

# THE FOURTH FORM MAGAZINE!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete Story of the Girls of Cliff House.

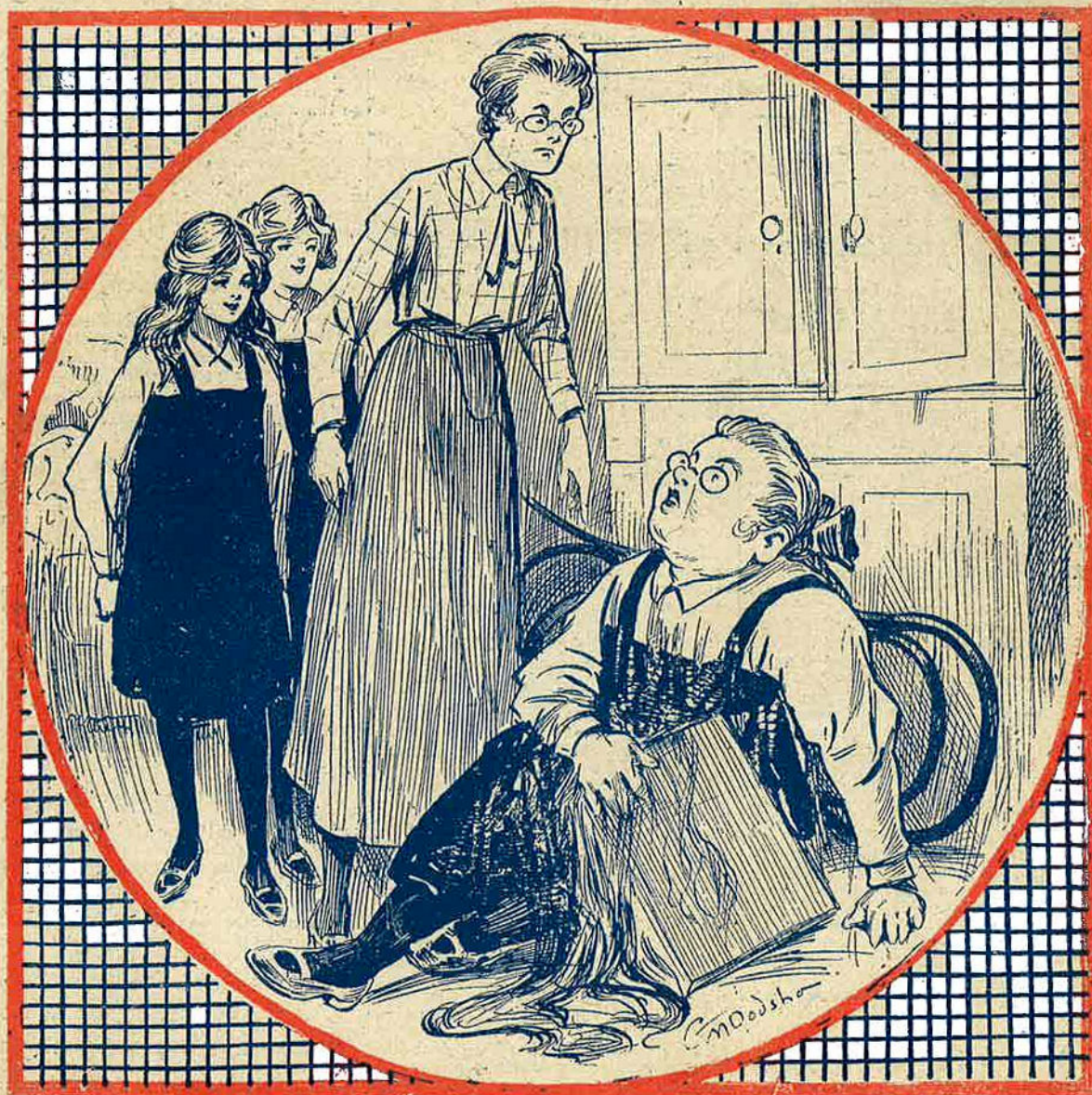
## THE SCHOOL FRIEND

Every  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Thursday

No. 5. Vol. I.

Three-Halfpence.

Week Ending June 14th, 1919.



AN UNFORTUNATE FALL FOR BESSIE BUNTER!

# The Fourth Form Magazine!



## Bessie's Letter.

**I** KNOW that I shall starve here. Bessie Bunter groaned out the words in a very dismal voice.

"What?" snapped Babs sharply. Babs—otherwise Barbara Redfern—was one of Bessie Bunter's companions in study No. 4 at Cliff House. Mabel Lynn was the other.

"I can count my ribs now," proceeded Bessie in the same agonised tones.

"Eh?"

"And my clothes no longer fit me," continued Bessie Bunter. "This is a very dreadful place!"

"Mum—my word!" gasped Mabs. "And just after she's cleaned the cupboard right out!"

"I am wasting away like a convict!"

"Six cream tarts!" said Babs solemnly.

"A large seal cake!" added Mabs.

"Three apples!"

"A whole tin of sardines!"

"Half a loaf and all the butter!"

"The remainder of my tin of coffee!"

"And," continued Babs cuttingly, "she says she's wasting away!"

Bessie Bunter did not heed them. She was sitting with her back towards the two girls, frowning at a sheet of paper in front of her, slowly writing the dreadful tale of her sufferings.

The table testified to the fact that a generous meal had just disappeared from it. And Bessie Bunter had been mainly responsible for that.

Being a Sunday, Mabs had expended the last of her postal-order the previous day in providing a good tea.

And Bessie Bunter had certainly not neglected her part in disposing of it.

"There is practically no food here at all," continued Bessie, half to herself, as the pen scratched over the sheet of paper. "They seem to think that a growing girl can exist on fresh air!"

"My word!" gasped Mabs.

"And I'm starving more every day!"

"How can you tell such fearful fibs!" explained Babs. "Why, you've eaten all that we were going to save until to-morrow as it is."

"I wish you girls wouldn't interrupt!"

said Bessie peevishly. "Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Well, I'm blowed!" Bessie gnawed at the end of her pen-holdder and groaned.

It was quite evident that she was bringing herself to believe in the pitiful tale of her sufferings that she was penning.

"I don't suppose that you will ever see me again," she muttered dismally, as her pen started to scratch again. "It is very hard to die young!"

"Die!" ejaculated Barbara Redfern.

"Never see you again!" added Mabel Lynn.

The two girls exchanged startled glances.

Bessie's tones were alarming in themselves.

If they had not seen the amount of tea she had just disposed of, they would certainly have believed that what she said was the truth. From the way she was groaning.

"What does she mean?" whispered Babs tensely.

Mabs shook her head.

"Couldn't say!" she said.

"When you get this the beautiful flowers may be blooming over my young head," pursued Bessie, in even more agonised tones.

"Eh?"

"And the birds will be sobbing over my dreadful fate, as they sing their morning song!"

Babs and Mabs exchanged more alarmed glances.

"No doubt you will read a full account of it in the papers," continued Bessie.

"What?"

"Of course," continued Bessie slowly, after some thought, "I forgive you all, and I hope that you will all rest quite happily after I am gone!"

"Gone? Gone where?" demanded Mabs.

"I know that what has been done has been done out of ignorance," murmured the fat girl. "There are many tragedies in life!"

"Oh dear!"

"But I feel it my duty to write these

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete Tale of the Girls of Cliff House. :: :: introducing Bessie Bunter :: ::

BY

HILDA RICHARDS.

few lines while I still have the strength," growled Bessie, scratching away furiously as the words came to her.

"Which whatever" is she writing," gasped Babs in a low tone.

"Perhaps she's off her head!" suggested Mabs. "She may have eaten too much, and it's upset her mind."

"She's certainly wandering. There's something the matter!"

Bessie paused and scratched her head.

"I can get nothing to eat here at all," she muttered, starting to write again.

"That's a fib!" said Babs loudly.

"Why, you'd try to eat us, if things were as bad as that!" added Mabs.

"You know you're starving me, you little cats!" snapped Bessie, turning her head.

"We—we're wh-wh what!" ejaculated Babs.

Bessie did not reply. She continued to scratch her head and bite her pen-holdder alternately.

"How do you spell malnutrition?" she asked suddenly.

"Who?"

"Malnutrition," said Bessie. "Perhaps you haven't heard of it, but it's another name for starvation. I've used that word once."

"Don't know."

"Oh!"

"Can you spell comatose, then?"

"No."

"That's another word you might remember after—I'm gone," said Bessie tragically. "It means that I'm in a kind of trance through having nothing to eat."

"And—and that's what you're suffering from?"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bessie. "I want to finish this."

And she began groaning out her pitiful tale again.

"I should like, as a last request, that my parrot may be killed—killed painlessly, of course," she said, "for I should not like to think he suffered the same. How do you spell agony, Mabel?"

Mabs eyed Bessie grimly, but did not reply.

"Be a cat if you like!" growled Bessie, after waiting in vain. "I should not like to think," she continued,

"that he suffered the a-g-g-a-y-n-i-t-e slow starvation. Will you please bury him beside me!"

"I'll kill him now, if you like," volunteered Babs, eyeing the evil-looking green parrot which Bessie had brought into the study.

"Don't you touch my parrot!" snapped Bessie, springing up suddenly.

"Then what do you mean by that rubbish you're writing?" demanded Mabs.

"Are you—are you going to do something to yourself, Bessie?" added Babs, who was really feeling rather uneasy about the fat girl.

"Not that I know of," said Bessie calmly.

"Then what on earth are you writing?" snapped Babs.

"I always write home on Sundays," explained Bessie.

"You're writing that to your pater?" said Mabs incredulously.

Bessie shook her head.

"Not pa," she said. "It's like trying to get blood out of a stone with him. It may move ma, though," she added.

"Good gracious!"

The two girls eyed each other in horror. Then Babs burst out laughing.

"You take the cake, Bessie!" she exclaimed.

"Whose cake?" demanded the fat girl absently.

"Oh, anybody's, for that matter! But I didn't mean it that way. You don't seem to have any idea of the truth."

"Don't you consider that I'm being starved here?" demanded Bessie.

"Of course not!"

"I'm getting fearfully thin," replied Bessie pathetically.

"You won't hurt for a bit," said Mabs heartlessly. "And to talk about dying from starvation—well, that takes the bun!"

"I sha'n't die really," admitted Bessie, after a moment's thought. "That's really a figure of speech. But my people haven't sent me a postal-order for some time."

"But when your parents get that letter they'll be writing to Miss Primrose about you," protested Babs. "And they'll be coming down and making inquiries."

Bessie shook her head.

"I doubt whether it will fetch more than half-a-crown," she said gloomily.

"Mum-mum-my word!"

Babs and Mabs had not heard of Bessie's writing home before. Bessie rarely wrote to her people, in fact.

The fat girl picked up her pen again, and gnawed it.

"I wonder if you can suggest anything else for my letter," she said.

"Oh, do dry up, you little donkey!"

"I suppose you're jealous because you can't write such a good letter," said Bessie maliciously.

"Never mind, I sha'n't let you share in my postal-order!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bessie frowned.

"Heartless cats!" she ejaculated.

But she had evidently come to the end of her imagination, for further words failed her.

"I think I'll finish now," she said, and continued: "Trusting you are the same as this leaves me, I am, your heart-broken daughter, Bessie."

"That ought to do it!" said Bessie, as she stuck down the envelope. "I'll post it now."

Mabs and Babs exchanged glances as the fat girl left the study.

"Isn't she the limit?" said Mabs.

"Her people must be used to her, though," said Babs. "If I sent a letter home like that there would be an awful bust-up!"

Mabs swung her legs, and gazed thoughtfully at the ceiling.

"I'd like to have a copy of that letter, you know," she said. "It would be worth keeping."

"If Bessie would only write things like that for fun, they'd be worth reading," agreed Babs. "I wonder if she would? Some of the other girls would like to see that."

"We could write a skit on one!" said Mabs.

"Why," said Babs, with sparkling eyes, "if we thought of a few things like that—My word! I've got a fine idea. Why not start a Form magazine?"

"I—I—I— Oh, I say!" said Mabs, smiling. "That's a splendid notion—a really ripping wheeze, in fact!"

She made a wild clutch at nothing as the chair fell backwards. And just at the same moment the door opened.

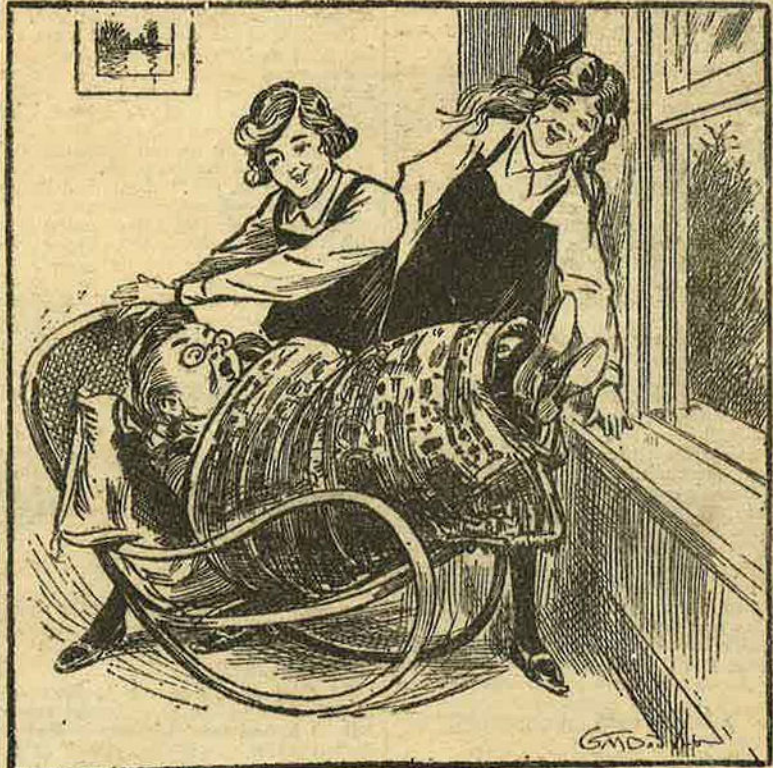
Mabs expected to fall on the cold, hard floor. She did nothing of the sort. She collided with the soft, plump figure of Bessie Bunter.

"Yow!" roared Bessie. "Yarooogh!" There was a heavy thud as Bessie sat down.

"Yow!" shouted Bessie. "My ribs are all broken! Ow-w-w-w!"

Mabs scrambled up, leaving Bessie on the floor, hugging the chair in a wild embrace.

"Lemme get up!" cried Bessie, shutting her eyes and gripping the chair tighter. "You're knocking all the breath out of me! Cats! Yarooogh!"



Bessie Bunter was not comfortable, to say the least. She jolted from side to side as the chair rocked, and she felt every moment that she would be propelled through the window.

**Bessie, a Chair, and the Bull.**

"IT would be a fine score for the study!" said Babs brightly. "Every big school has a magazine."

"Rather!"

"We can have all sorts of leg-pulling articles!"

"And skits!"

"And pictures!" added Barbara.

"Perhaps!" said Mabs, somewhat doubtfully. "Anyway, we can make the thing a huge success!"

"And the girls will be green with envy!"

"My word! Picture Marjorie Hazeldene's face when she reads the first copy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mabs leaned back in her chair, laughing. In her excitement, she leaned recklessly.

The chair swayed in a perilous manner. "Look out!" yelled Babs.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mabs.

"Get up, you little donkey!" said Babs, smiling.

But Bessie, her mind still running on the dreadful story of her sufferings which she had just penned to her mother, did not abandon the idea that it was a terrible attempt on her life.

"Grooogh!" she roared. "Yarooogh! I'm killed, I tell you! Stop hitting me with the chair! Oooooo-er!"

Bessie Bunter, having started, was using her lungs to their best power.

"Oooooo-er!"

Several doors opened, and the occupants of the studies stared out to see what was the matter.

