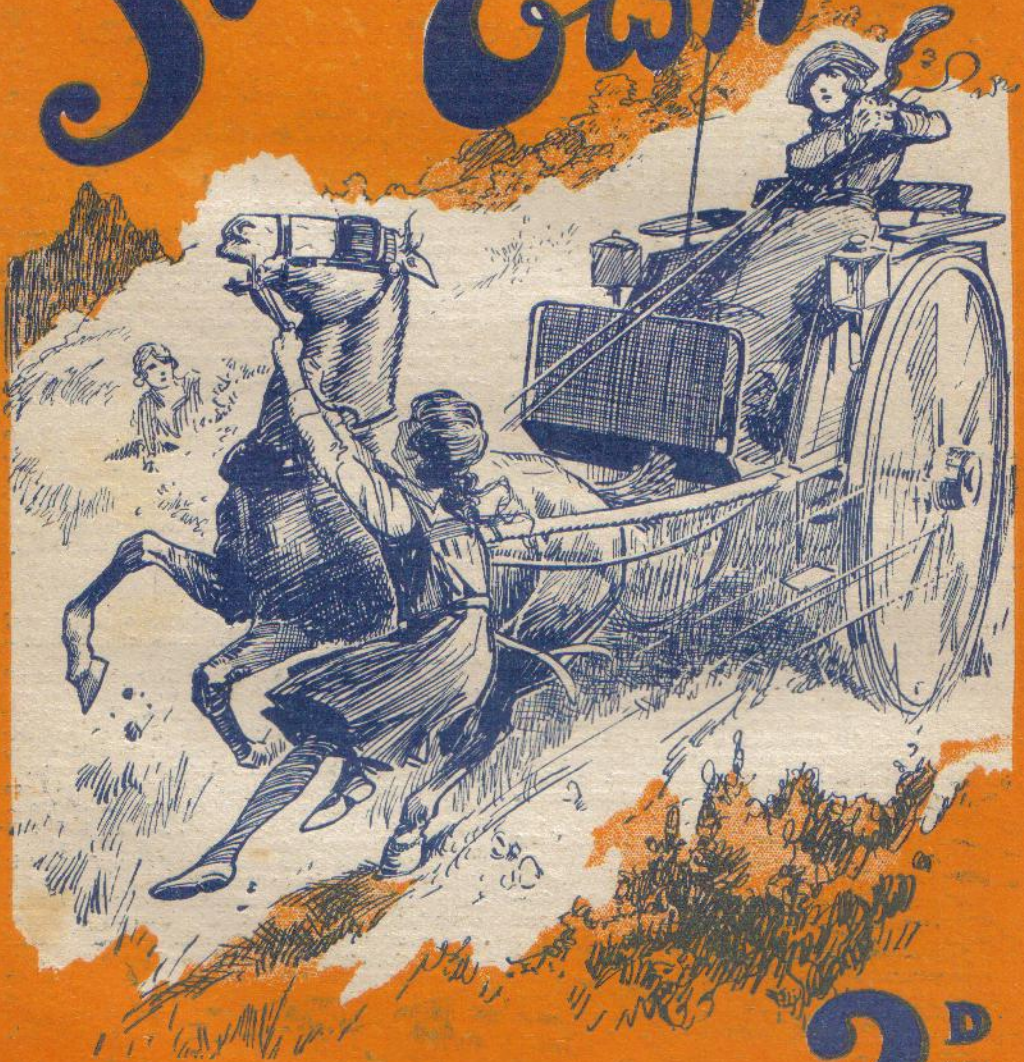


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HOW TO MAKE A CRETONNE-TRIMMED OVERALL ! FULL PARTICULARS :: :: INSIDE ! :: ::

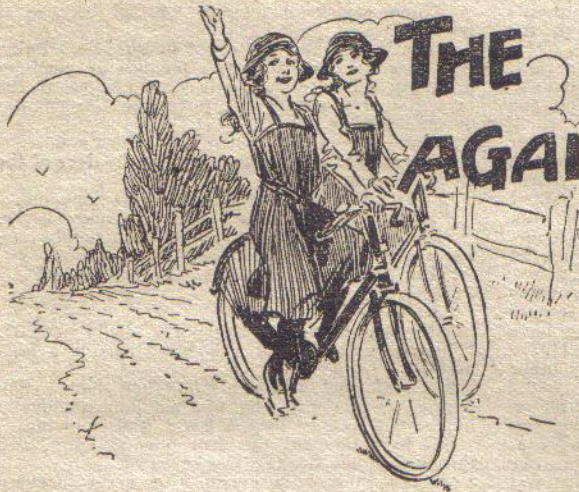
The Schoolgirls' Own



BETTY BARTON'S PLUCK!

(An incident from "The Form Against Them!"
the grand school story contained in this issue.)

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THE FORM AGAINST THEM!

A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of the Girls of Morcove School, introducing Betty Barton, the girl from the Council School, and her :: :: chum, Polly Linton. :: ::

By MARJORIE STANTON.

Letting Them Have It!

"THERE is a note for you, Polly." Betty Barton made the cheery remark as she sat at ease in a nice, roomy wicker chair.

"And who can that be from, I wonder?" said Polly Linton, raising her pretty brows in puzzled surprise.

A moment since she had come sailing into the cosy room which she shared with Betty. Closing the door, Polly stepped to the table and took up the note which was lying upon her blotting-pad.

"Hallo, this is from Cora Grandways!" she exclaimed, directly her eyes were scanning the pencilled message. "And she has the cheek to address me as 'Dear Polly!'"

Betty Barton laughed, but in an instant her pretty face clouded over.

"And what is that troubled look for?" asked Polly, glancing up at last from the note. "Don't you worry, Betty! It is not going to work—a game of this sort!"

"Then you see what Cora Grandways is up to?" Betty returned, getting up from her chair. "She and that sister of hers, and all the rest of them, no doubt—"

"They want to woo me away from you—yes," nodded Polly. "A likely thing, to be sure!"

"But—"

"I'll go along and see Cora, right away," broke in Polly, crumpling up the note. "Sha'n't be a moment, dear."

Hastily quitting the room, she went to another study door, marked "No. 7," tapped sharply, and walked in.

"Hallo, Polly dear!" was the very gushing greeting which she received from Cora and Judith Grandways.

But Polly wanted none of their endearments.

"I got your note," she said, almost curtly. "You said there was something you wished to see me about that would be highly pleasing."

"Yes, Polly," said Cora. "You see, Paula Creel, our captain, has practically left me to arrange about next Saturday's hockey match. We girls in the Fourth Form will be meeting the Fifth—"

"I hope you win!" struck in Polly. "It is

high time the Fourth Form won back some of its lost reputation for sports!"

"We shall win, Polly—if you play for us," Cora said, with brazen flattery.

"Righto!" was Polly's answer. "I'll do my best anyway. And there is Betty Barton."

"That Barton kid is not going to play!" snapped Judith Grandways savagely.

Cora Grandways frowned, as if she wished her sister had not put things so crudely.

"You see, Polly dear, it isn't to be supposed that Betty Barton can play. She—"

"Why not?" broke in Polly. "She is a Fourth Form scholar, like the rest of us."

"How can she possibly know how to play?" Cora protested, with a grimace. "They didn't have a hockey team at that Council school which she attended before she came to Morcove."

"Perhaps not, but I've seen her practising the last day or so, and she is quite good!" said Polly.

"The weather is beautiful, and Betty can get heaps more practice between now and the day of the match."

"Oh, rubbish!" snapped Judith. "We want players, not beginners!"

