

The TROUBLE-MAKER OF MORCOVE

BY MARJORIE
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NEW YEAR NOVELTIES.

How frequently one finds, a fortnight or so after Christmas, that there is someone who has been forgotten, and who should have been remembered when the little stock of Christmas gifts were sent off.

Maybe, Daphne, your old school chum, whom you have never before neglected, will have cause to wonder why she has suddenly been left out in the cold. Of course, it is natural enough, in the hurry and excitement of Christmas preparations, to leave out someone.

When you suddenly remember the fact a week or two afterwards, you feel that you must make amends as soon as possible. And then comes the realisation that the festive season has made big demands upon your purse, and that you are "broke," with the exception of a few odd coppers lingering at the bottom of your purse.

Never mind! You can make those few pence go a very long way, and if you are at all skilful with your fingers, can speedily put together one or two novel and topical gifts that will be highly appreciated.

A calendar is an article that is always welcome if it is artistic, and there are several kinds which you can easily make at home.

One that would include a happy personal touch can be made from a piece of artistic photo-mounting—the kind that looks like a superior type of brown-paper, and is rough at the edges. This can be bought in several shades and colours.

Now, if amongst your photographs you have a happy snap of yourself, about two inches by three, you paste it in the top left-hand corner, an inch and a quarter from the top edge and one inch from the left edge. Possibly the print can with advantage be trimmed down, in which case you can cut it down to a square, oval, circle, or diamond.

To give a little extra finish to the portrait, it can have a border of Chinese white, which can be applied with a pen if watered down a little. The border can consist of a single or double line, ruled at even distance round the portrait. Or you may decide that it would look more effective in black or some other colour.

Now comes the calendar part of the business. If you are a neat letterer this can be done by hand, but that is rather a lengthy business, and, as you can buy little calendar blocks quite cheaply, it would be an easier and quicker method to purchase one of these, cover the front sheet with a piece of your mounting paper, and pin or glue the whole in the right-

hand bottom corner of the mounting sheet, leaving a good border at sides and bottom, as with the photo.

All that remains is to write "Calendar, 1926" on the front of the date block, and "Good Wishes," or some other seasonable message, above.

The girl who has artistic ability and is handy at painting could fill the space suggested for the photograph with a simple specimen of her own handiwork. Something cheery—a humorous dog or some other animal—would be most suitable, and if she cannot draw the animal from her own imagination, there are plenty of drawings in books and magazines that she could copy, putting in her own colour scheme.

Another novel decoration for this kind of calendar is the "silhouette" picture. Good silhouettes can be made from any picture that has a simple outline. The outline should be traced on a piece of transparent paper with a fine-pointed copying-ink pencil. This design can be transferred to a piece of white card by slightly damping the transparent paper and pressing it on to the card. When it is dry the outlined figure should be filled in with Indian ink, a brush being used for preference. Figures that are full of action such as a Spanish dancing-girl—are the best suited to silhouette pictures.

Another type of mounting for your picture and calendar is suede, which, again, can be bought quite cheaply and in a fair variety of colours. Red, brown, or green are good colours to choose.

The suede calendar should be on a smaller scale than the type described above. Half the size will be quite large enough.

With suede you need some decoration of strong colours. Bright orange, red, green, or blue are all suitable on a background of brown, and you should aim at getting solid splashes of colour.

A figure like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, with green hat, scarlet-coloured tunic, and yellow scarf would suit admirably. This could be painted on by hand if you have the necessary ability. If not, no doubt you could find a scrap from one of your Christmas crackers that would serve almost as well.

Narrow strips of suede threaded through each of the top corners at an angle and tied into a neat bow would certainly add effect to your calendar, and the bottom of it could be ornamented by cutting the suede carefully at narrow intervals at the bottom to form a fringe about an inch long.



THE TROUBLE- MAKER OF MORCOVE!

BY MARJORIE STANTON.

An Enthralling, Long Complete Tale of the Early Adventures of BETTY BARTON & Co., the Popular Fourth Formers of Morcove School.

CHAPTER I.

The Girl Who Put on Side.

"PORTER!"

"I say, porter, help me with this!"

As the train came with a rush and roar into the junction of Barnscombe, there were excited shouts for porters from schoolgirls in hats adorned with the band and badge of Morcove School.

All of them were anxious to get themselves and their luggage into that train, and it would be a very tight squeeze indeed.

The porters loyally did their best to cope with this rush, for they knew that they could expect substantial tips from the schoolgirls. At the beginning of the term, as the porters had learnt from experience, the girls' purses were well filled.

But at last the rush subsided, the luggage was packed in the train, save, of course, for the personal bags and packages that the girls took with them.

Then came another rush, this time for compartments. Of course, friends wanted to get together, and they seemed oblivious of the fact that it was impossible to crowd twenty girls comfortably in a compartment intended to hold only ten.

"This way!" cried Betty Barton, the captain of the Fourth Form at Morcove School. "Madge, Polly, Tess, come on!"

Madge Minden came flying along the platform, with Polly Linton by her side, and Tess Trelawny close behind. Then came Trixie Hope, with languid Paula Creel bringing up the rear.

"Which compartment, Betty?" asked Polly Linton, Betty Barton's special chum.

The guard was on the platform holding his flag ready, and now the luggage was nearly aboard. There was little time to spare.

Betty Barton had opened the door and went rushing into the compartment. Polly followed her; then the others.

Polly Linton flopped down on to a seat and gasped. And in another moment the five others of the party were in the compartment with her.

Phoop!

The guard whistled and waved his flag, for now all the girls were inside.

"Hurrah!" cried Betty Barton. "We're off!"

"Yes, we're off," agreed Polly Linton. "But—phew! What a rush, girls!"

And Polly commenced to fan herself.

These six girls had brought none of their luggage into the compartment with them,

having left it all in the luggage-van, and now the rush for seats was over they looked round.

It was then for the first time that the girls had a chance to glance at their fellow-travellers. Two of them they knew, they were Cora and Judith Grandways.

Cora Grandways gave the chums of the Fourth a very cold and lofty glance. For, though Cora and her sister Judith were in the same Form as Betty Barton & Co., they considered themselves much above those girls' level.

And Cora's curled lip indicated as much.

But that was not what caused the looks of blank surprise on Betty and the others' faces. They were looking at the other girl in the compartment.

She was not a girl they knew, but Polly, as she glanced across at her, could not help an exclamation.

"My word!" exclaimed Polly. "What a cheek!"

But the girl in the corner did not turn her head. She looked loftily out of the window, though she must have known that some more girls had entered the carriage.

This girl wore no hat, and her fair, wavy hair glittered in the sunlight. She was leaning back against the soft upholstery, a magazine in her hand. A pretty hand it was, and white, but marred rather with the two flashy rings that adorned it. They were expensive rings, but Betty, as she stared, could not help thinking how much nicer the girl would have looked without such jewellery.

And that was not all. The girl's trimly-clad feet rested on the seat opposite so that no one else could occupy it, and strewn around her were hat boxes and one or two paper bags.

"Excuse me," said Betty Barton, coughing, "but would you mind moving your luggage from the seat, please? I want to sit down." It was quite a polite and natural question, for the compartment was designed to hold ten occupants, and now there were only nine. But the girl's boxes, parcels, and person occupied seating room for three people. To say the least of it, the girl was selfish.

At Betty's question the girl turned her head.

"Did you address your remark to me?" she asked coldly.

And Cora Grandways in another corner seat, chuckled. Cora was always pleased at

any rebuff that the chums of the Fourth received.

"I did," answered Betty as politely as she could, although the girl's attitude annoyed her. "I should very much like to sit down, and if you move your hat-box on to the rack I shall have a seat."

"Couldn't you sit on one another's knees—what?" asked the girl, speaking affectedly. "I'm really too comfortable to shift for anybody. You shouldn't have come into this carriage."

"Hear, hear!" said Judith Grandways.

"No one spoke to you," said Polly Linton, rather nettled at the new girl's tone. "One ill-mannered girl at a time is enough, I think."

There was silence in the compartment then, an unpleasant silence, and the girl in the corner looked out of the window again.

Betty clenched her hands. She was angry, very angry at the new girl's behaviour, but Betty was always generous and forgiving, and it occurred to her that perhaps this girl was not accustomed to giving in to others. She might be an only child brought up in luxury.

"Would you mind moving the parcels, please?" said Betty very patiently.

But the girl in the corner did not answer.

Polly Linton eyed the parcels scornfully, almost glaring at them, in fact. Polly could not understand anyone being so selfish as to take up so much of the compartment with luggage.

Before Betty could stop her, therefore, Polly had snatched up the hat box and flung it on to the rack.

The girl in the corner sprang to her feet. Temper was written plainly on her face, and her brow was simply thunderous. Back on to the seat came the hat-box that Polly had placed on the rack. And then the girl flung herself back in the corner seat, and without saying a word put her feet heavily back on the cushion opposite.

"Well!" exclaimed Polly Linton, after a pause. "Of all the cheek!"

"My word—yes!" said Tess Trelawny. "I do think that that is a little bit too much!"

But Betty Barton remained silent. At heart she was as much against this new girl's selfish attitude as any of them were, but Betty could not help feeling that perhaps the girl's temper was due to the fact that she was the spoilt daughter of doting parents.

"I'm not going to stand all the way to Morcove Road," said Polly Linton firmly. "I have paid for my seat and I want to sit down!"

"Third-class passengers should go into third-class compartments," said the girl in the corner, as though that settled the whole matter.

"We're not third-class passengers!" snapped Tess Trclawny.

As a rule it took a great deal to rouse Tess' temper, but now even she was very cross.

"If you don't want to be taken for third-class passengers you shouldn't look like them," said Cora Grandways, with a sneer.

The girl in the corner, realising that for some reason unknown Cora was her ally, turned round. But she said nothing.

Nor did Polly say anything, but she acted. With firm, rather rough hands, Polly deliberately planted the precious hat-box on the rack once again.

Then Betty sat down. There was just room for them now, but the girl in the corner still kept her feet on the cushions of the opposite seat.

With flashing eyes she turned to Polly.

"How dare you!" she shouted. "I shall call the guard! You have no right to throw my things about!"

"You should not take up the whole carriage, then!" retorted Betty, feeling that she must at last interfere. "We are quite willing for you to have a seat yourself. But you should know better than to place your feet on seat-cushions, and you—"

"Who are you?" shouted the girl, her eyes blazing as she glared at Betty.

"You're a cheeky lot of schoolgirls! If you're Morcove girls, then I shall ask aunt to take me away!"

At this, all the girls uttered a gasp of astonishment.

"You're coming to Morcove?" asked Betty, in surprise.

"Yes, I am!" snapped the girl.

"Well," said Betty, "you'll have to change your ways. If you intend being as selfish and as rude as this at school, you'll find your mistake!"

"Hear, hear!" said Polly Linton.

"Yes, wather!" added Paula Creel. "If you don't know better you will have to be taught!"

And the other girls all nodded approval of this sentiment.

The girl in the corner looked up at her peers on the rack, and then at the Mor-

cove girls. She half-opened her mouth to speak, then shut it again, and looked out of the window, the angry frown still on her face.

She realised now that, for the second time, her hat box had been planted on the rack, it must stay there for the rest of the journey. It was a case of at least six against one; and, anyway, to take the box down again would mean another scene. And besides, she retained two seats, for her feet still occupied one.

Then, after a short silence, Betty & Co. began to talk amongst themselves about the holidays—which they had spent together.

They ignored this new girl and her selfishness, seeming to forget she was in the compartment.

But Cora Grandways could not forget her.

From time to time the two Grandways sisters glanced at the girl in the corner, weighing her up, as it were. The sisters looked at one another and nodded. Their looks seemed to say: "Yes, this is the sort of girl for us!"

CHAPTER 2.

A Surprise for Betty Barton.

"MORCOVE ROAD!"

The old porter on the platform at Morcove Road, the station for Morcove School, shouted out excitedly as the train drew in at the platform. "Morcove Road!" called the porter. "Change 'ere for Morcove School!"

Out of the carriages, in a laughing, jostling crowd, tumbled the schoolgirls, and once again there was excited, impetuous cries of: "Porter! Porter!"

Then there was a rush to get all the luggage out. There were bags and trunks and hampers galore.

"One at a time, missie—one at a time!" said the porter. "Can't attend to everyone at once, you know."

But now a girl took his arm. "Porter," she said imperiously, "I'll give you ten shillings if you'll get me a cab and attend to my luggage."

The old porter hesitated, and scratched his head. Ten shillings was rather a large tip—the usual was half-a-crown, though many gave twice that amount.

"Porter!" called Madge Minden and Polly Linton.

The porter looked from Polly and Madge to this girl—a girl he had never seen before, yet a girl who could obviously afford to tip

him on a generous scale, and he knew that from Madge and Polly he could only expect half-a-crown.

"All right, miss," he said to this new girl; "I'll get a cab."

And off he went.

The new girl waited. She had her hands full, holding parcels. The rest of her luggage lay strewn about the platform. But that could wait. She knew that the boxes and trunks would be sent to school, for they were addressed all right.

She did not appear to realise that the porter she had sent in search of a cab had been requested to perform a similar office for others; and yet Polly and Madge, having travelled with her and become aware of her selfishness, were quite sure that she had made her large offer of a tip to spite them. But they said nothing.

The porter was not long in returning.

"I've booked your cab, miss," he said, to the new girl. "Will you give me the parcels?"

The girl, with the same tilted nose and lofty expression, piled up the perspiring porter with her many goods and chattels, then followed him to the exit.

"Oh, what a girl!" exclaimed Betty Barton. "Really, she is selfish!"

"Selfish!" echoed Polly Linton. "I should jolly well think she is! She heard us call that porter long before we got out, and he was actually coming towards us when she nabbed him. Wasn't he, Madge?"

Madge Minton nodded, then shrugged her shoulders hopelessly.

"What's the use of worrying now?" she said. "Let's rush out and see if there is a cab left. We can leave most of this luggage. But I want my bag."

"Yes, wather, and my hat-box!" lisped Paula Croel.

But Betty Barton left both bags and boxes to the mercy of the porters, and went to the exit. After a moment's hesitation, Polly Linton followed. There was certainly no use in waiting about, for the cabs would then be booked.

Outside, Betty saw the new girl again. She was standing beside a cab which the porter was loading up with many parcels and hat-boxes.

The girl stood aside, watching, with a very superior look on her face.

"There, my man!" she said to the porter.

"There is a ten-shilling note."

She handed the note to the man in a most

patronising manner, and Polly Linton sniffed.

"What a snob!" she said. "I don't like her, Betty, and it's no use pretending that I do."

Betty was about to make a reply, then stopped, for there was a new development now. Towards the cab in which the new girl had ensconced herself walked two girls—Sixth-Formers.

"Why, there's Ethel Courtway!" said Betty. "Look, Polly!"

Sure enough, it was the captain of Morcove School, with her closest friend at her side. The captain of the school was extremely good-natured and a favourite with everyone.

"Wonder what she's going to do?" asked Betty, for she could see that Ethel was walking straight to the cab in which the new girl was now seated.

Ethel's brow wore a frown. A frown was not usual on Ethel's brow; as a rule, she was a very cheerful, happy-hearted girl, of a most amiable disposition.

Betty & Co. were so near that they could not help hearing what passed as the captain of the school spoke to the man in charge of the cab in which sat the new girl.

"I thought you promised to wait for us, Jenkins?" said Ethel to the cab-driver.

"H'm! Well—ye-es, miss, like as not," replied the cabby. "But a young girl inside—"

The cabman motioned inside the cab. He did not say that it was the lure of a large tip that had helped him to break his contract with Ethel.

"But we ordered you to wait," said Ethel. "You don't mean surely that you're going to take another passenger? Is it a mistress?"

"No, miss."

Ethel's face was angry now, and she looked inside the cab. When she saw that the occupant was a junior, her face flushed.

"My word!" she exclaimed. "This is too bad, cabby! Why, it's a junior girl. I won't stand this!"

She opened the door of the carriage.

"Excuse me," she said, "but this is my cab. The man had no right to let you enter it, for I wrote and ordered it yesterday. If you wouldn't mind letting me have it, I should be greatly obliged."

Under the circumstances, any ordinary girl would have allowed Ethel the use of the cab.

But the new girl seemed to have ideas of her own.

"Mind your own business!" she snapped loudly. "I'm here, and I'm going to stop here!"

Dead silence followed that extraordinary way of addressing a senior girl, and Polly Linton muttered an apprehensive: "My word!"

"There's going to be trouble," opined Madge Minden.

Ethel Courtway's face was black with anger. Never before had she been spoken to quite like that from a junior, especially in front of other junior girls. It was too much to expect a senior to bear. But by splendid self-control she kept her temper.

"Will you get out of this cab, please?" she repeated, in trembling tones. "I have told you that this is the cab I ordered."

Still the girl inside made no effort to move, and Ethel Courtway's brow became blacker.

"Girl," she said, in an effort to calm her rapidly rising temper, "I am the captain of the Morcove School! You are a new girl there, I presume? I order you, as a prefect—as captain of the school—to get out of that cab!"

The new girl rested her arm on the window-frame.

"And as Teresa Tempest, I refuse!" she answered insolently. "Cabby, drive on!"

For a second Ethel Courtway remained speechless, whilst Betty & Co. stood irresolute. And even as they watched, the cabby whipped up his horse, and the cab rolled away down the station yard.

Ethel Courtway bit her lip and turned on her heel, an angry flush showing in either cheek.

"My goodness!" gasped Tess Trelawny. "That has done it!"

Now other girls came up, wondering what had happened.

And Betty Barton & Co. explained. Grace Garfield, Ella Elgood, Dolly Delane, and about a dozen other members of the Fourth Form gathered round and listened, with rather awed looks on their faces.

"Goodness, she's going to be a handful!" said Ella Elgood. "Wonder if she'll be in the Fourth?"

And that, indeed, was what they all were wondering. They looked at Ethel Courtway, and knew that it would not be long before the matter of the cab would be investigated.

The new girl had started her life at Morcove School conspicuously, but not well.

"Here, Ethel, you have our cab!" Betty Barton had just got a cab—or, rather, Trixie had run to get it—but it was Betty who had made the offer.

Ethel Courtway turned. "Thanks, Betty Barton!" she said gratefully. "I'm glad to see that you're not all rude like this girl. She's Tempest by name, and tempestuous by nature, I'm afraid!"

And the captain of the school got into the cab with another word of thanks, anxious to get to Morcove School and meet again the girl who had been so impudent.

Betty & Co. had to wait some time for another cab, but eventually one rolled up, and inside they crowded—five of them. Tess Trelawny went outside with the driver.

At last the towers of Morcove School came in sight, and the cab pulled up.

"School again!" sighed Polly, as she got out.

But Polly was not so despondent as she made herself out to be. Polly liked Morcove, for she had spent many a happy day inside its much-loved walls.

"It's not too bad to be back again," said Madge Minden. "We've had a good time, but—Hallo, what you want, kiddie?"

A small Third Form girl came forward shyly, and it was to her that Madge had spoken.

"Please, Miss Redgrave wants to see Betty Barton," said the small girl, and darted off.

Betty hurried across the quadrangle, wondering rather why Miss Redgrave had sent for her. Miss Redgrave was the junior mistress at Morcove, and was liked by the majority of the girls.

During the previous term Betty had helped the mistress, and Miss Redgrave had not forgotten this fact. She had always liked Betty, and had stood by the girl at a time when Betty had been shunned by many of the Fourth-Formers.

For the time had been when Betty's mother had done charring to keep the Barton home together. But that had been in the days before the sudden arrival home of a rich uncle had enabled the girl to go to school.

But now, what cause could the mistress have for wanting her? That was what Betty wondered as she ran up the stairs to the mistress's study.

And when she tapped on the door, Betty's face wore a puzzled look.

"Come in!" called Miss Redgrave's voice, and Betty entered.

"You want to see me, Miss Redgrave?" said Betty.

The young mistress looked up with a smile.

"Yes, Betty," she said. "It is about a matter that is private, yet not unconnected with school affairs. But sit down, dear!"

Betty sat down wonderingly, and looked at the mistress, waiting for her to proceed.

But Miss Redgrave did not go on at once. Instead, she tapped her desk with a pencil, and looked out of the window. Her brow was frowning, and it was obvious that she was not quite at ease.

"There are some new girls coming this term," said the mistress.

• Betty looked up.

"Ye-es," answered Betty, surprised at the remark. Surely the mistress had not brought her here to acquaint her with that fact.

"Ah," smiled the mistress, "I am afraid you think I am talking in conundrums. But this matter—of which I am speaking to you in confidence—is connected with a new girl."

"I understand," said Betty, wishing to help the mistress out of her difficulty. But why there should be any difficulty in discussing a new girl Betty could not understand.

But Miss Redgrave explained herself now.

"This particular new girl, Betty, is my niece."

"Oh!" Then Betty could understand why Miss Redgrave was so perturbed.

Now she was giving the mistress a very keen look indeed—a look which the mistress did not fail to notice.

"My niece," continued the mistress, "has been spoiled by her mother, my widowed sister, whom I have not seen for years. My brother-in-law left quite a fortune, and my niece has been allowed to spend money much as she chose. In fact, she has been allowed her own way a great deal."

"And she is coming to Morcove," said Betty.

"Yes; and why I have brought you here, Betty, dear, is to ask you to keep an eye on my niece."

She looked at the captain of the Fourth Form with eyes that were soft and pleading.

"Why, Miss Redgrave, I shall be only too pleased to do so," exclaimed Betty. "That is nothing to ask of me. Of course I will keep an eye on her."

"Thank you," said the mistress gratefully. "But I do not wish you to make the promise without being fully aware of the difficulties which will beset your path. My niece is not by any means an easy girl to manage; on the contrary, she is headstrong and self-willed. To guide her, as I hope you will, you will have to be forbearing and patient with her."

There was a pause, and Betty nodded.

"I think I can do it," she smiled. "Anyway, Miss Redgrave, you can rely upon me to do my best, however difficult to manage she may be!"

The mistress rose and crossed to Betty, who rose to her feet.

"You dear girl," she said, pressing the Fourth Former's hand. "I believe you would do anything for me, Betty."

Betty Barton flushed.

"I would, Miss Redgrave," she replied. "Anything. But this—it is simple."

"You will not say that when you have seen my niece," sighed the mistress. "You will find Teresa Tempest—"

Betty Barton started back.

"Teresa Tempest!" gasped Betty. "Teresa—Miss Redgrave, you don't mean—you can't mean that she is your niece?"

The mistress, though surprised at Betty's knowledge of the girl's name, sighed and nodded.

"Yes, Teresa is my niece," she said. "But how is it that you know her?"

"I—I—" stammered Betty. "We met her in the train."

"Oh!" Miss Redgrave turned from the captain of the Fourth's red face, guessing that by her arrogant manner her niece had already made herself unpleasant.

"If you wish to revoke your promise—" began Miss Redgrave.

But Betty shook her head firmly.

"No, no!" she cried. "I have made my promise, and I will keep it. Besides, Teresa does need someone to guide her. You can rely upon me, Miss Redgrave."

Once again the mistress pressed Betty's hand, then went back to her desk, and Betty, her mind in a whirl, made her way to Study 12, the study she shared with Polly Lanton.

Teresa Tempest—Miss Redgrave's niece! That was the girl's thought. "And I must look after her. Oh, it will be difficult!"

But Betty clenched her hands. "However difficult my task may prove," she vowed, "I will not break my promise. Always I will do my best to look after Teresa Tempest!"

CHAPTER 3.

Astonishing the Form.

THERE'S going to be trouble," murmured Ella Elgood.

"And with a capital 'T,'" supplemented Grace Garfield.

In the Fourth Form dormitory at Morcove School was quite a crowd of girls--most of them busy unpacking trunks and bags. The omnibus had arrived with the luggage that had been left at the station, and the girls were having an exciting time with the unpacking.

The topic of the conversation as the girls unpacked was, not unnaturally, the new girl. Those who had seen her and had witnessed the scene at the station had much to say--and those who hadn't been present on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion had had it all explained to them many times.

Betty took no part in the conversation, but remained by her box with rather worried brow. The more difficult her task seemed to be. To look after a girl when she does not want to be looked after is never likely to be an easy task. But Betty could see that, to begin with, the girl had started by setting the whole Form against herself.

The whole Form? Not quite, as Betty saw now; for Cora Grandways had entered the dormitory--and Cora was accompanied by Teresa Tempest.

The new girl's entrance was greeted with dead silence. All conversation ceased, and the girls stood by their boxes, staring.

Cora Grandways smiled--her younger sister, Judith, giggled slightly. This was just the sort of situation Cora liked. Time had been when she had made a set at Betty Barton because of the girl's family affairs, in the days before her rich uncle's arrival home. Now Cora had ceased to gibe, although she and Betty, through no fault of that girl's, were not really friendly.

"Let me introduce you all to the new girl, Teresa Tempest," said Cora loudly. "Teresa Tempest--the Fourth Form!"

Teresa glanced at the silent girls, then frowned. It needed but one glance to tell

her what sort of opinion the Fourth Form girls held regarding her.

And Teresa's frown turned into a look of contempt. She shrugged her shoulders, and turned to Cora Grandways.

"Sociable crowd--what?" she said in affected tones.

Then Betty, with outstretched hand, went forward.

"Good-afternoon, Teresa!" said Betty, trying to be affable, although it meant a great effort. "Welcome to the Form! Let me introduce you all round."

The new girl gave a short, unpleasant laugh.

"I'm sure I don't want to be shown round, or introduced to these girls," she said scornfully. The accent she put on "these" was not calculated to enhance her chances of being popular with the girls.

"Oh, leave her alone, Betty," said Polly. "I'm sure I don't want to be introduced to her. She can go hang for all I care!"

"Hear, hear!" said Madge Minden spiritedly. "Think she might learn her manners before she comes to school."

"Oh, she'll get some drilled into her before long," shrugged Ella Elgood. "She's got to see Ethel Courtway yet."

And at that the Fourth Formers nodded their heads. They had never before known a new girl insult a mistress on her first day at Morcove; but even without the precedent, they were quite sure that it would mean trouble for Teresa.

From time to time as she unpacked, Betty cast anxious side glances at Cora and Judith Grandways, who were talking to the new girl. At first Cora and Judith had spoken loudly, but their tones were now almost subdued to a whisper.

Betty's ears burned. In one side glance she had caught Cora nodding towards her, and had heard the girl's giggle. Then Betty knew as surely as if she had heard the whispered words, that Cora and Judith were speaking about her.

She caught a whisper now, and her face coloured hotly, for Cora was saying:

"That girl--oh, yes, she's captain of the Form, you know, but not of our class--eh, Judith?"

"Not a bit," said Judith. "Why, d'you know her mother once did charing?"

At that word "charing" several girls looked round, knowing to whom Cora referred, and Polly Linton looked quite indignant.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the new girl. "I say, you must be joking. Really, you don't mean to say that—that girl—I say!"

Her tone expressed wonderment first, then contempt, and the look she gave Betty was openly scornful.

"Oh, of course, we don't mix with her," said Cora hastily. "She's not our class, you know."

And the new girl nodded. She sat down gracefully and very carefully on the bed which Cora said must be hers.

"Oh, what a nuisance!" exclaimed the new girl. "There's a wretched ladder in my stocking. Oh, that does make me savage." A new pair—only bought yesterday.

Cora nodded.

"Yes, it is a nuisance," she said. "And they were expensive—"

"Oh, twenty-five, the usual, y'know," said the new girl airily.

"Twenty-five shillings!" said Cora Grandways, in awed tones.

The new girl nodded coolly.

Cora looked at her sister, and Judith raised her eyebrows. The Grandways sisters were looked upon as the most extravagant girls in the Form, but even they seldom had the luxury of such expensive silk stockings.

And the other Fourth Formers—they were frankly amazed.

"Swank!" sniffed Polly Linton. "She's a snob and a swank! Pleasant sort of girl to put in the Fourth."

And whispered remarks amongst the girls expressed the same opinion. Such remarks were not likely to set Betty's mind at rest. The new girl seemed to become more and more difficult to manage at every point.

"I—I say," said Betty haltingly to the new girl. "I could not help hearing what you said, and I thought that, as captain of the Fourth, I ought to tell you that coloured silk stockings are not allowed for juniors. You must wear black stockings with your school frock!"

