

Her eyes goggled.

"Jim, don't be a fool!" she cried. "How can it belong to you? My uncle—"

"Your uncle gave it to me," he said. "Hold tight!"

The car jerked as he accelerated. She was thrown back, breathless, in the seat. Dazed and bewildered, she sat staring at him, her cheeks white now. And then they were in the town again, roaring up the white, dusty street past the station, past the hotel, and on to the quay where the towering liner which had brought her here yesterday was already sending out warning siren shrieks to passengers as it prepared to depart.

With a jerk the car halted. Jim flung open the door.

"Hurry!" he said.

"I won't budge! I refuse! I—"

He grabbed her bag. Then he grabbed her arm. Breathlessly she found herself pulled on to the quayside, saw the gangway in front of her. Then—amazingly—she was being pushed up it.

"Jim, don't!" she cried. "This is all wrong! I've got no ticket—"

"Come along!" he said fiercely, and rushed her on to the deck. Then he put her case down, and, as another shout went up, pressed something into her hand.

"There's your ticket!" he said tersely. "I guess I'm sorry for this, but there was no other way. Whoa! Just a minute!" he yelled as the gangway began to move, and, hurriedly raising his hat, he flew down it to the quayside again.

In dazed but furious bewilderment Renee stared after him; then mechanically at the ticket he had placed in her hand. It was a boat ticket all right—a single ticket which entitled her to travel to England. So he did mean it.

A hot fury swept over Renee. Her eyes blazed as she saw the boy, without even another glance back towards the ship, running towards his old flivver. A stormy determination that matched Jim Short's own filled Renee. With a sudden gesture of utter anger she flung the ticket to the winds. Then, grabbing her case, she plunged for the slowly moving gangway.

"Hi, hi!" a voice called.

The gangway was already sliding back from the quay. But Renee did not heed. Even as it creaked and swayed she was running its length. At its end she gave a mighty jump, landing on the quay with a jolt that jarred her from head to foot, but still in possession of her bag. Ignoring the shouts and cries that came from the boat, she fled for the roadway.

There was no sign of the impertinent, the insufferable Jim. Not that she wanted to see him now, or ever again. She knew only that she was not going to be beaten, and she remembered that a little farther along the dock there were cars for hire. She darted towards them. Fiercely she shook the coal-black driver nodding over the wheel of the first vehicle.

"You know Kiddlegstream?" she asked.

"Yaas, missy; mighty long way," the driver said doubtfully. "Cost plenty money."

"How much?"

"All of ten florins, missy."

"I'll give you twelve. Drive me there quickly!"

"Yaas, missy," the native said in pleasant alacrity.

The next moment Renee had slipped into the open vehicle. Breathlessly she sank into the seat beneath the gay striped awning.

There came a shiver, a jerk, and she was bound for her inheritance with the glowing knowledge that she had beaten Jim Short after all.

THE INTRUDER AT THE FESTIVAL



WHITE roads, glistening sugar-fields, waving palms, and over all the blazing sunshine. The beauty of the scene, the perfume of the atmosphere, swept away Renee's angry turmoil as the car bowled along.

But her amazement still remained. Even now she could hardly credit that Jim Short had deliberately, calculatedly, plotted to ship her back to England without her consent. Even now found it hard to believe those words of his, "That plantation is mine." His, indeed, when she had the papers in her bag to prove that it was hers! When she had been specially sent here to take up that claim!

Or was he just a scoundrel?

Somehow she was unwilling to believe that and tried to thrust the thought from her.

Then ahead she saw Kiddlegstream. It burst upon her vision like some beautiful

picture. She saw the towering peaks of the blue mountains, mystic summits hidden in the drifting clouds. She saw green slopes, dotted here and there with glistening white patches of limestone. She saw the stream itself, winding its way like a gleaming silver ribbon through rich plantations, heavy with the promise of the harvest to come. She glimpsed the dazzling plumage of the firs which lined the banks.

Then she saw the farmstead itself, a place of glazed green tiles, of cool white porticos dotted with canopied chairs and gay wicker tables, and she saw a stout cigar-smoking man with a wide-brimmed straw hat pulled over his eyes stepping forward to meet her.

"Who are you?" he said.

"Are you—are you Mr. Macfarlane?" she asked.

"That's me, yeh. I'm manager——"

Renee introduced herself. He stared at her, took his cigar from his mouth, and warmly clasped her hand. At the same moment he jerked round his head.

"Emma!" he called; and added for Renee's benefit: "My missus."

Emma, in a white apron on which she was dabbling her hands, came fluttering out of the shady portico. She was as small as Mr. Macfarlane was large; as thin as he was fat. Her eyes had a bird-like brightness as Mr. Macfarlane chucklingly introduced her.

"But, well, I never!" she said. "And here was Sandy—with a look at her husband—just wondering what time he'd better meet your train. Well, Miss Forbes, we're right glad to see you, but you've caught us hopping, I'm afraid. Come inside and I'll take you along to your room. Then you shall eat while you tell us all about everything."

With mounting pleasure, Renee glanced about her. To think that this great farm and its rich lands were hers! This house was hers! And Mr. and Mrs. Macfarlane her managers. She was more enchanted still when she was introduced to her dainty room—a cool dream in pink and pale mauve, with a view from its window that was almost unbelievable in its beauty. But where did Jim Short come in? she asked herself.

Her mind was still puzzling that when, half an hour later, she was seated with her host and hostess at a table laid beneath the portico, with two coloured house-boys hovering in attendance. As they ate, she told the manager and his wife all about Jim Short and the trick he had played on her.

"So that's what Short's been up to, is it?" said Macfarlane at length.

"He said he worked here," Renee nodded.

"Worked? He used to, he meant," Mr. Macfarlane said. "But he doesn't now!"

"Oh?"

"I sacked him."

Renee was surprised to find how disappointed she was.

"Why?"

"I more than sacked him," Mr. Macfarlane went on. "I put the police on him. I thought he'd gone for good, and I'm not very easy in my mind now that you say he's around again. He was a thief——"

"Thief! She was wondering why she felt so chilly."

"Ay!" The manager nodded. "He stole amethysts. When I found out, I dismissed him. Then out of revenge he tried to set fire to the plantation. I guess he really does believe this place is his. You see, he says his uncle promised it to him years ago; says he's got a document that proves it."

"But that's impossible——"

"Of course! By the way, I suppose you've got your papers?"

Renee nodded.

"Maybe you'd like to hand them over?"

She hesitated.

"For safe keeping, I mean," Mr. Macfarlane went on. "I'll have to look through them,

shan't I? And we don't want Jim Short trying to steal them, do we? Better let me have them and lock them up in the safe till the business is all settled."

It seemed common sense. But still Renee was a little hesitant.

"Apart from him," Mr. Macfarlane urged, "there'll be other strangers around——"

Renee looked surprised.

"Oh, of course! I haven't told you yet. There's a festival here to-night—a festival I organised in your honour as the festival of the new owner."

Renee's eyes glowed. This was better than anything she had dreamed of. For the moment she forgot about her papers.

"Tell me about it!" she said eagerly.

Mr. Macfarlane, supported by his wife, did. There would be bonfires, singing, dancing, followed by a feast at which she would be asked to preside in order to meet her employees and their friends. About fifty or sixty guests would be present, most of them natives, but with a sprinkling of white people, wearing every imaginable sort of costume.

"You'll have a grand time and won't want to be bothered with valuable papers," the manager went on. "So just for safety's sake you'd better let me lock 'em up for you and hand you the key."

Renee had no further hesitation then. Filled with an excitement, she followed him into the house. There she saw her papers safely stowed away in the old safe, and felt more reassured than ever when Sandy Macfarlane, straightening up after locking the heavy door, handed her the key.

"As owner here, this is yours," he said. "You'd better take charge of it."

She thanked him and pocketed the key. She felt a weight off her mind and was quickly able to take an interest in all the excitements around her.

It wasn't long before a crowd of cheery natives appeared, carrying with them lanterns and streamers, parcels and baskets. And very soon preparations for the festival were in full swing.

Lanterns were hung all round the great courtyard. The porticos were festooned with flags, streamers, and banners. Long trestle-tables loaded with drinks and food, deserts and ices, were set up.

Before sundown the guests started to arrive. Some were on foot, some in cars, some in ramshackle rickshaws, and all, as Mr. Macfarlane had forecast, in the weirdest possible variety of colours and costume.

"The festival opens in half an hour," Mrs. Macfarlane told her—Mrs. Macfarlane, dressed in a vivid creation of crimson and gold. "You had better change, Renee."

Renee went off to her room. Not having a fancy costume, she changed into a cream dress, winding a vivid scarlet sash about her waist. By then tambourines were musically jingling and voices were crooning haunting songs. The lanterns, now all alight, transformed the courtyard into an enchanted fairyland. Overhead a shy moon was riding among banks of drifting clouds.

As Renee appeared on the steps of the portico the tambourines gave one terrific crash, and there was silence. Mr. Macfarlane, taking her hand led her forward to the steps of the portico and there introduced her to the throng confronting her. There was a great roar of cheering. Magically the tambourines started up again, and Renee, hardly knowing how she came to be among it, found herself dancing as gaily as the rest with one partner after another.

At the end of a couple of hours she was almost exhausted. Hoping she would not be missed, she crept away to sink into a wicker chair under a wide cypress-tree, where she could watch the revellers.

Suddenly there was a step behind her.

"Guess I wasn't clever enough after all, Miss Forbes."

She turned with a start, smiling involuntarily. She knew that voice.

"Jim Short!" she breathed. "Jim Short—in disguise."

"That's me!" He gazed at her. "Aren't you going to have me thrown off the plantation?"

Looking at him again, Renee knew that, in spite of all that had happened, she was glad to see him. She patted the seat next to her.

"Sit down. As it happens, I want to talk to you! What are you doing here?"

"Well," he challenged, "what are you doing here, come to that? I've told you this is my property."

"Jim, don't be silly!"

"I tell you I have your uncle's letter——"

For the first time she began to think he must be serious.

"Jim, do—do you really believe you have some claim?"

"I have every claim," he said doggedly. "And if it hadn't been for the fact that this scheming manager of yours put the police on my track I'd have proved it before now. I can't do that now until I've first proved my innocence of the charge of theft. Once I've done that I'll quickly be able to claim my estate."

Renee was shaken in spite of herself. He seemed so certain, so completely in earnest.

"But what about my claim?" she asked.

"I can't say anything about that till I've seen it—if it exists!"

She ought to have felt angry at that insult. But she didn't. She realised he felt he was being cheated. Though she didn't believe for a moment that Mr. Macfarlane was the rogue Jim made out he was, she saw that he honestly believed in the manager's treachery himself. She wanted to find out more about Jim.

"You didn't steal those amethysts?" she asked.

He smiled wryly.

"Lady, you mightn't believe it, but I've never stolen anything in my life."

"And you didn't try to set the plantation on fire?"

"Why should I, when it's mine? It doesn't make sense, does it?"

"But, Jim, this claim to the plantation. If I could see that——"

"You don't believe I've got it, eh?" He looked at her. "O.K.! Well, you shall see it. But not here." He thought for a moment.

"Meet me to-morrow at midday at Swallow Dip—five miles along the river there. When you reach it, whistle three times and I'll be along."

There came a sudden voice from among the dancers, the thin, reedy voice of Mrs. Macfarlane.

"Miss Forbes! Renee! Where are you?"

Hastily Jim Short rose.

"Where's your claim?" he asked.

"They're safe—in Mr. Macfarlane's safe," she assured him; "I handed them to him for safe keeping——" She broke off, momentarily disturbed by the look on his face.

Mrs. Macfarlane's voice came again, and Jim promptly darted back among the trees.

A minute later Mrs. Macfarlane appeared.

"Oh, so here you are!" she said. "I've been looking for you everywhere. You're wanted, Renee—or will be, in a few moments—to take your place at the head of the festival table! Er——she looked round dubiously——" who was that you were talking to?"

"Oh, you mean that young man who looked like a Mexican!" Renee laughed. "Just one of the guests. He's gone now."

"Oh!" Mrs. Macfarlane seemed satisfied. "We'd better get along," she added urgently.

And Renee went. She was still uncertain in her mind about Jim, but very glad to have seen him again, all the same, and pleased, somehow, to know that she was to meet him on the morrow. But during the revels of the next hour she forgot all about him.

