

"CLARA TREVLYN'S TEST!"

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of the Girls of Cliff House School, featuring CLARA TREVLYN.

No. 157. Vol. 7.

Week Ending May 13th, 1922.

The School Friend

2^d



Given free



CLARA TREVLYN ASTOUNDS HER CHUMS!
A novel incident from the magnificent new long complete story of the girls of Cliff House School, contained in this issue.

COLOURED ART CARD.
No. 2.—Clara Trevlyn.

Also in this issue:

The Special Clara Trevlyn Number of "The Cliff House Weekly," and TWO Fine Entrhralling Serials



All readers who write me and enclose a stamped envelope may be sure of receiving a prompt reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, "The School Friend," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

MY DEAR READERS,—I can safely assume that you are all of one opinion concerning the last two numbers of the SCHOOL FRIEND—last week's and the one before you now—and this is, they are the finest pair of numbers that I have ever published. I have closely scanned both issues several times, with the fixed intention of finding faults, but I have been quite unable to hit on a single one! I am sure that my readers, too, have found the first two numbers of the enlarged SCHOOL FRIEND to be absolutely perfect in every detail.

Last week I informed you that the chief figure of next week's SCHOOL FRIEND would be one of the best-liked of Fourth-Formers. And, indeed, which of my readers does not like

PHILIPPA DERWENT,

the Tasmanian girl of the Fourth Form at Cliff House? For her many sterling qualities, her bravery, and her even-tempereness in particular, Philippa—or Flap, as the girls call her—is admired by every reader of our stories. But amongst Australasian readers Flap is the most popular girl at Cliff House.

The beautiful art cards of Peggy Preston and Clara Trevlyn have led you to expect the coming

EIGHT COLOURED PORTRAIT CARDS

to be equally superb. I can promise you they are all just as excellent, and the COLOURED ART CARD OF PHILIPPA DERWENT, which will be presented with next Thursday's SCHOOL FRIEND, will be just as fine as the cards of Peggy Preston and Clara Trevlyn which you already treasure.

Philippa Derwent not only features on this dainty art card, but she is to take

THE LEADING PART

in next week's magnificent new long complete story of the girls of Cliff House. Its title,

"PHILIPPA DERWENT'S PLUCK!"

By Hilda Richards,

at once suggests the dramatic nature of this fine narrative. Not for a long time now has Philippa Derwent taken the leading role in one of our stories. But we all remember the manner in which she rode a barebacked horse through the teeth of a thunderstorm to save an

injured man's life. "Philippa Derwent's Pluck!" will show you that the Tasmanian girl is just as valiant, just as ready to take daring risks for others, as ever she has been in the past.

But we have not yet finished with popular Philippa Derwent. The next number of

"THE CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY"

will be a

SPECIAL "PHILIPPA DERWENT" NUMBER.

It will be simply packed with information concerning the Tasmanian junior. You will learn how Flap arrived at Cliff House, how she came into possession of her dog, Grip, how she finds the work of "getting interviews," as well as information concerning her home life in Tasmania, and details regarding her study. There are other very interesting features, too, as well as amusing articles by Bessie Bunter and Frances Barrett. You will find this Special Philippa Derwent Number a very worthy follower of the Special Peggy Preston and Clara Trevlyn Numbers of the "Cliff House Weekly."

The third absorbing long instalment of

"FRIENDSHIP FORBIDDEN!"

By Ida Melbourne,

will be the opening feature of next Thursday's SCHOOL FRIEND. I am sure the trials of Dolores are affording you the deepest sympathetic interest. How would you like to be a pupil at such a school as the Limmershaw High School, surrounded by such chummy, sport-loving girls as Kitty Crichton, Pearl Hardy & Co., and yet forbidden their friendship— forbidden to take part in all their sports and enjoyments, and condemned to live a lonely, solitary life? That is the lot of Dolores Kalenzi, and one cannot help sympathising with her for rebelling against it.

And then, as usual, there will be another fine, long, enthralling instalment of

"THE SIGNALMAN'S DAUGHTER!"

By Gertrude Nelson.

This story grows more and more enthralling as it proceeds, and Olive Walters shows herself in a finer light each week. Though times seem to

become worse for her, and Sybil Duke jumps at every opportunity for tormenting her, Olive rises to every occasion like the valiant little heroine she is.

And now, who is to be the favoured Cliff House character for the following week—the girl who is to have a superb art card of herself presented, a story in which she takes the leading part, and a special number of the "Cliff House Weekly" devoted to her? Again I must leave you to guess the popular girl's name, but you have now no more than seven characters to guess from, and I do not doubt but that many of you will be correct in your surmise. Whether or not, you will one and all be not a little pleased when, next week, the name of the chosen girl will be revealed.

Don't forget that there are EIGHT more superb coloured art cards of your favourite characters to be presented, EIGHT more magnificent long, complete stories of the girls of Cliff House in which the chosen girls will take the leading parts, and EIGHT more fine Special Numbers of the "Cliff House Weekly." Lest you have forgotten the names of

THE GIRLS WHO ARE YET TO FIGURE

in these grand numbers I will set down their names again—not in the order in which they are to be dealt with, but exactly as I published them before: Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, Bessie Bunter, Marjorie Hazeldene, Dolly Jobling, Phyllis Howell, Philippa Derwent, and Augusta Anstruther-Brown.

Your sincere friend,
YOUR EDITOR.

BRIEF REPLIES.

(Owing to the fact that we go to press considerably in advance of publication, readers should bear in mind that letters cannot be answered on this page within six weeks from the date of receipt.)

"Squibs" (London, E. 5).—Your wish is gratified this week, for Clara Trevlyn takes the leading part. You can obtain back numbers of the SCHOOL FRIEND from our Back Number Department, 7 to 9, Pilgrim Street, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, enclosing 3d. in stamps for one copy and 2½d. for each additional copy. This, of course, covers the cost of posting them on to you.

LOVELY LEATHER,
ALL COLOURS, 11d. sq. ft. MAKE OWN G'OVES, HATS, DOROTHY BAGS, and save money. Send 2a stamp full set patterns.—CATT, Leather Merchant, NORTHAMPTON.

CUT THIS OUT

"School Friend." PEN COUPON. Value 2d.

Send 13 of these coupons with only 2/9 direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4. You will receive by return a Splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6 (Fine, Medium, or Broad Nib). If only 1 coupon is sent, the price is 4/9, 2d. being allowed for each extra coupon up to 12. (Pocket Clip, 4d. extra.) This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the SCHOOL FRIEND readers. Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. Foreign post extra.

Lever Self-Filling Model, with Safety Cap, 2/- extra.
THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 157.

WAVY HAIR.

GIRLS! Why have straight, lank, unattractive hair, when IN A FEW MINUTES by means of "CURLENE" it can be transformed into a radiant mass of RIPPLING CURLS. The effect of each application lasts for some days and after a short course of treatment the hair develops a tendency to WAVE NATURALLY. About one month's trial supply sent, with GUARANTEE, for 1/9.

THE CURLENE CO. (DESK 36),
37 & 39, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

SILK JUMPERS, CAMISOLES, BLOUSE LENGTHS, Stockings, Underwear, and General Drapery. Write for Free List.—H. H. CLEGG (Dept. M15), 96, High Street, MANCHESTER.

Be sure and mention "THE SCHOOL FRIEND" when replying to Advertisements.

OUR FINE NEW SCHOOL AND MYSTERY SERIAL.



By
IDA MELBOURNE.

Characters in this Story.

DOLORES KALENZI, a dark-eyed, olive-complexioned, and very attractive Eastern girl, who, by the orders of her aunt, is forbidden the friendship of

KITTY CRICHTON, **PEARL HARDY & Co.**, the upright and lighthearted Fourth-Formers at Limmershaw High School.

YELMA KALENZI, the aunt of Dolores, who is really not at all an unkindly woman, but is under the strict orders of Dolores' uncle.

None of the happy freedom of the Limmershaw High School girls was allowed Dolores Kalenzi. Twice a day at the finish of lessons her aunt called at the school to take her home, and on account of this the Eastern girl naturally became an object of ridicule amongst most of the High School girls. She was there to study—nothing more, said her aunt, and she was to make no friends. But in spite of this Dolores makes friends with Kitty Crichton.

Later Dolores brought some Eastern paintings and photographs to the school, and showed them to the girls. A man's photograph was instantly singled out by the girls, who were struck by the resemblance in features with those of Dolores. Was it her father? At that very instant her aunt dashed on the scene, and snatched the photograph.

"Where did you get this, Dolores?" she almost shouted. "It is not your father! How dare you bring this to the school!"

Why?

"BUT, aunt—"
Dolores, amazed at her aunt's outburst, stared in surprise. She had never before known her aunt so cross. Sometimes she was angry; sometimes she spoke sharply, but never had she acted like this!

"Come, Dolores," said her aunt. "You must come home. Lessons are over."

Dolores bit her lip, and looked rebelliously at her aunt, who now gripped her arm.

"There is a games lesson, Aunt Yelma," she answered, rather sulkily.

The girls in the crowd looked on interestedly. Pearl Hardy and several others smiled; but Kitty Crichton frowned seriously.

It would not do for Dolores to rebel—all the same it did not seem quite fair that she should be compelled to miss

games lesson—the most popular lesson of all.

Phoop!

The sharp sound of the whistle made everyone in the group look round.

Miss Poole was waving her hand excitedly.

"Time for tennis," said Kitty Crichton. "We'd better go."

She turned to Dolores, and stretched out her hand.

But Dolores' aunt prevented that hand being gripped. She wheeled her niece round forcibly, and several of the girls laughed.

"Put her in the corner," said a voice from the edge of the crowd, and Dolores flushed.

"Come!" said her aunt impatiently. "You must come home."

Dolores, after but a second's hesitation, moved off with her. She turned her head back, and Kitty Crichton waved. From the other came a laugh.

Then Dolores turned her head resolutely, and, choking down angry words, went quietly with her aunt. Nor did her aunt speak until they had gone some few yards down the lane outside the school.

She halted, and looked about her before she spoke.

"Dolores," she said sharply, "to how many have you shown this photograph?"



"These dresses—better than friends?" repeated Dolores. "No, no! They are wonderful!—yes, aunt! But nothing could be better than—friendship!"

"To the mistress—and some of the girls—those you saw. I don't see any harm, aunt—you made me look a silly. You could hear how they were all laughing at me."

"To the mistress!" repeated her aunt. "You had no business to take the things to the school. What did the mistress say?"

"She said that I was to get your permission. She wants to show them to the school—"

"Tush! You have been seeking these at home?"

"Yes, aunt," Dolores admitted, unafraid. "I did. But they are only photographs. I don't see why you should be afraid."

"Afraid!" snapped the woman. "I am not afraid." She paused, and tried to smile. "I—I am not afraid, Dolores," she said. "But you know I—I am a trifle quick-tempered, and—and I was cross that you should have been inquisitive enough to have searched amongst the many things at home. Give me those photographs!"

In silence Dolores handed them to her aunt.

The woman examined them, looked quickly at Dolores, then nodded.

"This is all?" she asked, although the question seemed partly a statement.

"Yes," answered Dolores, and she turned to the hedgerow.

She turned on tiptoe, and watched the playing-fields, which she was just able to see.

The tennis-courts were clearly marked, and the white hats of the tennis players bobbed about delightfully.

On Dolores' face was a wistful look, and her aunt noticed it.

"Why do you look sad, Dolores?" she asked softly. "I do not wish to be cruel. But you must not be inquisitive. These photographs are my property—what are you regarding so intently?"

"I am watching the other girls," said Dolores slowly, in her soft voice. "I am watching them enjoying themselves, looking happy and free of care—and—and I must go home. Oh, aunt, it isn't fair!" "Isn't fair!" ejaculated the woman. "Nonsense! Come home, Dolores. You are foolish. Any more such nonsense as this, and you will be taken from the school. Games! They are but a passing girlish fancy—nothing more."

"It is not fancy, aunt!" protested the girl indignantly. "I have a right to play with other girls. Why should I be kept at home? Why should I be hemmed in? It is right to play—"

"Nonsense, child, nonsense. Come!"

And, almost by force, she dragged her niece away. The green fields faded from

sight, and the sound of the tennis players and their audience became fainter and fainter.

Dolores' arm was hurting where her aunt's hand gripped it firmly, but she gave no sign of the fact. She must obey her aunt.

Now that she was cooler she was thinking over the strange incident—she could picture now her aunt's face as it had been when snatching the photograph.

Why had her aunt been so angry? What did it matter that someone had suggested a resemblance to her father? It was not an insult, for that particular photograph was of a fine-looking man.

She glanced at her aunt, whose face was set, and whose eyes were narrowed thoughtfully.

"When did father die, aunt?" she asked softly.

Her aunt turned her head abruptly. "Your father? He died when you were young."

"Was he ever in Boralia?"

"Boralia!"

Dolores stared in amazement at her aunt, who had halted. She noted her aunt's deep breathing.

"Is this more rubbish?"

"But Miss Poole, my Form-mistress, says that the inhabitants of Boralia are clothed as in the photographs—"

"Tush! Utter nonsense, child!"

But Dolores was frowning thoughtfully, wondering what all this could mean. Why was her aunt so mysterious? Boralia—there was nothing wrong, surely, in mentioning that country?

She sighed, and shook her head wearily. Her heart ached for freedom; and she was caged in. She longed for friends; but she was not even allowed to mix with the other girls when school was over.

"Aunt Yelma!" she began. "I—"

She broke off, and stared at her aunt in amazement. Truly her aunt was puzzling this afternoon. For now she was gazing fixedly at a tree.

"What's the matter, aunt? What is it that you stare—"

Slowly Dolores' eyes followed her aunt's gaze to the tree. She looked at it perplexed, seeing nothing about it that should cause comment.

But her aunt's breath was coming in quick, short gasps, and her eyes seemed about to start from her head.

"Aunt—"

"Come," said Yelma Kalenzi hoarsely.

Dolores was half-dragged along towards the large greystone house her aunt called home, and she called prison.

But Dolores looked back at the tree. Then again she stared at her aunt and tried to speak. But now her aunt was looking fearfully from side to side.

Up the gravelled path they went through the large portico. The door was opened by the dusky servant in blue attire.

Dolores stood by while her aunt spoke rapidly to the man. It was a language that Dolores did not understand. Seldom had her aunt used it; for Chilean, the servant, could speak a few words of English.

The dusky servant's eyes flashed, and he shot home the top and bottom bolts of the huge door.

The tapestry-hung walls made the hall dark, and the faint light above the door was now closed.

"Why does Chilean lock the door so carefully?" Dolores asked.

"It is necessary; we do not want burglars," explained her aunt, in some agitation. "Dolores, go to your room!"

Dolores went slowly along the corridor, brushing by the curtains. On the stair—

way she paused, and saw her aunt go into the large room to the left.

Peering, by leaning forward, Dolores saw her aunt fling the photographs into the grate and apply a match to the already-laid fire.

Her aunt turned, and Dolores drew back against the wall as Yelma Kalenzi passed out of the room.

Now she saw the photographs in flames. For one moment she stood irresolute, then she ran forward, and fell on her knees before the blazing photographs.

She snatched at the long one—the one that showed the handsome man Pearl Hardy had suggested might be her father. With one eye turned fearfully to the door, she smothered the flames, and stuffed the photograph into the neck of her dress.

To save the others was impossible; and now at any minute her aunt might return.

Dolores straightened herself and crept from the room. Chilean had gone down to the basement, and she ran upstairs to her room, unseen.

She slammed the door, and leaned back against it, breathless for the moment.

Very quietly she turned the key in the lock, and walked to the open windows that gave on to the stone balcony.

There she stood in the afternoon sunlight, examining the charred photograph. Her father! Could it be true? Was that man her father?

She looked at it almost longingly. If she had a father—if her father were alive, then she would have companionship, and perhaps she would have freedom!

Then she shook her head, as though laughing at her own thoughts. It was absurd. Her father was dead. How could Pearl Hardy know? Pearl was joking; she usually was. The man was not like her—

As though to settle that matter, she ran to the large looking-glass, and searchingly regarded her own image. Then she looked again at the photograph.

There was a likeness—or was it her imagination? How could it be her father?

She was trying to laugh down the belief—the belief that had come creeping over her. It might be her father; a photograph of him before he died. But, if it were, why should her aunt show such alarm?

Why?

It was a question she was unable to answer. This house—was it, too, not a mystery? She had often asked questions. But they were never answered.

Tap!

"All Friendship is Feigning!"

"IT is I, your Aunt Yelma, Dolores."

Dolores went to the door, and unlocked it as she recognised her aunt's voice.

She pulled the door open, and Yelma Kalenzi entered. In her arms were dresses—beautiful dresses that made Dolores' eyes light up immediately.

"Ah!" murmured Yelma. "They are fine, are they not, these dresses?"

She held one aloft for Dolores' inspection, and the girl clapped her hands.

"Better than friends?" repeated asked Yelma slyly.

"Better than friends!" repeated Dolores. "No, no! They are wonderful. But, aunt, nothing could be better than friendship!"

Yelma Kalenzi frowned, and lowered the dress.

"Then you still cherish that foolish

notion," she said. "Tush! It is nonsense! Look at these dresses—this dress brocaded in gold! What girls at the school have such a dress? None. Look at this string of pearls! Look at them—the loveliest—"

She held them aloft, and it was easy to see that she at least worshipped their beauty.

"They—they are truly beautiful, Aunt Yelma," admitted Dolores, a trifle sadly. "But, oh, will you never understand? It is not them I want—it is not them I crave—but friends, companions, girls of my own age!"

Yelma Kalenzi sighed.

"You are an absurd child, Dolores! I had thought better of you. You have riches—then why do you want friends? Friends are traitors when opportunity occurs. All friendship is feigning. Better by far to stand alone. When you have friends, you share secrets; and a secret shared, Dolores, is a secret no longer."

Dolores shook her dark head.

"You do not know the Fourth Form," she said proudly. "We of the Fourth do not tell tales, and we can keep secrets. Oh, if Kitty were my own friend—"

"Kitty! She was there this afternoon?"

"Yes, aunt. Kitty is the Form captain. She is so good at tennis! And—all the girls love her—"

"She is top in the class—the clever girl—"

"Well, not top," said Dolores, with hesitation. "But she is quite clever. The top girl is not—not admired. They call her a swot—"

"Fools, all of them! They care nothing for learning, only for games. If a girl can hit a ball, then she is wonderful. Will you always think that, Dolores? Do you think when you are grown to womanhood and wisdom that you will admire those who can do nothing better than hit a tennis-ball?"

"I shall always admire Kitty Crichton, Aunt Yelma."

"Tush! That is what you think now. I know better. Always you will admire pearls—always you will admire dresses."

"Not more than friends, aunt—"

"Tush, child! I know. When Kitty Crichton is gone—when no one at your school knows her name—then still will these pearls retain their lustre; they will still be beautiful. They were beautiful before you were born—before I was born. For what—does one friendship count? There have been thousands of friendships, but they are gone. There is only one string of pearls like this!"

Dolores sighed hopelessly. Truly her aunt seemed determined not to be convinced by any argument.

"But aunt, Kitty—she is so splendid! She is honourable, and—and I want, a friend. And—and can't you understand—I want friendship! What have you against Kitty?"

"Against her? Why, nothing, child! She is not worth thinking about! Now you admire her because she is captain, and hits a ball well and straight; in years to come she will be forgotten. Her fame will die with her schooldays. But yours—"

She broke off, and stroked the dress.

"Mine?" Dolores laughed bitterly. "I have no fame. No one knows me; no one wants to know me, aunt. I am just no one at school. They laugh at me—"

"Let them laugh; it is but the laughter of fools! You should not mind that—"

"Oh, aunt!" sighed Dolores. "You can never have been a schoolgirl."

Laughter does matter. Why do you always fetch me from school—"

"To save you from making friends with the other girls."

"But why—why—why?"

Dolores voice almost rose to a shriek, and there was a traceable catch in it.

"Why?" Yelma shrugged her shoulders. "Can you not understand? I have told you a thousand times. Friendship is useless. You shall not make friends. I order it. They are useless. You are not sent to school to make friends—you are sent there to learn."

Dolores sank on to her bed, and looked helplessly at her aunt.

"Oh, aunt, why are you so cruel? I am not happy without friends; and—and all I ask of life is to be happy."

"Tush! I can make you happy. You were happy before you went to the school. Be not so weak. Cast thoughts of them from your mind. Let books and such silent companions be your friends, not trust yourself to wagging tongues and prying eyes."

"They do not pry; they are not inquisitive," said Dolores angrily. "You do not know them. It isn't fair to say that of them."

Her soft voice had almost become grating in her anger.

Yelma Kalenzi shrugged her shoulders.

"If you argue until your face turns black I shall not give way," she said firmly. "There is a fable that tells us of a dog who, looking into a brook, dropped the bone he had, to snatch at the reflection of it in the water, and thus lost both. Do not snatch at friendship, Dolores; take this dress. Friendship is as fleeting and unreal as that reflection. You think you have it; then it is gone."

But Dolores did not move. No argument that her aunt could bring forward would shake her. She wanted a friend. She wanted to be friendly with Kitty—with all of them. Why should her aunt object?

"I—I know you mean well, aunt," she said hesitatingly. "You mean this for my good. But, oh, I would much rather take my chance of the wagging tongues and prying eyes. Let me find out that friendship is false—if false it is—let me learn by experience."

Her aunt's face shaded, and she saw that she had gained a point.

She rose from the bed and crossed the room. Placing a hand on either of her aunt's shoulders, she looked up into the dark eyes.

"Give me that one chance, aunt," she pleaded. "Let me try—let me see what friendship can be. If it is false, as you say, then"—she looked away sadly—"then it will make me unhappy. But I can't believe it true. Let me try—"

"Later," murmured her aunt. "But not now. Not yet."

Something about her nervous reply made Dolores stare. Her aunt had seemed strange to-day.

"Aunt," she said suddenly, "what is the matter? Why are you so strange? What was it made you stop at the tree?"

"The tree? Nothing! This dress will suit you."

"Yes, aunt. What was it, and why was I not to show the photographs?"

The questions ran out rapidly—the questions she had stored up. And Yelma Kalenzi bit her lip.

"It is nothing, Dolores," she said. "You should not worry about such things, child. The photographs were my property, taken by an old school-

friend who died in that country. I did not want them taken to the school for them to see, to set their tongues a-wagging."

"There was no harm," murmured Dolores, looking keenly at her aunt.

"Enough!" replied Yelma Kalenzi, with a nod. "They were my photographs, and it is I who shall judge what is to be done with them. You should not be inquisitive."

"I am sorry," said Dolores. "I—I did not mean to be inquisitive. But I had seen them before, and the mistress at school mentioned such a dress as was depicted."

"Yes, yes," said Yelma Kalenzi hurriedly. "Say no more about them—not to anyone, Dolores. I will leave this dress, and the pearls. Do not worry child."

Then she kissed Dolores and left her, closing the door.

But even after her footsteps had died away down the stairs Dolores did not move. She stood staring at the closed

from the bed, and knotting them securely together, after she had twisted them.

The drop from the balcony was not great, and Dolores was a lithe, active girl. Her muscles were like steel ribbons, and she had no fear.

Working patiently yet quickly she tied the sheets to the balcony pillars. It was useless to hurry and be careless. For carelessness might mean a nasty fall.

But the sheets were dangling down within six feet of the ground, and with hardly a tremor she slipped over the balcony.

Down the sheets she went, hand-over-hand. Near to the ground she dropped, and rolled over. But she was unhurt, and with a last look at the balcony she crept along by the side of the house.

She was free for awhile, and now she would find out what had frightened her aunt. Away from the house, she took the photograph out and looked at it. She nodded, and went quickly down the lane.