Teresa Tempest leant back on her bed and laughed.

"Oh, hark at her!" she said. "Mummy's little darling. The kind teachers won't let us wear what we want. You booby!" she finished scornfully, looking at Betty. "Do you think I care what you or anyone else—mistresses, monitresses—like to think of me? If I care to wear coloured stockings with my frock I'm going to! Anyway, I

shall wear real silk stockings, however much they cost. But I don't suppose kids like you can afford twenty-five shillings a pair!"

Betty flushed, and half-opened her mouth to make an angry retort. But Miss Redgrave's request came into her mind. It would not help matters if she started losing her temper with the new girl. But Betty began to see more and more how difficult her task was to prove.

"If you bought a book on common etiquette, you'd do far better," retorted Polly Linton hotly.

But Teresa Tempest did not appear to hear Polly's remark.

"My word, what a girl you are!" sighed Cora Grandways smoothly.

Teresa nodded serenely and self-complacently.

"Oh, I know how to put people in their places," she said, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "One gets used to it through managing servants. We've got seven, y'know."

The new girl had unlocked the larger of her two trunks. As she threw back a lid a layer of tissue paper was revealed. This she removed, and there, on the top, lay a beautiful orange-coloured charmeuse dress.

At the sight of it Cora Grandways clapped her hands, and dropped to her knees.

"I say!" she cried. "Oh, isn't that just gorgeous! Look, Judith!"

And Cora commenced to fondle the soft material, whilst Teresa watched her with a smile on her well-cut lips—a patronising smile that was very superior indeed.

"Oh, do put that dress on—I'll help you," said Cora. "Isn't it just sweet!"

"Perfectly lovely!" echoed Judith, as enraptured as her sister.

And the other girls—they stood speechless. During ordinary schooldays the girls always wore their plain serge drill dresses. Only on Sundays were they allowed to put on anything "special." Then it was an exception to see anything but a white dress—save in very quiet shades.

Judith dressed in a pink, a fluffy pink dress, but that dress had often received rebukes from mistresses for being too elaborate.

But this orange charmeuse! Whatever would Miss Somerfield, the headmistress, say, if she were to see that? Betty wondered.

The new girl rose to her feet languidly.

"I don't mind puttin' it on, if you'd like to see it," she remarked condescendingly, and yawned.

"What lovely hair you've got," said Cora, smoothing the girl's wavy tresses as she unplaited it.

Teresa sat down in a chair, and folded her hands in her lap. It was quite obvious that she was used to a maid's toilet attentions.

And now Cora unwittingly had become her maid.

"I wish my hair were as wavy as yours," said Judith Grandways enviously.

Teresa laughed. "Well, it can be, if you like to have it waved," she said. "It doesn't cost an awful lot, y'know. I fancy I paid a fiver—or something like that. I never can remember prices and things."

Cora gasped. The new girl's tone indicated that a fiver or two here and there did not make much difference to her allowance.

"My gracious!" said Judith. "You mean you've had it permanently waved?"

"Why, of course!" Teresa's tone was a trifle petulant.

"I must get mine waved," said Cora thoughtfully, as she brushed the new girl's shining tresses.

"And I," said Judith. "But—but it won't do to tell Miss Somersfield, the head-mistress."

"Pooh!" said Teresa airily. "Don't think that I take any notice of mistresses! I don't come to school to be dictated to!"

And Cora and Judith murmured, "Oh, my word!"

Most of the Fourth Formers had ceased their packing. They simply could not proceed whilst this scene was being enacted before them, and Teresa, fully aware of the scene she was causing, lolled back in her chair.

"Ready?" she asked.

"Yes, here's the dress," said Cora. And she unfolded the shimmering dress, placing it flat on the bed.

Teresa Tempest slipped off the plain frock she was wearing, and slipped on the orange charmeuse, with Cora's aid. Judith stood up admiringly.

The dress was of simple cut, and hung wonderfully well.

"Now those shoes," said Teresa; "the black suede ones, I mean."

In silence Cora handed over the shoes from the trunk, and Teresa put them on

with great care—then took them off, and took from the trunk another pair of black silk stockings, and put them on.

She was ready now, except for her hair, and the Fourth-Formers stood about watching her, wondering what would be the next move of this queer girl.

"I think I'll put my hair up," said Teresa thoughtfully. "It suits me better. And I don't suppose it will matter much."

"Oh—oh, dear! Nun-no!" stammered Cora.

"Nun-nun-not at all!" echoed Judith faintly.

How the Fourth-Formers stared at the sight of Teresa putting up her hair! Surely she did not intend going downstairs dressed in such a manner?

At last Teresa stood radiant, with her hair up, in orange charmeuse dress, and silk stockings and suede shoes.

But she was not finished yet. From her handbag she took a small gold box, and from that box took a small puff.

Carefully she powdered her face, and very neatly, be it said. Next came a dab of lip-salve, and the spoilt girl declared she was finished.

Then there was a dead silence in the dormitory. No one knew what to say.

"Coming down now?" said Teresa.

The Fourth-Formers gasped—even the Grandways sisters.

"Dud-dud-down!" stammered Cora. "Oh, yes, rather, of course!"

They had walked half-way across the dormitory, when the door opened and a small girl entered.

"Please, is Teresa Tempest here?" she asked.

The new girl stepped forward.

"Yes, I am she," she said haughtily.

"What is it, child?"

"Please, Ethel Courtway wants you in her study, at once," said the girl, and ran off.

CHAPTER 4.

Teresa "Tries it on!"

"ETHEL COURTWAY!"

Teresa Tempest frowned.

"And who may she be?" she asked of Cora Grandways.

"She's the captain of the school," said Cora. "If she wants you, Teresa dear, you'd better go, but—but—"

"She wants me in her room," said Teresa, frowning.

Cora nodded.

"Teresa?" All eyes were turned as the name was called quietly, and the new girl faced the speaker, Betty Barton.

The Form captain's face was clouded, and she came forward rather shyly.

"I—I don't think it would be advisable to go and see Ethel like that," said Betty awkwardly. "She—she was the girl who wanted your cab at the station, and she is the captain of the school!"

Teresa stared, then tossed her head.

"I wish some of you would mind your own business," she said.

Betty Barton flushed. She was determined to stop this girl from folly, if she could.

"You don't understand," she protested. "Ethel is a mistress, and if you go to her like this—"

"Like this!" echoed the girl scornfully. "If I want to wear these clothes, I can, I suppose! I should like to know who is to stop me!"

"You'll soon find out when you meet Ethel Courtway," cut in Polly Linton. "The idea of a Fourth-Form girl going about the school with her hair up!"

Teresa tilted her nose.

"I have not the slightest intention of going anywhere near Ethel Courtway," she said. "I don't like her!"

The new girl shrugged her shoulders and turned on her heel. With Cora and Judith following her, she went from the dormitory, leaving behind her a dead silence.

When they got outside Cora winked at Judith, and that girl smiled. They wanted to see what would happen when Teresa met Ethel. They felt sure that there would be trouble. And the two sisters cared not whether this girl were punished or not.

They had not long to wait for the cloud to burst, for they had barely sauntered ten yards when a tall, trim-looking girl came along the passage.

Cora and Judith recognised her at once. She was Ethel Courtway. Ethel's face was angry and her brow clouded, which was only natural. Never before had the school captain's authority been so openly defied.

"Well!"

It was Teresa Tempest who spoke thus insolently. She stroked back her wavy hair with one jewelled hand, patting it into place. And Ethel—she stood dumbfounded, unable to say a word.

"Teresa Tempest!" She shouted the name, so angry she was; her eyes blazed.

"Oh, you insolent girl! Did you not get my message?"

Before this obviously enraged girl Teresa slightly lost her accustomed "nerve." Then she remembered that Cora and Judith were present, and they were watching her closely; she knew that.

"I got it," nodded Teresa coolly.

"You—you—" stammered Ethel. "But, girl, why didn't you come at once? You know—you must have been told—that I am captain of the school!"

Teresa Tempest shrugged her shoulders.

"Too much fog," she said easily.

Ethel Courtway drew in a deep breath and controlled her temper with the utmost difficulty.

"Come to the headmistress at once, girl!" said Ethel Courtway. Then she bit her lip, remembering suddenly that the headmistress had not yet arrived at the school.

But Teresa did not move; and the four girls stood there, silent, the air electric.

Now a voice broke the silence; a new voice, but one all four knew well.

Miss Redgrave came forward. The young mistress' face was white and anxious.

"Ethel, what is the matter?" she asked agitatedly.

"This girl!" exclaimed Ethel. "She has been insolent and rude."

Miss Redgrave nodded in what they all thought a peculiar manner.

"Yes, yes," she said hurriedly. "Bring her along to my room, Ethel, please."

Teresa made no sign of recognising her aunt, and Miss Redgrave—she was too worried to give the girl a welcome at that moment. She had been expecting such a scene as this, and she was glad that she had been at hand instead of another mistress.

"Very well, Miss Redgrave," said Ethel Courtway, and turned on her heel. She followed the mistress along the passage.

Cora looked at Judith, and then both looked at Teresa. Teresa winked.

"See that mistress?" she asked. "Well, she's my aunt—a poor relation, y'know—and I can twist her round my little finger."

"Oh!" gasped Cora.

"I see," said Judith.

"Cheerio!" smiled Teresa, and loftily waved her hand to the two sisters. "Back again soon, y'know."

She went down the passage jauntily be-

hind Ethel Courtway in an exaggerated mimicry of that girl's walk.

Miss Redgrave seated herself in a chair in her study, and when Teresa had come inside Ethel Courtway closed the door.

"Sit down, please, Ethel," said the mistress. "Now, tell me what has happened."

Ethel Courtway gulped and told the mistress just what had occurred at the station, and how Teresa had spoken to her in the passage.

When the mistress had finished Miss Redgrave remained silent. Her eyes were very troubled, and from time to time she glanced at Teresa, noting that girl's dress, her hair, and her powdered face.

Teresa seemed unperturbed, and was, in fact, scanning her polished finger-nails critically, just for all the world as though this was a private affair between the mistress and mistress in which she played no part.

"Teresa," said Miss Redgrave gently, suppressing a sigh.

"Yes, aunt?"

Ethel Courtway started, and Miss Redgrave flushed.

"You must not call me 'aunt' here, Teresa. I am Miss Redgrave to you whilst we are at school." The mistress turned to the mistress. "I must tell you, Ethel," she sighed, "that Teresa is my niece—my sister's daughter. I—I have not seen her for years, and it was only yesterday I learnt she was coming here."

"Oh!" said Ethel Courtway.

This fact added a new complexion to the affair. She gave the mistress a sympathetic glance, for she realised in what a difficult position the young mistress was placed by the arrival at Morecove School of Teresa Tempest.

"I—I—," began the mistress. "I think I'd better leave her to you, Miss Redgrave," she said. "It will be all right if Teresa apologises. She is a new girl, and perhaps not used to school life."

Teresa tossed her dark head.

"Apologise!" she scoffed. "Oh, yes, I can see myself doing that!"

Miss Redgrave brought her clenched hand down on the desk. Neither Ethel nor Teresa had ever seen the mistress look so angry.

"Teresa," said Miss Redgrave, "apologise at once! If you do not, I will write to your mother!"

"Mother wouldn't let me stay if she

knew how I was being treated," returned the insolent girl.

Miss Redgrave clicked her teeth.

"You will do as I say, Teresa!" she almost shouted. Then she dropped her voice to a lower tone. "My dear girl," she said, "can't you see what a bad beginning you've made? If this sort of conduct continues, the headmistress may ask for you to be removed from the school."

"I don't care!" snapped the wilful girl.

"Bother the headmistress."

"You will apologise now, at once, to Ethel Courtway," she insisted angrily, "or I will take you to the headmistress upon her arrival and have you caned—caned before all the school!"

There was a look in the mistress' eyes that cowed the girl, obstinate though she was.

So now she allowed her false pride to suffer a temporary set-back, lest worse should befall her. At least, it was easy to apologise, and only these two would ever know.

She turned her head and gave Ethel Courtway a look that said: "I'm forced to do this; but you wait!"

Then, very sulkily, she said, aloud and ungraciously:

"I'm sorry."

"Thank you," said Ethel Courtway, and with a sympathetic look at the mistress she left the room, glad to get away from the stubborn-natured girl.

When she had gone Miss Redgrave looked at her niece sorrowfully.

"Oh, Teresa!" she sighed. "What a foolish girl you are. And why are you wearing those clothes? You know—you must know—that you should not put up your hair, nor make up your face. You should put on your drill dress. Now, go upstairs and change into your ordinary dress. Come, let us have no nonsense!"

Teresa jumped to her feet, and her eyes blazed.

"Change?" she said. "Do you think I'm going to take notice of you? You may be my aunt, but you can think yourself lucky that I recognise you at all, you poor relation. I shall write and tell mother all about you, so there!"

"Teresa—!" But the girl swished aside and opened the door. "Teresa!" said Miss Redgrave.

"Slam!

Teresa Tempest was gone.

CHAPTER 5.

More Trouble for Teresa.

"TERESA!"

It was Betty Barton who called the girl's name. Betty was standing in the corridor when the new girl came along.

"What do you want?" asked Teresa aggressively.

Betty smiled patiently.

"I came to tell you that lunch is ready," she said. "If you like I'll wait while you change into your school-frock, and show you the way to the dining-hall."

Teresa drew back.

"No, you won't!" she snapped. "You may think you can worm an acquaintance with me—but you don't. I've met your sort before. I don't like toadies!"

Betty flushed, and bit her lip.

"I thought you would like me to help you," she replied steadily. "Please, don't misunderstand me! But you're a new girl, and you don't know your way about the school."

"Well, I can find out," said Teresa.

She was in no mood then to speak politely to anyone, and least of all to this girl, who, according to the Grandways sisters, was the daughter of a woman who had done charring.

"Mother told me to be particular about friends," went on Teresa coldly. "I don't care to associate with charwomen's children."

Betty flushed.

"Very well," she shrugged. "I'm sorry; but you will find the dining-room downstairs, the second door to the left."

And Betty walked off, feeling that to attempt friendly relations with this girl was hopeless at present.

When Betty had gone the wilful girl stood irresolute.

Just at the moment when she had half-decided to run upstairs and change, along the passage came two smiling girls.

They were Cora and Judith Strangeways.

"Hallo, Teresa!" said Judith. "How did you get on?"

Teresa shrugged her shoulders.

"Wasn't Ethel Courtway cross?"

"She was," said the new girl. "but I got round her all right. Now what about something to eat?"

"This way," said Judith, with an indrawn breath. "But, I say, Teresa, you have got a nerve. I wish I had half your cheek."

Teresa smiled, and shrugged her shoulders. All thought of changing her clothes was gone now. To do so would be a decided "climb down," and she would never do that in front of these girls! How could she after what she had just said?

But it was not without a tremor that she entered the school dining-room.

Cora opened the door with a sly grin, and winked at Judith. The two girls, although they really did admire Teresa in some queer way for her unbounded insolence—or cheek, as they chose to call it—were quite aware that she was "showing off" for their benefit, and they were anxious to see the fun. And this is why they let her enter first, so that they should miss nothing.

As Teresa entered the room, all conversation ceased, and there was a dead silence.

The new girl was really very nervous inwardly. But not for worlds would she have let those Grandway girls know that. It was her first school, this, and she was slightly unnerved, anyway, by the hundred odd pair of eyes that were turned upon her as she entered.

All the juniors were attired, according to regulation, in drill dresses; and even the mistresses wore plain blouses and skirts.

Miss Redgrave was sitting at the Third Form table when Teresa entered, and her face went a deep pink with vexation. Her niece had deliberately defied her.

Now Cora Grandways hurried forward and took a seat at the Fourth Form table, motioning Teresa to take the one next to hers.

Teresa sat down, and then it was as though Babel had been let loose. Everyone seemed to talk at once, and Teresa went crimson.

Miss Massingham, the Fourth Form mistress, stared at her speechlessly.

From the Third Form table Miss Redgrave came across to her niece.

"Teresa!" she cried angrily. "I told you to change that dress! Why have you deliberately disobeyed me?"

Her tone was angry, and across the table Betty gave the mistress a compassionate look.

Teresa Tempest did not move.

"Miss Redgrave spoke to you, girl!" snapped Miss Massingham. "Do I understand that you have already been told to take off that ridiculous garment?"

Teresa did not answer.

Miss Massingham rose from her seat and stood behind the girl.

"Teresa Tempest," she said as steadily as she could, "leave this table at once and go to your dormitory. You are a disobedient girl. You have been twice ordered to remove those clothes, and I will not be defied." The Fourth Form mistress turned to the Sixth Form table. "Ethel Courtway and Rita Powell, take this girl upstairs and see that she goes to bed," said the mistress angrily. "She shall miss her lunch, and will have to be satisfied with bread and water."

For a second Teresa looked as though she would resist Rita Powell and Ethel Courtway, but she now realised, too late, that she should not have been so disobedient.

As the two Sixth Formers lay hands upon her she quite lost the last vestige of her temper.

"Let me go!" she shrieked. "I won't be sent to bed! I'm not a baby! I won't go! It isn't fair! Oh, leave me alone!"

But struggle though she did, she was no match for the two Sixth Formers, and at last she was dragged from the room and up to the dormitory.

And when the Fourth Form went to bed that night they found Teresa fast asleep, lying on her side, the corner of the bedclothes gripped tightly in her hand.

"My word," said Polly Linton with a shake of the head, "that girl—she will take some teaching!"

Betty Barton sighed.

"It will be a hard task," she said. "But, oh, Polly, don't you think we might try together. Can't we give her some new interest in life. Can't we show her that clothes and jewellery are not all that matter?"

"That girl?" exclaimed Polly. "I do most things for you, Betty—but I'm blessed if I feel called upon to act as her fairy god-mother!"

Several girls laughed, and there were cries of "Hear, hear!"

Betty Barton sighed and turned away.

Polly would not help. Betty felt she could not blame her chum. But Betty—she had made that promise to Miss Redgrave, and she must stand by it alone, it seemed, and she must attempt to show this wilful, headstrong girl the path she should tread.

CHAPTER 6.

Teresa Faces the Music!

"SHE'S still got her bracelets,"
 "And her gold wristlet watch!"
 "And the diamond pendant!"
 "And the brooches!"
 "My word!"

Teresa Tempest could scarcely have failed to hear those words uttered by the group of Third and Fourth Formers, who stood at the foot of the stairs watching her as she made her way to the study of Miss Somerfield, the following morning. Yet not the slightest notice did she take of any of the girls. She treated them all as though they did not exist.

And, although most of the girls were regarding Teresa with contemptuous looks, Betty Barton wore a worried frown.

"Teresa!" exclaimed Betty, stepping forward. "I—I say. You can't go to the headmistress with those jewels on. It will only make her more cross!"

Teresa turned upon the speaker with a look of contempt. Yet she did not say a word, merely tossing her head.

"Swank!" hissed Ella Elgood. And the cry was taken up by the others.

Even then Teresa did not heed.

Suddenly there came an interruption, and the crowd of Fourth-Formers became silent. For down the passage came the figure of a young mistress—Miss Redgrave.

"Teresa!" she exclaimed, hurrying forward. "Hurry yourself, my girl. Do you not know that Miss Somerfield wants to see you?"

"All right; I'm coming," sneered Teresa, but she did not hurry herself in any way.

Miss Redgrave led the way down the corridor, and stopped when she reached a half-open door, on which was the word:

HEADMISTRESS.

At her tap a gentle voice called "Come in!" and the mistress threw the door wide for Teresa to enter.

In went Teresa Tempest to that room, sacred in the eyes of the other Morcove girls.

Yet Teresa Tempest seemed unabashed. She stood leaning rather on her right leg, her left slightly bent. With her right hand she patted a wisp of hair into place, as unconcerned as though meeting a head-

mistress was, to her, an everyday occurrence.

Miss Redgrave, however, was nervous and ill at ease. There were two other women in the study, Miss Somerfield, the headmistress, and Miss Massingham, the mistress of the Fourth Form.

All three mistresses seated themselves, and gazed in no little doubt at this strange new girl, who seemed so careless of their presence, or of the punishments they were entitled to administer.

"Teresa Tempest," said the headmistress, after a slight pause, "although you have been only one day in the school, you seem to have caused unprecedented upheaval by your disobedient and unruly nature!"

Teresa Tempest nodded, and surveyed her finger-nails.

"I suppose that is how they'd put it," she said.

Miss Somerfield sat back in her chair.

"How—how—they'd put it!" she stammered. "Girl! Are you aware to whom you are speaking? Do you know that I am the headmistress of this school?"

Her tone was terrifying, or would have been to many another girl, but Teresa Tempest, with conceited bravado, was attempting to set the whole school authority at naught.

Miss Somerfield brought her fist down with a bang upon the table.

"I have heard all about you, Teresa Tempest," she said angrily. "How you were impertinent to Ethel Courtway, the school captain, and how you had the insolence to disobey your mistress, Miss Redgrave—"

"She ordered me to take off my dress—my orange dress!" retorted Teresa. "I'm not going to be ordered about by her!"

"I can see, Teresa Tempest," Miss Somerfield said, in steady tones, "that you have a very big lesson to learn. Let me tell you in the first place, that I will brook no insolence. One more insolent word, and you will be sent straight to the punishment-room!"

"I shall ask mother to take me away," said Teresa, her lip trembling now that she realised how firm the headmistress could be.

At home, when scolded, Teresa had found tears a way out of her difficulties.

Her father was dead, and her indulgent mother gave way to her on every point.

Teresa had but to cry, and all scolding was over. So tears came easy to her.

Miss Somerfield saw that the girl was not now so stubborn, and she seized the opportunity to speak her mind.

"You are an insolent girl, Teresa," she resumed. "But you will do no good by asking your mother to take you away from Morcove."

Teresa's lips trembled more now, and tears welled up in her eyes. This the headmistress affected not to notice.

"Miss Redgrave, here," resumed the headmistress, "has the misfortune to be your aunt; but the relation between you gives you no excuse to defy her. She ordered you, and rightly, too, not to wear the finery in which you had garbed yourself. You were told not to wear jewellery." She waved her hand. "And now what do I see, a diamond pendant, and a bracelet, and brooches—"

"They—they were presents from my—my father before he died," said Teresa tearfully.

Miss Somerfield opened her mouth to speak, then shut it quickly. Teresa was really crying now, and the mistresses could see the tears trickling down the girl's cheeks.

Miss Massingham sniffed scornfully. But Miss Somerfield hesitated. If those articles of jewellery were presents from her father, then the girl might have acted simply out of sentiment. But Teresa was probably acting—so the headmistress mused. And if that were so, then Teresa was a fine actress.

At last the headmistress spoke.

"I—I do not wish to be hard upon you, my girl," she said. "But you must understand—and I mean this—that you are not allowed to garb yourself in such costly dresses, nor are you allowed to wear such a large amount of jewellery."

"But—but—" stammered Teresa, letting the tears fall faster.

Miss Somerfield rose from her chair, and, watched by the two other mistresses, crossed the room. She laid her hand upon the crying girl's shoulder.

"There, there," she said softly. "Don't cry, my girl. None of us wish to be hard upon you. If you only obey the school rules, you will find that the mistresses are no more desirous of discord and strife than the girls. Be a good girl, and dry those tears!"

How suddenly that scene had changed from its commencement. Teresa, defiant and insolent, had met with reverse, and the cunning girl had turned to tears as a way out. And Miss Somerfield—how could she be blamed? How was she to know that the girl was only acting—that Teresa was laughing in her heart at the way she had deceived the headmistress?

"I—I didn't mean to—to be insolent. It—it's my hasty temper," stammered Teresa. "I'm always being blamed. No one cares about me, no one!"

Miss Somerfield looked quite worried lest this strange girl should suddenly become hysterical, for Teresa was crying now with increasing bitterness.

"Don't cry like that, Teresa," said Miss Somerfield gently. "No one desires to be unkind to you, but you must learn to control your temper—"

"I do try—oh, I do!" sobbed Teresa. "But—but what's the use?"

"Hush, child!" said the headmistress, with gentle reproof. "You mustn't talk like that. I think you had better go to your dormitory and lie down for a while. Miss Redgrave!"

The young mistress came forward.

"Take her upstairs," said Miss Somerfield. "I fear she is somewhat overwrought. Poor child, I think she is not wholly responsible for her insolence and disobedience. She has not been accustomed to discipline."

Miss Redgrave nodded.

"Her mother is indulgent," she sighed. "Teresa has certainly had too much of her own way."

She took the girl's arm, and led her to the door, whilst Teresa dabbed her eyes with a yellow silk handkerchief.

"Wait," said Miss Somerfield. "Before you go, Teresa, I should like to impress upon you the fact that, but for your unchecked temper, this painful scene would not have occurred. In future, dear, try to control your temper, and you will find life much smoother and easier."

Teresa, her face still buried in her handkerchief, nodded, but did not reply.

Miss Somerfield returned to her chair, frowning, and she and the Fourth Form mistress exchanged hopeless looks.

"Difficult—a very difficult girl to handle," sighed the headmistress. "But I think she

is sorry, genuinely sorry. There are many girls like her."

Would that she could have seen Teresa on the other side of the door. Her opinion would then have changed quickly.

For, once the oak door stood between her and the headmistress, the new girl's sorrows and regrets dropped from her like a mantle, and the real Teresa stood revealed.

She snatched her arm from Miss Redgrave's grasp, and, turning to the closed door, pulled a long, derisive face, and put out the tip of her tongue in a most unladylike manner.

Miss Redgrave positively gasped at her niece's duplicity.

"Teresa!" she exclaimed. "Oh, you wicked girl!"

Teresa turned on her angrily.

"You mind your own business, aunt!" she snapped. "This is all your fault! If it hadn't been for you putting your silly nose into my affairs, that silly school marm wouldn't have jawed me so!"

Miss Redgrave seemed struck dumb at this strange, insolent speech. Never had she heard Miss Somerfield alluded to so rudely.

"Teresa! How dare you?"

"That's right, shout!" snapped Teresa.

"You'd like to bring the whole school on the scene, wouldn't you? You're just like all poor relations—think you can get your own back on me just because you've a little brief authority. I don't care two pins for you—or—for any of them, not even that grey-haired school marm! My mother could buy up the whole of this school, and never miss the money! So there!"

And before the amazed, dumbfounded junior mistress could reply, Teresa Tempest had stalked up the passage, her head held very high in the air, and turned the corner.

Those crocodile tears—tears that had gained her pardon—were still traceable on her cheeks, and now Teresa sought to eradicate them.

From the front of her blouse she extracted a small gold case, and a neat, dainty power-puff. Inside the case was a small mirror and some highly scented cream powder.

With the aid of that small mirror she powdered her cheeks, nose, and eyelids, hiding skilfully the tell-tale traces the streaming tears had left upon her face. Then, to brighten her lips, she moistened them with her finger-tips.

Scarcely had she finished than two girls' surnames of the corner of the passage, and gave turned of delight.

"My word! Teresa!" cried Cora Grandways; and her younger sister, Judith, echoed:

"Why, Teresa!"

Teresa Tempest hastily concealed her powder-puff, and faced the sisters with radiant face.

"Hallo, dears!" she said. "Didn't expect to see you."

"Hear you've seen Miss Somerfield," said Cora, giving the new girl a keen look. "About that—er—affair yesterday, I suppose?"

Teresa raised her eyebrows.

"Somerfield?" she said, as though the name were new to her. "You mean that grey-haired school marm—the headmistress?"

Judith Grandways nodded.

"That's right—that's Miss Somerfield," she said. "Awfully strict, isn't she? I suppose you've been gated?"

"Oh, you dear simples!" Teresa said. "Why do you suppose I should be punished? With dear Ruth Redgrave, a mistress, for an aunt, how could I be?"

Cora Grandways drew a deep breath.

Judith remained silent, awed by this new girl's audacity.

"Well, what about brekker?" said Teresa. "I'm hungry."

"Oh, y-y-yes," stammered Cora, unable to take her eyes from Teresa's face. "Of course—brekker."

"This way," said Judith.

And as they walked down to breakfast, the Grandways sisters could not help the side glances they cast at this strange new girl who was able to avoid punishment. And they were thinking how very useful to them she might prove.

CHAPTER 7.

Their New Study Companion.