"Fatima again!" snapped Clara Trevlyn from the doorway of Study No. 7.

"I say, Babs, leave the fat image alone!"

"Oh, Clara!" said Marjorie Hazeldene. "She is a fat image!" said Clara calmly. "But that's no reason for bullying her!"

"Yaroooogh!" roared Bessie, in a still

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lauder key. Her eyes were still tightly shut, and she had managed to get the chair mixed up with her legs.

The girls in the corridor could not see the real cause of the trouble. But they could hear the voice of the fat junior all right.

"I say, let her alone!" called Cissy Clare. "That's enough, you know!"

"But we—we're not touching her!" explained Mabs, laughing.

"What?"

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bessie Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed Babs and Mabs.

The other girls crowded out of their studios, and as they came in sight of the real cause of the trouble they laughed, too.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooooo!"

Bessie's face was red from her exertions, and the chair was getting still more mixed up with her feet.

She was lying on her back, kicking and scratching.

The mind of the fat junior did not work quickly as a rule. And, having once shut her eyes, Bessie did not think of opening them in a hurry.

The unexpected assault as she came into the study had convinced her that she was being brutally attacked by someone using a chair.

"Ha, ha, ha!" spluttered Babs, almost in tears, and leaning on Mabs for support. "What a silly donkey! Ha, ha, ha!"

And from the corridor echoed:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter suddenly came to Bessie's ears. It struck her that something not so very terrible might be happening as she had imagined.

She opened her eyes very slowly and saw—the chair.

Bessie's screams and struggles ceased abruptly. She gazed, open-eyed, at the piece of furniture.

"Go it, Fatima!" said Clara laughing. "That was splendid! Don't stop now!"

Bessie blinked inquiringly at the group. Her spectacles had slipped and were hanging on one ear.

Her face was red and perspiring, and there was a small cloud of dust hanging in the air where her feet had thrashed the carpet.

"Wh-where's she gone-gone to?" she gasped.

"Who?"

"The nasty little cat who attacked me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bessie's little eyes glittered wrathfully. It dawned on her suddenly that she had been providing free entertainment for the Fourth Formers.

She scrambled to her feet, and grasped the chair ponderously.

"Cave!" whispered Cissy Clare; and the crowd in the corridor suddenly started to melt.

Bessie did not heed the warning. She swung the chair up and faced round angrily.

Miss Bullivant, who had been the cause of the alarm, pulled up sharply as the chair whirled round.

The leg missed her face by a matter of an inch, but a projecting splinter caused it to catch in the "Bull's" hair-net.

Miss Bullivant always wore a net on her hair. She did not believe in fashion. She always stated that she set comfort before everything. But just then the net felt far from comfortable.

"Oh! Ooooo! Oh!" ejaculated Miss Bullivant. "Desist, girl! Oh!"

Bessie Bunter heard the voice with a

start, and released her hold of the chair as though it had been red hot. At the same moment Miss Bullivant ducked, with the chair hanging to her hair.

Bessie looked down.

The chair was lying on the ground, and Miss Bullivant was by it, with her angular body bent until her head nearly touched the floor.

"It's all right, Miss Bullivant," said Bessie tremulously.

The Bull did not reply. She was trying to detach the chair from her hair.

"Dud—don't be afraid, Miss Bullivant," said Bessie Bunter. "It's gone now."

"What has gone?" snapped Miss Bullivant, from the region of Bessie's feet.

Bessie jumped in alarm.

"Th—that wuw-wuw-wicked old kikkik-cat!" she stammered lamely.

Miss Bullivant gave a pull, and succeeded in dragging her hair-net free.

Her hair was in a disordered mass, and her head was feeling very tender.

She stood upright and gave the unfortunate fat girl a severe look.

Bessie blinked and straightened her glasses. There was a deadly silence.

"I am waiting for an explanation!" exclaimed Miss Bullivant sternly.

"Oh—er—oh, yes!" stammered Bessie. "I—that is—you see, w—I mean—"

"I heard a terrible noise coming from this corridor, Bessie," snapped the Bull, "and I come up to be—to be brutally assaulted!"

"That—that was the dud dog!" explained Bessie Bunter.

"Dog? I thought you said something about a cat."

"I—I mean cat," said Bessie hastily. "That wicked old cat attacked me. It—it made a fearful noise!"

"I have never heard a cat make a noise like that," said the mistress acidly.

"Nor have I, before," explained Bessie. "I think it must have got rabies. It snarled and scratched and screamed and roared—"

"Nonsense!"

"It did, really, Miss Bullivant," said Bessie glibly. "I even felt quite nervous. I know it was waiting to spring on me, and to—to tear me to ribbons," she added pathetically.

"Ridiculous!"

"I think it's dangerous to have cats like that about the place," said Bessie.

"It—it looked fearful, really it did! It dashed at me, and—and picked up the chair—"

"What?"

"I mean—that is—I picked up the chair, and tried to drive it off. It was still flying at me, and tearing great lumps of flesh from my legs!"

Miss Bullivant was too speechless to reply.

"And I was just chasing it down the corridor when—you came along, Miss Bullivant!"

"Do you consider that a satisfactory explanation, Bessie?" demanded Miss Bullivant grimly.

As a matter of fact, Bessie did not. But she did not say so.

She saw that there was trouble brewing for one. And that one was herself. Her brain worked very quickly, as it sometimes did when she was in a real difficulty.

"That—that's the truth, Miss Bullivant," she said.

Miss Bullivant opened her mouth to reply. But at the same moment she gave a violent start.

The loud howl of a cat seemed to come from right behind her.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated the Bull. "Mrrraow! Oooooowow!"

### The Cat Again!

MISS BULLIVANT spun round hastily.

"Meow!" came from behind her.

The Bull turned again.

"Mrrraow!"

Again the Bull spun round. And again came the sound.

Bessie's queer gift of ventriloquism had certainly saved the situation.

Miss Bullivant was surprised at first, and then alarmed. She did not know of the fat junior's power of using her voice.

As fast as she turned, the cat seemed to get behind her. Bessie watched with a quiet grin on her fat face.

Miss Bullivant darted to the right, and to the left. But the cat seemed to foresee every movement. The Bull did not even catch a sight of its tail.

And as she danced about the corridor, the cat's voice seemed to get angrier. It appeared to be rather annoyed at Miss Bullivant's movements.

Miss Bullivant, however, became increasingly agile as the cat's yells became more bloodcurdling.

"Dear me!" she gasped. "Most strange!"

"Mrrraow! Yooooow!"

The Bull jumped hastily to one side. "Can you see the—this cat, Bessie?" gasped Miss Bullivant.

Bessie suddenly withdrew into the security of the study doorway and nodded her head.

"Look out, Miss Bullivant!" she said. "It's just beside you now!"

"Yowl!"

The Bull sprang right across the corridor, and turned round hastily. But there was no sign of the offending feline.

"It's the same one, Miss Bullivant," said Bessie. "It's awfully ferocious. Shall I hit it with the chair?"

"Yes—I mean no!" said Miss Bullivant, suddenly remembering Bessie's last performance. "But—but where is it now?"

"Just behind you, Miss Bullivant."

"Then I will stand quite still for a moment, and—and jump backwards!" declared the schoolmistress. "Is it still keeping still?"

"Yes."

Miss Bullivant gathered all her energies and gave a spring back towards the wall. If any poor cat had been there it would certainly have been hurt by Miss Bullivant's feet.

But, as it was, the mistress simply bumped violently against the wall.

Bessie nearly burst out laughing as she saw the mistress's expression. But she remembered in time that it was too dangerous to give way just then.

A wild howl came from right underneath Miss Bullivant, and then there was a sound of a scuffle, and the cat's voice sounded from the end of the corridor, rapidly getting fainter.

Miss Bullivant pulled herself together and rubbed the back of her head tenderly. It had struck the wall rather violently.

"Has it escaped, Bessie?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Bullivant!" said Bessie demurely. "It—it ran like anything!"

"Oh dear!"

It was evident that the invisible cat had rather shaken the Bull's nerves.

"What sort of cat was it?" asked the mistress, recovering herself a little.

"A—a nasty one!"

"Yes. But what did it look like?"

"I think it must have been a—a man-eater!"

"What?"

"I mean, it looked awfully savage!"

"Was it Miss Primrose's cat?" demanded the Bull.

"No—oh, no!" said Bessie hastily, seeing that that domestic feline could probably prove an alibi. "I think it was a stray."

"It was certainly a nasty thing! I shall give orders for it to be hunted out of the building at once!"

"Yes, Miss Bullivant!"

The schoolmistress paused. She was inclined to take a more lenient view of Bessie's previous behaviour.

"I am going now!" she said tartly. "And I shall not at present punish you for the noise you were making!"

"Th-thank you, Miss Bullivant!"

"But I shall be more severe if it is repeated, Bessie!"

And with that Miss Bullivant swept majestically away.

There was a titter of laughter in the corridor, and nearly every door opened as soon as Miss Bullivant had gone.

The girls had watched the performance

"What?"

"The magazine, of course!"

"My word! I'd clean forgotten about that!"

"Never mind! We can start now, Bessie won't be back for a little while. And we shall have to keep it dark from her."

"Rather! She'd be bound to tell everyone she met. She couldn't keep a secret!"

Babs produced a sheaf of imposition paper, and handed some to her friend.

The two always kept a supply of paper in the study, for it was in frequent demand for copies of Shakespeare's works.

Miss Bullivant believed in setting lines which would help to educate her pupils, and "Hamlet" had frequently been extracted by the scathing pens of the two chums.

This time, however, the work was more

as we get the first number out we can prove it's our idea!"

"Good! Fire away!"

Mabs picked up her pen, looked at the paper thoughtfully, and then put her pen down again.

"This wants some thought!" she said at length.

Babs grinned. She was writing furiously.

"You leave it to me!" she said. "I'll fill it."

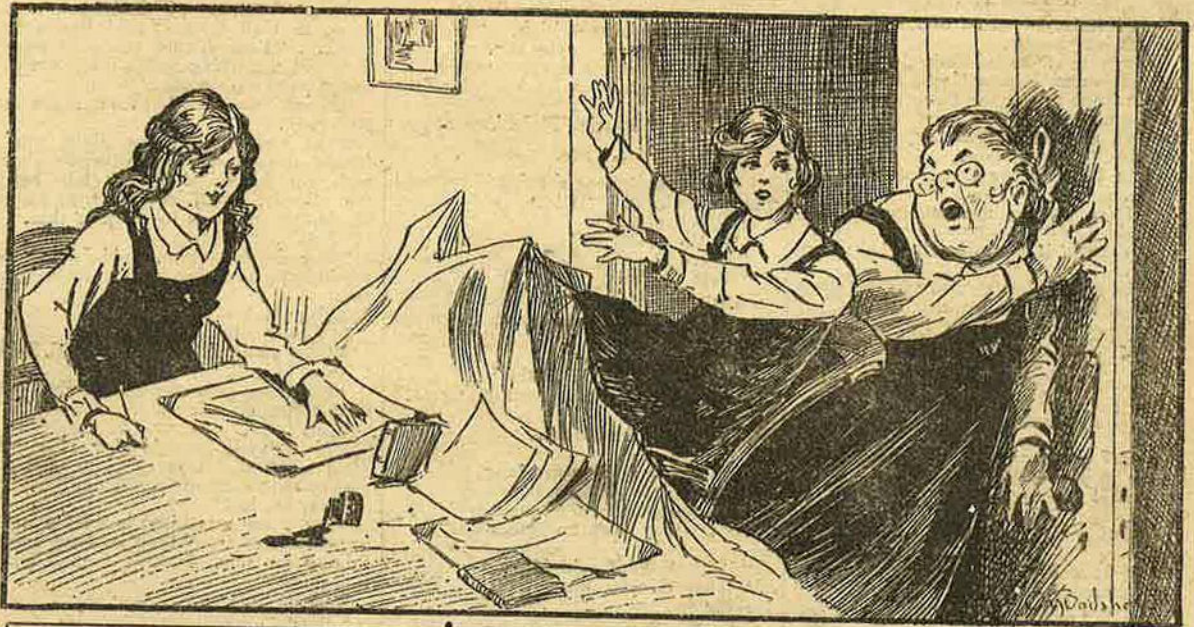
Mabs edgelled her brains furiously. A sudden thought struck her. She wrote the heading with a pleased smile.

"A Few Thoughts on Hats!"

### Summer-y!

"W HAT do you think of this?" asked Babs suddenly.

"No good!" said Mabs, without looking up.



As Mabs fell backwards, she fully expected to fall on the cold, hard floor. But she collided with the soft, plump figure of Bessie Bunter. "Yow!" roared Bessie. "Yarooogh!"

through cautiously opened doors, but they had not dared to laugh. They had their laugh now.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Babs and Mabs had been in their study, cramming handkerchiefs in their mouths to restrain their mirth. They took them out now, and chortled to their hearts' content.

Bessie Bunter stood and cackled in the doorway. She had scored off Miss Bullivant, and Bessie was not slow to advertise the fact.

"He, he, he!" she cackled. "Don't you think I did that fine? He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And for once Bessie was the heroine of the hour.

"Have some toffee, Fatima?" asked Clara Trevlyn cordially.

Clara was very appreciative. She had enjoyed the jest, and her heart quite warmed to Bessie.

"Thanks!" said Bessie promptly.

She left Study No. 4 willingly. There was nothing left there, in the eating line, and Bessie was hungry after her exertions.

Babs and Mabs exchanged glances as the door shut.

"What about the business, now?" asked Babs.

convivial. Mabs and Babs were keen enough on their idea to work till further orders.

"We've got to have an editress first," said Babs.

"I could do that all right," said Mabs.

"So could I," said Babs.

"I think I understand what we want."

"I thought of it first."

"You said it first," said Mabs warmly.

"But we both thought of it together."

"Well, it's no good quarrelling," said Babs resignedly. "We'll do it between us. You be responsible for the first half, and I'll do the second. That sounds all right."

"I suppose it does," agreed Mabs.

"But how about the editorial?"

"We'll decide that later," suggested Babs. "The first thing to do is to get the thing going."

Mabs leant back in her chair, and sat swinging her legs.

"How about contributors?" she asked.

"We sha'n't want any more for the first number," said Babs. "We'll write the things ourselves, and print them on a hectograph. If we start asking for contributors, we shall have to get a paper out before us."

"That's so," agreed Mabs. "As long

"Eh?"

"No good at all!" said Mabs. "In fact, it's a lot of rubbish!"

Babs frowned.

"If I was a boy," she said, with emphasis, "I should bang your head on the floor!"

"Very likely—if I was still a girl!" said Mabs, with a smile.

"No; I mean if you were a boy!"

"In that case, you'd be gone out of the window before you knew where you were!"

"Rubbish!"

Mabs looked up and laughed.

"Well, we're not fellows, so what does it matter?" she said serenely. "What is it you want to get off your chest?"

"Ahem! It's a little poem on summer."

"Pass the smelling-salts, and I'll listen!"

Babs coughed.

"This is how it begins," she said, and proceeded to read.

"Wonderful things are written of autumn,

Clever, indeed, are the folk who thought 'em;

Sights which are charming are seen in winter,

Of praise for them I am no suinter."

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"I thought it was about summer?" said Mabs, staring. "That seems as though it's intended to rhyme somewhere, but I can't see what it has to do with summer."

"I'm coming to that!" snapped Babs.

"Well, buck up! You've left me in the middle of winter."

Babs ignored the joke, and looked at her manuscript.

"This is where it goes on," said Babs.

"Then we come to think of lovely spring, When the young man buys a wedding-ring."

"Why?" asked Mabs interestedly.

"Oh, don't you see?"

"Something to do with the balmy breezes?" asked Mabs. "I suppose you mean he goes off his head in the spring?"

"No, of course not. A man once wrote a thing—I forget his name—in which he said that in the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. Well, I've improved on that," concluded Babs triumphantly.

