

“THE RIVALS OF MORCOVE” GREAT NEW SCHOOL  
SERIAL STARTS TO-DAY

# THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE



**HER AMAZING  
DISCOVERY!**

*A great incident from  
"The Rivals of Morcove"  
within.*

**2<sup>D</sup>**

Your Editor is always delighted to hear from any of his readers, and to have their opinions on all the features in "THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE." Prompt replies will be sent to all readers who enclose a stamped addressed envelope.



Address your letters to:  
THE EDITOR,  
"THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE."  
The Fleetway House,  
Farringdon Street,  
London, E.C.4.

#### A Great Surprise

I KNOW what keen enthusiasts all of you are on dancing, especially at this season of the year, when dances are again in full swing; and for those who are experts, and keen in this winter pastime, I have designed a great new series which will commence in a week or two's time. They are short stories, and they will deal with dancing. It would be giving too much away to tell you the plot of the first splendid story by a writer who is quite new to your paper, but who will prove to be a certain and reliable acquisition. Next week I shall be able to tell you some more about this great new series.

#### A Fine Tale.

DORIS LYTH has made her name so popular with all readers of THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE that I am sure you will be interested to hear of a splendid complete story by her which will appear in next week's great issue. This is entitled "The Missing Code," and it is the story of Eleanor Drayton, and how, from a quite casual incident, there came a most exciting adventure and a romance. The story of her friendship and her exploit in this particular tale is one that will grip you from beginning to end, and you must on no account miss this thrilling story from so popular a writer.

#### Will Jeffery Succeed?

STEPHEN JEFFERY seems to have achieved success for his plot, but whether or not he will succeed ultimately is a matter for Mona Marchmont to determine. She has seen her father go to sea on a false errand. She has seen the mysterious and sinking Stephen Jeffery enter her father's house, and now—now she dashes seaward with the intent to preserve her father, if it is at all possible for her to do so. Strong in intent and courageous, she means to overcome the wiles of Stephen Jeffery and his father, and, with the loyal friendship of Trafford Ashton to aid her, it seems that she is stronger now than ever before, and that there are forces working against Jeffery that he need not despise. But will Jeffery succeed? Next week's magnificent instalment of this great serial opens up new developments in this dramatic and thrilling story of the sea.

#### What does it mean?

ALREADY Ethel Courtway of Morocco School has come upon a strange happen- ing. She has discovered that her step-brother is the friend of the strange boy she met on her way to the school. What does this dramatic meeting by the ruined mill portend? Can it be that Cyril Dudley is not all that she thought him to be, and that her father's judgment is correct? But no, surely friendship beyond question! And yet behind all this lies a big mystery, a mystery that Miss Marjorie Stanton deals with very skilfully at the chapters of her story are told to you.

As you read the new turns that this story takes, you cannot help but be impressed at the rivalry that is going on at Morocco School, and all the strange mystery connected with this old mill in the hands, purchased recently by Ethel's father.

#### Some Magnificent Special Articles.

NEXT week's issue will contain some really splendid special articles, amongst which can be numbered the very up-to-date topic, "Should Men and Girls Work Together?"

In this fine article the writer raises many interesting arguments, and I am sure that you will be held by every word that she writes.

Another special article writer has written her views of the subject, and therefore you have the far and the against of this question.

"The Hard Case of the Eldest Sister" is another special article that you should not miss, and then, to all those who are zealous in the care of their personal appearance, "The Hands Beautiful" will make its appeal, for this article will show you how to keep and care for the hands.

"Playing the Game," an article designed to interest all business girls and dealing with office loyalty, is another topic, and so also is "Don't be a False-Pride Girl."

These are some of the special articles in next week's magnificent issue.

#### Next Week's Song.

ONE of the hits of the year has been "When You Came My Way," a song that also makes an excellent valse; and this fine number's chorus will be published with full lyrics in next week's issue.

Look out for some great song hits in forthcoming issues.

#### A Paper for all Girls and Schoolgirls.

I WANT to bring to the notice of every schoolgirl the appearance of a magnificent paper for all schoolgirls, a paper that is filled with school adventure, pathos, and incident, a paper that contains stories that are true to life.

This paper is now on sale, and its title is "The Schoolgirls' Weekly."

For the small sum of twopence you it would be possible to obtain.

Just to enumerate one or two of them.

"The Lass Who Was Nobody," a school story by Miss Mary Shirley, tells of a girl called Maggie Kershaw who, because her father was unjustly accused of a crime, had to go away to a big boarding-school under an assumed name, and there was made the butt of the cruel jokes of certain girls at the school. The lot of Maggie Kershaw was not a happy one, but how she bore it and the adventures she met with makes material for one of the finest school stories yet written.

