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The Schoolgirls' Own



2nd

CORA'S "JOKE"! (An incident from the grand long complete story of the girls of Morcove School contained in this issue.)

The fame of Morcove School is world-wide. Here is a splendid "Morcove" yarn.



THE SCHOOLGIRL MONEY-MAKER!

A magnificent new long complete story of the girls of Morecove School which tells how musical Madge Minden carried through a novel scheme.

By MARJORIE STANTON,

The Girl Who Kept Her Temper.

"Of course, you make excuses for her, Betty Barton! You would!"

"Not at all, Cora Grandways. I really don't see any excuse, except that it pleases her to do it."

"Then why not stop it?"

"How can any of us stop it?" Betty Barton blandly returned.

"Yes, bai Jove, that is the pwoblem!" drawled Paula Creel, from the depths of an armchair. "Pwecisely how can one weason with the twying geal?"

No one answered for the moment. All the girls, in fact, who were at present thronging the Fourth Form captain's den at the Priory felt quite nonplussed.

At last Cora Grandways risked a hint that she felt sure would be resented.

"We might tell—"

"What!" went up the howl of indignation. "Wh—at, tell!"

"Bai Jove, don't you know!" remarked Paula, fanning herself with a perfumed handkerchief whilst she looked very disdainfully at Cora. "You ought to wealise by this time, Cowa, we geals don't go in for telling."

"If we did," said Polly Linton grimly, "I know one girl who would have been expelled ages ago!"

"Yes, wather! Howevah—"

Paula said no more. She was in one of her very languid moods, and the chair was most comfortable. She even closed her pretty eyes as if for a doze.

"I want you to quite understand," said Betty Barton quietly, "this thing Madge Minden is doing grieves me. I'm not a snob, and so I don't talk a lot of nonsense about the loss of dignity in Madge's engaging to give music-lessons for money; but—"

"Hear, hear!" put in Polly, sitting on the edge of the table and swinging her legs. "But, girls—but—"

"I do think—and I have told Madge so," went on Betty—"whilst she is doing a thing like this she must let Form matters slide."

"Of course she will!" flared out Cora. "Didn't we have a taste of that last Saturday? She was down to play in the hockey-match, but backed out. Just to go touting for music pupils. Ha, ha, ha!"

Cora's jeering laugh always grated on the other girls. At the present moment it stung Betty into voicing a word in Madge Minden's favour, which perhaps might not otherwise have been said.

"Well," Betty said, "we know this—Madge always has been so keen on music."

"Oh, yes!" came sweetly from Audrey Blain. "And I, for one, think it—well, just amusing."

Polly looked at her none too amiably.

"It is quite a good thing from your point of view, I should say, Audrey. You want to go in for the music festival at Barncombe, and it must be rather fine to have Madge coaching you."

"Fancy Madge being ready to coach other girls when she is entering for the very same contest herself!" exclaimed Dolly Delane.

"Pooh!" said Polly. "Madge knows, of course, that if she teaches some of you from now until Doomsday she can still beat you hollow."

Audrey turned away, putting up a hand to fiddle with her hair. When Audrey did that she was either trying to attract attention or was feeling "rattled." At present she was "rattled."

"That's what you say, Polly," she remarked airily, passing towards the door. "But what you know about music doesn't count for much."

"No, it doesn't," laughed Polly. "I leave others to go mad over sonatas and things. Umpty, iddly, ooo, tee-tee!" she cried, running her hands up and down an imaginary row of piano-notes.

"Yes, wather! Howevah—"

Polly swung off the table and made a dive for Paula.

"What are you talking about? You're asleep, Paula, so wake up!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Out of that chair, or else take me on your knees!"

"Polly deah, pway wefwain fwom being so fwivolous," entreated the aristocrat of the Fourth Form. "You are squashing me, Polly! Help, geals—wescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed the others, as they saw Polly, the madcap, bouncing up and down on Paula's lap.

At this instant someone came darting to the open doorway with tidings that caused a small sensation.

"I say! Miss Somerfield is here! She has just turned up."

"Oh!"

"Hooway! Pway get off me, Polly deah. You have wuffed my hair dreadfully."

Polly, part of whose aim in life was to tease the swell girl, got to her feet again to discuss the gratifying announcement that had just been made. And thereupon Paula, lolling back in the armchair, fetched out a tiny pocket-mirror and comb and made a careful toilette.

"So Miss Somerfield has turned up!" exclaimed Betty. "On account of last Saturday night's burglary, I suppose. Not that there seems to be any likelihood of a development over that business."

"No, worse luck!" grimaced Polly. "A fat lot the police did when they were fetched along! No clues, of course!"

Tess Tralawney spoke, after glancing at the study clock.

"Four o'clock! I'm off, for one. No, Betty, don't ask me to stay to tea, as per usual. As a matter of fact—"

"Well?"

"I think it would be nice to go down to tea this afternoon," Tess answered from the doorway. "Nice to show up down there, since we know that Miss Somerfield is on a flying visit."

The arrival of Miss Somerfield, Morcove's beloved Headmistress, was quite an event. Ever since the fire at the school, some weeks ago, the Fourth and Fifth Forms had been quartered here at the Old Priory. Other Forms had been accommodated elsewhere in the neighbourhood, and so the Headmistress had to divide her time amongst the various "camps."

Well in advance of the tea-bell, Betty and Co. were scampering off downstairs, although Paula, who was certainly part of the "Co.," was a notable exception. Let Paula Creel get in front of a mirror to tidy her hair, and one never knew when she would turn away from it!

But even she took her seat at the tea-table before the cups had been passed round, and so she was "all there" when Miss Somerfield's entry called for a welcoming outburst from the scholars.

Miss Somerfield, grey-haired and stately, got as far as "Well, girls!" and then—

"Hurrah!" Betty led off her Form, whilst the captain of the Fifth did the same at another table. "It is good to see you again, Miss Somerfield!"

"Yes, wather!"

"Spiffing" was madcap Polly's way of expressing her feelings. "Hip, hip—hooray!"

"It is nice to be amongst you, let me say in return," smiled the popular Headmistress, not taking her stand to address the girls, but starting to saunter from table to table. "Still keeping your end up, girls, although conditions are so makeshift!"

"What-ho!" from Polly, and a hearty: "Yes, wather!" from Paula, whilst the other girls chorused equally jubilant responses.

"But why hasn't somebody caught last Saturday night's burglar?" Miss Somerfield jested,

causing a burst of laughter. "Betty—Polly," she added, with mock solemnity, "you generally figure well as amateur detectives."

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Hovevah—"

"No clue!" Betty called to the Headmistress, with a laugh.