"Have you?" asked Mabs doubtfully.

"Of course I have," said Babs. "I didn't want to put the thing as foolishly as the man-poet did."

"It's a good idea to improve where possible," agreed Mabs.

Babs took up her interrupted reading again.

"We're getting near summer now," she said.

"I thought it was rather hot," observed Mabs.

Babs glared, but started reading again without further comment.

"But I'll give you now the reason Why I like the final season, For I know that there will come a Jolly fine time in the summer. Summer hot—"

"And some are cold, I suppose you're going to say," said Mabs, interrupting.

"What do you mean?" demanded Babs.

"You said some are hot," explained Mabs. "Well, we know that; but it would be wrong to say some are cold."

"Summer hot, I said!" snapped Babs. "If you'd listen, you'd enjoy the poem more."

"Oh, dear!" murmured Mabs. "Go on quickly. I want to finish my article on hats."

Babs blinked indignantly, and continued:

"Summer hot comes once a year, Bringing sun and all good cheer."

"What would it bring if it came twice?" asked Mabs, with a twinkle in her eye.

"Don't chip in, or I shan't read any more of it!" growled Babs.

"There you see the lambs in meadows Which belong to Mister Beddows, And the apples in the orchard, Which belong to Mister Scorehard, And the cows graze on the clover, Which belong to Mister Dover."

"What are you reading now?" demanded Mabs, in astonishment. "The advertisement page?"

"No!" snapped Babs crossly. "That's the poem. I think that part reads very well."

"But what have Mr. Dover and Mr. Scorehard got to do with the poem?" asked Mabs, in bewilderment.

"They're only rhymes," said Babs lightly. "You see if you can find a rhyme for orchard. You've got to put something, so I made up those names. See?"

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"If you'd spoken earlier I could have given you some advice for that part," said Mabs. "Why not say:

"On the left you see old Drury,  
Owner of the local brewery;  
On the right you see old Masworks,  
Owner of the village gasworks?"

Babs frowned.

"It isn't poetic to talk about things like that," she said. "You want to think of beautiful things, not gasworks."

"Is there much more?" inquired Mabs.

"I'm not an automatic machine!" snapped Babs. "I've only done three pages in all, so far. I haven't finished the poem yet. I'm only reading what I've done."

Mabs drew a deep breath.

"Carry on," she said, in a voice which Joan of Arc might have envied.

Babs carried on.

"See the little larks so high,  
Singing, singing, in the sky.

hear the old ewe's frenzied raving,  
At the way her lamb's behaving."

"Shaving?" queried Mabs innocently.

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I didn't mean shaving!" snapped Babs, colouring. "Lambs don't shave. I said, behaving."

"Do they behave?"

"Sometimes they do."

"Well, that's all right. Go on."

Babs gave Mabs a suspicious glance. She was beginning to understand that her leg was being pulled.

"How I love to roam on the sea,  
Jump in the air, and swim in the sea."

"Really?" asked Mabs.

"All the busy bees are busy,  
Going to each little flower.  
Do those little bees get dizzy?  
Do they sleep a single hour?"

"Don't know," said Mabs.

"What do you mean?" asked Babs, looking up.

"I don't know if the bees get dizzy," said Mabs. "I believe they have a nap sometimes, but I couldn't be sure."

"Those are only—er—rhetorical questions," said Babs loftily. "That means, they're questions which no one answers."

"Why?"

"Well, because—that is, there's no answer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wish you wouldn't be so funny, Mabs," said Babs tartly. "It may seem humorous to you; but that's because you don't understand poetry."

"I don't understand this one," admitted Mabs. "I'm still thinking about that frenzied ewe shaving."

"Raving, I said," retorted Babs, blushing.

"Well, it's all the same. She ought to be put in a strait-jacket if she's as bad as that."

"That's poetic license."

"An animal in that state ought not to be given a license at all," declared Mabs.

"Duffer! I mean, I have the license," said Babs warmly.

"Well, if you go on at that rate you'll soon lose it," smiled Mabs.

Babs threw down the poem in disgust. "You'd better do one yourself," she said. "I've finished."

"Honestly, Babs, I don't think poetry's in your line," said Mabel.

Babs gave her a severe look, and said nothing.

But Mabel was not easily daunted.

She picked up her pen, and started work again on the important subject of hats.

Babs watched her moodily for a couple of minutes. Then she suddenly laughed, and picked up her pen.

"I'm going to write an article," she said severely, "saying exactly what I think about Shakespeare—the absurd creature!"

### An Editorial Conference—With Interruptions.

"I SAY, you girls—"

The round face of Bessie Bunter peered into Study No. 4.

There was a hasty collection of papers on the part of Babs and Mabs.

"What do you want?" demanded Babs sharply.

"Anything for supper?" asked Bessie.

"No," said Babs and Mabs in one breath.

"Then I suppose I shall have to go down to Hall for it," said Bessie dismally. "I think that you girls might have got something in for me, after the way I saved the situation to-night."

"What situation?" asked Mabs interestedly.

"The Bull would have given you a fearful wiggling for knocking me about with the chair, if I had told her," said Bessie. "Of course, my nature wouldn't permit me to stoop to that."

"No?"

"But the least you could have done would have been to provide something to eat."

"You think so?"

"Of course I do."

"Then go on thinking," advised Babs.

"We're busy."

"The other girls aren't so mean," continued Bessie.

"Oh!"

"They've all been looking after me. They know that I saved them all from getting detention, or something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't see anything to cackle at!" growled Bessie. "They've been entertaining me fine. I think I shall leave this study."

"Good!" ejaculated Babs.

"When?" added Mabs eagerly.

Bessie blinked.

"Other girls appreciate me!" she growled. "I've had cake, and toffee, and—all sorts of things."

"And then you want supper?" demanded Babs.

"Of course I do!" retorted Bessie Bunter. "A growing girl can't live on air."

"Then you'd better stop growing," said Mabs. "Good-bye!"

Bessie slammed the door, and said something which sounded like "Cats."

Babs and Mabs heard her footsteps die away along the corridor.

Mabel Lynn grinned.

"I wish someone would adopt her until we get this first number out," she said.

"We ought to be able to have it done in about three days, if we work hard. By the way, how are we going to get the hektograph?"

Babs thought.

"Better run over to Courtfield," she said. "I know Mr. Casey, the printer, has one for sale."

"Good! Then we'll go over to-morrow night. We'll keep everything secret until we're ready to print the copies off. Then Bessie can give us a hand with the work. It will be too late for anyone else to copy us, and there'll be a bit of excitement as soon as Bessie starts talking about it."

"That's the idea."

"Well, we'll lock up what we've done

now, and have supper," said Mabs. "If Bessie comes in here too often we can go out in the garden and write it."

The manuscripts were hastily hunched together and thrust into a drawer, which Babs locked.

The two chums arrived in Hall to find that Bessie had already disposed of her portion of supper, and was looking hungrily round for anyone who should come in with a cake or any such luxury.

But Bessie was doomed to receive no more that night.

Babs and Mabs finished their supper quickly, and returned to the study to talk their idea over more fully.

But they found Bessie Bunter already firmly installed in the rocking-chair, and discussion was out of the question while she remained there.

"Hallo, Bessie!" said Barbara Redfern. "Wasn't someone asking for you just now? Have you seen them?"

The fat junior shook her head.

"I forget who it was," said Babs. "Someone who had a grudge against the Bull. She was jolly pleased to hear what a wiggling you gave her to-night."

Bessie's face expanded in a fat smile.

"Who was it?" she asked.

Babs looked thoughtful for a moment.

"I forget," she said. "I couldn't really tell you who it was now. And they didn't say what they wanted you for."

Bessie rose.

"I wish you'd remembered who it was," she said peevishly.

"Go out and see, Bessie," said Babs sweetly. "If anyone wants you, I expect they'll still be waiting."

Bessie nodded, and went out into the corridor. There was a little chuckle in the study as the door closed.

"Good!" said Mabs. "Now to business."

She opened the drawer, and pulled out a bunch of papers.

"Now I think," began Mabs, "that on the first page—"

The door-handle rattled, and Bessie Bunter looked into the room.

"Have you remembered who it was yet?" she asked.

"No."

"Cat!" muttered Bessie.

And the door slammed.

"As I was saying," said Mabs, "we want the first page—"

"I say, you girls—"

Bessie Bunter looked into the study again.

"What is the matter now?" demanded Mabs impatiently.

"Was it a girl in this Form?"

"Dunno!"

"Cat!"

Bang!

The door was shut again with unnecessary violence.

"What we want on the first page," recommenced Mabs, "is a nice little—"

The door opened. Bessie glared into the study.

"There's no one in the corridor looking for me," she said. "How am I to find out who it was?"

"Dunno!"

"Well, what's the use of giving me half a message like that?"

"Sorry I spoke," said Babs shortly.

"Well, if you'd only paid more attention when my friends asked about me, you'd have saved me all this trouble."

Silence.

"Couldn't have been anyone in the Fourth—they'd know my study," ruminated Bessie.

No answer.

"Was it someone in the Fifth?"

Still no reply.

"Cats!" muttered Bessie Bunter.

Slam!

The door closed violently as Bessie started on her pilgrimage in search of the mythical philanthropist again.

"Perhaps we can do something now," said Mabs. "I was talking about the first page. What we want is a nice little sketch, and an editorial."

"You can do the sketch," said Babs generously. "I'll write the editorial. I'm good at that sort of thing."

"Ahem! So am I!"

"Well, we can't both do it," said Babs wisely. "We'd better leave that till last. Now, I think that verse always starts a thing off well. Suppose we put my poem on summer on the first page?"

"But we want them to read everything, dear," said Mabs, with affected innocent. "We don't want them to tear it up as soon as they get it."

"Look here, Mabs," said Babs sulphurously, "if you're going to insult my poem like that, I'll jolly well tear up your silly article about hats. It's all wrong, as it is!"

"It's a jolly good article," said Mabs indignantly. "That poem of yours is hopelessly off the track!"

"Nonsense! I tell you—"

The discussion was interrupted by a shuffling of feet outside the door. Bessie Bunter entered the study, breathless and red.

"It's no one in the Fifth," she said angrily. "You know who it was who wanted me, and you won't tell me their name. You know I'm hungry!"

"Try the Third, dear!" said Mabs gently.

Bessie bestowed a glare upon Barbara and Mabel.

"A lot of good that will be!" she growled. "I shall be looking until bedtime."

"Oh, do give your chin a rest!" begged Babs. "If it's not worth looking for, I wonder you're troubling. I tell you I don't know who it is that wants to see you. If that isn't sufficient, you'd better sit down again, and be quiet. We're busy."

"Little cats!" snapped the fat junior. She closed the door again, and melted away down the passage. Babs and Mabs looked at each other, and prepared to take up the cudgels once more.

"Now, as I was saying," proceeded Babs, "my poem is just the thing. It's bright and attractive. They won't stop until they've read it."

"That's true," smiled Mabs. "They won't stop until they've read the first two lines, if you ask me anything. They'll start running as soon as they see it."

"I shall pull your hair in a minute!" said Babs emphatically.

"And I shall pull yours—"

Bang!

There was a crash at the door, and Bessie Bunter rolled into the study again.

"Can't find anyone!" she grumbled. "Are you sure that you don't remember, you girls?"

"Haven't we said so?" demanded Babs.

Bessie scowled, and crossed over to the rocking-chair slowly. The juvenile editresses eyed her with looks of strong disapproval.

With Bessie in the study, the discussion was naturally at an end. And Bessie seemed to have got rather tired of running about in search of an invisible person who wanted to buy her a supper.

Babs gathered the papers together slowly, and put them back in the drawer. Bessie, however, did not seem interested. She jumped up again with a sudden thought.

"I wonder if she's waiting for me in the tuckshop?" she asked.

And Bessie was gone at a surprising speed.

"Now, about that first page!" began Babs, as the door closed.

The discussion started again; but it was not destined to last long. Bessie Bunter was back in a surprisingly short space of time, red and exhausted. She sank into the chair again, having evidently abandoned the idea of finding her well-wisher.

The joint-editresses exchanged a look of chagrin.

The discussion was finished—for the time being!

## Two Tins and an Idea.

THE movements of Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn for the next two days were nothing if not mysterious.

Bessie Bunter realised, in a dim sort of way that something was being planned.

She saw papers being hastily hidden away whenever she came into the study, and she began to understand that her presence was not desired in the study.

Not that that daunted Bessie. But ideas began to work in her brain.

From a fragment of conversation which she had heard she gathered that the two juniors were trying to get together as much money as they could.

There was only one explanation that Bessie could see, and that was that they were planning to have a secret feed at an early date.

Bessie decided to wait her time. On Monday evening Babs and Mabs went out quite early, and did not return until supper-time. But they were carrying a bulky parcel when they came back.

Bessie grinned to herself as she saw them come in.

"Hallo, you girls!" she said cheerfully.

"Hallo!" responded Babs, without enthusiasm.

"I must admit that I'm feeling rather peckish," said Bessie, with a fat smile.

"Really?"

"And I should just enjoy a little snack now."

"Then you'd better go down to Hall and have supper," advised Mabs. "It's just ready."

"I think I'll stay up here," said Bessie, with a knowing wink.

"Just as you like!" returned Babs shortly.

Babs and Mabs sat down and waited until Bessie changed her mind. They wanted to unpack the parcel, but they did not wish to do it while the fat junior was there.

Bessie looked at the parcel, and her mouth fairly watered.

"Supper in Hall is not worth having," she said. "I think that it was awfully decent of you to think of bringing something in!"

"Eh?"

"Of course, I shouldn't think of letting it go any further that you've been getting in a few provisions," said Bessie.

"What do you mean?"

"But I think you might just as well share it out now," smiled Bessie. "As soon as my remittance comes I'll return the spread, you know."

Babs stared at the fat junior.

"What on earth are you talking about, Bessie?" she demanded.

Bessie blinked.

"All right!" she growled. "You don't think I'm such a fathead that I don't know what you've got in that parcel!"

"What is it, then?"

"Food, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Babs and Mabs laughed heartily.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 5.

There alarm in case Bessie's suspicions had been aroused was quite unnecessary.

Bessie Bunter scowled.

"Let me have a look at the food!" she urged.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you mean to say that you're not going to give me anything?" demanded Bessie Bunter indignantly.

"Not a single tart!" said Babs.

The fat junior glared through her round spectacles.

"Then I'm going down to Hall!" she snapped. "Cats!"

Bang!

The door was closed with a tremendous slam as the indignant junior went out. Babs and Mabs exchanged looks, and burst out laughing.

"Poor Bessie!" said Babs.

Mabs picked up the parcel and cut the string.

The paper fell away, and revealed the necessities for the school magazine.

There was a small enamelled tin tray, two tins labelled "Hekto," a little bottle of ink, and a generous supply of white paper.

"Put it away quickly," said Mabs.

The drawer was hastily opened, and the tray, paper, and ink were pushed inside. But only one tin of jelly would go in as well.

"Try and push the other one in," urged Babs.

Mabs shook her head.

"Won't go," she said. "There's no room for any more!"

"Oh dear!"

Babs scratched her head thoughtfully. "There's nowhere else where we can put it safely," she grumbled.

Mabs nodded.

"Pull the label off, so that it doesn't advertise itself," she said, "and put it on the top of the cupboard. It'll be safe there."

Babs produced a pocket-knife, and opened a rusted blade.

Babs was proud of her pocket-knife. It was usually missing when wanted, and when found was, as a rule, as good as useless. But Babs would not have parted with it for worlds.

She scraped away at the side of the tin until the label had been obliterated. Then she stood on a chair and pushed the tin as far back on the top of the cupboard as she could.

Then the two chums went down to supper.

Bessie Bunter eyed them in surprise as they came in, and hope revived a little. They had been too quick to have eaten anything that was in the parcel.

So Bessie swallowed the remainder of her supper, and hurried up to the study.