#### All Alone.

I wonder what like would be your life if you were alone—all alone, desolate, and in the mercy of the world? This fate was the lot of Mabel and Alice Carr, the appealing heroines in "Sisters—All Alone," another of the magnificent serials in "The Schoolgirls' Weekly."

Mabel and Alice Carr are at a loss where to turn, but they fight bravely.

"The Schoolgirls' Weekly" is full of good things. There is a magnificent detective series, a series dealing with a girl who is a wonderful ventriloquist, and a splendid story by Louise Essex entitled "The Duffer of the Family."

Just for the winter evenings, and for those who want to compete for a first prize of one hundred pounds, there is a magnificent competition entitled "Hidden Railway Stations."

Order your copy of "The Schoolgirls' Weekly" now, and avoid being disappointed.

It is priced twopence, and is to be obtained at all newsagents.

#### THE VERY LATEST THING IN SONG FOX-TROTS.

If you searched all through the music shops you could not find a better fox-trot song than the number that is in your paper this week.

The name of its author is enough to convince you of the merit of the composition, for Christopher Bishop is a name to conjure with in the realms of song and dance music.

"After a While" is quickly becoming the race at all dances. The reason for this is not hard to find. It is a piece that so assists the steps to perfection, and it is full of original themes, and is possessed of most charming words, that are given here.

You said "good-bye," and made me cry.

After I learn'd how to love;

You promised me you'd always be

True as the stars that shine above. (Bis)

#### CHORUS.

After a while—you'll be sorry,

Sorry you made me cry;

There'll come a day, not far away,

When you'll regret you said "good-bye."

And when you're feeling so lonely,

Wishing you were with me only,

Remember I said, "You'll be sorry,"

After, yes, after a while.

## For the DANCE SEASON

#### AN ARTICLE ABOUT THIS WEEK'S MUSIC.

Some day you'll miss my loving kiss,

And you'll be grieving for me;

Your heart will yearn for my return,

And you'll be sorry, wait and see. (For)

One has only to read the words by Mr. Christopher Bishop to realise what an excellent fox-trot this number carries. It has become the fashion to hum or softly sing the words of these fox-trot songs, which are so in vogue these days, and the writer of this week's present the other day at a dance when "After a While" was being danced.

The cries of the opening bars of this number on the dancers was magical. It seemed to inspire them, and they evidently knew it quite well, for there was hardly a dancer but had memorised the words.

To memorise the words of one of this type of song is to dance the better to it when it is played.

The big functions have taken up "After a While" in great style, and there is not a fashionable dance these days but makes a special feature of it.

The big London and Provincial hotels and restaurants ring with this number, for it is regularly played by the orchestras of these places, and can be heard at all the halls where concerts are given.

Altogether "After a While" bids fair to be the biggest fox-trot song of the year, and no portfolio will be complete without its inclusion.



This Magnificent New Serial Starts To-Day.



# The RIVALRY of MORCOVE



Tells of Ethel Courtway, head girl of Morcove School, and of the mystery that surrounded herself and her adopted brother, Cyril Dudley.

By Marjorie Stanton

**Dismissed.**

"THERE is no need to drag Ethel's name into this affair!"

From the muffled sound of voices these words rang out with the distinctness of a pistol shot, and the girl, who was about to cross the hall of Courtway Lodge, started and halted by the staircase in an attitude that betokened sudden dread.

Her blue eyes were directed towards a closed door only a few yards away. From the room within came these voices, and although the thick oak door made words practically inaudible, the rapid rise and fall of the voices could only admit of one construction.

A heated altercation!  
"Father and—Cyril!" breathed the girl, and then added: "What I expected would happen has happened!"

She took a step forward, and then paused in hesitation. On the hall-stand was a letter, and she picked it up as one in a dream, 'all the while listening.

Her eyes told her the letter was for her—"Miss Ethel Courtway, Courtway Lodge," and in the corner, "Please forward to Morcove School"—but she made no attempt to open it. 'All her attention was concentrated on the closed door.

Her father was dominating the conversation now, with only an occasional interjection from the other occupant of the study.

Ethel drew in her breath.  
"I am wrong to listen," she told herself. She half turned to go away. "Oh, if I could only think of some excuse to go in the room. Perhaps I could make peace between them." She hesitated in the way those who are seventeen hesitate to participate in their elder's affairs.

And then with dramatic suddenness the door of the study whirled open, and the figure of a tall, well-set-up youth appeared framed in the doorway. He did not see Ethel, for although he was making his exit his glance was directed inside the apartment. Ethel had a fleeting vision of her father standing with his back to the fireplace, and one glance was sufficient to tell her that he was furiously angry.