"I confess," said that lady, with less levity, "it gave me a very unpleasant turn to hear about the burglary. We live in disturbing times indeed, girls. This morning I have had another upset."

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Yes, girls I am very sorry to say," went on Miss Somerfield, taking a letter from her pocket for reference, "your visiting music-mistress has been called away to the North of England on very important business, and so I have to find another at very short notice."

"Phee-ew!" Polly did not mind whistling; and, indeed, she was not the only girl who felt staggered.

A nice thing, this! Just at a time when they were to start training for a certain competition in connection with the musical festival at Barncombe!

"That is the trying part about it all," agreed Miss Somerfield, guessing the girl's rueful thoughts. "It will be a shame if your chances at the festival are all handicapped by my having to get you a new instructress. But I will do my best, girls."

That went without saying, and Betty, for one, was on the point of saying so when she heard Cora Grandways making a sarcastic remark across the tea-table to Madge Minden.

"A chance for you to earn a guinea or two, Madge! He, he, he! Why not offer to take on the job of coaching us? Oh, my, what a lark that would be!"

"You be quiet, Cora!"

Betty glared at that girl, for the sneerer had spoken almost loud enough for Miss Somerfield to hear.

But Cora only laughed, and turned to Audrey Blain.

"You saw that kid in the town Madge has taken on as a pupil, didn't you, Audrey? Wasn't she the absolute limit? Ha, ha, ha! Nothing better than a step-girl."

By now the whole tea-table was feeling embarrassed. The girls in general really had felt pained at Madge Minden's taking on music-pupils at so much an hour, but they dreaded any of the mistresses getting to know about it.

"Cora," Polly breathed fiercely, "if you don't jolly well hold your tongue—"

"Yes, wather! Weally, Cowa deah, pway betway a little wegard for westwaint."

"He, he, he!" Cora tittered again; and she would have continued her taunting of Madge, it is certain, only just then the signal to leave the tables was given.

Miss Somerfield at that moment was over by the Fifth Form table, and so the Fourth Form scholars trooped away without further speech with her. Outside the room there looked like being a flare-up between Polly and Cora, but Betty managed to keep the peace. When all the girls had ascended to the studies, however, where there was no risk of Miss Somerfield's hearing what passed, a demonstration took place which Betty could never have quelled, even if she had tried.

It was an outburst of scoffing cries and taunts

HAVE YOU MET

SYLVIA SILENCE

THE GIRL DETECTIVE?—SEE

"The Schoolgirls' Weekly."

as Madge Minden came by on the way to her own study.

"How's the step-girl getting on with her Beethoven, Madge?" sniggered Cora.

"Can I pay you threepence on account, and the rest next week?" grinned Ella Elgood. She was one of the girls who had "booked lessons" more out of fun than anything else.

"How much commission do you pay if I get you new pupils?" a third girl wanted to know.

And so it went on, nearly every member of the Fourth Form having some jest to make, in a more or less ill-natured way, at Madge's expense.

Not a word did she answer. She simply walked straight on to her den, entered, and closed the door. And she did not slam that door, either!

Madge Knows Something.

IT rankled, though!

Yes, it hurt her to be the butt of the Form like this.

Scoffed at even by some of her very best friends; positively jeered at by less good-natured scholars, chief of whom was that despicable Cora Grandways!

But they would not shame her out of it—no. A thousand times no!

So she was saying to herself at this moment. Apart from the fact that anything like derision was the very thing to set Madge's back up, she had something ever before her in her mind to strengthen her resolution.

Calmly she was considering another little enterprise that would perhaps cause another sensation in the school. Well, what if it did? She knew what she was about.

With a determined air she got up and passed from the room, and a minute later she was in the handsome downstairs room which had been reserved for Miss Somerfield's use when that lady might be at the Priory.

The Headmistress was away for the moment, so Madge waited. On the table was a current copy of the local paper, and to pass the time she took it up and began to skim through it. Her eyes scanned the preliminary announcement of the coming festival, then wandered to the news pages.

So, all at once, she saw an item that her eyes devoured eagerly. It was an account of the burglary at the Priory on the previous Saturday night.

Twice she read the paragraph, then put the local newspaper down, and stood staring absently before her.

She was thinking of the poor, shabby little soul who had engaged to take music-lessons because music was a passion with her. Poor little Maggie Shaw, living in one of Barncombe's back streets, along with a father of whom she had said:

"I can't tell you what he is. I don't know what he does for a living."

No, she did not know, and that fact heightened the suspicion that Madge had that Maggie Shaw's father was the burglar of last Saturday night!

Out in the corridor Miss Somerfield's returning step suddenly became audible, and Madge pulled herself together for the interview.

"Well, Madge dear?"

The sweetest of smiles went with Miss Somerfield's cordial greeting as she came into the room.

"Isn't it a shame about our being without our music-teacher just at this important time?" the Headmistress exclaimed. "You, of course, Madge,

deplete the situation as much as any girl can; music is such a passion with you."

Then Madge went straight to the point.

"Miss Somerfield," she said calmly, "I have come to ask you. May I be allowed to train the girls for the festival?"

Miss Somerfield held her breath and stared.

Madge's Step-girl!

AT that moment, in the study occupied by Grace Garfield and Ella Elgood, there were great doings!

Half a dozen girls were there, all engaged in dressing up a most awful-looking dummy with lightning speed.

A skirt and blouse had been pulled over the bolster that did duty for body and legs. Stockings stuffed with paper were the arms, a safety-pin securing each arm to a shoulder.



MADGE'S PUPIL! When Madge Minden arrived at Miss Ainsley's house, little Maggie was cleaning the step. "I—I didn't expect you yet, miss!" she faltered.

turn, out of which a face with a hideous smile had been carved. By the use of pen and ink the teeth had been marked out, and eyes and eyebrows drawn with great skill.

"Now the hat!" chuckled Grace, stepping up to the awful dummy with a very battered bit of headgear. "Oh, look—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The other girls simply doubled up with laughter.

"He, he, he! What a guy!"

"Madge's step-girl pupil to the life, I call it," said Cora Grandways.

She it was who had inspired this little jape at Madge Minden's expense. At first Grace and the others had had scruples, fearing that the joke might seem to be ill-natured; but they had decided that it could be done in a good-humoured way, and so they had promptly got busy.

Ella had routed out an old pair of white gloves, and had stuffed them with paper. It was an easy task to fasten these dummy hands to the ends of the dummy arms, and then—well, the girls screamed louder than ever with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear, how lovely!"

"Sh!" Cora cautioned them. "We mustn't give the joke away yet awhile. You know my idea—we'll take it down to the music-room and seat it at the piano. He, he, he!"