She searched the cupboard quickly and systematically. But there was nothing there to attract her attention. The mysterious parcel had disappeared, and so had its contents.

She looked round the remainder of the study, with the same result. There was no sign of the package anywhere.

Bessie sat down, considerably mystified.

She was still convinced that the two chums had brought in a parcel of food, and that the writing she had seen them doing had been some sort of menu. But she could get no further.

She commenced her prep disconsolately. Bessie was always hungry, and this night was no exception. She felt that she could have done justice to the supposed contents of the parcel just then.

Babs and Mabs returned, and started their prep in silence. And Bessie did not raise the subject again.

There was hardly a word spoken until they went to bed.

Babs and Mabs deserted the study next

day, and went out into the garden with their writing materials.

Babs had abandoned the poem on Summer in time to save the discord between the two editresses becoming too acute.

She had also given her opinion on the much-maligned Shakespeare, and had written two very tolerable articles in addition.

Mabs had made good progress, too. She was rapidly covering sheets of paper with her last article, and when the editorial was done she considered that they would have enough.

No one in the Form had been forgotten.

Babs had turned her poetic mind to Limericks, at which she was decidedly better than at any other form of verse.

There was one on Study No. 7, one on Marcia Loftus, the bullying girl of the Fourth, and one on Bessie Bunter.

While the two chums worked out in the fresh air, however, Bessie Bunter was busy in the study.

She was convinced that the hidden food must be somewhere near at hand.

Her diligent search was rewarded at last.

In the back of the cupboard, underneath some books, she discovered a large tin of peaches. Babs and Mabs had quite forgotten that they were there.

Bessie planted them triumphantly on the table, and continued her search. But she found nothing else until, standing on a chair, she espied the tin of hektograph jelly.

Bessie pulled it down and examined it by the window. There was nothing to indicate what it was. The fat girl sniffed; and as she had a cold, she did not detect the slight, unpleasant odour. "Gelatine!" she muttered triumphantly.

An idea came to Bessie. With peaches and gelatine she could make an excellent "flan."

Bessie gathered the two tins up and hastened down to the model kitchen, where the worthy Miss Plummy was wont to instruct them.

Fortunately the door was unlocked.

Bessie wanted an oven to do her cooking in, and this was just the place. For, in addition to the fire oven, there was a small electric oven in the corner.

The fat girl switched on the current, and put the tin of gelatine to melt. Then, with dexterous fingers she proceeded to make some pastry.

Bessie moved quickly.

She had no right in the kitchen after school hours, and she was likely to be ejected as soon as she was discovered.

But, with the advantages which it offered, Bessie was determined to show them what she could do in the way of making her "flan."

The pastry was quickly knocked together. Bessie selected a large, round dish, and carefully spread the paste over it.

Then she poured the tin of peaches into a saucepan, and, with a wooden spoon, stirred the hektograph jelly into it.

Bessie's eyes were gleaming.

She might have detected that something was wrong from the smell if she had not had a cold. But Bessie, unfortunately, was quite ignorant that she had blundered.

As soon as the peaches were well mixed with the jelly, she poured the whole mixture into her pastry, and then popped it in the oven.

"That will do it a treat," she muttered, as she felt the heat of the oven. "Splendid things these electric cookers."

She slipped quietly out of the kitchen and made her way back to the study.

Miss Plummy would have been extremely annoyed had she known the use to which her cookers were being put. Miss Plummy took a tremendous pride in her kitchen, and did not like anything in it touched while she was away.

And there was likely to be trouble for someone when the worthy cookery mistress saw the state of her usually spotless pots and pans in the morning.

But Bessie did not live for the future. She waited in the study until she judged that her "flan" would be nicely baked, and then made her way down to the kitchen again.

It was nearly supper-time, and she guessed that Babs and Mabs would be coming in shortly.

The "dainty" was cooked to a nicety. Bessie thoughtfully turned the current off, and withdrew the steaming dish.

Then, with an expansive smile on her features, she bore her delicacy to Study No. 4.

### Bessie's Experiment.

"WELL, I'm blowed!" ejaculated Barbara Redfern.

The door of Study No. 4 swung open to admit the fat form of Bessie Bunter.

She was bearing a steaming delicacy in her hands.

"My word!" added Mabel Lynn.

Bessie Bunter deposited her burden on the table, and smiled expansively.

"I've got you a good supper to-night, girls," she said airily.

"Rather!" agreed Mabs genially.

"That looks all right. What is it?"

"A flan," said Bessie. "They're jolly good, too. Of course, it's better to let them get cold, and set. But there was no time for that."

"Doesn't matter," said Babs. "I expect we shall be able to eat it."

"Come on, then!" said Bessie, with a business-like air.

Babs opened the cupboard-door and passed out three plates. Mabs supplied the forks and spoons, and then sat down.

A curious look crossed Babs' face.

"There's a rather funny smell in here," she remarked slowly.

"Ahem! There is!" agreed Mabs.

"The drains, I expect," said Bessie, beginning to carve the "flan."

Babs eyed her portion. It looked very appetising, and yet—well, it had a curious smell.

She handled her spoon doubtfully.

"Don't wait for me, girls," said Bessie, helping herself to a very generous portion. "I expect I shall be finished as soon as you."

"Do—do flans always smell like this?" asked Mabs.

"Oh, rather!" said Bessie. "And they taste fine. You try them, and see."

Babs and Mabs resolved to do so. They each took a small portion in their spoons, and tasted it.

Bessie Bunter was not so cautious. She loaded a spoon as high as she could, and popped its contents into her mouth.

There was an instant's dead silence, and then a sudden splutter.

"Oooooooh!"

"Groooooogh!"

"Whoooooosh!"

The three juniors sprang to their feet and hastily jabbed their handkerchiefs to their mouths.

"Horrible!" shivered Mabs.

"Dreadful!" added Babs.

And Bessie Bunter said:

"Oooooooh!"

Babs and Mabs had, fortunately, not tasted too much of the unsavoury concoction. But Bessie Bunter had, as usual, helped herself liberally.

"Oh, dear!" she moaned. "I'm



poisoned. Ooooh! Croooogh! I know I shall die!"

"B-r-r-r-r!" shivered Babs. "Mum-mum-my word!" gasped Mabs.

Bessie Bunter dashed about the study, rubbing her mouth, and coughing, and spluttering alarmingly.

"Oh! Ooooh! Wow!" she wailed. "Wh-whatever was it?" demanded Babs, getting her breath back.

"Wooogh!" "How did you make it?" "Groooogh!"

And Bessie Bunter continued to cough and splutter, and walk about.

"She couldn't have been spoofing us," said Babs, watching Bessie Bunter's antics.

Mabs nodded. "Bessie sampled it, anyway," she grinned. "What did you put in it, Bessie, besides—besides the peaches?"

Bessie Bunter rubbed her mouth tenderly.

"Ooooh! Only s-s-s-some gelatine to m-m-m-make it firm. Groooogh!"

"Gelatine?" repeated Babs. "Where did you get it?"

Bessie pointed distantly to the top of the cupboard.

"Mum-mum-my word!" gasped Babs. "That wasn't ordinary gelatine. That was hektograph jelly!"

"Hek-hek-hek—" gasped Bessie, aghast.

"Yes." "Oh dear!" groaned the fat junior. She sank into a chair and moaned.

Bessie was genuinely frightened. As a matter of fact, the stuff she had eaten was not poisonous, although it was very disagreeable. But Bessie was not to know that.

"Suppose you swing your arms about a bit," suggested Babs.

Groan! "Lie on your back and turn a somersault!" said Mabs.

Groan! Bessie did not seem disposed to try any of the remedies suggested. But a sudden idea came to her.

"I'm going to see the matron," she said, getting up slowly. "Good-bye, you girls. My death will be at your door, but I forgive you!"

"At our door!" gasped Babs, who began to see that Bessie was not really as ill as she thought she was.

"Of course," said Bessie. "I made the plan for you. I wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been so thoughtful."

"My word!" "I suppose you'll even say that you never asked me to make it, when I'm gone," growled Bessie, opening the door.

"Of course we shall," said Babs. "Cats!" growled Bessie.

Babs and Mabs exchanged glances. Then Babs laughed.

"Our poor magazine!" she chuckled. "It is rather funny when you come to think of it. Bessie must have had a good hunt round."

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

And having come to the conclusion that Bessie would suffer no serious hurt from eating the gelatine, Babs and Mabs laughed at the rather disastrous result of their first tin of jelly.

Bessie did not return in a hurry. Babs and Mabs sat talking for a little, and then suddenly decided to make the most of their opportunity.

Paper and hektograph ink were quickly produced, and they started to copy the contributions for their magazine.

For half an hour there was complete silence in the study. Then Babs yawned, and they rested for five minutes.

But as Bessie Bunter was still absent,

they decided to make hay while the sun shone. So they continued their work until the bell went.

"Oh, dear!" muttered Mabs. "It's bed time, and we were just getting along fine."

"Never mind," said Babs. "We'll get it done to-morrow, and then we can whip the copies off, and give Marjorie Hazeldene an advance proof."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The precious manuscripts were carefully locked away, and then the two girls made their way up to the dormitory.

Bessie Bunter joined them on the stairs.

"Hallo!" said Babs, in affected surprise. "I didn't think we were going to see you again!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bessie. "What's the matter?" queried Mabs.

The fat girl had decided to start a school magazine!

**Bessie the Poetess.**

"I SAY, you girls—" Bessie Bunter looked up, with a perplexed frown on her fat face.

"Be quiet!" said Mabs shortly. Bessie Bunter blinked, and pored over the paper before her.

"I say," she commenced again, after a pause of about two minutes, "do you know a rhyme for tea-time?"

"Rhyme?" repeated Babs curiously. Bessie nodded.

"No I don't!" said Babs shortly. She gave Bessie a rather suspicious look, and then continued with her prep.

The fat junior growled something under her breath, and wrote slowly.



"Give me those copies back!" exclaimed Clara Trevlyn. "Not likely!" said Freda Foote. "I'll have another six! They're such splendid value!"

Bessie was looking positively green. It was evident that she had received some drastic treatment at the hands of the matron.

"Castor oil!" groaned Bessie. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Bessie did not join in the laughter. She was feeling too unhappy for that.

It was not the hektograph jelly which had upset the fat junior. It was the castor oil.

For a wonder, Bessie could not go to sleep that night. She lay awake, thinking, for a long time.

Two thoughts remained in her mind. The first was the urgent necessity of obtaining immediate funds. The second was—hektograph jelly.

And, as Bessie thought, a sudden idea came to her usually dull mind.

Bessie saw a vision of unlimited tuck, and her face expanded in a pleased smile. The thought of the hektograph had given her a splendid wheeze—and quite a new one, so far as Bessie was concerned.

"What do you call a person who eats too much?" she asked, after a further pause.

"Bessie Bunter!" said Babs, without looking up.

"Don't be an idiot!" growled Bessie. "What's another name for a food-hog?"

"A hog who eats food!" said Mabs. "Do be quiet now, and let us get on with our prep."

"But I'm—" "Give it a rest," said Babs wearily. Bessie Bunter blinked indignantly.

"Cats!" she ejaculated. And she resumed her interrupted labours.

Babs and Mabs bestowed occasional wondering glances on the fat junior. They both had a suspicion that she was poaching on their preserves, so to speak.

Bessie continued her labours for another quarter of an hour. Then she leaned back in her chair, and surveyed her work with a critical eye.

She had completely covered one sheet. THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 5.

It contained about twelve lines of very bad writing, sprinkled with about twice that number of blots and smudges.

But Bessie was proud of it, for all that.

She blinked across at her two study companions. They were both busy writing.

"I say, you girls," said Bessie, "I want you to listen to this."

"Shut up!"

"I've just written a little thing here which I know you'll like."

"We sha'n't!"

"So if you'll just stop a minute, I'll read it."

Babs glanced up wrathfully.

"If you can't be quiet, you'll go out of the door!" she said warningly.

Bessie blinked.

"But this is a masterpiece!" she howled.

"How much?"

"I tell you I've just written a jolly fine poem," explained Bessie. "I'm going to give you the first chance of hearing it."

Babs looked across at Mabs. The same thought was in both minds, though how Bessie had discovered their plan, they could not imagine.

"Go on!" said Mabs, in an icy voice.

Bessie cleared her throat.

"This is a little poem on 'The Machine's Lament'," she said. "It's a splendid little thing, and I got the idea from watching a traction engine the other day."

"Sounds inspiring!" said Babs sarcastically.

Bessie examined the manuscript.

"Bessie Bunter's new poem," she read. "Specially written by Bessie Bunter, and entitled 'The Machine's Lament,' by Bessie Bunter. This little poem was specially commissioned and executed by Bessie Bunter."

The fat girl paused.

"Now I'll read the poem," she said. "This is where it starts:

"The Machine's Lament,"

By Bessie Bunter."

"You've forgotten one thing," observed Mabs slowly. "You ought to say who's written it, in case someone doesn't notice it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Babs.

"Have you written any more than that?" asked Mabs.

"Of course I have!" howled Bessie.

"That's only the start. This is where the real poem begins:

"I saw one day a traction engine;  
The name on it was Matchless Indian.  
It stood at the corner of our little street,

And I passed the poor thing with  
sorrowful feet."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Babs and Mabs.

Bessie blinked in amazement.

"I'm blown if I can see anything to chuckle at!" she growled.

Babs continued to grin.

"What gave the traction engine sorrowful feet, Bessie?" she asked interestedly.

"Don't be silly!" snapped Bessie. "I had the sorrowful feet."

"Poor things!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bessie blinked speechlessly at her audience.

"That's only a figure of speech," she explained at length. "You'll understand in a minute. Listen:

"I said to the engine, 'Why are you so glum?'"

He said, "Well, I'm hungry; that makes me look run.

They ne'er give me cake, toffee, jam,  
or margarine.

But cinders and oil feed the poor old machine!"

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 5.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Babs and Mabs chortled again.

Bessie's ideas of verso struck them as being very funny.

"I say, Bessie," gasped Babs, "where did this machine say all this to you?"

"The machine didn't say anything really," said Bessie furiously.

"It ought to have been locked up if it did!"

"You little donkey! That's only my imagination!"

"In that case," said Mabs severely, "you ought to be locked up, if you imagine things like that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bessie regarded the mirthful juniors with a glare that nearly cracked her thick spectacles.

"Cats!" she howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Mabs and Babs laughed to their hearts' content.

"Wh—what's this poem for, Bessie?" asked Babs, at length.

"For those who will appreciate it!" snapped Bessie. "People with intelligence like my own."

"Lunatics—eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bessie glared.

"It's pure jealousy!" she growled. "You know that you couldn't write anything as good, and you want to put me off."

"That's it!" agreed Babs.

"Fortunately, everyone in the Form isn't a jealous little cat, though," said Bessie.

"Are you going to show it to anyone else?" asked Babs curiously.

"I'm going to sell it," said Bessie.

"You'll do a big business with the museums!" agreed Mabs.

"I don't mean that. I'm going to print off copies when I've done some more, and sell them in the school. That's number one for 'Bessie Bunter's Weekly'!"

"Oh, my word!"

Babs and Mabs suddenly recovered from their laughter, and eyed the fat junior grimly.

"You're not going to do anything of the sort," said Babs.

"You're a little cheat!" added Mabs grimly.

"Who's a cheat?" hooted Bessie. "Every word of that is original!"

"We know that," said Mabs. "But you stole the idea from us."

Bessie Bunter gasped.

The accusation was certainly untrue. But Bessie was so often in the wrong that it was hard for anyone to believe that she could be right for once.

"I suppose you want to come into the idea now," said Bessie truculently. "You can see how much money I'm going to make. Well, there's nothing doing. This is going to be my magazine. I'll tell you what, though," added Bessie, as an after-thought. "I'll let you write a page for five shillings!"

"What?" gasped the two in one breath.