It was near the end of the feast when Mr.

Macfarlane stepped up softly behind her chair and spoke in her ear—quietly, urgently.

"Miss Forbes, will you step into the house for a minute?"

She threw one wondering look at him, knowing immediately that something serious was afoot. With a smile of apology to her guests, she followed him as he led the way into the house and into the room where, an hour or so previously, he had stored her precious documents and handed her the key of the safe.

There she stood, her face suddenly paling.

"For the safe door was wide open!"

"Jim Short," Mr. Macfarlane said grimly, "I practically caught him at it. Emma said she thought she'd seen him in the grounds, and I came along here to make sure of everything. Then I saw him taking papers from the safe——"

"Papers?" Renee cried, with a sudden start.

"Your papers!" he said, with a nod. "He was cramming them into his pocket. Of course, I went for him, but the wily young rascal was too quick for me——"

Never had Renee felt so angry as she did then. The liking, the sympathy, she had felt for Jim Short evaporated in a flash.

He had robbed her, after all!

RENEE KEEPS HER APPOINTMENT



"If I could only get my hands on him," Mr. Macfarlane was saying.

Renee was hardly listening. Her mind was full of angry horror. To think Jim Short could have done this! To think he had come here to rob her of her heritage! When she—yes, she knew it now—had been so ready to trust him.

But Jim had played his last trick. Never again would she trust him.

She quivered in the indignation, the futile fury, which swayed her.

And then dimly she became aware of her manager's mutterings. Suddenly aflame, she swung around.

"You shall get your hands on him!" she found herself blurting. "And I'll help you!"

"What?" he rapped. "Do you know where he is?"

Renee told him of the arrangement she had made with Jim Short—that arrangement to meet him at the Swallow Dip on the morrow.

"Although I don't suppose he'll turn up now," she went on half regretfully. "You'd better forget it, after all, Mr. Macfarlane."

"It's a chance," Macfarlane said. "Anyway, it's worth the trying, and no harm'll come of it if it don't work out. You keep that appointment, Miss Forbes, and I——"

"You?" she questioned, her anger suddenly faltering.

"I'll be there—with a couple of the boys." His jaw set. "Meet him—keep him talking. We'll be waiting. Find out all you can, then give a shout. We'll do our stuff then. That's arranged, eh?"

Renee nodded.

She went back to the festival then, but it had lost all interest for her then, and she was not sorry when towards midnight it broke up. Weary, and feeling that something had been taken completely out of her, Renee sought the dainty bed-room which had been given to her for her own.

It was without any sense of triumph that she thought of the trap prepared for to-morrow.

Why—oh, why had Jim not been honest with her? Why had he led her on to disclose where her papers were, and then deliberately burgled them? He knew—must have known—that those papers represented all the proofs she had of her heritage. If he genuinely believed that his claim was the right one—though she didn't

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The CASE OF THE Frightened Girl

By PETER LANGLEY

ON TEMPLE ISLE

JUNE GAYNOR, niece and partner of Noel Raymond, the famous young detective, went to Glen Hall to investigate the mystery of a spectral figure known as the Green Rajah, who was supposed to haunt Temple Isle.

Also staying at Glen Hall was a likeable, yet mysterious boy named Jack Linton, whom June suspected of being the Green Rajah.

June discovered that Colonel Raikes, who had once owned Glen Hall and Temple Isle, had hidden a crystal goblet which was the key to the lost secret of the Purple Mountains. She also found out that the Green Rajah was after the goblet.

One evening she rowed across to Temple Isle, thinking that the crystal goblet might be in the Temple Museum. On the island she encountered the Green Rajah, and in escaping from him she fell over the cliff edge!

JUNE gave herself up for lost.

It looked as if she had escaped from the spectral Green Rajah only to meet a worse fate.

Down she plunged, and then unexpectedly her headlong fall was checked. Bushes and saplings grew out of the face of the cliff, and on to one of them she had crashed. Branches whipped her face and tore her clothes, and then she was falling again.

But that brief check had given her new hope. Frantically she lunged out with both hands; made a desperate grab at an out-jutting branch as she went hurtling past it.

Her frenzied fingers found a grip. There came an agonising pain in her shoulders, then she was swinging dizzily, suspended fifty feet above the jagged rocks which dotted the water at the foot of the cliff.

Panting, exhausted, she could only cling there helplessly for a few moments, then with her last strength she battled her way up on to the branch.

"Phew! That's better. But it was a narrow squeak!"

Sitting astride the long, pole-like branch, the schoolgirl detective rubbed her sleeve across her hot, moist face, then looked eagerly about her. As she did so, the smile faded

from her face, for her plight was still dangerous.

The moon had emerged from behind the black cloud, and its silvery light showed that below the slender sapling on which she was so precariously perched, the cliff dropped sheer, while above it bulged out. Either way was unclimbable.

"Oh, golly, what am I going to do now?"

Helplessly June sat there. Under her weight the branch began to bend, and suddenly there was an ominous crack. Her face whiter than ever, she clung to the bough with both hands, and looked agitatedly behind her.

Crack!

That alarming sound came again, and she gave a dismayed gulp.

"It's breaking—tearing away at the roots!"

Frantically she looked round, seeking some safer perch, but there was no other branch in reach.

Lower bent the slender sapling, and now that ominous crack by its roots could be plainly seen. It could only be a matter of minutes before the bough broke completely away, and when it did—

June looked down at the rock-infested lake and shuddered.

"Help!" she cried. Better to face the Green Rajah than this terrifying peril. "Help!"

And magically, or so it seemed to her, her shout was answered.

"O.K.! I'll be with you in a jiffy!"

Slowing round on the creaking, cracking sapling, June stared upwards, and then a surprised gasp escaped her lips. For standing on the top of the cliff, in the act of uncoiling a long rope, was a curly headed, boyish figure.

Jack Linton!

So it was he whom she had seen rowing across the lake! But what had brought him to Temple Isle at this time of night?

Despite her delight at seeing him there, she could not repress the sudden suspicion which buzzed in her brain.

Suppose that green-clad, turbaned figure which had threatened her had in reality been Jack Linton! All along the evidence had pointed to Jack being the Green Rajah, but

because she liked him she had tried to smother her rising suspicions.

But now—

Another alarming crack cut into her thoughts. She gave another agitated cry:

"On, quickly! It's—it's breaking off!"

"Don't worry. I'm coming."

Strangely reassuring was that drawing voice, and June felt a little ashamed of her suspicions as she saw what risks he was taking on her behalf. Having tied one end of the rope to a tree, he had thrown the other end down over the cliff, and was now shinning down it. Earth and stones rattled by as he sought to get a foothold on the cliff, and as he slid past the bulge the rope whirled round, making him swing dangerously.

"Oh, be careful!" gasped June, and, her heart in her mouth, she watched him.

But he only laughed, and as he drew alongside and hung there, one leg curled around the rope, she could see his reassuring grin.

"I'll have to give you a pickaback," he said. Clinging with one hand to the rope, he reached out with the other. Comfortingly, his arm went around her waist, and, lifting her up from the cracking bough, he helped her on to his back.

"You—you can never climb with my weight!" she panted.

He laughed again.

"Can't I? You just wait and see. Samson's my middle name, you know. Hold tight—and get ready to grab the rope, just in case I slip."

And as she clung to him he started to battle his way upwards, hand-over-hand, his breath coming in harsh gasps. The liking June had felt all along for him deepened to admiration. What a courageous boy he was! Oh, if only he would not be so mysterious! If only—

She felt herself colouring, for again those ugly suspicions had come surging back. Try as she would she could not forget all those disturbingly incriminating bits of evidence.

"Here we are! D'you think you can clamber up over the edge yourself?"

Looking up, June saw her rescuer's fiercely gripping hands level with the top of the cliff.

"Yes, I think so!" she gasped.

After a struggle she managed it, and as, breathless and quivering, she gained the solid ground, he gave an acrobatic wriggle which brought him to her side. Gratefully she regarded him.

"Thank you!" she exclaimed. "I'll never forget what you've done! It was splendid of you! If you'd fallen—"

She finished with an uneasy shudder, but he only chuckled.

"Fall? Not likely! Why, monkey's my middle name!"

"I thought it was Samson," she said, laughing despite herself.

"Oh, that's on my granddad's side!" he jested; then abruptly the sparkle faded from his eyes, and earnestly he regarded her.

"Maybe one of these days you'll be able to do me a good turn," he said slowly.

"I certainly hope so! If I ever get the chance, I'll take it," she assured him.

He grinned.

"Right, that's a promise—one I'll hold you to," he said, and, though he spoke lightly, she detected an unusual note of seriousness in his voice. "But, I say, what brought you across to Temple Isle?" he asked.

She looked him full in the face. The time had come, she decided, to put her worrying suspicions to the test.

"That's just what I was going to ask you," she said quickly. "I had a good reason. I'm a detective, you know, and I came after the Green Rajah. But what about you?"

The question seemed to take him by surprise. His eyes dropped beneath her steady gaze, and he fingered his tie, as if a little at a loss. Finally, he laughed.

"Oh, I just felt like a blow of fresh air," he said, "and the island seemed as good a place as anywhere to get it. As it happened, it was a good job I did decide to come here, wasn't it?" He laughed again, then shot her a thoughtful glance. "So you came after the Green Rajah, did you?" he murmured. "Did you run across his Highness?"

She nodded, troubled by his evasive manner. If he had nothing to conceal, then why couldn't he give a direct answer to her question?

"Yes, I did," she replied. Impulsively she told him all that had happened, and she saw his face darken with anger.

"The scoundrel!" he burst out. "Gosh, but wouldn't I like the chance of teaching him a lesson!"

It seemed impossible to doubt his sincerity, and June frowned in bewilderment. Had she done him an injustice? Was it possible that, after all, he had nothing to do with the Green Rajah?

Again she felt herself wondering just what was the real reason for his visit to Temple Isle. He seemed so sincere in his anger towards the Green Rajah.

Earnestly he regarded her.

"Look here, why don't you give this thing up?"

"Give it up?" She looked at him in startled surprise. Again she found her suspicions of him rising to the surface. Vehemently she shook her head.

"Not likely! I'm going to get to the bottom of this mystery, no matter what the risk. It's my job," she declared.

He frowned, and then laughed.

"Spoken like a true 'tec!" he said lightly. "Now, what about getting back? I've got my boat on the other side of the island."

She nodded, and together they walked past the temple-like museum down to the beach. He helped her into the skiff which tossed on the water, moored to a near-by boulder, but as she crossed to the bows she knocked something off the centre seat.

It was an attache-case, and as it clattered to the bottom of the boat the lid came open.

"Oh, sorry!" she cried, and made to pick up the case; but in a flash he had jumped aboard and pushed her aside.

"Don't touch it! Leave it to me!" he exclaimed, and there was alarm in his voice.

June regarded him sharply. What could be in that case which he was so desperately anxious that she should not see? Could it be—and the thought seemed to stab through her heart—could it be that stored away in it was the Green Rajah's disguise?

She frowned as she watched him bend and hurriedly fasten the case.

"What ever have you got in it?" she asked, trying to keep her voice light. "Diamonds?"

He laughed, but she thought she detected an uneasy note in his voice.

"Hardly. Only a few old papers. But, I say, you look cold." As he spoke he took off his coat. "Here, put this around your shoulders," he urged.

June protested, but he insisted, and, despite herself, her heart glowed as he draped the warm coat around her. How thoughtful Jack was! Impossible to believe that he was a thief—a scoundrel who could deliberately threaten a girl. And yet—

She shook herself angrily as he picked up the oars and pushed off.

"You're a detective, June Gaynor," she reminded herself, "and detectives have no right to be impressed by anyone's charm. No matter who the Green Rajah may be, it's your job to expose him and bring about his arrest."

Yet she knew in her heart that if the bogus ghost should prove to be Jack Linton, then she would for once find it difficult to do her duty.

THE HANDWRITING CLUE



THE first thing June did next morning was to seek out Mr. Henley. She must show him the letter she had found, and also tell him about her frightening experience on Temple Isle.

Her host was in the library, talking to Mr. Roger Standish, and both men gave startled

gasps as they read the note which June had found in the package from India.