"What—what are these?" asked Dolores falteringly. "Signs," explained Pearl Hardy, winking at the others. "Some secret agency made them—aren't they alarming?"

door, wondering if what her aunt had said were right—if the photograph had been taken by a friend of hers—a friend of her who did not believe in friends. But why had she been alarmed at sight of the photograph?

And why, too, had her aunt been alarmed at sight of the tree? Dolores could not remember seeing anything strange about it. Yet something there must have been. And the girl had a vague feeling that the orders given to Chileen—the orders to lock the door—were not unconnected with that tree.

She looked over the balcony. Then she crept to the door, and silently unlocked it. She looked down the stairs, and heard voices. Her aunt and uncle were talking.

Her uncle she seldom saw, and he seldom addressed her.

They were talking rapidly, and in a language that she did not understand.

But assured now that they were not paying her any attention, she went back to her room and locked the door.

A daring plan had occurred to her—a plan whereby she could gain freedom for a few minutes.

Already she was tearing the sheets

The Sign!

"STRANGE!" Pearl Hardy, of the Fourth Form at Limmershaw High School for Girls, put her head on one side, and gazed in wonderment at a tree by the roadside.

Kitty Crichton nodded, and one or two of the others moved to Pearl's side.

"Some guides, perhaps," suggested Kitty. "Might be, you know. A tracking sign."

"It might," agreed Pearl. "Shouldn't be at all surprised if those girls from Miss Tomas' are out on some stunt—"

"Oh, that would be splendid!" laughed Kitty. "Miss Tomas' girls would be great on guiding, or on anything else that required intelligence and go."

Pearl Hardy grinned and nodded.

"All the same," she said, "some of them are guides. It may be hard to believe. But they are. Lot of silly, stupid ninnies, most of them."

There was a laugh from the others—a laugh of agreement.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 157.

Miss Tomas' girls apparently were not looked up to by the girls of the High School.

Thus the laughter, when Pearl suggested that the Tomasses were on a guiding expedition.

"See—there are the tracks," pointed out Pearl. "Someone has been treading there."

"Of course," smiled Kitty rather sarcastically. "How else could that chalk mark have got on the tree? Someone must have put it there—and they couldn't have done it from the road, unless their arm happened to be a few yards long."

"Oh, rubbish!" said Pearl, who objected to being a butt. "It's the Tomasses, and I'm going to show them how to be guides."

"What do you mean?"

Pearl smiled.

"Dear children," she said. "This is where your Pearlkins shows you which is what. These girls are guiding? They are going to follow that ingenious chalk sign on the tree?"

"I suppose so," said Kitty slowly.

"Of course they are!" said Pearl determinedly. "Now I suggest that for once we are kind to these children. Suppose we give them more signs—eh?"

"You mean mark the other trees?"

"You are brilliant to-day, Kitty. That is what I mean," nodded Pearl. "What fun, girls! And we'll hide behind the hedge, and watch them—eh?"

Kitty Crichton shook her head.

"Better not," she said. "I don't quite like it; it isn't fair."

"Fair!" exclaimed Pearl. "Oh, rubbish, Kitty! Don't be squeamish. It will do the Tomasses good. Who's on?"

And Pearl looked round at her followers.

Several hands went up, and only a few seemed not to like Pearl's brilliant idea. Perhaps those who voted in favour did not mind much what was done so long as Pearl did it.

"Who's got some chalk?" asked Pearl.

But there was a shaking of heads. The girls were not in the habit of carrying chalk with them.

"That's awkward," frowned Pearl.

One of her followers pointed through the hedge.

"There's the bit the girl, whoever she was, used to make the original mark," she said. "Use that."

"Good idea!" exclaimed Pearl. "Ripping!"

So she darted through the hedge and picked up the piece of chalk. It was a lump—not a stick of the blackboard writing variety. But it marked, as Pearl discovered when she tried it on her dress.

"Where shall I begin?" she asked.

Kitty Crichton caught her by the arm. "Don't do it, Pearl," she urged. "It doesn't seem fair. It may be some important tracking competition."

"Not likely," said Pearl, determined not to be put off her great scheme. "Nothing the Tomasses ever do could be important, Kit. I'll start on that tree."

Kitty sighed and gave it up.

"If you will—you will, I suppose," she said.

Pearl, chalk in hand, pushed through the hedge and stood before another tall tree.

"A circle, isn't it?" she asked as she made an oval shape.

"And a triangle in it," said Jane Prestwich, who was determined to help Pearl, if only because it annoyed Kitty.

Pearl added the triangle and smiled.

She served several trees in the same manner, and surveyed her handwork triumphantly.

"How's that?" she exclaimed.

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 157.

"Jolly good!" applauded Jane Prestwich. "What about—'Ware—someone coming!"

At that warning there was a rush for the hedgerow on the opposite side, and Pearl followed. Kitty was left in the roadway.

"You sillies!" laughed Kitty. "It's only Dolores Kalenzi."

"The infant!" exclaimed Pearl indignantly. "Goodness, I thought it was someone important." And Pearl, rather annoyed at having taken cover, came out.

Dolores was coming down the road, and all could plainly recognise her. Kitty waved, and they saw Dolores wave, too. Then the dark-faced girl hurried forward.

"Hallo, Dolores!" said Kitty, smiling. "I didn't expect you."

"Nor did I," said Pearl, wagging her forefinger. "Time you were in bed, infant. Nurse's looking for you."

"My aunt!" ejaculated Dolores, with a nervous start.

"She's joking," Kitty reassured her. But Kitty had noticed that start, and was frowning.

"I—I've just come along to look at something," said Dolores.

She glanced in hesitation at the group of girls, and they looked at her, with smiles on their faces.

Dolores looked up at the tree, and blinked as she saw the crudely-made circles and triangles.

"What—what are they?" she asked.

"Signs," explained Pearl, winking at the others. "Some secret agency made those signs. Aren't they charming? I suppose the whole of Limmershaw's going to be blown up."

There were chuckles at that, and Dolores, realising that Pearl was making fun at her expense, tightened her lips.

She looked at the signs, and walked farther along. There were many signs, and she knew that they had not been there before.

But there was one sign, neater than the others—a circle neatly described round a triangle. And that sign was on the tree at which her aunt had stared.

Could it be at that her aunt had been so alarmed?

"What's the matter, Dolores?" asked Kitty as she noted the girl's look of mingled concern and amazement. "Don't believe Pearl; she's pulling your leg. This is her idea of a joke. She made the signs."

"Pearl did?" ejaculated Dolores.

"Oh!"

"Stupid; fancy giving the game away!" ejaculated Pearl in disgust, and she shook her fist at her friend.

Pearl went up behind Dolores.

"Yes, I made them," admitted Pearl. "Jolly good, aren't they?"

And she slapped Dolores on the back.

Dolores nodded, and stared at the signs. She was sure that it was the sign that had scared her aunt—the sign. But why? What did it mean? Had it some sinister significance?

She hardly heard the giggles of the other girls, and by now she was used to them. They were laughing at her; they always were.

But now she was wrong. They were not looking at her, but at Pearl, who was drawing something in chalk on a school exercise-book.

Very laboriously, and with chalk laid on thickly, Pearl made a circle, and then a triangle. The chalk must have been a quarter of an inch thick.

Pearl winked at the others, then coughed.

"Good old Dolores!" she said, and slammed the dark-faced girl on the back with the exercise-book.

"Oh!" exclaimed Dolores, and the other girls laughed. "Please don't do that," she said. "It hurts!"

But the other girls chuckled.

"Oh, do let her alone, Pearl!" said Kitty Crichton half angrily. "She has done nothing to you."

"Oh, I think she's fun!" cried Pearl. "Good fun. Now go home to nurse. And mind the Tomasses don't catch you."

"I don't understand," said Dolores puzzled.

And the others laughed at the expression on her face. The idea of her walking about with the chalk circle and triangle seemed to afford no little amusement.

The chalk marks were clear and unmistakable. If Pearl Hardy were right in her surmise that the Tomasses, as she called them, were on the trail of the circle and triangle, then Dolores might well be their quarry.

Dolores pulled down her hat nervously. She hated being laughed at; more especially when she wanted to be these girls' friend.

Why was she so amusing to them? "Look out!" called Pearl warningly. "Here comes your nurse! Hide her, girls! She'll get caned and put to bed!"

Pearl made a dart to conceal Dolores, but Kitty shook her head.

Down the road, hurrying as she had never hurried before, came Yelma Kalenzi, Dolores' aunt. And behind her was the native servant.

"Oh!" groaned Dolores. "Let me go!"

But Pearl, pretending to help, was keeping her back.

"Dolores!" panted Aunt Yelma breathlessly. "Dolores!"

Her eyes were starting, and she was almost devoid of breath.

Dolores pushed past Pearl, and hurried towards her aunt.

"Oh, oh!" panted Yelma Kalenzi. "Dolores! Then you are safe?"

"Yes, aunt, I have been no farther than this. I—"

Her aunt, breathing deeply, took her by the shoulder, and the dusky servant took the other arm.

"Thank goodness you are safe!" murmured her aunt, to the other girls' amazement.

In astonishment the group of girls watched the two hurrying Dolores, protesting, along the road.

"It's a shame!" said Kitty Crichton angrily. "My goodness!"

In silence they stared as they saw the native servant halt and point in obvious alarm at Dolores' back.

His shaking finger indicated the circle and triangle.

Anxiously Yelma Kalenzi whisked Dolores round, and stared at the sign.

She made some ejaculation, and the watchers moved forward, for Yelma Kalenzi had collapsed in a faint.

(Why this extraordinary effect made by the chalk sign? Can Pearl Hardy's joking remark that it has been made by the agent of some secret society be the correct solution? Then, if so, how does it affect Dolores? Next week's long instalment of this splendid and exciting serial will plunge you deeper into the mysterious doings that are going on at Limmershaw. Order next Thursday's issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND at once, so as to be sure of securing your copy. The demand for your favourite paper at the present moment is very great.)

Clara Trevlyn's Test!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of the girls of Cliff House School, featuring Clara Trevlyn of the Fourth Form.

By HILDA RICHARDS.

The Muddled Oaf!

"Oh, Clara!" Marjorie Hazeldene looked up at her study-mate reprovingly. Marjorie was busily engaged writing lines, and a sudden bump in the study had caused her to start—a permanent evidence of the start remaining on the footscoop in the form of a large, spidery blot.

"Sorry!" grinned Clara Trevlyn cheerfully. "I'll rub it out for you!"

"No—no, thank you!" said Marjorie hurriedly. And her tone suggested that Clara had at some previous time erased a blot.

"Don't bounce that ball again," said Dolly Jobling, the third occupant of Study No. 7 on the Fourth Form corridor at Cliff House School.

Dolly's face was red, which was not surprising considering that the temperature of the study, due to the hot summer's day, had been unnecessarily increased by a roaring fire. According to Dolly, a fire was necessary for her cooking operations. Clara had mooted the question of the necessity for Dolly's cookery—a question that Dolly had politely declined to answer.

"I shan't bounce it into your silly toffee," said the cheerful Clara, as she held the football tightly.

"I hope you won't!" retorted Dolly stiffly. "But you make me nervous with that ball in the study—you'll break something."

"Yes, Clara dear," said Marjorie Hazeldene, in her gentle way, "do be careful. You broke the clock last time you had it in here. I really can't see that you need it this weather. It isn't the netball season, for one thing; for the second thing, we don't play netball."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Clara amiably. "I'm not going to play netball."

"Oh, good!" sighed Marjorie. "You are going to put it away, then, dear?"

"I'm not," said Clara. "Oh, then—then what are you going to do, dear?" asked Marjorie. "I hope you're not going to practise shooting it into my workbasket, as you did last time—"

Clara grinned and shook her head. "Wrong again!" she chuckled. "If you want to know, Marjorie, I'm just going to have a kick-about in the quadrangle—"

Marjorie Hazeldene dropped her pen, and almost fell off her chair. Dolly Jobling even went so far as to withdraw her attention for one second from her toffee.

"You're what?" asked Marjorie. "You're which?" ejaculated Dolly. Clara Trevlyn grinned and let the football drop to the floor. On the rebound she caught it.

"I said I'm going to have a kick about in the quadrangle. You know what a kick-about is, don't you? That's what my brother calls it. You know, just boot the ball—"

"Just what?" gasped Marjorie, who was never-faithfully surprised and horror-stricken at her chum's rather boyish expressions.

"Boot," explained Clara. "Kick, biff, punt. You know, just kick it up—so!"

Clara dropped the ball and gave it a gentle tap. But the tap was not quite as gentle as she hoped, for the ball hit the wall with a dull thud.

There were three separate "Oh's!" and three pairs of fascinated eyes watched the ball bump on to the table, bowl over a vase of flowers, and then roll over Marjorie's imposition.

"Oh—oh dear!" murmured Marjorie. "You duffer!" exclaimed Dolly Jobling, with the candour of a true friend.

"Mum—my hat!" murmured Clara, in dismay. "I say, Marjorie, I'm awfully sorry, you know! Can—can I do it for you? I mean, I'll do it again—the writing, you know!"

Clara was immediately repentant, and her generous heart impelled her to rectify the damage she had done.

"It's all right!" smiled Marjorie. "It—it doesn't matter. Luckily, I haven't done many on this page. It won't take me long to re-do it. And Miss Steel doesn't want the lines until tea-time."

Clara sighed and picked up the ball, then she smacked it and grinned.

"Spouse I ought to be smacked," she remarked. "Just my luck!"

"Just your fatheadedness!" grunted Dolly.

"Oh rats!" said Clara. "How was I to know that the silly thing was going to bounce back?" She looked hurriedly at the wrist-watch on the mantelpiece—the clock having previously had an unfortunate argument with the football. "I shall have to hurry, or I shall be late for the kick-off."

"The—the kick-off?" said Marjorie, giving her chum a queer look. "I say, don't you think you'd better sit down, Clara?"

"I can't. I shall be late now," said Clara. "I must have a kick-about—"

"But why?" said Marjorie mildly.

"To shock auntie," explained Clara. And with this she bounced out of the study.

Marjorie leaned back in her chair and sighed. Dolly Jobling shrugged her shoulders expressively.

"I knew it would come sooner or later," said Dolly Jobling, with the air of a philosopher. What "it" was she did not explain. But Marjorie seemed to understand.

"It may be the sun," said Marjorie

anxiously. "It's been very hot lately. But Clara always was a bit tomboyish and eccentric. I can't think what she means by the 'kick-off,' and scaring auntie, though."

"Oh, she'll get over it!" said Dolly easily, and poked at her toffee.

Marjorie rose from her chair and pushed it under the study table.

"I think I'd better follow her," she said. "She'll get into trouble."

Which was really not improbable. Marjorie knew Clara, and knew how often her friend's irrepressible spirits had got her called to account.

So Marjorie hurried downstairs. But even when she was in a hurry Marjorie did not go down three stairs at a time, as Clara did; nor did she make use of the banister's polished surface.

Another girl, grinning broadly, was coming up the stairs, and Marjorie stopped her.

"Bridget, have you seen Clara?"

Bridget O'Toole grinned more broadly than ever, and Marjorie's heart jumped. Bridget had a great sense of humour—a sense that was not incompatible with Clara's. Perhaps the trouble had begun.

"Faith, an' I have entoirely!" chuckled Bridget.

Then she turned and pointed along the corridor at the foot of the stairs.

Marjorie, who expected to see at least a shattered chandelier or pulverised window, stared in no little alarm in the direction Bridget indicated.

Then Marjorie, too, was forced to smile.

For in a fat heap on the floor lay the well-known figure of Elizabeth Gertrude Bunter.

"Yow-ow-wow!"

Apparently the fat girl of the Fourth was not a believer in the time-honoured maxim that little girls should be seen and not heard. At the present moment she must have been audible half a mile away.

Marjorie hurried forward, and Bridget followed.

"Bessie," exclaimed Marjorie, with concern, "are you hurt, dear?"

Bessie Bunter ceased to howl, and groaned.

"Oh!" she moaned. "My bub-back's broken! I've ricked my spine, and she—she's bub-broken my glasses!"

Bridget O'Toole burst into a gust of heartless laughter, and even gentle Marjorie smiled.

"Here are your spectacles," she said gently. "They're not broken, and I don't think your back is either, Bessie."

Bessie Bunter groaned and blinked.

"If I euc-catch Cuc-clara I'll pull her plait!" she wailed. "She threw a bub-bomb at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ye gossoon!" roared THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 157.

Bridget O'Toole. "Twas only a football!"

"Oh, really, Bridget!" said Bessie Bunter stiffly, as she ceased to groan. "I know better than you do—it hit me! It was a bub-bomb!"

Satisfied that Bessie Bunter was not seriously hurt, if hurt at all, Marjorie hurried on into the quadrangle, and looked about her anxiously.

A group of laughing girls in the centre of the quadrangle gave the clue to her chum's whereabouts.

Bump! Bump! Bump, bump, bump! The pleasant, if wintry noise of a bouncing football sounded through the quadrangle. On this pleasant Wednesday afternoon the quadrangle was almost deserted. Most of the girls had elected to spend the half-holiday on the river, but some had chosen the cricket field.

The Fourth-Formers had had a match arranged for that day, but the other side having failed to put in an appearance, other arrangements had been made.

Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form, and her chum Mabel Lynn were taking part with the Fifth Form in a match against the Sixth, who also had a vacant date.

The Fifth Form team was "in," and it was those who were waiting their turn at the wicket who now gathered round Clara Trevlyn to watch her efforts at the noble art of football.

"Go it, Clara!" laughed Freda Foote. "Head it!"

"See if you can land it between those elms," laughed Phyllis Howell, herself a sportswoman.

But Barbara Redfern frowned, and tried to capture the ball.

"Better take it in the school, Clara," she said. "You'll get into trouble if you don't. You'll break a window or do something!"

Marjorie hurried up to the group and caught Barbara Redfern's arm.

"Do stop her, Babs!" she urged. "I know she'll do some damage."

Biff! Bump, bump! Bump!

The football sailed up into the air from the impact of Clara's rather large-sized shoes. That Clara could kick was certain, but that might not be sufficient excuse to exonerate her from blame should damage be done.

"Do stop, Clara," urged Babs; and Mabel Lynn chimed in, too.

But Clara Trevlyn only laughed and shook her head.

"What, before auntie comes?" she said. "And I'm doing this for her benefit?"

"Fuf for her benefit?"

Clara kicked the ball, and the crowd broke hurriedly to give it a clear flight.

Piper, the school porter, was just entering the gates, and Piper pulled up in quite natural amazement at the sight of "one of the young ladies" performing with a football.

"Look out, Piper!" yelled Clara. "Save this if you can!"

She ran back behind the stationary ball, and prepared to take a mighty kick. Piper, frozen with horror, stood still.

"Stop!" cried Marjorie.

Clara waved her chum aside and ran forward.

With a mighty kick she sent the football hurtling to the gate, accompanied by "oh's" from her audience.

With a curving, high trajectory the ball sailed to the gates.

The school porter moved this way and that hesitatingly, uncertain whether to face the ball and save his citadel—the gateway—or take flight.

He had not much time to think. The

ball bounded in front of him, and he dropped the broom he was carrying.

Biff!
The football caught Piper under his chin, and Piper, with a howl, subsided on to the cold and unsympathetic quadrangle.

And then from the Fourth-Formers came a concerted gasp.

"Oh!"

Cousin Amelia!

"OH!" That sound of mingled shock and horror came from the school gateway as a severe-looking woman, with a small cape and bonnet, paused in time to avoid the football as it bounded over the fallen Piper.

With the stately woman was a girl, well-dressed and obviously squeamish, who drew back from the ball.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Clara Trevlyn. "Auntie! I've done it now!"

Marjorie Hazeldene sighed, and most of the girls laughed.

"Oh, Clara," said Marjorie, "what ever will happen?"

There was genuine alarm and anxiety in Marjorie's voice. She, at least, realised the seriousness of the offence.

"I shall ask auntie to boot that ball back," replied Clara, with a chuckle. "Wonder what sort of goalkeeper auntie would make?"

The lady in the gateway was pointing indignantly at the fallen porter with her sunshade, and her voice was raised angrily.

"She's going for old Piper," said Babs. "Looks as though she might hit him with that green sunshade."

Clara brushed the dust from her drill dress and strode across the quadrangle, while the crowd of Fourth-Formers followed her.

Piper rose painfully and looked questioningly at Clara's aunt. The girl in the dainty, immaculate dress stared at him scornfully.

"It is positively disgraceful!" exclaimed Clara's aunt quite angrily. "I am surprised to see the school porter indulging in such pranks."

"Ahem!" said Clara discreetly.

But as yet, Clara had not been seen. Her aunt was not finished with Piper.

And the school porter was gaping with excusable stupidity, what time he clasped his aching chin.

"I shall report you for this," said Clara's aunt. "But for the intervention of my niece, Amelia, I might have had a severe fall over that ball."

Amelia looked self-consciously down at her shoes.

"I shall certainly take the matter up," rapped on Clara's aunt, while Piper continued to blink at her. "To think that you are setting such a terrible example to—"

"Ahem! Aunt—"

Clara Trevlyn, slightly red in the face, stepped forward.

Her aunt wheeled round to her, and surveyed her through a pair of tortoise-shell lorgnettes. In silence the crowd waited.

"Clara!" she said. "My dear girl. Dear me—you—you are dusty."

"Yes, aunt. I—er—"

Clara fumbled for words.

"This foolish man nearly tripped me up with his ridiculous tomfoolery with the ball."

"Ahem! It was my fault, aunt!"

"Your fault!"

Miss Trevlyn's tone was scandalised, and Amelia, her thin lips curled into a

slight sneer, gave her cousin a reproachful glance.

"I was just having a kick-about with the footer, aunt—"

"Clara!"

Miss Trevlyn drew herself upright, and from some of the Fourth-Formers in the crowd came sounds of stifled mirth. Others, with more sense of proportion, looked expectantly alarmed.

"How many times, Clara, have I ordered you not to make use of slang? You can say what you wish to say in English."

"Y-y-yes, aunt. I was just playing football, and kicking the football with the evident object of guiding its course between the gateposts—and Piper failed to save. It caught him—I mean, hit him under the chin."

"Indeed. Then the man is not to blame." She turned to Piper. "I am sorry that my ignorance of the true state of affairs caused me to blame you. But it did not occur to me that any girl—that any girl—least of all my own niece, could be guilty of such disgraceful behaviour."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Clara.

"I came to the school, Clara," said her aunt, in the same tone, "hoping, apparently vainly, to find you more cultured, and less of a tomboy."

"Yes, aunt. But there's no harm in football—or in hockey."

"I do not approve of such games for girls," said Miss Trevlyn decidedly, and with finality. "There is no need for them. Surely, it would be better for you to employ your time in learning deportment. Amelia finds no need for football."

Clara looked at Amelia and grinned. Amelia returned the grin with a sneer. There was obviously little love lost between the cousins.

"I am shocked, disgusted, at your conduct, Clara. And I hope sincerely that you are not typical of your Form—"

"Dear me, no!"

Annabel Hichens, the old-fashioned girl of the Fourth, shook her head and stepped into the limelight.

"We are not at all like Clara, Miss—er—Trevlyn," she said. "I have told Clara repeatedly that she is far from lady-like. I have offered to give her lessons in deportment. I am prepared to do so now. A woman's place is in the home—"

Clara glared at Annabel, and the other Fourth-Formers chuckled. When Annabel Hichens had once embarked on her favourite topic she became like a runaway horse, very difficult to stop.

But Miss Trevlyn seemed quite pleased, and she smiled sweetly upon Annabel.

"I am pleased," she said, "that there is at least one girl in the school who appreciates the value of deportment."

And, with head in air, Clara's aunt strode on. Amelia, after pausing just one second to sneer at her cousin, walked on, too!

For some seconds after Miss Trevlyn had gone there was silence, broken only by a chuckle from that lady's niece.