"That's a lot below the usual charge," said Bessie. "But I'm willing to charge fairly cheap rates for the first number."

"Mum—mum—my word!"

"I got the idea last night over that hektograph jelly," went on Bessie, explaining her scheme proudly. "And as I'm such a dab at writing things, I thought the girls might like me to bring out a high-class weekly paper for them to read."

"Go on!" said Babs, in a faint voice.

"That's all," said Bessie. "Of course, I shall write most of the stuff myself, but I'm going to allow a few others to contribute at fairly cheap rates. It'll be a tremendous help for them to get things

taken for other papers, when they say that I've accepted things."

Babs and Mabs did not reply.

They were speechless.

### Sticky!

BARBARA and Mabel did not speak again until Bessie had left the study.

Bessie Bunter, for once, had completely taken their breath away.

From the proud explanation of her scheme, it had been fairly evident that Bessie had originated the idea in her own mind.

But it was a crushing blow to the youthful editresses.

Mabel Lynn looked very serious.

"Unless we get our magazine out at once," she said, "Bessie will say we got the idea from her. Of course, she won't be able to do anything herself, but Study No. 7 will make a song about it!"

"They will!" agreed Barbara.

"Bessie's gone to look for contributions now," pursued Mabs, "and everyone in the Form will know what she's doing. Marjerie & Co. may think that it's a wheeze of ours, and bring out a rival one, and then the whole thing will be a mess up!"

Babs nodded.

The two chums did not recover from the shock at once. Mabs was the first to make a suggestion.

"There's only one thing to be done," she said. "We must try and get ours ready to-night. That will show them that we thought of the idea first. Otherwise, anyone in the Form may bring out a really good one, with Bessie going round and telling them her idea!"

Babs nodded more brightly.

"How much more is there to do?" she asked.

"Only the editorial to be written," said Mabs. "We've done eleven pages, and got them ready to take off. One of us had better write the editorial in hektograph ink, saying that as we go to Press we've heard about Bessie Bunter's effort, and all that!"

"Good idea!"

"Well, I'll write the editorial, while you get the jelly ready," said Mabs.

"You'd be better at doing the jelly," said Mabs generously. "You know all about those things. I'll just run the editorial out while you're taking off the copies!"

Mabs laughed.

"We've not going to have a quarrel about the editorial," she said. "We've both had a finger in the pie. Let's toss for it!"

"Right!"

"Tails!" said Mabs.

The penny rolled under the table and propped itself against the table-leg.

"It's a head!" said Babs triumphantly.

"That's not fair!" said Mabs indignantly. "It didn't fall flat!"

"You always count the side which is most visible," said Babs with an air of wisdom.

"Well, we're not going to," said Mabs.

"Toss it up again!"

Barbara Redfern gave in, and threw the penny into the air.

This time it landed in the butter, and could not have been said to have been either head or tail.

Babs wiped the coin carefully, and threw it up again.

This time there was no doubt about it. It was a tail, and tail Mabel Lynn had called.

"Then I write the editorial," said Mabs, "while you get the jelly ready!"

And, without waiting any longer,

Mabel commenced on the coveted task. Barbara took her defeat cheerfully. She opened the drawer and produced the tray for the jelly.

Then she went below with the tin of composition and melted it.

When she returned Mabs had made good progress, and the page was nearly finished.

Babs poured the jelly into the tray, and skimmed the surface.

One tin having been wasted, there was not very much left for them to print their copies on.

But Barbara and Mabel both felt confident that they would manage to produce the first number all right in spite of the difficulties.

Mabs looked up at the alarm clock and regarded it intently. The time which it showed was twenty minutes past eight.

still trying to induce some of the girls to contribute to her new weekly at the special reduced figures.

Babs and Mabs hurried down to supper, only to find that their calculations had been wrong, and that they would have to wait another half-hour.

As their prep was finished, and they did not want to go back to the study, they wandered out into the quad.

The Bull, otherwise Miss Bullivant, was walking about there, and she spotted the two juniors.

"Bull—look out!" warned Babs, in a tense whisper.

Mabs understood the whispered warning, but there was no escape. The Bull swept down on them like a bird of prey.

"I hope, Barbara and Mabel," she said acidly, "that you have done your preparation?"

"I—I feel sure we have, Miss Bullivant," protested Babs.

But the Bull had evidently set her mind on going up to the study on some pretext or other. She led the way grimly, and the two juniors followed.

The door of No. 4 was ajar. Miss Bullivant entered, and the girls followed. There they paused, speechless.

In front of the cupboard a fat figure was standing on a chair, reaching up curiously. If Miss Bullivant had arrived a minute earlier the trouble might have been avoided. But Bessie had sealed her own doom.

It was while she was in search of a hectograph that she had spotted the tin belonging to Babs and Mabs on top of the cupboard.

And Bessie had never reasoned that it might be full of liquid jelly. Her only thought was to get it down.



The three juniors sprang to their feet and hastily jabbed their handkerchiefs to their mouths. "Horrible!" shivered Mabs. "Dreadful!" added Babs. "Oooooo!" said Bessie Bunter.

The junior made a quick mental calculation.

"Twenty minutes fast on Saturday," she muttered. "Gains ten minutes in the first twelve hours, and then loses four and a half in the other twelve. Just been wound—let's see, four from twelve is eight, minus a half, plus four, divide by three."

Babs regarded her intently. "What's the matter?" she inquired. "It's nearly supper-time, I should say," said Mabs, having worked out the sum to her satisfaction. "Let's put the jelly on the top of the cupboard, and go down to supper."

"Good idea!" The full tray of melted jelly was raised very carefully to the top of the cupboard.

Then Babs and Mabs put away their work and left the study.

A roar of laughter came from up the passage, and above it rose the harsh, wheezy tones of Bessie Bunter.

Evidently that enterprising junior was

"Oh, yes, Miss Bullivant," said the two juniors meekly.

"I am glad to hear that," said the Bull, in tones that suggested she would remember their remark. "I have had cause during the last few days to warn you several times that you have not paid sufficient attention to your preparation. I hope you have worked hard to-night!"

"We have, Miss Bullivant," said Barbara.

Which was quite correct.

Until Bessie Bunter had interrupted the two juniors, they had been working away at their prep in a manner which would have won the Bull's warmest commendation had she seen them.

Miss Bullivant paused. A sudden idea came to her.

"I am not busy just now," she said, "so I will come up to your study with you and go over your preparation. I think that I gave you some sums to work out to-night. I will see whether you have used the correct methods."

Her fat fingers touched the tin, and she drew it forward. She was just going to pull it down, when the Bull gave one of her little, grim, hard coughs.

Bessie jumped. The tin moved swiftly over the edge of the cupboard.

Crash!

Bump!

"Yarooooogh!"

Bessie sat on the floor beside the fallen chair, and yelled.

The overturned tin of jelly lay upside down in her lap, dripping slowly. But there was not much more to come out. Nearly all of the jelly was over Bessie.

Miss Bullivant surveyed the scene grimly. Babs and Mabs coloured with a mixture of confusion and anger.

"Bessie!" snapped Miss Bullivant.

"Oh dear! Yes, Miss Bullivant?"

"What are you doing there?"

"I—I— Nothing, Miss Bullivant!" said Bessie innocently.

"You are in a disgraceful state, Bessie!" said the Bull.

"Am I, Miss Bullivant?"  
"I desire an explanation!" said the Bull calmly.  
Bessie scuffled to her feet, dripping with jelly.

Her blouse was blotched all over, and her hands and arms were covered with sticky amber liquid.

Bessie put one hand up to rub her face, and transferred a smear of jelly across from her left eye to the back of her neck.

"You—you made such a funny noise, Miss Bullivant," said Bessie at length, "that I—I—I fell down!"

"What were you doing at the top of the cupboard?"

"Juj-juj-just getting this jelly down, Miss Bullivant."

"And you were not aware that it was in this liquid state?"

"Yes—I mean, no."

The Bull turned grimly to Barbara and Mabel, who had followed her up just in time to witness Bessie Bunter's accident. "To whom does this jelly belong?" she inquired severely.

"It's ours," said Babs.

"Did Bessie know what state it was in?"

"I don't think so, Miss Bullivant."

"And what, may I ask," said the Bull acidly, "is the object of leaving this dangerous liquid in the study in that state?"

"We—I— You see, we were going to—that is, I—"

"Am I to understand that it was a—hem!—practical joke?" demanded the Bull in her most terrible accents.

"Oh, no, Miss Bullivant!" said Babs. "We were going to print a Form magazine. That is all."

"Ridiculous!" said the Bull. "Bessie, you bad girl," she snapped suddenly, as she spied the dripping figure of the fat junior, "go and wash yourself! As for you, Barbara and Mabel, I forbid you to bring any more of this—er—jelly into the study. In view of your recent bad work in class, I shall also forbid you to concern yourselves in the writing of any of these foolish magazines for one week. You need all the time you can afford for the preparation of your lessons."

And the Bull swept away, leaving ruin and chaos in her path.

### Rivals!

**T**HE—bad-tempered, unreasonable old thing!

Mabel Lynn spoke at last, in a voice that rang with indignation.

"Trumpy old creature, I call her!" said Barbara Redfern, with a good deal of emphasis. "Fancy punishing us just because Bessie Bunter was fooling about with our jelly! I call it unjust—jolly unjust, in fact!"

"Especially after we've written the whole thing!" added Mabs. "Of course, she can order us not to have any hektograph jelly in the study, I know. We're not supposed to do any cooking there, either. But we do!"

There was a light tap at the door, and Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlin entered the study. They noticed the outworn looks of the two juniors.

"Hallo!" said Clara. "What's up with you two? We just came along to see Fatima. We've just heard that she's been painting herself up a bit."

"Oh!" said Mabel coldly.

"We wanted to tell her," said Clara, "that we'd like a little contribution from her for our magazine."

"Your magazine?" demanded Mabs and Babs in one breath.

"Of course!" said Marjorie. "Haven't you heard of it?"

Babs dropped into a chair, and fanned herself.

"You're late in the day," she said. "Mabs and I are starting the official Form magazine."

"Nonsense!" said Clara.  
"It isn't nonsense!" said Babs. "It's the truth!"

"Fatima has given you the idea, too?" said Clara. "Well, under those circumstances, we won't ask you to contribute to ours."

"Of all the impudence!" exploded Mabs.

"Eh?"

"It's our idea. We've been working on it for days. You've no right to start one now."

Clara laughed.

"The official magazine is the one which gets out first," she said.

"Not at all. We thought of the idea, and it belongs to us."

"Not a bit of it!"

"We've written the whole magazine!" gasped Mabs. "It's all ready to print off!"

Marjorie looked at Clara inquiringly.

"In that case you'll be out before us," said Marjorie. "So I don't see what you've got to grumble about. Of course, ours will be better, but you can't prove that it's your idea."

"Er—we can't produce it now," said Babs lamely.

"That's what I said," declared Clara triumphantly. "Fatima gave us all the idea, and just because she happens to be in your study you can't say that the magazine belongs to you!"

"We don't claim it on that score," retorted Babs hotly.

"Then bring it out, dear!" said Marjorie sweetly.

"I tell you we're not allowed to!" said Babs wearily. "We've been forbidden."

"By whom?"

"The Bull."

"The Bull? What's she got to do with it?"

"She thinks she's got a lot to do with it."

"I suppose you went and showed her an advance copy," said Clara, scornfully, "to get her official sanction."

"Wrong. Guess again," said Barbara tartly.

"Oh, I don't wish to do any more guessing," said Clara, airily. "She must have had some good reason. I suppose the grammar wasn't good enough—which one would expect."

"She hasn't seen it."

"Well, how does she know about it?"

"We—we had to tell her," said Babs, desperately.

"That's what I said!" declared Clara triumphantly. "And then you say that you didn't want to get her official sanction."

"We didn't want her interference at all," retorted Mabs. "She came nosing round here, and found out all about it. And she's forbidden us to touch it for a week."

"Really?"

"Yes."

Clara smiled.

"Good old Bull!" she said approvingly. "She still patronises the old firm. Three 'Moooooo's' for the Bull!"

"Oh, Clara!" murmured Marjorie. "But Clara gave her three 'Moooooo's' in great style."

"You wouldn't have grinned if it had happened to you!" snapped Babs, angrily. "It's our magazine, and the Bull's stopped it. You've no right to bring out one under the circumstances."

"Nonsense!" said Clara, emphatically.

"All's fair in love and Form magazines."

"We'd like to see a copy of yours when—when it's done," said Marjorie, with a smile. "We'll give you a copy of ours free, so that you can get a few tips. We don't want to cut you out altogether."

"And we might even write for you occasionally," added Clara. "Good-bye!"

And Marjorie and Clara were gone, leaving the two unhappy juniors even more in the dumps than they had been over their previous bad fortune.

"If that doesn't take the giddy rock-cake!" declared Babs, recovering herself with an effort. "Every study will be producing a magazine next."

"It's all Bessie's fault," said Mabs, indignantly. "She's wrecked both the tins of jelly, and caused all the rest of the trouble."

Babs laughed.

"She hasn't got off scot free," she said. "She nearly poisoned herself with the first one, and drowned herself in the other. Bessie is a fearful nuisance, but she does get her deserts occasionally."

There was a grunt outside the door, and the object of their misfortunes rolled dismally into the room.

Bessie had been undergoing extensive renovations.

She had had to have a bath, and change all her things.

In addition, the matron had lectured her very severely on unladylike deportment, and Bessie was feeling far from happy.

She had visions of her pocket-money being sadly reduced to pay the cost of the extra washing.

"It's all your fault," she said, flopping heavily into a chair.

Mabs eyed her grimly.

"We've been waiting for you," she said slowly. "You've wrecked our chances of bringing out a Form magazine. What have you got to say about it?"

"Your chances?" hooted Bessie.

"Why, it was my idea all the time."

"It was ours—long before you thought about it," said Mabs, grimly.

"Fibber!" snapped Bessie. "You stole the idea from me!"

"Wh-a-a-a-t?"

"Of course you did," said Bessie. "I thought of it, and then you naturally saw what a lot of money there was in the idea."

"My—my word!"

"And fancy sticking a tin of molten, fiery gelatine up on the cupboard like that," continued Bessie, disagreeably.

"It was a trap for me, that's all."

"Oh, dear!"

"You knew I should come along, and the slightest jar on the cupboard would upset it on me. It was a plot to injure my eyesight, I expect. I call it sheer jealousy, and I'm jolly glad the Bull gave you a good lecture about—Here, I say! What's up? Was—er—marrer?"

Bessie's grumbling had come to an abrupt termination.

There was a certain limit which held the tempers of Babs and Mabs, and Bessie had walked over that easily.

She felt herself picked up in her study friend's grip, and dropped on the floor.

"Yow!" roared Bessie. "Here, I say, stop it! Groooooogh! Yoop!"

"Roll her in the hearthrug!" snapped Babs. "I've had enough of this!"

"Yow! I'm hunt! Yarooooogh!"

But, in spite of her noise, Bessie was rolled up in the hearthrug, so that only her round spectacles and tightly-dressed hair were visible above it.

"Now into the chair!" snapped Babs.

Bessie Bunter was bundled into the rocking-chair.

It was beyond the strength of the two girls to lift her bodily, but they managed to perch her on the edge of the chair, and wriggle her into it.

Bessie goggled at them through her round spectacles. Her cries were muffled by the hearthrug.

And she did not like the expression on Babs' face.

#### A Slight Alteration.

"Woooooogh!" came faintly from Bessie.

"Now," said Babs calmly, "you're a nuisance, Bessie!"

"Ooooooh!"

"You've spoilt our magazine by your inquisitiveness!"

"Owd! Yow-ow-ow!"

"And Mabs and I are jolly wild about it," said Babs, in a very solemn voice. "So we're going to turn you out of the study! See!"

Bessie's eyes opened wide with alarm. She did not know that Barbara was not half so serious as her voice sounded.