"A keen beginner can often put up a better showing than a slack, out-of-practice, so-called player!" Polly answered smartly. "How many of you have touched a hockey-stick in the last three weeks?"

And she paused for a reply.

It did not come. Polly Linton was right. Under the slack leadership of Paula Creel, the Form's interest in the sporting side of school life had been going from bad to worse.

"Well," Cora Grandways broke out at last desperately, "if you are so keen on seeing the Form buck up, Polly, then promise to play for us."

"I will, certainly—gladly!" said Polly. "But Betty must play, too."

"Impossible!" cried Judith, taking a swishing turn about the room. "That kid—"

"Go on; speak out!" Polly said calmly. "Let me hear exactly what you have to say against my friend!"

"Well, you know, Polly dear," purred Cora, "we still feel we must bar her altogether. She

ought not to be at this school—a girl whose people were so poor that only a little while ago the mother had to go out charing."

"So whether Betty could play hockey or not, you would refuse to put her in Saturday's team?"

"Well—yes," said Cora sulkily. "You see

"Oh, I see! And I understand what your game is, in getting me to come along for this talk!" Polly exclaimed, in utter disgust. "Knowing how I love a game of hockey, and how I grieve at the poor state the Form has got into, you thought you could drive a bargain with me. I could have a place in the team on Saturday, on condition that I threw over Betty Barton."

"And it wouldn't be a bad thing for yourself if you did throw her over!" said Cora, coming out in her true colours now. "A fine lot you have gained, so far, by chumming with that kid!"

"It has cost you the friendship of every other girl in the Form!" added Judith.

"The friendship of girls whom I was fed-up with!" said Polly breezily. "After seeing you two, and Paula Creel, and all the rest of you, getting more and more snobbish every day; after seeing you letting the sports go hang, whilst you thought of nothing but slacking about and toggings yourselves up!"

"Oh, all right!"

"Let me finish, please; then I'll go," said Polly. "I say, after all that sort of thing, it was a treat to me to come back from my few days' leave from school and find a girl like Betty here."

"What would your parents say," jeered Judith, "if they knew you had thrown over all of us to pal up with a washerwoman's kid from the Council school?"

Polly gave a peal of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! What would they say—my dad, who is the most democratic man in the county I come from? And mother, who drives about in an old governess-car, with a donkey between the shafts, when she might drive a Rolls-Royce? You don't know my parents, you girls!"

"At that rate, we don't want to know them!" said Judith.

"And at this rate," retorted Polly, "you are never jolly well likely to know them! I'm taking Betty home with me, I hope, for the holidays, when they come along. But you—"

"Oh, that will do!"

"If I turned up at home with a couple of girls who tog up like you, and rouge their lips—"

"That will do, Polly Linton!"

"It may do for Morcove School, but it wouldn't do for my people at home! They'd have a fit!" said Polly.

With which parting shot she sallied from the room, and was chuckling merrily when she rejoined Betty Barton.

"Well, Polly, what—" began Betty, as her chum entered the study.

"Nothing. It didn't come off!" was all Polly would say, with a shrug.

Then she stepped to the study window.

"What a ripping day for our halfer!" she exclaimed. "Just like spring, isn't it? But that's the beauty of Devonshire, Betty—the winter is so soon gone. How about a run on our bikes?"

"That would be jolly," said Betty. "Only, how about next Saturday's hockey match. Polly? Aren't you going to be in the team? Oughtn't you to practice this afternoon?"

"I'm not in the team," said Polly, with another shrug.

"Then you have refused, and all because of me!"

"That's not the way to put it," objected Polly, who meant to spare Betty's feelings as much as possible. "I have refused because I object to the exclusion of a certain girl, purely on the grounds of snobbery!"

"But—"

Betty paused, for at that moment the door of the study opened.

It was Ella Elgood who looked into the room.

"Hallo, Polly," she said, ignoring Betty. "Such a lovely afternoon! Don't you simply long for a bit of hockey practice?"

"I'm going out with Betty Barton," said Polly cheerily.

"But—"

"It's you who need the practice," Polly went on. "You haven't touched a hockey-stick for a fortnight."

Ella's affected goodwill failed her then. She scowled at the girl who was standing so loyally by the one scorned by the Form, and went out.

But in a moment the door opened again, and this time Grace Garfield was revealed.

"I say, Polly," she began, after giving a stony glance to Betty, "what's this about your not playing Saturday's match?"

"What's the reason?" retorted Polly. "Ask the Grandways girls!"

"They've told me," said Grace. "And all I can say is, you are letting down the Form, all for the sake of a mistaken friendship for that kid!"

"Letting down the Form?" said Polly. "I think it is let-down already! It is going to be pulled up by-and-by; but not by girls who slack about and powder their faces, and are everlastingly standing in front of mirrors!"

Slam!

Grace Garfield banged the door as she stormed away so that the very walls shook.

But in a few moments yet another girl made her appearance, and this time it was Paula Creel, the bored-looking captain of the Form, who was venturing here to remind Polly of the price that had to be paid for her loyalty to Betty.

"Hallo-ee, Polly deah!" drawled Paula. "I say, bai Jove, you are not going to be so extremely silly as to keep out of the hockey match, just because we bar the Barton person?"

"Bai Jove, yes, I am, don't you know!" Polly mimicked Paula's affected speech to the life. "Because, don't you know, I think it is extremely snobbish of you, bai Jove, to bar the Barton person, don't you know! Eh—what? Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is extremely bad form, Polly," said the captain, "to carry on like this. One should put the good of the Form before friendship, don't you know. Think of the sacrifices I make—the awful boring life I lead—as captain of the Form, bai Jove!"

"But think of the pride you must feel," said Polly saucily, "when you see what your captaincy has brought us to!"

"Bai Jove, yes!" said Paula, feeling flattered. "The Form is a pwetty good example to others—what?"

Polly nodded, keeping a straight face. As for Betty, she simply had to turn away, convulsed with laughter.

"Yes, Paula," said Polly; "as an example of horrid snobbery—"

"Eh—what?"

"Snobbery and slacking, and silly vanity!"

"Vanity, bai Jove! Snobbery! So you don't

think I'm weally any good as a captain, after all? You'd like to see me wesiga, perhaps?"

"I would, indeed!"

"Bai Jove!"

And Paula was so staggered by this frank remark of Polly's that she simply faded away, as it were, leaving the door wide open.

"Weally, you geals," they heard her saying to Cora and Co. out in the passage, "such extreme wudeness to one's Form captain—it beats the band, bai Jove!"

"Polly will find out the mistake she has made before long," came in the sneering voice of Cora Grandways. "There is such a thing as stooping and picking up nothing! And she has stooped low enough, goodness knows, to pick up that Barton person!"

Polly was laughing. But to prevent Betty from overhearing any more of these sneering remarks, she marched to the door, and was just going to swing it to with a deafening slam when a sudden, startling check was placed upon all the jeering talk.

as she looked past the Headmistress and saw Cora Grandways peering round the edge of the doorway. "Polly and I made up our minds that this should be the jolliest study in the whole Form!"

"And I must say you have succeeded!" declared Miss Somerfield, causing Cora, in the background, to scowl savagely. "If I remember aright, this particular room had been shut up for a long time. In fact, I seem to remember ordering that it should not be used."

She added, after a pause:

"You had orders to move in here, of course?"

"Yes, Miss Somerfield," said Betty; and added quickly: "It is quite all right now, at any rate."

The Headmistress nodded.