"No argument that you can bring forward will ever convince me," Cyril Dudley, that you have not betrayed my trust," she heard him say.

"Well"—the young fellow half made to re-enter the room—"I still declare that I have done no such thing. Your whole attitude is most unjust, Mr. Courtway. You're simply jumping at conclusions—"

"Will you go out and shut the door?"  
"Oh, I'm on my way out of the house, too."  
"Quite so," said Mr. Courtway cuttingly.  
"As I have ordered you to quit, bag and baggage, within an hour, you can hardly, with decency, remain here."

With an indignant gesture the other turned—and saw Ethel!

It was one of those tense moments when the tongue refuses to do its office. A dozen different phrases hovered on Ethel's lips, but all she could eventually ejaculate was:  
"Cyril—you are leaving us!"

He nodded.  
With a rapid stride her father joined them.  
"Come in, Ethel," he said, with a perceptible softening of voice and expression as he addressed her. "I will explain what has happened." He waited until Cyril Dudley was clear of the doorway and then closed the door with the suspicion of a slam. "A regrettable occurrence, my dear; most regrettable. The boy whom I adopted—the boy I have always trusted—the boy who has been brought up with you—"

He broke off and cast himself in a chair. The morning sunlight streaming through the high window showed his clear-cut features, the firm mouth, the iron-grey hair. A man to be trusted; as straight as a die; but not one to be tolerant of the weaknesses of human nature. Just, but hard, was his character.

"I suppose this is rather a surprise," he continued. "Rather a—"

"No, father," broke in Ethel, her pretty cheeks taking an extra tinge of colour.  
"For the past three weeks I have noticed your treatment of Cyril; I have foreseen that something was wrong somewhere—that there was trouble brewing. Is—is it too late to do anything?"

"Oh, yes, quite! I have thoroughly made up my mind that I can no longer have him in the house. As you say, my treatment of him has altered during the past three weeks; but it was only last night that certain suspicions I had were confirmed. Without going into long and elaborate details, it will be sufficient if I tell you that I have lately become possessed of a certain thing of value—of great value maybe—"

"Ah!" broke in Ethel, "then that was why you had those burglar alarms fitted here a fortnight ago!"

"Yes, I had reason to believe they were necessary. Before they were fitted on two occasions I found that someone had entered this room and tampered with certain lock-up drawers."

"Father!" Ethel leaned across the table, her eyes wide open in horrified amazement.  
"You suspect Cyril! Oh, it is unthinkable!"

"Nothing is unthinkable," retorted her father curtly. "Listen! The night before the alarms were fitted I heard a sound, and going down to investigate, I caught sight of someone going in here from the hall. It was a young man. He heard me coming and escaped through the window. He was the exact build of Cyril. I went up to Cyril's room; but the door was locked. I didn't knock, because, like you, I then believed in the word unthinkable. But I resolved to watch Master Cyril. Two days afterwards, down in the village, I saw Cyril talking to

a man whom I happen to know would give much—do much—to secure my secret. Again, I did not tackle Cyril."

Mr. Courtway paused impressively, as if to give time for these facts to be thoroughly absorbed.

"Last night, however," he went on, "I caught Cyril red-handed in this room, and then, naturally, all doubts vanished. He denied that he was searching for anything. I possessed; but he would not tell me what he was doing here."

"He would not tell me what he was doing here!" repeated Ethel dully.

"No; neither would this morning. I taxed him bluntly with his intentions, and he swore on his word of honour that my accusations had no foundations." Mr. Courtway shrugged. "There was no other course but to dismiss him. A private secretary who acts like that! What else was I to do?"

"Nothing," returned Ethel slowly, "save, perhaps, to accept his word of honour."

Her father smiled his hard smile.

"That alternative, I confess, did not occur to me," he said. "Of course, we had high words; Cyril has spirit. It was a distressing scene, as you can well imagine, fortunately not likely to happen again."

"I can't believe this of Cyril," muttered Ethel. "I can't—I can't!"

"Naturally, you find it difficult—so did I. Still, what else is there to believe? Can you suggest any explanations?"

Ethel remained silent. A passionate outburst surged within her, but she knew she would only make matters worse if she gave vent to her feelings.

"Very well," pursued Mr. Courtway. "Now listen to me, Ethel. I am issuing no orders, but it is my wish, my earnest wish, that you will not attempt any form of farewell with Cyril."

Gradually there crept into Ethel's face that look of determination—that evidence of firm will—that was so characteristic of her father.