"This proves it," declared Mr. Standish. "The Green Rajah is out to discover the Lost Secret of the Purple Mountains, and the contents of that package did contain a vital clue." He frowned at the letter. "Why didn't this fellow, Lal Singh, put his address, or at least state what the package originally contained? Now, thanks to the Green Rajah, we'll never know."

"You mean, you still think he stole the original contents?" queried June.

"Of course. Surely it's obvious; but there's one thing"—excitedly Mr. Standish glanced from June to his host—"the contents of that package are no good to the scoundrel without the other half of the clue—without the crystal goblet."

"Yes; and that must be our first task—to find the goblet," June put in. Eagerly she surveyed Mr. Henley. "I suppose you haven't any idea where it might be hidden?" she asked.

To her dismay, he shook his head.

"Fraid not, my dear. Now I come to think of it, there was a mention of a crystal goblet on the list of Colonel Raikes' curios, but I haven't any idea where it may be hidden. I've got the smaller and more valuable curios locked up in my study, but I'm certain there's no crystal goblet amongst them, nor is it in the museum on Temple Isle."

Though disappointed, June's lips set resolutely.

"Well, it's got to be found. That's my first job—hunting for it," she said again.

"Well, don't go taking any foolish risks," Mr. Henley said anxiously. "We can't have you running into danger, you know."

June smiled.

Immediately after breakfast, she was deciding, she would slip up to her room and go over her notes. There must be some clue to put her on the right track. After all, she had several threads to follow.

First of all, there was the question of the identity of the rascal who had in the beginning impersonated Roger Standish, and was now posing as the Green Rajah.

Then there was the missing crystal goblet—the search for that ought to provide her wits with plenty of scope.

And then there was the frightened girl who had been the bogus Mr. Standish's companion.

Her eyes gleamed as she thought of that girl. In the excitement of recent developments she had rather lost sight of the impostor who had pretended to consult her. If only she could track down that girl she might be able to discover also the Green Rajah.

"And then there's Jack Linton," June murmured to herself, as the gong boomed out, summoning everyone to breakfast. "He fits into the jig-saw puzzle somewhere. I can't believe he is the Green Rajah, although—"

She broke off, for, as she crossed the hall, there came a rush of feet, and she found herself surrounded by Mildred Henley, Ted Brandish, the Smith twins, and a whole crowd of youthful guests. All were bubbling over with high spirits, and excitedly Mildred grabbed June by the arm.

"I say, are you any good at amateur theatricals?" she asked.

"I was very keen on them at school," June admitted.

"Whoopee!" Mildred laughed gleefully. "That's fine! You'll be able to help us a lot, then. We're going to put on some charades to-night."

"Yes, and we're going to choose our costumes after breakfast," put in one of the Smith twins.

"There's a whole hamperful upstairs," added Mildred. "They used to belong to Colonel Raikes, and they are just what we need."

Still chattering excitedly about the forthcoming entertainment, she led the way into the dining-room, and afterwards they all insisted that June should help them to pick out suitable costumes, brushing aside her protests that she must get on with her detective work.

There was nothing for it but for June to accompany the rest of the young guests up to the spare room where the hamper of theatrical costumes was stored.

Cries of delight came from the girls when the big basket was opened, for it was packed with every possible kind of costume. There were lovely crinolene frocks, shimmering Tudor gowns, rich, silken Indian costumes, costumes for the boys.

Eagerly the girls helped themselves, and Ted Brandish gave a whoop of delight as he drew from the hamper a gorgeous rajah's costume, and a silver turban, which he thrust upon his head at an absurdly rakish angle.

Mildred burst out laughing.

"You look tons better than the old Green Rajah, Ted," she said.

June joined in the laughter, and turned to the hamper to choose her own costume, then she suddenly grew rigid, her attention attracted by a sheet of paper pinned to the lid of the basket. On it had been written a list of the costumes in the hamper, and something about that bold, distinctive writing seemed startlingly familiar.

In imagination she could see the bogus Standish's girl companion writing her name and address on the card which June had given her—a name and address which subsequently June had discovered to be false. That writing had also been bold and distinctive.

Abruptly the schoolgirl detective drew in an excited breath.

"It's the same—I'm sure of it!" she told herself, and with glistening eyes regarded that sheet of paper.

If she was right, then it would be an important clue—one which might enable her to track down not only the frightened girl, but her audacious companion, the Green Rajah.

"I must make sure," June told herself, and, hurriedly excusing herself, raced out of the room and along the corridor to her bed-room.

In one of her suitcases she had stored away the card on which the unknown girl had written. Getting it, she took one glance at it, then went running back to the room where the hamper was.

By the time she regained it Mildred & Co. had gone, taking their costumes with them. Only one figure remained in the room, standing by the fireplace, in the grate of which burnt a log fire.

It was Jack Linton, but at first she paid him no attention. Her excited gaze went to the basket. Now to compare the two hand-writings! She lifted the lid, then stiffened, staring in dismayed surprise. For no longer was a piece of paper pinned to the basket-work. The all-important list had gone!

Involuntarily her eyes went across to the fireplace, and she gave another gasp as she saw amongst the crackling logs a tiny pile of black ashes.

Instantly she knew the truth, and angrily she stepped forward.

"It was you who took it!" she cried. "It was you who burnt it the moment my back was turned!"

And in open accusation she regarded him.

THE BLUE CRINOLINE



FOR a moment she thought she detected a worried, uneasy glint in his dark eyes; then he was shaking his head as if in bewilderment and raising a finger in good-natured reproof.

"I say, you shouldn't go for a fellow like that," he protested, "especially a chap like

me who's anxious to be friends."

"It's no use pretending!" she stormed.

"You burnt my clue!"

"Clue?"

He raised inquiring eyebrows.

"Yes, clue. You know what I mean—the list

which was pinned on the inside of the lid."

"Oh, that!" At last he seemed to understand, and he nodded. "Yes, it was I who chucked that in the jolly old fire," he confessed.

"Are you sure that's to admit it?"

"But, of course. I say, old thing, I'm sorry if I did wrong, but I didn't think that scrap of paper was any use. I just pulled it off, and when I'd read it I pitched it in the fire."

Apologetic was his smile and genuinely sincere sounded his voice. But for once June was proof against his charm. Fiercely she hardened her heart; forced herself to forget that less than twelve hours ago he had saved her life.

"Are you sure that's the truth?" she demanded, and her eyes never left his face. "Are you sure you didn't burn that paper because you, knew it might lead to some big discoveries?"

If the accusation made him feel uneasy he showed no signs of it. Instead, he shrugged his shoulders as if still bewildered.

"I say, what are you getting at?" he asked. "Why, to hear you talk, anyone would think we were deadly enemies. But we're not, are we?"

He stepped closer and almost pleadingly returned her angry gaze. "We are friends, aren't we?" he asked softly.

She found the look in his dark, earnest eyes almost irresistible, and to her anger she felt herself colouring. With an effort she forced herself to look at him.

"You haven't answered my question," she pointed out, trying to make her voice sound cold and businesslike.

"But how can I answer it?" he protested. "What possible discoveries could a list of costumes have led to?" he asked.

Steadily she faced him, her emotions fully under control now.

"You might have realised that it was a clue which might have put me on the track of the bogus Roger Standish's niece—on the track of that girl who pretended to consult me the other day."

He gasped, and for a moment that puzzled smile faded from his lips.

"But surely—" he began.

She waved his protest aside.

"Or you might have thought it would lead me to the Green Rajah," she persisted. "Well, let me tell you something, Jack Linton. No one—no one—is going to keep me away from that girl! No one is going to stop me solving this mystery! I've taken up this case, and I'm not going to let it drop until I've brought it to a successful conclusion!"

She shot him one last angry look, then, turning, she left the room. But, once outside, that grim, determined expression faded and she bit her lip. It had come as a bitter shock to her to realise that before long she and the boy she liked so much might become open enemies.

The sound of happy voices coming from the drawing-room made her remember the forthcoming charades, and, glad for once to forget her professional duties, she entered, to find Mildred and all the rest excitedly admiring one another's costumes. At sight of the girl

detective standing in the doorway, Mildred snatched up a blue frock from a chair and came running forward.

"Ah, there you are!" she cried. "Look what we've picked out for you! Isn't it sweet?"

She held out the costume, and June smiled as she saw that it was a ribboned, billowy crinoline. She held it against her, and admiring cries came from all around.

"Oh, it suits you beautifully!"

Smiling with pleasure, June regarded herself in the long mirror fastened to the wall, and slowly she nodded.

"It's really lovely," she murmured, "and I'm sure it's right for size."

She swung round as Jack Linton entered the room. The boy seemed to have forgotten the embarrassing scene of a moment or two ago. That cheery, tantalising smile on his handsome face, he sauntered forward, another frock draped over his arm.

"It's not bad," he admitted, "but this will suit you heaps better."

And he reached out his free hand, as if to take the crinoline from her. Involuntarily June drew back.

"Thank you, but I like this," she replied.

"Oh, but it makes you look too old!" he protested. "If you'll only try on this—"

But June shook her head. She was beginning to suspect that Jack Linton always had a deep motive for whatever he did. What could it be this time? Why should he seem so eager for her not to wear the blue crinoline?

"I've made up my mind," she said.

To her relief, he did not persist. Instead, he laughed.

"O.K. I suppose you know best. But, I say"—he looked round—"what about that shopping expedition to the village?" he asked.

"Come on, everyone! It's a lovely morning for a walk." There was a chorus of approval, so he held out his hand. "If you'll give me your costumes I'll put them back in the hamper," he said. "You won't want them until after tea."

And again he made to take the blue crinoline from June, and again she instinctively recoiled.

"Thank you, all the same, but I'll look after mine myself," she said.

"But—"

"I know what boys are!" she cut in, with a laugh. "If I let you have it you'll crumple it up. No, it's going on a hanger." And, before he could protest, she had walked to the door. "See you all soon as I've put it carefully away," she said, and went hurrying up the stairs.

Once in the privacy of her room, she regarded the blue crinoline thoughtfully.

Was it possible that it held some secret—some clue connected with the case she was engaged on? Was that why, once again, Jack had been so strangely persistent?

She ran a curious hand over the silken folds, and then suddenly her heart gave an excited bound. Beneath the billowy sash there was a pocket, and in that pocket was something which crackled and bent beneath her touch.

Eagerly she drew it out, to find that it was a large photograph.

One look she took at it, then she gasped. For now she knew why Jack Linton had burnt the hamper list—why he had not wanted her to have this frock!

For the photograph was of the frightened girl who had pretended to consult her in London!

Here was proof positive that Jack Linton was connected with the Green Rajah—proof positive that he was desperately anxious that she should not get on the track of the mystery girl!

Be sure you don't miss next Friday's exciting chapters of this serial in the **GIRLS' CRYSTAL**.

The SKATING GIRL'S MYSTERY MASCOT



A NEW SET BACK FOR SHEILA

SHEILA MAYNE lived with her family at the little Canadian town of Juniper Bend. The "Bluebirds," the skating club to which Sheila belonged, were anxious to do well in the forthcoming ice carnival and impress Lee Farrell, a film producer, who would be present.

Sheila's rival, Corinne Lefevre, was being tutored by Karl Olsen, who boarded with the Maynes. He and Corinne seemed curiously interested in an owl totem necklet which Sheila had found, and which Red Eagle, a young Redskin, told her to guard closely. He also offered to help her improve her skating.

Corinne declared that Sheila was in league with Red Eagle, and because the club would not expel her, Corinne and her friends resigned.

Sheila was worried about Red Eagle who, while escaping from the police, had injured his ankle, and was now hiding in the loft above the clubhouse.

Then, to Sheila's dismay, two men arrived at the clubhouse, and announced that they were bailiffs, and would remain there until Sheila's father paid a debt he owed. How was Sheila to prevent them from discovering Red Eagle?

SHEILA stared in dismay at the broker's men. "I'm Tucker, and this is Sweeney," said the taller of the two men. "We don't want to inconvenience you, but the law's the law, and here we've got to stay till we get that two hundred and fifty dollars!"

Red with humiliation, Sheila turned to the Bluebirds.

"I'm forever getting you into a jam," she declared. "I'm sure daddy doesn't know about this yet, and—"

She hesitated, her eyes turning instinctively in the direction of the loft, where Red Eagle was hidden. Could he hear and understand all that was happening? Would he realize that the two unwelcome guests would stay on, day and night now, perhaps preventing his escape?