POLLY LINTON flung herself into the armchair in Study No. 12, and sighed. Morning lessons were over, and how jolly the small study seemed this glorious September morning!

"It's good to be back at school," she sighed. And Betty Barton, her chum and study companion, nodded.

"Yes," laughed Betty. "It's a second

home really. We grumble enough about school, but, after all, it's not so—"

Betty broke off suddenly, for there came a tap at the door.

As both occupants of the study called "Come in!" the door of the small study opened, and the junior mistress appeared.

"Why," exclaimed Betty, "Miss Redgrave! This is a surprise. Do come in!"

The two girls were looking rather surprised at this visit, for it was unusual for the mistress to visit the girls' rooms—and Miss Redgrave, moreover, was not their Form-mistress, and they wondered what had brought her to their study.

They were soon to know.

"I—I want you two to do me a favour," Miss Redgrave said.

"A favour!" cried Betty. "Why, yes, Miss Redgrave?"

And Polly nodded.

"Ra-ther!" she said, no less enthusiastic than her chum.

"Thank you," smiled the mistress. "I knew you would say 'Yes.' But I haven't yet told you what I want." She paused. "You are at liberty to refuse, you know, if you find what I ask impossible."

But both girls shook their heads. They were fond of this junior mistress, and both would do anything for her.

"Then I will proceed," said Miss Redgrave. "You, Betty, know all about the matter. But I will speak now for Polly's benefit. It is about Teresa Tempest—"

"Oh!" said Polly, and knitted her brows.

Miss Redgrave went on quickly:

"Teresa is my niece, and I am sorry to say that she has been brought up to be vain and extravagant by an indulgent mother. She is inclined to fits of temper, too."

Polly Linton pulled a long face. When Miss Redgrave had asked a favour, Polly had no idea that it would concern Teresa.

The mistress, though, was quick to see Polly's look.

"If—if you wish me to say no more—" she began.

But Polly shook her head.

"Not at all, Miss Redgrave," she replied, though she no longer seemed enthusiastic to do the junior mistress a favour.

"Well," resumed Miss Redgrave, "I want you two girls to look after Teresa. She needs the friendship of girls who will show her the right road—girls such as you, and

I have asked Miss Massingham to put Teresa in this study with you. I hope you don't mind?"

For one long, tense moment there was a silence—a silence which was broken by a hard, indrawn breath from Polly.

"Put—put her in here!" she exclaimed.

Betty Barton remained silent, although she was no more keen on the idea than Polly.

"But—but I say, Miss Redgrave," protested Polly. "Can't—can't she go—"

At sight of the look on her chum's face Polly broke off.

"If you would rather she were put elsewhere," said Miss Redgrave, with a heavy sigh, "I will see that arrangements are made for—"

"Well, it's—it's—" stammered Polly, torn between a desire to have the room to herself and Betty, and a desire to please the mistress. "I— Oh, all right, if Betty doesn't mind!"

"I don't mind," said Betty quickly. "If you wish it, Miss Redgrave."

The junior mistress rose and crossed to the two girls.

"You are two dear, generous girls," she said huskily. "You are the only girls I can trust to look after Teresa, and I know you would rather have this study to yourselves. But you are doing this for my sake. And I am grateful, dears, more grateful than I can say."

Then, before the girls could reply, she was at the door, and had clicked it to.

When she had gone Polly looked at Betty, and Betty pulled a woeful face.

"Well, if that isn't the limit," said Polly. "We're going to have that girl foisted on us. It's a bit thick—"

Polly Linton stopped short and stared. For the study door had suddenly been flung open with no preliminary knock, and now into the small room came Teresa Tempest.

To the two occupants she said not a word, but her eyes roved critically round the room.

"What a poky place!" said Teresa, sniffing with disdain.

Polly Linton's temper, already slightly ruffled, rose rapidly.

"Well?" she said. "If they don't knock before entering a room where you were brought up, I suppose they shut the door after them?"

Teresa's eyes alighted on Polly, as though

she had become aware for the first time that there were two girls in the room.

"I thought this was Study No. 12," she said, frowning. "But it seems that I've wandered into the maids' quarters!"

Polly Linton fairly bubbled with rage. She walked across the study and slammed the door to.

"This is Study No. 12 all right, Teresa Tempest," she said. "And we're your future study companions."

Teresa Tempest did not reply. She patted her hair—that stray wisp that never seemed in place—and looked at the ceiling. From there her eyes wandered to the curtains, and her lips curled.

Poor Betty flushed, becoming aware for the first time of the several tears in those curtains, which she and Polly only a minute before had spoken of so affectionately.

"Won't—won't you sit down?" asked Betty.

Teresa looked at her.

"Hallo, you here?" she said. "Let me see, you're the factory—or washerwoman's daughter, aren't you?"

Betty went a deep crimson.

"My mother did charring when we were poor," she said gently. "And I am not ashamed of it."

Teresa sniffed.

"I'm not going to stand this," she said. "Whatever must aunt have been thinking to put me in with a charwoman's daughter!" Her frown deepened. "I won't stand it!"

Polly Linton smiled.

"Well, you needn't!" she said.

"Oh, Polly!" said Betty, with a frown, to remind her chum of the promise they had made to the junior mistress.

"I don't mind," shrugged Teresa, with an unpleasant smile. "I certainly shouldn't stay if I didn't want to." She looked round the room. "It's small; but the view from the window isn't bad at all," she said thoughtfully. "And with some respectable furniture instead of this cheap-jack stuff—"

"What's wrong with the furniture, you—you swank?" demanded Polly hotly.

But the only sign Teresa made that she had heard this outburst was a twitching at the corner of her lips.

"That isn't much of a clock," she murmured.

And she gave the study clock on the

mantelshelf a look that was very critical indeed.

"It's been good enough for us," said Polly huffily. "It isn't made of solid gold, if that's what you mean."

Teresa tossed her head, and crossed to the corner where Polly Linton's writing-desk stood. Once again she patted back the wayward wisp of hair as she stood thoughtfully gazing at the small piece of furniture.

It was not an expensive desk, but it had been a present, and Polly was quite fond of it.

Teresa kicked at it gently.

"Cheap wood," she commented. "Still, I can easily buy something to replace it. I've got a desk that cost twenty pounds, you know."

"You're welcome," said Polly, her eyes glittering angrily.

She looked at Betty, but that girl remained silent, not knowing quite what to say. She felt as indignant as Polly, but she knew that it would not do to upset this girl—if they were going to carry out the promise they had made Miss Redgrave.

Teresa was now wandering round the small study, eyeing and examining practically every article of furniture.

Presently, just as she was pulling a face at a picture frame, there came a rap at the study door.

Polly wheeled round, then clicked her teeth.

"Hallo! Here you are, Teresa!"

"Been looking for you everywhere. Someone said you were here."

It was the Grandways sisters. Cora and Judith were not at all friendly with the chums of Study No. 12, and it was rarely indeed that they ever paid Betty and Polly a visit. And now they were no more welcome than usual.

"What do you want?" asked Polly Linton brusquely.

Betty Barton's worried look deepened.

"Not you!" said Cora Grandways to Polly. "I say, Teresa, I hear they've put you in here. What a shame!"

Teresa nodded.

"Yes, it is, rather," she said. "But I can soon make this den look all right. Just wants twenty or thirty quid spent on it, you know, and all this rubbish chucked out."

Polly Linton swallowed something in her throat, and turned to her chum.

"Are we going to stand this—this insult?" she demanded. "This is asking too much." She turned to the Grandways sisters. "If we've got to put up with Teresa there's no reason why we should stand you!" she snapped.

Polly was getting cross, but neither the Grandways girls nor Teresa seemed perturbed. But Betty, she felt she was in a very awkward position indeed.

"I suppose I can have my friends here," said Teresa Tempest, with a sarcastic smile.

Polly crossed to the door.

"Then I'm going," she said. "I've had just about enough of this. Betty, are you coming?"

Betty Barton hesitated, drawn between a desire to go with Polly and a desire to keep the promise she had made. It would hardly be keeping her promise to go and leave Teresa alone with the Grandways!

"I—I—" stammered poor Betty, in confusion. "Polly, dear, remember—"

But Polly Linton was in no mood to listen to reason, and before Betty could say anything further, Polly had gone from the study, slamming the door behind her.

For a second after Polly's angry departure there was a silence in the study, broken at last by a jarring laugh from Teresa Tempest.

"Thank goodness she's gone!" said Teresa.

Betty gave her a reproving glance.

"Polly is my friend," she said. "I think—"

"Well, you can go, too!" sneered Teresa; and the Grandways sisters laughed and nodded.

How difficult it was for Betty to stay here after that—after she had practically been told she was not wanted. But Betty had promised Miss Redgrave she would look after Teresa. And, somehow, she felt that there might be some good in the girl; but she knew that if Teresa fortified her friendship with the Grandways sisters, that good would remain well hidden. So Betty, with an uncomfortable feeling, stayed.

"I dare say she'll like to hang round you!" sneered Cora Grandways. "All the people who jump up in the world like to mix with the upper classes!"

Teresa, deeming this a compliment, shrugged her shoulders.

"She can stay if she likes," she said. Teresa was not displeased to have a few

flatterers around her, and the more toadies she had the better she liked it.

With difficulty Betty controlled her temper, and stood awkwardly by. Teresa walked to the armchair, and after giving it a rigid dusting with her bright-coloured handkerchief, sat down. She crossed her leg, and arranged her dress carefully. Then she patted down that wilful wisp of hair into place once more.

How that affected action jarred on Betty—Betty, whose every act was natural and sincere! Yet her feelings for this new girl were of pity more than of contempt. But the Grandways sisters—this was just the sort of girl they admired.

"What I came to see you about," said Cora Grandways, "was to-morrow afternoon—it's Wednesday, and a half-holiday."

"Really," said Teresa, effecting a yawn.

Judith nodded, looking at her sister.

"And we thought you might like to come out somewhere. I was thinking of a trip on the sea—"

"Topping!" smiled Teresa. "We'll have a good feed first. You must take me to the best restaurant in the town. Of course, I shall stand exes!"

"Thanks!" said Cora, her eyes shining.

"By the way, talking of feeds," said Teresa, "my furniture will arrive this evening, and I propose to hold a study warming. What do you say to that—oh?"

"A study warming!" said Cora.

Teresa nodded.

"Oh, I always do things in style, you know! Best of everything. Pay top price, and you get the best things. Now, look at these stockings. Some girls would wear any cheap stuff—but not me!"

Betty was frowning now, for this girl's boasting was really unbearable.

Teresa was about to expound upon the style in which her mother kept house, when a bell sounded.

"That's dinner," said Betty.

Teresa rose languidly to her feet.

"Oh, dear!" she yawned. "What a life—lessons, meals, lessons! But what about that outing to-morrow, girls? I suppose it's fixed all right? You are coming?"

As Cora and Judith nodded, the new girl turned to Betty.

"You coming, too, kid?" she asked patronisingly, with a half-sneer. "I dare say you'd like to see how the upper classes really do things."

Betty flushed angrily. How she would have liked to tell Teresa what she thought of her! But, Betty could not forget the promise, and how worried Miss Redgrave was about her niece.

"I'll come," she muttered unhappily.

"Oh, just as you like," said Teresa casually; and she followed the Grandways sisters from the study.

Betty did not follow at once, but stood in the study alone, her arms hanging limply by her side. Her face was worried, and she was frowning deeply.

How heavily this task of looking after Teresa hung upon her! More and more clearly Betty saw the difficulties that beset her path.

Yet she was determined not to give in—determined to carry on with the task of looking after Teresa.

CHAPTER 8.

The Interrupted Banquet!

"THIS way, my man!"

The Fourth Form corridor was deserted, for it was a wonderfully bright and sunny evening, and most of the girls were on the playing fields. Naturally, on such an evening as this, there were a few girls in the studios. The sunshine and the green fields had offered attractions far too alluring to be resisted, and there was no one to see Teresa Tempest as she walked mincingly up the passage.

Behind her trudged Steggle's, the school porter, puffing and panting.

Steggle's was heavily laden, bowed down under the weight of a huge, iron-bound box trunk.

"It's a hard climb!" muttered Steggle's, as he staggered along.

"That's the study," said Teresa, as she pointed to Study No. 12.

Steggle's put the box down, and stood gasping.

"Oh, don't loaf about!" said Teresa crossly. "There are several more things to bring up—there's the mirror and the pictures, and the armchair, and the desk. You don't want to be all day!"

"Orl right!" muttered the porter. "But I ain't a moving man!"

Grumbling, he retraced his steps down the stairs, and went across the quadrangle to where a large pantechicon stood waiting at the gates.

This was Teresa's furniture arriving, and the one or two girls idling about in the quadrangle took a lively interest in the proceedings.

Cora and Judith, when they saw the furniture, guessed to whom it belonged, and came racing up to the Fourth Form passage.

"My word!" panted Cora. "I say, Teresa, is this your furniture?"

The new girl nodded, looking up from unpacking the large box. An ornate clock, gilded and expensive-looking, stood beside her, and there were two large cases, and one or two other ornaments.

These articles the Grandways sisters eyed admiringly and enviously.

"I say," murmured Cora, "what a lovely clock!"

"And those vases!" echoed her sister. "Aren't they splendid! Don't you think so, Cora?"

Teresa looked very pleased at the compliments.

"Yes, I rather fancy my taste," she said airily. "This study will look better when I've finished with it!"

"But there won't be room for all your things," said Cora, looking round the study, which now held as much as it could to look comfortable and not crowded.

"Oh, I shall throw this rubbish out! That charwoman's girl and her friend ought to be jolly pleased to have something decent in the room!" And Teresa looked round scornfully at the room's present contents.

"You're going to throw all these things out!" stammered Cora.

And Judith murmured:

"Oh, gracious!"

Truly, the new girl's methods were surprising. Cora and Judith had always reckoned that they had plenty of cheek, but this—

"Yes; better clear out this stuff first, I suppose," said Teresa thoughtfully. "Help me with this desk."

She laid hands on the desk, and Cora, with a meaning look at Judith, lent a hand.

One after another Betty and Polly's things were put into a spare room. It was lucky for Teresa that Polly was not there then, or there might well have been a scene!

"Now," said Teresa, when the study was at last bare. She looked round the room,

which was empty now even of the carpet and curtains. "I think we can begin."

The passage being deserted, they had time to work uninterrupted. Steggles had brought everything up now, and the passage was looking more like a furniture depository than anything else.

Teresa, with an air that was lordly and patronising, handed the porter a pound note.

"That's all right!" she said, with a wave of the hand. And Cora and Judith gasped. Steggles looked at the note, and then at the new girl. He was used to tips, and had often received some quite substantial ones. But a pound note! He gazed at it for one second more, and then hurried off, lest the new girl should change her mind.

"First the carpet," said the new girl.

And then they set to work. But Teresa saw to it that the hard work was done by Cora and Judith. While they placed the carpet down and hung the curtains, she stood by, one hand on her hip, the other patting back into place the wilful wisp of hair that seemed to worry her.

Then the curtains went up. And Cora and Judith did not seem to mind at all that it was they who did all the work while Teresa supervised. They were only too pleased to do anything to keep in this new girl's good books.

And as they arranged every article, Cora and Judith made fawning, complimentary remarks.

"And now," said Teresa, when the study was complete, "will one of you run off to the shops and order the food?"

"I will," said Judith. "I say, this does look topping, you know! That clock and the mirror—they must have cost an awful lot!"

"Pounds," nodded Teresa. "But what does money matter to girls like us? And don't spare a penny when you order the food, you know. I'm paying. Get a lot of things. The best of everything, you know."

"I know," nodded Judith. "I'll put it down to your account. Coming, Cora?"

And the two sisters, very excited, hurried off. While they were gone, Teresa stood in front of the mirror admiring herself. She took out her powder-puff, and dabbed her nose with it. When she was satisfied, she lounged into the expensively upholstered

armchair, with which she had replaced Betty and Polly's things.

Soon Cora and Judith returned, their arms full, with the intimation that the school page was following with the rest of what they had ordered.

The Grandways sisters had taken the new girl at her word, and there was certainly the best of everything.

After they had washed they commenced to set the table, whilst Teresa, from the armchair, once more supervised. It was surprising how readily the two Grandways sisters obeyed her, and how meekly, too.

"Now bring in all the girls you can find," said Teresa. "All in the Form, you know; there's enough to go round."

And once again Cora and Judith acted at the new girl's bidding.

Teresa, when they were gone, put on her jewellery. She had taken it off during lessons, but now she felt safe in wearing it again.

When the guests began to arrive, talking excitedly, Teresa was sitting in the chair again.

There were many girls who came, despite the fact that Teresa was not popular. The temptation of a good spread had softened their hearts, and, as many of them said, "she might be all right."

"Good-evening," said Teresa, to Ella Elgood, the first to arrive. "Welcome! Take a seat. The others won't be long. What do you think of the room?"

Ella looked round wonderingly. The change was certainly surprising. She would have said something, but now the others were arriving in their twos and threes.

Soon there were quite a dozen chattering girls in the room, all looking in surprise at the gold clock, the mirror, the large, showy vases, and the well-filled table.

"All here?" asked Teresa. The study was crammed, and it was indeed surprising how all these girls had managed to crowd into the room. "Mind that vase there; it cost a lot of money! I don't want it broken!"

Grace Garfield, who had really been dangerously near upsetting the gaudy ornament, shifted to one side.

Paula Creel sniffed slightly. She had come with Tess Trelawney and Madge Minden and Trixie Hope. But none of them were feeling very comfortable.

"Betty Barton and Polly Linton aren't

here yet," said Norah Nugent. She did not say that Betty was even then trying to persuade Polly Linton to put on an appearance. Polly was very cross with Teresa, and she did not in the least want to appear at this "function," as she called it. And Betty was explaining to her chum that it would be well to give Teresa a second chance—that to cut her at the outset would not help matters.

"Oh, we can't wait for them," said Cora. "I'm hungry."

"Hear, hear!" said many others.

"Right-oh, then!" said Teresa languidly, rising. She moved to the head of the table. "Sorry you can't sit down, all of you," she said. "Move that armchair to the head of the table here, somebody, will you?"

In silence the armchair was moved.

"Ladies," said Teresa, on her feet, when the others had seated themselves as best they could, some on the window ledge, others on the desk and coal scuttle. "I have stood you all this spread as a study warmer. At least, that's what the mater calls it when she has her friends to the country house. We do a lot of entertainin' at home, y'know. I've got used to it, having titled people at our functions, y'know."

Silence greeted this speech, most of the girls feeling uncomfortable. Paula Creel's lips curled. Paula was a well-bred girl, and moved in the highest society. But Paula never swanked like this.

"The food's not much," said Teresa lightly. "I spent all I could, though, and there should be plenty to go round. Finish it up, you know. If you can't, take it away with you."

She looked round as though expecting a slight cheer. But this time the silence seemed more ominous than before, and the atmosphere was strained.

"We—we're going to have a good time," said Teresa, just a little more hesitant now. "Be careful, though; don't knock anything over. Oh, do mind that vase, girl! And, I say, that desk cost pounds and pounds, so do be careful!"

Grace Garfield looked at the vase as though she would eat it, then moved further away. All the girls looked ill at ease.

"More like a museum than a study!" sniffed Tess Trelawney. "I wonder what Betty will say to this?"

Tess Trelawney was feeling annoyed,

and, when she was feeling annoyed, Tess became a trifle sarcastic.

"I say, mind that carpet, Madge," she said. "That cost a hundred pounds!"

Madge Minden grinned, saw the joke, and passed it on.

"I say, Trixie," she frowned, "don't knock down that picture. It was probably given to Teresa by the Duke of Mud-splash!"

But Teresa did not see the humour of this remark, although several girls giggled.

"Now settle down, and eat all you can," said Teresa, looking round, ignoring the remarks that were being passed. "Eat just what you like. I bought it for you to eat."

Just then the door opened a fraction. The girls who were gathered round it squeezed aside.

"No room," said Madge Minden.

"Open this door!"

"Bai Jove!" cried Paula Creel. "It's Polly Linton!"

Polly, with a face that was red and angry, squeezed into the room, followed by Betty.

"A spread!" she exclaimed. "I—"

Polly broke off, and gazed round the room. Her brow became angry and thunderous, and Betty could not help an exclamation of astonishment.

"What's happened?" cried Polly. "Where's our clock?"

"And the curtains!" gasped Betty.

Polly looked searchingly round the room. Then she turned to Teresa Tempest with clenched hands.

"This is your doing, I suppose?" she said bitterly. "What have you done with our things?"

Teresa laughed.

"You mean those cheap-jack things? That awful clock and the shabby carpet? I've thrown them into the spare room!"

Polly choked.

"You've thrown out our things!" she shouted.

"Why, you— It's our study, and you've—"

Words failed Polly, and she could only glare round the study, looking from one girl to the other. All the guests seemed to be feeling awkward and ill at ease.

"Well, you couldn't expect me to hold a party with those curtains and that carpet!" sneered Teresa.

Polly Linton's face went as white as a sheet, and she pushed past one or two girls,

and reached the vase of which Teresa was so proud.

"Come on, Betty," she cried. "We won't stand this. Clear this stuff out of here."

The vase in hand, Polly made for the door.

Teresa Tempest rose to her feet amidst a dead silence.

"Stop!" she cried angrily. "Girl, put that vase back!"

Polly did not stop, but went to the door. Then she returned for the clock. That was enough for Teresa. She pushed past the silent girls, and reached Polly.

She clutched that girl's arm whilst Betty stood by.

"Put that clock back!" she cried angrily. Polly shrugged her shoulders.

"It's your fault, Teresa," said Betty. "You really shouldn't have moved our things."

But Teresa paid no heed to Betty; she rushed into the passage after Polly, who had placed the clock on the floor.

Teresa snatched up the clock, and Polly Linton put her hands on it. The two girls glared at one another angrily.

Then Teresa completely lost her temper. She tugged and tugged at the clock, and Polly released it suddenly. Back flew Teresa as from a catapult, falling heavily to the floor.

Crash!

A splinter of glass and a buzz told that the clock face had broken, and that the works of the clock had been upset.

"Oh, you cat!" cried Teresa, in almost a shriek.

She sprang at Polly, and that girl drew back.

Like the crack of a pistol that sound rang through the corridor as Teresa's hand, sweeping forward, met Polly Linton's cheek.

With a sharp cry of pain, Polly drew back, her hand to her cheek. And from the girls crowded in the doorway there were cries of surprise and anger.

"You spiteful thing, Teresa!" said Tess Trelawney.

But then the girls in the doorway fell silent, for a shadow had darkened the passage, the figure of a mistress.

"Miss Redgrave!" breathed Ella Elgood. The junior mistress came forward, a pained look on her face.

"Polly! Teresa!" she exclaimed. "What is the meaning of this?"

"Meaning!" fumed Teresa. "This girl, she has ruined my clock, which cost pounds and pounds!"

Miss Redgrave frowned, and looked at the fallen clock.

"Oh, Polly!" she rebuked sadly. "You should not have done that. You know——" She broke off and sighed.

Polly Linton said nothing. She was not a sneak.

"Punish her, aunt!" shouted the angry Teresa. "You can see what she has done——"

"Sneak!" hissed the girls in the doorway.

Miss Redgrave looked troubled.

"Oh, you foolish girls!" she sighed. "Why must you always quarrel like this? I have no doubt you are as much to blame as Polly, Teresa. You will both write fifty lines of Latin——"

"I won't!" shouted the new girl. "It isn't fair——"

"S-s-s-s-s-s-s-s!"

"Teresa!" pleaded Betty, taking the new girl's arm. "Calm yourself!"

Teresa shook Betty's arm off angrily, and made as though to follow her aunt, who had turned and was now walking off down the passage.

"No, you don't," said Madge Minden. "You'll stay here. It was like your cheek to turn Polly's and Betty's things out of the study. We quite thought your stuff had been put in with their permission."

"I vote we help Polly and Betty put their things back," said Tess Trelawney.

And the others gave nods of approval. Then, while Teresa stood helplessly by, gesticulating and shouting, the Fourth-Formers moved all her things out of Study No. 12, piling them in a heap in the passage.

One by one Betty's and Polly's things were replaced, until Study No. 12 looked its old self again.

"I shall complain!" shouted Teresa. "I haven't finished yet!"

But Polly Linton slammed the door of Study No. 12 in her face. The other girls, laughing at Teresa's well-deserved discomfiture, went into their own studies and shut the doors.

And Teresa was left alone in all her glory with the banquet and the expensive furniture heaped in the passage.

"Better move them into the empty study," said Cora Grandways wisely.

And Teresa at length saw that that was all she could do. So all the gorgeous furniture was shifted into the dusty, empty study at the other end of the passage.

And the rest of that evening Teresa spent with the Grandways sisters in their study. She occupied the best chair, and scowled all the evening.

Teresa Tempest's plumes had been ruffled. But Betty in Study No. 12 could not help thinking how little she had done to help Teresa to change her ways; and Polly, in her outspoken way, had only made matters worse instead of better.

CHAPTER 9.

A Mean Trick.

BETTY BARTON closed the door of Miss Redgrave's study behind her gently. Betty's face was worried, for she had had a long talk with the mistress, and the subject of their conversation had been Teresa Tempest.

The mistress' worried look had made Betty more than ever determined to look after Teresa.

If only Teresa could be lured away from the Grandways, Betty was thinking, how much better it would be. For if there were none to applaud her and egg her on, the girl might turn over a new leaf.

But how could she be expected to alter when her every word and action was praised and admired by the two Grandways sisters?

So now Betty made her way to the Fourth Form passage. Polly Linton, a hockey stick under her arm, was coming downstairs.

"Coming along?" said Polly.

Betty looked up, startled out of her reverie.

"Coming? Where?" she asked.

Polly Linton looked at her chum keenly.

"Why, surely you haven't forgotten the hockey practice?" asked Polly, in amazement, for Betty was usually so keen on sports.

"No," stammered Betty, in confusion. "I haven't forgotten. But, Polly, would you mind very much if I didn't play this afternoon?"

"Didn't play!" exclaimed Polly. "But, my goodness, Betty, I thought you were so keen!"

"I am," said Betty. "But you know I've promised to look after Teresa, Polly. And I simply can't let her go out alone with the Grandways this afternoon."

Polly Linton frowned.

"Look here, Betty," she said firmly, "when Miss Redgrave asked us to look after Teresa, she couldn't have meant us to keep an eye on her every minute of the day, and to forfeit our own pleasures!"

"Perhaps not," said Betty quietly. "But—but I feel that I must stay with Teresa this afternoon."

Polly shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, all right," said Polly. "Please yourself, Betty!"

And Polly went off to her hockey practice, greatly disappointed that Betty was not to accompany her.

Betty, no happier than Polly, went along to the Grandways study, and tapped on the door.

"Come in!" called out Cora. Betty entered. She looked round the study, and her quick eyes noted the change in the furnishing. Teresa Tempest had apparently made the study her permanent abode, and now most of the furniture in it was hers.

"Hallo!" sneered Judith. "What do you want?"

Teresa looked up.

"Oh, that's the kid we asked to come with us, y'know," she said.

Cora and Judith nodded. They could see how displeasing the new girl's patronising manner was to Betty, and they began to see what fun they could get by humiliating the captain of the Fourth if she came with them.

Of the reason for this sudden friendliness on Betty's part the Grandways sisters knew nothing, and presumed that she wanted to "get on the right side of" Teresa. And that is just what Teresa herself thought.

"We've decided to go on the sea," said Teresa. "It will be expensive, but I am paying, so that will be all right." She looked critically as Betty nodded. "I suppose you've not got a better dress than that?" she said, frowning. "We'll have to get dinner out somewhere, y'know."

"This dress is all right," said Betty, looking the girl straight in the eye. Betty knew quite well that Teresa was taunting her for the amusement of the Grandways, and Betty was sure now that taunting was all

she would get from this afternoon adventure.

As yet it was quite early, and a trip on the sea in such weather as this would indeed be welcome.

"What time shall we return?" asked Cora, looking at Teresa. "We can probably get late passes if we say that we are going on the sea."

"Late passes!" exclaimed Teresa. "My word, that's the idea, of course. Run off and get them!"

Cora frowned a bit at this peremptory order, but she only hesitated a second, then ran off. In Cora's unscrupulous mind a scheme was evolving, and Betty, had she known it, would have been even less happy than she was now.