"I must say good-bye to Cyril," she said in a low, tense voice. "I'm sorry, father; but I must do that."

Mr. Courtway shifted uneasily in his chair.

"As Morcove School you are head girl," he said. "To-morrow when you go back there, some girl may badly want to do something which you may consider is not in the best interests of the school. You will request her not to do it, and you'll expect her to fall in with your wishes. Very well, I am head of the house. The analogy to me seems complete."

"Nevertheless, father, Cyril and I must say good-bye."

"You place him before me?"

"I place kindness before either."  
"Suppose I order you?"  
"Will you do that, father?"

Mr. Courtway gazed at his daughter, and his rising anger evaporated into pride. Ah, but she was a fine girl—a girl in a thousand. A trifle self-willed, perhaps—still, she was none the worse for that. He was the same himself, reflected Mr. Courtway, and so had been his father and his father before him.

"Very well, Ethel, do as you wish," he said at last, and he took up a newspaper to signify that the interview was closed.

Ethel went to him and placed her arms round his neck.

"Are you very cross with me?" she whispered.

He looked up and kissed her.

"And won't you give Cyril another chance?" she pleaded.

The hard look returned to his face.

"I really shall be cross if you refer to that matter again," he said.

And Ethel, knowing it was useless to argue further, departed to seek out her old playmate—maybe for the last time.

#### Au Revoir—But Not Good-bye.

CYRIL going—Cyril never to be here any more—not to be at the Lodge when she came home for holidays! No more cycle rides together, no more walks or dances. Perhaps never more to meet! So ran Ethel's thoughts.

less responsive to the impression of either emotion.

He put down the bags and took her hands in his.

"Cyril!" murmured Ethel, and then she hung her head, unable for the moment to continue. "It—it's silly of me to cry," she went on. "Crying won't help either of us."

"What has your father told you?" he asked, still gripping her hands.

Briefly she recounted everything.

"Yes," said Cyril Dudley, "that is correct. Trust your father to be correct in his details." He nodded gloomily. "It's the construction—the values—the places on details where he goes wrong. Mind you, Ethel, I can't blame him. When he—"

"No, no," broke in Ethel. "Please don't think I want you to tell me anything which you are forced to keep a secret. I have perfect faith in you, Cyril. Nothing will convince me that you have done anything of which you need be ashamed. All in good time, I know, you will tell me everything. Until that time comes I am content to wait."

"Ah, Ethel," he sighed, "what a brick you are! And now through me you're going to feel unhappy, and I can do nothing—nothing, at least, as yet. It's beastly!"

Slowly, reluctantly, he released her hands and picked up the bags.

he always played the game; he was incapable of double-dealing, she was certain of it.

He made a motion to put down one of the bags to make room, but before he could do so she placed her hands gently on his shoulders and kissed him.

"Au revoir, little brother," she said, keeping her voice firm. "And good luck!"

He turned abruptly—for there are some emotions no young man cares to show—and slowly descended the stairs.

Ethel watched him for a second, and then wheeling round, darted along the passage to her room. She flung open the door, and ran to the window. Even here she commanded a view of the winding carriage drive and the gates beyond.

A faint sound of the hall door closing came to her ears. Cyril had left the house! She looked through the window, and a second later his figure emerged into view. Tall, broad-shouldered and erect, he walked away with a slow, steady pace, and it was not until he reached the three tall elms that he checked his stride. Then he looked back.

Thrusting aside the blind she waved her hand. Did he see her? Maybe—yet he gave no sign of having done so.

Ethel sank into the window-seat and buried her face in her hands. Oh, why wouldn't her brain act—why wouldn't ideas come that would throw light on this affair!

The gong for lunch sounded below, but still she sat there. Outside a troop of angry sparrows fluttered in the ivy. None of these sounds disturbed her or conveyed any meaning.

For half-an-hour she remained in the window-seat.

A tap at the door. She looked up and saw her father standing before her.

"Look here, Ethel," he began, and there was a slight tone of embarrassment in his voice, "you mustn't think that this business hasn't upset me, because it has. Hitherto I had always looked upon Cyril in the light of a son. I was fond of him. Well, that's over and done with, Ethel. Thank goodness I can depend on you."

"I said good-bye to Cyril," cut in Ethel, with just a touch of defiance.

Her father nodded.

"I repeat—I can depend on you. There is something I want you to do for me when you go back to Morocco. You know the windmill that lies over near the landslip? Very well, I have lately bought the mill and the few acres of ground belonging to it."

Her father spoke in quite a casual tone, but Ethel could not help feeling surprised at the news. She knew the place perfectly well, and an uninviting, sterile tract of land it was.