"It could have been far from all right when you were placed in here," she said, "and I am astonished that you were ever told to make your abode here. Surely there are plenty of other studies where you could have been accommodated, along with other girls?"

Then Betty looked at Polly, and Polly looked at Betty.



CAPTURED BY THE SNOBS! All Betty and Polly's struggling only ended in their having their hands tied behind their backs, and handkerchiefs bound in front of their eyes.

At the same time a familiar step sounded along the passage, and suddenly Polly was stepping away from the open door, confronted with the imposing figure of the school's own Headmistress.

The Plotters.

"MAY I come in, girls?"

As if any of the girl scholars of Morcove School had the right to refuse admission to their own Headmistress!

But it was just like Miss Esther Somerfield to speak so graciously; just like her to seize every chance of putting true womanhood before pride of position. There was nothing of the snob about the Headmistress of Morcove School!

"Dear me, you have a very charming little study here!" she exclaimed, looking all round the room in pleased surprise. "Delightful!"

"We have made it so," said Betty, with a smile,

It was Miss Massingham, the Fourth Form mistress, who had ordered Betty to occupy this particular room, but neither Betty nor Polly had any intention of acquainting Miss Somerfield with this fact.

"Ah, well!" exclaimed the Headmistress, dismissing the matter with a shrug, much to the chums' relief, for they would have hated having to tell the true facts to Miss Somerfield. "Even if you found this room slightly bare at first, you have got your reward now. I declare, your own Form captain might envy you this place!"

From somewhere out in the passage there sounded a gasping whisper, which was very much like Paula Creel's: "Bai Jove!"

Betty and Polly smiled again. It was clear to them that all the snobs were listening in the passage; and, like all listeners, they were not hearing anything to their advantage.

"You are doing very well, Betty Barton," continued the Headmistress. "That is something you can tell your people at home when you write."

And she gave a very kind smile to the one-time Council schoolgirl, who had been less than a fortnight at Morcove.

There was another splutter of whispers in the passage, which the Headmistress appeared not to heed.

"You can tell your people I called you a credit to the school, Betty," said Miss Somerfield.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh!"

The half-stifled exclamations from the listeners very nearly sent Betty and Polly into shrieks of laughter.

"I only wish," went on the Headmistress affably, "that we could get a few more girls like you, Betty. The school would be all the better for them, I am certain."

More splutters! Really, it was like the letting off of damp squibs out in that passage!

"But let me come to the point," said Miss Somerfield. "I want two of my best scholars to run an errand for me this afternoon."

"Oh, Miss Somerfield," Betty and Polly exclaimed in a transport of delight, "how jolly! We were just thinking of taking a run on our bikes."

"Then you can do what I want and get your spin in the open, all at the same time," smiled the Headmistress. "It is quite a simple errand. Mrs. Channing and her daughter were here yesterday, having tea with me. They left some music behind when they took their leave, and I want you to run over to their house with it, with my compliments."

"Mrs. Channing?" echoed Polly. "That is the big house along the coast road, isn't it, Miss Somerfield?"

"Combe Towers—yes," nodded the Headmistress.

"About four miles from here, and a lovely run it will make for you on your bikes. So, come along at once, and I will give you the music."

Miss Somerfield turned and passed into the passage as she finished speaking; but the very most she saw of Cora Grandways and Co. was their high heels, as the flustered listeners dived into their studies.

Hastily the snobs shut themselves in, and allowed ample time for the Headmistress to pass by, with Betty and Polly in her wake.

Then, very cautiously, those study doors were opened again, and first one and then another of the snobs came stealing out.

"My word! Did you hear?" began Cora.

"The kid is a credit to the school!"

"Just fancy a Headmistress saying such a thing!"

"Bai Jove!" simpered Paula Creel. "It is wather bad form—what?"

"It's a jolly scandal!" declared Grace Garfield.

"Miss Massingham, our Form-mistress, ought to be the Head of this school. I've always said so."

"Yes, rather! No showing favouritism to washerwomen's children then!"

"And then, don't you know," complained Paula, "to say that I ought to envy the kid the study she has got! Bai Jove, I never heard anything like it!"

Judith Grandways went to the door of the chums' study, opened it, and stood looking inside.

"I wish to goodness we could rag the whole show!" she said savagely.

"Oh, rather!"

"Bai Jove!"

"And perhaps we will before long!" said Cora

grimly. "But I've got a better wheeze than that. You heard the errand those two girls are being sent on?"

"Well?" clamoured the others.

The old look of malicious cunning glinted in Cora's eyes.

"They are being sent on that errand because they are a credit to the school. Don't forget that! A credit to the school—Betty Barton, the Council school kid, and the chum who has taken pity on her!"

"I only hope Miss Somerfield will have cause to regret picking Betty for such an errand!" sulked Judith. "I'd like to see Betty thoroughly disgusting the Channing people, by being rude to them when she gets to that grand house!"

"Then here is my idea—listen!" exclaimed Cora, with a grin. "Suppose we get away in advance of Betty and Polly, and make them prisoners? Then a couple of us, pretending we are Polly and Betty, can go on to the Channings' place with the music, and— You know!"

"My word!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What a topping wheeze!"

Cora Grandways mimicked a very vulgar voice:

"Good-afternoon, Mrs. Channin'! 'Ow are yer? I've brought the moosick, yer know!"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's the stuff!" tittered the others.

"What about hockey practice, though?" questioned Grace Garfield. "That match on Saturday—"

"Hang the match!" said Cora, with a shrug.

"Hear, hear!"

"Bai Jove, you know, this other business—it is weally too good to be missed, don't you know!" said Paula Creel. "Besides, we have lost so many matches already, don't you know, what does one more beating mattah?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Come on, then!"

And five minutes later Cora Grandways and Co. were off and away on their bicycles, getting well ahead of Betty and Polly along the coast road to Combe Towers.

The Ambush.

NOT without reason is it claimed for Morcove School that it enjoys one of the finest positions in the Country.

There it stands, that immense pile of buildings, high up on a breezy hill, overlooking the Bristol Channel, where the winter gales bring giant seas tumbling in from the vast Atlantic.

So close is the great school to the beautiful sea, it is only a run of two hundred yards from one part of the boundary walls to the very edge of a beetling cliff.

A deep chine—or "combe," as they call chine places in the West of England—affords the scholars easy access to the beach and bathing pools, whilst various roads lead away from the arched gateway to such places as Morcove Village, barely a mile away, and Barncombe Town, which lies all snug amongst the rolling hills, some distance from the sea.

Prettiest of all the highways is the one that goes up and down, and in and out, all along the top of the cliffs, with the sea always in sight on one side, whilst the other side reveals glorious stretches of moorland.

And along this road went Betty Barton and Polly Linton, making for Combe Towers, with the afternoon sunshine in their eyes and their hair flying in the breeze.

It was Betty's first excursion along the coast road, and the sight of such magnificent scenery was throwing her into raptures.

"Polly, it is simply gorgeous!" she panted, as she and her chum reached the top of another hill, after wheeling their bikes all the way up a very steep gradient.

"Poof!" was all Polly could answer, whilst she fanned her flushed cheeks. "Well, I suppose—poof!—it is always worth the—poof!—fag of getting here to see such—poof!—a lovely view!"

"Oh, rather!" said Betty. "But it makes you feel somewhat thirsty, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Polly. "We'll have some lemonade before the afternoon is out. But what do you say to a nice high tea, at the very best shop in Barncombe? We can work round to the town, after leaving the music."

"That's a splendid idea!" agreed Betty heartily.