Cora set off, hugging the floppy dummy in her arms. In the passage she encountered Audrey, who raised her brows.

"What on earth—"

"You must recognise it, surely!" grinned Cora. "Madge's step-girl!"

"Oh!" And Audrey burst out laughing. Then another door opened, and Paula Creel stood revealed.

"Eh—what? Oh, bai Jove!"

"Isn't she a darling?" exclaimed Grace Garfield, referring to the dummy. "Cora assures us that it is Madge's step-girl to the life."

"Yes, wather—I mean—Howevah, a jape's a jape, I suppose," Paula Creel said.

"Where are Polly and Betty?" Ella Elgood wanted to know. "They ought to see it."

It appeared, however, that the Form captain and her bosom chum were to miss this bit of fun—for the present, anyhow. Their study was looked into, and found to be deserted. Eva Merrick gave it as her opinion that the two girls had gone down to see Miss Redgrave in connection with some Form affair.

So, forming a sort of giggling procession, the girls trooped on down the stairs, escorting the guy to the room that was doing duty as a music-room at the Priory.

The place was lit up, for it was the custom to keep the music-room available for girls who might wish to put in an odd five minutes at the piano during reasonable hours. No one was at the piano when the mirthful crowd swarmed into the room, and so Cora was able to dump the guy upon the music-stool at once.

Not content with doing this, Cora arranged the dummy so that the hands looked as if they were banging away at the piano-notes. She also enhanced the realistic effect by turning the head so that the turnip face was looking towards the door. "Gorgeous! Spiffing!" were some of the merry comments.

"Half a sec., though!" pleaded Grace.

She found a sheet of foolscap, and, by means of a spill of paper dipped in an inkpot, printed off these words in large capitals:

MADGE'S STEP-GIRL!

This glaring placard was placed in a prominent position at the foot of the music-stool, and then all the girls stood away to admire the effect from a distance.

"Ha, ha, ha!" The laughter was starting again when Ella came whirling in with a warning:

"Siss! She's coming—Madge is coming!"

"Oh!"

Those girls who were close to the door darted away from the room. Others, feeling there was not time to take to flight, hastily scrambled into

empty cupboards. Others again crouched down behind couches or benches. Two of the japers crawled under a table.

They were all more or less hidden from view several seconds before Madge turned into the passage that led to the music-room.

She had come straight from her brief interview with Miss Somerfield to the music-room with a heart that was very light. For that interview—it had been successful, wonderfully successful!

Miss Somerfield had had her breath taken away when Madge first spoke. That the girl had expected. What she had hardly dared to expect was the quickness with which her amazing proposal had been agreed to. It is one thing to feel quite capable of undertaking a certain responsibility; it is often quite another thing to get others to share one's confidence!

"And I am to be paid for the work!" was Madge's exultant thought as she came towards the music-room. "What about it now, dad? When you warned me that nobody can expect to make money at music, and—"

And there the girl's jubilant thoughts broke off. She had reached the music-room doorway—was stopping dead with the sudden shock of a great surprise.

No wonder, either!

There at the piano sat a frightful sort of guy in the attitude of strumming at the notes. The head was turned, just as if a real girl might have turned her head to smile a greeting to someone entering the room.

Only this was no smile that the turnip face had for Madge. It was the most hideous grin one could imagine!

Then, as Madge tore her fascinated gaze from the grinning face, she saw the placard:

MADGE'S STEP-GIRL!

Madge was not without a sense of humour. But this was a thing she simply could not smile at.

If the guy had been labelled "Madge," then she would have taken the jape in good part. But that word "step-girl"—it jarred. It hurt her.

It was a cruel jape against little Maggie Shaw—Maggie, making such a brave fight of it with her young life; motherless Maggie, innocent daughter of a man who was most likely a criminal.

She heard some smothered tittering, and knew then that the girls responsible for this jape were hiding—some of them, at least—in the music-room.

At the same instant there was a flurry of steps behind her, and she thought that other girls were making a sudden rush to catch her in the act of staring at the dummy, and so enjoy her angry looks.

But in this she was wrong.

Three girls came hurrying up behind her—a trio whose looks showed that they were no parties to the jape. Betty, Polly, Paula!

"What's the joke, Madge?" questioned Betty. "Paula here has said something about a guy."

"Yes, wather! A most' wiculous cweature, bai Jove. Howevah—"

"If it's you they are guying, Madge, you mustn't mind if I laugh," said frank Polly. "Oh!"

Polly repeated the cry with rising anger:

"Oh, look, Betty! See the label!"

Betty saw it right enough, and her face grew stern. She and Polly together strode into the room. They were going close up to the leering

figure when, with a yell of laughter, all the girls in hiding rushed out.

"Ha, ha, ha!" went up the shrill laughter. "What do you think of it, Betty? Polly, isn't it good? He, he, he!"

"Hush! Don't interrupt the poor dear's music-lesson!" sniggered Cora. "Tumpty, umpty, iddle-dee-dee!"

There was another shriek of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Bravo, the step-girl! What a genius!"

Then suddenly the merriment died away. To the japers' amazement, Betty had caught up the derisive label and torn it across.

"Here, steady a bit," Cora broke in, thrusting forward. "You had no right to do that, Betty! Don't you be so cocky!"

"Any girl has the right to stop a poor girl being made game of!" Betty flashed indignantly. "It's a shame—a shame!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted Polly.

"Yes, wather! Geals, I wanted to express my wegwet when I first saw the guy. Howevah—"

"Spoilsports, all of you!" Cora said fiercely.

"A fine lot of sport in a thing like this!" retorted Polly witheringly. "Don't get hold of any wrong idea, you girls. If you had been making fun of Madge—well, that would have been different. It's the making fun of Madge's poor friend in the town—"

"We—we hadn't looked at it in that light," two

This time she seized the head, and that, too, promptly detached itself from the bolster body.

Crash! went Cora, as she lost her balance and went sprawling.

"Had enough?" chuckled Polly.

Apparently Cora had not. Up she scrambled, and made a third rush, only to find Polly biffing her about the shoulders with the headless dummy.

By now the shrieks of laughter were loud enough to be heard all over the house. So to avoid drawing too big a crowd to the scene of conflict, Polly suddenly sped away, hugging the remnants of the dummy in her arms.

"Catch me, if you can!" she defied Cora from the doorway.

Whereupon Cora, in sheer blind rage, snatched up the turnip-head and hurled it.

A miss!

Polly ducked aside, and next moment the turnip smote the passage-wall opposite the door—thump! "Yah, clever!" Polly chuckled; then fled, with the infuriated Cora breathing fearful threats as she tore in pursuit.