"Now," said Babs, in solemn tones. "Is there anything you wish to say before we—we do it?"

Bessie blinked and goggled in horror.

"Open the window!" snapped Babs; and Mabs obeyed quickly.

She grinned as she did so, but she was behind Bessie's back, and the fat girl did not see it.

"Now, we can't get you to go out of the door and stay out," said Babs, "so we're going to put you out of the window. It may not hurt you, of course," she added, as an afterthought.

"Yow! Stoppit! Don't, p-p-p-please!" Babs presented an adamantine countenance.

"Ready," she said.

Mabs added.

They caught the rocking chair, and dragged it over until it was just below the window. Then, at a sign from Babs, they commenced to rock it.

Bessie was not comfortable, to say the least. She jolted from side to side as the chair rocked, and found herself fearfully insecure as it went backwards and forwards.

As the rocking grew more, the horrible thought came to Bessie that they intended to sway it so much that she would fly right off the chair, and go through the window.

There was no chance of that, but Bessie did not stop to reason with herself.

She gave one despairing look round, as the chair rocked back, and then, with a violent effort, rolled out of the chair on to the floor.

Bump!

"Yoooo!"

Bessie was still wrapped in the hearthrug. But she did not let that worry her.

With remarkable agility, she rolled along the floor until she was free, and then scrambled to her feet.

The next moment the door slammed behind her back.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mabs and Babs stood in the corner, roaring with laughter.

Bessie's flight had been exactly what they wanted, and they knew that they were not likely to see the fat junior back in a hurry.

They closed the window, and put the paper back on the floor, in case any injuries should be made.

But Bessie evidently saw the hoax as soon as she had escaped, for they were left in peace.

Supper had been missed in the events of the evening, but Babs and Mabs did not mind that. They were not hungry.

With Bessie, it was likely to be a more momentous thing.

But they had no pity to spare for Bessie Bunter.

The two luckless editresses sat and outdug their brains until bed-time for something to do to save the situation. But no schemes came to their minds.

They retired in very unhappy frames of mind. The triumph which was to have been theirs had been snatched away.

Nor did there seem any chance of doing any more hectoring. Miss Bullivant was keeping too close an eye on them for that.

The next day the faces of Barbara and Mabel bore disconsolate expressions, and it was not until evening that there came any ray of hope.

Mabs came into the study with an excited face.

"I've found out something," she said. "Clara's been talking about her magazine. It's going to be called 'Marjorie and Clara's Weekly,' and they're going to have it printed."

"Printed?"

### OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY!



No. 5.

CLARA TREVLYN.

"Yes, by Mr. Casey, at Courtfield. From the way she spoke, I believe it's all ready to go over now."

"Oh, dear!"

"Mr. Casey's promised to rush it through for them in a couple of days. Piper just told me that he's going over to-morrow morning, and would bring back anything I wanted."

"Really?" asked Babs.

"That means," said Mabs impressively, "that he's going to take the copy over for them. Of course, Clara didn't tell me that."

Babs thoughtfully scratched her head with a penholder.

As that brought no inspiration, she tilted back her chair and swung her legs, keeping a dexterous grip on the cable with one hand, to prevent herself overbalancing.

Suddenly she gave a little chuckle and jumped up.

"I'm going visiting, Mabs," she said fiercely.

Barbara disappeared from the study, and walked along the corridor, to Study No. 7. She returned in about five

minutes with an even brighter smile on her face.

"I've got an idea," she said, touching her forehead dramatically. "Put a kettle of water on, Mabs."

"What for?"

"Don't question the commander-in-chief of the forces," said Babs, in her best dictatorial voice. "I want steam!"

"Great Scott!"

"It's a good wheeze!" confided Babs.

"Hurry up! We've got to get this job done quickly!"

There was no fire in the study, but a small one burned in the "Cosy Corner" at the end of the passage. Mabs put a small kettle on to boil, and returned to the study.

Babs was already busy working on her prep, and refused to be drawn into conversation. So, after a little, Mabs followed suit.

Presently Bessie Bunter came into the study.

Bessie was in a talkative mood.

She wanted to explain that she was expecting a remittance, and that a loan on the strength of it would greatly oblige.

But as Babs and Mabs had heard the tale before they were not visibly impressed.

At exactly five minutes to seven Miss Bullivant looked into the study.

She smiled grimly as she saw the two juniors hard at work, and she even relented a little in her recent decision.

"If you have finished the first half of your preparation, Barbara," she said, "you may cease work after supper."

"I have done everything," Miss Bullivant, said Barbara.

"So have I," added Mabel Lynn.

Bessie Bunter looked up loquaciously.

"Please, Miss Bullivant, I've been working like—like steam to-night," she said plaintively. "But I don't feel well, and I can't get on with it. May I be excused?"

"No!" said the Bull.

She had no charity to spare for Bessie Bunter.

"Cat!" muttered Bessie, as the door closed.

A few minutes later the bell rang for supper. Bessie was up like a shot, and was gone.

Babs held up her hand warningly, and went to the door. She watched carefully through the crack for five minutes, and then beckoned to Mabs.

"The coast's clear," she whispered.

"Quick! Get the kettle!"

Mabs went to get the kettle, which was boiling merrily.

As she returned, she saw Babs come out of Study No. 7 with a large envelope in her hand.

"What's that?" she asked.

Babs displayed the front of the envelope. It was addressed to Mr. Casey, Printer, Courtfield, and bore the words "Copy—urgent!"

"This is where we want the steam," said Babs. "See, it's got a lump of sealing-wax on the end where they stuck it down. But the other end is only gummed. Steam it open!"

Steaming the envelope was soon accomplished. Babs inserted her hand, and withdrew a bunch of papers.

It was the "copy" for "Marjorie and Clara's Weekly."

Babs glanced through the sheets with a frown on her face.

"Rubbish!" she muttered.

"What is?" queried Mabs.

"Idiotic trash! Labels!" ejaculated Babs.

"Let's see it!"

The two juniors sat down to read.

## No Luck for Bessie.

"FANCY them writing stuff like this!" snapped Barbara Redfern, overcome for the moment by what she read.

The front page of the rival "Weekly" was quite ordinary. But there was nothing else to which Study No. 4 could not take exception.

A stirring article on the second page stated the claims of Study No. 7 to be considered as an example to all others, notably No. 4. And after that followed Clara Trevlyn's contribution of limericks, limericks.

These might have been considered works of art by Clara. But Babs and Mabs did not consider them clever in the least.

"Listen to this!" said Barbara, in tones of great indignation. And she started to read:

"There was a young lady named Redfern,  
With desires to be great she did burn;  
She managed, you see,  
A Form-captain to be,  
And the "honour" quite made her  
"poor head turn."

Babs snorted with disgust.

"Fancy writing awful drivel like that!" she growled.

Mabs smiled indulgently. She saw a little humour in the rhyme, as it did not affect herself.

"You ought to have a sense of humour," she said blandly. "You know, Babs, all great people have things written about them, and have to put up with them."

"Indeed!" snapped Babs. "Then listen to this one. Perhaps you'll see the humour in this, too:

"There was a young lady named Lynn,  
Whose "pose" was a trifle too thin,  
Her efforts at dress  
Were a horrible mess,  
And made all the onlookers grin."

"Oh, dear!" murmured Mabs, in dismay.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Babs. "You ought to have a bit of humour, you know. Then you'd laugh!"

"That's too bad!" snapped Mabs. "Look here, I'm sorry I laughed. We're both in the same cart."

"There's another here," said Babs. "Thank goodness it will never see daylight!"

"To go to the Zoo is a bore,  
And waste of a sixpence or more,  
It freaks you would see  
Performing—and free—  
Just look in the Study marked "4!"

"Mun-mum-my word!" ejaculated Mabs.

The two juniors exchanged glances.

There was a lot more for them to read, but they could see at a glance that it was all in the same vein.

Marjorie and Clara had evidently intended to take a rise out of their rivals, and they had been within an ace of succeeding.

"We'll have to buck up if we're going to do anything," said Babs. "Page 1 can stand, I think. But the rest is absolutely impossible. Where's our copy?"

Mabel Lynn opened a drawer, and produced a mass of papers which had been written for publication in their own ill-fated journal.

"Good!" said Babs. "Now we'll get to work."

For ten minutes after that the girls were very busy. Babs touched up her

limericks carefully, making them stronger than before.

Mabs improved the shining hour by carefully going through the manuscript of the article eulogising the glories of Study No. 7, and substituting 4's for 7's and 7's for 4's. The result was that, without much trouble, she had completely reversed its effect.

"This article reads fine now," she said, smiling. "I think that I'll leave Marjorie Hazeldene's name at the top of it. It's a pity to rob her of the credit when she's done most of the work."

"Ha, ha! Yes."

The chums of Study No. 4 proceeded with their work in breathless haste.

When the copy went into the envelope again it was quite satisfactory from their point of view. Not much of the original copy remained, and what there was had been altered in places.

Babs and Mabs had managed to get most of their own efforts to fit into the space allowed.

For the rest, they had "doctored up" the other contributions until they were quite flattering to them, if to no one else.

"Buck up!" said Barbara at last. "We must return it now."

The papers were put in the envelope, and the flap stuck down. Babs slipped across to Study No. 7, and returned with a beaming face.

"The deed is done, Macduff," she said jauntily. "Lead on to the frugal repast!"

Mabs grinned, and led on.

Marjorie and Clara were having their supper, and did not notice their arrival. They were deep in conversation, and chuckling with great delight.

Babs nodded solemnly to Mabs.

Mabs grinned, and said nothing.

Piper duly proceeded in the direction of Courtfield on the following morning, carrying a large white envelope.

Babs and Mabs chortled to themselves. But they waited until two days had flown by.

Mr. Casey, all unconsciously, was burning the midnight oil in vain so far as his real patrons were concerned.

He chuckled once or twice as he looked at the copy, and saw the numerous alterations in it. But he did not think to question anything. He had had to print school magazines before.

On the third day Marjorie met Barbara in the quad.

"By the way, Babs," she said, "our magazine is arriving to-night. Piper's bringing the copies over. Shall we put you and Mabs down for a couple of copies?"

"Rather! What time is it arriving?"

"About half-past five," said Marjorie.

Babs and Mabs were in Study No. 7 promptly at half-past five. There was no sign of the magazine, but the two chums were in fine fettle.

"It's not here yet," said Clara. "But we shan't keep you waiting long. And I don't think you'll be disappointed."

"Hurrah!" yelled Babs.

"Hurrah!" added Mabs.

Marjorie eyed the two visitors questioningly.

"What's the matter?" said Clara shortly.

"Just a little enthusiast, that's all," said Babs.

"Don't see why you should be," said Clara suspiciously.

"We don't harbour any animosity," said Mabs genially. "Why shouldn't we be excited. It's a Form affair."

Clara nodded.

"Yes," she said. "But we've rather cut you out."

"We don't mind what you've done," said Babs magnanimously.

Marjorie stared at the wall thoughtfully.

"It's very decent of you two to take it like this," she said. "Perhaps we have been a little unfair to you. We'll let you have a hand in the next number."

"Of course, for that matter, we were keen on having a hand in the first one," said Babs demurely, omitting to state, however, that they had done so.

"Never mind," said Marjorie. "That's done now. And whatever happens to a rival Form magazine it is all in the game, isn't it?"

"Rather!" said Babs enthusiastically.

"We got the better of you," proceeded Marjorie; "but we shouldn't have minded if you had done the same to us."

"Really?"

"Of course not," said Marjorie easily.

The boast seemed simple enough, with the magazine in the printer's hands. She wondered why Babs and Mabs looked at each other, and grinned slightly.

Dolly Jobling came into the study and dropped into a chair.

"When are the magazines coming?" she inquired gloomily. "I can't see Piper anywhere."

"Any time now," said Clara. "I—Hullo! What do you want, Fatima?"

Bessie Bunter blinked into the study.

"I say, girls," she said genially, "I hear your magazine is arriving to-night."

"You've guessed right for once."

"I'm willing to act as agent, if you like," said Bessie. "I'm a jolly good saleswoman."

"Doesn't matter, thanks."

"I shouldn't ask too much in the way of—er—remuneration," said Bessie magnanimously. "Sixpence a copy would do me nicely."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Bessie peevishly.

"The deal is off, Fatima!" chuckled Clara.

"Well, I'll make it fivepence, if you like," said Bessie, with increasing generosity. "You can keep the other penny for expenses."

"Nothing doing, Bessie. We're our own agents."

"But, I say—"

Bessie blinked indignantly. A large cushion was balanced in Clara's hand, and the sight of it cut short further argument.

"Cats!" snapped Bessie, as she slammed the door.

## A Great Success.

TAP, tap, tap!  
"Come in!" called Clara Trevlyn excitedly.

Piper entered the study, followed by a number of excited Fourth-Formers.

The magazines had arrived!

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Marjorie Hazeldene excitedly.

She cut the string quickly which held the parcel, and a little pile of blue books was revealed.

"Sixpence, please!" said Clara in a business-like tone, as a rush of copies commenced.

The magazines began to sell like hot cakes. Babs and Mabs each purchased a copy, and then edged unobtrusively towards the door.

A dozen copies were sold almost at once to the earliest arrivals. Then Marjorie took up a copy and surveyed it proudly.

"Looks fine!" she commented. "There will be—Hallo! I say, Clara, the printer's made a fearful mistake here!"

Marjorie had turned a dull red. Clara, too, had flushed.

In bold type on the front cover was the announcement:

"Margerine and Starer's Weekly."  
"Marjorie and Clara, I wrote!" snapped Marjorie hotly.

"What a silly mistake!" murmured Babs, with as straight a face as she could assume.

But a dreadful presentiment already possessed Clara.

She saw the other girls turning over the pages quickly, and beginning to chortle. She knew that her limericks were not funny enough for that.

A bold notice on page two caught her eye:

#### "NOTICE.

"Marjorie and Clara, hereinafter called Margerine and Starer, the promoters of this magazine, regret their total inability to write any more than the first page of it—which they have done badly. They have therefore called upon the originators of the idea—Barbara Redfern and Mabel Lynn of Study No. 4—to complete the work; and this they have very kindly done."

Clara dropped her copy in helpless indignation.

"Look at page two!" she shrieked. "We have," said Babs innocently. "Very complimentary of you, I must say! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mum-mum-my word!" gasped Marjorie, crimson with mortification.

A roar of laughter floated in from the passage, where the juniors who had not been able to get into the study were standing, reading their copies.

"Here's a fine limerick!" said Meg Lennox:

"There is a young lady named Jobling,  
Whose greatest delight is in gobbling.  
She's trying to cook  
From a sixpenny book,  
But her victims are groaning and hobbling."

"That's good," said Freda Foote, "but here's a better one. It says that Clara wrote it herself:

"There is a young lady named Clara,  
She's fair, but her ways might be fairer;

She tries, to our joy,  
To behave like a boy,  
But Clara, beware, and be wiser!"

"I didn't write it!" howled Clara. "It's very good, all the same!" said Meg Lennox with an approving smile.

"Marjorie's done a good verse about herself!" chortled Nancy Bell. Listen to this:

"This is of Marjorie Hazeldene,  
She isn't Fern Captain, but might have been;

In spite of her side,  
She was licked to the wide,  
And her temper created—well, quite a scene!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sentiments were not strictly true in any case; but that did not matter. The Fourth-Formers suspected a tremendous jape.

"It's a spoof!" yelled Clara excitedly. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"We never wrote a word of that rubbish!" cried Marjorie, almost in tears with vexation. "It's a—a—"

"Jolly good thing, anyway!" said

Babs. "You oughtn't to be so modest about the thing, though!"

"Quite unbecoming!" added Mabs, with a chuckle.

A roar of laughter came from the passage. Marjorie and Clara realised how fully and completely they had been hoaxed.

"This is your work, Babs and Mabs!" snapped Clara, making a sudden dive towards the door. "You've altered the copy!"