Springing into her saddle, Betty pedalled along the level stretch, tring-tringing her bell all the time. And Polly, whose bell had a different note, rang away at hers.

There was a nice straight run of a mile, at least, before them now, and the only hindrance was the breeze. It was always blowing pretty freshly at this height above the sea.

Soon, in fact, Betty had to give up trying to admire the scenery, and had to ride with her head bent to the wind. And it was whilst she was panting along like this, with her eyes almost six inches from the handlebars, that she suddenly found herself riding right into Polly's back wheel.

"Oh!"

Crash!

"Goodness, Polly! I'm sorry! I didn't know you were stopping!" Betty jerked out, as she almost fell off her machine in utter confusion.

"What—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" rang out a sniggering laugh. "Polly didn't know herself that she was going to stop until he was upset!"

Then Betty, standing beside her overturned bike, saw that she and her chum were surrounded by other girls.

Polly Linton had come a real cropper in the roadway, and she scrambled up with angry cries.

"Cora Grandways," she cried angrily, "you have given me a nice spill, rushing out with your bike to bar the way like that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Extremely smart of Cora, bai Jove!" said Paula Creel.

"Smart! I'll make her smart, if she isn't careful!" Polly cried, with righteous warmth. "Betty, I'm sorry there was no time to warn you, but these girls took me by surprise. They—"

"We meant to take you by surprise!" chuckled Cora. "So that is success number one!"

"What do you mean?"

"This was a sharp cry from Betty and Polly together, as they each took up their bicycles and made ready to ride on again.

"Out of the way, Cora Grandways!" Betty exclaimed fiercely. "We've no time to waste on you!"

"Yes, get away!" chimed in Polly, trying to push past with her bicycle. "Cora, if you don't leave go of my bike—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Success number two!" chuckled Cora, as she and all her companions—excepting Paula Creel, of course—suddenly drew closer than ever to the chums.

Betty found her bicycle snatched from her hands, and Polly had the same bewildering experience.

Both girls at once made a furious effort to get the machines back, and then they found themselves pounced upon and held fast—a case of four to one for each of them!

Outnumbered like this, was it a wonder that Betty and Polly struggled in vain to escape?

They were on their mettle now, and they felt they simply must resist to the best of their ability. But all their struggling only ended in each captive having her hands tied behind her with a handkerchief, whilst another handkerchief was bound in front of their eyes.

"Now turn them!" chuckled Cora. "Just to make them wonder which way they are going when we march them off!"

There was a burst of laughter at this, and next moment the blindfolded prisoners were being spun round and round.



MOCKING THE CAPTIVES! "Going to run and tell teacher, when we set you free at last?" said Cora Grandways. "Ha, ha, ha. You'd better, my girls."

"Faster! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, what giddy cweatures they will be, geals!"

"Do 'em good!" tittered Judith Grandways.

And round and round, faster and faster, the helpless pair were spun, until they were tottering upon their feet and gasping with faintness.

Suddenly, with a feeble cry, Polly flopped to the ground. Betty was giving a few swift spins, and then she too lost her balance and toppled over, falling upon her chums.

"Ha, ha, ha! Stand up, you duffers!" Cora Grandways cried, hauling Betty to her feet again, whilst Judith dragged up Polly. "And now lead on, some of you!"

After that the two captives were hustled along by the merciless girls, and which way they were being taken neither Betty nor Polly could tell, what with the bandage in front of their eyes and the giddiness that was upon them.

All they knew was that they were off the road, and were being hustled quickly downhill. But

presently their feet crunched into loose shingle, and then they realised that their captors must have brought them down one of the combs on to the shingly beach.

After being rushed along for a dozen yards or so, the blindfolded girls suddenly felt the air strike cold and dank upon their faces, whilst everything grew blacker than ever to their bandaged eyes.

They were, in fact, inside a big cave that ran for a great distance into the huge cliff. For a hundred yards the helpless prisoners might have been hustled along, and still the limits of the cavern would not have been reached. But Cora Grandways and Co. were content to march the captives only twenty paces or so from the entrance; then the whole party stopped.

"There we are!" remarked Cora gleefully. "A nice quiet, cool spot for a couple of ruffled girls to calm down in. I know you are in a fearful wax, Polly. Betty Barton is, too!"

"But she's trying to look as if she didn't care!" sneered Judith.

"Four on to one!" exclaimed Betty scornfully. "It doesn't give one much chance to do anything else but submit. Only, I can tell you this—Polly and I won't forget the way you have handled us!"

Cora flicked Betty across the face with her fingers.

"Going to run and tell teacher, are you, when we set you free at last? Ha, ha, ha! You'd better, my girl!"

"Please, teacher, Cora and the others have been hurting me!" squealed Judith, mimicking a tell-tale's voice. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"We haven't hurt either of them yet," said Cora; "but I feel just in the mood for having my revenge on the pair of them, for the way they have carried on against us!"

And her lips curled and quivered with the cruel impulses that had taken possession of her.

She was one of those girls who are swayed at times by a feeling that they must inflict pain upon some helpless victim or another, simply for the sake of exulting over that victim's helplessness.

"This cave might be our star chamber," she suggested, with a smirking grin. "I was reading a story about the star chamber in older times; it was lovely! But we had better carry out our present jape as we planned it, girls."

"Rather!"

"Bai Jove, yes!" simpered Paula Creel. "The music, don't you know?"

"All serene!" broke in Cora calmly. "Ella and I will be off right away, leaving you to guard the prisoners."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if they give any trouble," said the ring-leader, "just rub their pretty faces in the sand! Now, Ella dear!"

Ella Elgood had been all along one of the keenest tormentors of Betty Barton, and at the present time she was just as keen as Cora Grandways about carrying out the "jape" as planned.

Nor was it very wonderful that both girls were so ready and eager to play the daring parts for which they had volunteered. Only by actual tale-telling on the part of Betty and Polly, later on, could the culprits be brought to book, and they were positive that the victims were the last girls in the world to go to the Headmistress with their story.

So off went Cora and Ella, the former carrying the sheaf of music which had been in the wicker basket affixed to Betty's bicycle.

Mounting their own cycles on the coast road, the couple pedalled steadily along, and presently

they turned in at the wideflung gates of Combe Towers.

Dismounting half-way up the winding drive, they wheeled their bicycles the rest of the way to the great old house.

"My word!" muttered Cora. "There's some grandeur about this place! The people who live here must be awfully rich, and fancy Miss Somerfield sending Betty Barton with the music! As if Betty were a fair specimen of the scholars at Morcove School!"

The couple were now close to the great stone porch, and so they propped their machines against a fine cedar-tree that shaded part of the spacious lawn, and then walked boldly to the imposing front doors.

Cora tugged at the bell-pull; then gave a final whisper:

"Don't forget, Ella; I'm Betty Barton and you are Polly Linton!"

"All right!"

"Leave me to do most of the talking. And whatever you do, keep a straight face! I know you'll be in fits of laughter, but—"

Cora had no time to say the rest.

A liveried manservant had opened the massive hall door, and was looking down pompously at the youthful visitors.

"That Barton Kid!"

"GOOD-ARTERNOON, mister!" said Cora Grandways, adopting an awfully common voice. "Nice werver, ain't it?"

The footman looked flabbergasted.

"This is the 'ouse where Mrs. Channin's lives, ain't it?"

"Ahem!" coughed the servant. "Er—"

"We've brought the moosick, you know."

"Pardon?"

"Is he deaf or wot?" cried Cora, looking at Ella. She raised her voice. "I say, yer know, we've brought the moosick!"

"For Mrs. Channin," chimed in Ella.