"I want you to take occasional walks there," went on Mr. Courtway. "As present an old couple inhabit the mill buildings. I offered them a hundred pounds to give up possession—their time won't be up until another five years—but for some reason they refused my offer. It's rather queer, don't you know, for they are quite poor. Well, I'd like you to keep an eye on them, not, of course, obtrusively—discreetly. Let me know from time to time if you see anything—well, what I call it—suspect."

"Yes, father; I'll do this for you."

"Thank you, Ethel. This is in the nature of a business commission, such a commission as I hoped to entrust to—er—another. I am fortunate in having a daughter who can be trusted to carry it out in a businesslike way—not to babble and talk, but to keep her own counsel."

Ethel nodded listlessly. Her previous thoughts were not to be deviated into channels of conjecture as to the why and wherefore of this rather curious development of her father's business.

Her mind dwelt solely on Cyril and Cyril's affairs. Even Morocco took a back seat.

When, oh, when would she meet him again?

#### Back To Morocco.

"A NOTHER ten minutes and the train will be there. Alas, Ethel, why do holidays end?" Ethel laughingly confessed she was unable



The boy leant back in his seat with a self-satisfied smirk. Monica gravely produced her purse and took out a sixpence. "Thank you, my good fellow," she drawled, tossing the coin on to the seat beside him.

Appearances were certainly against him, but not for one moment did Ethel believe that Cyril had done anything wrong. There must be some good reason for his apparently extraordinary conduct. She would not press him for it—no, her loyal friendship required no explanations.

Yet it was mysterious. Angriely she dismissed the fleeting doubt that momentarily crept into her mind. He was not the only one possessing a mystery. Her father's valuable secret was a mystery—a deep mystery.

But where would Cyril go to when he left the Lodge? Twelve years back—an orphan—her father had adopted him, and there was his only home. Had he any money—any plans? How could she assist him? If her mother had not gone on that month's visit to Scotland she might have helped.

Thus the vague workings of Ethel's mind, as she hovered in the long corridor upstairs. A sudden opening of a door made her heart miss a beat. She saw Cyril emerge with a bag in either hand.

Silently they regarded each other as they slowly drew nearer. As there are no joys like young joys, so there are no griefs like young griefs. The heart pretty soon grows

"It's sort of knocked me silly," he went on. "Stunned me, and—and, hang it all, Ethel, you know I play the game."

"Rather! As if I shouldn't!" Silently they walked to where the staircase descended. Once she glanced up at him, and her heart ached as she noted the look in his eyes.

"Cyril, you will write to me at Morocco," she whispered. "You will write to me often—often, do you hear?"

"Rather! As if I shouldn't!" "I know, I know—but, then, everything seems so upside down. Wait, let me think. Where are you going when you leave here?"

"To find a job, Ethel." He gave a mirthless sort of laugh. "I wonder who will employ a chap who hasn't got a character? That job will want a bit of finding. Still, it's got to be found."

Ethel glanced down into the hall. Two of the maids were passing into the dining-room, busy in preparing lunch.

"Perhaps we'd better say good-bye here," she muttered.

"Not good-bye, Ethel—an revoir," he returned quickly.

She looked into his eyes and saw written there nothing but truth and honesty. Yes,

to answer the problem propounded by her friend, Monica Trent.

Monica lolled back in her corner seat and gazed out at the familiar landmarks. The scenery was crowded with memories for Morcové girls who had spent six years at the school, like Ethel and Monica.

"But you're surely not sorry to be back at dear old Morcové," said Ethel from her corner. "The Christmas term is always one of the best."

"No-o," murmured Monica. "I'm never sorry to come back—at least, not in the ordinary way. But this term means frightful anxiety for me! Yes! My young sister, alas! is now of age to come to Morcové. I am expected to set her an example. Two alas's. She has to live up to me—or I have to live up to her—I'm rather vague as to which. Anyway, a slight attack of influenza keeps her from appearing here until to-day evening. I have therefore seven days to get my house in order. Janet is her name. Quite a presentable kid, she struck me, during the hols. Have you another chocolate to spare? Thanks!"

And with this rather characteristic speech, Monica Trent once more yawned at the scenery.

At a once the train, puffing its way up the final hill, came to a standstill.

"Heavy load—overstated girls as a result of holiday-making," observed Monica, toying with the chocolate. "Engine on strike."

Suddenly she bolted the last bit and ejaculated: "Ethel, look!"

Ethel's eyes followed the direction of her friend's gaze, and slowly her features reflected Monica's expression of amazement. "They've turned it into a school!" she cried.

"Yes," breathed Monica. "and a boys' school. Well, this, as Paula Creel, of the Fourth, would say, is 'distressin'!"

