

# FOLLY



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When they came back (or possibly the next day) they were talking about other people's efforts. One friend had worn a necklace of amber beads with a label saying "Always" (or maybe even "Toujours"). I was curious about this and was told that it was a book called – the title we know – and not suitable for me to read. This would have been 1947/8, probably in the Christmas holidays, so it fits with the appearance of the film.

*And Mark Taha...*

...saw *Gone With the Wind* at 11, read it at 12, and acquired a lifetime's interest in the American Civil War as a result. Jennifer's treatment always makes me foam at the mouth. I intend to read *Forever Amber* some day. but – abortions in the 17th century? Sure they don't mean miscarriages?

Try [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_abortion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_abortion)

*Kay Whalley is also an Intended Reader:*

My only attempt to read *Forever Amber* was 8-10 years ago, and I failed to get past the first chapter or so. I did not know what I was missing! This puts *Gone With the Wind* in the shade (or penumbra, as the case may be). I'd better have another go at reading it.

*Jane Cooper also enjoyed Sally Dore's article on the cross-overs between girls' school stories and real life, not to mention the large families correspondence:*

I'd like to offer one or two more examples. First, the controversy about wearing gym tunics. In *Rachel in the Abbey*, Miss Raven, who has taken over the headship of the school from Miss Macey, insists that the senior forms wear blouses and skirts instead of gym tunics. For a short time this causes a rebellion in the sixth form who have got used to the ease and freedom of tunics. But this was published in 1951, the year I went to boarding school, where we all wore blouses and skirts without a murmur and special kit for games. So is EJO doing a backward glance at the earlier controversy? In the first generation books, e.g. *The Abbey Girls Go Back to School* (1922), there is plenty of talk about how daring (but enjoyable – or perhaps *therefore* enjoyable) it is to wear "gymmies" in the street even with coats over them. This kind of thing occurs in several books but as this is only a comment I won't give chapter and verse.

The point about academic education not unfitting girls for being homemakers is well illustrated by DFB in *Prefects at Springdale* (1938). Here the inter-house competition is won, not by the houses demonstrating music, science, languages, business studies or physical education but by the one offering domestic science.

Picking up on the correspondence about large families in children's fiction, may I put in a word for Charlotte M. Yonge? No, she doesn't (I don't think) get up to sixteen children in one family, but eleven in *The Daisy Chain* and thirteen in *The Pillars of the House* are noble efforts, especially when you consider that all these are