Gloomily the Bluebirds regarded each other. They were still smarting from the blow Corinne had given their happy band by resigning along with her followers and threatening to start an opposition club. Now it looked as if they might be denied the privacy and convenience of their own clubhouse.

"Just a minute, Sheila," said Larry. "Can I see that warrant for a moment?"

Mr. Tucker, who had pocketed it, brought it out again and Larry read it over carefully. "It's quite in order," he said. "I know how your father is embarrassed, Sheila, at present, what with Toddles being ill, and other things. But it's too near the Ice Carnival now to let this worry us. We can use some of the club funds, and have a whip round to clear off the debt. We'll just regard it as rent paid in advance."

Sheila clutched his arm, her eyes shining with gratitude.

"You think it could be managed?" she asked. "It wouldn't hinder the club?"

"We did very well out of the ballet," said Larry. "We can afford it. After all, most of the cost of producing has been paid. There'll be a surplus, even if we draw two hundred and fifty dollars. In any case, it's for genuine club purposes."

He looked round at the other Bluebirds.

There came a chorus of agreement, and then everyone prepared to go home. As Sheila put on her hat and coat, she cast another covert look at the loft. With the bailiffs on the premises all the time it would be impossible for her to help Red Eagle. Already she had a parcel of food hidden away in the clubhouse to take to him. What was she going to do about it? She frowned, then, seized with an idea, turned to the broker's men.

"You'll want some hot supper," she said, "so I think you'd better come home with me."

The two men looked at each other, then Tucker regarded Sheila a little suspiciously.

"That's real kind of you, miss," he said, "but I must warn you that it won't do to try any tricks. We'll lock up and take the key with us if we come."

"Well, just give me an hour to get things ready," said Sheila. "And don't make a noise. I don't wish my father to know about this till the morning. It might upset him, and he's been far from well."

They nodded, and Sheila left the clubhouse. To her relief, when she arrived home she found her father, who had complained of a bad cold, had already gone to bed. Gracie had also retired for the night, but Jerry was squatting by the fire in the living-room, reading. Quickly Sheila told him her troubles.

"We mustn't upset daddy to-night," she

whispered. "I'll get supper ready for the men in the kitchen. You'll attend to them and keep them talking, and while they're here I can ski down and see Red Eagle."

Jerry opened his eyes wide. "Red Eagle! I thought you said his name was Little Racoon? He told me so, too!"

Sheila frowned with annoyance at the slip. But she decided not to show it too much. The truth would be best. Jerry was at the age when he would be ready to champion any outlaw as long as he proved himself brave and chivalrous.

"Red Eagle has many names," she whispered mysteriously. "He is a hunted man just now. But it was Red Eagle who saved my life by stopping the runaway pony during the torch-light procession. He's done lots of wonderfully brave things like that."

Jerry looked at her, then rubbed his chin. "O.K., sis, I guess you know what you're doing. I'm a blood brother now. I would have to die rather than betray his secret. You've no need to worry. Even torture at the stake wouldn't make me talk."

Sheila squeezed his hand gratefully and went to the kitchen. She soon had some cold potatoes heating in a pot with onions and dripping, and a tin of plump sausages grilling in the oven.

And all the time she was cooking, her mind was on Red Eagle. She knew that she could trust her young brother now not to give her Redskin friend away, but she realised that it was becoming increasingly dangerous for Red Eagle to remain hidden in the loft of the clubhouse now that the bailiffs were around.

When Sweeney and Tucker did arrive, she had the table ready for them. The warmth from the hot stove and the sight of hot food made both beam. They took off their big parkas and drew up their chairs.

"Jerry'll have to look after you," apologised Sheila. "There's something else I must attend to at present. Make yourselves comfortable."

They thanked her volubly, then set to, with Jerry in attendance. In a moment Sheila was round to the front of the house, pulling on her parka and slipping the spare key to the clubhouse into her pocket.

Then she slipped outside, put on her skis, and whizzed off down the trail for the clubhouse. It seemed ages before she reached it. Taking off her skis, she unlocked the door and entered.

The fire was still burning brightly, so she did not kindle any of the lamps or candles, but, having found her parcel and vacuum flask as she had left them, she propped the ladder against the wall and started clambering upwards. When she raised the trapdoor she saw Red Eagle's anxious face peering down at her.

"Sheila," he whispered, helping her up, "you have come back. I wondered if you would. Red Eagle was worried. He heard strange voices. When all was quiet he opened the trapdoor and looked round. But the ladder was too far away. Red Eagle could not catch it, or he would have tried to get down."

Quickly Sheila told him what had happened. Red Eagle listened in silence, then frowned in the darkness.

"This is bad medicine," he murmured. "Suppose these men have just come, not for money, but as spies? The paleface girl Corinne and Olsen might be behind them."

He gave a grim chuckle. Sheila started. She suddenly saw light, realised what he was driving at.

"You mean the thing's faked, Red Eagle?" she demanded. "They are spies, here to watch us?"

"More, perhaps," said the young Redskin. "In this old shack, or near it, may be hidden the secret of the totems—the lost gold of Chinook!"

THE SNOWBALL BATTLE



"OH!" gasped Sheila, trembling with excitement. "Red Eagle, perhaps you're right. I never thought of that!"

He gave her shoulder a reassuring pat.

"You must not worry," he insisted softly. "Leave everything to me. I am here, and I

can watch. Red Eagle will find out if there is any trickery, and by to-morrow his ankle should be better."

Sheila drew a deep breath. "It's dangerous, of course," she said. "The game would be up if they should think of searching the loft. I'll try to see you again to-morrow if I can decoy those men away, but if I can't manage to come myself I'll send Jerry. It's my father I'm mainly worried about. He is so proud. He would sell everything rather than remain in debt."

Red Eagle smiled. "Have no fear," he whispered. "He will not have to do that. We are hot on the trail. Soon those who would injure and rob us will be caught in their own trap. Go now warily. Red Eagle has food and drink to last till you come again."

She saw that he was anxious she should not tarry, so she scrambled down the ladder, while he closed the trapdoor behind her. A few minutes later she was outside, had locked the clubhouse with her own key, and was skiing homewards.

She entered the house and gained the kitchen to find the two broker's men on the point of leaving. They gave her one sharp, curious glance, then smiled, and said how they had enjoyed their supper.

"To-morrow I will tell my father," she promised them. "We shan't keep you long at Chinook if I can help it."

But Sheila dreaded the morning, though she slept well that night, exhausted by her exertions and all the excitement.

It was not till after breakfast that she broke the news.

John Mayne sat and stared at her, then bowed his head in his hands.

"This is the end, Sheila!" he groaned. "Everyone will be down on me after this. I'll have to go bankrupt—be sold up. And Toddles isn't out of hospital yet. I'll have to go down and see these men and then go into town. Everything will have to be sold up. Even though you do well at the Ice Carnival, it will be too late. I'll have to realise on my share in the property."

He rose and paced the floor. Sheila tried to console him.

"Daddy, I know I can do something for us all, if we can only stave things off till the carnival," she protested. "The Bluebirds are going to help."

She told him what Larry and the others proposed doing. For a moment his face brightened, then clouded over again.

"But that will put me deeper in debt, and to your own companions," he said bitterly. "I'll have to try to get in contact with Norman Wayne's agents. If I only could get in touch with that fellow who holds a share in Chinook all might be well."

Sheila thrilled. She had almost forgotten about the distant cousin who held a share in the property, and of whom they knew so little. After all, he was a relative of sorts, so might be willing to aid them.

"Daddy, a week and a few days can't do any harm," she insisted. "That'll be carnival time. I'm not going to give in now. I'm going to have my chance. Besides—"

She hesitated and he looked at her. "Besides what?" he asked quickly. "Wasn't there something strange about Grand-Uncle Ruwert leaving so little money and only this property?" she queried. "Didn't everyone think he was really quite rich?"

John Mayne nodded. "Yes, there was a legend about him," he agreed. "He, an Indian fellow, and a man named Joubert made a big gold-strike up in the north somewhere. Twice they went away for gold. The second time Uncle Rupert came back alone. The Indian vanished mysteriously, while Joubert was never again seen. Your grand-uncle was so crazed after his experiences in a blizzard that he was never the same man again and he became a recluse. As for Green, the man who financed them each trip, he was murdered mysteriously."

Sheila looked at him. "Perhaps Uncle Rupert had the gold and hid it till he could divide it between his friends?" she suggested. "Perhaps it's hidden somewhere in Chinook, even in this house, or the old shack that's our clubhouse. Daddy, if it were found, some of it would belong to us."

John Mayne shrugged his shoulders. "I don't believe there is any hidden gold," he declared. "I think it was just a tale. I only remember Uncle Rupert dimly, and he was a bit silly. Used to sit, and paint, and paint—and mumble to himself. I'll go down and see these broker's men."

There was no stopping him. He went down, and came back with Sweeney and Tucker.

"They've locked up the clubhouse," said Sheila's father. "We're going into town together with the sleigh. I've got them to put all the club skates and other things you may need for your sports in the lean-to. They're not my property. I'm sorry, Sheila, but I'll have to settle things somehow. If I can arrange it I'll sell up everything, and leave Norman Wayne's agent his share. But I'll try to keep the lease till the end of the carnival."

He kissed her and gave her an affectionate hug. When they had gone Sheila felt she could sit down and weep. But she remembered that Larry & Co. might arrive that afternoon. She must hurry on with her household duties, and then get down to see Red Eagle.

Gracie and Jerry would not be back from school till the usual time before tea. If she was quick she might get to the clubhouse, help Red Eagle to make good his escape before any of the Bluebirds turned up, or the broker's men came back.

As she hastened down she saw vehicles, and a tawny party on the lakeside trail.

Larry, Mabel Rowan, Mavis, Jack, and all the faithful Bluebirds were there. But they did not give her a joyful hail. Instead, they looked pretty fed-up.

"Oh, what can have happened now?" thought Sheila desperately.

Larry soon told her. His face was white with anger.

"We've been forestalled, Sheila," he stated. "What do you think is Corinne's latest?"

"Corinne?" exclaimed Sheila. "Hasn't she done enough?"

"Yes, but you don't guess the cunning of that fair young lady," snapped Larry. "We forgot she was one of the Finance Committee. Her name was with mine, Mabel's, and one of her cronies on the savings book. She's put an estoppel, as they call it, on the account, claiming that she and the rest of them are entitled to their share of the ballet profits, and so on. We can't draw a cent till it's all settled in court. And my folks are away from home, so can't help. We're sunk. We've only managed to raise forty dollars between us."

Sheila cried out in dismay. It seemed as if her last hope was gone. Where could the two hundred and fifty dollars come from now?

Corinne Lefevre had gained another triumph. "Oh, how mean of her!" she cried. "Isn't there anything we can do about it?"

"Not quickly," said Larry. "She's making all kinds of other claims, too—a share of the costumes we subscribed for, running expenses, and so on. It can't go through the court in time for the carnival. What did your father do?"

Sheila told him, and Larry glanced at her in sympathy.

"Sheila, you mustn't worry," he said. "We'll outsmart her and the other traitors to the club somehow. At least we can do it on the ice, and with our ballet. We can't sit here idly. We've got to practice—get on with the job. If the wire I sent off finds my folks, father won't let us down."

Sheila gave a heavy sigh, then forced a smile to her lips.

"Let's have a good old skate, Larry," she suggested. "Suppose we try that idea I suggested—teams and drivers—like the Hugenberg circus horses. We can use sleigh bells—our ski-joring traces and time-step."

"The very idea," agreed Larry. "It'll be effective on big ice. But in an actual performance we'll need loads of bells and costumes—"

"And plumes for the 'horses,'" said Sheila enthusiastically. "Oh, there's lots of new things we can do to get the better of Corinne & Co."

They called the others round and explained. Everyone thought it a swell idea, with good opportunity for time-step skating. They took their own reins from the sleighs and sulkies and started off.

Sheila, with a team composed of Larry, Mabel, and another girl, got off first.

"Camptown Races," she cried. "Let's sing that, and see how we get on."

In a few moments all worries were forgotten. All of them had seen circus teams in action, and did their best to remember and imitate.

There were four teams of them, jingling along the lakeside, laughing and enjoying themselves, when there came shouts of mocking laughter from a little above their heads.