A quarter of a mile opposite to where the train had stopped was a long, straggling, picturesque-looking building. Once it had been the mansion belonging to one of the old Devonshire families, but for twenty years or more has and has been its sole occupants. Midway last term, that is, some three months back, an army of builders had suddenly descended; and, when Mo cové had broken up for the summer holidays, extensive additions and a thorough renovation of the original edifice were in full swing. Rumour said that some rich London merchant had acquired the property; but rumour, as the poet remarks, seemed to have turned out a "lying jade."

Certainly this was no private residence—it was a school—a large school, too, and that it was of the masculine persuasion was obvious by the spectacle of the number of footballs that soared in the air from the various groups that congregated the newly-laid-out grounds.

"Ah!" broke in a voice from the third corner of the carriage. "You may well be surprised!"

It was a fellow about Ethel's age who made the remark, and he had joined them some thirty miles back. When he had entered the carriage he had given Ethel quite a little start, for his build and bearing was so remarkably like Cyril's. But not in features. There was none of Cyril's pleasant expression about this one. On the contrary, he was a sulky, sullen-looking individual, with rather a pug nose and more than a suspicion of a squint.

At this Ethel's interest had evaporated, and as he kept himself immersed in a book for the whole of the time, she and Monica had almost forgotten his presence.

"I beg your pardon," returned Ethel blankly.

"Oh, hope you're not offended at my addressing you," he said. "No intention to barge in; but you see, as we're likely to be neighbours, thought I might venture. Besides, I can tell you all about that school."

Neither Ethel nor Monica felt exactly overjoyed at making the fellow's acquaintance, and Ethel, assuming he was one of the newcomers, wondered if he were a fair sample. If so, she decided she wasn't going to like them.

"So you belong to that new school?" she said.

"Oh, rather! Thorne's my name, member of the sixth, runner-up in last year's 'heavies,' first eleven at cricket and footer. New school you call us? My word! Not much newness about Prior's, I fancy! Unless, of course, you consider five hundred years established as new."

"We belong to Morcové School," said Ethel.

"Yes? Never heard of it. You see, Prior's old building started to get moth-eaten and unsafe way back last year, and the governors decided to shift us. And there—!" he indicated the building they were gazing at—"is where they have shifted us. So now you know, That'll be tuppence."

And he leaned back in his seat with a self-satisfied smirk.

Monica gravely produced her purse and took out a sixpence.

"Thank you, my good fellow!" she drawled, tossing the coin on to the seat beside him.

"Eh—what 'd you mean?" he demanded, and his little beady eyes narrowed in sudden temper. "Oh—er—I see! Ha, ha! Not too bad! And so you girls have a school here, have you?"

They nodded, looking out of the window as a gentle hint that the conversation had gone far enough. But Thorne—Maurice Thorne,

her look said: "Is he to be snubbed?" But Ethel's contemptuous expression told her that the enemy was to be treated with dignified silence.

Apparently Maurice Thorne considered the honours of the opening encounter had gone to Prior's School, and his grin of satisfaction was still in evidence when the train steamed into Morcové Road.

The majority of the members of both schools had arrived an hour or so previously, and this train was in no way crowded. Thorne hopped out first, and both Ethel and Monica breathed a sigh of relief on his departure.

"Morcové now will be no longer Morcové," declared Monica. "I'm thankful that I'm not head girl, Ethel; not only for my own sake, but for the sake of our school. It'll need a cool head to govern."

"Oh, I don't anticipate any great trouble," But Monica shook her head. "Clearly she did."

They passed through the barrier, and outside they found a small group of Fourth-Formers eagerly awaiting the arrival of Ethel Courtway.

Instantly she was spotted they surrounded her, and half a dozen voices communicated the news of the advent of Prior's School.

"We know—we know all about it," returned Ethel, when she was able to make her-



In the frenzied pandemonium that followed, Ethel was conscious only of one thing—the identity of the sack-slinger. It was Cyril Dudley, her adopted prother!

to give him his full name—was not so easily ruffled.

"Pretty sort of neighbourhood in these parts," he remarked. "In fact, quite top hole. Never been here before myself, but a pal of mine has told me all about it. Isn't there some sort of landslip over by the sea, and an old mill?"

Ethel gave the slightest possible start at these words. Suddenly—why, she could not tell—her father's request that she should keep an eye on the mill assumed an importance which hitherto she had not given it.