But she remained in ignorance of Cora's scheme, and when that girl returned a few minutes later with the passes, Betty was not suspicious. But of that scheme she was to learn later, to her cost.

"Now," said Teresa. "We've nothing to pack. It's a nuisance, of course, that we have to go in these drill dresses and school hats—"

"But it can't be helped," shrugged Cora. "Still, you could take your orange frock with you," she suggested.

Betty Barton shook her head.

"Don't you do anything so silly," she urged Teresa. "You will only get into trouble again."

"Pooh! What do I care?" answered the vain girl. But, all the same, she did not put on the orange frock.

And when they reached the school gates, Teresa's dress differed not from the others, save that it had an expensive look. Somehow, everything about Teresa seemed to speak of money.

When they were out of sight of the school, however, the new girl opened her handbag and drew from it two brooches, two bracelets, a gold bangle, her gold wristlet-watch, and the diamond pendant she had worn on her first visit to the school.

"There might be a monitress in the village," warned Betty. "I shouldn't wear that jewellery."

"Oh, mind your own business!" snapped Teresa. "It's only jealousy. What a worry you are with your 'don't do this!' and 'don't do that!' Are you paying for this jaunt, or am I?"

And to that Betty made no reply. All the way down to the sea the others talked

amongst themselves, seeming to ignore Betty, and she felt half inclined to turn back. But she remembered her promise to Miss Redgrave, and she set her lips.

"Get the boat from old Thompson," said Cora. "Then go into Geltham—that's a seaside place—for dinner."

"Topping!" nodded Teresa. "And you say we can get a motor-boat?"

Cora nodded.

"This way," she said.

They were right by the sea now, and Cora, who knew the small village well, went straight to the house of the only man there who owned a motor-boat.

"Can we drive it ourselves?" asked Cora, when they had settled the terms for hiring.

"Better let the man drive," whispered Betty to Teresa. "We don't want any accidents."

Teresa tossed her head.

"I can drive a motor-boat as well as anyone," she said. "I've driven one before."

But Mr. Thompson was not quite so sure. Yet at the sight of a five-pound note that Teresa dangled entrancingly, he acquiesced, stipulating first that he would see her get it under control.

But when they reached the boat, Teresa certainly showed she knew something about motor-boats. And Betty knew that it was useless for her to protest.

The man knew the Grandways, and knew the school. He realised, moreover, that a girl who could afford to tip five pounds could afford to pay for a damaged motor-boat, should an accident occur. And the thought consoled him.

"This is great!" said Cora, as the boat shot through the water at a tremendous speed.

For miles they went, and Cora laughingly suggested that they might well go to America.

But although this suggestion was not adopted, they went a good distance. Geltham was many miles along the coast, but in the fast moving motor-launch it took comparatively no time.

It was only when they pulled up in Geltham that they realised how time had flown.

"We shan't have time for something to eat," said Betty, in relief. "We had better go back at once!"

"Go back!" cried Teresa. "We're going to have a meal of some sort."

"But we shall be late," protested Betty.

"We've late passes," said Cora. "Don't be a prig, Betty Barton. You'll get a dinner for nothing, so what are you grumbling about?"

"But it will only get Teresa into trouble," exclaimed Betty.

"I can look after myself, thank you!" snapped Teresa. "Here's an hotel. Come on, Cora!"

And Cora, nothing loth, went with Judith at her side. Betty hesitated for a second, then followed.

How the people stared at the four school-girls as they entered the hotel lounge! It was an unusual sight to see school-girls in Geltham, for it was out of bounds for Morcove girls.

Betty clutched Teresa's sleeve.

"Teresa," she pleaded, "don't be silly. We mustn't come here. This town is out of bounds really!"

"Pooh! What does that matter?" laughed Teresa. "I'm going to have dinner. Mamma always takes me to hotels for dinner."

And Betty did not know quite what to say. She wished she could have gone back then. But there was no way back for her. The trains did not run straight from Morcove to here; the railway route back was roundabout, and would not land her back at the school before very late at night.

So Betty followed the others into the large hall lined with tables. The four girls sat down at a table, and the waiter approached.

"Four dinners, please," said Teresa. "On one bill."

"No, no," said Betty. "I'll pay—"

Teresa shook her head, and tapped the table with her hand so that her bracelets jingled.

"This is my dinner," she said loftily. "One bill, waiter."

And what a dinner they had! Seven excellent courses. Betty could not finish hers—she did not feel hungry enough. But the others ate it, to make out that they were used to this sort of meal.

"What about cigarettes?" asked the new girl, as coffee arrived.

Judith and Cora looked at one another doubtfully.

"Teresa!" exclaimed Betty. "Don't be silly! Someone might come in. Besides, you won't enjoy it."

Teresa curled her lip.

"Enjoy it!" she laughed. "What's a cigarette?"

Betty was getting desperate. She simply could not let this girl smoke! And she knew that Teresa was only showing off to Cora and Judith and anyone else who might be near!

But an idea came into Betty's head.

"I say!" she cried, looking round. "Oh, Cora! Judith, look! Who was that? Miss Massingham?"

The ruse succeeded. Cora and Judith's bravado disappeared, and even Teresa looked alarmed.

"M-miss M-Massingham!" stammered Cora. "I say! Suppose she saw us?"

Judith was looking even more agitated than her sister.

"Let's get out of here," she murmured. "Get the bill, Teresa. It's no good asking for trouble!"

Teresa was at first inclined to argue, but, with a shrug of the shoulders, indicative that she at least didn't care if she were seen, she took the bill.

And how relieved they all were when at last they were back in the launch.

"It was a spiffing feed," laughed Cora, and Judith nodded approval.

"Yes, I reckoned I did you well," nodded Teresa. "By the way, I bought this." She held up a large two-pound box of chocolates. "Pass it round."

The chocolates were munched, but Cora and Judith did not hand the box to Betty. Betty did not mind in the least. She was too pleased to think how they had got out of the hotel to worry about anything else.

Of course, she had not seen Miss Massingham—she had merely asked Cora if she had seen her. Cora and Judith, fortunately for Betty's scheme, had jumped to conclusions.

During the home journey, Cora and Judith and Teresa muttered amongst themselves, and appeared to have some joke. As they looked at her Betty knew she had something to do with their laughter. But what, she couldn't say.

Teresa was driving the motor-launch helter-skelter over the water, and was quite a long distance from the shore. Time and time again Betty implored her to draw in to the shore, for it was getting late, as Betty knew.

But no, Teresa would not return till she thought fit, and by the time they reached the shore it was a long way past calling-over time.

Betty started to hurry back to the school!

"We shall be late!" she cried.

Cora laughed.

"You will," she said.

Betty stared.

"Why not you?" she asked.

"We've got late passes," sniggered Cora, "till half-past nine. You haven't."

Betty stopped short.

"I—I haven't!" she stammered. "I thought you'd got passes for all of us, ordinary passes for nine o'clock."

Cora shook her head.

"That's the joke," she laughed. "I only got three."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grandways sisters and Teresa burst into a roar of laughter at Betty's flaming face, while Betty stood stock still, astonished and surprised at Cora's mean trick.

"Oh, Cora, how mean!" said Betty. "You knew that I was coming. You said you had got passes!"

Cora shrugged her shoulders.

"If you will push yourself on people you must expect what you get!" she exclaimed.

"So that's why you kept the boat out so late!" exclaimed Betty angrily.

Teresa Tempest nodded.

"Just a little joke," she said. "You've had a good feed, though, so why grumble?"

And Betty, as she wandered back to school, was very miserable indeed.

The first person she met on entering the school was the captain of Morcove.

"Betty, Miss Massingham wants you," said Ethel Courtway.

Very red in the face, Betty ran off to Miss Massingham's room.

"Well?" said the mistress, when she entered. "Where have you been, Betty, till this time?"

Betty flushed.

"I—I've been out in a motor-boat," she stammered.

Miss Massingham thumped the table.

"You have been at this school long enough now to know, Betty, that the time for you to return is at call-over, unless, of course, you have a late pass. You had not one—I ascertained that."

"No, Miss Massingham. I—I thought I had, though."

Miss Massingham raised her eyebrows.

"Thought!" she said scornfully. "How could you think such a thing?" Then, as Betty did not reply, she went on: "This

seems to me, Betty, a lame excuse. You, as captain of the Form, should set an example by conforming with all the school regulations. What must this new girl, Teresa Tempest, think of regulations when you set such an example?"

Poor Betty shifted uncomfortably. She said nothing about the Grandways and Teresa Tempest, though; and she thought herself fortunate indeed when at last she left the mistress' study with only two hundred lines to write.

But she explained it all to Polly, and, in the dormitory that night, Polly, like the loyal chum she was, went for Teresa and the Grandways.

"You three," said Polly scornfully, "ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourselves! What a mean trick to play! You simply tried to get Betty into disgrace!"

"Hear, hear!" cried Madge Minden.

"Awfully mean!" said Tess Trelawney.

And Paula chimed in:

"Yes, wather!"

"Well," snapped Teresa sulkily, "suppose it was so? She hung round us. After all, she got a boat ride and a hotel dinner out of it. Ask her that. I've spent a couple of quid on her this evening."

And Polly gave it up. But several girls cast curious glances in Betty's direction, wondering if she really were toadying up to the new girl, as Teresa suggested.

They did not know, as Polly did, the promise that Betty had made.

CHAPTER 10.

Betty Takes the Blame.

"OH, what a beautiful comb, Teresa!" Judith Grandways picked up a diamond back-comb and admired it with shining eyes. Like most of Teresa's things, it was expensive and ornate.

"Glad you like it," sighed Teresa, sitting up in bed. She was not an early riser, and seemed heedless of the fact that rising-bell had sounded some few moments before.

Most of the other Fourth-Formers were dressing, and now a splashing sound indicated that many were washing.

Very languidly, watched by a dozen pairs of eyes, Teresa Tempest arose and yawned.

Judith Grandways was still admiring the comb, and her sister Cora was looking over her shoulder.

"Pretty expensive?" asked Cora.

"Expensive!" said Teresa, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "Oh, so-so, you know! I never can remember the prices of things. That comb probably cost a fiver!"

From other girls in the dormitory came scornful sniffs at this swanky remark. Although they had become accustomed to the new girl's swank, they could not yet tolerate it.

"What's a fiver matter? Pooh!" exclaimed Polly Linton, with tilted nose.

Betty Barton caught her chum's arm.

"Don't, Polly," she pleaded. "Leave her alone. You can do no good by mimicking her, dear. You'll only rouse her temper, and, goodness knows, we don't want any more scenes."

Polly laughed.

"Do her good to be chipped a bit," she answered. And Polly, not heeding her chum's advice, commenced to "make-up."

"That's the style!" laughed Ella Ellgood. "Here's a ring, Polly."

"And here's a bracelet," smiled Madge Minden, throwing across a slave bangle of her own.

The Fourth-Formers caught on to the idea rapidly. And the girls began to take from their lockers the one or two pieces of "quiet," unostentatious jewellery they possessed.

Teresa Tempest did not turn her head. She may have realised that there was some jape afoot; if so, she kept her suspicions from the eyes of the girls. Teresa was chatting with Cora and Judith Grandways.

Cora Grandways, out of the corner of her eye, caught sight of Polly Linton, but Cora said nothing.

To tell the truth, Cora was not displeased to see Polly Linton making fun of the new girl. Although, in a way, Cora admired Teresa, yet she knew that the new girl was "showing off." It rather amused Cora to play this double part, toadying to the girl's face, but ready to laugh at her behind her back.

Polly Linton now was ready. Her hair was "up," with a string of pearls slung across the knot she had tied at the back. On her arm there were quite half a dozen bracelets.

Her face was white, made so by the application of some boracic powder, a tin of which lay on her washstand. Her lips were a bright scarlet—that colour being due to tooth paste applied with strenuous rubbing of a tooth brush.

"Haw, haw!" she said. "Not bad bracelets, what! Only cost a fiver or so—eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What price that back-comb?" laughed Tess Trelawney.

"Aw, a fiver, y'know—nothin' under a fiver. Wear them a week, then give 'em to the servants, what! We keep ten servants! And a car—I mean six cars!"

Teresa Tempest wheeled round, her hands clenched, her eyes flashing. Cora and Judith Grandways were behind her, and they hid their faces with their hands, endeavouring to hide their grins.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Teresa. "Look here—"

Polly Linton pretended to look down at her from an immense height.

"Eh, did you speak?" she asked. "Get away, girl!"

"What a beautiful dress!" cooed Grace Garfield.

"And what fine bracelets!" murmured Ella Elgood.

"Oh, only a fiver!" said Polly, trying hard not to laugh.

Teresa wheeled on her two companions, and Cora and Judith resumed their normal expressions with difficulty.

"Don't take any notice of her!" urged Cora.

"The impertinence!" cried Teresa, tossing her head. "I'm not going to stand this!"

"I shouldn't!" said Judith, with difficulty.

"No fear!" supplemented Cora.

"Blessed cheek, what!" mimicked Polly Linton. "Don't suppose any of you jealous girls have a fiver amongst you!"

Teresa stamped her foot.

"Will you stop it?" she cried. "I won't be persecuted like this! I shall ask my aunt to punish you!"

"I shall ask auntie to punish you, so there!" mimicked Polly.

And from the other Fourth-Formers came a gust of uncontrolled laughter.

It was too much for Teresa. She made a rush for Polly, and that girl dodged round Betty Barton, who was standing, a worried spectator of the scene.

The other girls were simply doubled up with laughter.

"Teresa!" implored Betty. "Do calm yourself. Polly, stop, dear, please!"

But the voice of poor Betty was unheeded. As Teresa dashed round the cap-

tain of the Fourth Form, brushing her aside, Polly Linton dodged the other way.

Teresa's temper was no longer under any sort of control. She grabbed at the nearest weapon, Betty Barton's washing-basin, and, before anyone could stop her, hurled the contents straight at Polly Linton.

Just in time that girl dodged aside, and—

Swoosh!

The water splashed on to the floor.

"Oh!"

That general exclamation came from the whole Form, and for a second there was no movement.

"I say," breathed Madge Minden at last, "that's a bit thick!"

"You spiteful thing!" cried Polly Linton. "Can't you stand a joke?"

The new girl's eyes flashed.

"If that's your idea of a joke, I cannot," she snapped.

"Then it's time you learned to!" answered Tess Trelawney. "Make her clear that water up, Betty."

"Hear, hear!" came a dozen voices.

"On your knees, Teresa!" cried Dolly Delane.

Teresa shrugged her shoulders, and marched across the dormitory, but she had not gone many paces before several hands were placed on her shoulders.

She wheeled round savagely, and knocked the hands away.

"Leave me alone!" she snapped.

Polly Linton stepped forward. Polly was angry now, very angry. It was not usual for cheerful, happy-go-lucky Polly to lose her temper, but now it was easy to see that she was enraged.

"You'll clear up that water, Teresa Tempest!" she said steadily. "You made the mess, and you shall clear it up!"

All eyes were upon the new girl now. The air in the dormitory was electric.

Polly Linton and Teresa Tempest faced one another. The look on the faces of both was stubborn and angry. Yet it was obvious that one of the two must give in.

Now the whole Form gathered in a group round the two girls.

"You will clear that water up!" said Polly Linton, pointing to the floor.

"I won't!" said Teresa, with a toss of the head, patting into place a wilful wave of hair. "Who are you that you should order me about?"

Polly Linton shrugged her shoulders, and turned to Betty.

"Betty," she said, in quick tones, "you are captain of the Form. Make Teresa wipe up that water. If she doesn't do it, report her."

"Report! What do I care!" retorted the new girl.

All eyes were upon Betty Barton now. Betty was the captain, and it was to her that the girls looked for leadership. They all felt that in this matter she should take a firm stand. It would not do to give way to Teresa.

But Betty's face wore a worried look. She did not reply at once, although she could feel the eyes of the other girls upon her.

For Betty was thinking of the promise she had made to Miss Redgrave, the popular junior mistress—a promise that she would look after Teresa. Only Polly of them all new of that promise, and Polly—her way of looking after the new girl did not seem to be effective.

But Betty's word was her bond. Once she had made a promise she would stand by it, whatever unforeseen difficulties should cross her path.

"Order her!" said Polly, less firmly now, wondering what was in her chum's mind. And the other girls, they were looking puzzled, too. Had any of them been captain of the Form, there would have been no hesitation about giving that order.

Betty turned pink.

"Don't you think you'd better clear it up, Teresa?" she said miserably.

Teresa sniffed. She knew that she could refuse with unconcern.

"Think so! I don't!" she retorted. "I'm not a skivvy! That's more in your line—your mother was a charwoman, wasn't she? You clear it up. I'll give you sixpence to do it."

"I say, Betty, you can't stand that!" said Polly.

But Betty Barton shook her head.

"You don't understand, Polly," she said. "It's no good ordering her—"

"No good at all. I'm glad you realise that much," laughed Teresa. "I'm going down."

And she turned away to the door. There was none to stop her. All the girls were too dumbfounded at Betty's unwillingness to punish the girl to say anything.

Then, even whilst the Fourth-Formers watched, Betty Barton did an amazing thing. She opened her locker, took from it an old skirt, and dropped to her knees.

With burning cheeks she commenced to mop up the water, which was rapidly soaking into the carpet.

"Mum—mum—my word!" breathed Polly Linton. "Betty—I say, Betty dear—"

Every face there expressed wonderment. Even Cora and Judith Grandways were surprised. There was an exception, however. That exception was Teresa Tempest.

The new girl turned back and laughed.

"The old ways and habits are too strong to resist," she sneered at Betty. "It's your job, and you can't help doing it. There's the sixpence I promised! And if you're very good, I'll take you out with me again."

Polly Linton clenched her hand till the knuckles showed white.

"Betty!" she cried hoarsely. "Betty! You can't take that lying down! If you won't go for her, let me!"

And Polly would have carried out her threat, but at that moment the door of the Fourth Form dormitory opened.

A face peered in, and from the Fourth-Formers gathered round the kneeling Betty came a gasp of dismay.

"Oh!"

"Miss Massingham!"

With frowning brow the mistress of the Fourth Form came into the dormitory. Past Teresa Tempest she brushed, and that girl, prepared for an angry scene, shrugged her shoulders and raised her head proudly.

"What is the meaning of this?" exclaimed the mistress. "You are late for breakfast, Betty Barton, you are captain of the Form, you— Goodness, girl! Why, whatever—"

Miss Massingham broke off, and stared—simply stared—at the captain of the Fourth Form in amazement, whilst Betty, red with dismay, looked up at the mistress.

"This—this water!" exclaimed Miss Massingham. "Who has spilt this?"

There was silence, and Polly Linton looked meaningfully at Teresa, as if telling that girl to confess. But Teresa kept silent.

"There—there has been an accident," said Betty.

Miss Massingham's lip curled.

"An accident!" she scoffed. "Gross carelessness! Your brain is empty. I take it

that this water is from your basin, Betty Barton?"

Betty nodded, and the other girls simply opened their eyes in amazement. One or two turned to Teresa, and nodded and frowned at her. But Teresa did not heed.

"It is!" said Miss Massingham. "Then, Betty, you will take fifty lines! Only last night I had to rebuke you for some offence. If you continue to behave in this strain, it seems to me the Fourth Form had better make preparations to elect another captain."

There were gasps then from the Fourth-Formers, and Betty went quite red.

Polly Linton opened her mouth to speak. She felt she could not stand by and hear her chum blamed for a deed for which she was quite guiltless. It was on the tip of her tongue to tell about Teresa's share in the accident. But she could not sneak, for that would be quite as bad as Teresa's silence.

"I—I had something to do with it, Miss Massingham," said Polly. "It was really my fault—"

Then, before Miss Massingham could reply to that, Teresa Tempest, the cynosure of all eyes, came forward proudly.

The new girl's mind worked quickly. She had seen the look the girls were giving her, and, contemptuous though she was of authority and law and order generally, she did not quite want to be treated as an outcast by the whole Form.

So she decided to give herself up to justice—and, of course, make the most of it.

"I did it!" she said.

"You!" stammered Miss Massingham, in bewilderment. She looked from Betty to Polly, then to Teresa.

"Yes," said the new girl, patting the wilful wisp of hair into place. "But I don't see that it's done much harm."

At this insolent speech the Fourth-Formers simply gasped. They had never heard a mistress addressed quite in this way before.

"Dud—dud—done much harm!" stuttered the mistress, quite staggered. "Oh!"

"It's only a cheap carpet!" said Teresa, rubbing the floor covering with her dainty shoe. "I'll buy another if you think this is spoilt!"

"My word!"

"Good gracious!"

Miss Massingham drew herself erect. Her

eyes glittered, and she gripped Teresa tightly by the arm.

"You'll pay for the carpet?" she said, through her teeth. "Girl! How dare you speak to me like that! How dare you offer to pay for a carpet! You will write me two hundred lines!"

Teresa was just a little shaken from her calm attitude of contempt.

"But—but if I pay for the damage, it's all right," she said. She seemed genuinely surprised that that method would not entirely finish the whole affair.

"I'll make it ten quid, then you can let the matter drop," she said.

Miss Massingham clutched the girl's arm tighter until Teresa gave a wince of pain. Then Miss Massingham's hand rose and fell three times.

Slap! Slap! Slap!

Teresa, with a yell of pain, went staggering back on to the bedstead, and Miss Massingham whisked to the door. There she stopped, and turned.

"That water must be mopped up!" she said grimly, then slammed the door close after her.

"Oh, oh, oh!" moaned Teresa.

"Serve you right!" said Polly Linton.

"I'd have slapped you myself if I'd been Miss Massingham!" said Madge Minden. "The cheek of the girl!" said Tess Trelawney.

Teresa Tempest turned upon Betty Barton.

"It's your fault!" she cried, tears of rage commencing to trickle down her cheek. "If you hadn't have fooled about this wouldn't have happened!"

Betty Barton, surprised and dismayed, staggered back, and from the Fourth-Formers came ejaculations of surprise.

"Well, I'm blessed!" cried Polly Linton. "Did you hear that, girls? After Betty tried to shield her, too!"

"For sheer ingratitude she takes the cake!" exclaimed Dolly Delane.

Tess Trelawney shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, come away! I'm fed-up with her!" she cried.

And the others, with a backward glance at Teresa, shrugged their shoulders and followed Tess Trelawney down to breakfast.

Betty was the last to leave. She stayed to give the ill-tempered Teresa a consoling glance.

Teresa jumped up and stamped her foot at Betty angrily several times.

"It's your fault!" she cried.

"But—but, Teresa——" pleaded Betty.

Teresa Tempest brushed past her, and went from the dormitory, slamming the door in Betty's face.

With a hopeless sigh, the captain of the Fourth Form went from the dormitory, none the less determined, however, to maintain her promise and stand by Teresa, to guide that girl through the difficult trials that lay ahead of her.

CHAPTER 11.

Teresa's Scheme.

TAP!

Miss Redgrave, the junior mistress—and perhaps the most popular one—looked up from the book she was reading as that tap came at her study door.

Breakfast was almost due, but there was some short time yet to wait.

The mistress's brow was frowning, and she had not been reading her book with the usual interest. For Miss Redgrave was worried.

"Come in!" she cried, wondering who the visitor could be.

Then, as the door opened, she started. For the girl who entered was the girl who had been in her thoughts, causing the lines upon her usually serene brow—Teresa Tempest, her niece.

"Teresa!" exclaimed the mistress.

Teresa nodded coolly.

"Hallo, aunt!" she said, and flung herself, uninvited, into the comfortable arm-chair out of which the mistress had risen at her entry.

Miss Redgrave frowned, opened her mouth to speak, then shut it again.

"Phew!" breathed Teresa, fanning herself with a gaily-coloured handkerchief she had drawn from the front of her dress. "What a time I am having! I am quite sure if mother knew the kind of girls this school contained, she would take me away."

"Teresa," said Miss Redgrave angrily, "do not be absurd! If you were not so insolent and disobedient, you would not be so often in hot water."

"Oh, it's my fault, of course!" sneered Teresa. "I might know that. You would take the part of those girls!"

She dragged another and smaller chair near to her and placed her feet upon it, then she placed her elbows on the arm-rests of the chair in which she was seated, and clasped her hands before her.

Quite unconscious she seemed of the storm-clouds that blackened the young mistress's brow, nor did she seem able to realise how rudely she was acting.

"Teresa," said Miss Redgrave, "when will you learn that I am a mistress here?"

Teresa smiled scornfully.

"Oh, do drop that sort of talk, auntie!" she pleaded, with a wave of the hand. "Why do you keep lecturing me? As if it isn't bad enough to have Miss Crassingham——"

"Miss Massingham it is, Teresa, and she is a very just woman!" said the junior mistress.

"Well, Massingham, then," snapped Teresa rudely, so rudely that her aunt clenched her hands and drew in a deep breath, finding it hard to control her temper before this girl's colossal impudence.

"What I came to see you about," resumed Teresa, with a frown, "is the way in which some of those common girls speak to me. That Betty Barton, for instance—the charwoman's kid!"

"Betty Barton is a very well-bred girl," rebuked Miss Redgrave. "She has been kind to me, and I will not have you insulting her. I little dreamt that my own niece would develop into such a snob. If you took more heed of what Betty Barton said, you would be much better behaved!"

Teresa patted back the ever wilful wisp of hair from her forehead.

"Pooh!" she exclaimed. "Betty Barton—fiddlesticks! She's only——"

"Teresa!" interrupted Miss Redgrave sternly. "If this is all you have come here to say, I should be obliged if you would go, and at once!"

Teresa made an impatient motion of the hand.

"You might wait until I've finished before interrupting!" she said. "I came to tell you that I have been humiliated—humiliated in front of all those kids. And so I want to ask you, aunt, to punish that girl Betty Barton for me."

"What!"

Miss Redgrave drew back.

"Teresa!" she exclaimed, in wonder. "Whatever are you saying? You have the

effrontery to ask me to punish Betty to please you! Have you taken leave of your senses?"

Teresa sighed wearily. "There you are, aunt," she said, "you go ramping on before I've had a chance to utter a word. I wish you'd let me speak. I was just going to say if you'd punish that girl I'd buckle to and get the captaincy of the Form from her—"

"You—you get the captaincy of the Form!" gasped Miss Redgrave, utterly amazed.

But Teresa nodded coolly. "Yes, I rather fancy myself as Form captain," she answered thoughtfully. "I'm used to managing people. I used to boss the servants at home, and goodness knows they were difficult to handle. They used to answer back rudely—"

"Much as you answer me back," suggested Miss Redgrave coldly. "Oh, Teresa, will you never learn that at school you cannot be the idol your mother made of you at home? Here you are, just a Fourth-Former, and that fact, hard though it may be, you simply must realise!"

"Oh, bother! There you go again, aunt," said Teresa, in tired tones. "I never did meet anyone quite like you for grouching. I never can do anything to please you. Now I am trying to reform and get the Form captaincy, you won't help me. Miss Massingham threatened to take it away from that Barton girl—that's what put the idea into my head in the first place!"

"Oh!" said Miss Redgrave. There was not much else for her to say. She felt helpless in face of this girl, though she was angry as now Morcove girl had ever seen her before.

"If you give her a few lines, aunt," said Teresa thoughtfully, "that will tame her down a bit!"

Miss Redgrave drew herself to her full height.

"Teresa!" she said, then breathed hard. "The bell for breakfast has just gone. I give you two minutes to get out of the room!"

The new girl frowned and eyed her aunt, puzzled at these new tactics.

Miss Redgrave pointed to the door, her lips tightened, and her eyes glittering. For just one second Teresa hesitated. Then she sprang from the chair.

"Oh, all right, use your authority," she

said. "But I think you're mean, and I shall tell the mater!"

With a haughty toss of the head Teresa Tempest moved to the door, and departed from the junior mistress's study. And as she made her way to the dining-hall, she seemed quite unperturbed by all that had happened.

In fact, during breakfast, she was unusually thoughtful. Cora and Judith Grandways, to whom she had unravelled her plans, knew of what the new girl was thinking, and they winked at one another.

They did not for a moment dream that Teresa would be successful in her bid for the captaincy, but neither of them minded supporting her.

