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"WHEN AUDREY WAS EXPELLED!" A SPLENDID, LONG, COMPLETE TALE OF MORCOVE SCHOOL

The Schoolgirls' Own



HER NAME REMOVED FROM THE SCHOOL REGISTER! A dramatic moment in the fine, long, complete story of Morcove School in this issue.

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A Splendid Long Complete Tale of the Girls of Morcove!



The Pink Card.

POLLY LINTON threw aside the "Barncombe Weekly Express" with a prolonged "Oh-h-h!" It was a wistful sort of groaning sigh, causing Betty Barton to glance up from the bit of writing she was engaged upon.

"And now what are you pining for, Polly, darling?"

"Oh!" said Polly, in exactly the same tone as before.

It was just like Paula Creel to come floating into the study at this moment, with a more or less relevant:

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove, geals, it weally is tewwifically hot to-day!"

"All the same, Paula, you are not going to have the easy chair, so don't think you are," teased Polly, retaining the coveted wicker for her own bouncing figure. "Oh—!"

"Again," smiled Betty. "Paula, what do you make of Polly's present doleful state?"

"Most remarkable, bai Jove!" simpered the aristocrat of the Fourth Form at Morcove, beaming at the madcap. "Pway, Polly, dear, welieve our gwave anxiety! You were saying—?"

"Oh! Oh, for a chance of going to Lady Lundy's gorgeous garden party next week!"

"Ah, now I understand!" exclaimed Betty. She licked the gum of an envelope into which she had slipped a few lines for home, and rubbed it down.

"No mistake," pursued the captain of the form, rummaging about for postage stamps, "an invitation to Barncombe Castle for the special fête would be a treat!"

"Yes, wather! And, bai Jove, geals, we might yet—"

"You might yet have this chair, Paula, if I didn't feel so lazy," teased the madcap, making herself more comfortable than ever, on purpose to tantalise the languid Paula. "Nothing doing, though!"

"Bai Jove—"

"And there'll be nothing doing, either," Polly went on sadly, "as regards invitations to that party! We can't always expect Lady Lundy and her daughter to make a fuss of us girls."

"No," came from Betty, as she banged a stamp on the envelope. "On the whole, her ladyship

WHEN AUDREY WAS EXPELLED!

A story which tells of how retribution came to Audrey Blain at last, and how Jess Lingard came into her own.

By MARJORIE STANTON.

has been awfully nice to us at various times. Time—?"

"Five-thirty, pip-emmaer," announced Polly, getting up from the chair. "And if anybody is game for a bit of tennis, I'm on!"

"Right-ho!" agreed Betty, jumping up from the study table. "You coming, Paula?"

A comical expression of regret came over Paula's pretty face. Having just subsided into the wicker-chair which Polly had vacated, she had hoped to recline there in peace for at least ten minutes.

"Yes, wather; oh, yes, tennis," Paula said, ever the one to fall in with others' inclinations. "Gwreat game, tennis!"

"Well, you can't play it in an armchair," cried Polly.

"That is a thing I wealised long ago," said Paula sorrowfully. "Might I, howevah, eatwat the pwivilege of westing here for a few minutes? I feel wather pwostwate with the hot wather, bai Jove!"

"Something must be the matter with Paula," Betty said to Polly, winking. "She is always such an energetic person."

"I agwee, geals—"

Polly howled.

"What! You take credit for being energetic, do you? You—you lazy-bones; you wearer out of other people's cushions! No, I won't waste more breath on you. But if you are not down on the tennis courts inside of five minutes—then beware!"

With which dramatic warning, uttered in a stager voice, Polly scampered off, Betty going with her.

Then Paula indulged in a delicious yawn, and closed her eyes.

"Ah," she murmured, sinking back contentedly. "What a welief, after the stwenuous activities of—"

She jumped in the chair as the door banged open and a girl burst into the room, crying:

"Ello, present!"

"Bai Jove, Naomer!"

"Where are Betty and Polly?" panted Morcove's dusky little scholar from the desert lands of North Africa.

"Gone to tennis, Naomer, dear. Pway wur away! I have promised to wecup my strength by weclining here in peace, bai Jove!"

Naomer flashed off, and another happy sigh came from the languid aristocrat.

"Ah! These twanquil moments in a cwoded life, bai Jove! These—oh—er—come in, Madge, deah!"

"Betty and Polly gone to tennis?" asked Madge Minden, from the doorway.

"Yes, wather; and if you will wait one moment I will join you," Paula said, cheerfully, getting out of the chair. "I had intended wecouping my stwength, Madge, deah. Howevah, these fwequent intewuptions wather pweclude the possibility of any weal wepose."