Looking up, Sheila recognised Corinne Lefevre and her cronies. They were standing on a rise just below the chalet which Corinne had rented as a headquarters.

"Hallo, Bluebirds," came Corinne's sneering voice. "So you've got the broker's men in now, have you? Didn't I warn you what would come of befriending Sheila Mayne? Now if I'd still been a member I could have soon found the dollars. Your troubles are only beginning. By the time the ice carnival starts you'll probably be in rags and tatters."

The Bluebird drivers had all stopped their "teams" now.

"We'll still be the Bluebirds, anyway," called back Sheila. "Not a bunch of spiteful rebels! Of all the mean tricks—"

But that was as far as she got, for suddenly there came a rain of snowballs. Evidently Corinne & Co. had come well prepared. For a moment or two the Bluebirds ducked and recoiled, then, scooping up handfuls of snow, they returned the attack.

"Come on, let them have it!" cried Larry. The Bluebirds needed no urging. Strongly they attacked, and suddenly Larry gave another excited shout:

"They're giving ground! Come on—force them right back into their headquarters!"

Furiously, Sheila & Co. let rip with their hastily gathered snowballs, and, gasping and yelling, Corinne and her cronies were forced back and back. At last they could endure that storm of snow no longer, and, diving into their chalet, they barricaded themselves in.

"That'll teach 'em," panted Larry, as he stood on the doorstep. "That's one up for us. Come on, it's time we got back home."

Triumphant, the Bluebirds hurried back to the clubhouse. Sheila saw instantly that her father and the two men had not yet returned. Once her chums had taken their departure she would be able to visit Red Eagle.

She waved the others off, then, when they had vanished round the bend, she re-entered the clubhouse and propped the ladder against the wall. When she had climbed up it, she tapped on the trap-door, but to her surprise, there came no answer. Thinking Red Eagle

might be asleep, she raised the trap and clamored inside the loft.

But, as she did so, she jerked the ladder. To her alarm, it slipped and fell sideways, crashing down on to the floor.

"Oh dear, now I've made a proper mess of things," she thought in dismay. "Red Eagle, where are you?"

She peered around in the semi-darkness, but there was no sign of her Indian friend. Except for herself, the loft was empty. What could have become of Red Eagle? Why had he gone?

Frowning in bewilderment, Sheila turned back to the open trap-door, to realise suddenly that she was a prisoner. Now that the ladder had fallen she could not get down to the ground. As she stood there, wondering what to do, she received another shock. From outside the clubhouse came the sound of footsteps, then the handle of the front door turned.

Someone was about to enter. Who could it be—the broker's men or an enemy?

WHAT SHEILA OVERHEARD



BEFORE Sheila could close the trap-door two people stepped into the big room below. They were Corinne and Karl Olsen.

"What can they want?" Sheila asked herself, and she was so intrigued that she forgot how awkward it would be if her presence up in the loft were discovered. Fortunately, neither of the intruders looked upwards, and so they did not realise that the trap-door was open.

Halting in the centre of the room, Olsen took a tape measure from his pocket.

"We've no time to spare, Corinne," he growled. "I'm not at all pleased the way you've bungled things. It would have been far better for us if there hadn't been a split in the Bluebirds. Then we could have come here openly."

"Don't be silly, Karl," snapped Corinne. "Sheila Mayne knows and suspects too much, and she's working hand-in-glove with Red Eagle. But it was smart of you getting round the debt-collecting agency and get them to put in the broker's men. Now we have a decent chance to learn the truth. You didn't tell Sweeney or Tucker anything?"

"No," snapped Olsen. "I'm not a fool. I didn't let them know we're on the track of hidden gold. They'd want a share in anything we got. Here, take this end of the tape and we'll measure out things. We haven't quite got the hang of what these totem signs mean, but we've an idea."

Sheila's blood tingled in her veins.

Here at last was convincing proof of what her enemies were up to. Olsen's hand had been behind the enforcing of the debt claim on her father.

The plotters below were determined to get possession of the clubhouse by hook or by crook. That might mean that the Bluebirds' headquarters was the site where Grand-Uncle Rupert had hidden any gold he had brought back from the North.

For the moment Sheila completely forgot about the mysterious disappearance of Red Eagle. Closing the trap-door, so that only a narrow crack remained, she applied an eye to the aperture and watched Corinne and Olsen making careful measurement of the floors and walls.

Sometimes Olsen took out a little rubber hammer from his pocket and tapped on the woodwork, making rough calculations afterwards in a notebook.

"That's enough to make comparisons," said the skating coach gruffly. "We know it's either this shack, or the Lodge itself. What are you grinning at so much, Corinne? Don't you

realise this is serious business, that we've nearly got hold of what we came after?"

"Yes, I do, Uncle Karl," chuckled Corinne. "But I can't help thinking of the nice surprise I'm going to give Sheila Mayne with tomorrow's news. It means I'll get my photograph plastered all over the place at carnival time, and advertising pays."

Sheila pricked up her ears. What new treachery had her enemy planned? And—had she heard aright—had Corinne really called Karl Olsen, her skating coach—"Uncle?" Sheila peeped eagerly down into the clubhouse, her eyes fixed upon her enemies, anxious to hear more of Corinne's new plot against her.

"Oh, that," laughed Olsen. "Well, it won't do any harm. You mean the invitations from that photographic agency whose cameramen were at the ice ballet?"

"Yes," said Corinne. "It was easy, seeing that I received both the letters when down at the rink. Once I had read mine I took Sheila's from the rack and destroyed it. So I'll arrive there to-night alone. Twenty dollars a time for six skating poses—that's what they offered each of us."

Sheila's eyes widened. What was this she was hearing?

Down below, Corinne went on talking, clinging to the arm of the man Sheila now knew was secretly her uncle.

"I'm killing two birds with one stone, Uncle Karl," the unscrupulous girl went on. "I'm keeping Sheila from making money she badly needs, and I'm also keeping her out of publicity."

She grinned maliciously.

"I've an idea they want these poses for the carnival programmes, posters, and souvenirs. Won't Sheila be mad if she sees my face smiling at her from every corner? It's bound to impress Lee Farrell, too, and give him the idea I'm most worth watching."

Listening, Sheila felt like opening the trap wide, and throwing something at her rival, so indignant did she feel about it all. The unscrupulous way in which her rival had gone about things made her blood boil.

Corinne had deliberately destroyed the letter addressed to her by the agency, and so Sheila had not known anything about the photographic appointment.

"Have we seen everything here now?" demanded Olsen, quietening his niece. "We want to get away without being seen."

"Just a moment," said Corinne suddenly. "There's one spot in here that I've never properly examined. It's that loft up there. You know, I believe Sheila Mayne used it for some reason. Maybe up there we'll find a clue to the treasure of Chinook."

She pointed to the fallen ladder.

"I'll stick it up, then we'll have a quick look round," said Olsen nervously. "In fact, you go up first, and see if there's anything interesting. Take my torch. I'll keep a look-out down below here, through a crack in the window-shutters. We don't want to be caught in here by anyone—not even Sweeney and Tucker!"

Sheila gave a gasp of dismay.

If she could get away unseen she might yet put a spoke in her rival's wheel, by turning up for the photographers as she had evidently been asked to do.

But if she were found here by Corinne, both the girl and Karl Olsen would know that she had seen what they had been doing with the tape-measure.

There were no lengths to which the rascally pair might not go. They might even kidnap her. Too much was at stake for Corinne and Olsen to have any scruples.

Hurriedly, Sheila lowered the trap-door right down, then, as she heard Olsen rear the ladder in position, she peered about her desperately.

Will Sheila be able to hide or will she be discovered? See next Friday's thrilling instalment of this enthralling serial.

The Merrymakers at College



By DAPHNE GRAYSON

THE NEW PROFESSOR

"I HOPE K House haven't scoffed all the doughnuts—they're jolly quiet," said Sally Warner, pushing open the door of the college cafeteria and leading her chums across to the counter.

"Make it syrup waffles all round, will you, Mrs. Barwell?" she asked, and dived for her favourite stool by the counter. Don Weston, Fay Manners and several others grouping round her.

Don gazed quizzically about the cafeteria. "Seems to be something missing this evening," he remarked. "I guess something's been happening to K House."

The chums eyed their rivals from K House wonderingly as they glumly occupied their favourite tables by the window.

Not a word—not a good-natured gibe did they thrust at Sally and the Merrymakers, of J House. That, in itself, was most unusual. Tony Fry, K House leader, was the centre of the gloomy group, with Edna Mervyn seated woefully at his side. Even Nat Piggot, the inveterate practical joker, looked moody.

"What's the matter with them?" blinked Fay.

"Looking like a lot of stuffed owls!" commented Don.

"They're brooding over that table-tennis match they're playing on Friday, against the locals," Sally guessed, and grinned at the K House leader. "Do you feel you've taken on too much, Tony? Like us to play the match for you?"

Tony Fry's grin was feeble and mirthless. "We're not even getting our fair practice in for the game, Sally," he said in a flat voice. "It's old Gritty!"

"Who?" asked Sally.
"Mr. Grittal—the new professor who's taken charge of our House," Tony said with a groan. "He's come here to ginger up the discipline. Takes himself more seriously than the dean. He says he's going to make sweeping changes in K, and run things in the same clockwork order as in his last coll. Huh! Pity he doesn't go back there." He lapsed into silence again, and Nat Piggot took up the story.

"He's bossing us about like a sergeant-major—putting his foot down on everything!" he cried indignantly. "He's reached the limit this evening, though. Our table-tennis team were playing in Community-room, and in came old Gritty and told us to pack up. Said he wouldn't have any games played there. The Community's the place for reading and study. And now we've got nowhere to practice for Friday's match!"

At once Sally and the chums were full of sympathy towards their rivals.

"But you can do what you like in your own Community-room!" Sally protested. "That's the idea of it—for relaxation. Grittal can't stop you playing table tennis—"

"You don't know him," groaned Nat Piggot.

Sally's brain was working swiftly. It was altogether unreasonable of the new professor to ban K House from playing games in Community-room. And it was unjust to the college, if they weren't to have a fair chance against the local table-tennis club. She whispered a quick word to Don and her fellow members of the Merrymakers. All nodded assent. Sally turned to K House.

"Listen, K—we'll help you out!" she said warmly. "You can use our clubhouse for practice!"

"What? Sally—you don't mean it!" Tony and his House-mates brightened unbelievably.

"Yes, I do!" confirmed Sally. "Bring your tackle along there, and I'll go and get the key for you now!"

"Gee, Sally, that's—that's sporting of you. Thanks."

Tony Fry hardly knew how to express his gratitude. This was totally unexpected—that J House should take their side against the new master, and actually offer them the use of their precious clubhouse!

"We shan't ever forget this, J House!" cried Tony in sincere thanks.

Sally went hurrying out across the campus to the Merrymakers' club—the largest chalet in the J House quarters. It stood snug in the shelter of the shrubbery, and it was locked this evening, and in darkness, because Johnny Briggs was inside developing a roll of films.

"I say, Sally," he grinned as she came in. "These snaps are a wow! I hid in the hedge with my camera, meaning to catch old Piggot!"

But guess who I got? You know that new professor who's taken over K House—that pompous ass, Grittal—

"Know him? That's why I'm here!" said Sally, and briefly explained matters to Johnny. Johnny was in ready sympathy with K House and the invitation accorded them. His grin broadened as he led her into the room where his prints were drying.

Sally took one look and burst out laughing. The scene was the garden path in K quarters. The first snap showed Mr. Grittal stepping, pompously, on the iron end of a cunningly hidden rake. The second snap showed the handle of the rake smiting him a hearty thwack at the side of the head. The third snap showed him dancing with wrath. And the fourth showed him sidestepping, inadvertently, into a pail of whitewash.

"Best shots in my collection—and that's saying a lot!" declared Johnny, glowing with pride. "Great, aren't they, Sally?"

Sally chuckled. "They certainly are! But for goodness' sake keep them out of sight!" she gasped. "K's just been telling us what a tartar their Mr. Grittal is! Can they play here now? Have you finished, Johnny?"

Johnny nodded, and, with Sally's help, he unscrewed the windows and cleared away his photographic gear.

Tony Fry and his team from K House arrived a couple of minutes later, bringing with them their table-tennis kit neatly rolled in its green canvas-bag. Sally and Don cleared two tables for them. The nets were rigged up and their interrupted practice was merrily resumed.