"My hat! And that is that!" said the irrepressible Clara.

But Marjorie Hazeldene was looking very serious.

"Oh, Clara," she said. "Why did you do it? You can see your aunt is cross. She may report you to Miss Primrose!"

"Oh, not auntie," said Clara.

"If you had only listened to me," said Annabel Hichens gravely as she wagged her forefinger, "you would now be a lady—you would—"

"You—you burbling, stupid nunny!" exclaimed Clara crossly. "Do you think aunt would like it if I looked like you?"

"My dear Clara—" "Don't 'my dear' me!" snapped Clara, quite crossly. Clara never did get on extremely well with Annabel, which, in view of the fact that they had not a great deal in common, was not surprising.

And Clara quite suddenly turned on her heel and left the group. Marjorie, always patient, went to pick up the football.

The others were either greatly amused or greatly perturbed, and in groups talked of the incident.

"There'll be trouble," said Barbara Redfern.

And Mabel Lynn nodded.

"There generally is," she said, "when Clara gets on the war-path. Poor old Clara."

But poor old Clara soon recovered her good spirits. She was never out of temper for more than about two minutes, and now, as she walked down the main corridor in the school-house, she was whistling cheerfully.

Actually, Clara could not whistle. Dolly had told her so in very plain words. Marjorie had broken the news more gently. But Clara still went on whistling.

The way to the stairs led past the headmistress' study, and even Clara realised that Miss Primrose, the headmistress, might not appreciate her rendering of "Swanee."

But as she turned into the headmistress' corridor, Clara stopped in surprise.

"My hat!" she murmured softly, and gave a low whistle of surprise.

For some seconds she stared in dumb amazement at a pink-clad figure half-way up the corridor. And well she might stare, for the pink-dressed girl was kneeling, with one ear close to the door of the headmistress' study.

Clara Trevlyn, with all her faults, was not a sneak. She was honest and outspoken, and anything underhanded, anything that savoured of the dishonourable, roused her ire.

She strode forward, not quietly, but in her usual way. The girl at the door, however, was too engrossed in her eavesdropping, too intent on what was being said in the headmistress' study, to hear what was happening in the corridor.

But she was soon to know. Clara Trevlyn, an angry frown on her face, was now level with the girl. She stooped, and with forefinger and thumb took hold of the eavesdropper's rather prominent and disengaged ear.

"Oh!"

It was an exclamation of surprise and alarm.

"Come up!" said Clara grimly, as her angry eyes met the startled ones of her cousin Amelia. "Your ear's coming! You can please yourself whether you come with it or not!"

"Let go—"

"Caught!" growled Clara. "Caught in the act, you sneak—spy!"

Amelia's dark eyes blinked in fright at her cousin's grim expression, and her lip trembled.

"This way!"

The indignant Clara dragged her cousin's inflamed ear along the passage, and Amelia reluctantly, but of necessity, accompanied it. Not until they were some yards from the headmistress' study did Clara stop, and then she released the paining ear, to which Amelia's hand went up immediately.

"Now, you lovely little sneak!" said Clara, with contempt that pierced even Amelia's skin, by reason of its genuineness.

Amelia bit her lip and scowled.

"I—I don't want any impertinence

from you, Clara!" she remarked, with a pitiful effort at dignity. She rubbed her ear, and her scowl became still darker.

"If you were in the Fourth," said Clara, "you'd be shown up and sent to Coventry!"

"Oh, really!" exclaimed Amelia, with an attempt at laughter. "And your dear Form-fellows would be greatly interested, perhaps, were I to tell them how you crawl round auntie."

"I don't listen at the door—"

"I was doing no such thing! My—my shoelace became untied, and I stooped to—"

"Oh, don't tell me those fairy-tales!" snapped Clara irritably. "You can't pitch those tales to me, Amelia! You pretend butter won't melt in your mouth! Oh, you sneak! I can't think how auntie ever puts up with you. She's a funny old stick, but she's a good sort, and straight as a die! You—you're like a corkscrew!"

"Clara, how dare you! It is like you to sneer at dear auntie behind her back!

little—what shall I say?—boisterous. Extremely boisterous!"

"A good deal more than merely boisterous," sniffed Miss Trevlyn. "When a girl—a young lady—plays football—football—"

She leaned back in her chair, and left completion of that sentence to Miss Primrose.

"Ahem! It is unusual, and I shall see that Clara is punished," said Miss Primrose. "Football is not one of our school games. Hockey is played at Cliff House, and one or two girls have attempted to start a netball club—"

"I have never approved of such games for girls!" said Miss Trevlyn emphatically, and with an air of finality.

In her own household Miss Trevlyn's word was law, and woe to her who dared gainsay it! But in Cliff House she was not so much of a personality.

"The directors have signified their approval of the games," said Miss Primrose mildly. "And, really, I can see no harm in them. They teach a girl to have



JUST LIKE CLARA! There were three separate "Oh's!" and three pairs of fascinated eyes watched the ball bump on to the table, bowl over a vase, and then roll across Marjorie's imposition! "Mum—my hat!" murmured Clara in dismay.

But you'd be glad enough to have her money if she died!"

"I!" exclaimed Clara warmly. "Why, of all the cheek! If—if I were a boy I'd jolly well hit you for that!"

She raised her arm threateningly, in pretence of a blow that was not likely to fall.

But the coward heart of Amelia was not up to the strain. She stepped back, and cried out in real alarm:

"Help!"

Taming the Tomboy!

MY dear Miss Primrose, it is really too terrible for words!"

Miss Trevlyn sat upright in the armchair, and fanned herself. Her face was worried, and she wore a look of really genuine concern for her wayward niece.

Miss Primrose, headmistress of Cliff House School, sighed, and adjusted her pincenez. She had been engaged upon Fourth Form essays when Clara's aunt had been announced, and she was not wholly pleased at the interruption.

"Yes, yes," she said. "Clara is a

consideration for others—they teach a girl to play fairly. The girls who do the school most credit are invariably sports-loving girls."

"H'm!" sniffed Miss Trevlyn. "No doubt—no doubt. My other niece, Amelia, has never played hockey or netball. But she does know how to conduct herself as a lady should. She does not come in with her hair in a tangle and her dress muddy and torn. Really, I sometimes feel quite ashamed to think that Clara is my niece!"

"She is a very straightforward and kind-hearted girl," said Miss Primrose rather stiffly, feeling that she ought to support her scholar, for Miss Primrose knew Clara's sterling worth—knew that her faults were on the surface and always seen. There was nothing underhanded about Clara. "I admit that Clara is inclined to be rough. Her manner is bluff, and she is thoughtless. But I like her. She is popular, and that speaks well for any girl, I think!"

"H'm!" grunted Miss Trevlyn. "I was fond of Clara as a child, very fond of her, and, of course, I like her now, if only she wouldn't be so annoyingly untidy, undainty, and rough. Amelia is

quite different. It is really a predicament!"

Miss Primrose, though she stared rather, made no remark. She wondered, however, what the predicament was.

"You see," said Miss Trevlyn slowly, "I am getting old, and some day my money will pass into other hands. I want to distribute it fairly to my nieces, of whom I have two—Clara and Amelia. The boys are provided for. But I wish to be quite certain that the money will not be squandered. Neither of them will be poor, and my money will make them rich—"

"I see," nodded Miss Primrose; "and the question is which shall have the larger share—and, I suppose, whether Clara is to have any at all, no doubt. You fear she may squander it."

"Most certainly, yes. And unless Clara improves, then I must disinherit her. I have given her chances to reform her rough ways, but she does not take them."

She paused, and Miss Primrose, feeling, no doubt, that something was expected of her, murmured, "Exactly!"

"With your permission," said Miss Trevlyn suddenly, leaning forward, "I will stay at the school and watch her. I want to see what she is like. I do not wish to judge the girl harshly from just one glimpse of her. A week's stay."

"Certainly," said Miss Primrose, after slight hesitation. "There is ample room in my house—"

"Thank you! For Amelia as well? Amelia is on holiday with me. She is an affectionate girl—very fond of me—"

"Yes, I think I could manage Amelia—I mean, I think there will be room. I will see that there is—"

Miss Primrose half-rose from her chair, then paused. From without came a clear sound—a shriek almost.

"Help!"

"Amelia's voice!" exclaimed Miss Trevlyn, and sprang up. Miss Primrose followed her to the door, and together they stared down the passage.

"Goodness me!" murmured Miss Primrose, as she blinked in amazement as she saw Amelia cringing away from Clara.

"Don't let her hit me!" wailed Amelia.

Miss Primrose strode forward, with Miss Trevlyn a pace only behind her.

"Clara!" she rapped out.

Clara lowered her half-raised arm. "Yes, Miss Primrose," she said meekly.

"Were you about to strike that girl?"

"No, Miss Primrose," said Clara truthfully. "I was only trying to frighten the silly kid—"

"She was going to hit me!" said Amelia sharply. "Just out of revenge because Aunt Jane spoke to her crossly!"

"Oh, rats!" said Clara.

"Clara!"

Miss Trevlyn and Miss Primrose uttered the name together, and Clara groaned.

"Clara," said Miss Primrose, "you will kindly refrain from using slang in my presence—"

"Or from using it at all," said Miss Trevlyn sharply.

Clara groaned aloud, and gave herself up as lost.

"Your aunt is most displeased with your unruly conduct," said Miss Primrose sternly. "It is really about time that you pulled yourself together. You are not a child now. Your aunt is staying with me for a week, and her intention is to keep an eye upon you."

"Oh!" said Clara dully. "And—and is Amelia staying, too?"

"Amelia is," said Aunt Jane tartly.

"And she will prove an example to you. Most certainly Amelia is staying."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Clara. "I mean—oh goodness!"

"To remind you that football is not to be played in the quadrangle—"

"Or elsewhere," interrupted Miss Trevlyn.

"I shall require you to write me out one hundred times, 'I must not play football.'"

"And in your best handwriting, although that is far from good," added Miss Trevlyn. "If you are wise you will mend your ways during the ensuing week." She turned to the headmistress. "And now, Miss Primrose, I will make arrangements for my stay, if you do not mind."

"Yes, yes," said Miss Primrose. "Clara, you may go!"

And Clara, not unwillingly, it must be admitted, went. She went very quickly, only stopping once to look back and groan again, "Oh crumbs!"

There was quite a crowd of girls awaiting her in Study No. 7 when she reached it.

At the sight of the lugubrious look on her face there was a chorus of friendly sympathy.

"Poor old Clara!" said Babs.

"Get it badly?" asked Dolly Jobling.

"A lecture?"

"Partly," admitted Clara. "But worse is to follow."

"Not going to be expelled?" asked Marjorie Hazeldene anxiously. "Oh, Clara!"

At that Clara grinned.

"No, Amelia's staying for a week!"

"That all?" asked Freda Foote, in surprise. "I don't see anything in that to—"

"You don't know Amelia," grunted Clara. "I've got to be meek and mild for a week—a whole week! I haven't got to sing, whistle, or play hockey, I suppose, and I haven't got to slide down the banisters. It will be a week. And to crown it all, there'll be Amelia. Ugh!"

"Poor old Clara!" chuckled Freda Foote. "You can't say that you haven't asked for it, can you? The only surprise to me is it hasn't come before!"

Clara groaned.

"And after all I've done for auntie," she said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old auntie," chuckled Freda.

"If you've got any sense you'll be unkind to her for the next week, Clara. She'd be much more pleased if you were like Annabel."

"I've a jolly good mind to be," said Clara. "Then she'd know what it is to have a nice jolly niece about the place, making it bright and cheery. It was jolly miserable at her house before I went. I'm not so sure that I sha'n't imitate Annabel, and pay her out. You never miss the water till the well runs dry, you know. She'll miss my happy, smiling face."

"I'll say she will," grinned Phyllis Howell. "She wants you to be like Amelia. Like a dutiful niece you ought to please her, and become a nice, well-behaved young lady."

"Lul-like me," said Bessie Bunter encouragingly.

"You—you fat stupid," growled Clara. "She doesn't want to go into hysterics every time she sees me."

"Oh, really, Clara!" protested Bessie. "I wasn't speaking about hysterics! If you had a figure like mine, I could teach you to be lady-like, like I am!"

"Ahem!" said Freda Foote tactfully, as she saw Clara's ire rising. "Joking apart—"

"I wasn't j-joking, Freda."

"Never mind, Bessie, you ought to have been. As I said, joking apart, we ought to help Clara become a lady."

She looked round the room, and winked at them all with the eye farthest from Clara.

"Hear, hear!" said Babs. "We'll turn her out a shining, gentle lady, who wouldn't dream of looking at a football."

"And every time she uses a slang expression, we'll fine her a penny," said Freda. "We can hire a yacht with the money and go to Africa."

"Oh, chuck it!" said Clara.

"Penny, please!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Twopence!"

Clara Trevlyn grinned, and then, to everyone's amazement, handed Freda Foote twopence.

"It's a go," she said.

And Clara meant it, unbelievable though it was. Clara intended to alter her ways. It was an excellent intention. But those who knew Clara and her little ways—and they were many—asked themselves the question: "For how long?" And Marcia Loftus, with a sneer, asked "Why?"

Her Last State Worse than the First!

YOU'RE not going down like that?"

Barbara Redfern, captain of the Fourth Form, stared at Clara Trevlyn in amazement. And the other Fourth-Formers, who were gathered round, chuckled.

Bab's question was not unwarranted, nor was her amazement. It scarcely seemed possible that Clara Trevlyn really intended going down to breakfast as she was then.

It was not exactly Clara's clothes that caused attention; for she was wearing her drill dress, but her hair was certainly amazing.

Clara's hair had been bobbed, and it just reached to the nape of her neck in the ordinary way. At present it was done in an extraordinary style.

"I've done it like Annabel's," said Clara. "So it must be right. Aunt is sure to like this, you know."

She put her head sideways and peered at herself in the glass. It was quite impossible to pretend that the style of hairdressing affected by Annabel suited Clara. The only advantage it possessed was its simplicity. But it was never intended for short hair.

Clara, by dint of brushing and tugging, had got her hair straight back so tightly that it raised her eyebrows. Then, with pins and ribbons, she had tied it in place by bunching the residue at the back.

"Clara. You mustn't go down like that," protested Marjorie. "Miss Steel will be angry."

"But Annabel's is like that."

"I hope not," said Annabel stiffly. "My hair is tidy, as a woman's hair should be. Although I prefer your hair to be tidy, I cannot imagine that it looks nice bunched back."

"Oh, well, it will have to do now," said Clara easily. And she smoothed it back. Then she took some hair oil and sprinkled it on lavishly—so lavishly that some ran down her forehead.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fourth-Formers.

"Iron it," suggested Freda Foote.

"Oh, rats!"

"Penny, please," said Freda, and clinked a box.

"Here, don't you give it to her," said Bessie Bunter hurriedly, and as if by magic the fat girl of the Fourth produced a tin box with a wide cut in its top.

From inside, when she shook it, came a sound that was reminiscent of latchkeys and rusty nails.

"No jolly fear," said Clara. "If you want tarts you buy them yourself, Fatima! Buzz off!"

"Twopence," said Freda Foote inexorably.

Bessie Bunter continued to rattle her tin; but with little result. Clara, knowing Bessie, was not likely to add real pence to the rusty keys.

"Twopence," said Freda, and Clara, with a sigh, handed the humorist of the Fourth a sixpence.

"And if you want any more coppers you can jolly well get them from someone else. I'm fed up with fines," said Clara.

"That's another threepence," said Freda thoughtfully. "Jolly is slang, coppers is slang, and fed-up is slang. Fivepence in all, and you gave me sixpence. Say something else in slang and make it an even sixpence."

"Rats!"

"Good! Now we're quits," said Freda. "Hope your funds will last out, Clara. You're doing splendidly. Two bob since yesterday afternoon. Two bob in half a day—average, five bob a day, and about fifteen shillings when you play hockey."

"Oh, do dry up!" growled Clara, trying to pin her hair back more tightly.

"Think I'll make a note of them," murmured Freda, "and let you have a weekly account; but you'll have to get your pocket-money raised. Let me see, another penny."

Clara still looked in the mirror, and the girls looked at Clara.

"I—I shouldn't go down like that if I were you, Clara," said Marjorie gently. But Clara shook her head.

"Auntie's cross, and I'm going to make her glad," she said. "She'll be so jolly surprised when she sees me in this get up, her wig'll fall off! You wait. I'm going to reform. I'm going to become neat and tidy like Annabel—stupid and fatheaded, no good at games, no good at anything except making a guy of myself—"

Freda Foote, who had been writing away with the rapidity of a shorthand expert, looked up with a wrinkled brow.

"Another fivepence," said Freda. "I under-estimated. Still, you'll ease off during lesson-time. And if you go carefully, you may get through the day on five shillings."

"Excuse me, Clara," said Annabel Hichens rather angrily. "I fail to see your reason for using me as a bait for your absurd humour. If you wish to learn a little of deportment, and if you wish to be of service in a house, then let me instruct you—"

"Give it a breeze till after brekker," said Clara.

"Twopence," said Freda, with an engrossed air.

Clara breathed deeply through her nose, and looked sideways at Freda.

"I say, Freda," said Bessie quickly. "you write down, and be secretary. I'll be treasurer. And I us-say, Clara, if you like I'll give you ladylike lessons at ten shillings a time—"

"I don't like—"

Clara turned to the girls around her. "Now, don't all grin like a set of jackanapes!" she said. "Miss Steel might smell a rat—"

The door of the dormitory opened, and Stella Stone, the school captain, looked in.

"Come along!" said Stella sharply. "You're all late for breakfast. Miss Steel will give you all a hundred lines if you don't— Goodness! Clara, what ever have you done to your hair? It does look a sight!"

"My hair, Stella!" said Clara innocently. "But it's done in a ladylike manner. I'm trying to please auntie."

Stella Stone grinned. Possibly she had heard about Clara's Aunt Jane.

"Oh, hurry along!" she laughed. "And you'd be wiser, I think, to take your hair out of that sticky mess, Clara."

Then Stella went. The Fourth-Formers hurried out after her; and Clara, a little dubiously, went with them. Clara had uneasy doubts as to the manner in which her new departure would be taken.

She intended the venture as a lesson to auntie. Perhaps it was not such an excellent scheme as she thought; but Clara detested convention, and was not enamoured of the girl who could not play games. Unreasonably, perhaps, she imagined that others must think the same.

If her aunt saw her as a good, neat, unathletic girl, Clara supposed that she would at once realise how much more

finnickily step, to the amusement of the others.

Annabel walked ahead into the dining-hall where the other Forms were at breakfast.

She waited until the other girls had entered, then she went in, and Clara followed, imitating Annabel's step.

All heads turned at their entrance, and for a moment a pin could have been heard had it dropped. Then—

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, look!"

"He, he, he!"

Roars of laughter went up from every table, and Clara rather nervously stopped; then, grimly, she went on, seeing that Annabel had not minded the laughter. Clara was determined to be a lady.

"Clara Trevlyn?" almost shouted Miss Steel. "Goodness gracious! Do my eyes deceive me? You have the impertinence to present yourself in that ridiculous manner! Walk properly, girl! And what have you done to your hair?"



CLARA'S WAY! Clara's finger and thumb closed about the disengaged ear of the eave-dropper. "Come up!" she ordered grimly, as her angry eyes met the startled ones of her cousin Amelia.

splendid was a care-free, jolly girl who could slam a footer or cricket-ball.

Unfortunately for the scheme, Clara and her aunt did not think along the same lines. Ridicule of propriety in conduct and dress was not really likely to alter Miss Trevlyn's ideas of long standing.

"It would be better," whispered Annabel Hichens, so suddenly that Clara jumped, "if you were to walk more sedately, and not with that unmannerly stride. Walk so!"

And Annabel, with mincing step, and fingers held daintily in a pose, stepped along a few yards ahead of Clara.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Clara. "What's that—the elephant falter, or the chimpanzee stagger? Is that what they did in the 'eighties?"

"This is the manner in which a well-bred lady carries herself," replied Annabel a little stiffly, as though ministering a gentle rebuke. "One does not stride—"

"Oh, ripping!" said Clara, and she clumsily attempted to imitate Annabel's

"Ahem!" stammered poor Clara. "I—er—a new style to please my aunt, Miss Steel. I—I'm reforming—"

Miss Steel simply blinked. And in the broad light of the dining-hall Clara's headdress appeared ridiculous; even more than Annabel's, from which she had modelled it, for Annabel's hair was long, and could be drawn tightly back in safety.

"Oh, indeed!" said Miss Steel. "It is by request—er—you will all take fifty lines for being late to breakfast! And, Clara, do not mimic other girls when you walk in to breakfast; an additional fifty lines may impress the fact upon your mind!"

Then Miss Steel, breathing hard, settled down to breakfast. But from time to time her glance strayed along towards Clara, and Clara's hair. It might have been noticed that Miss Steel smiled—a most unusual, yet quite excusable occurrence.

All through the meal Clara was silent, and Miss Steel seemed genuinely surprised. For it was not usual for Clara

to be silent. One way or the other Clara generally managed to make herself heard on all occasions.

It was most mysterious, and everyone seemed to notice it.

After breakfast Clara ran across her cousin Amelia.

As she saw her cousin approaching, Clara patted down her dress and attempted to look prim.

Amelia stopped short and stared. "Good-morning, cousin Amelia," said Clara meekly. "It is indeed a fine morning, is it not?"

"What do you mean?" asked Amelia, staring. Amelia did not look any too pleased. "I suppose this is another of your practical jokes, Clara?"

"Practical jokes!" Clara raised her hands in horror. "Oh, cousin Amelia, how crude your suggestion appears—practical jokes! Surely, they are not lady-like."

Amelia blinked, and the Fourth-Formers behind were nearly convulsed with mirth.

"Go it, Clara," murmured Freda Foote.

"Desist!" said Clara, rolling her eyes upwards. "Such mirth is unseemly. Dear, sweet cousin Amelia, what a pleasure it is to see your sweet, honest face—radiant with the sunshine of early summer—how happy and good it makes me feel!"

"Don't be absurd!" exclaimed Amelia crossly, none too pleased at the change in her cousin.

"Absurd!" Clara's lip trembled, and she stepped daintily forward. "Oh, Amelia, let us not quarrel, life is too short—er—hearts are too precious to break. Kiss me, dear Amelia!"

She bent forward and bestowed a cousinly kiss on Amelia's cheek.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Amelia sprang back and clenched her hands.

"You little idiot!" snapped Amelia. She glared at Clara and the laughing Fourth-Formers, then, her head in the air, she stalked off, and Clara looked after her tragically.

"Spurred!" she groaned. "Alas! My friendship scorned—am I not enough a little lady?"

"Oh, my hat!" laughed Freda Foote. "Do run along, Clara. We shall all get gaged for being late for lessons."

"It is unseemly to hurry," reproved Clara, and she walked along with mincing step.

Clara, the Sweeper.

"CLARA, you are late again!" Miss Steel spoke quite crossly as Clara entered the room daintily. Most of the other girls were seated, but Clara had only just entered.

"Yes, Miss Steel," answered Clara meekly.

"Why did you not hurry?"

"Hurry! Oh, Miss Steel!" exclaimed Clara in shocked tones. "Aunt Jane says a really nice girl never hurries—it is unseemly."

"Oh—oh—indeed!" said Miss Steel tartly, and stared at Clara.

The Fourth-Formers rocked about in their seats with laughter. Clara blinked up at the Fourth Form mistress with demure, innocent eyes.

"I think you had better get to your seat, and let me have no more of this freakish conduct, Clara."

Clara bowed her head, hesitated in her own mind whether or not she should curtsey, then walked to her seat and sat down gracefully.