Betty and some of the others gathered up such relics of the guy as littered the place, and prepared to withdraw. From above stairs came the bang of a study door, suggesting that Polly had reached her den just in time to slam that door against Cora.

"It's a pity this happened," Betty said quietly to Madge, finding that girl's eyes upon her.

There is a GRAND "MORCOVE" SERIAL now appearing in

"THE GIRLS' FAVOURITE" entitled:

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or three of them began to plead, with looks of genuine contrition. "We are not snobs, Polly."

"You have played into the hands of a snob for once, that's quite certain!" cut in Betty Barton. "Well, get rid of the wretched thing."

"Do what?" shrilled Cora, taking her stand in front of the guy. "I am not going to have it touched by you, Betty, nor yet destroyed to your order."

"Oh, if you say much more!" panted Polly, spoiling for a scrimmage.

"I'll say what I think!" snapped Cora. "Touch it if you dare!"

Then Polly simply "went" for Cora and the dummy—both.

In a flash she tilted Cora out of the way and caught up the guy.

The madcap's tactics set even Cora's fellow-japers laughing, and their laughter maddened her. She returned to the attack, only to have the guy thrust in her face.

"Go it, Polly!"

"Go it, Cora!"

So the mouthful cries went up, as a desperate struggle began between the madcap and the spitfire for possession of that guy.

Polly had it about the waist and held on grimly. Cora grasped the figure by its arms, and pulled—and backwards she toppled, as the arms came away, causing fresh roars of laughter.

"You idiot!" howled the infuriated Cora, charging in again.

"More want of thought than anything else, I suppose."

Madge said very steadily:

"Thanks, Betty! Tell Polly, too, will you, that it was good of her to see the thing in the right light!"

And then, just as if nothing at all had occurred in the nature of a commotion, she took her seat at the piano and began a piece from memory!

A strange girl, this Madge!

Madge Minden—Music-mistress.

AN hour had passed. In their "comfy" den, Betty and Polly were just giving a last moment to the evening's prep. when the door suddenly flew open in front of some breathless news-bearer.

"Betty—Polly! Whatever do you think!"

"Another guy?" sighed Polly, looked quite prepared, however, to deal with it if necessary.

"No, this is serious," panted the newcomer, who was no other than Tess Trelawney. "Madge Minden—Oh, just fancy!"

"Well, out with it!"

"She—she has got the job of music-mistress!"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"To the Fourth and Fifth Forms."

"Go on! You are kidding! Impos—"

"It's on the board downstairs!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!" chimed in the drawing voice of Paula, as she suddenly floated upon the scene. "Betty deah—Polly! It weally is



DOWNRIGHT RUDENESS! Cora and her followers made faces through the window at Madge and Maggie. The poor step-girl stopped playing and stared at the mockers.

the most remarkable occurrence! Extraordinary! Incredible, in fact!

"I shall believe it when I see it," said Betty. "Madge Minden, music-mistress! Oh!"

"I tell you, they're kidding!" chuckled Polly. But she soon knew better than that.

It was only necessary for her and Betty to dash away downstairs to see the official confirmation of that astounding bit of news.

Down from their studies came other girls, just as excited and sceptical as the Form captain and the madcap; and, like those two, they simply gasped as they read the notice which Miss Somerfield's own hand had penned:

BARNCOMBE MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

As the school's visiting music-teacher is unfortunately debarred from fulfilling her engagement, it has been decided that the choir to be trained for the festival contest shall receive instruction from Madge Minden.

This girl's musical attainments are known to the school, and I am certain that scholars will share my belief that the arrangement will prove altogether satisfactory.

(Signed) ESTHER SOMERFIELD,
Headmistress.

"Take instruction from Madge—catch me!" was one Fourth-Former's resentful cry. "I shan't enter for the choir-singing now."

"I shall!" cried Cora, with her malicious grin. "Think of the fun we can have with her! What a lovely caterwauling when she starts beating time. Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, seriously," said Tess, "how is she going

to do it all? Her own personal part in the diploma contest, paying pupils to coach in the school, paying pupils in the town, and then the choir practice!"

"Well, she loves it—music!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Howevah——"

Paula checked sharply as she suddenly realised that Miss Somerfield herself had come quietly upon the scene.

"Has it given you a shock, that announcement of mine?" smiled the Headmistress. "But, girls, just think it over. Madge not only knows the work, she also knows how your visiting mistress has been coaching you; she knows you all so well. Now, a stranger would take a little time to settle down, even when I had found one with satisfactory qualifications. And time is short."

This was all true enough, and even the most astounded girls began to feel that it was going to be anything but a mistake, their having Madge to fill the breach.

"I suppose," Cora Grandways inquired, with seeming innocence, "Madge is to be paid for her services?"

"Yes."

Cora was secretly elated when she saw how the answer she had drawn left several girls grimacing. Another "come-down" for Madge!

"Of course she will be paid," went on the Headmistress. "What she does with the money is her affair, not yours or mine. But I would have to pay any other instructress, so why should I not pay Madge?"

Miss Somerfield turned away as she finished speaking, as if she could hardly believe that any scholars would wish to dispute that argument, even if they had the right to do so.

"Huh!" said Cora scornfully, when the lady was out of earshot. "I know what Madge will do with the money. Put it in a stocking, to add to her hoard!"

"Oh, drop it!" Betty exclaimed. "Cora, I am just about tired of your keeping on about Madge!"

"Hear, hear!" from Polly, as usual; whilst Paula drawled:

"Yes, wather. Pway remember, Cowa, Madge is still our friend, whatever her faults may be."

Then Cora gave a "You-do-as-you-like" sort of shrug as the three chums walked off. She could certainly afford to treat the trio's loyalty to Madge with airy contempt, for the rest of the Form were plainly inclined to side with her.

In the studies that night the most caustic things were said about Madge's "grubbing for money." If she had volunteered for the position simply for the love of the thing, then it would have been to her credit. But—oh, she had got to have her fee, of course!

As early as next day Madge put up a notice inviting girls of both Forms to enter for the choir. And what a rush of names came in!

Various reasons accounted for this. Some of the girls were only entering so as to get let off some of the regular classwork. Others were joining for the mere sake of having a lark with the school-girl teacher. But quite a good majority wanted to go in for the contest in real earnest. They flattered themselves they had good voices, they had faith in Madge, and they wanted Morcove School to carry off the prize for part-singing and sight-tests.

So in the music-room that afternoon there was quite a huge gathering. The fact that Madge was already there did not prevent Cora and a few others from making a good deal of row at the

start. Madge called for silence at last, but the row still went on.