And, she added, as she fell into step with Madge along the corridor:

"Ours in a twying, stwenuous existence, Madge, deah!"

"Oh, come," demurred Madge, in her genial, sober way, "the Form has been having a quiet enough time the last day or two! Jess Lingard and Stella Munro have suddenly gone to London, so all the excitement over those two girls is ended for a bit——"

"Yes, wather——"

"I wonder, by the way, when we shall hear from Jess?" Madge chatted on. "I wonder why the two girls had to go off like that?"

"I gweatly wegwet, Madge, deah, I cannot pwobe the mystewy for you. All we geals know is that there was a lettah fwom Stella Munro's father, bai Jove, saying that she and Jess must both go up at once."

At this point the two girls heard someone coming on behind them rather faster than they were proceeding down the main stairs. To let her pass, since she seemed to be in a hurry, Paula dropped behind Madge—an action that might at least have been accorded a "Thank you" from the hurrying girl. But she flounced upon her way with head held high, and seemed to take delight in having been so rude.

The girl was Audrey Blain, and, as she got in advance of Madge and Paula, she gave a short grin, as if glad to have had the chance of flouting her two schoolfellows.

"I wegwet to say it, Madge, deah," murmured Paula; "but Audwey doesn't impwove as time goes on."

"Far from it," answered Madge, with equal regret. "Nothing shows up a girl so much as her being unable to make and keep real friends. How often has Audrey seemed to get quite a hold on other girls——"

"Yes, wather! By dazdling them, bai Jove——"

"And in the end, they have turned from her——"

"Dropped her, bai Jove, and a good job, too! Bai Jove, I hadn't wealised it before, Madge, deah. Now that Stella Munro has bwoken with Audwey the geal simply hasn't a single fwient to call her own!"

"Not one!"

"Audwey must feel that, wather, don't you think?"

"Feel it? If I know Audrey," answered Madge, earnestly, "it is a thing that maddens her!"

And the speaker was right enough.

At this very moment, when Audrey Blain had gained the open air, she was secretly seething with rage at the losing game she had played during all her time at Morcove.

Whichever way she looked, she could see other girls—many of them members of her own Form—either playing games in friendly parties, or sauntering around in friendly batches. If another girl came out from the school porch, she was sure of being hailed with affectionate cries. But Audrey——

No one wanted her.

"Well, hang them!" she muttered to herself, whilst she diverted her steps to avoid all the

happy band of girls. "I wouldn't want them, even if they would have me!"

But that was mere sour grapes.

Audrey would have jumped at a chance to make friends with any other scholar at this time, if only because she knew how humiliated she was by her lonely state.

When she first came to Morcove, it had been her dream, her ambition, to queen it over her Form. How could she possibly be happy without admirers—toadies? For the rest of this term, however, she would be without a friend. That was a certainty! And her jealous mind guessed just what the school as a whole had to say about her forlorn condition.

She knew—and it galled her to know it—that she was spoken of as the girl who had played a losing game, whilst her hated rival was in a stronger position than ever to-day!

Her rival! Audrey could see her now, by sending a glance behind her in the direction of the tennis courts. There was the girl who always held her own—the girl who had gained all the time that she, Audrey, had been steadily losing! Betty Barton, captain of the Form, whole terms ago, and captain still! One never glimpsed her without she had a host of friends around her. The precious captain—pah!

Thus the anger in Audrey's mind and heart flamed up, whilst the best she could do with her leisure time was to go for a lonely walk. This tame school life! Oh, if only she could find some fresh means of varying the monotony of it! If ever she had yearned for the time when she would be done with school, she had so yearned during the last few days.

"There is even no thrill in stealing a bit of pleasure, when there's no one to share it with," she was reflecting bitterly a few minutes later. "All the same, I must have another bit of a fling soon, even if it means——"

There came a sudden interruption to her moody thoughts. She was loitering to and fro close to the school gateway, and her idleness had been noticed by Morcove's genial old postman, as he rode in on his bicycle.

The old chap was a great favourite with the girls, and it was nothing unusual for one or another of them to shorten his tiring round by taking the satchel from him at the gateway, just as people sometimes do in great country mansions. So, now, he panted out an affable: "Good evening, missy," and then dismounted.

He evidently counted upon Audrey being eager to take the satchel; he did not happen to know what a disobliging, supercilious girl she was.

She merely nodded in response to his cordial greeting, and he might have ridden on again, only this third round of the day had just about left him dead beat. The heat had been a grilling one.

"Well, missy, are you going to save old Joe the journey up to the schoolhouse?" he could not help asking, rather pleadingly. "Not much for the school—there never is, no, not by the third delivery. Just these few——"

"Oh, all right," Audrey said, none too graciously, and held out her hand for the bag.