If Teresa were successful, then it would be all the better for them—that is what they were thinking. What would happen to Teresa were she to fail, did not concern the two snobs.

But any scheme for the discomfiture of Betty Barton was certain to gladden the hearts of the Grandways.

And Betty, she could not help wondering why Teresa was so silent. Teresa was not as a rule given to silence. The glances that from time to time she stole at the Fourth Form captain did not go unnoticed, and Betty wondered, with a ray of hope in her heart, if Teresa were really intending to reform.

If only Betty had known what was working in the new girl's mind! Those schemes and plans for gaining the captaincy—how they would have surprised Betty Barton!

When breakfast was finished, Teresa went up to Cora and Judith Grandways, and took the elder sister by the sleeve.

"I want you two," she said. "I've got a scheme, if you'd like to come into it with me."

Cora winked at Judith. "Thinking of the Form captaincy still?" she said.

Teresa nodded thoughtfully. "I am," she said. "And I've found a way."

She lowered her voice, and told them the plan she had evolved. Cora opened her eyes wide.

"My word! It—it's risky!" she said. "Jolly risky," echoed Judith. "But there's a chance."

Teresa smiled serenely and confidently. "Trust me!" she said. "I'm no bungler!"

And arm-in-arm the three went down to lessons, Teresa very pleased indeed with her morning's work.

CHAPTER 12.

Deceiving the Form!

THAT Teresa Tempest was no dunce was made obvious during lessons that day. Miss Massingham had gone so far as to compliment the girl, and Teresa had coolly nodded. Whereat Miss Massingham had compressed her lips, and resolved that never again would she take the trouble to praise this self-opinionated girl.

But, despite her undoubted capability at Form work, Teresa was not by any means an ideal pupil. She lounged about on her desk, and from time to time gazed through the open window, forgetful altogether of the Form-room and of the mistress.

Her quick brain saved her several times from punishment, for even when Miss Massingham at unexpected moments pounced upon her to answer some questions, Teresa had her wits about her, and replied sufficiently well to save herself from the mistress' wrath.

The lesson in progress at the moment was algebra, not a very popular lesson, be it said.

"Now, here is a little problem which some of you might even work out in your heads," said Miss Massingham. She looked at her book. "I bought a horse and a dog for £25. Had I given ten per cent. more for the dog, and two and a half per cent. more for the horse, I should have spent just one pound sterling more. What did I pay for the dog and the horse?"

The mistress lowered the algebra book from which she had been reading, and glanced expectantly round the Form.

Teresa Tempest was looking out of the window, absently, and Miss Massingham's eyes glittered.

"You did not hear the question, perhaps, Teresa?" she snapped. "You do not appear to have been particularly attentive. Please let me have the answer to the problem."

Teresa looked up with a start.

"I was just thinking," she said coolly. "It couldn't have been much of a horse, you know. I think the question's absurd really. My mater paid over fifty pounds for her Pekinese—"

There was a titter at this, and the girls looked at one another meaningly. Round the room went a whisper, "Swank!"

Miss Massingham seemed to bubble with wrath, and, really, it was not surprising.

"You were not asked your opinion of the

dog's pedigree, Teresa," she said sharply. "You were asked to say how much was paid for each. The question is in your book, No. 5, page 259, of the problems. What your mother chooses to do with her money is no concern of mine!"

Teresa clenched her desk and eyed the problem. It was not a difficult one, and there were half a dozen girls simply longing to give the answer.

Betty, out of sheer kindness, leaned over to Teresa and whispered in the girl's ear. Betty did not want the new girl to get into trouble, although she ought really to have allowed the girl to solve the problem of her own accord.

What the answer was that Betty whispered no one else could hear; but no one doubted its accuracy, for Betty was very good at algebra, and could do most of the problems in her head.

Teresa half turned her head to Betty and nodded.

"Thirty pounds seven and eightpence farthing, and a fiver!" she answered hurriedly.

For a moment there was dead silence, then a perfect wave of laughter swept across the Form.

Miss Massingham thumped her closed hand down upon the desk nearest to her, causing the occupant of it, Dolly Delane, to draw back in alarm.

"Thirty pounds seven and eightpence farthing and—and a fiver!" she stormed. "You utterly foolish and ridiculous girl. The two animals together only cost twenty-five pounds. That answer is absurd and impertinent."

Teresa bit her lip and flushed. Not one of the Fourth-Formers guessed that she was acting.

"I am not blaming you, Teresa, foolish though you are." She turned to the captain of the Fourth Form. "Betty Barton, come here!" she cried.

Poor Betty flushed and started. The other girls gazed at her in wonderment. They all thought, naturally enough, that she had whispered that ridiculous answer to the new girl, although Betty, as a rule, was not given to such foolish joking.

"Betty!" whispered Polly. "Why ever did you do it?"

Betty Barton did not reply, but walked with downcast head to the front of the class. Betty's mind was in a whirl. The answer she had given Teresa had been the correct

one—twenty pounds for the horse and five pounds for the dog. How in transmission it had become so changed she could not guess. And Teresa—she looked so confused that poor Betty did not suspect her of wilfully changing it.

Miss Massingham looked at Betty angrily. "Betty," she said, "what has come over you the last few days I cannot imagine. But first you stay out late without a pass, then you create a disturbance in the dormitory, and now—now you play a stupid joke upon a new girl. Did you hope to get her punished?"

Betty flushed with shame.

"No," Miss Massingham, she said. "I—"

Betty was going to say that the answer she had given Teresa was the correct one. But how thin that would have sounded—and how like a feeble excuse to evade punishment! Besides, Teresa would be punished. And had not Betty promised to do her best to keep that girl out of mischief!

Miss Massingham set her lips.

"Very well, Betty," she said. "You must write me out fifty lines. That makes a hundred in all with the fifty I gave you this morning. As Form captain you should have prevented that disturbance in the dormitory, and you should not play practical jokes on other girls. You, Betty, of all girls, should endeavour to set an example to this new girl. I am surprised and pained—extremely disappointed in you, Betty. If this sort of conduct continues I shall really have to think seriously of taking your captaincy from you."

Betty hung her head miserably, and there was a buzz of awed whispers, hushed immediately by the mistress's eye.

"I—I'm sorry, Miss Massingham," stammered Betty. "I—"

Just then the door opened, and another mistress entered. It was Miss Redgrave. The junior mistress stopped short with surprise at the sight of Betty standing before the class shamefacedly, with Miss Massingham eyeing her angrily.

"Gracious!" exclaimed the junior mistress involuntarily, and she gave Betty a compassionate look, wondering what the girl could have done wrong.

Miss Massingham turned to her.

"Yes, it is indeed surprising, Miss Redgrave," she said. "Betty has just misled Teresa Tempest into giving a simply absurd answer to an algebraic question."

Miss Redgrave opened her eyes wide.

"Betty has!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Miss Massingham, there must be a mistake! I cannot believe that! Why, Betty—"

She broke off, and stared at the captain of the Fourth. Betty Barton raised her head, and gave the junior mistress a pleading look that went straight to her heart.

"Oh, Betty!" said the mistress. "Can this be true?"

Cora Grandways sneered.

"I heard her," she said.

"And I!" exclaimed Judith Grandways.

Miss Massingham waved her hand at them.

"You were not asked to speak," she said. "I saw Betty whispering, and she admits it. Nothing more need be said. Betty, return to your place."

With cheeks crimson with shame, Betty Barton returned to her desk, the tears very near to her eyes. As she passed Teresa's desk that girl gave her a sneering look of triumph. Betty saw that look, although it came and vanished so quickly that none of the others had a chance to see it.

Had Teresa deliberately given that answer to get her into trouble? Betty wondered.

She looked up at Miss Redgrave, and the hurt, reproving glance that the mistress gave her, cut the girl like a knife.

Miss Redgrave thought she had broken her bond—that instead of helping Teresa she had tried to embroil her in trouble.

Betty half-opened her mouth to speak, then shut it again.

As Miss Redgrave, holding in her hand the book she had come to borrow, moved to the door, Teresa Tempest jumped to her feet.

"Miss Massingham," she cried, "can't I have half that punishment? I suppose I oughtn't to have given that answer though the Barton girl did give it to me."

There was a gasp of wonder at this. No one had expected Teresa Tempest to make such a proposition. But Teresa was not risking much. Even if she were given half Betty's punishment, it would only mean twenty-five lines. There would be no humiliation for her—only praise for owning up.

And Miss Redgrave—she was more surprised than anyone else. She knew Teresa better than did the others, and she had not expected this.

She glanced at her niece in surprise, and Teresa threw back her head proudly.

"If I've done anything wrong, I'm quite willing to be punished," she said.

One or two could not help giving this self-complacent girl an admiring look—for there was no actual need for her to make that request.

Miss Massingham shook her head.

"The matter is finished," she said, and picked up her book. "Now problem six—Tess Trelawney."

Teresa sat down, and Miss Redgrave, with one last sad look of disappointment at Betty, went from the room.

Once or twice during the rest of the lessons, Polly Linton tried to whisper to her chum, but Miss Massingham kept an eye upon her, and Polly deemed it wiser to remain silent.

No sooner, though, were lessons over than a crowd surrounded Betty.

"Betty," cried Polly, "why ever did you do it? You knew Miss Massingham was watching!"

"Besides," said Ella Elgood, "I think it a bit mean. If Miss Massingham hadn't seen you whisper, Teresa would have got into awful trouble."

Cora Grandways laughed.

"What do you expect from her?" she sneered. "She can't help it with the up-bringing she's had."

Teresa Tempest nodded.

"Oh, I don't blame the kid," she said. "She doesn't know any better, really. But I must say it was rather low-down."

Betty flushed, and gave Teresa a look that was very straight indeed. Betty could not quite make up her mind how that whispered answer had come to be altered. She could not believe that Teresa had made the alteration maliciously. She could not believe that of any girl. But Betty was still in doubt.

And Polly—she was as puzzled as her chum. Now that Cora and Judith professed—untruthfully, of course—that they had heard Betty give that humorous answer, many of the other girls imagined that they, too, had heard it.

"It wasn't quite playing fair, Betty," said Madge Minden.

And Trixie Hope, who was good at French, said: "C'était méprisable—it was mean."

"I—I—" stammered Betty. "I think Teresa must have misunderstood me. I gave the right answer, twenty pounds and five pounds!"

"That's right!" said Cora. "Try and back out now!"

And Teresa nodded.

"It wasn't much of a joke," she said, "but you might as well stand by it. I admit I was taken in."

Betty gulped as several girls began to laugh. Now she came to think of it, her statement certainly did sound thin.

Polly was frowning, quite puzzled by the turn events had taken, but she said nothing just then.

"It was jolly decent of you to own up, Teresa," said Madge Minden bluntly to the new girl. "I don't mind saying I hadn't much of an opinion of you at first; but it was jolly decent of you to try and take the blame."

"Hear, hear!" said Tess Trelawney.

"In fact," said Ella Elgood, "I don't think we've given her quite a chance, do you, girls?"

There was a shaking of heads which made Teresa smile to herself.

How well her plans were working out! She had not expected that incident in the Form-room, yet she had been quick to turn it to her advantage. And now, even sooner than the cunning girl had hoped, these Fourth-Formers were turning round, and actually praising her.

"Well, come along to the tuckshop," she suggested.

There was no hesitation then. Some of the girls felt rather ashamed that they had judged her so hastily. True, she was still the same swank girl, but she might have many good points hidden away out of sight.

So down they went to the tuckshop, where Teresa Tempest stood them a royal feast—the best that money could buy.

And those girls, as they sipped their ginger-beer and ate the many goodies Teresa provided, had no idea how cleverly they were being duped by this strange new girl.

Only Cora and Judith Grandways knew, and they were keeping their knowledge dark. Once or twice they winked knowingly at their rich companion, but that was the only sign they gave of their complicity.

And Teresa made a speech, such a speech a millionaire might give to some paupers he was entertaining.

But the girls suffered that. After all, they had accepted her hospitality, and they had agreed to try to overlook some of Teresa's faults. At least she was generous.

Teresa was progressing—but in what a way!

CHAPTER 13.

A Bid for Favour.

"BETTY, dear, you didn't do it!" In Study No. 12 Polly Linton clasped her friend's hand, and looked into her eyes pleadingly.

Betty Barton was sitting in the armchair, her hands clasped, her head downcast, looking despondent and miserable.

"I am sure—oh, I know I didn't!" she said. "Polly, I wouldn't do a thing like that! Teresa must have mistaken what I said."

Polly Linton sniffed.

"I think Teresa meant to get you punished," she said bluntly. "How could she mistake twenty pounds for thirty pounds seven and eightpence farthing?"

Betty shrugged her shoulders.

"I know it sounds silly," she said huskily. "But, oh, Polly, what a position I am in! Miss Redgrave thinks I meant to get Teresa into trouble!" Her lips trembled.

"Oh, you goose, Betty!" said her chum, with an attempt at jocularly. "Miss Redgrave ought to know Teresa better than that. I'll jolly well go and tell her."

And Polly rose from the chair. But Betty pulled her back.

"Don't do anything so silly, Polly," she said. "It will all come right soon, I suppose!"

"I don't think she meant you to suffer for Teresa's sake," said Polly. "It's all very well to promise to look after the girl, but

"But, Polly, dear," sighed Betty, "she would be expelled if she weren't looked after."

Polly sniffed.

"She wants chipping—teasing, that's the only way to cure her."

But Betty did not think so, and she shook her head.

"Well, I think you're silly, to take the blame for her," said Polly candidly. "And, anyway, Betty, it's no good sitting here. Come down to the common-room."

And thence they went, arm in arm. Polly knew that it would do her chum no good to "mope" in the study.

Teresa was in the common-room when they arrived, and there was quite a crowd of girls round her.

The new girl was sitting at a small table in one corner, and the girls were clustering round her, peering at something she had on the table.

As Betty and Polly entered all heads were turned in their direction, but save for a casual smile of recognition no notice was taken of them.

There was no doubt at all now that Teresa was holding her audience. There was something fascinating and compelling about the new girl, and the Fourth-Formers seemed to be carried away by her smooth, musical voice and her airy manner.

That she was wealthy was impossible to doubt, and all the girls had a liking for pretty clothes.

On the table before Teresa was a large steel despatch-box, which she had just unlocked. From it tumbled jewels, necklaces, pendants, rings, and brooches.

Many of the girls who looked on had wealthy parents, but they were not accustomed to such a display as this.

As she heard the exclamations of wonderment and admiration, Teresa could scarcely hide the smile of pleasure that stole round the corners of her well-cut lips.

"Not bad, are they?" she remarked casually, as Ella Elgood, with awed fingers, picked up a beautiful platinum ring, studded in emeralds and diamonds.

"My word!" breathed Ella, and the other girls gathered round her. "What a beautiful ring!"

Teresa nodded casually. She did not think it necessary to mention that the ring was her mother's—that she had borrowed it from her mother's jewel-box, where it had remained stored away, unworn, for several years.

"And those pearls!" murmured Norah Nugent. "I say, Teresa!"

How the new girl summed herself in these expressions of wonderment and admiration, seeming to take upon herself some credit for the beauty of the stones.

"There are some cheaper ones here, like this bangle," she said. "You know you can borrow any of these if ever you want to, girls!"

"Borrow them!" cried Ella Elgood. "Oh, Teresa, I'd love to!"

"And I!" cried Norah Nugent and several others. Norah picked up the bangle.

"You can have that little thing," said Teresa to Ella Elgood, indicating a small single diamond ring. "You can wear it on special occasions."

The girls gasped.

"Have it!" exclaimed Ella. "But—but

"Well, borrow it indefinitely, until I want to wear it myself," said the new girl.

This was a new light on the girl's character. But the girls little dreamt what motive lay behind it. They were thinking how generous this girl was, and that, after all, there must be a great deal of good in her.

"Yes, yes; take it," said Teresa. "And, Cora, you can have that ring. I don't care much for it. Sapphires never did appeal to me."

Cora picked up the ring, quite a magnificent one, and slipped it on to her finger, then looked at it admiringly.

Ursula Wade came forward then. Ursula was the slyest and meanest girl in the Form, and Ursula did not intend to be out of this distribution.

She picked up a beautifully carved bracelet.

"Oh, what a darling!" she said cunningly. Teresa waved her hand, after some slight hesitation.

"You can wear it if you like," she said. "After all, the mistresses oughtn't to be able to forbid jewellery!"

"No fear, not when it's like this," said Judith, picking up a ring.

In less than five minutes quite a dozen girls had had things lent to them.

And then Teresa unfolded one or two simply magnificent dresses she had brought down from the dormitory.

"There are these," she said casually. "I'm rather tired of them. Thought of burning them—"

"Burning!" cried Cora. "Surely not. Why, I—"

"Well, you can have that one," said Teresa. "I didn't think of that." She turned to the others who were crowding round. "If there's anything here that fits you, you can have it," she said to no one in particular. "I shall only have to burn them."

Then, rather shyly, the girls took the dresses. They were lovely dresses; and what a waste it would be if they were burned!

"You can keep those dresses!" said Teresa loftily. "They're good ones."

And soon she was handing out presents all round. The girls did not know how to refuse her wonderful generosity. There were photo-frames, strips of valuable lace—all manner of gifts.

"I say!" said Grace Garfield. "Are you sure you won't want these things? I mean—"

"Pooh!" said Teresa. "I can afford it. What's a few presents, anyway? The mater gives me heaps of money!"

Polly Linton came forward, and glared at Teresa.

"You silly show-off swank!" said Polly witheringly. "I suppose you're trying to buy over the support of these sillies by giving them jewellery." She turned to the other girls, who were looking a trifle uncomfortable. "Can't you see what a laughing-stock she's making of you all?" cried Polly scornfully.

At that Ella Elgood bridled up. She felt she was in the wrong, but she did not want to be dictated to by Polly.

"Mind your own business!" she snapped. "They're — they're Teresa's rings and dresses!"

"Yes, you're only jealous!" sneered Cora Grandways.

Teresa sighed. "Dear, dear!" she said. "What a jealous girl you are, Polly! Here's a ring for you."

She handed Polly a shining jewel, and Polly pushed the girl's arm back.

"Keep it!" she snapped. "You've won these sillies over, Teresa, but you can't deceive me, I tell you!"

Several girls were looking very uncomfortable indeed, and there were many of them who would have longed to hand Teresa back her presents. But their pride held them in check. Now that Polly had spoken they simply could not retract! That was how they felt.

There was an uncomfortable silence.

"Surely you're not going to take any notice of her!" sneered Teresa to the silent girls. "I'm blessed if I'd be dictated to!"

Grace Garfield shrugged her shoulders. "Nor am I!" she said. "I don't see if Teresa wants to give us presents why we shouldn't accept them."

But, all the same, Grace did not feel comfortable under the glance that Polly was giving her.

With one last scornful look at the girls, Polly turned on her heel and went back to her chum, who was standing in the doorway still.

"Come on, Betty," she said. "I'm fed up with them!"

After she had gone there was silence—an awkward silence. The girls realised for the first time what a break had occurred in the Form.

"I'm a bit fed up with Polly," said Grace Garfield slowly.

"Hear, hear!" said Ella Elgood. "And Betty—she's hasn't been playing the game lately. That trick in the class-room this afternoon—it really was a bit too much."

And there was a nodding of heads.

"She does appear to have a grudge against me," said Teresa slowly. "I—I know I've been a bit swanky, and—and rude. But that's only my way. Besides, I'm new to school life. I didn't mean to offend you all!"

This was said so penitently and with such an air of candour that none of the girls could find it in her heart to suspect Teresa of duplicity.

"And we, too," said Grace Garfield, acting as spokeswoman. "We've misunderstood you, Teresa. I—I'm sorry—"

Teresa smiled genially, and held out her hand.

"I know," she said. "It's been a misunderstanding all through."

Grace shook the hand extended to her, and the others followed suit.

"Perhaps Betty Barton has treated me so badly because she thinks I might oust her from her position," suggested Teresa, as though the idea had just occurred to her. "That mistress this morning—Miss Masingham—threatened to take the captaincy from her, you know. And this afternoon —"

"You take the captaincy!" exclaimed Ella Elgood, unable to conceal her amazement. "But you're only a new girl, and—"

"And what?" said Teresa quickly.

Ella fell silent. There was nothing she could say. She would have said that Teresa was not the kind of girl they wanted for captain. But how could she when the new girl had been generous, and when Ella even now had one of Teresa's rings?

"I should rather like to be captain," said Teresa tentatively.

Cora looked at Judith, and the two nodded.

"Well, I'd vote for you," said Cora, and Judith echoed her sister's reply.

"And I," said Ursula Wade.

Then Teresa looked hard at Ella Elgood, and that girl shifted awkwardly from one foot to the other.

Now all the girls had a feeling that they had been bought over, and it made them feel very mean.

"We could have a topping time if I were captain," mused Teresa. "I don't mind what I spend, you know. What does money matter? We could have some splendid

times, all of us. Big picnics and things —"

"What about hockey?" put in Tess Tre-lawney suddenly.

"Hockey!" said Teresa. "Oh, I'm a dab at hockey! You ought to see me in the forward line. I can tell you I take some stopping!"

One or two of the girls grinned at this boastful statement. But they let it pass.

They felt that, after all, they could put up with her swank. But they certainly did not want her for captain. That was evident from their faces.

"Besides," said Teresa, with a feeling that she was not progressing as favourably as she had hoped, "I've got a pull, you know."

"A pull!" exclaimed Grace Garfield. "How do you mean?"

Teresa winked.

"Don't you know?" she exclaimed. "Why, Miss Redgrave is my aunt. I tell you I can twist her round my little finger. She'll let me do anything I like!"

"But—but that would be favouritism!" cried Dolly Delane.

"Pooh!" scoffed Teresa. "What does that matter? Don't you see what a time we can have together?"

There was a silence. And Teresa, looking round, was surprised. Somehow, the girls, instead of being elated, were looking displeased.

Teresa, if only she had known it, was playing quite the wrong game. Very few schoolgirls approve of favouritism. And to think that Miss Redgrave would favour Teresa because she was a relation—it was discomfoting!

"I—I don't think you can," said Ella Elgood slowly.

"I can get round aunt all right," persisted the new girl. "In fact, I'll show you how it's done. Do we have her for any lesson to-morrow?"

"Yes, last lesson," answered Norah Nugent shortly. "But I don't think Miss Redgrave will be mean enough—"

"Mean enough!" said Teresa. "She'll do as I ask her. She's only a poor relation of mine, anyway! And, what's more, I'll get her to punish Betty Barton. I've only got to ask her! You wait until to-morrow morning, and you'll see!"

And she slammed the door.

"Well," said Madge Minden, when the

new girl had gone. "I say, girls, what do you think of that?"

"She's bluffing!" said Dolly Delane. "It's only some more of her swank!"

But Cora Grandways shook her head.

"That's all you know," she said. "I know for a fact she's evaded punishment once. She can twist her aunt round her finger!"

"Then all I can say," said Ella Elgood crossly, "is that Miss Redgrave isn't the good sort I took her to be. Only a mean woman would favour a girl. And I think Teresa is still more mean to try it on!"

"Hear, hear!" said Tess Trelawney and others.

"If she does it, then I've finished with her!" exclaimed Grace Garfield.

Teresa had taken a false step. Any other girl would have realised that. In fact, any other girl would have known that schoolgirls object to favouritism. But Teresa, she thought she would be admired because she could—or said she could—twist her aunt round her finger.

But she was to learn differently.

CHAPTER 14.

Returned Without Thanks!

"AUNT!"

Miss Redgrave stopped on her way down the corridor next morning as Teresa, with a very woe-begone expression on her face, halted before her in the passage.

"Well?" said Miss Redgrave, wondering what her niece could want now.

"I—I don't feel well," said Teresa. "I've got an awful toothache and headache. I think it's neuralgia."

"Oh!"

"And—and," stammered Teresa, "I don't like to ask Miss Massingham to excuse me from lessons. She—she'd think I was not telling the truth. But I am!"

And she placed her hand to her cheek, muffling it tenderly with a handkerchief.

"Don't you think you could manage to attend morning lessons?" asked her aunt, giving the girl a keen look.

Teresa nodded.

"I—I'll try," she gulped, in so heroic a voice that Miss Redgrave was plainly convinced that this excuse was genuine.

"You can lie down on your bed last lesson this morning," she said at last. "I am taking the Fourth for that lesson."

"You are!" exclaimed the girl, as

though it were a new discovery to her. "Oh, but I don't want to miss that!"

Miss Redgrave smiled, flattered rather, for the girl's tone sounded so sincere.

"If your head aches, you'd better not attend the last lesson," she said. "It's botany; you can read it up afterwards if you like."

Teresa nodded willingly.

"I'll read it up," she said. "Perhaps it would be better to lie down, aunt. Thanks very much."

And then she walked off, while Miss Redgrave, very surprised at the change in her niece, went down to the Third Form, which she was taking first lesson that morning.

How eagerly, too, the Fourth-Formers waited for last lesson of the morning to arrive. From time to time they looked at Teresa, and she returned the looks with nods of confidence, as much as to say: "You can rely upon me!"

Polly and Betty knew nothing of the matter, and, indeed, there had been little opportunity or need to tell them.

At length the time for last lesson arrived. Miss Massingham went out, and Teresa, with a smile on her face, followed the mistress.

Nor did she return, not even when Miss Redgrave came into the room.

The Fourth-Formers saw the mistress look at Teresa's empty place, and saw, too, that she must have known of her niece's absence.

Yet the mistress made no comment. And Madge Minden gave Tess Trelawney and Trixie Hope a meaning look. All the girls were looking at Miss Redgrave, and the mistress was surprised to note how surly some of the girls appeared.

"She's done it!" whispered Madge Minden to Trixie Hope when an opportunity occurred.

"Tu as raison!" agreed Trixie. "You are right; but what about getting Betty punished?"

Madge Minden frowned and shrugged her shoulders. She did not think that even Teresa would go as far as that.

"I'm finished with her!" whispered Madge Minden.

And then Madge passed a note round amongst the girls. But none of them wanted to be told what fools they had been, and they agreed to Madge's message, asking them to meet in the common-room after morning lessons.

Madge was going to hold a meeting, and undoubtedly the common-room was the best place, for, after morning lessons, it was usually unoccupied, most of the girls being out of doors.

Towards the end of the lesson, when everyone was looking anxiously at the Form-room clock, Miss Redgrave turned to Betty, with a slight frown on her face.

"Betty," she said, "I should like to see you in my study after lessons, please!"

Madge Minden and the others started. Teresa had carried out her boast. She had got Betty punished. Of that they had not the slightest doubt. How she had done it, they neither knew nor cared. But the mistress' stern look spelt punishment as clearly as the printed letters.

Dong, dong!

At the clanging bell Miss Redgrave snapped her book to, and there was an opening and shutting of desk lids, and a rush for the door. Betty, however, with Polly at her side, made her way to Miss Redgrave's study, there to await the junior mistress' arrival.

And while Betty was inside the study, Polly waited without.

Miss Redgrave was not long in arriving, and she shut the door behind her carefully.

Her face was worried and anxious, and she sat down before speaking.

"Betty," she said slowly, when she had motioned the captain of the Fourth to a chair, "I—"

Then she broke off, and she looked more worried than before. Betty looked at her, wondering whether she ought to speak. Then Miss Redgrave resumed.

"Betty," she said, "have I been asking too much of you? Has Teresa been too troublesome? I know her faults—I realise all your difficulties, and I hoped you would try—"

"Oh, I have, Miss Redgrave," cried Betty. "I have tried. Surely you do not think—" Betty choked. It hurt her to think that the mistress imagined she had failed in the trust imposed upon her.

"But yesterday—" said the mistress. "Oh, Betty, I would rather you had come to me, and asked to be released from your promise, than acted as you did in class!"

Betty flushed.

"I meant to explain to you, Miss Redgrave," she said. "It was a mistake all along. Do believe me, please. I am speaking the truth. Teresa was a long time in

answering, and I—I prompted her. I know it was wrong, but I thought it might save her punishment."

"Yes, yes, that is what I thought at first," said the mistress sadly. "But, Betty, why did you give her a false answer?"

"I didn't. I told her the correct answer," exclaimed Betty. "There has been a mistake somewhere, or—Teresa did it for fun. I would never have done a thing like that."

Miss Redgrave still hesitated.