Miss Steel's eye was still upon her, and

not very approvingly. Miss Steel had always looked upon Clara as one of her most unruly pupils, yet a pupil to be trusted. She was still to be trusted, but Miss Steel could not make out how much of this was a joke and how much earnest endeavour. Her previous experience of Clara led her to believe that the former had the honours with an overwhelming majority.

Clara sat bolt upright in her place, looking straight before her. It was as much as Miss Steel could do to refrain from smiling. For Clara looked amusing.

Annabel Hichens gave Clara approving glances, and Bessie Bunter blinked at her through thick spectacles. Freda thought of her slang fund which was not likely to increase rapidly. Clara had "gone off" slang.

Clara's attention to lessons was remarkable, almost uncanny in fact, and Miss Steel began to think that perhaps Clara was serious.

But suddenly Clara broke the silence of the Form-room.

"Oh!" she exclaimed in horror.

"Clara, what is it?" exclaimed Miss Steel.

"Oh, I am sorry, Miss Steel, that I unwittingly gave verbal expression to my surprise and—shock. But I've a hole in my stocking!"

Clara spoke as though she had suddenly discovered herself armless. And there was a gasp of amazement from the Fourth Form. Clara was renowned for the holes in her stockings. If Clara ever darned a stocking it was cause for remark and perplexity in the Form; it was an occurrence as remote as a universal flood.

"Indeed!" said Miss Steel coldly, as the girls tittered. "Indeed! I have noticed it myself, Clara, on several occasions. In fact, I have informed you of the fact more often than I can remember—"

"But, Miss Steel, what would auntie say?" ejaculated Clara, almost tearful, a look of woe-begone seriousness on her face. "Such a large hole, too!"

"Possibly! You had better darn it immediately after lessons. For the present you must forget it—annoying as it must be to a girl so tidy and precise as you," said Miss Steel sarcastically. "I hope it will not bear so heavily upon your mind that you cannot pay attention to what I am saying."

"Oh, no, Miss Steel," said Clara meekly. "My Aunt Jane says girls should be seen and not heard. Auntie—"

"Yes, yes, Clara. Please do not chatter!"

Clara looked meekly at her desk, and the lessons proceeded. Not another word did Clara utter until classes were over, and then very tidily she gathered up her books.

The other girls filed out, and Clara stooped to pick up a piece of paper. Then she went all over the floor picking up oddments, scraps of paper, and pencil shavings.

From the doorway the Fourth-Formers watched her dumbfounded. Clara Trevlyn picking up paper—Clara being tidy! Truly, it was amazing.

As for Miss Steel, she hardly knew whether she was awake or whether she was dreaming.

"Clara," she said in a weak voice. "Lessons are over, and—er—you are free. If you wish to play cricket—"

"My Aunt Jane, Miss Steel, says that cricket is a rough, unladylike game."

"Indeed!"

Miss Steel stared after Clara as that girl primly walked from the room. In her time Miss Steel had experienced

many strange girls, but Clara was surely the strangest!

Outside the Form-room Barbara Redfern gripped Clara by the arm.

"You didn't mean that about cricket?" she asked anxiously.

Clara looked at her coldly.

"If you mean to suggest that I have any desire to play cricket, Barbara Redfern," she said, "allow me to tell you that the imputation is extremely offensive."

"Oh!" said Babs.

"Oh, don't keep it up with us!" said Freda Foote. "We're in the know. You can rag Miss Steel, but you can't rag us. We don't allow it!"

"Rag—rag—" murmured Clara vaguely. "I really fail to understand you, Freda Foote. What is rag—a portion of material—or—"

"Well, I'm blessed!" exclaimed Dolly Jobling. "There's something the matter with you, Clara. You know what a rag is—a jape—a weeze—a stunt—"

Clara raised her eyes and looked mournfully at the ceiling.

"Is this some strange fanatic language?" she murmured. "I know it not. A weeze—surely that is akin to asthma—"

"Clara," murmured Marjorie, "don't keep on with it, dear! Do be serious. You seem to forget there is a cricket practice after lessons."

"Of course she remembers!" scoffed Dolly Jobling crossly. "If she thinks she can pull our legs, she's jolly well mistaken!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Stop it, Clara!" The Fourth-Formers were no longer amused. It was all right for Clara to play her little joke upon the mistress. But when she turned it upon them—well, as Freda said, it was a little bit too thick.

"I really fail to understand. I fear that you are vexed with me for something I have done," said Clara, in agitation. "I do hope that nothing I may have said in all innocence has caused you annoyance—"

Barbara Redfern looked at Marjorie and sighed. Mabel Lynn, who could see the point of this, and was rather admiring Clara's acting, smiled.

Freda Foote, herself a humorist, objected to her estate being trespassed upon.

"Come down to cricket, and don't play the stupid!" urged Barbara Redfern. "We haven't any time to spare!"

"Indeed, nor have I," said Clara solemnly. "There are stockings to darn, and the study wants sweeping out and tidying-up after Marjorie—"

"After me!" ejaculated Marjorie. "Why, Clara, it is you who threw the work-basket on the floor, and you—"

"Ahem! Anyway, it wants tidying very badly," Clara went on. "I have little time for frivolity. Cricket is a rough game in which no nice girl should take part."

"Hear, hear!" said Annabel Hichens, while the others gaped at Clara. "I agree with you entirely, Clara. I am more pleased than I can say that you have at last come to your senses. I will accompany you to the study and give you instructions as to cleaning it."

"Oh—er—that is kind of you, dear Annabel!" murmured Clara. "Your kindness is exemplary. Perhaps we can, in time, bring these misguided girls to see reason. A new era will start. Dolly Jobling shall be taught to cook—"

"Oh, shall I?" asked Dolly. "I'd like to know who can teach me!"

"It would be difficult. We can but try," answered Clara.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"One for you, Dolly!"

Clara smiled, and took Annabel's arm.

(Continued on page 45.)



THE CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY



No. 7. (New Series).

Week ending May 13th, 1922.

Clara Trevlyn is dark, with bobbed hair, and clear grey eyes. Upon inquiry, we learn that she did not have her hair bobbed in order to be in the fashion. It was in order that it "wouldn't be so much in the way!"

It is not easy to decide which forms Clara's outstanding characteristic—her slangy method of expression, her vigorous way of doing everything, her rather large feet, or that eternal ladder in the leg of her stocking. Perhaps the honour goes to the first named, as we hear her voice more frequently than we see the other things mentioned.

In fact, her predilection for slang always has been—and probably always will be—the despair of Marjorie Hazeldene, with whom and Dolly Jobling she shares Study No. 7. We never hear Clara say "Dear me!" It is always "My hat!" and "Great Scott!" Clara never talks about being willing to do anything. She is always "game."

Two such opposites as Clara and Marjorie are not to be found in the Fourth Form—if one excepts, in the matter of mere appearance, fat Bessie Bunter and thin Agnes White, or fashionable Meg Lennox and old-fashioned Annabel Hieheh. Clara is a complete tomboy, as vigorous and sweeping in everything she undertakes as Marjorie is gentle and delicate. It is hard to imagine Marjorie Hazeldene running downstairs three at a time; it is harder still to

GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING CLARA TREVLYN.

By Barbara Redfern (The Editress.)

imagine Clara descending in any other way. No doubt it is on account of this striking disparity in temperament that Clara and Marjorie are such close chums.

Clara expressly wishes me to make a distinct statement as regards the size of her feet. She takes a 7 in shoes—nothing larger!

She has rather stronger likes and dislikes than most of us. Her pet antipathy is slacking. She can't stand slacking in any shape or form, particularly, in the old days, in the shape and form of Bessie Bunter. It used to be almost her mission in life to reform Bessie. And now she says, in rather grievous tones, that now Bessie's character has altered in so many ways she does not find life the same!

Clara is more than good at every branch of sport we have taken up. But in short-distance running, swimming, cycling, and wicket-keeping at cricket she excels. So far as pluck goes, she has more than once proved herself the equal of any of us, and in daring, which has a meaning rather different from that of pluck, she is certainly the leading girl in the Fourth Form.

For verse-writing she has a peculiar

facility. She appears to be able to translate any happening into rhyme and meter with the greatest of ease. Freda Foote and Katie Smith are very good on their day, but Clara I can always rely on for really good

verses, at the shortest notice, when some expected contribution has not "happened in." Japing is an intellectual pursuit to which Clara is not unaddicted. In fact, I am inclined to believe she is the leading japer of the Form. I can remember a particularly amusing jape of hers. It was just after the occasion on which burglars tried to break into Cliff House. The Bull got into what Clara would call a "blue funk," and had burglar alarms connected with her window and door.

It was Clara who set an alarm, and put it under the Bull's bed, and, immediately following the stroke of twelve that night the alarm went off. The Bull simply leapt out of bed and aroused the whole school, and the whole building and grounds were scoured for the imaginary intruder. It was the biggest midnight commotion I have ever known, and certainly far greater in effect than poor Clara had ever bargained for.

No one thought of looking for a hidden clock, and that marked the last of the Bull's burglar alarm—and the last jape of the kind Clara ever practised!

But Clara, with all her noise and tomboy ways, is a great favourite with all, and holds a place in our hearts that could never be taken by any other girl.

WILL I EVER REFORM CLARA?

By Marjorie Hazeldene.



To tell the truth, I am beginning to feel doubtful. Clara is just as boisterous, just as careless, just as slangy as she was when she came to Cliff House. No reproof of mine seems to make any difference.

Dear me! The manner in which she descends the stairs is most ungraceful and dangerous. I am positive she will fall all the way down one of these days, and so I keep on telling her. But to no purpose!

How she has managed to go so long without having an accident I do not know. But I am very glad indeed that she has been so fortunate, and, if she must be so unladylike, I must hope her luck continues.

And her stockings! When do we see Clara's stockings without a ladder in one of them? Never! I believe she could wear through the very strongest pair in the world in a week! I keep on urging her to take more care in the wearing of them, but I may just as well not talk at all.

But the excess of slang in her conversation is perhaps her most reprehensible quality. Why she should always say "My hat!" instead of "Dear me!" and "Great Scott!" instead of "Good gracious!" I cannot understand. I have pointed out that all this is just a bad habit of hers, and can easily be broken. But it is no good! Clara, I am afraid, will always be Clara!

WILL I EVER REFORM MARJORIE?

By Clara Trevlyn.

(After reading Marjorie's article.)



To be quite candid, I am beginning to throw up the sponge. Marjorie is just as quiet, just as careful, just as mild in expression as when she first came to Cliff House. No blowing up from me seems to make any difference.

My stars! You should see the way Marjorie goes downstairs! First one toe, and then the other—the picture of maidenly elegance! I am positive that she will take root on the stairs one of these days, and so I keep on telling her. But nothing doing!

And as to running down two steps at a time! My giddy hat! Fancy Marjorie doing that!

And her stockings! When do we see Marjorie's stockings with a ladder in either of them? Never! I jolly well believe she could wear the flimsiest pair in the world for a week without rubbing a hole in them! I keep on urging her to put a bit more tear in the wearing of them. But I might just as well talk to the man in the moon!

But the absence of slang in her chinwag is perhaps her most inapprehensible quality. Why she should always say "Dear me!" instead of "My hat!" and "Good gracious!" instead of "Great Scott!" beats me hollow. I've pointed out that all this is just a bad habit of hers, and can easily be knocked on the head. But it's N.G. Marjorie, I can bet my boots, will always be Marjorie!



BRIEF HISTORY OF CLARA TREVLYN.

BRIGHT and breezy Clara! Bright and breezy from the day we met her, Clara's irrepressible high spirits have never been known seriously to flag, and she is as bright and breezy now as ever she was. No wonder she is such a general favourite all round!

Clara Trevlyn does not often play a dramatic part. Such a part does not quite suit her. But when, with a number of others, she takes part in a dramatic scene, she always, if at all possible, introduces a breezy, care-free element into the affair. That she can rise to a dramatic occasion single-handed, however, was amply demonstrated by the affair of the coiners in the tower, during our period of camping-out.

It is quite difficult to single out the happenings of note in which Clara Trevlyn does not play a prominent part. First of all, we find her scheming—with definite success—to remove the then objectionable Bessie Bunter from Study No. 7. Next she played a very prominent—but not successful—part in "canvassing" in order to have Marjorie Hazeldene elected as Form captain. And in the following occurrences Clara was always more or less in evidence.

Perhaps Clara's first noteworthy triumph was gained during our sports contest with the girls of Danesford Hall, in which she brilliantly won the 220-yards flat race; Ethel Jeremy, of Danesford Hall, getting in second a yard behind Clara. And after that, at about the time when Agnes White came to the school, Clara first showed her prowess as a wicket-keeper.

Her next notable performance in order of time is the one above referred to—the affair of "Hooker's" Tower. Whilst Augusta Anstruther-Browne and Marcia Loftus were imprisoned in the castle itself, Clara and a few more of us had been trapped by the rascals on the narrow parapet.

It was here that Clara showed both her pluck and her resource. At no little risk she swarmed down the inside of a chimney, and introduced herself to the coiners' kitchen. There she had a desperate skirmish

with one surprised coiner, during the course of which that gentleman received a bag of his own spurious coins full in the chest—literally paid in his own coin—and was bowled over. Then, escaping from the kitchen, she was able to let us in from above; and, finally, through a peculiar manoeuvre on the part of Bessie Bunter, to prevent the coiners escaping. This forms one of the most dramatic incidents in Clara Trevlyn's career at Cliff House.

Clara is undoubtedly a tomboy. She loves to clatter about the corridors, indulge in boisterous games, use slang, and raise her voice as much as possible. Above all, she loves to observe a cold and unemotional demeanour as much as ever possible. Far from being cold and unemotional, we found, on the occasion when her two chums quarrelled, what a soft, sympathetic heart is hers.

On that occasion Nancy Bell schemed to bring about a quarrel in Study No. 7. She succeeded, and so very completely that Marjorie and Dolly were each so convinced that the other was guilty of a very mean and spiteful deed that they ceased to be on speaking terms.

In spite of that, it was clear to everybody—Clara particularly—that they were still deeply fond of each other in their hearts. Clara's laborious efforts—such as arranging for Dolly to attend to Marjorie's cut finger—to bring them back to speaking terms, were both amusing and pathetic. Indeed, it is not too much to say that one could both laugh and cry at the methods Clara adopted to put an end to that first unfortunate quarrel that Study No. 7 had ever known. But she succeeded in the end, and Nancy Bell was exposed.

Clara has been loyal to Babs ever since Marjorie was beaten in the struggle for the Form captaincy. It is generally agreed now that no better captain than Barbara Redfern is to be found in the Fourth Form. Strange to say, however, it was Clara who nominated Bessie Bunter as future Form captain when Miss Bullivant, in a fit of bad temper, suggested that Babs should resign.

But Clara, of course, had a deep motive in this. The exact words used by the Bull were, "Bessie Bunter would make a far better captain than you do, Barbara!" Thus the nomination of Bessie Bunter as Form captain was nothing more than a gentle jape of Clara's upon the Bull. It was a lesson, too, and a very effective one it proved. Bessie Bunter made such a hopeless hash of everything she undertook, that Miss Bullivant, driven almost out of her senses, apologised to Babs, and ordered Bessie to resign.

In the history of Study No. 7 there have been but two serious quarrels. The first has already been mentioned with some detail. But it was Dolly this time caused the rift in the lute of Study No. 7, on account of the short-temperedness with which she returned to the school after the holidays. So unbearable did poor Dolly become that Clara and Marjorie actually removed into another study. Dolly, in reality, was engaged in a noble task to help her brother; but the quarrel this time was really her own fault for not taking her chums into her confidence.

Nevertheless, once again we find Clara in her laborious role of peacemaker—this time burning toffee, with the ulterior motive of tempting Dolly to help her with it. But Dolly's snappish reply—"I'm not interested in toffee!"—quite took the wind out of even Clara's sails! Still, it all came right in the end, and, with the worry removed from her shoulders, Dolly Jobling became the same old lovable, clumsy Dolly that Clara and Marjorie had always known.

Henceforward, Clara has never been in the background, yet never quite the principal character in a dramatic incident. Everything she has done has been typical of Clara—always creditable, always useful, always in a good cause. Clara stood by Babs all the while that Sheba Stanton was scheming against her and gaining such an influence amongst the Fourth-Formers. Whilst the Fourth Form parliament held its brief reign, Clara Trevlyn held the office of "Usher"—and very successfully she fulfilled her duties!

Clara was amongst the firmest believers in Augusta Anstruther-Browne's innocence when she was expelled from the school on a false charge. Indeed, it was Clara who pursued and captured the culprit—Judy Grigg—when that very mean type of girl, as Clara expressed it at the time, was "bunking."

In all, Clara Trevlyn is more than well worth having as a friend, and, as Marcia Loftus and Nancy Bell might corroborate, not at all desirable as an opponent!



MY LIFE—YEAR BY YEAR!

By Clara Trevlyn.

At a year I just missed falling out of my pram.
That I didn't succeed shows how lucky I am!
At two I sat down on the carpeted floor;
Though I wasn't in pain I gave vent to a roar!
At three I picked up a small coin of the realm;
The joy of this find did my mind overwhelm!
At four I fell into a six-inch deep stream;
People thought I was drowned by the way I did scream!
At five I was caught in a wind on the green;
I wasn't blown down, but I might well have been!
At six I first started a tomboy to be;
I threw twigs at the gardener, and, turning, did flee!
At seven I was worse, for I climbed a small tree;
And by way of reward got a graze on each knee!
At eight I was queen of the little girls nearabouts;
Said they: "You're the strongest and bravest girl hereabouts!"
At nine I was thinking of coming to school;
And wondering whom there would be to befool!
At ten I arrived, and met Marje and young Dolly;
Our Second Form days were, to say the least, jolly!
At eleven I scored my first goal in the Third;
'Twas against my own side—I won't say what occurred!
At twelve I was working off jape after jape;
Always in trouble—in scrape after scrape!
At thirteen an Upper Third-Former was I;
More tomboy than ever, my friends testify!
And now, a Fourth-Former, I let fall a tear,
As I write the last line of MY LIFE—YEAR BY YEAR!



CLARA—THEN AND NOW!

By Freda Foote.

(Comparing the Clara who arrived at Cliff House with the one we now know.)

THEN Clara used to say "My hat!" or "Great Scott!" only on occasions.

NOW we hear them in every other sentence!

THEN Clara made a pair of stockings last week without introducing ladders into them.

NOW her strongest pair won't last more than three days!

THEN, I believe, she only took size 8 in shoes.

NOW I am sure she takes a 14!

THEN she would come downstairs at no greater than running speed.

NOW she makes an express train look slow!

THEN she would only play japes upon her own Form, and the one immediately above.

NOW she practises them on anybody and everybody!

THEN she had Marjorie and Dolly for her chums.

NOW, for variety, she has Dolly and Marjorie.

THEN she wrote verses without rhythm, rhyme, or meter.

NOW they appear without meter, rhyme, or rhythm.

THEN she would sometimes be seen trying to mend her new stockings.

NOW—never!



QUESTION AND ANSWER!

By Clara Trevlyn.

Is versifying easy? No, it jolly well isn't! That's my experience, anyway! I can remember the difficulty I once had in finding a line to fit the one: "When Bessie was chased from the orchard." The best rhyme for orchard I could find was "tortured." It took me ever so long to find a suitable rhyme, and by the time I had formed the couplet,

When Bessie was chased from the orchard,
My giddy old hat! She did scorch hard!

Bessie had altered her ways, and my labour was in vain!

Do I ever intend to devote an evening to mending all my "ladders"? Yes, I do intend to. And that's as near as I intend getting towards it!

Do I think I shall ever alter my ways? The counter-question is—Why should I?

Do I find class work or games most congenial to my temperament? My stars! Class work or games! GAMES, of course!

How do I think I will fare in the next exam? Topping! Be put down into the Third, I should think!

Do I think Cliff House is improving or declining? Improving, beyond question, though why I should be asked to answer a question like this beats me! We're better at sport than ever we were before, and the last exam showed that the whole school had earned a higher percentage of marks than had been known for some time. So it looks as if we're improving, doesn't it?

If I could, would I rub out my face and draw another? If I could, would I—my word! What wouldn't I give to know who'd left this silly list of questions on my desk! I'd give the duffer the shaking of her life!

(Clara is now making an energetic search for Freda Foote!—Ed.)

MY POETS' CORNER!

By Clara Trevlyn.



IT has ever been my ambition to control a Poets' Corner in the "Cliff House Weekly," and when at last Babs said I could have a whole page for the purpose if I liked, I simply jumped for joy. And then, in a single evening, my views changed! Why? Why this strange thudness? Well, I sent round the joyful news to the poet laureates of the three chief Forms—self-laureated in each case—and the results were prompt. And that is as much as I can say in their favour.

From Angelica Jelly, of the Fifth, I received

HEIGH-O!

The poet hath entered her own!
Her songs will henceforward adorn a
Full page of the "Weekly," so every one
Will look forward each week to our Corner!

Nerve-shaker Number Two:

FROM GLOOM TO GLADNESS!

By Eugenio Ayres, Upper Third Form.

We poets are frequently sad,
So wan that there's few who look wan-er;
But now we are bithesome and glad,
For at last we've se-cu-red a Corner!

The Third and Final Act of the Tragedy:

HUZZAH!

By Frances Barrett, Sixth Form.

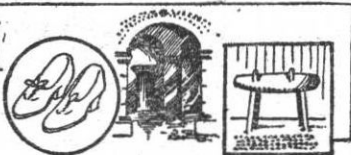
Huzzah! cries the poet from her den!
Huzzah and Huzzah! Every morn a
Fresh sonnet will flow from this pen,
And appear in the new Poets' Corner!

Which, you will agree, puts the lid on it! Not for some time will Babs hear me again clamour for a "Poets' Corner!"

(*Poet's note.—Pronounce WOAN.)



CLARA TREVLYN CONFESSES!



MY FAVOURITE HOBBY.

I HOPE I won't occasion much surprise by remarking that my favourite hobby is not mending stockings, nor cultivating a fairylike tread. It used to be reforming Bessie Bunter, but now this seems to be no longer necessary. Ever since the "Weekly" started, verse-writing has been my hobby. I believe I could keep on writing verses without stopping for a month and not get fed up. I have written at least one parody on every poem of note in the whole of English Literature. I've got a bottom drawer crammed full of verses. On the flypages of all my text books you'll find verses. Scribbled on the back of her cookery articles Dolly finds couplets. Tacked on to her needlework instructions Marjorie often finds lists of rhymes—and she doesn't appreciate the addition, either! If I'm not jolly careful, this hobby of mine will degenerate into a giddy mania!

MY FAVOURITE WALK.

My favourite walk is among the boulders and cliffs and caves along the coast east of Black Pike. When out walking I never fail to wear substantial shoes, and carry a walking-stick, and I seldom go without Marjorie and Dolly. Dolly, especially, never fails to make a walk interesting and full of varied incidents. I don't know how it is, but somehow with every few hundred yards or so her legs seem to get entangled with my walking-stick, and down she goes with a bump! Each time, too, she threatens never to come out again with me unless I leave that stick behind, but up to now she still risks it! I am rather partial to a walking-stick, and Dolly really can't expect me to leave it behind simply because of her clumsiness. We have always, however, to keep well clear of the brink of the cliff because of Dolly's regular tumbling-over act!

MY FAVOURITE SPORTS.

In winter, hockey; in summer, cricket. But supposing a summer evening is chilly, and seems to demand a game rather faster for each individual than cricket, then I find I favour tennis. And, again, supposing we have only a "scratch" game of cricket booked for a "halfer," and the afternoon is of the "picturesque" variety, then a row up river is the sport for me. Without bragging, I might state that I am immensely popular as a boating companion. The reason is, when in a boat I like to do the rowing, and many are the girls who like to take on the "cushy" job of steering! Last Wednesday afternoon, however, I surprised Marcia Loftus, Nancy Bell, and Hetty Hendon by acceding to their request to accompany them in their boat. But I surprised them still more by making them do all the rowing, whilst I did nothing but steer!