Then Madge gave a rap-rap on her desk in front of the mustered girls, and somehow her steady nerves and capable air quelled the noisy choristers.

"I want to say at the start," Madge said calmly, and her words fell on a thoroughly hushed assembly, "whatever else I may be to you outside this room, inside it I must be your mistress. I am afraid there is going to be some weeding-out for me to do. Well—"

She paused.
"If I do have to send any girls away, as being likely to spoil the others, let it be on account of voice only, and not for—horseplay."

"Yes, wa— I beg pardon, Madge deah—I mean— Pway pardon my intewuption," Paula floundered. "I was forgetting, bai Jove, that you are weally a pwofessor of music now!"

"A paid professional—yes," Cora said, in a stage whisper.

Madge ignored the spiffiro's sneer. She said they would begin with some sight-reading, and took up her pointer and stepped to the tonic-solfa chart.

Striking the tuning-fork, she gave them "doh." The first response was a rather confused, flat one, and Madge herself joined in the laughter. Next time the result was distinctly better.

"Once again, please—doh-h-h-h!" she led them. Then, with one exception, the whole roomful of girls sang the note really well. Cora, however, screeched "Daw-w-w-w!"

"Cora Grandways," said Madge, "if you do that again I shall have to send you out of the room!"

Cora reddened with fury. She wanted to sing the note all wrong again, out of sheer impudence, but she did not dare. There was something about Madge that warned her to be careful.

But when the sight-test had gone on for a few moments, Cora screeched again—not intentionally, but simply because she really had no voice at all for singing.

Madge stopped the singing.
"Cora," she said, "you had better not remain."

"I shall remain!"
"You will not remain," Madge insisted flatly. "You only spoil the others. They want to do the best for the school at the festival, and it is my job to help them. You may go."

This produced a dead silence. The whole class was holding its breath, waiting to see how Madge would enforce her command upon a girl as insolent and defiant as Cora.

"I—I couldn't help that last false note," Cora blustered at last.

"I know you couldn't. That is why you must go," said Madge. "You really haven't the voice."

Then Cora, suddenly rushing from her place, stood and yelled at Madge:

"Oh, go on, be as insulting as you can! Just because you have swanked this job out of Miss Somerfield! Who do you think you are?"

"For the moment I am your teacher."

"Bah! A miserable money-grubbing minx! One thing," Cora threw out, as she flounced to the door, "I suppose I'm not to be the only girl to be weeded out by our wonderful professional! Professional! Haw, haw!"

And the door closed behind her—slam!
She certainly was not the only girl to be asked to "stand out." Madge, with a perfectly un-

shaken nerve, went amongst the assembled singers whilst they were going through other tests, and now and then she just silenced a girl who was spoiling the others by a tap on the shoulder.

And the girl who received that gentle hint could either take it in good part or not; Madge did not seem to mind in the least.

As a matter of fact, her very earnestness so infected the whole class, there was hardly a single case of resentment against her decision. Most of the weeded-out girls effaced themselves from the scene with good-humoured resignation, whilst those who "passed" Madge's critical ear felt prouder of themselves than ever.

"If you girls," Madge said to the score or so remaining at the finish, "will stick at it for all you are worth, then I think there will be a success for Morcov School at the festival. That's all to-day."

She laid down her "baton." And by so doing she laid down all authority over them.

Next moment she was passing from the room without any put-on air. She was a Fourth-Former again.

"Worse girls than Madge, that's all I know," Polly exclaimed heartily.

And Paula said:
"Yes, wather!"

This Poor Child.

BUT the Form felt as sore as ever with her next day, when a mid-week "halfer" meant a hockey match against the Fifth—and Madge couldn't play!



WAS SHE TO BLAME! Madge read the words on the piece of paper: "Fourth Form BEATEN by three goals!"—another "dig" at her giving her time to music.

One of the best hockeyists in the Fourth; but no, she could not play to-day. She had to go into town—and why? To make more money over those wretched town pupils!

There was, as a matter of fact, only the one town pupil—the girl Maggie Shaw. But Cora and a number of other girls took the view that Madge still meant to get more pupils if she could.

In any event, there was the case against her. Even though she only had one pupil at present, it was a claim upon her spare time—time that should have been given to backing up the Form on the hockey-field.

"And you are shielding her!" Cora sneered at Betty Barton. "A fine captain you are! Never mind if the Form gets whacked, so long as Madge can rake in money for herself!"

Betty was secretly grieved that Madge's enterprise was clashing with her part in the life of the Form. At the same time, it angered her to hear Cora making such a song about the team being let down.

"Perhaps, if you and a few others had been keen on becoming good players," Betty was stung into saying, "Madge's dropping out would not have been the serious thing that it is!"

"Hear, hear—hear, hear!" Polly came along in time to say emphatically. "So that's that, Cora!"

The spitfire shrugged. "Huh!" and flounced away, to find an audience who would not be disinclined to listen to her inflammatory talk.

She did not seek in vain. In every school there is a section who are easily swayed by those who want to stir up strife. Cora found such girls as Grace Garfield, Ella Elgood, Diana Forbes, and Mabel Rivers ready to "side" with her, and a nice little demonstration against Madge was prepared for that girl when she should quit the school after dinner.

As Madge came away from her study, dressed for the cycle ride into Barncombe, Cora and her small following were hanging about for her.

"I suppose you are going to put your fees up to the step-girl," sneered Cora, "now that you are the officially appointed music-mistress to the two Forms?"

"Madge, half a sec.!" cried Ella Elgood, for Madge was walking on with absolute indifference to the taunts. "Don't forget to tell the step-girl she must give you halves if she wins the twenty pounds that goes with the diploma!"

"For, of course, she is going in for the festival contest!" yelled Cora, leaning over the banisters to shout down to Madge. "Gold medallist—Madge's step-girl! He, he, he!"

Not a word from Madge. But all the way round to the cycle-shed, and afterwards, whilst she was cycling into Barncombe, what a fierce thought there was beating in her brain!

Yes, Maggie Shaw should indeed go in for the contest. She, Madge, would teach some of them what it meant to sneer at a poor girl's ambition! Wait until the day of the festival, the hour when the great contest, open to all comers resident in the district, took place! There were less likely things than Maggie's winning the diploma, the gold medal, and the twenty pounds by her performance at the piano. And if the poor girl did achieve that well-deserved triumph—what about Cora and Co.'s sneers then?

It was barely half-past two when Madge got to the town, and she was not due at her "academy of music"—the tiny villa in Parish Place, where her queer old musical friend lived—until three o'clock. But she held on her way to that humble quarter of the town, feeling that it would be nice

to have a chat with Miss Agatha Ainley before little Maggie turned up.