The footman wiped a hand across his forehead, as if he felt himself breaking into a perspiration.

"Ahem! Well, I don't know, I'm sure," he said. "I have not received any instructions from my mistress—"

"What is the matter, Barlow?" asked a lady, coming forward from the back of the hall.

She spoke in a sweet, cultured voice, without any suggestion of drawing hauteur.

"Good-arternoon, Mrs. Channin!" piped Cora.

"I've brought th' moosick!"

"Oh!" The lady gave a bright smile. "I understand; you are two girls from Morcove School."

"Yuss!"

The lady winced as this word was almost shouted at her.

"You had better come in a moment," she said, leading the way to the dining-room, on the right of the spacious hall. "I expect you must be tired after the journey."

"Oh, we 'ad our bikes, yer know!" Cora informed her cheerfully. "Still, I don't say as 'ow we wouldn't be glad of a bit o' rest and a look rahnd!"

Then, as Mrs. Channing stepped to the vast sideboard, the sham Betty Barton whispered loudly to her confederate:

"My, Polly! Ain't this a lovely 'ouse? They must have more money than wot even my huncle 'as got!"

"It was very good of your Headmistress to send over the music," said Mrs. Channing, coming

away from the sideboard with cakes and lemonade. "You will tell her, please, that I am very much obliged to her."

"Yuss, that's orl right!" said Cora. "My word, Polly, look at that there kike on the plite!"

Mrs. Channing winced again.

"So you are scholars at Morcove School—scholars, I understand?" she questioned.

"Yuss, Mrs. Channin'! Fourt Form, we are, ain't we, Polly?"

"And your names?" asked Mrs. Channing.

"Me, I'm Betty Barton," said Cora glibly. "I ain't bin long at the skule, I ain't. Polly here, she's my pal. Ain't yer, Polly?"

And "Polly" nodded, not daring to trust herself to speech.

"Betty Barton," murmured Mrs. Channing. "A new girl. I use you a—a scholarship girl?"

"Ho, no! I used ter go ter Council skule; but my huncle came 'ome from America, rolling in welf, and so he pays for me edjercation."

"I see. Well, Betty Barton, and you, too, Polly, have some cake, and help yourselves to the lemonade."

Whereupon Cora Grandways made a grab at the biggest slice of iced cake, and then caught up the jug of lemonade and dashed some into a tumbler.

"My, but I were firsty," she said, smacking her lips after half-draining the glass. "Mrs. Channin', this here is a lovely kike!"

"I'm glad you like it."

"I'd like to come here agen, I would! Wouldn't you, Polly?"

Perhaps "Polly" meant to answer this time; but what she really did was to go off into a fit of choking.

"Nah, then—nah, then!" cried Cora, thumping her friend's back. "Can't yer remember yer manners, Polly?"

Mrs. Channing crossed to a bell-press and touched it.

"Barlow," she said to the footman when he appeared, "after these—er—young ladies have had their refreshment, you will show them the way out, will you?"

"Yes, madam."

"I am writing letters," Mrs. Channing said, "so you will excuse my leaving you. Good-afternoon, Betty Barton! Good-afternoon, Polly!"

"That's orl right, fanks!" sang out Cora, as the beautiful lady went gliding away. "And don't you trouble to 'ang about there," she added to the footman. "We ain't finished wiv the kike yet!"

"Ahem!" coughed the man.

"We ain't going to steal nothink, neither!"

"Er—ahem!"

"So buzz off!"

That was too much for Barlow. He interpreted the sham Betty's injunction to "buzz off" by backing away from the door in a half-fainting condition.

"Phew!" he breathed, fanning himself in the hall. "Really, I—I—I don't exactly know what to make of those—ahem!—young ladies!"

Left to themselves, Cora and Ella now exchanged glances, and then went off into fits of silent laughter.

"Ave annuver glars of lemonade, Polly!" Cora shouted, so that the footman would hear. "Come on; don't be afride!"

"Cora, if you don't stop it, I—I sha'n't be able to stop laughing!" whispered Ella.

"Me, I'm going to 'ave annuver slice of kike, and charnst it!" yelled Cora. "Oooo, look at the hicing on this bit!"

From one of the upper landings of the house a voice came floating down to Barlow.

"Barlow, are those girls going?"

"Ahem! Yes, madam; I—I fancy in a minute —"

"Orl right, Mrs. Channin'!" sang out Cora. "When you told us to 'elp ourselves, we fought you meant it. We didn't fink you meant it as a hint for hus to go! Come on, Polly! Who wants their old kike? We don't! Ain't my huncle got as much money as these here people?"

And, slamming down her plate and tumbler, Cora marched, nose in air, to the door, where Barlow retreated nervously before her.

Ella followed, overtaking her companion just as that girl was firing off a few parting shots.

"Yuss," Cora shouted at the footman, "my huncle can send me a better kike than that, any day in the week! My huncle—— Wot's that you're a-saying?"

"The—ahem!—the door—it leads straight out into the grounds, you know!" said Barlow.

"Fank yer for telling me!" said Cora witheringly. "'Ere, Polly, he finks we don't know the way aht! Yer great big stoopid, you!"

And then even Cora felt that one more word would be one too many.

She herself was ready to explode with laughter, and so she made a sudden scuttling rush for the front door and dived for the open, Ella bundling after her with the same great haste.

Next moment the door was slammed behind the girls, and then Mrs. Channing called down again from the landing above.

"Barlow!"

"Yes, madam?"

"I think I heard those girls go off, just now?"

"Yes, madam. It is—ahem!—quite safe now."

Mrs. Channing came rustling down the staircase. Hers was a face that looked as if she did not often suffer annoyances and loss of temper. But she was annoyed now—very!

Going straight into the library, she took up the receiver of the telephone and spoke into the transmitter.

"Are you there, exchange? Put me on to Morcove School, please. Thank you!"

In an isolated district of this sort, there was, of course, very little delay in getting connected, and in a few moments the ruffled lady was receiving an answer on the 'phone.

"Hallo! Is that you, Miss Somerfield? Oh, this is Mrs. Channing—yes, Combe Towers—speaking. I say, thank you very much for sending over the music, but— Can you hear me?"

The line buzzed for a moment, and then the talk went on.

"I hope you won't mind my mentioning it, Miss Somerfield; we have been friends long enough to be able to be quite frank, I'm sure. Those two girls you sent with the music—they were extraordinarily ill-behaved!"

Back from Morcove School came the voice of Miss Somerfield, uttering an incredulous cry.

"Ill-behaved! But——"

"Shocking! One of them in particular—the girl Betty Barton. I understand that she is a new scholar, who was very poor until recently. I like to make allowances, of course; but, really——"

"But, my dear Mrs. Channing, Betty Barton is the very nicest of girls! I chose her for the errand on purpose!"

"Nice, do you call her? My dear Miss Somerfield——"

"How do you mean? How did she mis-behave?"



THE HEADMISTRESS'S SENTENCE! "You are gated for a month!" said Miss Somerfield sternly. "You will each do me five hundred lines as well!"

"Oh, she was unspeakably rude!"

"No, no! Impossible!"

"But my servant here will bear me out. Really, I thought I ought to tell you, for the good of the school!"

"Yes, I understand; but I am simply astounded!" came the Headmistress's answer along the wire. "I will not let the matter rest here. When those girls return, I will question them!"

"Do! I am sure you owe it to the school in general to see that such a thing does not occur again. Good-bye!"

There was no answer from the other end of the wire.

At that end, Miss Somerfield, the Headmistress of Morcove School, was feeling too utterly dumbfounded for further speech.