MY FAVOURITE SHOES.

I have a pair of substantial old shoes that suit me for walking better than any others I have ever had. Perhaps it is because they are a shade larger than any others I wear! Quite recently these favourite shoes of mine mysteriously disappeared! I had persuaded—Dolly calls it browbeaten—Marjorie and Dolly to accompany me for another walk that bright evening. And my walking shoes were not to be found! In fact, all my shoes—save the indoor ones which I was wearing—had done the vanishing trick. And in the accustomed place of my walking shoes were a pair of high-heeled ones of Marjorie's! That Dolly was the culprit I knew by her cheerful demeanour. She wanted me to wear Marjorie's shoes so that I would keep my walking-stick more to the ground beside me, thus giving the clumsy Dolly a chance not to fall over so much. But, after a great search, I found my favourite shoes—in Dolly's boiling-pan on the gas-range! So poor Dolly did not escape the usual perils of our outings!

MY FAVOURITE WET WEATHER PASTIME.

This consists of nothing more or less than exploring the vaults in exciting but fruitless searches for more secret passages. Both Dolly and I find this really exciting—when there is nothing of importance to be done! On the last wet day we had a spice of excitement in connection with this. From one of the schoolhouse windows we had seen, through the drizzle and mist, a rather strange-looking girl dart to the old tower and disappear. Dolly and I gave chase eagerly and grimly, found the secret door—which, you might remember, Lorna Manton discovered—wide open, and, taking separate directions, we scoured the vaults. You can imagine our surprise and disgust when we found that the "strange-looking" girl was none other than Meg Lennox! Meg, attired in the very latest spring coat and hat, and there to escape the rain, and doing a bit of "exploring" to fill in time! It was a regular anti-climax!

MY FAVOURITE INDOOR PURSUIT.

Most emphatically, keeping in the trim of condition in the gym! I don't know of any other to equal it. I don't know how I should feel were the good old gym to be abolished. My mind is full of pleasant memories of happy hours spent in the gym. One or two, however, are not of the pleasantest. I remember once I had scaled to the top of one of the climbing ropes—a thing we are not allowed to do unless we have placed the thick mattress at the foot. I felt quite a nasty sensation as the stout iron hook at the top started to break away from the woodwork. I clasped both hands round the rafter over my head, and yelled for a ladder. The long gym ladder was missing, and whilst the girls held the mattress beneath me, I had to wait until Piper's ladder was fetched. This was done, and I reached the floor in quite a quivery state, after one of the most unnerving experiences I have had!

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 157.



CLARER TREVVERLIN

The Gerl and Her Werk.

By **BESSIE BUNTER.**

(4th Form.)

DO I hear you arsk, deer readers: "Impreposterus! What can be the meaning of the titel, 'Clarer Trevverlin: The Gerl and Her Werk,' when we know so well that she never does any werk?" Well, deer readers, the trooth is, that titel is just a litterry ekpreshun. Nothing more or less. It's the kind of thing we litterry krittikis are in the habbit of saying.

We often see such titels as, "Charles Thakkerly: The Man and His Werk," and "Willyum Makepeace Dikkens: The Man and His Werk." We know that they, too, never did any werk, becoss they were novverlists. So "Clarer Trevverlin: The Gerl and Her Werk" is a similar kind of titel. It is a litterry ekpreshun, which is the name of something that has no meaning. Thus my titel is nither impreposterus nor stupidiculous. It is a litterry ekpreshun, which means that it has no meaning.

In this artikal I mean to praise Clarer, just as I praised Peggi Presstun last week. Clarer will be no end pleezed when she reads it, and will blush with pride.

First of all, there are a lot of people who think that Clarer is nothing but a big, silly, orkwerd, noizy, useless, slangy tomboy, with feet and hands twice too big for her. I will now prosced to chatter this forliss impreshun. It is not korrekkt to think that Clarer is nothing but that. She is something else as well.

She is a riter of verses, for one thing. No praise of mine could be too high for her power as a verse riter. Her verses are beyond the bukkit—or should I say the pall?—of krittissizzum. They are idel in everything ekscept ryme, meter, wering, and konstrukschun.

That is but one aspekkt of the gerl and her werk. The way she gets the lazy slakkers like Nancy Bell and Marsher Lofters out of bed in the mornings is trooly admirabberbul. I have no payssiunche with lazy slakkers. They are not wanted at Cliff Howse. But Clarer goes too far, thoh, when she starts to drag me out after them!

Clarer's stockings are the objekt of much krittissizzum, and I am redly to meat and skwosh that krittissizzum. Clarer evidently believes in ventillashun, which is heitly. For another thing, Clarer, like a sensibbul gerl, knows that when she mends her stockings she makes them look much wesser than the ladders did, and for that reazon she leaves them alone.

Her shooze, agane, are subjekted to much sarkazzum and kontent from the gerls, and I am riting this to defend them against that sarkazzum and kontent. Clarer wares a sensibbul sighs in shooze. She dizerves applause for being the only gerl who's shooze I can get into. Clarer was arsking people only larst nite if they knew anything about her best shooze, which she had found cracked and calked with mudd, and lobbing over at the heels. She will be honored to lern that I borrowed them, and wore them to take a short cut throu the plowed feelds to the villidge. They fitted me puklikly, she will be relieved to reed!

So here ends "Clarer Trevverline: The Gerl and Her Werk!" (Bessie, as well as Freda, is now the objekt of an energette search by Clara!—Ed.)



THINGS I HAVE TRIED MY HAND AT!

By **Clara Trevlyn.**

AS the Cliff House Weather Expert, I once had a friend in the south-west corner of England, and another in the south of Ireland, and I got them to write to me each day, giving a careful description of the prevailing weather. Thus, if my Ireland friend informed me the weather there was brilliant, and my friend in the south-west of England remarked that the weather there was dull, but getting brighter, I calculated that a brilliant spell of weather was passing across here to the east of England. But alas! I prophesied wet when it turned out fine, and vice versa, until I got into ill-favour all round!

Gardening, washing, knitting, wall-papering, and mending bicycles, cricket-bags, tennis-rackets, and shoes and stockings are but a few of the things I have tried my hand at, and failed dismally!

Space won't allow me to mention the hundred and one other things I have tried my hand at. But the results have mostly been equally disastrous for all concerned—myself particularly!

THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 157.



SOME OF MY DUTIES!

(Self-Appointed and Otherwise.)

By **CLARA TREVLYN.**

VERSE Sub-Editress of the "Weekly."—This is my principal duty. Babs admits that I take a good deal of work off her shoulders in this respect. The amount of "poetry" that is submitted for our consideration is really surprising, Eugenie Ayres, Angelica Jelly, and Francis Barrett being the chief offenders. If you don't know why I have quoted the word "poetry," see the feature headed "My Poet's Corner" in this number!

Routing Out the Slackers.—This is a "self-appointed" duty of mine, but I fulfil it with perhaps greater zeal than I do any other. It includes seeing that all the girls tumble out of bed with the ringing bell, Nancy Bell, Marcia Loftus, Hetty Hendon, and Bessie Bunter being the ones on whom I keep the keenest eye. I also see that every girl takes a regular part in games—Nancy, Marcia, Hetty, and Annabel Hichens needing special supervision in this respect.

Backing-up the Form Captain.—I admit that I have tried more than once to have Marjorie Hazeldene made captain. But now that Babs holds the reins—and holds them so well—I make a special point of seeing that loyalty is observed throughout the

Form. Mutinous and disrespectful remarks concerning our captain are met with short shrift from me!

Japing the Fifth.—Why is there a Fifth Form at Cliff House? It is here to be japed by the Fourth, of course! I regard it as up to me to see that the Fifth is used for its true purpose here, and that it is japed at regular intervals.

Keeping the Third In Order.—Disrespect from a lower Form should not be encouraged. The Third have a tendency to bear the same attitude towards the Fourth that we bear towards the Fifth, which is not to be tolerated. Therefore, at regular intervals I organise a raid on the Third Form Common-room, and the cheeky youngsters are made to admit that the Fourth are in every way superior to them, and anything else we may think of at the time!

Minor Duties.—Amongst my minor duties are: Trying to bring Annabel Hichens up to date in her views. Keeping a check on Bessie Bunter's appetite. Knocking some of the laziness out of Nancy Bell. And a variety of others.

WHEN CLARA WAS MY FAG!

Specially Contributed by
STELLA STONE (School Captain).



I WAS captain of the Fifth Form at the time, and Clara Trevlyn was in the Third. I can well remember the Clara of those days—a small, cheeky, dishevelled youngster, more like Madge Stevens than any of the present members of that distinguished Form, only a little more cheeky and a good deal more boisterous.

In those days the Fifth were allowed to "fag" the Third and Second-Formers, and, by one of the most unfortunate decisions I have ever made, I chose Clara Trevlyn as my fag!

Perhaps as a lamer and lighter of the study fire Clara has made the most indelible picture in my mind. Clara effected this by three distinct and original movements. First she would tilt the scuttle full of coal into the empty grate; on to that she would toss a bundle of firewood, usually not troubling even to cut the string, and on top of that she would drop two or three folded newspapers. Once, by way of a little variety, she used my preparation instead of the newspaper!

Then she would apply a match to the papers, and leave me to enjoy a pleasant evening by the fire—which, of course, as soon as the paper burned out, ceased to exist!

Her way of laying a table was quite typical of her. So typical, in fact, that I ceased to avail myself of her assistance in this respect after the first day. To start with, she dumped everything from the cupboard on to the table—food, empty tins and bottles, all the crockery, and even the mousetrap, and set them out anyhow. The table set for a party of three looked like a badly arranged auctioneer's table.

Then she began in earnest. She cut eight slices of bread two inches thick, and used nearly a pound of butter in spreading them. She boiled eight eggs as hard as concrete, and dropped two uncooked ones on the cloth. The pickles, which weren't wanted, she also spilled over the cloth. She put salt instead of sugar into the "tea"—I quote tea, because that beverage was the thing it least resembled—and spilled ink over the cake. My guests did not stay to tea!

I remember that Clara was a particularly bad hand at delivering messages correctly. I told her to inform the rest of the Fifth that I intended holding a meeting in the music-room one evening. Clara, delivering the message, introduced the word "commercial-room" instead of "music-room." Thus I spent an interesting evening waiting for my Form in the music-room, whilst they spent an equally interesting evening waiting for me in the commercial-room.

The weekly amount of crockery Clara broke in washing up was astounding—and expensive! I recollect, too, that every time she departed from my study she would either leave the door wide open, or close to it with a terrific, resounding slam that upset my nerves for an hour afterwards!

I had a lot of difficulty in disposing of Clara as my fag. There were no "takers." But at last I changed her for Mary Patterson's fag, Pansy Carter, who was in the Second. Mary Patterson then was just as deaf as ever she is now, and, therefore, much better constituted than I for having Clara about the study. In fact, I remember Mary saying that she liked the sound of Clara closing the door, for it helped her to feel that she was no longer hard of hearing!

CLARA TREVLYN'S TEST!

(Continued from page 40.)

"We will leave these foolish, jesting girls, and bestow our valuable attention to work."

And Clara, with Annabel at her side, turned to walk off.

For a moment the others were too transfixed with amazement to speak.

Then Babs ran forward and called to her.

"Clara," exclaimed Babs, "don't take this too far! You must practise this afternoon. There is a match on Saturday—"

"It is impossible!" said Clara. "I am thinking of arranging a sewing-bee for Saturday!"

"A—a—a sewing-bee!"

"Clara!"

"She must be dotty! Clara—a sewing-bee!"

"It's ridiculous!" said Marjorie Hazeldene rather worriedly. "Clara was a bit—a bit of a tomboy. But I hope she isn't going to become like Annabel."

"Oh, it's only her joke!" said Mabel Lynn confidently. "Probably when she's out of sight she'll bump Annabel on the floor and leave her. She's pulling our legs."

"That's so," laughed Freda Foote. "Give her a few minutes, then let's follow—eh? I should like to see Clara cleaning a floor!"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"I think we ought to go," nodded Babs, "if only to pick up Annabel. I'm sure Clara couldn't stand her for more than a minute."

And Mabs led the way with Freda just behind.

Half-way along the passage Barbara Redfern stopped and held up her hand.

"What's that?" she asked.

From the direction of Study No. 7 came a bumping sound.

"Bump, bump!"

"Poor old Annabel!" said Freda Foote. "Rescue her, girls!"

And Freda Foote led a rush forward. She flung open the study door, and almost fell over backwards with surprise.

For in the centre of the study, an apron round her waist, and a duster tied round her head, stood Clara Trevlyn, sweeping the carpet!

Pleasing Auntie!

"CLARA!"

The name was voiced by the ten or twelve girls in the doorway. But Clara Trevlyn did not look up. She went on sweeping the carpet vigorously, and clouds of dust arose, nearly choking the girls in the doorway.

Annabel Hichens stood by, holding a dustpan and brush. On the floor was a pail of water.

Evidently the spring-cleaning had started.

"Clara!" shrieked Dolly Jobling, and rushed into the study. She went to the fireplace, and dragged off a pan of toffee that had been left on the grate to cool.

The toffee, owing to Clara's sweeping energy, had been covered with dust. It looked anything but appetising.

"Look!" exclaimed Dolly.

But Clara went on, energetically sweeping the carpet.

"Don't thump so much," said Annabel. "Hard as you like, but make the movement horizontal, not perpendicular."

Thump, thump, thump!

The noise attracted juniors from the Third Form passage, and soon quite a crowd was outside.

Doris Redfern, Barbara's sister, ran

down into the quadrangle to tell her friends of the Third that something was "on" in the Fourth Form passage.

She ran across the quadrangle and almost bumped into the pink-attired Amelia, who drew back.

Amelia was with Miss Trevlyn, and that stately lady glanced scornfully after the retreating Doris.

"Shall I rebuke her, aunt?" asked Amelia, in her wheedling way.

"It would be as well," admitted Miss Trevlyn. "Although it is hardly right to interfere—"

But Amelia did not hear that. She was always pleased at an opportunity to bully anyone smaller than herself.

She caught Doris Redfern by the arm.

"Now," she said, "what do you mean by bumping into me?"

"I didn't," protested Doris. "Madge!" she called to her friend.

Madge Stevens ran forward to answer that call for help, and Amelia rather sullenly released the fag's arm.

"Yes," said Madge, looking at Amelia angrily.

Miss Trevlyn led the way across the quadrangle, her head held high, and her sunshade, which seemed a permanent portion of her equipment, gripped tightly in her right hand.

"Where is the Fourth Form passage?" she demanded of a girl in the doorway.

"The Fourth Form passage?" said Stella Stone, the school captain. "Here, Marcia Loftus, take Miss Trevlyn to the Fourth Form passage, please."

Marcia Loftus scowled at Stella and looked at Miss Trevlyn.

"I want to see my niece, Clara—Clara Trevlyn," said the stately lady.

Marcia Loftus smiled.

"This way, Miss Trevlyn," she said.

And Marcia led the way to the Fourth Form passage. Marcia did not know what was happening in Study No. 7, but she knew that there was something amiss. And, like Doris Redfern, she had attributed it to Clara Trevlyn playing some new, freakish,

tomboyish trick.



DOES IT SUIT CLARA? Clara Trevlyn put her head sideways, and peered at herself in the glass. There was no denying that that style of hairdressing altered her tremendously. "Clara, you musn't go down like that!" protested Marjorie Hazeldene.

"There's an awful rag in the Fourth Form passage," said Doris excitedly, forgetting all about Amelia. "Clara's gone mad or something! She's thumping away, playing football or something. There's a tremendous crowd."

"My stars!" exclaimed Madge. And she turned and waved to other fags. "Come along! Fourth Form passage! Clara's got a new rag!"

The fags darted off, and Amelia, a thoughtful frown on her thin face, looked after them.

Very slowly she rejoined her aunt.

"They are running off to see Clara do something," she said, looking sideways at her aunt. "They say Clara's playing football, or something like that, in her study."

"Football?" exclaimed Miss Trevlyn. And she set her lips. "After all I have said! I shall investigate this, and if it is true—"

Miss Trevlyn did not finish the sentence, but Amelia gave a self-satisfied smirk.

"Yes, aunt," she said. "Clara really does go a bit too far."

"This is the passage, Miss Trevlyn," she said. "There is the study—the one where all the girls are."

Miss Trevlyn raised her lorgnettes and stared through them at the crowd of girls gathered round Study No. 7.

"Go it, Clara!" came a shout.

"Give it another!"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Miss Trevlyn.

"This—is this really outrageous, Amelia, keep by my side. I fear Clara is doing something really desperate."

"It seems like it," said Amelia, and she smiled triumphantly.

For some moments Miss Trevlyn's voice could not be heard above the shouting. Then Phyllis Howell turned and saw her.

"Pray allow me to pass," said Miss Trevlyn, very red in the face.

"Cave!" exclaimed Phyllis. "Clara's aunt!"

The girls faded away as though by magic, and Miss Trevlyn strode to the study doorway. A hush had fallen upon the excited girls.

But apparently the change in the

crowd's attitude had not been noticed by those in the study.

Miss Trevlyn blinked in amazement at the sight of Clara sweeping the floor. Clara was piling into it, and Annabel Hichens was bent double with coughing and sneezing.

"Clara—atishoo! Cla—atishoo!" said Miss Trevlyn.

Amelia was sneezing, and her dainty pink frock was already specked with dust.

"Clara, what are you doing?"

At last, realising that there was a newcomer, Clara ceased work, breathing hard through her nose.

"Good-morning, auntie," she said mildly. "Isn't this room dusty? I'm just having a summer clean. Don't you think it wants it—atishoo—atishoo! Oh, dear!"

"Clara, open the window, you foolish girl, and wait some of this dust away. It is really intolerable!"

Clara obediently opened the window and vigorously shook a duster about.

Miss Trevlyn shut the door, and Amelia stepped in, just in time.

"Dear, dear, this is shocking!" said Miss Trevlyn, as she sank into a chair.

"Really, Clara, you are the most extraordinary girl I have ever met. Surely you know better than to make this mess?"

"Annabel's been instructing me. She knows all about sweeping," said Clara, rubbing her nose. "Only I've been too busy to listen to her. It seems all right. I think I've got a good bit of dust out of the carpet."

"You have!" said her aunt sarcastically. "Nevertheless, I am glad to see that you are taking an interest in domestic affairs, Clara. And I hope this change is permanent."

"Th-thank you," stammered Clara. "Er—er—"

"I was under the impression that this was some foolery of yours," said Miss Trevlyn. "However, as it is really a serious, though unfortunate and misplaced endeavour to reform, I apologise for my uncharitable suspicion."

"Ahem!" said Clara, and she flushed. "I—"

"I—I am most favourably impressed, and I hope that you will continue in this fashion, though apparently you require schooling in domestic affairs."

"Ye-yes," stammered Clara. Miss Trevlyn surveyed her niece.

"The next thing you must do, Clara, is to attend to your attire—your stocking requires darning, your dress is dirty. Take Amelia here as your model. If you can become as neat as Amelia, and as nicely spoken, you will do well!"

"Yes, aunt," murmured Clara meekly. "Am I to become just like Amelia?"

"Well—yes, Clara, as nearly as you can!"

Miss Trevlyn turned and beckoned to Amelia.

"We will leave her to finish the work," she said.

And Clara was left in the study with the dust and Annabel.

All through lunch-time Clara sat silent and thoughtful. Marjorie spoke to her, and jestingly offered a penny for her thoughts.

"Never you mind," said Clara darkly. "Some people don't appreciate a good thing till they've lost it—no one values the best till they've had the worst!"

Which philosophy was subtle and mystifying; and Marjorie cast a doubtful side-glance at her chum. Clara was certainly rather strange in her actions lately.

During afternoon lessons Clara behaved in the same exemplary manner as

during morning lessons, and Miss Steel found no cause for complaint.

But when lessons were over Clara was not to be found, and though Marjorie and Dolly waited tea for some time, Clara still did not put in an appearance. The study was considerably neater in appearance, though there was still a trace of dust in the air, and everything they touched seemed to be dusty.

Dolly was having her second cup of tea when the study door opened, and Marjorie had a glimpse of a pink dress.

"Good-afternoon, Am—" she began, then stopped.

"Oh, good-afternoon!" said an affected voice; and Dolly Jobling sloped her tea into her lap as she recognised the voice of Clara Trevlyn.

Dolly simply blinked, and Marjorie stared.

Clara Trevlyn, in a pink dress that did not commence to fit her, and with her hair done up in a gigantic black bow, was smiling at them, a slight sneer on her lips.

"Oh, how dusty this room is!" said Clara. "How very dusty, my dear girls! I'm afraid it will spoil my dress, y'know."

And she stood up, posing, with one foot pointing sideways like a fashion plate.

"My 'gracious!" said Dolly. "Clara, you silly! Why on earth have you done that?"

"Dear Dolly, pray do not be inquisitive. I am Amelia!"

"Amelia— Oh, you silly, Clara!" laughed Marjorie. "You mustn't walk about like that. Your aunt will be frightfully cross—"

"My dear Aunt Jane will like it so much," simpered Clara, in the same affected way. "She wishes me to become like Amelia, a silly, affected snob, sneaking and prying. And I hope she'll like it."

"She won't!" grinned Dolly. "She'll be as mad as a hatter. For goodness' sake be sensible, Clara. Sit down and have some tea, then darn socks, if you like; but your aunt will be wild if she sees you like that."

Clara smiled, and sat down at tea. Her chums, at least, preferred her as the real Clara, and she was certain her aunt did, if only she could be brought to realise the fact.

"We'll see," she said. "I'll try it on auntie, and then you'll know. She's sure to like me if I'm like Amelia, whom she likes. Isn't it likely?"

And Clara Trevlyn, with a faint chuckle, got on with her tea.

Clara Has a Relapse!

"THERE, I think that's finished!" Clara rubbed her nose thoughtfully, and held up a black woollen stocking. In the heel had been a vacant spot now filled by dint of an hour's labour.

Marjorie nodded, and took the stocking.

"You see, darning isn't really difficult, Clara," she said. "You— Oh!"

Clara groaned as Marjorie smiled.

"Isn't it all right?" she asked.

Marjorie coughed, and looked at Dolly.

"Well," began Marjorie tactfully, "the hole—the hole doesn't show now, but you've darned it with cotton!"

"Well, of course. Isn't that right? You sew with cotton—"

"But this is a woollen stocking," explained Marjorie. "It should be darned with wool. I shouldn't show this to your aunt—"

"I think it's all right," said Clara. "That's a jolly good darn. Why, it took

me an hour! I've had time to write half a dozen verses for the 'Weekly' while I've been doing that silly thing. Blessed if it's worth while going to all this trouble to give auntie a lesson."

"Well, dear, I'm quite sure that she won't like this," said Marjorie. "I should leave it behind."

"I've got to take something with me. I can't go and see her without an excuse," said Clara. "That's all right. She's bound to like me as I look like Amelia—"

And Clara picked up the stocking and left the study.

With the stocking in one hand, she jauntily crossed the quadrangle. It was broad daylight, and there were quite a number of girls about. At the sight of Clara in a pink dress, however, they ceased their several occupations, and chuckled.

Clara, unheeding, marched on to Miss Primrose's pretty house. She pushed open the gate, and boldly walked up the front path.

In response to her energetic hammer on the knocker a neat maid appeared.

"I want to see Miss Trevlyn, please."

"Yes, Miss Clara. This way!"

The maid went on ahead, and tapped at a door. She entered, and Clara heard herself announced.

The maid returned.

"Miss Trevlyn is out at present, but Miss Amelia says if you will go up and wait, you will not be kept long."

Amelia was seated in a comfortable armchair, and she looked up from her book as Clara entered.