Little Maggie was already there, however—cleaning the doorstep!

As Madge alighted from her machine at the kerb, she saw poor Maggie down on her knees with a pail of water, hearthstone, and brush, doing the step most thoroughly. So intent was the step-cleaner upon her task, she never noticed Madge until that girl spoke.

"Maggie!"

"Oh, miss!" Maggie gasped rather breathlessly, looking up in a startled way. "I—I didn't expect you yet!"

"That's all right, dear. Finish your task, if you haven't finished already," Madge answered, regarding the whitened step across which Maggie was drawing artistic wipes. "I shall be indoors, all ready for you whenever you like."

Then she saw that queer soul, deaf Miss Ainley, advancing from the kitchen, and she stepped into the passage to take that lady's extended hand.

"Your little pupil from round the corner," Miss Ainley said, as soon as they were alone together, "what a good little soul she is! You know, she hasn't a piano at her own home, and she does so want to practise. So she asked me if she could clean my steps and do about the house for me a bit, in return for using the piano."

"Poor little Maggie!" exclaimed Madge, her heart entirely stirred. "She has the music in her, hasn't she?"

"My dear, she's a marvel!"

Then Madge confided her plans to her elderly friend. Maggie must be persuaded to go in for the festival contest. Oh, yes, she would be competing against all comers, including girls from the schools round about and clever girls in the town. Never mind; Maggie would take some beating!

"But what about yourself, my dear?" smiled Miss Ainley. "Aren't you entering for the contest?"

"Oh, bother all that!" was Madge's shrugged answer. "Think what it will mean to Maggie—the diploma, the gold medal, twenty pounds! An interest taken in her by people like Lady Lundy, and then—"

Madge did not say the rest. But she was thinking—an assured future, then, for little Maggie! Maggie, cleaning steps to-day, and with a father of doubtful character!

Five minutes later a very different Maggie came into the tiny parlour for her afternoon's lesson. Gone was the coarse apron; tidy was the hair that had been streaking about her face. And Madge could have kissed her!

After the eager little soul had been at the piano half an hour or so, with Madge sitting by her to impart many a bit of advice that any qualified teacher would have seen was most helpful, they had a bit of a talk about technique. It was Madge's chance, and she seized it.

"Maggie," she said, "you will have to go in for the Lady Lundy prize at the festival."

"Oh, miss! Me, compete against—"

"Yes, Maggie," said the other girl, with a smiling firmness that left her modest pupil overwhelmed. "Lady Lundy instituted the annual contest for the encouragement of local talent, and you have just as much local talent as anybody. It is only a question of constant practice."

"I'm so glad, miss; I can come here as often as I like to play," Maggie exclaimed fervently. "We've no piano at home, and, of course, I can never expect dad to buy one just for me, although

he seems to have got quite a lot of money just at present."

Madge thought of the school's cash that had been looted from the safe last Saturday night and this sudden influx of wealth. Suspicious—highly suspicious!

"Well, dear," said Madge, "you must put in all the time you can at the piano here, and just see if you can't win the Lady Lundy prize."

"Oh, if I could!" the girl murmured, her eyes aching. "Wouldn't father be proud of me then?"

Madge thought to herself: "If he isn't proud of you already, Maggie, he ought to be."

She opened her music-case and took out a sheet of music.

"I want you to make this your test piece for the contest, Maggie. It is a little symphony thing that poor Miss Ainley composed years ago. It has never been published, but I think it wonderful."

"I am sure it is, miss, if you say so."

"Anyhow, think of the pleasure to that good woman, dear, if she can be at the festival and know that her own piece is being played. She won't hear it played, because she is deaf, but—well, who knows?" Madge ended up hopefully. "She may hear the applause; it may prove to be so loud!"

Maggie's elated face proclaimed her enthusiasm. "Yes, that's fine!" she exclaimed. "You play it, please, will you, so I can see how it goes?"

Madge took her seat on the stool at once, and next moment her own deft hands had started the "Woodland Symphony."

Once again that shabby little front parlour filled with the rapturous melody that the unfortunate composer of the piece would never, it seemed, be able to hear any more.

"It's beautiful—wonderful!" agreed Maggie, the moment Madge finished. "Now shall I try?"

"Do."

So they changed seats again, and after a rather hesitant start, due to nervousness, Maggie began to master the intricacies of the symphony quite cleverly at first sight.

Then suddenly a thing happened that simply maddened Madge.

At the parlour window appeared the faces of several girls, who were impudently looking into the room.

Cora, and a few of her weakling followers!

Not only did they stare into the room, but they made faces, first at Madge and then at Maggie. Naturally the poor step-girl broke down at once, staring in a scared way at the mocking crew.

Cora lifted her hands before her and made a dumb show of strumming upon a piano, whilst she still leered through the glass.

"Ha, ha, ha!" pealed the other girls.

Madge felt the impulse to fly to the front door, whip it open, and launch herself amongst the tormentors, boxing their ears. But she did a better thing in the end.

In a dignified manner she simply walked to the window and drew down the blind.

"There, Maggie! They'll go away now," she said soothingly. "So you can begin again, dear."

"Who—who are they?" faltered Maggie.

"A pack of dolts," said Madge, feeling ashamed to admit that they belonged to Morcombe School. "They are very rude, whoever they are," was Maggie's quiet comment, after which she began the "Woodland Symphony" all over again.

No disturbing tappings at the window were heard, much to both girls' relief, and so they concluded that the mockers really had departed. Nor was there any sign of them when Madge presently drew up the blind.

But Cora and Co. had not had all the fun yet.

Twenty minutes later, when shabby Maggie came away from the villa, setting off at a brisk walk round to her own mean home, she came upon a group of girls, who burst out laughing at her.

"I hope you didn't forget to pay for your lesson!" sniggered Cora. "Madge Minden hates giving credit, I'm sure."

"Where are your gloves?" grinned Mabel Rivers, looking disdainfully at Maggie's hands, all rough as they were with toil. "Pianists should be careful not to get chapped hands."

"Are you going to play at the festival?" was Diana Forbes' jeering question. "If so, we must have special bills printed."

"He, he, he! Ha, ha, ha!" They were all laughing together.

"I am going to play at the festival—yes," said Maggie, when the merriment died down. "Since you are so inquisitive—"

"What! Oh, my! Oh, dear, she is going to play at the festival! A step-girl—ha, ha, ha!" Cora was almost shrieking, when a familiar figure suddenly rounded the corner, sailed right into the midst of the scoffers, and scattered them right and left.

Madge!

It was Madge, too, and she was thoroughly roused!