Crashing the telephone-receiver back into its position, she got up from her chair and paced about the room, looking furiously angry.

Heroines Both!

HA, HA, HA!"

"Bai Jove, gals!"

"Laugh! We've been nearly falling off our bikes ever since we came away from the house!" Cora Grandways shrielled.

"You ought to have been there, girls!" was Ella Elgood's chuckling remark. "It was a perfect scream!"

She and Cora were back in the cavern on the seashore, and they had just been rattling off a full account of the great jape played at Combe Towers.

Roars of laughter had interrupted the story again and again, for Cora went through the whole performance of posing as an imaginary Betty Barton.

"Cora isn't exaggerating a bit!" cried Ella Elgood. "Oh, she was a scream, and what that poor Mrs. Channing must have thought—"

"And the footman!" broke in Cora. "Don't forget the footman, Ella!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, how extremely amusing—what!" simpered Paula Creel. "But you have been telling our pwnsers all about it, don't you know!"

"Oh, dear, that's unlucky!" Cora said, with a mock grimace of alarm. "Now they can run and tell teacher!"

Cora, of course, knew, as well as all the others, that Betty and Polly would feel bound to silence about the disgraceful trick that had been played at their expense.

And so it had been no accident that had caused the story of the jape to be told in the presence of the prisoners, whose hands were still tied behind their backs, although their eyes were unbanded.

To the whole pack of self-styled "japers," it was the very cream of the joke, this talking about it all in front of the victims!

Betty and Polly were white with anger, whilst their eyes blazed with a wrath which they would not demean themselves to express with their lips. Each girl was keeping her teeth tightly clenched, holding back the indignant cries which it would have been a relief to utter—a relief, but a humiliation, too!

"Are you going to sneak?" Judith turned upon the helpless pair to ask them, fiercely. "My word, if you do!"

No answer. Only a still greater blaze of anger in the eyes of both girls.

"Let them sneak," said Cora, very slowly, "and we'll make them sit up for it! What do you say, girls?"

"Rather!"

"Bai Jove, yes. But you won't sneak, you gals, will you?" Paula Creel said, in a wheedling tone to the victims. "I say, don't you know, sneaking is such bad form—what!"

Still not a word from either Betty or Polly.

"Well, now we can get back to the school, and leave them to turn up later!" chuckled Cora, turning away. "Never mind about their tied hands, girls; they'll soon work them loose after we have gone."

"Ta-ta, then!" mocked Judith, showing to the silent prisoners. "You know where to find your bicycles. Ha, ha, ha!"

The laugh was taken up by the rest of the girls as they went crowding into the open, and even when they were going up the combe to the coast road the mirthful cry came again and again to the ears of Betty and Polly.

"Ha, ha, ha! What a perfect scream! He, he, he!"

"Oh, the awful creatures!" panted Betty, who was already wriggling at the bandage which bound her wrists. "Polly dear—"

"Betty, I think we had better not talk about it," Polly broke in huskily. "I—I can't trust myself to speak! That Grandways couple—"

"All of them!" Betty cried out hotly. "They are all as bad as one another! Well, it has been their turn to-day; it may be our turn to-morrow!"

"Yes," said Polly grimly.

Then, setting their teeth again, the two girls worked away in silence until their hands were freed from the knotted handkerchiefs which had scarred their wrists.

Betty's face was still aflame with anger; but, even so, she seemed to have her feelings of indignation under far better control than did Polly.

Perhaps the indignities of the last hour or two were a new experience for Polly, whereas Betty had already undergone other cruel ordeals at the hands of Cora Grandways and Co. At any rate, Polly now looked quite ill with helpless rage and a sense of shame.

She walked in front of Betty as they made their way out of the cave; nor did she turn her face to Betty or speak a single word until the pair of them had reached the sunny road running along the top of the cliffs.

Then, coming to a standstill at the spot where their bicycles were half-hidden amongst the fern-bushes, Polly suddenly banished the fierce look from her face and was able to speak calmly.

"I'm better now," was all she said simply. "We won't ever speak about it again, Betty dear. Only, we will remember—"

"Yes, Polly. And if ever—"

"Ah!" Polly breathed, clenching her hands. "If ever our turn comes!"

Then she picked up her bicycle, wheeled it across the springy turf on to the roadway, and prepared to mount.

But at that very instant the quietude of the coast road was broken by a most alarming sound.

It was the clatter of a galloping horse which first startled both girls. Barely an instant later, however, they heard a faint, wailing cry of terror.

Then Betty Barton called to Polly.

"Look, Polly—look! That horse and trap!"

"My goodness!" gasped Polly Linton. "It's a runaway!"

"It will be over the cliffs in a minute!" panted Betty.

And both surmises were correct.

Along the narrow road came that madly galloping horse, with the dogcart to which it was harnesses pitching and rolling from side to side.

There was only one occupant of the vehicle—a girl of about eighteen. She was doing her utmost to pull up the stampeding animal, but her desperate tugging at the reins had no effect whatever, whilst her cries of dismay made it clear that she was aware of the dire peril confronting her.

To one side of the narrow road, and not fifty yards from it, was the edge of the giant cliff. It was all unfenced; nor would any ordinary fence have checked the runaway steed, once it went dashing across the grass in that direction.

"Help, help!" cried the poor terrified girl, still tugging frantically at the reins.

Betty Barton flung her bicycle to the side of the road. Polly did the same with her machine. And then off raced both girls, running hard to meet the runaway.

On came the crazy animal, his forelegs leaping high at every step, whilst the foam flew in flecks from his mouth.

Polly, just a pace or two in front of Betty, pulled up suddenly, preparing to take her chance at trying to stop the runaway. And so Betty shrewdly left the road and ran out on to the grass, in readiness to do her little bit if the horse swerved towards the cliff-edge.

And that was just what the horse did do!

Within a few yards of Polly, the runaway reared up for a second, then swung aside and made for the grass, dragging the dogcart and rider with him.

Polly made a dash and tried to seize the horse by his head; but he eluded the girl's desperate grab, and galloped on, whilst Polly herself was sent sprawling on the grass, narrowly missing one wheel of the pitching vehicle.

But now it was Betty's turn.

With a feeling of grim calmness, which she was never able to account for afterwards, she made her dash to stop the horse.

With a clean spring, she leapt at the animal, seizing the shaft with her left hand, whilst her right hand flew to the horse's bit.

By thus hanging on with one hand to the shaft she was saved from being dashed to the ground, and now the runaway found that right hand of Betty's something to be reckoned with.

He could not wrench his head free of her tenacious grasp. He swerved again, reared up and down viciously, and still Betty hung on, and suddenly he owned himself beaten.

Panting and blowing, and quivering in every limb, the fiery animal came to a standstill, and in a moment Betty was calling to the occupant of the dogcart.

"There, he is all right now! Only don't get down for a moment, because—"

The terrified girl had already sprung from the cart, however, and now she came round to the horse's head, her face as white as death, whilst she could hardly speak for the trembling that was upon her.

"You wicked rascal!" she gasped out at last to the now penitent-looking steed. "Oh, you wicked bag-of-tricks!"

Then she gave a rather hysterical laugh as she turned to Betty and Polly.

"I expect you think I was an awful coward, yelling out like that. But if he had gone over the cliff with me—"

"Oh, don't talk about it!" shuddered Betty. "That was what we were both dreading!"

"It is what would certainly have happened if you had not saved me," the girl said earnestly. "The pair of you—it was simply splendid!—I don't know how to thank you! You must tell me your names, and when I get home—"

(Continued on next page.)