The friendly atmosphere between the rival Houses warmed up amazingly. There were roars or delighted laughter from K when Johnny showed them the snaps of Mr. Grittal.

Such harmony was too good to last. They had hardly stopped laughing over Johnny's snaps when the door was suddenly thrust open, and there, on the threshold, stood Mr. Grittal.

"What is this? What is going on here?" he demanded. "Fry, Piggot, and others of my own House?"

He was a large, heavily built man, and his dark eyes were keen and penetrating.

"Yes, sir! J House kindly said we could practice here, sir!" announced Tony.

"Who did?" And Mr. Grittal gazed inquiringly around him.

"I did, Mr. Grittal," Sally answered brightly. "This is our clubhouse, you know. The Merry-makers' Club."

"And you had authority to invite guests?" Mr. Grittal asked her.

"Oh, yes!"

"Whose authority?"

"The club captain's," said Sally politely. "I'm captain!"

"Oh!" And Mr. Grittal looked a little foolish.

He had come to oppose. Sally knew it. Mr. Grittal believed himself to be a just disciplinarian. She had given K a chance to practice in spite of his ban—and he didn't like it a bit.

"This club," he said, frowning. "What is it— You call it the—er—the Merry-makers. What precisely is its aim?"

"To give everybody a jolly good time, Mr. Grittal," Sally said warmly. "No restrictions here. Dancing, music, games, table tennis and—"

"Do I understand that this club is just a place where you waste your time?" Mr. Grittal broke in coldly.

"There's no rule against it," Sally agreed. "No rules at all, perhaps?" he asked sardonically.

"Oh, yes, we make our own rules," Sally told him. "One of them is that no one but members may come in without invitation. Or

course," she added earnestly, "it doesn't apply to you, Mr. Grittal. You didn't know the rules!"

Mr. Grittal's eyes narrowed as he gazed closely upon Sally's face, but there was not even a twinkle in her eyes.

"How often does your principal—Mr. Grant—come here to inspect?" he asked.

"Whenever we invite him! He loves coming!" Sally said brightly.

"Indeed?" And Mr. Grittal choked back the complaints he'd intended making to his colleague. "Then you had better reserve your invitations for Mr. Grant!"

"You mean, you don't wish to come here again, sir?" Sally questioned disappointedly, while Johnny politely opened the door.

"I do not!" Mr. Grittal said with a rasp. "Furthermore, I will allow no members of my house to come here! Fry, Piggot—pick up your belongings, gather up all that tennis paraphernalia!"

"B-but, sir—" spluttered Piggot.

"This is the only place where we can practise, sir!" protested Tony in dismay.

"I said pick up your belongings, Fry," Mr. Grittal repeated in a cold, hard voice. "And I forbid you to enter J House quarters again. You understand!"

Sally & Co. gazed helplessly at K House as they were forced to gather the whole of their tennis tackle from the tables while Mr. Grittal grimly held the green bag open for them.

"The same ban applies to you—to J House!" he added, addressing Sally & Co. "In future you will all confine yourselves strictly to your own quarters."

And, carrying the bag himself, he followed behind Tony & Co. as they trooped out in dumb rebellion.

"Well, what do you think of that!" gasped Sally as the door closed.

"Poor old K! He's let them down with a bang for the table-tennis match!" cried Johnny, echoed indignantly by the rest of J House.

"And let the whole coll. down, too!" exploded Don. "It's Roxburgh versus outsiders. We're all Roxburgh. And it's up to us to stand by K House."

"You're right, Don!" Sally agreed. "We've got to make Mr. Grittal climb down somehow."

"What about a deputation to the dean?" suggested Pat Waters.

"That's not a bad idea," Sally nodded.

"After all, the dean's a stickler for fair play, and—"

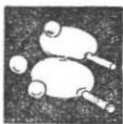
She broke off. "What's the matter, Johnny?"

Johnny was hunting feverishly on the floor for something. He looked up as Sally spoke.

"Those snaps of old Gritty!" he cried, his face red. "They were on the table. Now—they've g-gone. I say, you don't think"—he gulped—"you don't think they got swept up in the bag when Gritty marched off with it?"

"Oh golly—that's done it!" Sally gave a hollow groan. That, she guessed, was exactly where they had gone! Fate had thrown them into the hands of Mr. Grittal!

FRIENDLY RIVALS



THE chums regarded each other in utter consternation. Now what were they to do?

"If Mr. Grittal sees those snaps, he'll make it ten times hotter for K House, and he'll have the dean clamping discipline down on us, too—which is just what he wants," Sally voiced the opinion of all. "What's more, there'll be nothing we can do about the table tennis. We've got to get those snaps back, somehow, before he sees them!"

"But I don't see what we can do," gasped Johnny. "He's taken them along in the bag to K House—and he's forbidden us to go there!"

"Can't help that!" said Sally desperately. "Come and keep cave, everybody. Scatter round the campus, and whistle if you see old Gritty. I'm going across to K House."

"Might manage it by the back way. Sally—we'll come with you!" breathed Don and Johnny.

By a roundabout route they managed to reach the K House quarters unseen, and made their way round the back of the chalets. A quick footstep approached, and Sally's heart gave a thump.

She breathed a sigh of relief when she saw it was only one of the K House girls—Edna Mervyn.

"Those snaps?" she whispered in horror as Sally explained their errand. "In our table-tennis bag? Oh, golly! Gritty took it into Community-room, and he's still there! Still, I'll try to grab the snaps," she offered. "You wait at the back of Community-room—outside the window."

Sally nodded, and she and the chums crept to the back window of the Community-room—a large wooden building resembling a sports pavilion, surmounted by a flagstaff flying the K flag. All peeped through the window, and then looked uneasily at each other.

Mr. Gritty was standing by a table, lecturing his glum-looking House—and on the table before him lay the green sports bag.

"I intend K House to be the pride of Roxburgh," he was saying. "And I shall be all the firmer in my discipline now that I have seen the atrocious lack of it in J House. They are— What is it you want, Miss Mervyn?" He broke off as Edna made a covert movement of the hand towards the bag.

"I—want to get something out of the bag, Mr. Gritty," stammered Edna.

"Then, pray, why did you not ask me to give it to you?" Mr. Gritty asked coldly. To Sally & Co.'s consternation he began to open the bag.

"B—but it's something that doesn't belong to me, sir!" gasped Edna desperately.

"What?" Mr. Gritty glared with exasperation.

"I don't want it now, thank you!" she said wildly.

This sudden change of mind was disastrous. Mr. Gritty stared at her closely, then at the bag, his eyes narrowed with suspicion. Then he upturned the bag and shook the contents out on to the table.

"Are you sure there is nothing here you want, Miss Mervyn?" he questioned.

"N—nothing, thank you! I only—" Edna trailed off as the master's eye lit upon Johnny's snaps. Breathlessly the watching Sally & Co. saw him pick them up, look at them.

"Then—" "You say," he exploded furiously, "these do not belong to you? Then who—"

His piercing gaze flashed to the window. Sally bobbed down wildly, dragging the others with her.

"Beat it—quick!" she gasped. "Too late! A familiar gowned figure appeared in their path, his arms loaded with books. It was the dean!"

Mr. Gritty must have heard the sudden, startled confusion outside the window. His suspicions were confirmed. He paused amid utter silence, then, in a voice seething with anger, he spoke:

"Miss Mervyn—open the door. I have reason to believe you will find members of J House outside."

Helplessly Edna opened the door, to admit the dean—followed by Sally, Don and Johnny, all carrying the dean's books for him.

"Thank you, Miss Warner—thank you,

Briggs and Weston. It is very kind of you!" the dean smiled, then turned to Mr. Gritty. "These are some of the books, Mr. Gritty, that you promised your House would bind for me!"

"Oh—oh, yes, sir," said Mr. Gritty, confused, and, crushing the humiliating snaps in his hand, he glanced coldly at Sally & Co., then turned smilingly to the dean.

"I think you said, sir, that there are quite a number of your books need binding?"

"Oh, yes! A whole shelf full in the library!" the dean told him.

"Then may I suggest that J House do them? They seem to have a lot of time on their hands."

Sally drew in a tense breath. So Mr. Gritty was having his revenge upon them.

"Oh, yes, to be sure!" agreed the dean.

"I suggest that Miss Warner be made responsible for the task," pursued Mr. Gritty, eyes glinting on Sally, "and that she undertakes to have the books finished by Friday—the entire set!"

Furiously the chums returned to J House quarters, to convey the shattering news to their House-mates. It would take all J House's spare time to bind the entire set of books by Friday! A crushing victory for Mr. Gritty, they had to admit!

But an idea was already framing in Sally's mind how to outwit K House's tyrannical new master, and next morning, when the two Houses assembled together for lecture, a tattered book was passed under the desks from Sally to Tony Fry. Inside was a secret note.

"If K will help us bind these books, J will see you get your table-tennis practice. Meet in shrubbery facing dean's house six this evening.—SALLY."

Back came an answering note from Tony:

"Okay! Let's have the books!"

One by one, a chain of tattered books was passed under cover of the desks, until half of the number to be bound had been distributed to K House.

Sally and Don were waiting in the shrubbery when Tony and his table-tennis team joined them promptly at six that evening. The thick-growing bushes concealed them all perfectly from view.

"D'you remember the bursar's clerk who got fired for gambling?" asked Sally, leading the way to an iron trapdoor in the ground which looked like a water-hydrant.

"Yes. They caught him with a roulette wheel in the cellar of your clubhouse," recollected Nat Piggot.

"This is how he used to sneak in there," Don told them, and drew open the iron grid, revealing a flight of steps. "Follow me, everyone."

Next moment they were descending into an underground passage, and threading their way along to what had once been the cellar of a lodge. The lodge was gone now. The Merry-makers' clubhouse stood on its site. Sally opened a trap in the ceiling of the cellar, and eagerly Tony & Co. climbed up behind her into the clubhouse above.

"That's your way in and out in future, Tony, and Mr. Gritty won't be any the wiser," Sally said triumphantly. "What about your tennis tackle?"

"Gritty confiscated it after he found those snaps!" Tony replied dejectedly.

"Never mind—you can use ours," consoled Don. "Johnny's rigged it up for you, anyway, so that you wouldn't have to take the risk of carrying yours about."

Sally followed them thoughtfully into the games-room, where Johnny was duly fixing J House nets on the tennis tables.

"D'you know where Gritty's put your stuff, Tony?" she asked musingly.

"Yes—behind the cupboard in Community-room, because he knows we can't use it there," Tony told her.

"But you can use it here, so might as well have it," Sally said, with a purposeful smile. "I wouldn't be surprised if we get a chance to grab it during the next day or two."

She was right. During the next two evenings Mr. Grittall, noticing the absence from his House of the members of the tennis team, took to suspiciously wandering around the college grounds, particularly in the vicinity of the Merry-makers' clubhouse.

Once or twice, hearing the pat-pat of bat and ball, he rushed up the steps and threw open the clubhouse door. But Sally & Co. were ready for him.

His disappointed gaze rested upon an enthusiastic game played by four J House members. Tony Fry and his team had been hidden in the cellar!

"Have—have any of my House been here?" he asked foolishly.

"K House, sir?" echoed Don in astonishment. "K House aren't allowed in here, sir!"

"Your own orders, sir!" added Johnny.

Mr. Grittall withdrew, baffled. The same mystery confronted him again next evening. Certain members of K House nowhere to be found. The missing ones all belonging to the table-tennis team. Scounds of table tennis emanated from the Merry-makers' clubhouse, yet the only ones there were J House, and J House alone.

Sally, meanwhile, was making good use of Mr. Grittall's absence from K. She was recovering the confiscated green bag containing K House's table-tennis kit from Community-room! Triumphant she bore it away, disappearing with it through the secret passage in the shrubbery to the clubhouse.

"Cheers, Sally! You've got it!" Tony greeted her jubilantly as she placed the bag in front of him.

"We'll pay our part of the bargain to-morrow!" promised Nat Piggot, serious for once.

Next morning, before lecture began, each member of K House passed a neatly bound volume to J House. They had done their share capably. It was Friday, and the whole task was finished on time. Don collected them in a canvas bag and hurried off with them to the clubhouse. He returned to the lecture hall just as Mr. Grittall arrived to take both Houses in a joint lecture on science.