But as she saw Clara's attire she sprang up.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed. "What ever—"

"Good-evening!" said Clara. "This is a perfectly sweet room, my dear Amelia. How is our dear aunt—"

Amelia frowned.

"I don't understand you, Clara," she said tartly.

"I am endeavouring to please auntie," explained Clara. "She wants me to look like you, and now I do. I'm being very good; you see, I've even darned a stocking—a thing I never do as a general rule."

Amelia sneered.

"Yes, I've heard a great deal about your turning good. Auntie's been taken in, you'll be pleased to hear. She quite thinks you've reformed. I was speaking to Lady Hetty Hendon about you—"

"Lady Hetty!" exclaimed Clara. "Yes, I suppose she's about your sort."

Lady Hetty Hendon, whose father had, from a lowly position, been raised unexpectedly to a title that had been in abeyance for years, was not popular in the Fourth Form. The Form had made no difference on account of the fact that she had once been a servant in the school, but her underhand ways and spiteful nature did not tend to make her attractive.

As Clara had said, Lady Hetty was just the girl for Amelia, who worshipped titles.

"Yes, I was speaking to her. She is not a friend of yours; she says that no lady of title could lower herself by mixing with such a rough girl as you. And she told me that your reform is only a joke. Still, it has taken in auntie—"

"What do you mean—taken in auntie?" asked Clara, her face flushing.

"Mean?" Amelia laughed. "You dear innocent," she said. "Of course, you mean all this seriously—perhaps. You don't shout, and you don't whistle—oh dear, no; you're a very good girl, as long as auntie stays here. When she has gone it won't matter, will it?"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed

Clara, breathing deeply. She had a shrewd suspicion now of what her cousin meant.

"It's quite simple. I tell you, auntie has been fooled completely! She's under the impression that you're going to be a nice girl. So she'll probably make you her favourite in the will and leave you the money. Oh, very clever, Clara! I can see through it, but you've fooled auntie!"

Clara drew herself up.

"Well, of all the sneaks!" she exclaimed. "You're the sneakiest one I've ever struck! I hope no one really thinks I'm like you. As for auntie's money, I haven't thought a word about it. I don't want it, and I wouldn't have it as a gift!"

Clara paused, and Amelia laughed.

"Oh, that's very fine to tell me!" she said. "I sha'n't tell auntie. She knows you're after the money."

"I don't care tuppence what she thinks—if that's her opinion of me!" said Clara, thoroughly roused now. "I only wish I hadn't wasted all this time on her! I'll jolly well show her I don't care tuppence, too!"

"Bow-wow!" said Amelia. "Don't try to pull the wool over my eyes, you little hypocrite—oh!"

She jumped back as Clara swished the stocking round and flicked Amelia's cheek with it.

"You can tell auntie from me," said Clara angrily, "that if she wants to test me, she needn't bother! I don't want her money!"

And Clara swept out of the room. On the landing she paused to regain her composure. Her breath was coming heavily, and her face was red. Clara was wondering whether others thought the same as Amelia. It had not occurred to Clara before. And she went hot and cold all over at the thought that others might think she was currying favour.

From downstairs came a well-known voice.

"My niece?" asked Miss Trevlyn. "I will see her."

Clara drew a breath. Now was the time to assert herself. If her aunt came upstairs, it might be too late—Miss Trevlyn might think that she really was currying favour. And Clara did not want that.

Then suddenly bursting into a loud whistle, she came clamping down the stairs.

Aunt Jane jumped back, and threw up her hands in amazement. The maid sniggered behind her hand.

"Here I am, aunt!" said Clara cheerily.

"Clara—Clara, you—you terrible girl! How dare you—how dare you come into this house and perform as though—as though you were a performing monkey!"

"Oh, auntie, you're not cross!" said Clara chidingly. "Talking about monkeys, you haven't taken me to the Zoo yet; you promised to."

"Then that promise will most certainly be broken," said her aunt stiffly. "I shall most certainly not risk my life taking you anywhere—it would not surprise me were you to let all the animals loose in the Zoo! I am ashamed of you, Clara, positively ashamed!"

"Oh, aunt!"

"Go! And do not let me see you again until you are repentant for your most unmannerly conduct!"

Miss Trevlyn pointed to the door. Clara went, and as she walked down the short drive she could be heard still whistling shrilly. Miss Trevlyn put her fingers to her ears, and went upstairs.

"The girl is incorrigible!" she stormed.

Clara in Form!

CLICK! Clara Trevlyn was in great form, and quite a crowd had gathered round the net to watch her. When Clara was batting the crowd was always sure of seeing something happen.

When Clara hit she opened her shoulders and hit hard. To-day it did not seem to matter who bowled or what sort of "stuff" they bowled, Clara was ready for it. True, she was not stylish, and her cuts were often grievously late. But she was strong on the leg side, and, as Dolly expressed it, "pulled like a horse" from the off.

Stella Stone was watching from the ropes, and Stella was interested. Stella, being captain of the Sixth Form and school team, was interested in any promising juniors. And to-day Clara looked most promising.

But there was someone watching who did not seem impressed. That someone was Clara's Aunt Jane.

"Goodness, she's in form!" murmured Stella. "I must try her again."

Six balls in all Stella bowled Clara, and each one was slogged away, if not stylishly, at least powerfully. Clara's muscles and wrists seemed made of steel.

"Isabel!" called Stella to her friend.

Isabel Drake, the next best bowler of the First Eleven, came forward and took the ball from her captain's hand.

"Give her your best!" urged Stella.

Down went the ball, then away, to a chorus of deafening cheers from the Fourth Form. Clara flushed and waved her bat to them.

Not once did her wicket fall, though it had one or two close shaves, and several times the ball found the boundary; and at the end of fifteen minutes practically all the Sixth Form had tried their hands at her.

"Come on!" called Stella. "We give you best. My word, you're a slogger, Clara. You haven't much style, but you've got a straight eye and pretty



CLARA'S GREAT BATTING TRIUMPH! As Clara Trevlyn returned from the wicket the Fourth-Formers crowded on to the ground. "Hurrah! Good old Clara!" was their resounding cry.

And Clara saw her aunt from the corner of her watchful eye.

"Do you mind if I try my hand at Clara?" asked Stella. "She seems pretty well set to-day!"

"Not at all!" said Babs, flattered. "I don't think you'll move her, Stella!"

Stella smiled, and gripped the leather. The others stood back, and there was a hush behind the net. Clara tapped her bat confidently on the crease.

Stella Stone was a good bowler, and there were few who could withstand her for more than a few overs. Everyone, therefore, expected to see Clara's middle stump go somersaulting up the back of the net.

"Play!" called Stella, and took a short run.

Her right arm came from behind her back, and the ball went down the pitch like a three-inch shell. But Clara was watching it.

Click!

Bat met ball straight and truly, and away went the leather, sailing upwards to the clouds, amidst admiring exclamations from behind the net.

good judgment. If you can always hit like that, you're a treasure."

"Glad someone appreciates me!" said Clara, a trifle sarcastically.

"Well, I do. I've been looking for someone like you," said Stella. "We want someone who can hit for Saturday. A girl like you can sometimes pull a match out of the fire with your slogging."

"On Saturday!" repeated Clara dazedly, and she blinked at Stella. "You don't mean—"

"But I do. There's a place in Saturday's team for you."

Clara Trevlyn executed a war-dance, and most of the Fourth tried to get near her to pat her on the back.

In horror, Aunt Jane watched her niece executing that tremendous war-dance, and at that moment Miss Primrose appeared.

"Aunt—aunt," cried Clara joyously, "I'm playing for the school—"

Then her voice was drowned in a shout from the Fourth Form.

"Well done, Clara! Chair her!" cried

Phyllis Howell. "Don't let her get away."

And before Clara could get away they had caught her up and "chaired" her—raised her shoulder high.

"Hip, hip, hurrah for Clara!" cried Philippa Derwent. "Three cheers for the Fourth!"

Clara, red and triumphant, waved her panama in the air, and Miss Trevlyn, though she tried to look very stern, smiled slightly.

"It appears that my niece is popular," she said.

"Yes. From what they are saying, and from what Stella said to me," smiled Miss Primrose, "I rather suspect that Clara is to play for the school cricket team on Saturday—a great honour for herself and her Form."

"Indeed!" murmured Miss Trevlyn. "And this cricket, is it difficult?"

"It is far from easy," replied Miss Primrose. "It requires courage, resourcefulness, physical fitness and alertness, and unselfishness. Clara is athletic. She always plays fairly, and does her best."

"All the Trevlyns are athletes," said Miss Trevlyn proudly. "My brothers played sports. We are all determined, you know. We very seldom fail at anything we take up."

"Indeed!" smiled the headmistress. "Then Clara is a splendid representative of the family."

"Ahem!" Miss Trevlyn realised suddenly that she had altered her line of action. "Clara would be all right as a boy," she said, "but Clara is a girl. Cricket is all very well for boys. But I should like to see Clara more like Amelia here. Why, she's gone!"

Miss Trevlyn turned in surprise, to find that Amelia had vanished from her side.

"Yes, your other niece is over there, talking to Hetty Hendon of the Fourth and Marcia Loftus."

Miss Primrose frowned, knowing well the nature of those two companions Amelia had found herself. It occurred to Miss Primrose that there was a great deal of truth in the old adage, "birds of a feather flock together."

"Clara and Amelia differ greatly in temperament and character," murmured Miss Primrose, as they walked away from the ground. "Of the two, despite her rough-and-ready ways, I prefer Clara."

"She is certainly a Trevlyn," agreed

Aunt Jane. "But—well, Amelia is sweet and nice, and, indeed, all that a girl should be—"

She stopped as she saw Amelia crossing to her, and waited.

"Oh, Aunt Jane," said Amelia, "Lady Hetty has been pressing me to visit her people. I should so much like to see their estate. Would you mind if I deserted you just for a little while on Saturday, auntie dear?"

"Not at all, Amelia. If your friend would like to take you with her—"

She smiled at the girl, and Amelia bowed her head.

"Thank you, aunt!" she said meekly. "I shall love it so!"

Clara's Way!

"FEELING fit for a century?"

Babs patted Clara Trevlyn on the back as she asked that question.

"Fit as a fiddle," answered Clara. "We're going to win. The Fourth shan't be ashamed of me. And I'll show auntie what cricket's like." She craned her head forward and stared at three girls who were walking across the quad.

"Hallo! Amelia with Lady Hetty and Marcia—"

"Yes; they've got some affair on this afternoon," said Mabel Lynn.

"Apparently they're all going out together."

Mabel Lynn did not pay much heed to Amelia; in truth, Mabel was not impressed by Clara's cousin. Amelia had not proved popular with most of the Fourth-Formers, but Lady Hetty and she had found a great deal in common.

Clara stood staring at her cousin thoughtfully; but she turned suddenly as a hand was laid upon her shoulder.

She turned to find Stella Stone by her side.

"I'm ready," grinned Clara, twiddling the bat in her hands. "Fit to smash any bowling."

But Stella Stone did not reply. Her face was unusually serious. Babs and Mabs looked at one another meaningfully, wondering if Stella, at the last moment, had changed her mind.

"Where is your cousin Amelia?" asked the school captain. "I want to speak to you both."

Clara called to her cousin, and Amelia, after some hesitation, came towards her slowly and with dignity.

"Well?" asked Amelia, rather insolently.

Stella looked at the two girls and placed a hand on a shoulder of each.

"I have some rather bad news to break," she said. "Your aunt—"

"Nothing wrong?" asked Clara quickly, her face paling. "Aunt's not ill—"

"Her fortune is gone, I think," said Stella. "Miss Primrose asked me to break the news—Miss Trevlyn is now penniless."

"Penniless?" exclaimed Clara and Amelia together.

Stella nodded, and from the Fourth-Formers gathered round came murmurs of amazement. Miss Trevlyn had always been looked upon as extremely rich, and it seemed impossible that Fortune's wheel should have spun round so cruelly that she became penniless.

"Poor old auntie!" murmured Clara, with a slight catch in her voice.

"Penniless!" murmured Amelia. "Good gracious! And she's been making out she's rich. Wasting my time—"

Amelia spoke crossly, and she bit her lip. Clara stared at her.

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed. "I reckon it's a shame. Poor old auntie! Come on, Amelia, we must see her; she'll want someone to console her."

"I can't," said Amelia, looking away.

"I—I've got an appointment this afternoon. She'll have to wait—"

"Wait!" ejaculated Clara. "Your appointment's nothing. You'll be wanted—you're her favourite, and she's bound to want you near her now that things have gone so badly."

"I don't see that it's anything to do with me!" said Amelia surlily. "I didn't lose her money. I suppose in her corksire way she invested it in some silly thing! She'll have to wait! I'm going off!"

And Amelia walked off, with an angry toss of the head. Clara stared after her, her eyes blazing, looking as though she would willingly have hit her cousin.

"Of all the little cats!" she exclaimed. "After all auntie has done for her! I'm going, if she isn't. Stella, can you fill my place in the team, please? I—I can't leave poor old auntie—and I shouldn't feel much like playing now."

Stella nodded slowly.

"Yes; I can find someone," she said. "I want you, Clara, but I'm not going to prevent you from doing your duty; and I am glad that you want to do it. You're a good sort, Clara."

And Stella gripped Clara's hand. But Clara did not speak. At that moment she could not have, had she wished. So she ran off towards the headmistress' house, and turning, she had a last glimpse of Amelia going through the gates.

She banged at the door, and, brushing past the maid, hurried to her aunt's room.

Miss Trevlyn was sitting by the open window, staring out, but she turned as Clara entered.

"Aunt," exclaimed Clara, running forward, "I've heard—I'm awfully sorry, auntie dear!" she cried. "Poor old auntie!"

And she flung her arms round Miss Trevlyn's neck.

"Yes, yes, Clara dear," said Miss Trevlyn. "Poor Clara! Has Amelia been told?"

Clara did not reply, and Miss Trevlyn repeated the question.

"She's—she's got an appointment this afternoon, aunt," said Clara. "She—she can't come. But I dare say she'll come to you when she returns."

"Oh! Then she knows?" exclaimed Aunt Jane.

"Y-yes," admitted Clara reluctantly.

Miss Trevlyn was silent, but she stroked Clara's soft hair.

"You're a kind-hearted girl, Clara," she said softly. "I—I'm glad that you are sorry for me."

"Poor auntie!" murmured Clara.

"What ever will you do? You can come and live with us—I'll write and ask dad to-day."

"We must wait; it may not be as bad as I suppose," said Miss Trevlyn. "But, Clara, are you not participating in some great athletic event—a football match—"

"School cricket match, aunt," said Clara gently. "But—but it doesn't matter," she added, with an effort.

"You shall play, Clara," said Miss Trevlyn. "You want to, and you shall; but—"

She broke off, for the door of the room had opened, to admit a uniformed man, whose face was red with excitement.

"Scuse me, ma'am," he said breathlessly, fiddling with his hat, "but I understands you are the mother of Miss Amelia Trevlyn—"

Miss Trevlyn turned swiftly.

Cookery in Pictures

Here's something NEW in Cookery Books—a Photograph of each recipe. And we have TESTED and TASTED every one for you. Buy YOUR copies NOW

'BEST WAY'

PUDDINGS & PIES

'BEST WAY'

CAKES & PASTRIES

Price **6^d** Each

from any newsagent, or 71d. post free (inland) from 291a, Oxford Street, London, W.1.

"I am her aunt," she said. "What has happened?"

"Young lady hired a car, ma'am," said the man, "and I was supposed to drive. But they got me out on some excuse, and gave me a tip to post a letter." He paused for breath. "Then one of the young ladies drove the car off. It went wobbling down the road. I don't think she can drive—and if the car's smashed I shall lose my job!"

"Is not the car under control?" asked Miss Trevlyn nervously. "This—is this is amazing!"

"One of the young ladies shouted 'Help!' and the car swerved. They'll smash up before they've gone a hundred yards," answered the man breathlessly.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Miss Trevlyn, in agitation. "What is to be done?"

Clara jumped up.

"I can drive," said Clara. "I'll catch them up if they aren't going fast—"

"Clara—how can you?"

But Clara was hurrying from the room, and her aunt followed, the chauffeur bringing up the rear.

Clara went down the stairs three at a time, and Miss Trevlyn descended them faster than she had ever done before. But Clara was half-way across the quadrangle as her aunt reached the door.

She stopped as Barbara Redfern, Mabel Lynn, and Marjorie Hazeldene came towards her, and Miss Trevlyn hurried up.

"It's Amelia," said Babs. "Phyllis has just come back on her bike. They passed her and nearly knocked her off. They'll be killed!"

Clara led the way to the gates. She was not quite sure what she intended to do, but she was going to do something.

Suddenly there was the sound of a motor-cycle engine, and a man rode into the quadrangle.

"Any of your girls in a car, ma'am?" he asked Miss Trevlyn. "There's three schoolgirls blazing along in a car, and the girl driving doesn't know the first thing about steering. She nearly killed me. They've struck across the fields towards the quarry—"

"Across the fields!" ejaculated Clara. "My hat! They'll go into the quarry! Oh gracious!"

And Clara went white. But the others were struck almost dumb with consternation. The man had got off his machine, and now had kicked down the back-rest.

He was trembling with nerves, for, as he explained, he had had a narrow shave.

"We can't leave them to run into the quarry!" exclaimed Clara. And she shook the man by the sleeve. "Why didn't you chase them and pull the car up—"

"I daren't!" said the man. "I'm not going out of my way to get killed—"

Clara wrung her hands in despair.

"Fool!" she exclaimed, quite forgetting herself in the excitement. "Then, if you're too big a coward, I shall go!"

And she caught the motor-bicycle by the handle-bars and kicked up the stand. "What are you going to do?" exclaimed the man.

"Chase that car," said Clara grimly, and she pushed the large bike forward.

The crowd buzzed with excitement.

"Clara," said Miss Trevlyn sharply, "that is a man's motor-cycle! I cannot allow you to ride it, Clara!"

"Sorry, aunt!" said Clara. "It's the only way!"

And Clara, with a businesslike air, stamped on the kick-starter. It started on the second thrust, and she let in the clutch before she was on the machine.

It had all taken but a moment or two. Then, leaving the whole crowd gaping at her, she flew through the gates. On the

road, she bent low over the wide handle-bars and opened the throttle.

It was a powerful bike—the speedometer's reading was eighty miles per hour—but, though she did not bang the needle against the pointer, Clara speeded up so tremendously that the machine hardly seemed to be on the road.

Its roar was deafening, but Clara kept her wits about her. The gap in the rotted fence by the roadside, and the wheel-marks skidding from the road, showed her where the car had gone.

She left the road, and, with a sickening bump, the machine cleared a ditch. On she went over the uneven ground, almost shaken to pieces, the handle-bars almost wrenched from her steel-like hands.

It was a test of nerve and endurance. But Clara Trevlyn came through. Her tomboyish, dauntless nature stood her in good stead then.

Torn and bent corn showed the track made by the car, and she kept to it, the stalks whistling and shrieking as she tore through them.

And beyond the cornfields, far across the wild moorlands, was the car bumping along jerkily.

She saw two girls jump from it, and knew that they must be Lady Hetty and Marcia. But Amelia stuck to the wheel—as she must if she valued her life. Were she to let go, the car would topple over with fatal results.

The motor-cycle roared across the moorlands, Clara half off the saddle.

She was nearer—nearer.

A white patch ahead—the quarries, dark and treacherous. Perhaps Amelia did not know of their existence.

Nearer, nearer, nearer! She was level with the car. She caught it, and quickly shut off her engine. Then on to the foot-board she went, and the motor-cycle careered erratically off at a tangent.

Over the back of the front seat went Clara, and brought back the gear-lever into neutral, cutting off the power from the wheels. The engine was running idle.

But the quarries were near. She caught the steering-wheel and with her steel wrists jerked it, jamming on the brake sharply.

With a shriek the car skidded on a muddy stretch and spun round in a semi-circle, the rear near-side wheel hanging over the deep quarry's edge.

Quickly she engaged a gear, and the car went slowly into safety. She looked round at her cousin—but Amelia had fainted.

"Well Done, Clara!"

"HURRAH!" As the car was driven slowly through the crowd that had gathered round the gates of Cliff House cheer after cheer went up for Clara, who now sat smiling in charge of the wheel.

In the back of the car was the motor-cycle, little the worse for its wild journey, as the owner found on investigation.

Amelia, white and shaken, was helped down, and no one scolded her; it was not necessary. For Amelia was not likely to go upon another such jaunt for many years to come.

Lady Hetty Hendon was telling the crowd the story of the chase, and she did not spare Clara's blushes.

"Gracious!" murmured Miss Trevlyn. "It is wonderful that a girl could do such a thing—remarkable! Clara, you are a truly wonderful girl! It was lucky for Amelia that you happened to be tomboy enough to ride a motor-cycle."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Clara, trying to look normal, although she was

trembling slightly with the reaction of that strenuous ride.

"Wonderful is the word," said Stella Stone admiringly. "We haven't started the game yet, Clara. We're batting first, but we couldn't play while we knew someone was in danger. Are you fit for—"

"Am I not!" ejaculated Clara. "I'll jolly well show them whether I'm fit! If—if aunt doesn't mind."

"Gracious, no!" said Miss Trevlyn. "I—I should like to see you play."

Amelia was standing by, but Miss Trevlyn paid her no heed.

The chauffeur, having taken Lady Hetty Hendon's name for reference, as she had hired the car, went off, assuring her ladyship that in course of time she would get a bill for damages.

The motor-cyclist left a minute later, and Lady Hetty, in an outburst of ostentation, offered to cover any damage that might have been done. But Lady Hetty did not impress the crowd. They were more concerned with Clara Trevlyn—the heroine of the hour.

"Come on, don't let's waste time!" said Clara breezily. "We've got to lick Clarettonyales—"

And Clara led the way to the cricket-field. But Clara did not go in first! Stella and Isabel Drake opened for Cliff House, and Clara found her aunt a seat in the pavilion.

But Miss Trevlyn was looking perturbed.

"Clara," she said, "there is something I must say to you—and to Amelia. Is there somewhere quiet—"

"The pavilion, aunt," said Clara, surprised.

She beckoned to Amelia, who, frightened and ill-at-ease, was standing by.

The three went into the pavilion, and Miss Trevlyn closed the door.

"I do not wish to spoil your chance of success, Clara," she said; "so now I will tell you how you have been tested. I have not lost my money—not a penny. But I did it at Miss Primrose's instigation to test your natures. You, Clara, were sorry—you even left your game which meant so much to you. But you, Amelia," she went on sternly, "you went off; you did not care if I were penniless. And you ran into danger, from which only your cousin's resource rescued you. Apparently I have been labouring under a delusion regarding you. You will leave Cliff House as soon as your bag is packed, Amelia. I will order a cab."

And she turned from Amelia to Clara.

"Aunt!" exclaimed Amelia, her face dead white. "You—you don't mean—I don't understand. I—I didn't hear that you lost your money. I didn't know—"

"Amelia, that is not true. I watched from the window, and saw the school captain speak to you both. You are sly and deceitful. I see now how you have deceived me. It may interest you to know that to-morrow I alter my will, and not a penny do you get!"

"But, aunt—"

"Enough! Go!"

Miss Trevlyn pointed to the door, and Amelia, hanging her head, went. Half an hour later, unnoticed, she left Cliff House to return home, and Amelia was not feeling happy.

"I say, aunt," murmured Clara, "I—I didn't do this with a motive. If you don't mind, I'd rather not be in your will—"

"Tush, child! I am to decide that. You have proved yourself a girl of whom I can be proud. If you are a tomboy, your tomboyishness this afternoon saved a life!"

And Miss Trevlyn went back to her seat in the stand. Clara, her mind in a whirl, sat beside her aunt.