"I want to believe you," she said. "I have always trusted and admired you, Betty. Can it be possible that Teresa made up that wrong answer?"

Betty did not reply.

The mistress sighed.

"I can see that you suspect my niece," she answered. "Maybe, Teresa is capable of this. Yet I thought when I saw her this morning that she had changed her ways."

"So did I," answered Betty. "But there is no need for you to release me from that promise, Miss Redgrave. Teresa is generous, and I am sure there is good in her. She wants to show off and boast too much. But—but she may change. I am sure she will, in fact."

Miss Redgrave crossed to the girl's side.

"Betty, you are a dear, generous girl!" the mistress said. "I am sorry I accused you. I can see now, quite clearly, that Teresa played a spiteful trick upon you. And you have evidently forgiven her. Betty, that is splendid of you. Only a fine-natured, generous-hearted girl like you could have done that!"

Poor Betty did not know what to say in reply to this, but the mistress gratefully pressed her hand.

"You will guide her through and make a fine girl of her. I am sure of that, Betty!" she said, as, blushing, Betty went from the room.

And then Betty's resolution to look after Teresa became more firmly fixed than ever.

Meanwhile, the meeting was being held in the common-room. The girls gathered there wore solemn and rather angry faces. With them they had brought the presents Teresa had given them—presents that they were ashamed of having accepted. Truly they had been deceived.

Cora and Judith were there, too, but they kept well in the background. They had no desire to quarrel with Teresa. If

she could "twist Miss Redgrave round her little finger," so much the better. That is the way they looked at it.

When Teresa entered the room at last in company of Tess Trelawney, who had gone to fetch her, there was a silence.

"Hallo!" cried Teresa cheerfully, patting into place her wilful wisp of hair. "Now, what did I tell you? Haven't I twisted my aunt round my finger?" She looked round the room. "Why, what's the matter?" she cried. "Why are you all looking like wax-works?"

Madge Minden spoke up scornfully.

"I suppose you think you'd make a fine captain!" she exclaimed.

Teresa looked at her hard.

"Well, of course," she answered, more in her usual tones. "What are you making that face for? Look here, you're going to vote for me, I suppose? I intend to ask Miss Massingham to call another poll!"

There was a silent shaking of heads.

Teresa frowned heavily.

"You're not!" she almost shouted. "Look here, what do you think I've been spending my money on you for? You don't think I stood you that feed for nothing! Why—why it cost pounds. And—and those rings and dresses and things! You've got to vote for me!"

She stamped her foot angrily, and threw back her head imperiously.

"So that was why you gave us presents? That is why you've been polite lately," said Grace Garfield coldly.

"To buy our votes!" added Ella Elgood scornfully.

"You are weally the meanest geal I evah met!" hisped Paula Creel.

Teresa Tempest sneered.

"I see!" she exclaimed bitterly. "You think you can back out. You've had my feed, you've got my presents, and now you think you can throw me over!" She shook her finger at them. "You seem to forget that I can pay you all out easily. One word to my aunt, and I can get you all gated!"

Madge Minden flamed up at that.

"It seems that you've got Betty punished, yes," she cried. "And you think you can get us gated. We'll see about that. We won't stand it. I used to think a lot of Miss Redgrave, but if that's what she's like—"

"I've had enough of her!" finished Dolly Delane.

"And as for your presents," snapped Norah Nugent, with unusual heat, "there's your bracelet!"

The gold chased bangle clattered to the floor at the new girl's feet, and her face went a deep crimson, then white.

"You—you dare!" she cried.

Ella Elgood took from her pocket the ring Teresa had given her, and flung it at the new girl.

"There you are!" she cried. "Take it!"

And then every girl who had anything of Teresa's—save, of course, Cora, Judith, and Ursula Wade—flung back the presents they had received.

Teresa clenched her hands as though she would spring at them all, then stooped and picked up her property.

"Now you can clear out!" snapped Ella Elgood.

"And you needn't speak to me again!" cried Norah Nugent.

Teresa's lip curled.

"I don't want to," she said. "But you haven't heard the last of this yet. I don't forget, and aunt will see that you're punished all right."

"I shouldn't be surprised if you did twist that answer round that Betty gave you yesterday," snapped Madge Minden. "It—"

Teresa interrupted her with a laugh.

"Twist it round!" she jeered. "Why, of course I did. You boobies! I made that girl sit up!"

And Teresa went from the common-room, slamming the door after her.

Then Madge Minden spoke up.

"Well," she said, "if that girl does get Miss Redgrave to gate us all I shall go to Miss Somerfield. I won't stand it. It's a downright shame."

Then the Fourth-Formers realised they had a duty to perform. They went out and apologised to Betty, and they even endured Polly's scorn.

One and all they vowed they were finished with Teresa. But Teresa—she was not finished with them!

CHAPTER 15.

Birds of a Feather!

"I SAY, Betty, do look! There's Teresa ahead! But who ever's she with?"

Betty Barton followed the direction in which Polly Linton was pointing, and saw two girls in vividly coloured dresses walking down the lane.

Teresa's companion—she had Teresa's swagger, Teresa's affected little shrugs of the shoulders, and motions of the hand when talking.

"But how silly of her!" said Betty. "Anyone might see her—a mistress or a monitress. Miss Somerfield herself might drive through the town in her trap. We must warn her! Really, we can't allow her to be seen in that get-up!"

"And a jolly good job, too!" said outspoken Polly. "It would serve her right if she were severely punished!"

But Betty, as her face expressed, evidently did not think the same.

She quickened her pace in order to draw level with the two girls who were walking ahead.

Teresa was speaking, in her drawing tones, to the girl by her side—a girl who was dressed even more showily than Teresa. But she was an older girl, and had probably left school. What she chose to wear was her own business.

As Betty and Polly drew near, the latter made a grimace.

"She's worse than Teresa, the way she talks," she whispered.

And Betty nodded.

"Don't you get rathah fed up with school?" they heard Teresa's companion say. "Must be simply frightful bein' ordained about by mistresses and people!"

Teresa nodded.

"Oh, I don't take much notice of them!" she replied in her airy tones.

The girls in front suddenly became aware that someone was following them, and they looked round.

Teresa Tempest's expression changed.

"What do you want?" she asked sharply.

Betty made a step forward.

"Just a minute, I should like a word with you, Teresa, please," she said.

Teresa and her well-dressed friend moved with Betty to the side of the road.

"Well?" said Teresa ungraciously to Betty. "What do you want? It's like your cheek coming barging into us like this! I suppose you want an intro. to my friend—"

"I want nothing of the sort!" said Betty.

"I merely want to warn you that if Miss Somerfield, or any of the mistresses, should see you now with your complexion made up, there would be trouble."

Teresa almost glared.

"You—you've stopped me to tell me that?" she exclaimed angrily. "Of all the cheek! Look here, Betty Barton! You needn't try to work the 'fairy godmother' stunt on me! I don't like it. I can look after myself quite well, thank you! If I want to walk about in these clothes, I'm jolly well going to! I shan't ask your permission, nor the silly headmistress! It's a half-holiday and I shall do as I like!"

She tossed her head and would have moved off, but Betty Barton took her arm.

"Teresa!" she cried. "You don't understand! Oh, I know it seems nothing to you! But Miss Somerfield—if she saw you, you would be severely punished—might even be expelled!"

"My gracious!" Teresa drew herself erect and eyed Betty scornfully, almost fiercely. "Do you think I'm going to be dictated to like this? You may be captain of the Form, or King of the Woolamalos, for all I care. And Miss Somerfield—pooh!"

She made a deprecating gesture of the hand; then, shrugging her shoulders, turned her back on Betty.

"Damaris," she said, "for goodness' sake come 'on! These little namby-panby kids are annoyed with us!"

Damaris Leander laughed merrily.

"Oh, I heard what the kid said!" she answered, looking at Betty. "Don't you take any notice of her, Teresa. I suppose you're not going to be ordered about—"

"I should think not!" cried Teresa. "The very idea!" She turned to Betty. "You can go and tell Miss Somerfield, if you want to," she sneered, a ring of scorn in her not unmusical voice. "Do anything, but for goodness' sake keep away from me! I don't want anyone to think I know you!"

Betty flushed, and Polly Linton's eyes blazed angrily.

"I'm sure we don't want to be associated with you!" she snapped angrily. "Come on, Betty; snobs make me ill!"

And Polly led the way off; she held her head high in the air. A laugh followed her—a forced, affected laugh from Damaris Leander.

"Hallo! What's wrong?"

A group of girls stood round the notice-board at Morcove.

"Read it out, Madge!" cried Ella Elgood. "You're the nearest to it."

So Madge cleared her throat, and, while the others listened, commenced to read as follows:

"Mrs. Norton-Davis has kindly invited the girls of Morcove School to her garden-party at Headley House, on Wednesday next, at three o'clock. Only white dresses, or dresses of delicate shade, may be worn.

"ESTHER SOMERFIELD, Headmistress."

"My word!" gasped Tess Trelawney, clapping her hands delightedly. "I say, it's splendid, girls! Who says 'Yes'?"

"Yes!" came a laughing chorus.

"I think it's jolly decent of Mrs. Norton-Davis, whoever she may be," said Madge. "As this is a special occasion we shall be allowed to wear our best frocks. I shall wear that blue *cr pe-de-Chine* of mine."

"I'm going to ask her if she'll let me wear a pale green frock mother gave me," added Ella Elgood. "I shouldn't think she'd mind, as it's a garden-party."

"Who's coming to Miss Somerfield to ask her what we can wear?" asked Grace Garfield.

Immediately there was a show of hands.

"Come along, then," said Grace, taking what was for her the usual place of leader.

In a chattering, laughing group, they made their way to the headmistress' study and tapped on the door.

Miss Somerfield stared when they all entered.

"Dear me!" she said. "What does all this mean?"

Grace Garfield explained their mission.

Miss Somerfield held up her hands for silence.

"You can wear pretty summer dresses, of course," she said. "But I presume that none of you are thinking of wearing anything vivid in colour?"

"No, Miss Somerfield!" came another chorus; and then they all looked at one another, the same thought seeming to strike all—Teresa Tempest, she would wear something bright!

And Miss Somerfield was thinking the same, as indeed her next words showed.

"If any of you should see Teresa Tempest," she said, "please tell her that she must not wear anything bright. And, remember," added Miss Somerfield, "only those who have satisfactory reports will be allowed to attend the garden-party."

Miss Somerfield, with a notion of the

hand, signified that the interview was closed, and in a silent crowd the girls went from the room.

"That means a disappointment for someone," said Grace Garfield with a grimace. "I know. I, for one, haven't been all I should in class. Still, this term, no one has had much time to get bad reports."

"Except Teresa Tempest," reminded Ella Elgood. "She seems to have been rather good at it."

"And Betty Barton. You know how cross Miss Massingham has been with her lately," said Norah Nugent. "It's chiefly due to Teresa, of course, but Miss Massingham doesn't know that."

There was a nodding of heads. None of the girls had forgotten how meanly Teresa had acted in getting Betty Barton into disgrace when that girl had done nothing but help Teresa to the best of her ability.

"If I were Betty I would not put up with her," said Tess Trelawney. "What puzzles me is why Betty is always so friendly with her! You'd think really she'd cut her, after the way she's been treated."

"One certainly would think so," agreed Ella Elgood, with a nod and a shrug of the shoulders. "But perhaps Betty is, as Teresa suggests, trying to make friends for snobbish reasons. You know what Betty's mother was—a charwoman once."

Madge turned sharply.

"Oh, Ella!" she cried. "You ought not to say things like that! Betty is not the sort of girl to act in a snobbish way. And I can't see how you imagine she wants to be friends with Teresa for her money or position!"

Loyal Madge Minden was very angry at this unjust accusation. But the silence made it obvious that Ella's opinion was shared by not a few.

CHAPTER 16.

Who is to Blame?

AS the Fourth Formers, in a crowd, rushed into the hall half an hour later for "calling over," Miss Massingham eyed them grimly. "You are late," she said coldly. "Why, may I ask?"

"Please, we've been needleworking for the garden-party, and we didn't notice the time, Miss Massingham," said Betty Barton.

"You should be more punctual next time, Betty," answered the mistress. "You are excused now, but do not let it occur again."

Then, when at last all the girls were ready and in place, waiting, the mistress commenced to call out the names of the Fourth Formers in alphabetical order.

Each girl answered her name promptly, and soon the roll was taken, with no black marks being made against the absentees.

But several of the girls were looking along the lines questioningly. But no word was said until Miss Massingham gave the order to dismiss. The other rolls had been called some few minutes previously.

"I say," cried Tess Trelawny when the mistress had gone, "Teresa Tempest—I didn't know she was out, and I didn't hear her name called!"

"It wasn't!" said Grace Garfield.

"Then she must have a late pass out," opined Madge Minden.

"She did," said Judith Grandways with a nod. "Jolly handy having an aunt for a mistress."

"You mean that Teresa got a pass from Miss Redgrave without a proper reason—by favouritism?" asked Polly Linton quickly.

Cora nodded.

"Why not?" she asked coolly. "I know I would if Miss Redgrave were my aunt."

Polly Linton sniffed scornfully.

"I dare say you would!" she answered curtly. "But I don't think it's playing the game. In fact, I think it is very mean of Miss Redgrave. Don't you, Betty?"

Polly looked hard at her chum. But Betty Barton remained silent, a slight frown upon her forehead.

"Well, I think it's mean, even if Betty doesn't," said Grace Garfield. "Perhaps Betty would have liked to be with Teresa and share the late pass?" suggested Grace.

Cora Grandways laughed.

"Teresa doesn't want anything to do with a charwoman's daughter!" she sneered. "Betty may think she can crawl round, but Teresa wouldn't have her, not even to clean her boots!"

"I don't know what you mean quite, Cora," said Betty quietly.

Before Cora could reply, Grace Garfield spoke up.

"Look here, Betty Barton!" she said. "I'm not afraid to speak, even if the others are. It seems a bit queer to me that you've taken such a sudden liking to Teresa Tempest. We don't like Teresa, and you, who profess to have such a contempt for Cora and Judith, certainly ought not to like her."

It was very plain speaking, and Betty could not misunderstand Grace's meaning.

"You—you think that I am a snob?" she cried quickly, her face very red. "You think that I am—"

Betty broke off and stared in surprise, mingled with dismay. For into the hall came Miss Somerfield, the headmistress, and the headmistress' face wore an unusually severe frown.

A silence fell, and Miss Somerfield stopped before the Fourth Formers.

"This afternoon," said Miss Somerfield, "I posted in the hall a notice inviting you to a garden-party. I little dreamed when I posted that notice," went on the headmistress in sad tones, "that I should have to take it down again and rescind the invitation."

"Re-rescind the invitation!" echoed Madge Minden.

"I am pained to say, girls," she resumed, "that a girl from this school—from this very form, in fact—has so misbehaved herself in Mrs. Norton Davis' presence as to compel that lady to write to me, saying that, since the scene she witnessed this afternoon, she finds it impossible to entertain any Morcove girl at her garden-party."

There was a gasp, and the girls looked from one to another in dismay.

"Hands up the girls who have been in Barnscombe to-day," said the headmistress.

There was a show of hands then, quite half the Form apparently had been into the town that afternoon, for there had been no hockey.

"One girl has sullied the name of her school," said Miss Somerfield sternly, "and it is one of the girls who went to Barnscombe to-day. I know how you were all looking forward to this treat. Now it is cancelled, and you have one of your own number to blame!"

Without another word the headmistress turned on her heel and left the room.

"Who did it?"

"Yes, who was the girl?"

Madge Minden, Tess Trelawny, Grace Garfield, and half a dozen others, took up the indignant questions as the headmistress left the hall, and soon the girls were staring at one another mutely.

Then Polly Linton stepped forward, a light of anger in her eyes. Betty tried to clutch her friend's sleeve, but Polly shook her off.

"I know!" cried Polly. "It was Teresa

Tempest. I am sure of it! Betty and I saw her with a friend in Barnscombe. She was all dressed up—"

"Teresa!" breathed the girls.

"Oh, the mean thing!" said Ella.

"And I shan't be able to wear my best dress!" groaned Grace Garfield.

"Nor I!" came a chorus.

"And all through Teresa, too!"

"My word, wait till she comes in!" exclaimed Madge Minden.

And the angry exclamations and fierce looks boded exceedingly ill for Teresa Tempest when she should arrive.

Bed-time came, and no sign of Teresa. The Form, still angry and disappointed, tramped up to bed. But no sooner was the dormitory door shut as the last girl entered, than it was pushed open again and a girl entered—a girl wearing a long, dark coat and a school hat.

"Cheerio!" called Teresa coolly, and sauntered to her bed.

"Well?"

It was Madge Minden who spoke, and Madge's tone was very grim.

Teresa turned and gazed coolly at the infuriated Madge. She took some hairpins from her hair, which fell down her back in long, luxuriant waves.

"Yes, you can well stand there as if nothing had happened!" snapped Madge Minden crossly. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

Teresa shrugged her shoulders.

"I don't know what you are thinking about," she sneered, "and you would oblige me greatly by not getting excited."

"Listen to me, Teresa Tempest!" cried Madge. "You were in Barnscombe this afternoon, weren't you?"

Teresa proceeded to brush her hair, but made no reply.

"Make her answer!" cried Tess Trelawny. "Put her on trial. Make Betty the judge, and we can be the jury."

"That's a good idea!" cried Madge eagerly. "Here, put a chair on Betty's bed, someone. Lock the door. We'll have a proper trial and sentence here. Things have gone beyond a joke now."

Quickly the preparations were made. A chair was stood upon Betty's bed, and over the back of the chair was flung a blanket. The girls stood round in a ring.

"Now, Betty," said Madge. "You take the judge's chair, dear—I mean, your worship!"

But Betty hung back.

"You—you be the judge, Madge," she said awkwardly. "I—I'd rather not."

"Don't be silly," said Madge. "Up you go!"

The girls looked at Betty and smiled meaningly. Betty made up her mind quickly, and, climbing to the bed, seated herself in the chair.

"Who's defending?" asked Madge briskly. "I'll defend her," said Cora Grandways quickly.

"And I'll be counsel for the prosecution," spoke up Madge Minden. "I shall enjoy being that."

"Well, get over it quickly, anyway!" snapped Teresa.

"Prisoner," said Madge Minden sternly, fixing Teresa with her eye, "you were seen in Barnscombe this afternoon, and you are charged with creating a disturbance there, so that one Mrs. Norton-Davis became annoyed at the department of a girl representing this school; and, furthermore, you are charged with bringing disgrace on the fair name of the Fourth Form at Morcove."

"Oh, stop all this tomfoolery!" said Teresa, stamping her foot. "If you want to know, I was in Barnscombe with my friend Damaris, and also I may tell you there was a bit of a scene."

"Then you plead 'Guilty'!" cried Madge Minden. "You are the girl who upset Mrs. Davis?"

"And a good job, too!" snapped Teresa.

Madge Minden flushed, then she turned to the girls. "'Guilty' or 'not Guilty'?"

"Guilty!" came a chorus that more resembled a howl than anything else.

"Then sentence her, judge," said Madge, looking up at Betty, on whom now all eyes were fixed.

Eagerly they waited for the sentence, but Betty Barton did not speak.

"Go on, Betty!" said Madge, with a frown.

She wondered what was delaying her chum's verdict. Polly herself would not have hesitated a moment.

Twice Betty half-opened her mouth to speak, but no word escaped her lips.

"Send her to Coventry!" cried Madge Minden. "Go on, Betty!"

Betty shook her head.

"I—I think we might give her another chance," she said.

There was a gasp at that, and Madge Minden stepped forward.

"Betty," she whispered, "what's the matter? They've judged her guilty. You must sentence her. Send her to Coventry!"

But Betty still shook her head, though her face was flushed. She could not help the whispered remarks that the other girls were passing. She knew that they were thinking this more evidence that she wanted to gain favour with Teresa. But she could not help that. To send Teresa to Coventry would be to break her promise to the mistress, and that she could never do!

Teresa Tempest threw back her head and laughed.

"If the game is finished—" she began. Madge Minden broke in furiously.

"The game is not finished," she said. "I don't know what is the matter with Betty, but if she won't pass sentence, I will! Teresa Tempest, you are sentenced to Coventry for a week!"

"Hear, hear!" came a cry.

Grace Garfield stood up.

"And anyone speaking to her will be sent to Coventry, too!" she amended, with a meaning glance at Betty Barton.

The next day saw Teresa Tempest, to all appearance, utterly scornful of the sentence that had been passed upon her.

She held her proud head very high, and took her place in class as though nothing had happened.

After a morning and afternoon of silence, Teresa added a remark to Judith Grandways. The girl coughed awkwardly, and turned her head away. Teresa shrugged her shoulders then, but when, during the evening, she was by herself, she fell to brooding.

The study she shared with the Grandways was hers alone now. The other occupants were in the common-room.

The girl had lit a fire, not because she was cold, but for companionship. She had drawn back the curtains and opened the window wide, so that the air in the room should not become oppressive.

She sat over the fire, leaning forward in her chair, gazing into the smouldering embers. It was depressing. What memories those embers stirred!

For the first time she realised how happy she might have made her life at Morcove.

But it was too late now. They would not speak to her, let alone cheer her. She was the outcast, ignored, treated as though she did not exist.

She had boasted, swanked, pretended she did not care. But she did care! She knew

that now. And they had been willing to give her a chance. They had given her every opportunity. But she had offended everyone even her aunt.

As the fire died still lower in the grate, she rose to her feet, a sudden resolution made as she thought of her aunt.

This silence—these flickering shadows—she could bear them no longer. She must speak to someone, hear some voice speaking to her. She resolved to go to her aunt.

Even as she walked across the room the door of the study opened.

As she tried to identify the newcomer, she realised for the first time how dark it had become. She could no longer hear shouts from the hockey-field. It must be quite late.

"Who—who's that?" she asked, a trifle huskily.

The newcomer had crossed the room, and Teresa felt a hand placed lightly on her shoulder.

"It is I, Betty Barton!"

Teresa started.

"Betty Barton!" she breathed. "What do you want?"

The captain of the Fourth Form gripped the girl's arm and pushed her into a chair.

"Want?" gasped Betty. "I want nothing. I only want to help you."

"You must want something," said Teresa bitterly, looking up. "Friends always want something. I've never had a friend yet who didn't."

"Then, Teresa, you've never yet had a real friend," said Betty. "True friends are not like that. Let me help you, please—I want to! When you are out of Coventry you will be given a chance. Why don't you take up games—try to forget your home and the luxuries and freedom you had there?"

Teresa remained silent, thinking. In her present depressed and unhappy mood she felt the need of a friend as she had never felt before.

"Do—do you think there's a chance?" she asked. "I mean, will they speak to me if—I'm not—not so haughty? But I'm not used to school life at all."

"I know—I know," said Betty. "But, Teresa dear, do try!"

Teresa Tempest bowed her head.

"I have been mean all along," she said, in a thoroughly repentant mood. "I have been rude to aunt, and I'm going to apologise."

"You are?" cried Betty. "Oh, Teresa,

that is splendid!" And Betty's eyes shone with genuine pleasure. She gripped the new girl's hand firmly. "Teresa," she whispered, "you will soon become one of the most popular girls in the Form. I know you will. Let us go and see your aunt at once."

Within a few minutes both girls were in Miss Redgrave's study.

The mistress was greatly surprised at this sudden change of front, and while Teresa stood with hanging head, Betty rapidly explained all that had happened.

"Oh, Teresa!" sighed the mistress, her face quite bright and happy, a thing it had not been since her niece's arrival at the school. "And you genuinely mean to alter your ways?"

"Yes, aunt," murmured Teresa.

Yet now she was before the mistress, and she felt forgiveness was within her reach, she became more confident.

"I mean to alter," she continued. "I can see that I have done wrong. I didn't mean to get all the girls kept away from Mrs. Norton-Davis' garden-party. I didn't, really, aunt!"

"I know—I know!" said Miss Redgrave. "But you acted very foolishly, dear, and I think you ought to apologise to Mrs. Davis—"

"I will do it!" she cried. "If Miss Somerfield will let me see Mrs. Norton-Davis, I will apologise to her."

Betty took Teresa's arm and pressed it. Together they went from the study, watched by the mistress, from whose mind a weight had been lifted by this sudden reformation of Teresa.

Out in the passage there was a crowd of girls.

"What does this mean, Betty?" demanded Madge Minden, pointing scornfully to Teresa. "You know that girl's in Coventry?"

"You're trying to win favour with her!" sneered Grace Garfield. "What did I tell you, girls?"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Teresa, more in her usual style. "If Betty Barton chooses to speak to me, that's her business!"

Madge Minden ignored her.

"I'm not speaking to you," she said curtly. She turned to Betty Barton. "Are you going to speak to this girl? You know she's disgraced the school and the Form, Betty."

Betty Barton bit her lip and looked at Madge.

"Teresa has reformed," she said. "She is going to change her ways."

At this there was a burst of laughter.

"I fancy we've heard that before!" scoffed Madge Minden. "Eh, Polly?"

But Polly Linton was taking a back part in this scene, and she said not a word, but looked hard and pleadingly at Betty.

"You still mean to speak to her?" asked Norah Nugent to Betty, pointing to Teresa.

Betty nodded.

"Yes, I——" she began.

"Then I'm finished with you!" said Norah curtly. "And I think the Form had better look out for a new captain."

"Hear, hear!"

Betty Barton flushed, and opened her mouth to speak. But she shut it again, as the girls turned their back upon her and commenced to walk away.

CHAPTER 17.

A Much-needed Lesson!

"TERESA!"

Betty looked into the new girl's study. Teresa was there, quite alone, perusing a fashion paper.

She looked up at the captain of the Fourth, frowned slightly, then smiled.

"Hallo!" she said. "Come in! These silly duffers seem to be keeping up their frozen attitude!"

Betty entered the room and crossed to the girl. She could see that Teresa, though she treated the matter lightly, was still affected by the silence which even Cora and Judith Grandways were maintaining.

It was the evening following Teresa's praiseworthy decision to apologise to Mrs. Norton-Davis for the scene in the village, and Betty had come to inform Teresa that permission had been obtained for them to go.

Together they went down the stairs and out of the school.

"I suppose it won't take long?" mused Teresa. "We can get a train at the station, eh?"

Betty nodded.

"Yes, there will be a train from Morcove Road," she answered.

It was a splendid evening and very pleasant for walking, but it was obvious that that means of transit did not appeal to Teresa. As a car flashed by she looked at it enviously.

"That's the way to travel," she grumbled. "Of course, we've got some cars at home—"

She broke off and stared ahead. The car that had flashed by them had drawn up, and the girl driving glanced round.

"My word!" exclaimed Teresa. "Why, that's Damaris Leander!"

"Damaris!" said Betty. "The girl you were with—"

She frowned. It was not at all to Betty's liking that this girl should appear on the scene now.

Teresa did not heed Betty, but ran forward, her face bright with pleasure. And Betty, perforce, followed, but at a walk.

The girl in the car leaned back and gave a nod.

"Cheerio, Teresa!" she said. "Whither bound?"

"Eh? Oh, Barnscombe!" said Teresa.

Meeting this girl, all her old ways and mannerisms, all her swank and airy manner, came back. She did not like to tell Damaris that she was on her way to apologise to Mrs. Norton-Davis.

"Barnscombe!" cried Damaris. "Then jump in; I'm going there!"

In her momentary excitement at meeting Damaris, Teresa forgot all about Betty.

"Right-ho!" she said, and opened the door.

In she climbed, with a shout to Betty to jump in. But before Betty could follow, the car had moved off, and Betty—she was too amazed at first to realise what had happened.

Then she shouted, but the noise of the car moving off drowned her shout. There in the roadway she stood, staring in amazement after the fast-moving car.

Teresa Tempest had gone, and left her to walk!

But the new girl, looking back, saw what had happened.

"Damaris!" she cried. "Betty Barton! That girl I was with! We've left her behind!"

"Left her behind!" said Damaris. "Who is she?"

"Oh, that girl who spoke to me the other day when I was with you!" she said.

"That girl!" said Damaris scornfully. "I thought you weren't friends with her? You told me she was a charwoman's daughter, or something—"

"I—well—" stammered Teresa, then lapsed into silence. "Anyway, I suppose I

can wait for her in Barnscombe. She is sure to catch a train."