"You hateful pack of girls!" she stormed at them furiously. "I've put up with you at the school—I don't care a rap what you say to me or call after me—but if you think you are going to torment this girl—"

"You mind your own business!" flared out Cora. "We're not going to ask you who we're to talk to!"

"I expected you to make it your business!" flashed back Madge. "It comes naturally to you to make all the mischief you can!"

Then, controlling herself, she put herself close to the shrinking, bewildered Maggie.

"Come on, dear; I'll see you to your door."

And they went on together, Madge of Morcombe School, and Maggie of the meanest street in Barncombe, whilst Cora and her cronies stood glaring after them, somehow abashed.

This is the Man.

SO this was motherless Maggie's humble home—this little box of bricks in a ruinous row of houses with no front gardens and only a bit of yard at the back!

"Father is not in just now, so perhaps you would like to see my home?" little Maggie had shyly suggested when she got to the drab street-door with her schoolgirl friend.

The very pride in the step-girl's quiet voice had made Madge accept without demur. Yes, this

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brave little soul was proud of her home, and well she might be. Nothing to "show off"—quite the contrary. But Maggie could certainly be proud of the cleanliness of the place, a place that anybody might well have despaired of ever keeping clean and tidy.

"See my kitchen!" the girl exclaimed, after she had shown Madge into the tiny front parlour. She preceded the schoolgirl to the back of the house, and there was another poorly furnished room made so sweet and wholesome by Maggie's free use of the scrubbing brush that Madge felt she could have eaten her dinner off the very floor!

"I'd like to show you my own little bedroom upstairs, but I don't suppose you want to stop," Maggie remarked in a few moments. "We have three bedrooms—my own, my father's, and then one he keeps locked, and so I never go in there." "Never go in there, don't you!" muttered Madge.

"Well?" Maggie suddenly asked, with her shy smile, for Madge was keeping very quiet.

"You keep your little home beautifully clean and tidy, Maggie dear. I can only say that I hope the day will come when you will have no more poverty to face, and—"

"Hark! Oh, here is father, coming in now!" was the startled words which came from Maggie, as a step sounded at the street door. "Never mind, though. I am sure you will like father."

Madge hoped she was not turning pale. He had entered the house, his step was sounding along the narrow passage.

A moment, and his tall figure was filling the kitchen doorway. Sharply he had halted there, more than startled at finding a stranger in the house. His sharp eyes regarded Madge suspiciously.

"Father dear!"
"Who's this, Maggie?" he asked curtly.
"A young lady who is being kind enough to give me music-lessons free," Maggie explained eagerly. "And, father darling, she wants me to go in for the contest at the festival. She belongs to Morcove School."

"Where?"
"Morcove School, father. But they are at the Priory now, as perhaps you know."

"Ay, I—I've heard summat about that," Madge could see he was taking a grip upon himself. "Well, miss," he nodded at her, "it's very kind o' you, I'm sure. O' course, you won't be coming here to give the lessons. We've no planner, have we, Maggie?"

"No, father, not yet," she said hopefully. "But, you know, I feel sure that some day, when you get regular work, we shall be able to go in for one."

"Ay, ay, when I get work," he muttered, looking sideways shiftily.

"Now your father has come in, Maggie dear, I must be going," Madge said, her calm voice disguising the greatest secret agitation. "Good-bye, then; good-afternoon, Mr. Shaw!"

"Afternoon, miss. Half a sec!" he threw out, as both girls were going forward to the street door. "The Priory—weren't there a burglary there last Saturday night?"

"Yes," Madge called back.
"I heard about it," he nodded, sinking into a chair. "I suppose you, being at the Priory, hain't heard anything about them that done it being likely to get caught?"

"The newspaper says the police have no clue," Madge answered.

He said no more, simply nodded again, and so

the two girls went on to the street door, where a whispered good-bye took place.

"Maggie gal," her father said, when she came back alone to the kitchen, "she's really giving you lessons, is she?"

"Yes, father. And isn't it good of her, don't you think?"

"Ay, I suppose so, if—"

He lapsed into silence, and Maggie did not stand to gaze at him in his sullen mood and wonder why he seemed so uneasy. She wanted to get tea for him at once.

So in a moment she was bustling to and fro, whilst he still sat silent in his ladder-back chair, putting up a hand now and then to rumple his black locks in a perplexed, uneasy way.

What was he thinking?

He was thinking, supposing Madge Minden, being one of the girls at the Priory, was trying to be clever about catching the burglar? Supposing she had found a certain clue, and had formed certain suspicions, and was out to win glory for herself by doing what the police could not do?

"Music-lessons for my gal—first I've heard o' it," he was reflecting grimly. "Ay, well, if she is up to any game o' amateur detective, and I catch her at it, I'll soon know what to do."

Such was his sinister thought—one that boded ill, indeed, for Madge Minden if ever she, the very girl who was saving him from the police, should betray her knowledge of his guilt!

She, in her great-hearted pity for little Maggie, wanting only to save that hapless girl from knowing what her father was, and yet, by her very friendship for the burglar's daughter, slowly and surely drawing upon herself all the deadly distrust of the burglar himself!

Was it not a dangerous path for Madge Minden to be treading?

All the more dangerous because the peril would be always about her without her ever knowing it!

All Madge's Fault.

THE hockey-match was over. Back into the temporary schoolhouse at the Priory were trooping a gleeful lot of girls—the Fifth Form team and their supporters.

Behind them came a dejected lot of Fourth-Formers, looking very moody after the drubbing they had received.

"Walloped!" mumbled Polly Linton. "How disgusting!"

"Yes, wather! Howevah—"

"And all because—"

"Oh, Polly dear, don't say it!" sighed Betty Barton.

"But I must, Betty. We've the right to say it. All because Madge Minden prefers to go chasing after paying pupils instead of playing for her side."

"Without wishing to use a stwong expression," murmured Paula. "it weally is distwessing! Downright iwagic, bai Jove! Howevah—"

"No, it will be best not to reproach Madge when she comes in," suggested Betty.

"Don't know so much about that!" grimaced Polly. "Too bad, I call it!"

They reached the house, and it was not surprising that a good few of them got the idea that Madge was already back and having a bit of practice at the piano, for the brilliant piece they could hear certainly sounded like her playing.

But it was only Audrey Blain, as they found when they turned out of their way to take a look into the music-room.

"Hallo, girls!" Audrey greeted them, getting

up from the piano. She came across to the doorway. "You won, I hope?"

"We lost," said Polly bitterly. "A crushing blow to our prestige—yes, wather!" sighed Paula. "A dreadful dwubbing, Audwey."

"What a shame!" was that girl's sweet comment. "I would have been only too glad to stiffen up the team if I could have been any real use. Is Madge back?"