"Can't stop! Sorry!" said Babs. "Another time, dear!" added Mabs.

And the humorous chums of No. 4 were gone before Clara could exact vengeance.

"I say, Clara, let's have another six copies!" said Freda Foote generously. "This is splendid value, and so modest, too!"

Clara eyed her speechlessly.

"I'd like half a dozen for the principal museums," added Meg Lennox. "It's great! Beats anything the Egyptians ever did!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The unfortunate promoters of the rival magazine looked at each other helplessly.

Dolly Jobling was only just beginning to get over the shock of the terrible libel on her cooking, which the magazine attributed to Marjorie. Marjorie herself was incapable of action; but Clara was possessed suddenly of the strength of six.

"Give me those copies back!" she snapped.

"Not likely!" said Freda Foote, making a sudden dart towards the door.

Clara made a wild endeavour to retrieve the fatal copies; but it was too late.

She managed to snatch one, and then the hilarious juniors, still laughing, made a rush for the door, and vanished into the corridor.

They were still chuckling, and reading extracts which made the ears of the unfortunate occupants of No. 7 burn with indignation.

Clara slammed the door. She glared at the blue, ill-fated pile of magazines on the floor.

"We'll burn these, and then try and get the others back!" she snapped.

"We'll never do that!" said Marjorie hopelessly.

And Marjorie was right.

A fat, round face looked into the study. It was Bessie Bunter, and she was clutching a magazine in her hand. Bessie had managed to borrow one from someone.

"I say, Clara—" giggled Bessie.

"Well?"

"Want to buy this back?" said Bessie.

"Yes. You can have the sixpence now!" said Clara eagerly.

"Sixpence!" hooted Bessie. "Why, I can get half-a-crown for it anywhere in the school! I want five shillings!"

"You little duffer!"

"Four-and-six!" bargained Bessie. Bang!

A cushion hit the door heavily, and Bessie only just escaped in time.

She went out into the corridor, where a large number of Fourth-Formers were still laughing heartily over the contents of "Margerine and Starer's Weekly."

And Cliff House was likely to laugh for many a day yet; whilst the unhappy occupants of Study No. 7 were not likely to forget the help received from No. 4 in producing the "Fourth Form Magazine." THE END.

(Another long, complete story of the Girls of Cliff House, entitled "Under Bessie Bunter's Thumb!" in No. 6 of "The School Friend," on sale Thursday next. Order your copy in advance to avoid disappointment.)

## THE EDITOR'S CORNER!

My Dear Readers,

You may remember that in our first number I expressed the opinion that the SCHOOL FRIEND would meet with a tremendous reception. I am very glad to be able to tell you all that such has been the case. The SCHOOL FRIEND has proved a great success, and it has been heartily welcomed by every schoolgirl in the country.

I have received hundreds of letters from readers, in which they state that the SCHOOL FRIEND is the first paper for schoolgirls ever published. As Mary Rowlands, of Uxbridge, says: "We have all been longing for a paper like the SCHOOL FRIEND, only we did not know exactly what we wanted!" Addie E. Leeder, of London, also writes in a similar strain. She says: "I used to be quite jealous because there was not a school-story paper for girls on the market!" Norah Potter, of Ashton-under-Lyne, writes: "Boys' papers have been published weekly for years, but the SCHOOL FRIEND is the first girls' school-story paper. We have always wanted to have a paper of our own, and now we have an absolutely ripping one!"

And so I could go on quoting from the tremendous pile of letters at my side. But space will not permit of my doing so this week, and so I will go on and tell you something about next Thursday's splendid, long, complete tale of the Cliff House girls. This story will be entitled,

### "UNDER BESSIE BUNTER'S THUMB!"

By Hilda Richards.

If you look at next Thursday's cover, which appears on the back page of this issue, you will see that Bessie Bunter makes an attempt to play tennis. I say that she makes an attempt, for a glance at our next cover will make it plain that she knows very little about how to play the game. You will laugh heartily when you read of Bessie Bunter's attempts to prove to the Fourth-Formers that she is a good tennis player.

You will also read of how, in punishing Bessie Bunter, Marcia Loftus scratched her face, how a cold feeling sprang up between Marcia and the rest of the Fourth, how Marcia schemed and plotted to obtain her revenge on the girls, how Bessie Bunter spied on Marcia when—Well, I must not tell you anything more about this grand tale. There are any number of surprises in it and plenty of humorous incidents—incidents that I am sure will appeal to all of you.

There is no doubt in my mind that you will also enjoy reading next Thursday's long instalment of our splendid adventure serial,

### "THE GIRL CRUSOES!"

By Julia Storm.

In this instalment two new-comers arrive on the desert island. How they arrive, who they are, and what they do, you will find out when you obtain next Thursday's issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND. By the way, I hope you are all ordering your copies in advance. Only by so doing can you be absolutely sure of avoiding disappointment.

Once again I must express my regret that pressure of space prevents my having a longer chat with you. Next Thursday, however, I shall hope to take up at least half a page.

Your sincere friend,  
YOUR EDITOR.

P.S.—Don't forget that I am still waiting to hear from all those readers who have not yet written to me.

When Writing to  
YOUR EDITOR,

address your letters:

The Editor, "The School Friend,"

The Fleetway House, Farringdon  
Street, London, E.C. 4.

## THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF A SPLENDID ADVENTURE SERIAL!

## The Girl Crusoes!



By JULIA STORM.

The Chief Characters in this Story are: HILDA, PAT, and JOE, three plucky school-girls.

MISS STRONG, a brave, good-natured school-mistress.

MISS WHIFFEN, a nervous schoolmistress, and

MADemoiselle LA TOUCHE, whom the girls call Touchy, and who is even more nervous than Miss Whiffen.

The Utopia, a great Australian liner, is stopped on its voyage across the Pacific Ocean by a powerful German cruiser. The German officer in charge orders every man on the Utopia to leave the ship, and then sails away, leaving a band of schoolgirls and several schoolmistresses on board the Utopia, without a single man to work the ship.

A tremendous storm comes up, and Miss Strong and Hilda, Pat, and Joe take charge of the steering-wheels, and set the ship running straight before the storm. For two days and nights, whilst Miss Whiffen and Mademoiselle la Touche and the rest of the girls are lying in their cabins, they stick to their task, and at length steer the vessel into a lagoon, and discover, to their immense satisfaction, that land is at hand.

"It's a desert island!" said Joe, as she slips into her berth, thoroughly exhausted after her exertions. "We'll call it Diamond Island!"

Later on the girls start to explore the island, and make some very surprising discoveries. They come across a cave, and Joe leads the way in.

(Read on from here.)

## Edith Foster's Cake.

THE cave into which Miss Strong and the girls had entered, was a huge, domed cavern, which looked as large as a cathedral in the flickering light of their tiny torch.

The floor was dry and of smooth stone. Yet, far away in the dark recesses, they could hear the trickling of water, which sounded hollow as it echoed through the vast spaces of the black vault above them.

In here, the air was beautifully cool after the intense glare of the sun outside, and Pat drew a long breath.

"What a lovely place to keep butter!" she exclaimed. "Faith, the margarine on the ship will be fairly walking about the plate to-day!"

They did not dare to enter far into the cavern with the little lighting that they had, but Joe held up her tiny torch and examined the walls.

They were of yellow stone of the same quality as that which had held the opal matrix; but here and there, veined in the stone, was the real, glistening red-fire opal.

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There was enough of it in sight to make a thousand opal rings and necklaces!

Joe gave a great sigh of satisfaction.

"I always thought I should love to have an opal ring!" she said. "But now I don't want one at all! It is a strange thing, Pat, but now we have got the stuff here by the ton, I've no more use for an opal ring than I have for a white elephant!"

"My word!" exclaimed Pat. "If we only had a white elephant here, we could make him very useful! He could pull up the trees, and thin out the bananas, and he would do all the hauling and carting. But, as for your opals, Joe, my dear, I'm of your opinion. But we'll have a mantelpiece of opal when we build our new house!"

The pin of candle-nuts was now beginning to burn low, so Joe led her party out of the cave.

They found themselves blinking when they got into the fierce sunshine outside, and Miss Strong, announcing that it was nearly time for their midday meal, led the party down the Happy Valley to the boat.

They brought their specimen of opal matrix with them to show Miss Whiffen, who was something of a mineralogist.

Miss Whiffen declared at once that it was the real thing, and that their Aladdin's cave must be worth thousands of pounds.

Miss Whiffen had been cooking, and was very hot and tired, and all the girls of the shore-party were weary after their hard work of the morning.

So it was agreed that they should have a stand-easy all that afternoon, till the afternoon breeze set in from the sea.

The sun had eaten up all the wind, and the lagoon lay like a mirror in the setting of its reef.

But they knew that, punctually at four o'clock, the breeze that was blowing over the blue sea outside the reef, would ruffle the lagoon with its pleasant coolness.

"Lady" Edith had made a cake for tea.

It was her first cake, and was to be kept a great secret.

But nobody ever heard of a secret being kept aboard ship, and, before lunch was over, everyone knew that the cake was to be the great attraction at tea-time.

"Lady" Edith was in a very bad temper.

She was tired of making beds, and loudly proclaimed that it was a shame that a girl whose parents kept five ser-

vants at home, should be selected for this menial office.

Then Pat infuriated her by remarking: "Faith, my dear Edith, I suppose you do find it a change from the old fish-and-tater stall, wrappin' up the pan'orths o' chips, same as you've always been used to!"

If looks could have slaughtered Pat, she would have dropped dead under the glance that she received for this remark.

"Come away, Gladys!" said Edith to her friend, Gladys Knox. "We don't want to mix with these awful girls! One can't help doing so on board ship, but now we have touched land—"

Her voice died away as she marched arm-in-arm with her friend along the deck, elevating her nose in great disdain.

Pat laughed.

"Did you hear that, Joe?" she asked. "We are awful girls, and 'Lady' Edith refuses to mix with us!"

"Don't tease her, Pat!" protested Joe. "She'll get over it when she has seen more of Diamond Island. She'll find, presently, that it is of no use putting on airs and graces. But, come along, Pat," continued the energetic Joe. "Let us do something! Don't let us waste all the afternoon!"

"What shall we do?" asked Pat.

"I'm going to start building a boat!" replied Joe.

"A boat!" exclaimed Pat, aghast. "An' phwat will ye be wantin' a boat for, when we've got a dozen lifeboats on the ship, an' two in the water?"

"Why," replied Joe, "they are ships, not boats. It takes all the school to move one of those two-ton lifeboats. I want to build a light boat that two or three of us can manage easily; a boat that we can use for sailing about from the ship to the shore, and for running about the lagoon in!"

"But you are not a boat-builder!" protested Pat.

"Look here, Pat!" exclaimed Joe. "If we don't have a little boat, we shall never be able to get away from the crowd. If we want to go on shore, we shall have to take all the kids, and all the mistresses with us. But if we build a little boat on our own, and show Miss Strong that we can manage her, we shall be able to go off by ourselves!"

Pat nodded.

"How d'ye start buildin' a boat, my dear?" she asked. "Are you goin' to make a wash-tub, or a coracle, same as we have in Ireland?"

"No!" answered Joe. Then she lowered her voice to a whisper. "There's



a boat half-built on the ship now," she said. "It's up on the boat deck. The first officer was making it for himself, and the keel and the ribs are all set up. All we have got to do is to fasten the planking on with the copper rivets—and the planking is all ready and shaped. It's going to be a lovely boat. It is sixteen feet long, and to be made of oak; and that's the best wood there is for water. Come along!"

Joe led her companion away up to the top deck, and there, between the funnels, she rolled back a tarpaulin, and showed Pat the skeleton of a boat that was already well advanced in construction.

When they measured the framing, they found that the boat was seventeen feet from stem to stern, and, under the carpenter's bench, which stood up on the boat deck, they found all the planking cut and fitted, ready to cover the ribs.

The girls were not long in rigging an awning, for they knew better than to work under the fierce sun that was pouring down on the boat-deck.

The first officer of the ship had been a methodical man.

and plank after plank was slipped into its place, held in position by vices to bend it to the shape of the boat, and firmly secured by rivets.

The clinking hammers went merrily all the afternoon, and it seemed less than no time to the busy boat builders, before the ship's bell rang for tea.

Tea was laid at the long table on the deck, and "Lady" Edith's much-talked-of cake occupied the post of honour.

It was her first cake, and she had made up her mind that neither Pat nor any of her associates should have a share in it.

"I am not going to make cakes for that horrid crew of girls!" she exclaimed audibly. "It's bad enough to have to make their beds, and to wash up after them! Awful persons!"

"Let her keep th' ould cake down at her end of the table!" whispered Pat. "I don't like the look av that cake at all, at all!"

"What's the matter with it?" asked Joe, in an undertone.

"It looks as heavy as a cannon-ball!" replied Pat. "It's like th' cake av the lady av Cork."

nammerin' on th' door. So the lady she got up from her sewin', an' she opened the door an' said, 'Little bhoys, what's your hurry?' And the bhoys said, 'Yer ducks, madam!' An' the lady said, 'What's the matter wid the ducks, bhoys?' An' th' bhoys started cryin', for he was only a little bhoys, an' he'd seen a big disaster. 'They've sunk, madam!' he said. An' that's the sthory av the cake av the lady av Cork. An' it strikes me that 'Lady' Edith's cake is av th' same sort!"

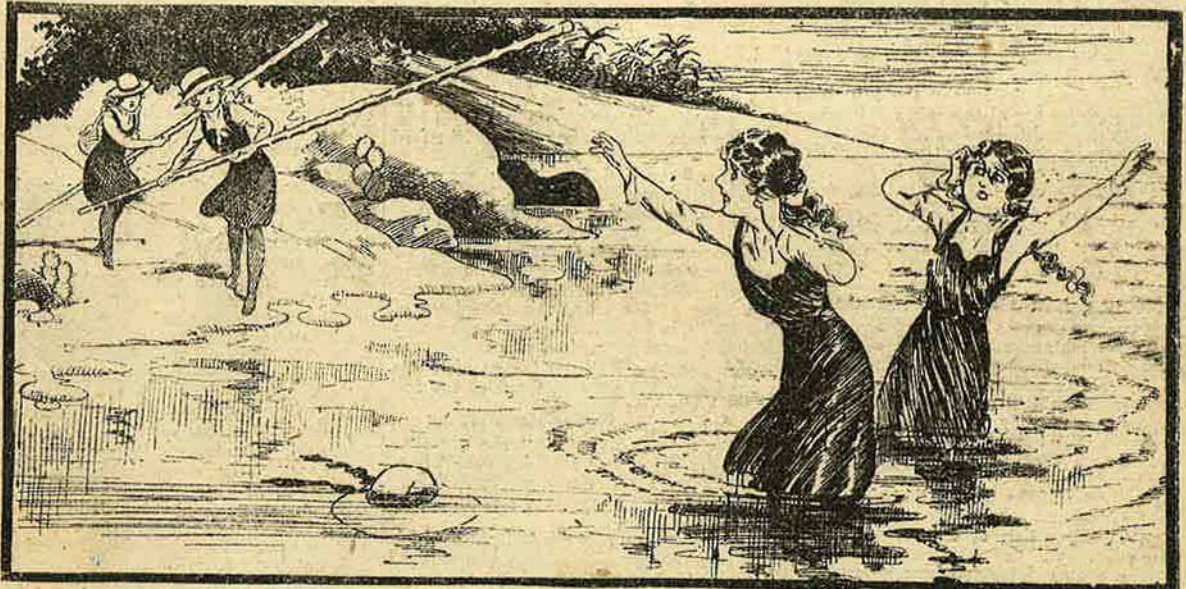
"Pat-ee-cia!" called the voice of mademoiselle from the head of the table. "Will you not have some of zis Jecelieux cake which Mademoiselle Edith 'ave made?"