"Yes, of course," shrugged Damaris. "Please yourself, you know!"

The car was simply leaping along the lanes, and the speedometer, as Teresa noted with a thrill, registered forty-five miles an hour.

It was a reckless pace, and Teresa had as much as she could do to keep her hat on her head.

"My-my word!" she gasped. "This is moving, you know! I don't like to go at this pace. It's a bit risky."

Even heedless Teresa was awed for once. They were in the town now, and Damaris half-turned her head.

"Where shall I stop, Teresa?" she asked. "Oh, anywhere!" said the girl. "I don't suppose Betty will arrive for a long time."

The car slowed up, and Damaris steered it to a kerb, where it came to a standstill.

"Well, if your friend's not coming yet," she said, "what do you say to tea?"

Teresa had already had tea at the school, but she nodded, not wishing to decline the invitation of this finely dressed companion of hers.

Damaris looked round thoughtfully, then operated the self-starter. The engine purred, and the car moved forward.

"We'll make it the River Café," she said. "That's a decent sort of place, and there's dancing there."

Teresa had no objection at all, so Damaris, who apparently knew the small town very well, steered the car down a side turning that led to the river. On the right was the River Café. Damaris ran the car on to a stretch of grass by the water's edge.

Teresa alighted, and her companion followed.

"This way," said Damaris, and strolled into the café.

All thoughts of Betty Barton had now gone from Teresa's mind. She always loved the sound of clinking cups, mingled with laughter and song. Somehow it seemed to fit in with her peculiar temperament.

Out on the lawn behind the café tables were placed, and people sat at them sipping coffee or lemonade through straws, and munched dainty cakes.

Damaris ordered two iced drinks, then she lit a cigarette and puffed away.

"Long time in bringing things, these people," she said. "Come for a stroll." And she rose from her chair.

Teresa not unwillingly followed suit, and together they strolled along the lawn.

"A beautiful river," said Damaris, eyeing the scenery thoughtfully, "and that mill there is picturesque, don't you think?"

"Very," nodded Teresa, with just a casual glance at the fine old mill, which stood slightly to the left, its wheel turning rapidly as the water roared upon it.

"Rapid stream," said Damaris; "come on to the towpath."

At the bottom of the long lawn was an iron gate, leading on to the riverside, and through this the girls went.

"I once sketched the mill," said Damaris. "You know—"

Woof! Woof!

At that sudden, angry bark, the smartly dressed girl jumped, and turned round.

But there was no danger. The dog that had barked was behind the railings of a garden. On the fence was a "Beware of the Dog" notice. But the huge mastif looked harmless enough.

"Pierce thing!" snapped Damaris. "It quite frightened me!"

Before Teresa could stop her, she had picked up a stone and hurled it at the dog. "There!" she cried. "Now don't make that noise again!"

As the stone thudded cruelly against his ribs the dog gave a howl of pain that changed almost instantaneously to a roar of rage.

He came at the railing with a rush.

Damaris Leander gave a scream.

"My word!" she cried. "He is coming for us. Run, Teresa, run!"

Both girls turned together, for the dog looked perfectly ferocious.

"Run!" cried Damaris again. "The car's at the top of the towpath."

The posts across the path were just ahead, and the two girls reached them almost together. They were far too excited to think of slipping under the bar that crossed, and there was only room enough for one to get through at a time.

"Let me get through—let me get through—" shrieked Damaris, quivering with fear.

Roughly she pushed Teresa aside and tore between the posts.

It was a sudden revelation of the girl's true, cowardly nature. She had run on, not caring what happened to her friend.

"Wait for me, Damaris!" cried Teresa.

She glanced round. The dog was down

now on the towpath, and, seeing the girls running, set off in chaso of them.

She strained every muscle, fear lending her wings. Then her foot caught a trailing root of a tree.

Thud!

Down on the towpath she went, all the breath knocked out of her body. She could hear the dog behind her.

She jumped to her feet. The dog was almost upon her. Teresa, with a scream, her hands in the air, drew back a fatal step.

In the excitement of the moment she had forgotten that she stood upon the river's brink. She took one step too many, and with a tremendous splash went into the river.

The dog paused just for a fraction of a second, then raced on after the still-fleeing figure of Damaris.

"Help! Oh, help!" shrieked Teresa.

But Damaris Leander did not hear, or, if she did, made no sign. Not once did she look round to see whether or not her chum was following.

Of her friend's danger Damaris heeded not.

Teresa was being carried away by the stream! She looked up, and for the first time remembered the mill.

There it was in front of her, the wheel, turning with roaring regularity, churning the water.

And still the unmerciful stream carried her on. Teresa almost fainted, then she struck out with fresh vigour. But she could make no headway against the stream, for her ankle ached painfully, and she knew that in falling she must have twisted it.

Nearer and nearer to the turning wheel. A black curtain seemed to drop before the girl's eyes.

"Help!" she shrieked. "Oh, help, help! I shall be drowned!"

And then, like a voice from afar, came an answering cry.

"Hold on; I am coming!"

Teresa half-turned and sank like a stone. In that brief second memories of her selfish life crowded through her brain.

Suddenly a firm hand took her under the armpits as she came up to the surface. A low, sweet-sounding voice said in her ear:

"Don't struggle!"

Teresa choked; she could scarcely breathe. She kicked out, then suddenly became still, a dead weight upon her unknown rescuer.

And the girl that had dived in to her

rescue—what a task she had! But her teeth were set and her strokes long. Evidently she was used to the water.

Gone were Teresa's curls. Her hair was a wet mass, but she was lost to the world now, quite unconscious.

The girl from the mill, who had seen the whole occurrence, swam strongly, and at every stroke drew the unconscious schoolgirl away from the dreaded wheel.

And now on the bank appeared another figure—a schoolgirl—who had arrived just too late to do as the girl from the mill had done.

That girl was Betty Barton. As she saw Teresa's brave rescuer was making for the opposite bank, where there was no current, Betty raced along the towpath and crossed by the bridge that ran through the mill.

On the other side she waited, and when at last the girl, with her unconscious burden, came near enough, Betty leaned over, grasped the girl's hand and dragged her up.

"My word! How brave that was!" exclaimed Betty, unable to conceal her admiration. "It was at the risk of your life, and—and for a girl you do not know."

"It was nothing," said the other softly.

She was quite a young girl, and Betty's praise made her flush. She dropped to her knees, and quickly commenced to apply artificial respiration.

Betty lent a hand, and anxiously they watched for signs of life.

For a long time Teresa remained a white, limp figure; then Betty, watching carefully, gave a glad cry.

"She lives—oh, she lives!"

Teresa Tempest had opened her eyes.

She blinked round, looked at Betty, then shuddered.

"Oh, the wheel—the wheel!" she muttered, then shuddered again.

"It's all right," said the strange girl soothingly. "You are safe now—quite safe."

Teresa turned her almost lifeless eyes to Betty.

"You did this," she exclaimed, "and Damaris."

Betty shook her head.

"This is the girl who rescued you, this brave girl," she said, turning to the unknown rescuer.

Teresa Tempest sat up suddenly.

"You!" she exclaimed, staring at the girl.

"You did it! I don't know you! You did this for me—me, whom you don't know?"

Her voice trailed off.

"Why not?" asked the girl. "I saw that your friend had run off—saw that you were left alone in the water."

"And you rescued me?" finished Teresa hoarsely. "You rescued me and—and I am nothing to you! Damaris—"

"She is a false friend," said Betty. "Oh, Teresa—Teresa, this is a lesson to you! Damaris is no friend."

Teresa, her mind full of remorse, nodded. Then a shiver ran through her.

"Come," said the girl who had rescued her. "You must dry your clothes. I live here by the mill. Come with me."

Between them, they raised the exhausted Teresa and led her to the house that stood by the mill.

"And you—you, too, need a change!" gaped Teresa, looking at her rescuer.

Then Betty smiled. It was the first unselfish remark she had ever heard Teresa make. This was a new Teresa, a girl who had learnt a lesson to think of others.

"Here they come!"

There was quite a crowd of girls at the gateway at Morcove School when Betty and Teresa at length got back. It was past calling-over time, and the girls were curious and not a little anxious about the absence of the two girls.

"Fine thing when our captain goes out like this, with a girl who has been sent to Coventry by the Form," said Grace Garfield.

"Why," exclaimed Norah Nugent, as the two girls came nearer, "what's happened?"

And there were gasps of amazement.

For Teresa Tempest wore no hat, her dress was screwed up—in fact, it was not a school dress at all, but a neat, though far from smart and well-fitting, serge dress, one that the girl who lived by the mill had lent Teresa.

"What a shabby dress!" cried Ella Elgood. "I say, Teresa—"

"What's wrong, Betty?" asked Polly Linton amazed, taking her chum's arm.

"There's been a slight accident," said Betty. "Teresa fell in the river and a girl rescued her."

There were cries of amazement at this.

"How did it happen?" cried several girls.

But Teresa did not answer, and Betty, she did not stop either.

When she reached her study, Teresa flung herself into a chair.

"I want to think," she said to Betty. "I want to think. I've been a fool. I realise that now. I have been selfish; and that girl to-day—she rescued me at the risk of her life, while my one friend—"

Teresa left the rest of her remark to be imagined.

Betty nodded.

"I understand," she said, with bright eyes. "Oh, Teresa, I am so glad you see things in that light."

And Betty quietly shut the door.

CHAPTER 18.

Called to Account.

TAP! Betty Barton looked up, and Teresa Tempest, the other occupant of Study No. 7, gave a slight start.

The study belonged to Cora and Judith Grandways, but it was also shared by Teresa Tempest. At the present moment, however, Cora and Judith were absent.

"Who is this?" asked the new girl. "Someone else to make inquiries. Come in, silly!"

The door opened, and Teresa's jaw dropped slightly. For the visitor she had addressed as "silly" was none other than Miss Massingham, the Fourth Form mistress!

"Good-evening!" frowned the mistress.

"We—we didn't know it was you, Miss Massingham," stammered Betty. "We thought that it was some girl—"

"Presumably," said the mistress coldly. Her brow was dark, and Betty could see that there was trouble ahead. "Teresa," went on the mistress, with a glare at the new girl, who was lounging in an armchair, "the headmistress wants you in her study immediately. And, Betty, you had better come, too."

"M-miss Somerfield wants me?" asked Teresa. "I—"

But catching a quick glance from Betty, she said no more.

"Come!" said the mistress, and opened the study door wider for the girls to pass through.

Miss Massingham led the way to the headmistress' study in silence.

"Come in!" said Miss Somerfield's voice

in unusually stern tones. And the two girls and the mistress entered.

Teresa, her hands clasped, eyed the headmistress almost challengingly.

"Teresa Tempest!" said Miss Somerfield sternly. "Last night you had permission to leave the school in order to apologise to Mrs. Norton-Davis for your conduct in the town the other day. Did you do this?"

Teresa held her head upright.

"I did not, Miss Somerfield," she said. "I intended to, but—"

"But what?" said the headmistress quickly. "You had permission to leave the school, only on the understanding that you would go to Mrs. Norton-Davis." She turned to Betty Barton. "You, Betty," she resumed, "as captain of the Form, and Teresa's companion on the mission, why did you not see that my wishes were carried out?"

Betty flushed uncomfortably.

Then Teresa spoke up.

"It was my fault, Miss Somerfield," she said steadily. "Betty could not help herself. A friend of mine came along in a car, and offered me a lift—for the moment I forgot all about Betty Barton."

"Forgot!" exclaimed Miss Somerfield. "What story is this you are telling me? And who was this friend?"

"A— a friend of mine," said Teresa vaguely. "You don't know her, Miss Somerfield. Anyway, I forgot, and she and I went to tea somewhere."

The girl's outspoken and almost challenging tones dumbfounded the headmistress, who did not seem to know quite what to say. She looked at Miss Massingham, and that lady shrugged her shoulders.

"You are a very difficult girl, Teresa," said Miss Somerfield. "How to punish you, I don't quite know. Last night your aunt, Miss Redgrave, told me that you were repentant of your folly—that you had decided to reform. That is why I was so willing to let you go yesterday to Mrs. Norton-Davis. You have misused the freedom I gave you. On your own confession you went to tea. Really, you seem incorrigible!"

"Oh, Miss Somerfield!" pleaded Betty. "Please, please give Teresa a chance. I am sure there is good in her. It was only thoughtlessness—"

"Silence!" said Miss Somerfield sternly. "You, Betty, should have thought of that before, and have looked after this girl. As

it is, the slur still remains on the name of the school. Through Teresa's conduct in the town the other day no Morcove girl may go to the garden-party Mrs. Norton-Davis is giving to-morrow. No one is more sorry than I that her invitation to the school should have been withdrawn."

Teresa seemed to swallow something in her throat.

"Miss Somerfield," she said, "I will apologise. Let me go again to-day, and —"

The headmistress brought her clenched hand down with a thump upon the table before her.

"Silence, Teresa!" she cried. "Do you think you will be allowed to repeat your escapade? You have acted stupidly and thoughtlessly. I wrote to Mrs. Norton-Davis telling her you would come last night. Now—" The mistress shrugged her shoulders. "In her eyes the school must appear more ill-mannered than ever. I cannot let you go again, Teresa. There is now only one course open to me."

Betty Barton's heart sank. As she had feared, Miss Somerfield had taken the blackest view of the whole circumstance. If only Miss Somerfield had known of that accident of the night before! The captain of the Fourth gave her companion one glance, and made as though to speak.

"Stop!" hissed Teresa in her ear, and pinched Betty's arm. "I can stand it."

So the story of Teresa's fall into the river was not told.

"Please do not whisper," ordered the headmistress severely. "Teresa Tempest, you will be gated for the rest of the week—kept within school bounds. You understand?"

At first Teresa did not reply; a sullen look crossed her face. But a tap on the arm from Betty changed her mind.

"I understand, Miss Somerfield," she said.

The headmistress nodded.

"Then the interview is closed," she said. "You will return to your studies. But first, Betty—"

"Yes, Miss Somerfield!"

"Betty, you will be more careful in future. When you are placed in charge of a girl, do not let her wander off at will with any companions she may choose. I am not at all satisfied with Teresa's account of her adventures last night—"

Teresa turned back from the door.

"Betty couldn't help it," she said. "It was my fault. There—there was an accident. I fell in the river—that was how I forgot the apology. And the girl I was with was Damaris Leander, a friend of my mother's."

"A friend of your mother's!" said Miss Somerfield. "Oh!"

Then, as she said nothing more, the two girls went from the study.

Outside in the passage was Polly Linton.

"Betty," said Polly, "what is it? Have you been punished? Has Miss Somerfield —"

Betty Barton shook her head. "It is all right, Polly dear," she answered.

"But that girl!" exclaimed Polly, pointing scornfully to Teresa. "She would not mind getting you into trouble. She has got you into disgrace before. Oh, why do you bother about her now, Betty dear? We have both tried—"

"You mind your own business!" snapped Teresa, in something like her old tones.

And then Betty had to act the part of peacemaker. She stepped between the two girls, and gave Polly a pleading look.

"Polly," she whispered, "trust me, please—trust me! This will be all right. Teresa is a different girl now. I can't explain. Only give her a chance!"

Polly hesitated, and then shrugged her shoulders.

"I suppose you're right, Betty," she answered rather shortly. "You usually are."

And Polly Linton turned on her heel.

"That girl!" said Teresa, with a slight sneer. "What a mad-brained, harum-scarum she is!"

"Polly is my friend, Teresa," said Betty gently.

The old Teresa—the Teresa Morcove had first known—would have made some snappy reply to that. But this was the new Teresa, changed by the rescue from the river.

"I'm sorry," she said.

She pushed open the door of Study No. 7, and together the two went inside. It was quite dark now, and Teresa lit the gas.

That ornate, expensively furnished room! Teresa glanced round. How empty all this gilded show seemed! What did all this avail her? She answered for herself—nothing!

"Oh, Betty," she said, looking up, "what a fool I have been! All along you have

been right. I have been selfish—mean. I see that now. That girl last night showed me reason. When I think of the unselfish way she dived into the river to rescue me—"

A glad light shone in the eyes of the captain of the Fourth Form as she leaned towards Teresa.

"Teresa," she whispered, "I am so glad. I know now that you have altered. All your old boasting is gone. For you to—"

Abruptly Betty broke off in the middle of her sentence, to glance up as the door opened.

Into the study came a crowd of girls, and Betty and Teresa jumped to their feet.

"My—my gracious!" exclaimed Betty. "What does this mean?"

The foremost girl, who was Grace Garfield, pointed to Teresa.

"Mean!" laughed Grace. "Why, we want to know the reason why you, Betty Barton, the captain of the Form, accompany that girl—that swank—when she goes on her flaunts?"

Betty did not reply, and Teresa smiled, and shrugged her shoulders.

"We're not going to stand it," said Ella Elgood, and there was a murmur of approval.

"You've swanked and boasted," exclaimed Norah Nugent, "and now through you we've been forbidden to go near Mrs. Norton-Davis' house. We've missed that garden-party, and all through you!"

Teresa remained silent.

"That's right, sit like a dummy!" said Grace Garfield. "I hope you got into the row you deserved this evening!" She turned to Betty Barton. "As for you," she said, "you're as bad as Teresa! I'm finished with you both!"

"And I!"

It was a regular chorus. One angry look more did the crowd give the two girls, then the door slammed.

"Good riddance!" said Teresa instantly.

Then her expression seemed to undergo a rapid change.

"Betty," she muttered, "do you think I should apologise to them? Would it help?"

Betty smiled.

"Apologise?" she cried. "I am sure it would help, Teresa. How glad I am you thought of it. They will know then that you are sorry for what has happened. They

cannot help judging you by the way you have acted in the past."

"I know," said Teresa. "I know. But I will try to be different. I will, Betty."

And Betty could see that she meant it.

CHAPTER 19.

An Urgent Summons.

"COMING down to the gates?"

Teresa linked her arm in Betty's and looked at that girl with a smile.

It was Wednesday, the morning of the garden-party, and, breakfast over, the girls were whiling away the interval before the start of the morning lessons.

"Down to the gates?" asked Betty in surprise. "Why?"

"Postman," answered Teresa. "I'm expecting a letter and a remittance from my mother. The postman seems to be late, so I thought we might go and meet him."

Betty nodded her head.

"Right-ho!" she said. "I'll come."

So they wandered down to the gates. There were several Fourth-Formers in the quadrangle, and they gave Teresa and Betty looks that were very cold and unfriendly indeed.

"Any letters for me?" asked Teresa, quickly stepping forward as the postman appeared.

"Name?" asked the postman.

"Teresa Tempest. It will be in a round handwriting, on a blue envelope. Mother always likes blue."

The postman grinned.

"No blue envelopes here," he said. "But I think there's one for you, all the same, miss. I noticed it on account of the new name."

"Then hand it over," said Teresa, patting into place the wilful wisp of hair—much in her old style. But then, as Betty realised, it was impossible for this girl to drop immediately all her old habits and mannerisms.

The postman handed out the envelope and then passed on, and Teresa stared at it quite puzzled.

"I don't know this writing," she said.

"Unless"—she looked at Betty—"unless it's from Damaris."

She slit the envelope eagerly, and drew out a folded sheet of notepaper. While she read it, Betty watched her.

"Well," she said, as Teresa made re

sound. "What is— Why, goodness! Teresa!"

Betty started forward, for Teresa—she was staring at the letter in her hand like one in a trance.

"What is it?" cried Betty. "Oh, Teresa, is it bad news?"

The new girl shook her head dumbly, and handed the letter to Betty.

That girl took it and perused it rapidly, quite as surprised as her companion had been.

"From the girl's mother—the girl who rescued you!" she gasped. "Oh, Teresa, she's ill—ill, and nearly dying the woman says!"

Teresa took back the letter and read it again.

"All through me!" she muttered. "Betty, this girl is ill! She must have caught cold through that wetting the other day. And it was all through me. All my fault. Oh, Betty, I must see her—I must!"

She looked at the letter in her hand, and the words swam before her eyes:

"Come if you can. Cissy is calling for you. She is delirious, poor child!"

"She wants you," said Betty, when she, too, had read the letter. "She knows your name, the mother says, through reading it in your hat, which you left behind. Teresa, you must go—this afternoon—directly after classes—"

"I will," said Teresa, then suddenly back to her mind came the interview of the night before, and the headmistress' sentence. "But, Betty," she exclaimed, "Miss Somerfield has gated me. I can't go."

"Can't go!" repeated Betty. "Oh, I had forgotten that! Surely Miss Somerfield would let you go, Teresa, if she knew! She must!"

Teresa Tempest set her lips.

"Whether she does or does not, Betty," she said, "I am going! This girl, she saved my life, and now that she wants me I must go."

Betty put her arm round the girl's waist.

"Teresa, I am glad to hear you talking like that. I know that you want to go. This is the making of you. You must go, and I will ask your aunt. Miss Redgrave will explain everything to Miss Somerfield, where perhaps we could not."

"You will ask her, Betty?" cried Teresa.

"But suppose she says 'No'? That will only make matters worse. For I must go—I shall go, whatever they say!"

Betty shook her head, and gave the girl a pleading look.

"If you are refused permission, you must not go, dear," she said. "Teresa, you really must not. You would be expelled. You know what Miss Somerfield said. She's going to keep an eye on you. And she will be very strict about that gating!"

"But, Betty!" exclaimed Teresa. "Oh, I must go!"

"Then I will ask Miss Redgrave," said the captain of the Fourth Form. "But come, Teresa; there goes the bell for lessons."

And into class the two went.

All that morning Teresa Tempest was most inattentive, and brought words of wrath upon her own head. Miss Massingham was not a mistress to be lightly treated, and she rapped her desk with the pointer several times, and called Teresa to account.

And how the other girls smiled! They felt that the girl deserved all that she was getting. Betty gave Teresa a warning look to be careful.

How eager Teresa was to get the morning lessons over! She did not know quite how she endured them. All the time her thoughts were centred on the girl who had rescued her—the girl who was now lying ill, crying for her in a delirium.

And Teresa was gated!

Towards the end of the lesson Miss Massingham called for silence.

"Girls," she said, "do not forget that all of you are gated this afternoon. Miss Somerfield has taken this precaution to make sure that no girl goes to the garden-party." She looked hard at Teresa Tempest. "But for one girl," she resumed, "you would most of you be able to enjoy yourselves at Mrs. Norton-Davis'."

Someone started to hiss, but Miss Massingham silenced it immediately.

"That is enough," said the mistress. "But do not forget. Any girl seen going out of the school—unless, of course, she receives special permission, which is not very likely—will be severely punished."

At that Betty gave Teresa a meaning look to tell her it would not do at all to take matters in her own hands.

Lessons ended at last, however, and there was quite a rush for the door. Betty

crossed to Teresa's desk, and, when the others had gone, said:

"Teresa, I'm going to Miss Redgrave; it's the only way."

So Teresa, of course, agreed. Hopeful of success, the captain of the Fourth Form, accompanied by Teresa, went along to Miss Redgrave's study, tapped on the door, and entered.

Teresa waited outside.

"Miss Redgrave," said Betty, "can I have a word with you, please?"

The popular young mistress looked up. Her face, Betty could not help noticing, was very sad and worried. Her troublesome niece had told upon her even more than Betty had suspected.

"What is it, Betty?" she said. "Something about Teresa? Oh, please do not say she is in further trouble!"

Betty shook her head.

"Not in trouble, Miss Redgrave," she said. "But Monday, when Teresa went to Barncombe, she fell in the river. A girl, at great danger to herself, dived in and saved Teresa. And now that girl is ill—delirious—and asking for Teresa. Here is the letter from the mother. Oh, Miss Redgrave, please let her go!"

"Let her go!" repeated the mistress slowly, as she leaned forward to take the letter Betty handed to her. This she perused. Then, with marked surprise, she looked up.

"Betty," she said to the girl who was waiting anxiously. "I can see that this is genuine. But—but how can I persuade Miss Somerfield? It will be difficult, very difficult. Once before Teresa had permission to leave the school with a worthy object, and I have heard how she used—or, rather, misused—the permission to go tea with a friend of hers!"

"But, Miss Redgrave, this is genuine. Teresa really is changed. She is grateful to that girl who rescued her; and—oh, let her go, please! She will go, I know that, and if she does not get permission she will go without it."

"Go without permission!" exclaimed the mistress. "You cannot mean that!"

"I do," said Betty. "Oh, it is genuine, Miss Redgrave!"

So pleading was the girl's tone that the mistress could not help but be impressed by it. Once more she glanced at the letter, and saw the urgency of Teresa's mission.

"It is a matter of life or death," she murmured. "This Marjorie Staines is calling for Teresa. Marjorie, the rescuer of Teresa." She placed the letter down suddenly, rose from her chair, and nodded quickly and decisively.

"Very well, Betty," she sighed. "I will see Miss Somerfield. I will do my utmost to persuade her to allow Teresa to go. For this journey may do Teresa all the good in the world. It is the first time she has ever wanted to do anything for another girl."

And, with the mistress' promise, Betty left the study to tell Teresa the good news.

Out in the quadrangle a crowd of girls stood, sulky, and not at all contented. Their afternoon had been spoilt. Polly Linton had tried to organise a game of hockey, but there had been no keenness. On any other day the girls would have played readily enough. But they knew that they were gated, and not allowed out of the grounds, and they wanted to go. More than ever the river and the open fields appealed to them. But the open fields and the flowing river were as closed books that afternoon.

The sight of Teresa, some minutes later, walking to the gates, was like a red flag to a bull, and a whole crowd of them set in chase.

Betty was with Teresa, and as she heard the girls she turned.

"What is it?" she exclaimed, rather crossly.

Madge Minden, Tess Trelawney, Trixie Hope, and Grace Garfield, and half a dozen others, stopped. Polly Linton kept well in the rear. Polly had complete trust in Betty. She had decided that whatever happened was, in the long run, for the best, and this—well, she could not understand; but, anyway, Betty probably knew best.

"What is it?" repeated Tess Trelawney. "You may well ask that, Betty Barton. Why is Teresa wearing her school hat? Why is she walking to the gates? She cannot go out. We are all gated!"

Teresa turned now and looked at them scornfully.

"I am going out!" she said, with a return to her old way. "I don't see what it has to do with you at all. I have permission."

"Permission!"

The girls looked surprised. Then Madge Minden, pointing, said:

"Why, here comes Miss Redgrave!"

As the young mistress approached there was silence, and many of the girls stared at her doubtfully.

"Teresa," said the mistress, "Miss Somerfield says you must be back by six o'clock, and not a minute later."

"Six," nodded Teresa. "Thanks, aunt. Thanks for getting me permission."

And Teresa, with a grateful nod, walked with Betty to the gate. The mistress returned to the school house. But, when she had gone, what an outcry there was on the part of the Fourth-Formers!

"It isn't fair!" exclaimed Grace Garfield. "It isn't!"

"Sheer favouritism!" snapped Ella Elgood.

And that was the general opinion. Really, what else could they think when they were kept in on this fine afternoon, and Teresa—the cause of all the trouble—was allowed to go out until six o'clock?

And while the Fourth-Formers angrily discussed Miss Redgrave and her alleged favouritism, Betty was saying a few warning words to Teresa Tempest.

"Don't be late, whatever you do!" whispered Betty. "Oh, Teresa, remember! If you are late, if you do anything silly as you did before, your last chance has gone."

"I know," said Teresa quietly. Then she laughed—her old laugh. "Oh, trust me!" she said. "I'm not a bungler!"

But Betty, as she returned to the school, was not so sure that things were all right.

Suppose Teresa should meet her friend Damaris!

CHAPTER 20.

Speed!

"OH, Miss Tempest, I am glad you have come!"

It was Mrs. Staines, a thin, rather shrunken woman, who opened the door of the small cottage by the mill. It was a dark house inside, with old-fashioned rooms crowded with odds and ends, and dingy pieces of furniture.

Teresa gave one look round the small front room as she entered, and could not help an involuntary shudder. To one who had been used to every luxury, this was nauseous. She followed the thin woman upstairs.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Staines, and she laid her finger to her lips. "The doctor is in the rear girl."

Teresa entered the room—there was no need to warn her to go silently. She was a changed girl. In her now there was no trace of swank, no trace of her airy manner, and conceit.

Never before had she been confronted by sickness, and it awed her.