Vaguely into her mind came a wild idea of some subtle connection between her father's mysterious and valuable secret, that terrible quarrel between him and Cyril, the old mill at the landslip, and last, but not least, this objectionable boy of the name of Thorne. Wild—it was an absurd thought, and yet—

"Don't either of you trouble to answer my question if it would pain you," snapped Thorne. "I suppose you Morcové girls have got to think that you're the only pebbles on the beach. You'll jolly well find you're mistaken now we've come here. Girls' school—pah!"

Monica shot a quick glance at Ethel, and

self heard. "It's no good crying over spilt milk!"

For some reason or other, this apparently innocent remark tickled the juniors. They burst into a roar of laughter.

"You'd better tell that to Paula Creel," said one of them. "Spilt milk! My word, her dress is 'wined,' as she calls it. We all went into the Creameries—a dozen of us—Betty Barton, Tess, Madge, and the rest of the usual lot. Just as poor old Paula was served with a glass of milk in trooped about a million of these new—"

"Surely not so many as that, Polly?" smiled Ethel.

"Well, no, perhaps not; but at least fifty. Anyway, in they swarmed; pushing and shoving, some of them barged into Paula, joggled her elbow, and the glass of milk she was holding went all down the front of her dress. That started the trouble," continued Polly, with dancing eyes, "and matters didn't improve when some of our seniors and some of their seniors turned up. There was a gorgeous row, wasn't there, Betty?"

"Yes," broke in Betty Barton, the Fourth Form captain, "so we thought some of us had better come and meet you, Ethel, and ask what Morcové's going to do about it."



(Continued from previous page.)

"Rather!" cried Polly; "because, Morcove's jolly well got to do something."

"Hear, hear!" Ethel turned to Monica. "We'd better look in at the Creameries," she said.

Monica nodded, and the two seniors set off down the straggling High Street.

"I wonder who really was to blame," mused Ethel. "Our lot or theirs?"

"I fancy you'll find you mustn't have doubts like that, Ethel. Morcove will require you to believe that the boys are always in the wrong."

Monica's remark opened up such vast possibilities of trouble that Ethel was silenced, and she remained so until they arrived at the Creameries.

Congregated round the door they discovered a score or so of the Morcove girls, and there were others inside the shop; but the greater proportion of the customers were the aliens and the strangers, and their pink and dark blue cap was the predominant note of colour in the establishment.

But noise—the sound of voices raised in argument—predominated over everything.

Ethel, eagerly hailed by her followers, pushed her way inside, and out of the crowded assembly two figures leapt to her notice. One was Stella Hawkes, the hot-headed, red-haired senior, and the other was their late travelling companion—Maurice Thorne!

The attitude of these two clearly reflected the bitter feelings that animated the assembly, and at once Ethel intervened.

"Is all this necessary?" she asked, her clear voice rising above the babel of sound.

Stella Hawkes bit her lip. She was conscious that she had not handled the situation well—had not handled it as Ethel would have done—and because she was jealous of Morcove's head girl, her temper was in no way improved by Ethel's appearance.

"Not necessary at all," cut in Thorne loftily. "This is a time for plain speaking, and I want you girls to understand once and for all and finally—"

"Excuse me," said Ethel, "but are you the head boy?"

"No, I'm not," snapped Thorne; "but

that doesn't make the slightest difference."

"I think it does. Whatever has taken place here neither you—nor you, Stella—have the right to any final word. That lies between the captain of Prior's School and myself."

"You're all Tommy rot!" blustered Thorne. Then it was that another force intervened.

Close to where Thorne lolled was a fellow, apparently some sort of servant, engaged in filling a sack with apples. At Thorne's rudeness he suddenly picked up the half-filled sack, swung it round, and the improvised weapon, catching Thorne full across the shoulder, swept him to the ground like a ninepins.

In the frenzied pandemonium that followed, Ethel was conscious of one thing—the identity of the sack-slinger.

It was Cyril Dudley!

Then Thorne scrambled to his feet, cheeks aflame, fists doubled.

Ethel moved to intervene between the combatants, but suddenly Thorne halted.

"Go on, Thorne, old boy! Dot him one!" cried the assembled Priors.

But Thorne, to the amazement of everybody, stood still, with his hands dangling at his sides.

"That—er—that was an accident, eh?" he mumbled.

"Yes," Ethel heard Cyril answer coolly. "If you like to call it so."

Apparently Thorne did like, for he stuck his hands in his pockets, and without another word, left the Creameries.

#### The Meeting in the Landship.

#### CYRIL DUDLEY at Morcove!

These four words represented practically the sum total of Ethel's thoughts during the next three hours.

But now, as she sat in her study after tea, other items—though all to do with the same matter—engaged her attention.