Mademoiselle La Touche had noticed that the cake had not been handed down the table, but had been jealously saved out to Edith's own circle of friends.

"No, thank you, mademoiselle," answered Pat politely. "I think I'll just have a little plain-bread and butter."

"Josephine!" asked mademoiselle invitingly.

"No, thank you, mademoiselle!" replied Joe sweetly.



"Quick!" cried Edith Foster. "We are sinking!" "It's all right!" exclaimed Joe. "Don't be frightened, and don't struggle. We'll get you!"

Every plank was marked, and its place indicated in a working drawing that was hidden in the drawer of the carpenter's bench.

And every plank had been fitted and drilled with the holes for the rivets.

So the girls were able to set to work straight away, working with the copper rivets.

The planks were adjusted on the skeleton of ribs.

Then Joe drove the copper rivets through plank and rib, whilst Pat fitted the copper disc, or lock-washer, on the inside of the boat, and hammered down the soft metal, till the planking was tightly clinched to the boat.

Then Hilda and Damppling Davis, a short girl, were pressed into service.

Damppling was a fat, good-natured girl, who was always ready to lend a hand, and, what was more, was clever with woodwork, having taken lessons in carpentering and woodcarving.

She at once showed herself as capable as Joe herself in handling the tools that were brought from the carpenter's chest.

"And what was the matter with the cake of the Lady of Cork?" asked Hilda.

"Well, you see, Hilda, me dear," said Pat, with a twinkle in her eyes, "this lady was a great lady at washin' up, but she was no cook. So wan day she made a cake, and whin she offered the cake to her family, they said: 'Take it away, an' try it on th' pig.' So she took it to th' pig, an' th' pig grunted, and he said: 'No cake for me, thanks; I'd prefer bread-and-butter, av it's all the same to ye, lady!' So the lady took th' cake, an' she fed it to th' ducks that was swimming on the duck-pond. An' ducks will eat anything. So they ate the cake!"

Pat was silent, and started to eat a huge slice of bread and marmalade.

"Well, I don't call that much of a story," said Joe, in disappointed tones.

"Wait a minute, me dear. I haven't told you the end av it yet," replied Pat.

"An' a story without an end is like a pig without a tail. Now," she continued, "the lady had just settled down to a bit of sewin', when a little bit av a bhoys came

"Hilda, do you not wish to try zis gateau which Edith 'ave made?" asked mademoiselle, doing her best, like a commercial traveller, to stimulate a demand for Edith's cake.

The cake had been handed round to Edith's friends, but they did not seem to be getting on very well with it.

They were crumbling it on their plates, and one or two were pushing it into their pockets and handkerchiefs.

"They're food hoarding!" whispered Joe.

"They're hiding it up to feed the tann sharks with!" said Pat, under her breath.

Then the unwitting mademoiselle turned to Edith herself.

"Edith," she said reproachfully, "why do you not eat your cake?"

Edith turned very red.

"I am afraid it's rather heavy, mademoiselle," she said. "I think there must have been something wrong with the oven!" she added hastily.

"Voila! You are too modest!" responded mademoiselle. "I will try your cake!"

She cut at the cake, and struck a hard patch.

The knife would barely go through it. Then she turned suspiciously to Edith. "Ze cake, 'o is like ze stone!" she exclaimed. "Where did you take ze flour for your cake?"

"I took some from the flour dredger and some icing sugar out of the little tin which stands on the shelf in the galley!" replied Edith.

"Stop, girls!" exclaimed mademoiselle, with a sudden gesture. "Do not consume more the cake!"

"We have not consumed any yet, mademoiselle," piped up a little girl. "We can't," she added plaintively. "It's awful! It's like bricks!"

The little tin was sent for from the galley, and mademoiselle gave an exclamation of horror when she opened it.

"Zis es not ze flour! Eat is not ze sugaire!" she exclaimed. "Zis is ze plasteir of Paris!"

And plaster of Paris it was. A shriek of laughter went up from the table as Edith indignantly picked up the cake, and heaved it over the side.

There was a rush for the rail, and the girls saw it sinking down and down, till a large shape, gliding through the water, turned over, and snapped at it.

The girls gave a cry as they saw the cake disappear.

It was one of the lagoon sharks, which were hanging round the ship, which had rashly devoured the morsel.

"There he goes!" cried the girls. "No, it isn't!" they added, as they lost sight of the shadowy shape. "Where has he gone?"

"He's sunk!" said Pat, with a twinkle in her eye. "Like th' ducks at the Lady of Cowk!"

### Caught in the Quicksands.

THE afternoon breeze had now set in fresh and cool, and the girls were assembled at the ringing of the ship's bell to go ashore.

There were still nearly three hours of daylight, and they were going to pitch a tennis-net on the hard, dry sand.

But Joe had no fancy for playing tennis.

She begged Miss Strong that she might take Hilda and Pat with her, and go on a short expedition of exploration along the coast.

Miss Strong demurred for a moment. But she soon made up her mind that she could not keep these three girls for ever with the rest of the party.

She knew that if there were dangers to be encountered on the island, these three girls, out of all her charges, were the most fitted to encounter them.

"Very well, girls," she said. "I know that you will be careful, and that you will not do anything rash. You are armed?"

Joe opened the haversack she was wearing, and showed the captain's revolver.

"Don't be away more than two hours," said Miss Strong, "and if you see any signs of danger come back to the shore at once!"

This was agreed upon, and when the party reached the shore and pitched the tennis-net, which they had devised from some of the spray cloths from the bridge of the liner, Joe, Hilda, and Pat set off on a brisk walk along the shore, determined to make the most of those precious two hours of leave.

They carried their axes at their belts, and Joe had brought a coil of strong light line, which she wore over her shoulders.

She also carried with her a small tin pan.

"What on earth do you want to bring that wash-bowl with you for?" asked her sister.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 5.

"I thought it would be useful if we found any squashy sort of fruit, like mulberries," answered Joe sedately.

They marched along the bench close under the shadow of the tall coco palms, and passed the entrance to the Happy Valley.

Joe was anxious to see what there was beyond a point of lava cliff that jutted out at the far side of the valley, a quarter of a mile away.

"And what have you got in your haversack, Pat, that's weighing it so heavily?" she asked.

"Spike nails!" replied Pat.

And slipping her hand into her haversack, she produced a sample spike, which she had taken from the carpenter's chest on the ship.

It was a tremendous nail, nearly ten inches long.

"I have another load of them," said Hilda.

"What are you going to do with them?" asked Joe, wondering.

"Why, we are going to walk up that big coco-palm there," said Pat, "and get some of the green coconuts. And as we can't walk up trees, we thought we would drive these spikes in all the way up, and make a look-out palm of it."

Joe laughed.

"There's no need to drive spikes in the tree, if you want to go up the palm," she said. "I'll show you how to climb after coconuts."

"How do the natives get them?" asked Pat.

"Why," replied Joe, "you see that nearly all these palms slope a little bit in one direction. That is the way they are blown by the prevailing trade wind, just as you see trees at home close by the sea-shore nearly all grown pointing inland. All the natives do is to get on the slope of the tree, and take hold of the trunk in both hands and walk up it. But they have long arms, like monkeys."

Joe tapped a leathern belt, which was wound over her shoulders, under the coil of rope she was carrying.

"As our arms are not long enough to run up a palm like that," she said. "I am going to use this climbing-belt. Then, if you like, I will climb up in the belt, and will stick the spikes in, so that you can climb up, too!"

They soon reached the tall palm which Pat had indicated, and Joe, standing at the foot of this, slipped off her shoes.

Then she threw the coil of rope to the ground and, taking the long, leathern belt, passed it round her waist, and round the great polished shaft of the graceful palm.

Putting her toes against the tree, and placing her hands to the shaft, she turned to her companions.

"You see, girls," she explained, "I lean back in the belt and tighten it. Then I start walking up the tree, and the belt slips up with me—so!"

And, suiting the action to the word, she had soon walked up a good twelve feet of the polished trunk.

Her two companions looked up, and watched her rather anxiously.

The shaft up which she was climbing was a good seventy feet high; but Joe, whose gymnastic costume did not impede her, went steadily climbing up—twenty, thirty, forty, fifty feet—getting smaller and smaller.

"Faith! She's going up it like a house-fly! But I wish we hadn't let her go up!" said Pat, who was feeling rather nervous, for the palm looked a tremendous height now that they were standing under it.

But Joe reached the top of the shaft safely.

She grabbed at the bases of the great

fronds and, lifting herself, disappeared into the great tuft of greenery at the head of the palm.

"It's splendid up here!" she called out. "It's like a nest, and you can see ever so far!"

"Then I'll start drivin' my staircase o' nails at once!" exclaimed Pat in response.

"Don't do that!" cried Joe. "It will take you ever so long, and we've only got two hours. I'll drop the belt, and you come up, and bring the line with you. And mind you make the belt safe about your waist with the lacing before you start climbing."

The belt was dropped from the crown of the tree, and Pat, making it fast, slung the coil of line over her shoulders, and climbed up the palm with astonishing swiftness and ease.

Then the belt was dropped to Hilda, who followed, climbing breathless into the great crown of the palm, to join her companions.

"Oh, how lovely!" she gasped, as she parted the fronds of the great nest and looked around her.

The top of the palm swayed gently in the breeze.

They could see the lagoon stretching for miles, and the girls playing tennis on the sands opposite the great hull of the liner.

It was almost impossible to realise that they were stranded on this desert island.

The ship looked smart and trim, and as though she must have a large crew on board her.

They could see the polished brass rims of her ports glistening in the sunshine, whilst the glass in the scuttles flashed back the light here and there like diamonds.

"We'll hide the nails at th' foot of this palm, girls!" said Pat with enthusiasm. "And we'll put a staircase up it, and it'll be just the place to hide from Whiffy and Touchy! How she swings in th' breeze! It's like restin' in a hammock!"

But their two hours were precious—far too precious to be spent even in this delightful palm-top.

Joe, climbing down into the palm crest with her axe, cut off a bunch of the delicious young drinking nuts—the coconuts which had not yet formed.

They were of a mottled green colour, and, cutting round the top of these, Joe presented her friends with a real South Sea drink, goblet and all.

"Faith," exclaimed Pat, as she drained this natural cup, "that beats all the ginger-beer I have ever tasted! It's better than ginger-beer and vanilla ice, an' that takes a lot av beatin'. I'm thinkin' that I'd like to be a monkey an' live all th' time in the top av a palm-tree, drinkin' green coconuts. But how are we goin' to get down?"

"Easy enough," replied Joe. "I get into the belt and go down, and, when I'm down, you drop the end of the line to me and haul up the belt. Last out of the tree throws down the line when they are in the belt."

This plan was adopted, and in a few minutes the three girls stood safe on the ground at the foot of Look-Out Palm, as they called this new hiding-place.

But there was one from whom they could not hide, for through the coco-groves, panting and puffing and wagging his tail, rushed Togo, the dog.

Togo had had enough of lawn tennis on the sands.

He had dashed after the balls, and the girls had thumped him with their racquets.

So he had come off through the groves chasing land-crabs, and had not been

They did not stop to wash any more pans of gold.

They had discovered a rich goldfield, and that was quite enough for them.

And as they retraced their steps down the river-bed to the entrance of the valley, they conversed on the absolute futility of gold in a situation like their own.

"Gold is only good for one thing here," said Joe, "and that's for stopping teeth. And it's lucky for all of us that we had our teeth looked after before we left home, for I don't know what I should do if anyone wanted a tooth pulled out on the island."

"I dare say we'd manage it all right," said Pat hopefully. "It was Mike Doolan, the blacksmith, that pulled all the teeth in our village. He'd pull ye a tooth for sixpence, and he'd pull your head off for a shillin'—ay ye'd let him!"

But Joe and Hilda decided that they were glad that Mike Doolan was not in practice as a dentist on Diamond Island.

They bustled along the shore, and walked round the point again.

From here they could see that the girls were still playing tennis over their canvas screen, whilst others were strolling along the shores of the lagoon, examining the life in the pools amongst the coral ledges which, in the low tide, projected far out into the blue water.

The three girls noticed Edith and Gladys walking along the beach by the water's edge, as they turned into the Happy Valley to attend to the bacon which was smoking in their smoke-hut.

They opened the hut and made up the slow burning fire with a fresh heap of the aromatic bark and leaves which they were using for the smoking, and Joe looked at the hut with great satisfaction as the blue vapour came curling out between the palm leaves.

"That's the right place to get when the mosquitoes bite," she said. "And, by the way, Pat, what's that lump over your left eye?"

"Faith!" replied Pat. "That's just where a mosquito did sit on my forehead. I thought I felt the spalpeen's hot feet!"

And they became aware of the presence of a good many mosquitoes in the still air.

"They came out at sunset from amongst the greenery," explained Pat. "But I hope they are not going to swarm in this place. Otherwise it will be worse than the ship."

"It's all right," replied Joe. "They will sting us for a bit, and raise lumps like pigeons' eggs; but, after a bit, you get used to them, and a mosquito can sting you all day without doing you any harm."

"But what about fever?" asked Pat, who knew something of the ways of the mosquito as a bearer of the dread malaria.

"They are all right if there is no malaria on the island," replied Joe. "When we come to live ashore, we'll put paraffin over all the little pools up the valley where the water does not run. That prevents the larvæ from coming to the surface of the water where they breed, and turn into fly."

"Faith! I think ye'll be wantin' a lot of paraffin!" said Pat, slapping her cheek and incidentally a mosquito vigorously.

"There's another thing," added Joe. "Miss Strong is going to dose us all round to-night with sulphate of quinine as a preventive against fever. We are to be quinine every night and every morning!"

Pat made a wry face at this. "I think I'd sooner get in the bacon-house, and be cured with the bacon."

she said. "But what are you after, Joe?"

"We've still got a few minutes left of our two hours," replied Joe, turning to a thicket of the great bamboos which grew in the entrance to the Happy Valley. "I'm going to cut a couple of these big canes for goal posts. The girls are talking about playing football on the sands to-morrow night."

She laid her axe to the foot of a couple of the great canes which were clashing together with a musical sound in the evening breeze, and, bringing them down, the girls carried them on their shoulders out of the Happy Valley.

As they marched out of the mouth of the valley, the sun was dipping in the sea, and it was dusk.

And Joe gave an exclamation of wonderment, for she noticed that the haughty "Lady" Edith and Gladys Knox, who were standing far down by the water's edge on the sands, were actually waving to them.

"That's queer!" said Joe, coming to a halt with the bamboos on her shoulder. "Lady Edith waving to us! She must have got friendly all of a sudden. What on earth can she want?"

Gladys Knox also was waving and beckoning frantically, and, for a moment or two, Joe was perplexed.

Then she suddenly realised what was the matter. The figures of the two girls were reflected in long shadows on the wet sands.

But, in the uncertain light, Joe saw that the distance between the hems of their gymnasium-skirts and their reflection on the sand was extraordinarily short, and that their legs seemed sawn off.

"Quick, girls!" she gasped. "They are in a quicksand! Hilda, run quick to the boat, and get the oars and the gratings out of the bottom. Bring them along the shore here, well above the wet line. It's off the mouth of the river that the sands are dangerous!"

Joe was quite correct in her surmise. The two girls down by the water's edge had suddenly discovered that they were in a quicksand, and before they could move had felt themselves caught by the deadly sands, and sunk nearly to their knees.

This was why they had suddenly started waving and calling to Joe and her companions.

"Stick to the bamboos, Pat; we'll wait 'em!" cried Joe. And away they went, running down the beach as fast as they could.

Joe took care to follow down an outcrop of good, sound coral rock that formed, as it were, the bank of the treacherous river which set the sands afloat.

They were not far from the two girls when they reached the end of this breakwater of rock.

"Quick!" cried Edith. "We are sinking!"

Her face was very pale, and her lips were white, for she had now sunk to her knees.

"It's all right. Don't be frightened, and don't struggle. We'll get you," answered Joe.

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