EXPOSING THE SNOBS! "Those girls who behaved so disgracefully at my house!" declared Mrs. Channing, pointing to Cora and Ella.

"No, please, don't let's have any fuss made about it!" pleaded both girls. "We—well, we would rather you didn't!"

"But you saved my life! I couldn't possibly do anything with him, the rascal! I am a pretty good hand with horses, but he had the better of me for once!"

"Well, mind you keep him in order all the way home!" laughed Betty. "Perhaps you will walk him all the way?"

"Lead him, do you mean? Not likely!" cried the girl, who certainly did not lack pluck. "He is going to go home as meek as a lamb!"

Giving the quietened animal a hearty slap on his neck, she led him back to the road, climbed to her seat in the dogcart, and then called a farewell to the girls.

"Don't be uneasy; he won't serve me that trick again! So good-bye, and thank you ever so much! I sha'n't forget your bravery!"

Then she touched up the horse with her whip, and he cantered off in a better frame of mind, causing Betty and Polly to breathe freely as they watched the whole outfit and its pretty driver pass safely out of sight.

"She's a jolly girl!" was Polly's comment. "I've seen her before, out driving; but I don't know who she is."

"Think I'd rather stick to my bike, and leave horses and traps to other folks," smiled Betty, as she and her chum picked up their machines and mounted. "Sure you feel all right, Polly dear, after your tumble?"

"How about you?" answered Polly. "I wonder the horse didn't pull your arm out of its socket."

"Oh, I'm all right! Race you back to school, to prove it!" challenged Betty.

And off they whirred, feeling in very high spirits again, for the adventure with the runaway had eclipsed all the humiliating incidents that had gone before.

But their thoughts were brought back sharply enough to the doings of Cora Grandways and Co. when both girls had reached the school, had stalled their machines, and were making for their study.

Just inside the house entrance, they were met by Miss Redgrave, the Fourth Form junior mistress.

"I have been asked to keep a look-out for you," said the mistress, in her gentle way. "The Headmistress wants to see you, so will you please go to her at once? She is in her room."

Betty and Polly did not trouble to ask why they were wanted. They had a pretty shrewd notion, and they could only set their teeth rather grimly as they sought the Headmistress's room.

Miss Somerfield, looking both girls up and down when at last they stood before her, did not relax her frowning expression.

"The pair of you evidently came here prepared to find me annoyed—most annoyed!" she exclaimed. "Your eyes tell me that you are utterly ashamed, having no excuse to plead!"

After a moment she burst out again:

"A disgraceful affair, that is the only word for it!—I chose you two girls for the errand to Mrs. Channing, because I thought you would do credit to the school. You heard me say that I was sending you for that reason, and what is the result?"

Betty and Polly, having nothing to say—for what could they say without sneaking about Cora and Co.?—the Headmistress continued:

"Mrs. Channing has phoned to me, feeling

actually forced to complain about your disgraceful rudeness at her house! You have disgraced yourselves, you have disgraced the school, and that means you have put yourselves quite out of favour in my eyes!"

Betty winced at that, and so did Polly. They drew just a little nearer to each other, whilst they still had to stand there, hearing themselves so unjustly condemned, and yet unable to vindicate themselves except by the unthinkable course of "telling tales."

"You are gated for a month, the pair of you," Miss Somerfield said sternly, "and you will do me five hundred lines each! Now go, before I yield to the temptation to inflict even greater punishment!"

A scornful wave of the hand was the girl's humiliating dismissal, and with bowed heads they went from the room.

With set faces and pursed lips they went up the stairs and along the Fourth Form corridor. In the Grandways girls' study a tea-party seemed to have assembled, and Betty and Polly could guess what all the talk was about in that den, as they heard all the girls breaking out again and again with a loud:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They Laugh Best—

EVEN next morning, Cora Grandways and Co. were still enjoying the huge joke which they had played at the expense of Betty and Polly.

As usual, when punishment was dealt out by the Headmistress herself, the penalties inflicted upon the offenders figured in the day's notices, and that in itself was a great joke from the self-styled japers' point of view.

"Going for a bicycle ride after school?" Cora said to Polly Linton, as the whole Form was returning to the classroom after break. "Oh, I forgot; you are gated, of course!"

"And perhaps you haven't finished your five hundred lines just yet?" sniggered Judith. "He, he, he!"

This twitting was confined to Polly Linton. As for Betty Barton, Cora and Co. felt that they could not do better than treat her with stony contempt.

Knowing how much comfort it was to her to have the friendship of Polly, it seemed a good wheeze to make a sharp difference between the way they treated Polly and the treatment they accorded "the Council school kid."

Cora, in fact, still had hopes of wooing Polly away from Betty, and so it was an agreed thing amongst the snobs that all the real malice was to be directed against Betty.

Polly herself was aware of the difference in the treatment that was being meted out to her; she was aware of the motive, too. And it only meant that she took every possible opportunity of showing her loyalty to Betty.

The resumption of classes after that mid-morning break found the two girls side by side again, and once, when they had their heads close together over the same book which they were consulting, Polly lifted an arm and put it about her chum's shoulder.

Perhaps Miss Redgrave, who was in charge of the class, thought it only a half-absent action; but it was an intentional display of affection on Polly's part—and it told!

Cora Grandways gnawed at her underlip. She was going to make some savage remark in a whisper to Ella Elgood, when the classroom door opened.

Next moment all the girls rose to their feet and remained standing, for it was their Headmistress who had entered, bringing with her a couple of visitors.

Betty, standing shoulder to shoulder with Polly, nudged her chum excitedly.

Polly answered with a nudge of her own. Then they stood with bated breath, waiting for Miss Somerfield to speak.

"You won't mind our intruding for a moment, Miss Redgrave?" the Headmistress smiled blandly. "I am making a round of the different Forms with these friends of mine. We have been to the Sixth Form and the Fifth, without meeting with success; but perhaps—"

She broke off there, and, turning to her companions, spoke to them in a lowered voice.

Then she addressed the whole class.

"The fact is, girls," she said, in the tone of one who is highly pleased, "Mrs. Channing and her daughter have come over to the school this morning to make known a very brave deed performed in the most modest fashion by a couple of Morcove scholars."

The class rustled like a field of corn in the breeze.

"It appears," went on the Headmistress, swelling with pride, "the horse that Miss Channing was driving yesterday afternoon bolted with her on the coast road. She would certainly have gone over the cliff, but for the heroism of two girls, who did not give their names or any other information."

Whilst Miss Somerfield was saying all this, with the class rustling again in its excitement, the roving gaze of the younger visitor came to rest upon Betty and Polly.

"There, Miss Somerfield—see!" she exclaimed boldly, pointing. "Those are the two brave girls to whom I owed my life yesterday!"

"Ah!" Miss Somerfield stared straight at the blushing heroines. "Betty Barton and Polly Linton!"

"What!"

It was a puzzled cry from the elder visitor, Mrs. Channing.

"My dear Miss Somerfield!" she exclaimed. "I—really, I don't understand! Betty Barton and Polly Linton were the girls who called yesterday with the music. You know—"

"Yes, those are the girls—the same girls—"

"Oh, no!" Mrs. Channing broke in emphatically. "They are not the same girls! The girls who called and returned the music—"

She paused, sending a searching glance all round the class.

"You two, in that desk—hold up your heads!" she cried sharply to Cora Grandways and Ella Elgood. "There, those are the two girls, Miss Somerfield!"

"Impossible!" gasped the Headmistress. "I sent Betty Barton and Polly Linton with the music!"