The rapid course of events following Cyril's drastic action at the Creameries—what had they comprised? In her mind she tabulated them. First, startled recognition on her part, and a gesture to be silent on his. Then the buzz of talk amongst the boys, conveying the startling information that Cyril had found employment at "Prior's" in a menial capacity.

"And now he will be dismissed!" she thought.

But it was curious how suddenly Thorne had subsided, and then his expression! It had almost seemed as if he, too, was as surprised as Ethel had been to see Cyril in these parts.

Probably fancy. The rapid succession of events during the last forty-eight hours had unnerved her, made her brain all out of gear.

The noise the girls were making in the corridors! The first night of the term always prefects would have stopped it. But this evening Morcove tradition allowed latitude.

Bang, crash, overhead—loud laughter, beneath—medley of conversation in the studies either side of her. And she was alone—with her thoughts.

"I'll go for a short stroll," decided Ethel. An hour's walk in the cool autumn air would clear her head.

She put on her hat and coat, and then, with a glance out of the window at the gathering gloom, she placed in her pocket a small electric torch. This armed, she sallied forth.

Apart from a few scampering juniors, she met no one of note, and within five minutes she was treading the hard, firm high road.

Which way? She gazed around, and over to the north she saw a new twinkling set of lights through the trees, "Prior's!" "To-morrow," thought Ethel, "Miss Somerfield will have something to say about us and them!"

Idly she speculated on the headmistress' remarks.

She looked towards the sea, and the existence of the landship, together with her father's instructions came to her mind. The mill! Half-an-hour there and half-an-hour back, she reckoned.

Fit by the impulse she strode off in that direction.

The road was a lonely one. There was, as yet, no moon, and it was dark—dark as only a country road can be. A slight suspicion of frost had hardened the ground, and her footsteps echoed with a metallic ring.

She started at a ground pace, and with her mind fully occupied she paid little heed to other matters. By-and-by, however, it seemed to her she heard a double echo of her footsteps. Possibly it was an illusion, and to test it she stopped suddenly. She heard the echo doubled, and then at a brief interval was a third sound.

This convinced Ethel that someone was walking behind her as nearly as possible her own pace. Now if the sound of the second person's footsteps had continued, she would have thought nothing of it, but the fact of the sound ceasing was too significant.

She was being followed—at least, that was the conclusion she came to.

She turned and walked back a few paces, switching on the electric torch.

She could see no one.

"I was foolishly nervous," she said to herself, half aloud.

And once more she set her face towards the landship. Now and again she listened, but she heard nothing but a single echo. Probably the person who followed her, if indeed she was followed, had turned off by one of the many field paths.

Thus the conclusion Ethel came to—an erroneous one, as the red-haired girl wearing the Morcove colours who followed in her wake could have told her. But Stella Hawkes was more cautious now and kept to the grassy side-path, which deadened her footsteps.

Presently Ethel turned at right angles and left the road. Quickly the surface of the ground became very uneven. Shortly she encountered an immense cavity, in which bushes and even trees had taken root. The full force of the light sea breeze rustled these and caused noises like a hundred whispering voices.

Fifty yards further on she reached a place where an enormous pile had been torn from the highest part of the original cliff. Near and tons of overhanging rock pushed outward by the sliding force behind, had first been precipitated, and such was the impetus that these rocks had been thrust many yards distant from the cliff.

Ethel halted here, and gazing seawards, she could dimly make out on her left a black object, which she knew to be the mill. Near it glimmered a thin crescent of a new moon.

Miscellaneous, when the landship had occurred, a hundred years back, the mill had escaped.

"Why has father bought that land?" wondered Ethel.

For a while she pondered, and then sharply to her ears came a sound—quite close too—that revived her previous uncomfortable sensations. Ethel wheeled round. She had courage, or else she would not have done what she did. She flashed on the electric torch to where the sound came.

The bright rays cut into the darkness like a knife and showed a certain spot with the clearness of day. It showed, beside rough bushes and undergrowth, the forms of two boys sitting on some stone boulders. Apparently a minute previously they had been in deep, though subdued, conversation—their whole attitude showed that—and the suddenness of the shaft of light had only altered their positions to the extent of turning their faces in Ethel's direction.

Ethel gave a low ejaculation.

It was Cyril Dudley and Maurice Thorne!

"You—you two—are friends?"

His voice was scarcely raised above a whisper; but other ears besides theirs had heard it.

Stella Hawkes crawled nearer to listen.

Cyril Dudley and Maurice Thorne friends! Was there ever such an amazing discovery? No wonder Ethel was amazed; no wonder she pauses irresolute. But what is Stella Hawkes doing here, and what will this new revelation portend? See a magnificent installment of "The Rivals at Morcove" in next week's GIRLS' FAVOURITE.

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