"Silence, everybody!" Mr. Grittall snapped as he mounted the rostrum. "I have an announcement to make, first of all, which concerns K House only!"

The gleam in his eyes held both Houses suddenly apprehensive.

"On a point of discipline," he went on, "I was compelled to confiscate your indoor tennis kit. Someone has impudently removed it. It is gone from where I placed it. As a penalty"—and he glanced significantly at the calendar, as if reminding himself that to-day was the day of the match—"the whole of K House will be confined to college until to-morrow afternoon!"

MR. GRITTALL'S SEARCH



THERE was a stunned silence—then Sally burst out wildly:

"But you can't do that, Mr. Grittall!"

"Why not?" He turned swiftly upon Sally. "Why do you say that, Miss Warner?"

"Sally means our table-tennis match is to-day, sir!" Tony

explained. "We're playing out at Roxville, and if you gate us—"

"There is no 'if' about it, Fry!" broke in Mr. Grittall. "I have said you will not be going to Roxville, and I meant it. You will be confined to college until to-morrow—the whole of K House! Why this should so concern the other House"—and his suspicious gaze reverted to Sally—"is beyond my comprehension."

"It concerns the whole coll., sir, if our team doesn't turn up!" cried Don.

"Roxburgh's never let the other side down before, sir!" supported Nat Piggot.

"It's penalising the whole coll., sir, just for what one person did!" Sally began again, breathlessly—but every other voice drowned her. Everyone in both Houses was determined not to let her give herself away and bear the full punishment.

"The point is, Miss Warner," glinted Mr. Grittall, "I don't know who that person is!"

But he had his suspicions. He had seen the warning look Johnny had cast at Sally; the way Fay frantically clutched her arm.

"I shall make it my business to find out," he continued grimly. "I promise you that." And, still watching Sally out of the corner of his eyes, he picked up his lecture notes. "Now we will proceed with our studies."

Never had feelings seethed as they did that morning at lecture—never had there been such real and fierce alliance between the two Houses against their enemy, Mr. Grittall.

They gathered together in heated indignation as soon as he had left the room at dismissal.

"We're not standing for this! We'll send a deputation up to the dean!" blazed Tony Fry.

"No, Tony—it's up to me to get you out of this," Sally said firmly. "It's all my fault, anyway. I was the one who took your tennis kit. I'll go to the dean—"

"And we'll come with you," put in Tony Fry. "But, I tell you—" Sally began, but Tony went on:

"Yes, Sally, we'll come with you, and you can be our spokesman. You can put our case before the dean."

"Hear, hear!" came from the others.

"Now," Tony became suddenly business-like.

"What about six people from K House and six from J? Let me see; you, Piggot, Edna—" And he proceeded to pick out the members of his half of the deputation, while Sally did likewise. They were all ready to go to the dean when the door was suddenly opened, and Mr. Grittall strode in.

"I thought I told you, K House, that you were not, on any account, to associate with J House. You will all come with me immediately, and don't let me find any member of J House in your company again!"

With smothered groans K House were forced to troop out of the hall, Mr. Grittall following them like a gaoler, and in seething wrath J House made their way along to the cafeteria.

Once again Mr. Grittall had scored over them. No doubt he had been listening at the door, Sally guessed, and then had deliberately ousted Sally and her chums from the deputation! Sally's lips were pursed grimly.

From their seats by the window Sally & Co. saw Tony and the rest of the K House deputation pass grimly on their way to the dean's study. Sally silently and unhopefully wished them luck.

Three minutes later the large figure of Mr. Grittall went marching by in the same direction. Sally quivered. She knew the deputation wouldn't stand a chance with Mr. Grittall present. She beckoned to Don, and quietly they slipped from their seats and left the cafeteria, making their way to the Merry-makers' clubhouse. They were thinking of that green canvas bag containing K House's table-tennis kit. Whatever happened that must not be found in the Merry-makers' clubhouse.

(Please turn to the back page.)



RIVALS *for the* PLANTATION

(Continued
from
page 284.)

see how it could be—why wasn't he prepared to allow the matter to be settled in the customary manner? A solicitor would very quickly establish a solution. But to steal her claim—that was contemptible. The action of a thief and a cad.

When, next day, the time came for her to depart for her appointment with Jim Short she had no compunctions whatever about the part she was to play. He did not deserve consideration.

Mr. Macfarlane lent her a horse and indicated her course, assuring her that when she shouted he and his boys would be at hand.

So Renee set off, half wondering whether the whole trip would turn out to be a wild-goose chase. Threading her directed path through canyon and over river-bank, she plodded through the hot sunlight and the cool shadows until she reached the spot known as the Swallow Dip. It was a small valley, bounded on three sides by rugged limestone cliff, broken here and there with deep gullies and caves, with the river roaring away to her right, and a great fall dropping from the mountains, making a deep sucking whirlpool in the centre of the river.

She dismounted. She looked around, pursed her lips, and let out a long-drawn, shrilling whistle.

No reply.
Again she whistled. And again. Then she stood, waiting tensely.

Still no response.
"I might have guessed," she muttered in disgust. She was about to turn to her horse again when she started.

From among the cleft of the rock came another whistle—long, low, drawn-out.

She halted, a colour running into her cheeks. Then she saw him—Jim Short—dressed as she had seen him at the festival, stepping from a gully ahead of her.

"So you came," he said slowly as he stopped in front of her.

"As you see," she said coldly.
"I'm afraid, Miss Forbes—Renee—I've done you an injustice," he muttered.

"You'll keep to Miss Forbes, please," she said. "I prefer it that way." And if you call robbery just an injustice—

He winced.
"Not robbery," he said. "You—you don't think I'd rob you—"

"Then what else—"

"May I explain?"

"Isn't that what we're here for?"

"All right," he straightened. "Let me start from the beginning. Two years ago, when your uncle was here, I was his head boy. He liked me and we got on well together. Then one day I saved him from a dangerous snake. Your uncle promised then that when he died I should have a big share in the plantation—"

"Yes?"

"He was taken ill and I carried on. I had saved some money, and with it I bought a little land on the outskirts of this estate. I was lucky. On that land I found—amethysts."

She stared.

"Good amethysts. First grade." He looked at her. "I told Macfarlane about it. Then he told me that your uncle wanted to buy my bit of land."

"Yes?"

"And so I signed away my amethyst mine, and in return I got a document from your uncle—handed to me by Macfarlane—in which he stated that the whole estate was to be mine. But later I found out that Macfarlane was taking the best stones out of the mine."

Did she believe him? She did not know. But she listened as he continued:

"Then I heard of your uncle's death. I went at once to Macfarlane—to hear for the first time that you—a girl I'd never heard of—was the sole heiress. That you were coming over to claim both the estate and my mine. Can you wonder that I was furious?"

She couldn't—if it was true. But she still had doubts.

He went on to say how he had heard a conversation between Macfarlane and his wife which convinced him that Renee herself was part of their conspiracy. Then he described how Macfarlane suddenly accused him of stealing amethysts from the mine—of being sent away from the plantation and the police searching for him after the fire on the estate.

"It was because I thought you were working with the Macfarlanes that I tried to get you off the scene as soon as ever you arrived," he ended.

"And what do you think about it all now?" she asked.

He flushed.

"Now I'm not so sure." He paused. "I thought you were my enemy, you see. I had every reason to think so, hadn't I?" He looked up suddenly, and she was surprised and touched to see the contrition on his face. "I'm sorry," he said, "but—well, I just don't think so now. You see, I like you."

Renee felt her resolution wavering. She wanted to believe Jim, but to do so meant that she must at once mistrust the Macfarlanes, against whom she had no evidence except this boy's word.

"I came to see the document you said you had," she said. "That letter from my uncle. Did you bring it?"

He nodded. He placed his hand into his inside pocket. And watching him, Renee herself felt mean. She had kept this meeting to corner him, to trap him. Close at hand, she knew, was Sandy Macfarlane and his two men, ready to pounce at her signal. Suppose she did not give that signal? Supposing she warned Jim while there was yet time? Supposing—

And then something happened which sent all her ideas topsy-turvy again, which transformed her readiness to believe in him into a sudden flaming gust of fury.

For in drawing out his letter Jim Short dropped something else to the ground—a packet tied round with red ribbon. Renee saw what it was before it even hit the ground.

"My papers!" she cried. "You cheat! You—you hateful thing! So you did steal them after all! You—"

"Renee!" he cried.

But Renee had spun on her heel. One ringing shout she sent echoing among the rocks, and while Jim stood staring at her that cry was answered.

From behind him there came a sudden cry, a crash, a rush of feet. A rope snaked through the air.

Even as Jim Short turned the rope slipped

over his shoulders to his elbows, was drawn viciously tight with a force that flung him on his back.

Sandy Macfarlane, with a grin Renee could never have imagined on his face, touched his hat to her.

"Good work, Miss Forbes. This'll save a lot of trouble! Come on, boys—the him up! I want him back at the plantation before handing him over to the police."

THE AMETHYST HOARD



INSTINCTIVELY Renee rushed forward to snatch up her precious papers, but she could not bring herself to witness the continuation of the scene.

She turned away. She felt furious still—but somehow, maddeningly, irritatingly, her sympathy for the boy would persist. When at last she did look back it was to see him being led away towards a cleft in the hills which was obviously some hidden track leading to a spot where Manager Macfarlane and his two rough-looking black boys had concealed the horses.

She felt in no hurry to return to the farm. She was acutely aware of a need to get things clear in her mind. She wanted to think things out, to make sure of herself. And standing there she could see on the scene of the struggle an envelope half buried in the sand. The envelope, she guessed, was the one which had contained the letter he had received from her uncle.

She picked it up. Should she open it? She did. The address was that of her uncle. The signature at the end of it was her uncle's name. But—and here she frowned, wondering again with sudden new uncertainty—the handwriting was definitely not her uncle's.

She read the letter. It began "My Dear Jim." It went on to say that in the event of Jim selling his amethyst mine, Kiddlegreen Farm and all that was in it would become Jim Short's property, and mentioned that documents were being drawn up to this effect. Not a word about herself—which perhaps was not surprising.

For the letter, obviously, was a forgery! "Oh, my goodness!" Renee breathed, her mind in a sudden whirl.

A forgery. By whom? By Jim himself? Had Jim prepared this to bolster up his fantastic claims? She looked at the letter again and did not think so.

"He believed this. This is what made him act as he did," she found herself whispering. "But—but if that's true, why did he take the trouble to steal my claim?"

She stood there in sudden hushed mood, trying to puzzle it out. She thought and thought until the thoughts began to revolve on each other in such confusion that her mind became chaotic. When presently she roused herself and glanced at her watch she discovered that she had been away from the farmhouse several hours.

"Well, there's only one place to get at the truth, and that's the house itself," she said.

She mounted her horse and jogged back. In the courtyard she met Emma Macfarlane, her little face sharp with anxiety.

"Renee, don't go in vet!" she jerked. "Sandy is busy phoning the police."

"Phoning?"

"About Jim Short," the woman gulped. "Sandy put him in the shack at the other side of the banana plantation. The police can't get out here until to-morrow and they've asked Sandy to hold him. And so Sandy shut him up there with the two boys to guard him."

"Oh!" Renee said, and felt more than ever disturbed, first at the fate of Jim Short, next at the strange agitation of the woman before

her. And the inconsistency of the message she had given her.

For if Sandy Macfarlane had already made arrangements with the police for holding Jim Short until to-morrow, why was he phoning them now?

More uncertain than ever Renee became then. Despite herself, she found Jim's story revivifying in her mind. She looked at the woman in front of her.

"All right," she said. "I don't particularly want to go in yet. But—Mrs. Macfarlane?"

"Yes, my dear?"

"Where is this amethyst mine that's supposed to exist on the estate? I'd like to see it." The woman's stare was blank.

"Amethyst? Bless you, Renee, what are you talking about?" She gave a laugh. "There's never an amethyst been found on the land—except those that Jim Short stole. And they," she added, "belonged to my husband. I suppose Jim Short himself told you that story."

"Well, yes."

Mrs. Macfarlane smiled pityingly. Then she turned on her heel and went towards the house. But Renee was thinking in an entirely different direction now.