"Those are the girls who behaved so disgracefully at my house!" declared Mrs. Channing, pointing straight at Cora and Ella. "If they are not the girls you sent, then it means that some disgraceful hoax was played!"

The Headmistress held her breath for a moment. "Cora Grandways—Ella Elgood!" she cried at last. "What does this mean? Did you impersonate Betty Barton and Polly Linton yesterday?"

No answer.

"You did; your silence is an admission!" rapped out the Headmistress. "And now I understand.

Oh, I see clearly how it is that such disgraceful things happened! It was all done to disgrace Betty and Polly in my eyes!"

"No, n-n-n-no!" faltered Cora, going red and white by turns. "It—well, it was only done for a bit of fun!"

"Fun, when it means that I punished both girls most severely for a thing of which they were entirely innocent! Fun you call it! I understand the motive for your fun! How many other girls were concerned in the abominable trick?"

"We were all in it!" spoke up Judth Grandways sulkily.

"Good gracious!"

"Bai Jove, don't you know!"

"That will do, Paula Creel! Silence, all!" exclaimed the Headmistress angrily. "Since you were all concerned in the affair, you will feel it only right to receive all-round punishment! With the exception of Betty Barton and Polly Linton, whose punishment is rescinded, the whole Form—"

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Silence! The whole Form is gated for a fortnight, and each girl will do five hundred lines!"

Mrs. Channing and her daughter had turned aside, feeling rather uncomfortable; but now the girl swung round, and, with a glance that asked Miss Somerfield's permission to speak, addressed the whole class.

"I am afraid, from what has come to light," she said breezily, "there has been a sort of jape that has hit back at those who carried it out. Nothing in that, girls, if it had been a jape that was innocent in its intention. I was a terrible japer myself when I went to school. But your jape seems to show that you had a grudge against the brave girls to whom I am so grateful."

The visitor paused.

"Well, let this be the end of it!" appealed Miss Channing earnestly. "Come, girls; now that you have all heard how bravely Betty Barton and Polly Linton acted yesterday—oh, surely, you will be done with all paltry snobbery! Surely you will give them both a cheer when I call for one!"

But the whole Form was silent.

"You will not?" Miss Channing drew back a step, her face gradually expressing the same scorn which filled the eyes of the Headmistress and Mrs. Channing. "Oh, well, then I have nothing more to say to you, that's all!"

"I am ashamed—ashamed!" cried the Headmistress bitterly. "After the brave deed you have heard about—after the way this young lady has appealed to your better natures, you will not give Betty and Polly a single cheer!"

"We don't want any cheering, please!" spoke up Betty then, in great confusion. "Please—"

"But at least," interposed Miss Redgrave, suddenly stepping forward, "you will let me show my regard for what you have done, Betty—and you, Polly! Here is my hand! I am prouder of you than ever!"

"As I am, too!" cried the Headmistress. "All the prouder of you both, because you were too fine-spirited yesterday to denounce the girls whose victims you were!"

Then she followed Mrs. Channing and her daughter to the door, whilst Miss Redgrave signed to the girls to sit down and resume their work.

Someone gave a brazen chuckle, and the junior mistress fixed her steady eyes upon the culprit.

"Cora Grandways, if I hear another sound from you, I will take you to the Headmistress when her visitors have gone!"

After which Cora subsided, only to burst out with all the greater vehemence directly the class was dismissed.

"Those two!" she almost hissed, as she and her cronies watched Betty and Polly go romping up to their den. "Let them look out for themselves after this!"

"Yes," said Judith fiercely, "I'm not going to be gated for a fortnight, with five hundred lines to do, without making those kids pay for it!"

"Nor I—nor I!" exclaimed others.

"Bai Jove!" simpered Paula Creel. "It really is most extremely annoying!"

"Wait!" panted Cora Grandways. "Leave it to me! I'll get the revenge you want!"

But would she?

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

(Cora Grandways has resolved to obtain her revenge upon Betty Barton and Polly Linton! Will she succeed? You must all be very anxious to obtain the answer to this question, so do not miss next Tuesday's magnificent long, complete story of the girls of Morcove School, entitled: "A Schoolgirl's Secret!" To avoid disappointment, order your copy of "The Schoolgirls' Own" in advance!)



Your Editor's Chat.

Write to me as often as you like and let me know what you think of "The Schoolgirls' Own." All readers who write me, and enclose a stamped envelope, may be sure of receiving a prompt reply by post. All letters should be addressed: The Editor, "Schoolgirls' Own," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

What Does Betty Do?

SUPPOSING a girl you knew had treated you very badly. Supposing that same girl had allowed you to be blamed for something, when one word from her would have cleared you in everybody's eyes. Supposing she had stolen something of a valuable nature and pawned it. When you realised the consequences of such an action, realised the nature of the punishment which would be dealt out to the girl as soon as her action was discovered, what would you do?

Let us presume that you would do your best to help the girl. And then supposing that, in trying to save her, you yourself became accused of doing the very same thing of which the other girl was guilty, would you take all the blame and say nothing, or would you denounce the girl as a thief?

Maybe you will never be placed in such a position. But in next Tuesday's magnificent long, complete story of the girls of Morcove School, entitled "A Schoolgirl's Secret!" Betty Barton finds herself in a similar predicament to the one I have quoted. Does Betty shield the girl, and allow herself to be blamed, or does she tell everything in order to escape punishment herself? These questions will be answered in next Tuesday's grand story. On no account must you fail to read it.

Full of Excitement.

THERE is a very thrilling instalment of "Cast-away Jess" in next Tuesday's issue of THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. The girls are plunged into one of the most exciting adventures of their lives.

The Girl Who Makes You Laugh.

I DO not think I am wrong in saying that of all the characters in our stories, the one who sends you into most roars of laughter is Dulcie Marshall, the fat girl in "For Film-Fame and Fortune!" Dulcie is even more amusing than ever in our next instalment of this enthralling serial. By the way, in this instalment Gladys West discovers that Flora Golding is more determined than ever to obtain her revenge upon her.

"The Gipsy's Warning!"

THE above is the title of next Tuesday's story of the Guides of the Poppy Patrol. I expect that when you read this week's story you will be somewhat puzzled by Rose Neath's behaviour. Rose had expressed a desire to be on friendly terms with Molly Marsh. Is she really sincere, or has she a motive for chumming with Molly? Well, to discover this you must read the forthcoming stories dealing with the Guides of the Poppy Patrol.

Next Tuesday's Articles:

AT the moment of writing letters are simply pouring into my office, all of which praise THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. From them I gather that our stories are popular with all. As for the articles—well, everybody seems to be delighted with them. Many readers have stated that the hints have proved of great value to them.

Now, in next Tuesday's issue the Needlework Notes will contain full particulars for making a Dainty Crochet Nightdress Top, and instructions will be given for making a Cretone Fancy-Bag.

These readers who are fond of cookery will be told in our next issue How to Make Small Cakes.

"The School Friend."

ONCE again I wish to draw the attention of all my readers to our Companion Paper, "The School Friend" is published every Thursday, and it contains a magnificent long, complete school story of the girls of Cliff House. This Thursday's story is entitled "The Sixth-Former's Downfall," and it is a story which will hold you from start to finish.

Then in this week's issue there is a splendid number of The Cliff House Weekly, the little paper edited by Barbara Redfern and her chums of the Fourth Form.

The price of "The School Friend" is three-half-pence, and once you have read one copy I am positive you will want to read many more. So take my advice and order your copy of Thursday's issue at once.