The small bed-room was barely furnished, just with the few necessities, and one or two cheaply framed pictures on the wall.

On a bed lay a sick girl, white and thin.

Teresa started forward as the girl tossed and turned on the bed.

The doctor, who sat patiently watching by the bedside, raised his hand impetuously, almost angrily.

So Teresa stood quite still, her heart beating quickly. Her eyes took in the whole scene, impressing it lastingly upon her brain.

She stared in mute amazement at the girl on the bed—the girl who had rescued her. She turned and looked at the mother, who was dabbing her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"Oh, she did so want you to come, Miss Tempest!" she whispered. "It is good of you—"

Teresa almost laughed.

"Good of me!" she exclaimed, in choked tones. "Good! When she is suffering for me—for my selfish folly!"

And she clenched her hands helplessly, her heart filled with bitter remorse.

Remorse, the bitterest of emotions, brought back to her mind all her follies, all her boasting, and her heedlessness.

And now—now for the first time she was face to face with a tragedy—a real tragedy. Never before had she treated life seriously. She had scrambled through it, caring for nothing, except the fact that behind her she had money and a home.

Once again she looked round the room, at the walls stained and dirty, at the chair with its broken seat, and lastly, with a lump in her throat, at the bed.

The girl in the bed stirred.
"Teresa!" she moaned. "Teresa Tempest! Teresa Tempest!"

Teresa stepped forward impulsively, and dropped to her knees.

"Stop!" she whispered hoarsely. "Oh, don't speak like that! I am here! I am Teresa Tempest!"

The girl's wandering hand gripped

Teresa's, and still that moaning voice went on:

"Teresa, Teresa, Teresa Tempest!"

Teresa turned to the doctor.

"Can't you do anything?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, why do you sit like that? Why don't you do something?"

The doctor sighed and shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Wait," he said. "We can only wait."

In an agony of suspense Teresa sat there holding the delirious girl's hand. On the other side of the bed the mother leaned her head on the counterpane and cried softly.

At last, as four o'clock struck, the doctor rose. He crossed to the weeping woman and patted her shoulder.

"The worst has happened," he said.

"We must get a specialist immediately. "One cannot play about with double pneumonia."

The woman looked up.

"A specialist!" she cried. "But the money. We cannot afford it! And, oh, she will die! Marjorie, Marjorie—speak, speak! Oh, my darling!"

And the woman fell upon the bed, her whole thin frame shaking with sobs.

"Don't worry, my good woman," said the doctor soothingly. "I will see that things are all right. Have no fear. In Taunton even now the very man—the finest man I could obtain—is staying. He is a friend of mine—Sir Laxton Vane."

"Taunton!" exclaimed Teresa. "But how far away is that?"

"Forty miles," said the doctor, with a slight shrug. "We must get a car and send someone."

Teresa shook her head.

"I will go," she said. "I can get a car; my friend has one."

Waiting only for the doctor to write the address, she grabbed at her hat and pulled it on her head.

The woman, with tear-stained face, turned to her.

"Oh, you dear, unselfish girl!" she exclaimed. "How grateful I am that you came!"

"It is nothing, nothing compared with what she did for me!" said Teresa hastily, evading the woman's embrace. "But I must not linger!"

And she rushed helter-skelter down the stairs, out of the house, and on to tow-

path. Through the mill, over the bridge she ran, and then past the river café to the main street of Barncombe.

Then she paused. Which way should she go? Damaris would surely be out! Damaris — Why, of course! Damaris would be at the garden-party. That girl had nervy enough for a dozen. Despite the thing she had said about Mrs. Davis, Damaris would somehow manage to be at the garden-party. Her people were well known, and Mrs. Davis was new to the district, so Damaris would be asked, not for herself, but for her name's sake.

So Teresa, after a hurried inquiry as to where the garden-party was to be held, hurried on.

Yes, there was the house—a large house, and up a side street were parked more than a dozen cars. Teresa ran her eyes over them hastily. She could not see Damaris', yet she felt sure it was there.

She entered the grounds, and ran down a path, looking to right and left.

Everywhere were fashionably dressed women and a few men. All gave the girl curious, half-amused glances. But Teresa did not heed them.

She approached a lady.

"Excuse me," she cried. "Have you seen Miss Leander — Miss Damaris Leander?"

The lady, who had been smiling to an acquaintance, turned sharply at the sound of the voice, and Teresa's heart gave a leap. It was Mrs. Norton-Davis!

She was almost tempted to run away then, for the look on the other's face—it was simply ferocious.

"You!" she exclaimed. "Why, I thought—"

Teresa turned away, and as she did so a girl came running towards her—a fashionably dressed girl, who held out her hand.

"Teresa!" she exclaimed. "My goodness, you—"

Damaris seemed to have quite forgotten the incident of the river, when she had run away, leaving Teresa struggling in the water. Neither did Teresa trouble to remind her.

"Come quick; not a minute to spare!" cried Teresa urgently. "Oh, Damaris, it is a matter of life or death! I want your car. Come!"

Damaris frowned and hesitated, but the schoolgirl gripped her sleeve and dragged

lier off, followed by the surprised looks of the garden-party guests.

And Mrs. Norton-Davis, absolutely astounded, glared after the two girls through her lorgnettes.

Teresa led the protesting Damaris to the gates, not listening to one of the girl's excited words.

"Your car!" cried Teresa. "Where is it? There is a girl dying. We must go to Taunton. Oh, hurry—hurry!"

And Damaris saw then that Teresa was in deadly earnest.

She hurried round to the side road as she had not hurried in her life before. There was something so compelling about Teresa's manner that Damaris felt under a spell.

The car was reached, and it was Teresa who went into the driving seat, and Damaris meekly got in beside her.

Teresa started the engine, and, reversing her gears, steered the car back. Then the car was sent forward at a leap.

As they raced along the dusty road, Damaris held her breath.

"I say, ease up, Teresa!" she panted, as the car leapt along a straight stretch of road. The speedometer registered fifty-two miles an hour.

And Teresa had gasped when, a few night before, Damaris had raced the car much slower than that.

It was dangerous driving at that speed, but it was a matter of life or death.

In a few short sentences Teresa explained the urgency of the case.

"It's forty miles to Taunton!" added Teresa through her teeth. "We must get there in at least an hour."

"An hour! Then you want a 'plane!"

"A 'plane! What's the good of talking of miracles? 'Planes don't happen along here," said Teresa.

But Damaris looked quite excited.

"Teresa!" she cried. "Teresa! Have you the nerve to fly?"

"Nerve!" exclaimed the schoolgirl. "Of course I've the nerve if there's a machine anywhere. But there isn't."

"You're wrong," cried Damaris, with shining eyes. "There is a machine, and near here, too—a runabout owned by a friend of the pater's. He's only just got it. He was in the Air Force."

Teresa's eyes sparkled, although this news seemed too good to be true.

"It's at a large house lying back on the

left here," said Damaris. "We'll pass it in a minute. Put her all out, Teresa!"

Which Teresa did. They raced up a small gradient, and slid down. Then into view came a high, imposing-looking mansion.

Damaris waved her arms.

"That's the place!" she cried. "Pull up, Teresa!"

Teresa let out the clutch, and applied the brakes. The car came to a standstill. Almost immediately they heard a roar.

"Quick!" almost shrieked Damaris Leander. "The machine! It's going to start! Oh, hurry, of we shall be too late!"

And into the garden of the house they ran.

At the back was a wide, flat field; around this a small biplane was taxi-ing.

The two girls ran forward, waving their arms and shouting. But the whirring of the aeroplane engine deadened the sound of their voices.

The machine wheeled to take off in the right direction, and it came straight towards the girls.

Suddenly the pilot saw them, shouted, turned, and shut off his engine.

Teresa and Damaris ran forward.

The pilot shook his fist at them angrily.

"You silly girls!" he cried. "You might have been killed. Didn't you see the danger notice?"

"No, no, Mr. Gordon. Oh, never mind that!" said Damaris, flushed with excitement. "You know me, I'm Damaris—this is my friend, Teresa Tempest. Will you take her to Taunton, please?"

"It's a case of saving a life!" exclaimed Teresa. "A girl is dying. I must get a specialist!"

"But, Damaris—" began the man. Then he looked at Teresa's anxious, eager face and trembling form.

"Haven't got a weak heart, I hope?" he asked.

Teresa shook her head.

"I'm all right!" she cried. "Oh, take me, please; every moment is precious!"

Mr. Gordon motioned the girl to the seat behind him.

"Hop in, kid!" he said briefly. And making a megaphone of his hand shouted across to a shed on the other side of the field; "Johnson!"

The mechanic emerged from the shed and came running across.

"Swing her!" said the pilot laconically.

A few misses, then, with a roar, the engine started, and the propeller spun. The mechanic jumped back, and drew Damaris clear.

As the machine taxied off, Teresa waved her hand to her friend.

"Thanks!" she shouted. "I shan't forget this!"

The machine wheeled slightly, then took off, and rose gracefully.

It was Teresa's first aeroplane ride, but she lost the first glamour of it in her anxiety over the safety of Marjorie Staines. Taunton must be reached and the specialist brought back.

Up, up went the machine till it appeared but a tiny speck to Damaris watching below.

Teresa looked back to where, thousands of feet below, and some miles behind, the sea glistened—marked out by the wavy coastline.

So high was the machine that the ground below seemed to be moving slowly.

"Faster!" she shouted. But her voice was carried back to the wind.

How she would have enjoyed that daring trip on any other occasion! But now she wanted to do something, wanted to help in the piloting of the machine—to send it faster and faster.

Yet they were moving at the rate of a hundred miles an hour!

No, she no longer took an interest in what was passing below, but watched the leather-capped head of the pilot.

It was not hot up here. She noticed that at once, but she did not heed it.

Then they started to descend. She sensed it rather than knew it. For with the blue sky above and around she lost her sense of direction.

She looked over the side again, and caught her breath, for the earth was at a slant, and seemed to be rushing up to meet the machine.

She thought not how terrible if there should be an accident—not on account of the consequences for herself—but because, if disabled, she would be unable to reach the specialist, unable to complete her mission.

But landed safely, gracefully, and Teresa, loosening the straps, leaped from the machine.

"Wait!" she said to the pilot. "I shall return with the specialist. He must go. You must take him."

"Right!" said the pilot, lighting a cigarette. "Be as quick as you can."

Teresa stared round the wide meadow, then darted off in the direction of the town.

How breathlessly she ran along the roads. She inquired her way, and was directed to the road on the slip of paper the doctor had given her.

Bang! Bang!

She knocked at the door, and how impatient she was that the maid came slowly along the passage. Why couldn't the girl hurry?

Want to see the specialist? Of course she wanted to see him! Oh, all this horrible delay!

But it was different when at last she was in the presence of the great man himself.

He wasted not a moment, first ordering his car, then packing a bag, talking to the girl all the time.

"You have saved the girl's life probably," he said, in his quick way. "Hope so. Car ready, Jones? Thanks! Come along, my girl."

Teresa, all eagerness, followed the specialist into the magnificent limousine, and it started off before she was seated, flinging her on to the cushions.

"Direct driver through tube there," said the specialist briefly.

The girl was trembling now with reaction, but with the great man at her side she felt confident. He seemed so understanding, so assured. He was not like the other people, needful of explanations. He acted as quickly as he thought, and he spoke like a machine gun.

"Come, my girl!"

He jumped out of the car almost before it stopped, and helped Teresa out. Then they crossed the field to where the aeroplane was stationed.

"Cheerio!" said the pilot breezily. "Back again?"

"Very good of you to help us, sir," said the specialist. "Barncombe, please. Alight in field near mill. H'm! Yes, squeeze for two of us. But that's all right. Get in, my girl."

Teresa wasted not a minute, but got in with the specialist.

Then the pilot jumped down. Fortunately only one swing of the propeller was needed—it was on compression—and, with a roar, the engine started.

In climbed the pilot. The machine taxied

then took off. Up they went, and the return journey had started.

As they rose, Teresa caught a glimpse of a clock in a church tower. The hour hand pointed to six, and the minute hand to five. Five-and-twenty minutes past six!

Five-and-twenty minutes ago Teresa should have been back at the school!

She shrugged her shoulders helplessly. What would happen on her return she did not dare to think, but in any case it could not be helped. A girl's life had been at stake.

The pilot, realising the urgency of the mission, raced his engine, and to the excited girl it seemed only a matter of minutes ere the mill came into sight.

They had passed Mr. Gordon's house, and Damaris, who had waited there patiently in a car, looked up, saw the machine, and almost instantly started her engine.

She followed the fast moving aeroplane, saw it descend, and she made in the direction of the mill.

Meanwhile, in the house by the mill the sick girl lay still as though in a trance, her mother, standing agitatedly by, and doctor patiently watching.

"Oh, will Teresa never come?" moaned the mother. "Oh, she has been gone an age!"

"Have patience!" whispered the doctor. "Patience!"

Then the roar of the aeroplane engine was audible. The woman rushed to the window, and stared in amazement.

"An aeroplane, landing—in the field!" she cried. "What car, it mean?"

Next moment she became almost hysterical with joy.

"Oh, goodness, it is Teresa, and a man!"

The doctor went to the window, and started with surprise.

"Saved!" he exclaimed. "That is the specialist!"

In another moment the specialist and excited girl were in the sick-room. Not a second did the great man lose; he took in the whole case with a quick glance, while the mother hugged Teresa Tenipce in an ecstasy of joy.

"You have saved her!" she sobbed. "Oh, you wonderful girl, you have saved Marjorie's life!"

The specialist looked up. "I hope she has," he said. "But"—he shook his head—"her life is in the balance."

Then he turned to Teresa. "My girl," he said, "I think you had better return to school. You can do no good now, though you have acted wonderfully."

And, after some persuasion, Teresa allowed herself to be led from the room. Outside the house, to her surprise, was Damaris in the car.

"Hallo!" said that girl. "I waited at Mr. Gordon's place. Saw the aeroplane come down, so followed. Want a lift to the school?"

In some queer way Damaris seemed repentant, sorry no doubt for the way in which she had deserted her friend and left her to the mercy of the stream.

"Yes, please," said Teresa, and quickly! Off like the wind went the car.

CHAPTER 21.

Expelled!

"SISTER ANNE, sister Anne!" chanted Polly Linton. "Can you see anyone coming?"

Betty Barton looked at her chum reprovingly.

"Oh, Polly," she said, "I do wish you wouldn't jest! This is serious really. Teresa may be expelled."

"And a good job, too!" came a regular chorus.

Round the gates of Morcove quite a crowd of girls were gathered. It was nearly eight o'clock, and dusk was falling, but there was no sign of Teresa.

"Miss Somerfield give me orders to send Miss Teresa to her when she arrived," remarked Steggle, the porter.

"I know," said Betty. "But something must have happened. Here's a car! Perhaps—"

But Betty's hopes dropped to zero as she discerned that the approaching car was empty.

The chauffeur alighted and came to the gates. He nodded to the school porter.

"Miss Somerfield in?" he asked. "I've got a note from my mistress, Mrs. Norton-Davis."

"A note!" cried the girls. "Oh!" The chauffeur nodded, and pushed back his cap.

"Some of you have been getting into mischief—eh?" he said playfully. "Don't know what things are coming to, I don't. That girl this afternoon—"

"Girl!" exclaimed Betty eagerly, thinking of Teresa. "What happened?"

"Haven't you heard?" said the chauffeur, obviously glad they had not, for he liked to be a bringer of tidings. "Why, the rumour's been going round the people at the garden-party that a young girl's been flying—acroplying or something. Flew forty miles to fetch a doctor!"

"Oh!"

The Fourth-Formers' faces expressed utmost disappointment. They had expected to hear something of Teresa's doings. They thought that perhaps, after all, she had been to the garden-party.

"Jolly plucky thing," said the chauffeur. "I've only heard bits of the story. The footman told me—"

"A girl going for a flight—that wouldn't be Teresa!" laughed Polly Linton.

"Not to fetch a doctor for anyone else!" chimed in Grace Garfield. "Teresa wouldn't move an inch to save her best friend!"

"That's not true!" cried Betty. "You know—at least—" Betty did not finish her sentence. "I think you're unfair," she added lamely. "Teresa would help a girl."

And then started an argument. The chauffeur, with a grin, walked off. Hardly had she gone than Norah Nugent, who was standing in the roadway, gave a shout.

"Hi, girls! Here's another car!"

The girls crowded nearer to the gates, and watched the car eagerly. It pulled up by the school, and a girl alighted. Then the car drove off.

"Teresa!" went up a shout.

"Arrived by car! What impudence!" exclaimed Ella Elgood.

Teresa Tempest feigned not to hear, but pushed her way through the group. The girls crowded round her, and would have held her back.

But even as Betty, pressing forward eagerly, got by the new girl's side, a voice broke in upon the shouts of the girls.

"Girls! Silence! Stand back!"

It was Miss Massingham!

The mistress strode to the front, her eyes glittering angrily, and the girls fell back on either side.

"Teresa Tempest!" exclaimed the mistress. "You disgraceful girl! Come with me at once to the headmistress!"

The new girl stepped forward, outwardly calm and unabashed. She gave Betty a

glance and a nod—a nod that asked for trust.

And Betty, though at first inclined to doubt the girl, had no such feelings now.

Teresa followed the wrathful mistress into the school and up to the headmistress's room. In the corridor they passed the chauffeur, who had delivered his message.

That message Miss Somerfield had just finished reading when the door opened to admit Teresa and the mistress.

"Teresa!" exclaimed the headmistress. "You are back at last. Oh, you deceitful girl!"

Teresa tightened her lips and remained silent. How could she tell them of the aeroplane incident? How could she expect her story to be believed? They would think she was lying. Rather than tell them of her good deed she would suffer punishment. That one good deed of her life must remain her own treasure—to barter it against punishment, to use it as a means to evade even expulsion—no! It was impossible! It was her secret!

"I have a note here," said Miss Somerfield. "A note from Mrs. Norton-Davis saying that the girl who insulted her in the village the other day was at her garden-party this afternoon!"

"It's not—" began Teresa about to deny the statement. Then she remembered that hurried rush in the garden of Mrs. Norton-Davis' house to find Damaris. "I—I did go there for a minute!" she exclaimed.

"You went there!" repeated the headmistress. "And you speak casually about the visit, as if it were a mere nothing. Girl, do you not realise what you have done? You have broken your promise—the promise you made not to go there! You were given the privilege, which no other girl was granted, of leaving the school. But you were told to return at six o'clock. Did you do it? No. Instead, you had the audacity to go to the garden-party!"

"I—I—" stammered Teresa.

"You are an incorrigible girl!" broke in Miss Massingham. "Twice you have been given a chance. Each time you have abused a privilege. I suppose you met that friend again?"

"I—yes," stammered poor Teresa. "I met her, Miss Somerfield. But—"

She bit her lip, and said no more. There was no excuse for her to make, unless she

told of her visit to the specialist, and that she would not do.

"And," resumed the headmistress, "Mrs. Norton-Davis saw you go carcering off in a car. Is that true?"

"Yes, Miss Somerfield," mumbled the girl. "It—"

"Very well, then."

Miss Somerfield set her lips and brought her clenched hand down hard upon her desk.

"Then, Teresa Tempest," she said, "I have no course open to me but to expel you. I shall write to your mother, and ask her to take you away. You are a thoughtless, selfish girl. You have placed your aunt in a most awkward position. Ever since you have been at the school you have been a source of anxiety and worry to everyone who had come into contact with you!"

Teresa hung her head, and for the first time looked sorry for herself.

Expelled! Sent away from school in disgrace. And this at the time when she was reforming, when she thought she was well upon the better road, stony though it was!

"You are a disgrace to the school!" resumed the headmistress. "And I cannot allow you to remain. Had you taken advantage of the chances you have been given, my decision might have been otherwise. But at every turn you get worse instead of better. You must go. Pack your trunks, and prepare yourself for departure. I am writing your mother to-night. Go!"

Teresa turned on her heel, and now, with her head erect, went from the room.

As she opened the door there was a scuffling sound, and a girl scuttled along the passage. Teresa bit her lip.

An eavesdropper! The conversation had been overheard, and in another minute the news would be all over the school.

But she shrugged her shoulders. Sooner or later they would all know. So why not now?

CHAPTER 22.

Acclaimed by the School.

NEXT morning Teresa was to go, and there was excitement in the Fourth Form. They could not say they were sorry to see the last of her, yet they were surprised at her new and quieter attitude.

She seemed to have lost much of her

bravado and show. Though she professed not to care what happened, there were worried lines upon her brow as she sat at breakfast.

The only time she brightened up was when Madge Minden produced a cutting from the local paper.

"What's that, Madge?" whispered Tess Trelawney. And Madge, with a side glance at the Form-mistress, whispered back:

"A cutting from the local paper. It's about that girl and the aeroplane!"

The Fourth-Formers near turned their heads, and there were cries of:

"Show me, Madge! Let me see!"

But Madge Minden shook her head.

"Not now," she said. "I'll show you afterwards. It's not much. They rushed it into the paper late last night. It says some girls raced along in a car, got in an aeroplane, and flew forty miles—right to Taunton, in fact—to fetch a specialist!"

"Phew!" cried Polly Linton. "I say, that's more like a film. Wish I'd had the chance!"

"Jolly plucky, anyway," said Tess Trelawney. "Wonder who she was?"

Madge shrugged her shoulders.

"Don't know," she said. "The paper doesn't say. Probably it's a film actress."

"But what a nerve!" said Norah Nugent. "I shouldn't much care to go flying. Probably, as you say, Madge, it was only a film actress doing it for the films."

Madge glanced at the cutting again.

"No; it says here it was a girl—a girl of about fifteen."

"No one from Morcove," said Polly. "We were all gated! What an honour for the school that would be if it had been one of us! No such luck, though!"

Not one of them thought of Teresa. She do such a thing! It was too absurd for them to consider. And from what Ursula Wade had told them, they were all assured that Teresa had spent all the afternoon at the forbidden garden-party.

But Betty knew. And she glanced at Teresa. That girl, with flushed face, looked down at her plate.

After breakfast, Tess and Betty went for a quiet stroll in the school grounds. Then, turning, they made their way back to the school house.

As they entered the school, Miss Somerfield called to them.

"Teresa!" she said sternly. "Are your bags and boxes packed? Your mother is coming for you this afternoon."

"Yes, Miss Somerfield," answered the girl dully.

Quite a crowd of girls were standing round watching the scene, and Miss Somerfield did not order them away.

"Go, then, Teresa," said the headmistress, "and see that everything is ready. Steggles will be up there to carry them down."

When the girls had gone upstairs with Betty by her side, Miss Somerfield turned to the crowd of whispering girls.

"Girls," she said sternly, "let this be a warning to you. It is not often that I have to make such an example, but in this case it was necessary. It does not pay to be defiant and rude to mistresses, Teresa has been a disgrace to the school, and should any of you be thinking of following in her worthless footsteps, think well before you do so, for I should not hesitate to expel any girl who acted in a like manner!"

Dead silence followed this short speech, and the mistress was about to turn away, when a tall, keen-eyed man entered the school house.

He doffed his top-hat, and bowed to the mistress. The girls gave him curious but admiring looks, wondering who this smartly-clad, well-bred looking gentleman could be.

"Good-morning, madam!" he said. "May I see the headmistress, please?"

"I am she," said Miss Somerfield, in surprise. "Will you follow me—?"

The man made a slight motion with his well-gloved hands.

"No time, madam," he said. "I am a busy man. Yesterday a girl flew to me by aeroplane on an urgent errand. Plucky girl—resourceful!"

At this there was a murmur of surprise from the girls. They looked at one another, and then at this gentleman.

"Yes?" said Miss Somerfield, in surprise. "But what—?"

"I've come to tell you that a report which appeared in the newspaper, which the girl might have seen, is false. My patient, the girl whose life she tried to save, lives. The paper reported her death."

"But the girl—the girl, who is she?" ejaculated the headmistress, moving aside

as Steggles, with a trunk on shoulder, came lumbering by.

"Eh? Jove, I forgot! I haven't told you her name. Her name—her name!" said the doctor, clipping his thumbs in perplexity. "Dear me; it's on the tip of my tongue! It's—it's—"

Suddenly he looked up. Down the stairs came Teresa Tempest, and, with her, Betty Barton.

"By Jove! Luck's in!" said the doctor, with a faint smile. "Madam, there's the girl—the brave girl who saved the life of Marjorie Staines!"

And he pointed to the staircase. Miss Somerfield turned, and from the assembled girls escaped a cry.

"Teresa Tempest!" The specialist nodded.

"My girl," he said, turning to Teresa, "Marjorie Staines lives!"

"Lives!" cried Teresa.

"And is progressing favourably," said the doctor. "But I must really not linger here, madam. Good-morning, Miss Tempest. You deserve a medal, my girl—a medal! You saved that girl's life!"

Then he was out of the school house as quickly as he had entered it.

Just a second's pause, just a second's silence, then it was as though Babel had been let loose. Everyone seemed to be talking at once.

"Teresa Tempest," exclaimed Miss Somerfield. "I—I read of that adventure in the paper. You were the girl. That is why—why you were late. Why did you not tell me that?"

Teresa did not reply, but her face went crimson.

For the first time in her life Teresa Tempest had blushed.

"Girls," cried Betty Barton, "three cheers for Teresa. Whatever she may have done, forget. Hip, hip, hip!"

And then, after over so slight a pause, came a deafening:

"Hurrah!"

"Chair her!" cried Polly. And as the Fourth Form put Polly's words into operation, Miss Somerfield walked off quietly, a smile on her lips.

"Let me down—let me down!" cried Teresa. "I must go and see Marjorie!"

Marjorie Staines was well on the road to

recovery, as Teresa found when she reached the small house by the mill. And how grateful Mrs. Staines and Marjorie were! But when she found that the girl was all right, Teresa hurried away to hide her blushes.

Praise—it was a new sensation for her! She a heroine, a heroine who had been "chaired!" How much better it was to be a popular heroine than an unpopular outcast of the Form.

She returned to the school, and her mother was waiting, having heard the whole story from the lips of Miss Somerfield.

In the headmistress' room was quite a small crowd, Miss Redgrave and Betty, Teresa, her mother, and, of course, Miss Somerfield.

Miss Redgrave's eyes were shining with suspicious moistness as Teresa took her hand and kissed her cheek.

"I'm sorry I've been so mean to you, aunt," she said. "Oh, I know I've been a fool! Betty showed me that. Dear Betty!"

And she hugged that girl affectionately.

"I know," said Miss Redgrave. "It is Betty we must thank, Teresa. You did not know, but Betty has suffered much for you. She promised me to look after you, and how well she has kept that promise!"

"She did?" cried Teresa. "Oh, Betty, you're the best friend I have. And now I must go——"

"But not because you are expelled," said

Miss Somerfield. "I want you to stay, Teresa, but your mother insists that you accompany her to the Continent. She is lonely without you."

"Oh, Teresa," sighed Betty, "I do wish you could stay! You, Polly, and I—how happy we could be!"

Mrs. Tempest shook her head.

"I want Teresa to come abroad with me," she said. "She will have her old governess. But I am lonely without her. She is my only companion, you know."

So, later that day, Teresa and her mother went down to the gates to where their car waited.

And what a crowd there was to see them off!

"Good-bye, girls!" waved Teresa.

And the Fourth waved back to her.

"One last cheer, girls, for the heroine!" cried Madge Minden.

And once more three hearty cheers rent the air.

And then the car moved off, with Teresa leaning out waving good-bye.

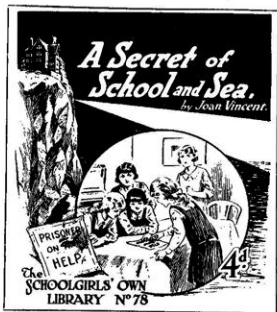
"Come again some time!" shouted Betty, and Teresa replied by a nod of the head.

But whether or not Teresa would ever come again, they did not know. Certain it was that if she did she would receive a royal welcome. Like the famous month of March, she had come in like a lion and gone out like a lamb! But such a lovable lamb!



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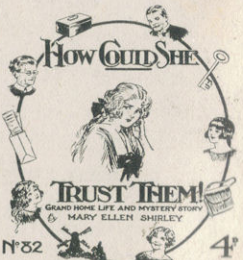
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