Supposing Jim's story were true, after all? Supposing it was he who had forged that letter, with the sole intention of gaining possession of Jim's piece of land? Then, when they had faked charges of theft against him, they could work without interference on the mine, extracting all the best stones.

It seemed fantastic at first, that theory. But it took hold on Renee nevertheless. And now, seeing that the coast was clear, she determined to do a bit of investigating for herself.

She strode away until she had reached the plantation, then, quickly passing through it, approached the house from the back way. Drawing her head above the sill of the room which the Macfarlane couple occupied, she peered in.

At once she knew that her latest idea was right.

For in that room was Sandy Macfarlane. He was feverishly packing a large case. His wife stood near by, handing him things to ram into it, and even as she watched she saw the woman lift a heavy, bulky leather bag. As she handed it towards her husband the top gaped open for a moment.

Renee stood shocked and stunned at the brief glimpse of the glittering, purple contents. Amethysts! A whole bag of them!

She dodged down. Now she knew that she had misjudged Jim Short. Manager and manageress were nothing but cheats and robbers. They were packing up—preparing to clear out while they had possession of the amethysts. In a flash all that confidence she had wanted to feel in Jim Short came uppermost. In a flash she knew the truth. But what could she do?

Confront the two in the room? Tell them that she knew of their villainy?

A moment's reflection showed her that that would be folly. Desperate as they must be now, she would receive no pity at their hands. Now there was only one thing to do. Get Jim! Jim, however, was a prisoner in the shack, guarded by the two rough-looking negroes.

"But I've got to see him! Got to!" she told herself. "I've got to get him out of that somehow!"

Her eyes roved desperately around. Carrying a map of the plantation in her mind, she knew where the shack was—a good half-mile away. Then her eyes lit upon one of the banana wagons—a ramshackle, motor-driven old vehicle used for the spraying and harvesting of bananas on the farm. She ran towards it. With a leap she jumped into the driver's seat and started up the engine.

Renee slipped in the gear and accelerated, heading for the wide grass path that ran through the plantation. She set her teeth as

she pressed harder and harder upon the pedal, and the old machine jumped and snorted. But it went. Faster and faster it went.

With the tall bananas forming a shady avenue on either side of her, Renee drove on. Then ahead she saw the shack just outside the plantation—saw at the same time the two natives standing in front of the door, each swinging a big stick.

How was she to deal with those two men?

But no sooner was that question asked than Renee knew the answer. She was not quite out of the banana plantation yet. Not yet had the two men seen her. With sudden, desperate instinct she stared straight at them and, having set the course of the car, slipped sideways out of the seat.

She had a momentary giddy sensation of spinning in midair. Then, with a crash that robbed her body of breath, she had hit the ground.

There was a crash, a cry. Renee jumped to her feet. Now she saw the old wagon madly careering across open space towards the shack. She saw the two men jump in alarm.

But it was not at the shack itself Renee had directed the old car. It shot right past, careering on toward the next plantation.

What would they do?

They did exactly what she hoped they would do. Even while they were on guard at the shack, they were also guardians of the master's property—and if that wagon crashed among the trees it would do damage, there was no doubt. The two natives shot in pursuit. And immediately Renee raced towards the shack.

"Jim!"

She flung herself against the door. It was not a strong structure and it crashed in under the impact. Immediately her eyes darted to one corner, lighting on Jim—trussed and bound, his eyes popping in surprise at sight of her.

"Renee!" he gasped.

"Jim—"

In a moment she was feverishly tearing at his bonds, at the same time telling him of the discovery she had made. He stared at her.

"I know," he said. "They've cleaned out the mine of amethysts. I heard that last night while I was scouting round at the festival. I heard them, too, planning to rob you of your papers—that's why I stepped in and grabbed them first. Then, when they knew I had the papers and would read them and find out the truth, they guessed you and I might put two and two together, so they up and decided to clear out."

"With your amethysts," Renee said.

"That's it, I guess. But, we'll see." His jaw set. "Help me, will you?"

She worked with a will. In a few moments she had freed his hands. Working with her he freed his legs and together they left the shack.

From the plantation came a roar, a crash—a yell from the black boys.

"They're busy," Jim said. "But leave them now. We've got other things to do, before it's too late."

He caught her hand. Together they raced through the estate. As they came within sight of the farm they saw that a speedy-looking car was drawing up outside it, that a native boy was helping Mrs. Macfarlane into it. Sandy Macfarlane, wiping his brow, was just descending from the portico.

Jim raised a warning finger to his lips.

"Ssh, softly—don't let them see us—yet," he whispered.

Renee nodded, and, still holding Jim's hand, crept with him under cover of the thickly growing bushes to the portico.

Mrs. Macfarlane, seated in the car, was growing impatient.

"Do hurry, Sandy," she urged, throwing a

half-fearful look round, "before anyone turns up and sees us."

"Oh, you needn't worry about that—that boy's safely locked up."

Renee heard Jim's muttered words:

"That's what you think."

Then, he was running forward.

Sandy Macfarlane turned and saw him. In sheer amazement he stood a moment; his jaw dropped. But in the same instant Jim was upon him. A blow that sounded like the crack of a whip caught the manager under the chin and bowled him backwards. Like a shot Jim had dived his hand into the man's pocket and produced his revolver.

"Renee," he shouted. "Phone for the police. And until they come, Mr. Macfarlane, you'd better stay where you are. If you dare to move—"

Jim wagged the gun suggestively, and with a dry-lipped moan, Sandy Macfarlane collapsed against the portico steps.

IT was an hour later that the manager and his wife were taken away, Jim and Renee riding with them into the town where they made a full statement to the police before the precious pair were locked up. It was Renee who gave most of the evidence, supported of course, by the papers she carried and by the stolen amethysts which were found in the Macfarlanes' luggage.

When it was all over, Renee and Jim went back to the plantation.

"Well," Jim said, as they sipped coffee on the cool veranda. "I guess I've been a fool. It's pretty clear now that Macfarlane did forge that letter which gave me this farm. But I'm satisfied. Even if the amethyst mine itself is worked out, the amethysts themselves are mine."

"And what are you going to do with them, Jim?" Renee asked.

He looked at her.

"You know what I'd like to do with them?"

"No."

"Give them to you."

She stared.

"But why?"

"Because," he said. "I'd like to buy a share in this estate with them if you'll let me."

"You mean that, Jim?"

"I certainly do."

Renee laughed.

"Then it's a bargain. You'll be my partner."

"Your working partner," he added gaily.

"As long as you don't try to send me off to England again—" Renee laughed.

Jim became serious. His eyes fixed themselves steadily on her radiant face.

"I'm not likely to do that again—ever," he said softly.

THE END.

HER QUEST FOR THE PIRATE'S TELESCOPE

By

HAZEL ARMITAGE

This intriguing story of mystery and adventure will appear complete in next Friday's
GIRLS' CRYSTAL

THE MERRYMAKERS AT COLLEGE

(Continued from page 296.)

"When the dean hears what Grittal has to say, he's bound to come along to the clubhouse to see if we've got it," said Don.

Sally nodded.

"Yes—we've got to smuggle it away—and the quicker the better," she agreed.

Entering the clubhouse, they made for the cupboard at the far end. Here were stored two green canvas bags. Don grabbed one and Sally the other. Then Don gave a gasp as he looked out of the window.

"Quick—here they come," he whispered, as he saw the dean and Mr. Grittal heading for the clubhouse.

As he spoke he pulled up the secret trapdoor, and, carrying the two heavy canvas bags, they disappeared into the cellar, closing the trapdoor behind them. Next moment the dean and his companion stepped into the clubhouse.

Don looked at the bag Sally was carrying, then gave a soft chuckle.

"I've got an idea," he said, and whispered in Sally's ear. She smiled in delight.

"Splendid," she said. "You cut off across to K House. I'll stay here and, if necessary, keep the dean and Grittal's attention occupied."

On Don hurried along the underground passage, carrying one of the green canvas bags. Sally, standing under the trapdoor, heard the two men moving about, obviously searching for the missing table-tennis gear. Then the dean's voice reached her ears.

"It doesn't appear to be here," he said, "but I agree with you, Mr. Grittal. Discipline must be maintained. If what you say is true, Sally Warner and her friends must be punished, as well as the members of your House. But are you sure there is no mistake? You are sure the tennis kit was not mislaid?"

"Positive, sir. It was deliberately taken by Sally Warner."

"Very well. We will go along to your House and make inquiries. Perhaps, some of your students will admit the truth."

Sally gave a gasp of dismay as she heard footsteps overhead. At all costs the dean and Mr. Grittal must be prevented from going to K House until Don had had a chance to carry out his plan. Carrying the second green canvas bag, she went hurrying down the passage. As she emerged, she saw the dean and the tyrannical master leave the clubhouse. Deliberately she stepped from out of the bushes, allowing herself to be seen. As she expected, Mr. Grittal gave an excited cry as he saw the green canvas bag she was carrying.

"There, I knew I was right!" he exclaimed. "That is the very bag!"

Quickly Sally stepped back amongst the bushes as if not wanting to be seen. There came a cry from the dean, but Sally, pretending not to have heard, went hurrying along the path.

Not until she was a long way from K House did she stop and turn round.

"Oh, was it you calling, sir?" she asked, blinking in innocent surprise at the breathless dean. "Sorry if I didn't hear you before, but I was in a hurry."

"So it appears," he commented sardonically. "In fact, it looks suspiciously to me, Miss Warner, as if you were deliberately trying to evade Mr. Grittal and myself."

"Oh, sir, whatever makes you think that?" asked Sally, looking shocked and surprised.

"Because we know what's in that bag!" It was Grittal who spoke, and furiously he

pointed to the green canvas bag. "It is useless to attempt to deceive us," he grated. "Do you deny you were going to hide that bag?"

"Indeed, I do, sir. I was taking it to the dean's study."

"To—to my study?" gasped the dean, regarding her incredulously.

"Yes, sir. It contains the task you asked J House to do, sir."

She opened the bag—and the dean found himself gazing at the books from the library, all newly and neatly bound!

"Really, it—it seems we have done you an injustice, Miss Warner," he said apologetically.

"Mr. Grittal thought that this bag contained table-tennis equipment which had been removed from K House in wilful disobedience to his orders."

"Table-tennis equipment, sir?" Sally opened her eyes in surprise. "But that was all a mistake, sir. The equipment has been found. I think that if Mr. Grittal makes inquiries he will find that the tennis bag was accidentally shifted to another room."

She spoke confidently—and she had reason to. For by now Don would have placed his bag—containing the missing table-tennis kit—where a search would quickly discover it.

"If that is so, then there has been a double mistake," the dean declared. "I thank you, Miss Warner, for clearing up this unfortunate matter for us. I am sure that Mr. Grittal is as grateful as I am."

Mr. Grittal made no comment, but his expression was eloquent enough.

"We will all proceed to K House and see if what you say is correct, Miss Warner," went on the dean.

He led the way back down the path, and as they approached K House they were met by Tony Fry.

"The kit's been found, sir!" he exclaimed. "Someone must have accidentally moved the bag from where you put it."

"Then, in the circumstances," said Sally, quick to press home her advantage, "I take it the K House gating will be lifted."

"Certainly, Miss Warner. The detention will be cancelled," the dean declared. "And also, Miss Warner, I must congratulate you on doing a splendid job of work."

And appreciatively the dean gazed at the newly bound books. Taking the bag from Sally, he walked off with it. Slowly Mr. Grittal followed, and Sally chuckled as she saw the look of helpless fury on his face. He had been completely outwitted.

That afternoon a special coach took Sally & Co. to Roxville, where they saw K House win the match.

Later, they all adjourned to a café for tea, and Sally's eyes sparkled as she saw the gorgeously laid-out table.

"My, this is something like a celebration spread!" she exclaimed.

Tony Fry grinned and nodded.

"But we've got something more than our victory to celebrate," he remarked.

Wonderingly Sally & Co. regarded him.

"What?" they chorused.

"Well, I've just been phoning to the coll.," he said, "and have heard a surprising bit of news. Old Grittal's left us. He's going to take charge of your House!"

It was as if a bombshell had burst at the Merry-makers' feet. They had scored a great victory over the tyrannical Housemaster—they had done their riva's a good turn—and this was to be their reward. In future they were to be in charge of Mr. Grittal!

In next Friday's entertaining story you will read of another battle of wits between Sally & Co. and their unpopular new house master.