Not until a sudden shout told that Isabel's wicket had fallen did Clara pay heed to the match; and then, with a glum look, she saw the scoring-board—total, 7; last player, 2. Isabel was out—Isabel, one of the school's best bats.

As Pauline Wilson took up her stance, there was a breathless hush.

Only 7, and the first wicket down! Clara watched the bowler's action. A tricky run, the ball went down. It beat Pauline "all ends up," but it just scraped by the wicket, and the wicket-keeper caught it.

What an agonising minute it was while the bowler slowly gathered up the returned ball, screwed it in her hand, and looked round at her field!

By a gesture she moved point a pace or two farther back.

Then, watched by a hundred pairs of eyes, the ball went down the pitch.

Click!
Pauline had played forward, and there was a faint hand-clap, followed by a groan, for at a tangent the ball had shot high in the direction of point.

And point was watching it, stepping back.

"She'll miss it!" murmured Clara. "It's spinning like billy-oh!"

But point had been placed in her position because her hands were sure. Back went her right hand, and then farther back, with the red leather tightly gripped in it.

Pauline, her bat half-way from the ground, stared at her, and point, smiling, threw up the leather and caught it.

"Out!" said the umpire laconically.
And Pauline trailed back regretfully to the pavilion, while Barbara Redfern, the scorer, altered last player from 2 to a large 0.

Every eye was fixed expectantly upon the pavilion entrance, and down the steps came Connie Jackson, swaggering on to the pitch, her bat under her arm.

Connie leisurely took up her stance, and looked round the field.

"Middle and leg!" she called to the umpire, and held her bat erect.

It took some minutes before she was satisfied.

Clara watched the bowler, and saw her smile at long-off, who nodded.

Then down went the ball. It hit the ground and shot across the wicket, while Connie essayed a graceful but futile leg-glide.

Click!

Down went the middle and the leg stumps, springing out at angles of thirty degrees.

Connie remained in her graceful attitude, apparently waiting for the camera. But the only response was a slight chuckle from the umpire.

"Out!"

"Oh ker-ums!" groaned Clara. "Three down for 7! Three! Oh, my only giddy aunt!"

The Cliff House crowd was silent and morose. Stella, at the other end, was preparing to face the new bowler, with Flora Cann as her partner. From the crowd came a sigh of relief as Stella drove the first ball for 4. The next she sent for 3, and Flora took the bowling.

Flora broke her duck's egg with a beautiful cut for 2.

Sixteen the score stood at now, but that was not remarkably hopeful.

Flora's next shot gathered a single,

and the batsmen crossed. There was no further scoring that over, and Flora faced the deadly bowler.

She nicked the first for a lucky 3, and Stella, with a single, gave the bowling back to Flora.

Things seemed to be brightening up, and Flora was playing cautiously. She stopped two, and then out she went to a loose one.

Click!
"How's that?" exclaimed the wicket-keeper, throwing up her hands.

And Flora Cann, the athlete of the Fifth Form, looked gloomily at her dismantled wicket.

Stumped—and with only 6 to her credit! The total was 21. Twenty-one! And the Clarettonvales were sure to average 15 a wicket. Cliff House, 21 for four, and only six more wickets to fall!

"Come on, Clara!" said Isabel Drake. "Pull us together. Show them how to play—"

"Dear me!" said Miss Trevlyn. "Is it your turn, Clara? Remember you are a Trevlyn!" she added proudly.

"Right-ho, aunt!" grinned Clara. "You watch."

As Clara Trevlyn entered the field there was a roar of cheering from the crowd. Clara waved her hand cheerily. She was wearing pads and gloves, and she was gripping her trusty bat.

The bowler grinned at the sight of a junior, and winked elaborately at long-off.

"Centre!" cried the umpire.

The bowler looked round, and screwed the ball in her hand. She jumped into the air, and took a furious run. Clara set her lips. She had faced such bowlers before. She knew that that run was intended to strike fear into her heart.

But the bowler had awakened the wrong passenger; and her run put her completely off her length.

Clara's sure eye judged the ball's flight. She opened her shoulders, and caught the loose ball on the drive—a beautiful hit.

Away went the ball, while the bowler watched it open-mouthed.

Bang!

It hit the pavilion side without touching the grass once, and the Fourth Form fairly danced with delight. Six, at the first shot!

Clara chuckled and grinned at Stella. The bowler scowled, and kicked the turf with her heel.

But Clara had got her eye in. Bang went the next for four. It was not a stylish stroke, but, as Clara would have expressed it, "it got there."

The Clarettonvale team spread themselves out deeper, and the bowler sent down a catch chance. Clara pulled it, just as the bowler had anticipated. But the bowler had underestimated Clara's hitting powers. For the ball sailed a good yard over deep mid-on's head, and went bumping to the boundary.

Fourteen in three hits! The crowd nearly went mad, and Aunt Jane rubbed her hands enthusiastically. Aunt Jane had forgotten her niece's gentility; she only remembered that Clara was her niece—a Trevlyn. And a Trevlyn was leading the way!

No wonder Miss Trevlyn looked round at the other spectators, and her face flushed with pride as she heard the cheers.

After that it was like a firework display. Stella played carefully, and Clara just hit like an automatic hammer.

Bowlers were changed but without result. The field got in closer—the field opened out; but all the tactics were without success.

Clara drove and slogged persistently.

It was a slow bowler who at last caught her. Her bowling was difficult

to time, and Clara, stepping out, returned too late.

As she went back to the pavilion, whistling cheerfully, she glanced at the board, and almost jumped as she saw Babs affix her score.

Last player 62!

The Fourth-Formers crowded on to the pitch, and there was almost a riot.

"Sixty-two!" shouted Phyllis Howell.

"And nine fours, and three sixes—"

"Hurrah! Good old Clara!"

Clara at last forced her way up the pavilion steps to her aunt. Miss Trevlyn rose, her eyes shining.

"Splendid, Clara—splendid!" she exclaimed. "It was most remarkable! Splendid! I am proud of you!"

And she kissed Clara affectionately.

In the rest of the game Miss Trevlyn had not much interest, although she noted, when the final score was announced as 160, that her niece had scored a great many more than a third of the score.

Everyone around was praising Clara, and Miss Trevlyn looked admiringly at her niece.

Clara's part had been played, and played well. She was not expected to bowl, although she was sure at fielding.

The other side, however, were tired—made so by chasing Clara's slogging hits. And there was little spirit in the batting.

Stella and Isabel rattled down the stumps right merrily, and the Cliff House crowd was nearly mad with cheering. But one girl stayed the rot, and Cliff House cheered her to the echo at her plucky stand.

One hit to leg proved her misfortune. For square-leg in the shape of Clara Trevlyn held the ball firmly. Only Clara's rather large hands could have held that shot. The most dangerous opponent was dismissed, and after that it was a procession from and to the pavilion. It was all over bar shouting.

And the shouting was only delayed five minutes.

Clara Trevlyn was hoisted shoulder-high, and carried round and round the field by her admiring Form-fellows.

And when at last Clara was replaced on terra firma, she found her Aunt Jane before her.

"Girls," said Aunt Jane, "I am determined to celebrate this event. Clara has done wonderfully, and I am proud of her. You shall all be my guests to-night. I will hold a banquet in Clara's honour, in her study!"

And what a royal banquet that was, with Clara at the head of the table and her aunt beside her!

When Miss Trevlyn departed on the morrow there was a tremendous crowd to see her off; and the last sound she heard was cheering—cheering her. As she leant back in her cab, Miss Trevlyn dabbed at her eyes, although at the same time she smiled.

"A jolly good sort," was Clara's verdict. And a verdict, too, that was echoed by the others.

And never did Clara regret being natural. The tomboy had come through with flying colours!

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

(Next Thursday's issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND will contain "Philippa Derwent's Pluck!"—a magnificent new long complete story of the girls of Cliff House School, a special Philippa Derwent number of the "Cliff House Weekly," and further long, absorbing instalments of "Friendship Forbidden" and "The Signalman's Daughter! Order your copy of the SCHOOL FRIEND in advance.)

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2"
THE SCHOOL FRIEND.—No. 157.



The SIGNALMAN'S DAUGHTER



Our magnificent new Serial of
Railway, Home, and School Life.
By **GERTRUDE NELSON.**
(Author of "The Ivory Seekers," "The
Island Feud," etc., etc.)



THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

OLIVE WALTERS, a pretty, golden-haired girl of fourteen, who attends St. Mildred's School as a day boarder.

TOM WALTERS, Olive's father, a signalman who was on duty at "Gosbridge Box."

MR. THEODORE DUKE, a big financier, and the father of

SYBIL DUKE, who, with Olive, is a member of the Fifth Form at St. Mildred's.

Through an enemy of Mr. Duke's tampering with the levers in Tom Walters' box, a special train bearing the financier was derailed, and Mr. Duke was injured. From that moment his daughter Sybil, at St. Mildred's, was the bitter enemy of Olive, and took every opportunity for scheming against her.

Tom Walters was discharged by the railway company, and, on top of that, the bank which held his small savings suspended payment. Swallowing all her pride, Olive sang in the streets to earn money. But worse troubles were to be showered upon her brave little head. At St. Mildred's she was accused by many girls of stealing an examination paper, with the intention of helping herself in the coming exam; and then, shortly afterwards, she was seen singing outside a theatre by none other than Sybil Duke!

(Read on from here.)

Refined Cruelty!

THE concluding note of Olive's song broke unmusically as she found Sybil Duke, resplendent in her expensive furs, confronting her.

None of the people who had been listening appeared to notice the breaking of the girl's voice, however; for already a storm of applause had burst out, and the clapping drowned its sudden quavering.

Old Sam arose from his harmonium, and, taking off his hat, he moved towards the theatre queue to begin collecting. His eyes were dim these days, and he failed to notice the agitation the sight of the other well-dressed girl had caused Olive.

For a long moment Olive and Sybil Duke stood silently regarding one another.

In the eyes of Olive was something very like horror; in those of Sybil still an incredulous amazement.

Sybil was the first to recover herself.

A slow smile—a scornful, cruel little smile—came to her lips. Very deliberately she placed the shilling she had proffered Olive upon the harmonium, which stood on the kerb. Then, gathering her fur coat about her, she turned upon her heels and walked haughtily after her mother into the theatre.

With a little gasp of hot indignation, Olive snatched up the shilling from the harmonium and flung it into the gutter. She was breathless—a little faint. She sank down on to Simple Sam's camp-

stool, and remained there until the old musician returned, smiling delightedly at the weight of the coppers and small silver coins that had been dropped into his hat.

It was as through a haze that Olive saw him before her. He was speaking, but his voice to her was no more than a confused murmur.

"I feel faint, Sam," the girl said in a stifled voice. "Let us go home. I can sing no more to-night."

Instantly old Sam was all concern.

"Let me go and fetch you a taxicab, missy," he suggested. "We can well afford it, and it will not cost very much."

"No, no, Sam," Olive protested.

"I—I shall be all right in a moment. Let me sit here for a minute or-so, and—and I shall be able to walk. Something has happened to upset me, but it is no use my explaining. You would not understand."

Her brain was whirling dizzily. The contemptuous face of the girl who had already so cruelly persecuted her was still swimming before her, and she felt weak with dread when she thought of what their fateful meeting would mean to her.

Sybil Duke would be only too glad to further humiliate her, and to-morrow all St. Mildred's would know that she had sung in the streets for alms. Dare she ever show her face again at the school? As she let her mind picture the fresh sneers and gibes now possible Olive shuddered.

She summoned all her courage, all her will power to her aid, and stood up. Simple Sam still eyed her with anxiety as he closed his camp-stool, attached it to his portable instrument, and hoisted it on to his back.

But Olive walked steadily enough as they turned towards her home.

She had thrown off her temporary faintness, and, determinedly setting her lips, she was deciding that even this fresh opportunity given her schoolfellows to heap contempt and insults upon her should not make her forgo the chance of winning the scholarship, which would mean right of entry into college and fifty pounds per annum for three years.

She knew that it would be hard, terribly hard, to face it out. But was it not her duty to cling for the time to St. Mildred's because of the chance of bettering herself?

No! Let her lot be what it would, she would not leave the school!

Nevertheless, in spite of her plucky spirit, Olive spent an almost sleepless night. Apart from imagining all that her schoolfellows would say and think when they knew about her having been singing outside the theatre, there was the accusation Sybil Duke had made against her in

regard to the scholarship paper to trouble her.

That she should have gone to Miss Synes' study and admittedly opened her desk on the very afternoon that the headmistress missed the paper of questions was most unfortunate.

Fate seemed to be against her. The girl who so bitterly disliked her had been given yet another weapon to wield against her by this last cruel trick of circumstances.

"I am innocent! I did not take the paper, and I have nothing to worry about, no matter what they say, if I prove the winner," poor Olive whispered to herself again and again, as she lay in her bed. But, for all that, she tossed and turned restlessly, and sleep refused to come until it was almost dawn.

At breakfast she was unusually pale. Her mother commented upon the fact, but knowing how great was the trouble of her parents, Olive refrained from making known her own worries.

She set out for school at the usual time, though had she known all that the morning held in store for her, brave though she had determined to be, she might have quailed.

Away at St. Mildred's Sybil Duke was already in the quadrangle.

Sybil was a resident boarder, though occasionally, as she lived so near, she would spend a night at her home, as had been the case on the preceding evening when she had visited the theatre with her mother.

A dozen girls, who had wandered into the quad after breakfast for a breath of fresh air before the bell rang for morning school, had uttered surprised exclamations as they found Sybil arriving so early.

"Why, Sybil dear, do we see this wonderful display of energy?" asked a girl named Hilda Ware, who was a member of the Fifth. "Did you find the bed hard?"

Sybil shook her head, a curious smile curling her lips.

"Gather round, girls. I have something to tell you," she said. "It is something not one of you could even guess at, too!"

Sybil's especial cronies, Agnes Graham, Hilda Ware, and another Fifth-Former, Esme Conyers, drew nearer. Other girls, realising Sybil had something of interest to impart, joined them, and formed a circle about the works-owner's daughter.

"Do tell us your news, Sybil darling," begged Agnes. "Do not keep us in suspense. Have your people come into a fortune and bought you a motor-car, or something?"

Sybil Duke again gave a shake of her

head, and the smile dying from her lips, her eyes grew hard and vengeful.

"No, it's nothing like that," she said. "But what I have to tell you concerns the girl whose father caused mine to lose a small fortune."

"Olive Walters?" Esme Conyers murmured, understanding.

"Yes," Sybil agreed, nodding. "What do you think the wretched little council school upstart was doing last night when the mater and I went to see 'The Brass Bottle' at the Theatre Royal?"

"Selling programmes?" Hilda Ware asked, making a guess.

"No; singing in the street outside the theatre with a ragged old tramp with a harmonium," Sybil Duke answered, with a contemptuous laugh. "It's almost unbelievable that a girl who is a scholar here should dare to do such a thing, isn't it?"

The other girls stared at her in blank amazement. For a second or two they were incredulous, speechless. Then as at last they found their voices, all began to ply Sybil with questions at one and the same time.

"Singing in the street?" gasped Agnes Graham.

"Singing? You mean begging for money outside the theatre?" asked another.

"Good gracious, Sybil! Are you sure you made no mistake, and that it really was she?" asked Esme Conyers.

"Mistake! There was no mistake. I was as near to her as I am to you, Esme, and stood so that I looked her full in the face," Sybil Duke answered. "She was startled and annoyed to see me, too, I can tell you!"

"But why can she be doing such a thing?" Agnes Graham asked. "Is it because her father and mother are in want?"

Sybil shrugged her shoulders.

"Probably," she had to admit. "Her father was discharged from the railway company for his wicked carelessness in leaving his box and allowing the accident to happen—and rightly, too! He ought to have been sent to prison! You see what comes of a scholarship making it possible for a board school girl to enter a school like St. Mildred's. What would the girls at the grammar school along the road say if they knew that one of the scholars here sang in the street for coppers?"

"It is too scandalous!" agreed Hilda Ware. "Fancy our having to associate with such a girl!"

"It is not fancy but reality," Esme Conyers said, tossing her head. "I think we ought to tell Miss Symes about it, and try to get her sent away from here. I, for one, should hide my face in shame if I thought the grammar school girls knew about it and I met any of them!"

A chorus of agreement came from Sybil's other listeners, with the exception of Agnes Graham.

The latter was curiously silent and thoughtful. Perhaps she was picturing how bad matters with Olive at home might be and pitying her a little, realising the sterling moral courage needed to sing in the streets.

"I do not know about telling Miss Symes. What the girl does when away from the school is, after all, really nothing to do with Squibs, and I fail to see how she could expel her," said Sybil. "But she deserves to be hounded out of St. Mildred's, in my opinion. Firstly, she got every girl in the school into disgrace when she played that vicious joke on Squibs. Secondly"—she glanced quickly about her to make sure Winnie Norris was not amongst these about her

"—she stole that scholarship paper, you can be sure, and now, lastly, she has done her best to disgrace the school by descending to the level of a beggar. I think we ought to take the law into our own hands, so to speak, and make the school too unpleasant for her to want to remain!"

"Yes, you are right, dear," declared Hilda Ware, "and we will do it. We will show her what we think of this last abominable thing she has done!"

Other girls chorused their agreement, and the little crowd dispersed, Agnes Graham walking with Sybil towards the school.

"Don't you think, Sybil dear," Agnes said suddenly, "that you are a little rough on Olive Walters?"

"Rough! What on earth do you mean, Agnes?" Sybil demanded, in real or well-feigned astonishment.

Agnes seemed a little confused. For a long time now she had toadied to Sybil Duke, as, even now that Mr. Duke's income had decreased, Sybil was always well provided with pocket-money, and gave frequent "feeds" in her study. Whilst on occasions Agnes was invited to Sybil's home, and was sometimes taken motoring with the latter and her mother.

But Agnes Graham had in her some little good, and now that she had taken the plunge she contrived to keep something of a bold front.

"I mean, dear," she said, "that, after all, she might not be so bad as you think her. Supposing—just supposing someone did enter the signal-box and interfere with the signals on the day of your father's accident and Olive Walters did struggle with them, to try to save the train, as she says?"

"Do you believe such a thin yarn for a moment, Agnes?" Sybil asked heatedly. "If you do, you would perhaps like to make her your bosom friend, though it would mean that I should never dream of speaking to you again! There she is—coming through the gates now. Why not fall upon her neck and tell her how sorry you are that you helped in that jape upon Squibs? She would be interested to know who was responsible for the booby-trap for which she was blamed, and"—sarcastically—"of course, she would not dream of giving you and me away."

"Don't be silly, Sybil! You know I am your friend, and that I should stick to you whatever you did," Agnes said hastily, paling and finding her temporary pluck deserting her. "Ah, there's the bell! Look at the beautiful sunshine! What a pity we have to stick in a stuffy class-room all the morning!"

It was true that the bell for morning school had commenced to clang out its sonorous summons. It brought all the girls who had been in the quad hurrying into the school building, and, for that reason, Olive Walters, who had just arrived, was spared fresh humiliation—as yet.

Sybil was a little abstracted as she took her place in the foremost row of desks in the Fifth Form class-room. The words of Agnes Graham were repeating themselves in her brain, and she was wondering, as she had wondered secretly before.

Supposing someone had tampered with the signals? had been the gist of what her crony had said. And supposing Olive Walters had tried to prevent them and struggled with them, as she had declared at the official inquiry?

Well, what if she had? Sybil asked herself, her eyes flashing with a fierce light. It did not alter the fact that Olive's father had been absent from his box. He had left it because he thought his wife was dying. But what was the

wife of a signalman to her? She would continue to pursue the object she had vowed to achieve—to persecute this man's daughter until she drove her out of the school!

"Sybil Duke, you are—ahem!—failing to attend to me!" she heard the voice of Miss Symes say severely; and she realised that the headmistress, who was instructing the Fifth again that morning, had begun her lesson.

She sat upright in her seat and fixed her eyes a little resentfully upon the mistress; and until morning school was over, Sybil Duke was forced practically to dismiss Olive from her mind.

Olive, loath to go out into the quad amongst her schoolfellows, lingered behind in the school-room. She helped Miss Symes stack away some books in a cupboard, the usual mistress having been sent on some trivial errand.

Out in the quad, Winnie Norris waited for her friend, but as she failed to see Olive emerge with the other girls, Winnie retired to her study. She wanted at least to make a show in the forthcoming scholarship examination, and was giving almost all her spare time to "coaching" herself in subjects she thought might arise.

If she could only come out near the top it would satisfy her parents, as they would know that she had been trying.

The books put away, Olive had no further excuse to remain in the school-room. Though she dreaded the scornful glances she fully expected to meet in the quadrangle, there was nothing for it but to obtain her hat and face the music.

After all, she thought, as she set her lips tightly and flung up her head a little, the situation had to be faced sooner or later, so why not at once?

As Olive emerged from the school and the fresh spring wind fanned her cheeks, rather to her surprise she found none of the other girls near the building. But almost at once she realised that a vast crowd of them was gathered near the ornamental iron-gates which opened into the roadway.

Almost half the school must have been congregated there, and Olive, as she made her way in that direction, vaguely wondered what was the cause of the excitement.

Poor girl! She was to know soon enough.

As she drew abreast of the crowd, it parted, and Olive beheld Sybil Duke standing by her wide-brimmed straw hat, which lay, crown downwards, on the ground.

Sybil was assuming an expression of exaggerated misery, and as she saw Olive she began to sing in a still more wretched voice that favourite song of the beggar class of street-singer, "Oh, Where is My Wandering Boy To-night?"

Her imitation of a street-singer of the more vagrant type was really almost clever. It could have been admired and laughed at had her efforts aimed at a better cause.

Between every few words of the song, which she sang in a quavering treble, she paused to give a pronounced sniff and held out her hand as one soliciting alms.

For just a moment Olive paused. She had drawn a quick breath and flushed painfully, and tears of humiliation had sprang into her eyes.

Hilda Ware, Esme Conyers, and a few others stepped forward and dropped half-pennies into Sybil's hat. Then there was a positive uproar of jeering, scornful laughter from the crowds of girls who looked on, and Olive, her cheeks still scarlet and her eyes smarting and blinded with her tears, made to flee.

But it was not easy to reach the gates. Some of the girls deliberately placed

themselves in the way, and jeering words were hurled at the unfortunate girl.

"Common street-singer!" cried one.
"We don't want you in this school!" glibed another.

Blindly Olive thrust her way through them. Almost, this last and greatest humiliation had broken her spirit, and it was only by an effort of will that she refrained from breaking into a run as she found her way clear to the gates.

She walked through them, however, though she quickened her pace as she gained the road.

Her tears still made her vision hazy, and a butcher's boy on a bicycle almost ran her down. She did not hear the sarcastic remarks he flung after her as he rode on, and she crossed to the opposite side of the unpaved road.

The girl hurried onwards without a glance behind. She knew instinctively that a goodly number of her tormentors were gathered just outside the gates of the school, ready to hurl further insults her way should she look back.

It was a Wednesday, and consequently half-holiday, and Olive had not brought with her anything to eat, as was her custom on other days now that her parents were in straitened circumstances.

The girl reached the stile and the foot-path a short distance along the road. She still had to traverse the latter to reach her home, though that was now in the populous town.

At the stile she paused. There was no one to see, as she was hidden from the school by a curve in the road, and, seating herself upon its step, she dropped her face into her hands.

Her slender shoulders shook convulsively, and her sobbing was of one whose heart was near to breaking.

Why was it possible for fellow-beings to be so cruel? she wondered. With but one exception, the girls of St. Mildred's seemed hopeless snobs whose one aim in life of late was to wound and hurt her.

Olive suddenly felt a hand laid upon her shoulder. With a start, and stifling her weeping, she looked up. A little cry of astonishment broke from her lips as she found Miss Crawford standing over her.

"What is the matter, Olive?" the mistress asked quietly.