"Oh, don't talk to me about Madge!" exclaimed Polly, swinging away.

Audrey turned back to get her music from the piano, whilst the other girls drifted off to go to their studies. There was a smile at Audrey's vivid red lips as she stood glancing over the piece she had been playing. She felt she had been in brilliant form just now. If she went on like this, that diploma and the gold medal, to say nothing of the twenty pound prize, would yet be hers. And all the glory that such a triumph was bound to mean!

Still pondering the hopeful prospects for herself at the festival, she sauntered to the music-room

"Oh, so you are back!" the spitfire cried at Madge coarsely. "What about giving me eighteenpenn'orth of music after tea, or are you done with having me for a paying pupil?"

"Your money is as good as anybody else's," Madge said calmly. "If I were poor, and had to get my living, I would have to take anybody who came along. So—"

"Excuse me, Cora," interposed Audrey, "I've booked Madge for after tea."

"Oh, have her and welcome!" laughed Cora. "You know how much I really care for her rotten teaching! It's only a joke with me! Ha, ha, ha!"

Madge said: "Very well, then, Audrey, after tea," and passed on to her room.

Closing the door she stepped to the table, and was surprised to see a slip of notepaper lying there, with something scribbled upon it. She took it up and read these words:

Result of the Match.

Fourth Form BEATEN by three goals!



"GO IT POLLY!" Cora Grandways and Polly Linton struggled hotly for possession of the guy, while the spectators roared advice and encouragement.

window, and from there, suddenly, she saw Madge coming up a path all alone.

How fagged and pale the girl looked! That was Audrey's immediate thought, and again the pleased smile flickered at her lips.

"She is overdoing it! My only rival for the festival—she has taken on much too much, and she will be a wreck on the day. Well, all the better for little me!" was the artful girl's exultant thought.

Two minutes later she encountered Madge in the corridor.

"Hallo, dear! I say, after tea, could you find time to give me an extra hour at the piano?" Audrey purred. "I am afraid I'm not getting on at all well."

"Yes, I think I can manage that," said Madge. "Not that it matters very much if you can't," Audrey added. "After all, I'm not so frightfully keen on the festival contest."

Then Cora Grandways suddenly sailed round from the stairs with her companions of the afternoon.

Her face quivered. After drawing a breath or two, she took the sheet of paper with her to the Form captain's study.

Betty and Polly were there, as usual, laying tea, and Paula had "dropped in," after her amiable custom.

"Polly," Madge said, breaking the painful silence which her quiet entry caused, "I think this is your handwriting."

"Yes, I wrote it. I am not ashamed to admit it. When a crack player goes traipsing off to make money at music—money that she isn't in any need of—instead of playing up for her Form—"

Polly paused for breath. "I think," she finished gaspingly—"even her best friends ought to say what they think of her."

"I am sorry you lost the match," Madge said huskily. "You may not believe it, but I am very sorry. All the same, sport can't always come first."

"I think it might come before grubbing for money that you don't need," cried Polly.

"Well, well," put in Betty soothingly. "Will you stay to tea, Madge, and—and we'll try to be just as good friends as ever? Oh, I hate this drifting apart—I hate it!"

"Thank you, Betty," Madge said, turning back to the door, "but I can't very well accept. I would have to be off directly tea was over. I'm giving Audrey Blain an extra music-lesson presently."

"Oh!" fumed Polly, slamming down the bread-platter. "Bother music! Bother everything!"

Then, as the door closed after Madge's withdrawal, the madcap of the Form did a thing that was most unusual for her to be guilty of. She burst into tears.

"I can't help it! I'm a cat!" sobbed Polly, dabbing a handkerchief to her eyes. "I said I was not ashamed of putting that slip of paper on Madge's table just now, and yet I am ashamed—I am!"

"Then, hai Jove, tell her so, Polly dear! Pway let me—"

"No, you dare!" Polly almost shouted, sending Paula flopping backwards into the armchair with a violent push. "You sit still!"

"Ah, dear," Betty said presently, "I wish I knew how all this is going to end!"

How would it end—for Madge and all of them? They might wonder, but they would never guess!

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

This laughable scene depicted on next week's cover of



shows further of the japes played on Madge Minden by her form mates. This story is entitled:

"MADGE MINDEN'S SECRET"

and the "secret," together with her musical trials and tribulations forms one of the most exciting stories you could possibly wish to read.

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COOKERY HINTS.

This Week:
CANTERBURY SLICES.

MISS GRILL, our cookery mistress, lifted her cakes from the oven and stood them on to the table in front of the class.

"Now, girls," she said, "you can all start and make your cakes. If you carry out all my instructions, yours will be as nice as those that I've just made."

May Strange and I walked over to the board to read the instructions which Miss Grill had written up for our guidance.

How to Make Canterbury Slices.

Required: Three and a half ounces of flour, two ounces of castor sugar, half a teaspoonful of baking-powder, two ounces of margarine, two ounces of sweet almonds, and one egg.

Blanch the almonds and chop them finely. Cream the margarine and sugar, add the egg (well-beaten), and beat the mixture until it is "frothy."

Mix the flour and three parts of the almonds together, gradually add them to the mixture, and beat well.

Lastly, add the baking-powder and beat again for a minute.

Pour the cake mixture into a well-greased, shallow tin, sprinkle over the remainder of the chopped almonds, and bake the cake in a moderate oven for twenty minutes.

The cake, when done, should be nicely browned on top.

Turn the cake on to a board which has been sprinkled with castor sugar, and, when it is cold, cut the cake into slices.

There was a little competition among the girls for first turns with the scales, etc., but we soon settled down to work.

What Bertha Burns Did.

"What are you doing, Bertha Burns?" asked Miss Grill, in an angry tone.

We all stopped work and looked in the direction of Bertha, who stood looking very foolish.

She was actually just going to add the egg to the cake without first heating it well.

Beating eggs until they are frothy is one of the secrets of light cakes.

Miss Grill had explained this to us during the lecture, but Bertha hadn't been attending; so, later, she made herself look ridiculous in front of the whole class.

Mabel Cook's Confusion.

Presently Mabel Cook left her place and came running towards May and me.

"I can't find a baking-tin," she said. "Have you one to spare?"

"Now, Mabel Cook," said Miss Grill sharply. "What are you gossiping for?"

And when Mabel explained about the tin, she was still more angry.

You see, Mabel should have greased the tin before she mixed the cake.

When their cake emerged later, it was both sticky and flat.

Owing to not weighing the sugar, they had added too much; and while Mabel was chasing round after a tin the baking-powder had lost its strength!

DOLLY HOPE.