Olive's head drooped again. In spite of her efforts to check them, sobs still shook her slim figure, and she found it impossible at once to speak.

"Why did they all crowd round you in the quadrangle, child?" Miss Crawford persisted gently. "I followed you to find out. I saw them from the window of my study."

"I—I cannot tell you, Miss Crawford," Olive faltered. "It—it would be too like sneaking."

"No—no, it would not, dear," the kindly mistress objected. "I promise that I will keep strictly to myself any confidence you give me. I ask you to tell me just what has been happening—as a friend, not as a mistress of your school. I feel, somehow, that you are in great trouble, Olive, and, believe me, I want to help you if it lies in my power."

Her kindness brought a lump to Olive's throat, and she had hard work not to break down again. Gratefully she took the mistress's hand, and held it for a moment dumbly. Then she felt how great was the need to confide in one whom she could call friend, and she no longer hesitated to be frank with the teacher who had previously shown sympathy towards her.

"I—I have been singing in—the streets, Miss Crawford," she whispered in a stifled voice, "and they have found out. That was why—why they all gathered about me and jeered and laughed. I—I ought not to have done it,

perhaps, but things were so desperate at home, and I sang in the streets to earn money to help my father and mother."

"I know, child," was Miss Crawford's quiet yet startling reply.

A Fresh Disaster!

"YOU know?" Olive raised her eyes to the wonderfully sympathetic glance of Miss Crawford, regarding her in amazement.

"You—you knew that I went with the old gentleman—he is that!—with the harmonium and sang in the streets, Miss Crawford?" she repeated, a little aghast.

Again Miss Crawford's hand rested upon her shoulders, and the mistress smiled.

"Yes, dear, I knew before you gave me your confidence, for I was in the town the night before last, and saw you when you delighted the people who waited outside the Hippodrome," she said. "And do you know what I think of those who have jeered and laughed at you for what you did?"

Mutely, Olive shook her head.

"I think," Miss Crawford said, very deliberately, her eyes growing stern and contemptuous, "that they have far more reason to feel a sense of shame than you if they trouble to examine their own consciences. I wonder if any one of them would have had the courage to stand in an open street and sing, supposing their parents were in distress? I think not, and I advise you, Olive, to disregard all that they may say, all their empty sneers: I can feel only admiration for you. I think that what you did was just splendid."

Olive's eyes momentarily shone with pleasure, then she sadly shook her head.

"Ah, if only they would think that, Miss Crawford! But they never will," she said. "Accustomed to their fathers and mothers having wealth—or, at least, being in comfortable circumstances, they cannot understand what it means to see one's parents next to penniless and facing absolute want."

"Has it been as bad as that at home, Olive?" Miss Crawford asked, with quiet, earnest sympathy.

Olive flushed and hesitated. She had not really meant to admit quite how desperate matters had been with her

parents, having a horror of the kindly mistress offering to help her with a gift of money. But, having gone so far, she could do nothing save incline her head in agreement.

"I am so sorry, child!" Miss Crawford said. "But perhaps I can help you?"

"My people have money to go on with for a time now, Miss Crawford," the girl said hastily. "I earned quite a lot when I sang on those two nights in the city."

"Yes, yes," Miss Crawford nodded, understanding what was in the girl's mind and admiring her pride. "But there is no reason why your voice should not continue to earn you a little for your parents, especially under improved conditions."

"I do not understand," Olive murmured.

"I mean on concert platforms, dear," explained the mistress. "As a matter of fact, I went into the town to buy some music, and whilst in Day's Music Emporium I met a certain gentleman and his wife, who are of the Conservatoire, or school of music, and I spoke to them concerning you."

She laughed at Olive's surprise.

"You see, Olive, you have a voice I am a little proud of having trained," she continued. "Mr. and Mrs. Wilberforce, the couple I speak of, are very influential people in the concert world, and frequently organise very high-class concerts themselves. For that reason they are at all times anxious to discover new talent, especially in young singers, who might be trained into something out of the ordinary, and I asked them if it were possible for you to be given a trial."

"Oh, Miss Crawford, how kind you are!" Olive cried impulsively. "Do you think there is a chance for me?"

"Yes, dear, there is," the mistress replied, pleased at her enthusiasm. "At the end of next week this lady and gentleman are conducting a concert in aid of charity, at the Memorial Hall, and they have promised to include your name upon the programme. They will both be present, and if only you make another hit such as I witnessed you making I think your future as a concert-singer is assured. I shall be there, too, and, if you wish, will accompany you in your songs. You must try not to be nervous, and do your very best."



Sybil Duke, standing by her wide-brimmed hat, was imitating in a wretched voice a street singer. The tears of humiliation sprang to Olive's eyes.

"I will, I will, Miss Crawford!" Olive declared, a catch in her voice. "How can I thank you enough for giving me this opportunity?"

"Win success, and I shall be more than repaid, Olive," the mistress answered. "Come to me during the luncheon-time tomorrow, and we will practise some new songs I have which, I think, will suit you. I can let you know further details about your appearing at the Memorial Hall then or later. You poor little soul, I fear your lot has been a hard one. But cheer up! I am sure there are better times in store."

Miss Crawford stooped and kissed the girl's tear-stained cheek. Then she pressed her hand and left her, and, crossing the stile, Olive began to wend her way homewards.

Tears still troubled on her lashes; but she was happier than she had been, perhaps, since the coming of her parents' great trouble. One could not converse with the sunny-natured Miss Crawford without somehow being heartened. Then there was the mistress' promise that she should have her opportunity to place her foot on the first rung of the ladder of fame as a singer.

"How kind she is!" Olive thought again and again, as she crossed the meadows. For the time being she forgot even the studied cruelty of her schoolmates, and to her the future seemed to smile brightly with hope.

Olive knew that there is practically no limit to the earnings of a singer at concerts of the right kind. She was young enough to be superbly optimistic, and she was inclined to see in her forthcoming chance the beginning of the end of all her father and mother's troubles.

She helped her mother with some housework during the afternoon, telling her her wonderful news. Mrs. Walters was delighted, and more than once, as they worked together, Olive surprised her mother regarding her with a proud light in her eyes.

The girl said nothing of what she had suffered that morning at school. She knew that it would hurt her mother terribly if she knew how she had been humiliated, and at all times Olive pluckily made a point of keeping her troubles to herself. She told herself that her parents had far too many worries of their own to be distressed upon her account.

In the evening Olive noticed that her mother looked very pale and tired, and urged her to go to bed. After a little pressing Mrs. Walters complied with the girl's suggestion, Olive promising to wait up for her father and to make him a cup of cocoa when he eventually came in from his daily search for work.

Mrs. Walters had scarcely retired when Olive's father came in. He was carrying a large cardboard box, and as Olive rose from where she had been seated to greet him she saw that he was smiling happily.

"Work at last, father!" she cried joyously, understanding.

"Yes, lass," Tom Walters agreed, placing the cardboard box upon the floor and stooping to receive her kiss. "I have had the most wonderful luck! I called on a man with whom I used to go to school years ago when we were both boys. His name is Gregory Carson, and he has done very well in life. You may know the name of Carson & Matthews, the big wholesale drapers. Well, he is the founder of that important business, which he started in one small shop in a back street. He has just produced some dainty lines in blouses for the coming summer, and he has trusted me with samples of the various fashions. He was genuinely sorry to hear how up against

it we had been, and chided me for not coming to him before. He is going to pay me two pounds a week as a standing wage, and commission on sales. Tomorrow I start travelling with his new lines in blouses around the various retail shops, and I am certain I shall do well."

"It's splendid, daddy!" cried Olive, tears of joy glistening in her eyes. "Oh, how pretty and delightful!"—as he raised the lid of the box, stood it on one side, and showed her his samples—blouses chiefly of crepe-de-Chine. "But how expensive they must be!"

"Yes, Olive," Tom Walters nodded, laughing. "The retail prices range from twenty-five shillings to three guineas apiece. At wholesale rates the blouses in this box are valued at just over fifteen pounds. Anyone but myself would have had to leave some security with Mr. Carson before they took them from his establishment."

"He has proved a friend, father."

"One of the best, dear," Tom Walters answered; then he gave a grave shake of his head. "He is a good fellow, and I wish I could have found him in better health. He told me that of late he has suffered severely with his heart, and even whilst I was with him in his office he had an attack that frightened both young Mr. Matthews, the junior partner, and myself. Hallo! Whom have we here?"

There had come a swift pattering of feet and an eager whine. Tom Walters had moved the lamp a little nearer the



Mr. Walters came in carrying a large cardboard box, and Olive jumped to her feet. "Work at last, father?" she cried joyously.

edge of the table, so that Olive could admire the sample blouses, and the girl was so intent upon the dainty garments that for the moment she did not realise the presence of old Simple Sam's dog, Paddy.

The dog had come rushing into the room to find her, Tom Walters having left open the outer door.

With a bound the shaggy animal leapt on to the table in a frantic desire to lick Olive's cheek and attract her attention. Tom Walters uttered a cry of alarm and sprang forward as he saw disaster pending. But he was too late.

Paddy, in his anxiety to display his affection for Olive, collided with the lamp and, toppling over and falling upon its side, it burst with a dull explosion. Next moment a stream of blazing oil had shot over the table and was dropping into the box of flimsy blouses.

In an instant the blouses with which Olive's father was at last to have had a chance to make good were blazing furiously and rapidly being reduced to a heap of worthless ashes!

Dark Threats!

TO make certain of extinguishing the flames that had threatened to envelope Olive, Tom Walters beat at the rug with his hands.

"The blouses, father! The blouses! I am all right; look to them!" Olive gasped, though her arms had been burned painfully, her eyes were streaming, and her face twitching with the smarting agony.

Her father scrambled to his feet, but it was only to stumble over Paddy in the semi-darkness, and to fall heavily as the dog made to scamper from the room, his apology for a tail between his legs.

Paddy yelped, for he was badly frightened. He rushed from the Walters' quarters; and, for the second time, Olive's father hurriedly rose to his feet.

But even as he swung towards the valuable garments the last of them caught, and a bright tongue of flame shot towards the ceiling. The fired oil had set alight one side of the cardboard box and also the table-cover, and the ex-signalman groaned as he leapt to the box, turned it upside-down, and shook it.

Only a mass of crinkled ashes fell to the floor. The unexpected fire had destroyed the fifteen pounds worth of goods with which he had been entrusted in little more than as many seconds.

Fearing that the whole room would be set ablaze, Olive's father dashed into an adjoining scullery. Snatching up a pail, he filled it at the tap above the sink. He left a small galvanised bath in its place, and rushed back with the pail of water into the living-room.

He flung the water over the spot where the flames had gained their most formidable hold, noting as he did so that a strip of carpet and the upholstered seat of a chair had also started to flare.

Without waiting to see the result of his effort to extinguish the blaze, Tom Walters tore back to the scullery with the pail. He changed that for the bath which had been beneath the running tap, and for the second time hurried back to the scene of the disaster, with the three-parts filled bath.

Towards the flames Olive's father hurled the water, and it was then that a frightened scream came from the adjoining bed-room, where Mrs. Walters had been sleeping. Glancing up, Tom Walters saw his wife's figure framed in the doorway.

"Keep back, mother—keep back!" he cried, for Mrs. Walters had flung a loosely fitting dressing-gown over her nightdress, and he feared that the flowing garments might come in contact with the flames and catch.

By this time Olive had struggled out of the rug with which her father had enveloped her and risen to her feet.

Her arms were burned sufficiently to cause them to smart badly, but nothing like they would have been had her father not acted so promptly. The girl forgot her pain in her anxiety to help her father put out the fire which threatened their little home, and she sped after him as he returned to the scullery with the bath.

The contents of the pail, which Olive carried into the kitchen, did much to check the already decreased fire. And when Tom Walters staggered after her with the bath again filled and emptied that over the last of the flames, they died out, and the room at least was saved.

Olive lit some candles, and, coughing because of the smoke that hung thickly on the air, Mrs. Walters came forward and gazed ruefully at the damage the flames and the water had done.

"How did it happen, Tom? And what was in the box?" she asked, looking a little puzzled as her eyes fell upon the latter.

In the dim light of the candles Olive and her father regarded one another in gloom and consternation.

"My goodness, what shall I say to Mr. Carson?" the ex-signalman groaned.

"It—it was an accident, wasn't it, father?" Olive faltered. "The dog was trying to lick my face when he jumped on the table and upset the lamp. He knew no better, and we can hardly blame poor old Sam, his master."

"No, we cannot blame him; but, even if we could, of what would be the use, Olive?" asked the ex-railwayman. "Sam is as poor as we, and not in a position to help by paying even a part of the damage. I am afraid this will be end of all my hopes. Old friend though he may be, Mr. Carson will hardly find it possible to overlook this loss."

"Perhaps, daddy, he would let you make the damage good by paying it a little each week out of your wages and commission," Olive suggested.

"Ah, if he only would," her father muttered. "But he is bound to be angry. Could anything be more unfortunate?"

"Tom—Olive, what does it all mean? What was in the box and been destroyed?" Mrs. Walters asked again. And then her husband and the girl between them explained.

Mrs. Walters turned back towards her bed-room, with a sob.

"Will our luck never change?" she asked in a despairing tone. "Perhaps this will lose you the berth, Tom, before you have been given the least chance to make good."

"We'll try not to think that, mother," Olive said, following her into her room and slipping a comforting arm about her waist. "Mr. Carson, from what father says, is a kind-hearted gentleman, and fifteen pounds cannot mean very much to him. Surely, if father explains, he will deduct a part of his earnings each week until the blouses are paid for, and give him other samples to take round to the shops he calls on."

Tom Walters was on his knees, mopping the water from the floor. By the light in her bed-room, as she turned up the little night-lamp, Mrs. Walters saw how Olive's arms had suffered, and, with a cry of concern, she insisted upon smearing them with vaseline before she would allow the girl to return to the kitchen to help her father.

The unfortunate incident of the burned blouses was responsible for the little family of three getting very little sleep that night.

Olive's father lay wide-eyed nearly all through the night, wondering what he should say to Mr. Carson on the morrow, whilst his wife was as concerned as he and slumbered only fitfully.

Then, in the case of Olive, though she had had little rest the night previously, sympathy for her father and anxiety as to how Mr. Carson would receive the news of the calamity, kept sleep from her eyes for hour upon hour.

How hard it was that he should obtain this new work and almost immediately stumble against a cruel trick of Fate such as this, which might dash all his hopes!

Olive's father was silent and moody during breakfast. His honest face was drawn and worried, and he scarcely touched a morsel of food.

Just before it was time for Olive, whose arms still smarted painfully, to think about leaving for school, Tom Walters arose to his feet, intending to go round to Mr. Carson's office and report what had happened.

But as he was on his way towards the outer door of their rooms there came a rat-tat-tat upon it, and, opening the door, Tom Walters was surprised—a little disconcerted under the circumstances, to find Mr. Carson's junior partner, George Matthews, standing without.

Mr. Matthews was a young man with a bulldog jaw and a scowling brow. He wore rather glaring gloves, was bold of glance and aggressive of manner. His clean-shaven face was that of a hard man, the lips thin and usually compressed, and the eyes steel-grey and stern. The gold-mounted walking-cane he carried, the diamond ring that flashed upon his finger, and the heavy gold watch-chain stretched across his fancy vest, were his natural complement.

As Tom Walters drew back Mr. Matthews stepped over the threshold almost rudely.

"Ah, so this is where you live, Walters," he said, as he entered the living-room and glanced about him with a hint of contempt. "Not a very inviting neighbourhood, yours, my man."

Olive's father flushed slightly, and the girl, who had turned from gathering together her satchel and some books, regarded Mr. Matthews in some little indignation.

Most of the signs of the fire had been either removed or concealed by Olive and her mother when they had arisen that morning, and, as he took the most comfortable chair in the room, Mr. Matthews did not notice the traces that were left.

"You seemed to be well acquainted with my partner; in fact, he seemed to treat you almost as a friend, Walters, so I presume you will count what I am going to tell you as bad

(Continued on page 56.)

A Record-breaking CORSET OFFER

ASTOUNDING BARGAIN.

14/11 Ambron Corsets for 8/11

SENT AT ONCE ON HOME APPROVAL FOR DEPOSIT OF ONE SHILLING.



THIS remarkable Corset Offer is unparalleled: 50,000 readers of SCHOOL FRIEND are being given the opportunity to benefit by a unique scheme for introducing quite a new Model of the Ambron Gold Medal Health Corset.

Make sure you secure one of these Models at almost half price, for fortunate indeed will those ladies be who participate in this record-breaking Corset Bargain Offer.

You have the assurance of the largest Mail Order Corset House in the World that a Corset of the quality of Ambron Model "A" is absolutely unpurchasable at any Draper's or even the largest Stores at a less figure than 14/11.

Just read the specification of this Corset, which appears under the illustration. The garment is made of Ambron Super Corset Cloth of exceptional fabric strength. A small piece of this material requires a strain of 240lbs. to break it. In the usual way a cloth that will stand a strain of 95lbs. is considered good. This is only one of the reasons why the Ambron Model "A" marks such a big advance in Corset manufacture.

So you have to-day an opportunity of securing really exceptional 14/11 Corset value for 8/11; in other words, you are being presented with a bonus of 6/- to induce you to give this beautiful model a trial.

GIGANTIC NATIONAL SCHEME OF "ON APPROVAL" PRIVATE FITTING AT HOME.

By this plan you are able to have one of these wonderful Corsets sent to your own home for a Private Fitting and absolutely on the Approval or Return Basis. You are not even asked to send the Bargain Price in the first instance. All you have to do is to send 1/-, and if, after the closest examination, you are not absolutely satisfied with the garment, you simply return it to us and the 1/- you have sent will be immediately refunded. If, however, you decide to keep it—as we have every confidence you will—then you have the additional advantage, if it suits your convenience to do so, of paying the balance in instalments of 1/- per week.

Fill in the coupon below, send it to-day, and as soon as the postman can bring it to you, you will be the happy recipient of the biggest Corset Bargain ever made.

HOW TO ORDER.

GIFT COUPON which cancels of the price. 6/-

Post this Coupon with 1/- deposit and 6d. part postage, and a 14/11 Ambron Model "A" Corset in Dove Coutille will be sent to you on approval. When you complete the purchase your 1/- deposit will count as 7/-, and the balance of 7/11 you can remit in one sum or by weekly instalments of 1/-. If not entirely satisfied, return the Corset at once and your deposit will be refunded. Please give measurements here:

Waist..... Bust..... Hips.....
Pin Coupon to a sheet of paper, on which write name and address very plainly, and enclose with postal order which please cross thus / /.

D School Friend, 13-5-22. No. 126.

Post your order at once to **AMBROSE WILSON, Ltd.**,
126, Allen House, 70, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1.
The Largest Mail Order Corset House in the World.

THE SIGNALMAN'S DAUGHTER!

(Continued from page 55.)

news," the junior partner of the big wholesale drapers said. "You'll remember Mr. Carson had a heart attack in the office yesterday. Well, he had another when he reached home last evening, and it proved fatal."

"Fatal, sir?" Tom Walters gazed at him blankly, aghast. "Mr. Carson is dead!" he cried, shocked.

Mr. Matthews nodded.

"Yes. The attack carried him off suddenly, after he had dined," he said. "It is very sad, of course. But, even the death of its most important member does not permit of a firm such as ours showing any slackness. Competition in these days is too keen. I have called to see you, Walters, as there are one or two matters I should like to discuss with you, and I was not sure whether my late partner had arranged for you to report at the office prior to starting out upon your round, or otherwise."

This was a falsehood of convenience.

Mr. George Matthews had known that Olive's father was to have called at the firm's offices, though Mr. Carson had arranged that he should interview the proprietors of one or two retail shops with his samples on his way.

Again Mr. Matthews looked around the scrupulously clean but simply furnished room. His real object in calling had been to find out just where Tom Walters lived. He had suggested to the partner, who had

so suddenly passed away, that the firm ought to be given some security against the valuable samples Tom Walters would have to be supplied with and another reason he was here was to determine whether the ex-signalman owned sufficient furniture to form such security.

Mr. Matthews was a man who trusted no one, and he never took risks if they could be avoided.

"I can hardly credit Mr. Carson is dead, sir," Tom Walters said, his voice low and regretful. "It is so sudden, I mean. Poor—poor Mr. Carson! You say, sir, that you have something to say to me. Firstly, perhaps, I had better tell you of a most regrettable accident that has happened."

"Accident?"

Mr. Matthews frowned.

"Accident? What do you mean?" he asked sharply.

Tom Walters moistened his lips with his tongue. For him it was a most difficult situation.

"An accident to those blouses which Mr. Carson gave me as samples, sir," he said a little huskily.

"The blouses? What has happened to them?" Matthews demanded, his eyes hard, a little suspicious.

"The lamp was overturned, sir," Mrs. Walters put in, realising her husband's embarrassment. "The blazing oil from it fell amongst the blouses and—and—"

"They were totally destroyed, Mr. Matthews," the ex-signalman said, as his wife paused, dismayed at the angry roar with which the junior partner of the drapery firm had sprung to his feet.

The signalman, as he had spoken, had jerked the partially burned cardboard box from beneath the table, and now he pointed to it with a helpless gesture.

"It was entirely an accident, sir," he began, "and—"

He broke off, staring in surprise at the wholesale draper, as the latter laughed harshly, incredulously.

"Oh, an accident, was it?" Mr. Matthews sneered. "A pretty story, that, my man. But do you imagine that I credit it for one moment?"

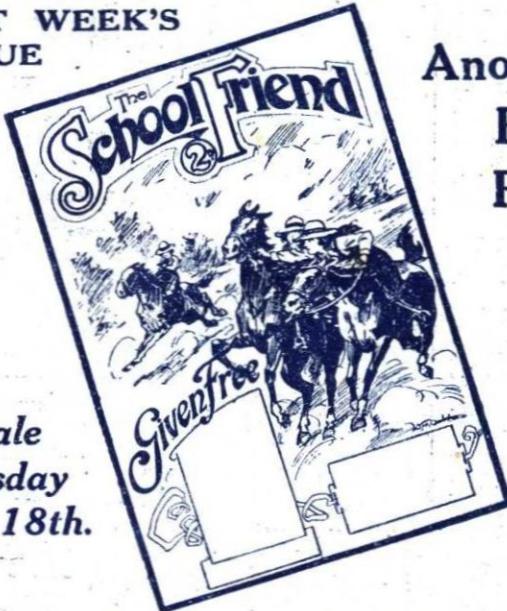
"Do you think, sir, that I am not speaking the truth?" Olive's father asked in an indignant tone.

"I make so bold as to doubt it," Matthews said bluntly. "D'you know, I had an idea something like this might happen; for a man who is dismissed from one situation in disgrace is not likely to do well in another, in my opinion. I could not override my senior partner, but I considered him very foolish to take you on trust as he did, and if I had had my way, you would certainly never have left our establishment with those valuable samples without leaving ample security in our hands! By James, I have half a mind to go for the police and prosecute you right away."

Olive had been tensely listening, her face strained and white. Now a sharp cry burst from her lips, and she came quickly round the table towards the wholesaler.

(How will Olive reply to the harsh charge of her father's employer? Will poor Tom Walters again be thrown out of work? Don't miss next week's instalment, and do me a favour by recommending this serial and "Friendship Forbidden!" to all your friends.)

NEXT WEEK'S
ISSUE
of



On Sale
Thursday
May 18th.

PHILIPPA DERWENT'S PLUCK! A Long Complete Story of Cliff House School.
SPECIAL "PHILIPPA DERWENT" No. of the "Cliff House Weekly."

WILL CONTAIN

Another of our Beautiful
**FREE Coloured Art
PORTRAIT CARDS!**



PHILIPPA DERWENT.

And long instalments of our fine serials, "Friendship Forbidden!" & "The Signalman's Daughter!"