It was, indeed, light enough, the contents being all local letters. As she walked back to the drive, she glanced over the envelopes, and saw that they were mostly tradesmen's communications for the headmistress. Not a single letter for the girls.

Yes, there was, though! One for Betty Barton—a local one.

Just because the missive was for her hated rival, Audrey eyed it sneeringly. She saw that it bore a penny stamp, which suggested that it was nothing of great importance anyhow—a mere circular.

Sure enough, Audrey found that the flap of the envelope was not gummed down, but only tucked in; and suddenly she felt curious to see the contents.

Keeping the letter in the wide-mouthed bag, she opened the envelope, as anybody else would have been free to do, and so glimpsed a pink card—a ticket for some performance was what it seemed to be.

Audrey worked the card out of the envelope, and next instant a very fury of jealousy was possessing her, as she read these words, partly printed and partly written:

“Barncombe Castle,
“North Devon.”

“The Earl and Countess of Lundy will be glad to see Miss Betty Barton and Friend at the Garden Party to be held in the Castle Grounds on Wednesday next.”

Because She was Captain.

IT was half an hour later.

In Study No. 8, Audrey was all alone, staring at a pink card which her hands held in her lap.

She had handed in the post-bag; but not before this particular item in the evening mail had been adroitly abstracted!

She could hardly take her eyes off the card. If only this invitation had been addressed to her, how her heart would have been lifted up with joy!

What girl in the school would not be wild with excitement to be favoured like this? But, although Lady Lundy had always shown a great interest in the school as a whole, and had often entertained the scholars at the castle, it had been taken for granted by all that there would be no invitations for Morcové girls this time.

They had had one glorious “treat” this summer, as the guests of her ladyship; and for this particular function it was known that so many invitations had had to be issued, there was really no room for schoolgirls ad lib.

But here was one invitation—addressed to Betty Barton!

Audrey quite understood. Not liking to overlook the school altogether, Lady Lundy had instructed her secretary to issue one invitation to a scholar, who would thus be, as it were, representative of the rest. And she had chosen Betty Barton, because she was captain!

Was it a wonder that Audrey felt fairly mad with envy?

This was the sort of favour one came in for, as the result of being captain of the Form! Just because she was captain, that hateful girl, that precious council school slut, was invited to a party which she, Audrey, would gladly have paid a couple of guineas to be present at!

Only there was no getting in by payment—no! The pink card was to be a passport into grand society and a scene of splendour on the great day; without one of these pink cards, it was utterly useless to present oneself at the castle entrance!

Audrey could even remember one such occasion when she had tried to bluff her way into the ground, only to meet with a bitter humiliation,

She got up from her chair, and laid the card upon the table, only to scan it again in the next moment.

“Betty Barton and Friend.”

That portion of the inscription had been dashed off with a fountain-pen by Lady Lundy's busy secretary. There was the Form captain's name, so that the card was altogether different from one that read “Admit Bearer and Friend.” All the same, Audrey began to ponder desperately. Couldn't she use the invitation, even though it was made out to Betty?

“She shan't go to the garden party, anyhow!” was the envious girl's fierce resolve. “If I can't do anything else, I'll destroy the card, and she will never know what she has missed—she and Polly—for, of course, they would go together!



AUDREY IS FOUND OUT! “You, Audrey,” Lundy, “will return at once to Morcové and report to the headmistress. I shall communicate all the facts to her!”

But can't I make use of it myself—can't I? Oh, if only I could!”

She rubbed her forehead to ease the tension of desperate thinking.

What would happen if she went to the party, armed with this invitation, when it was not hers to use? She started to think it out carefully.

No difficulty at the entrance gates, where the tickets were taken. The man on duty there would take her ticket, and pass her through the barricade, without questioning her identity. So that was all right. But Lady Lundy would most likely be on hand to receive every one of the visitors. What would she say and do, when she found a girl named Audrey Blain turning up uninvited, and no sign of Betty Barton, who had been asked?

Then suddenly Audrey brought her hands together with a little clap. It would be all right! Anyhow, she would take her chance! If she should have to meet Lady Lundy for a welcoming handshake, she, Audrey, would simply pass as "a friend." It was on the card—"Betty Barton and a Friend." Well, she would be that friend! As for Betty Barton herself—Lady Lundy must be left to believe that the girl had got lost in the crowd!

So, all at once, Audrey's mind was made up.

There were many things still to be taken into account; but her feeling was that this daring deed was not half so risky as many other ventures she had embarked upon in the past. A mere trifle, compared with some of those former misdeeds.

And so, perhaps, it was. Nevertheless, it was by this latest bit of trickery that Audrey was to find herself cornered at last!

She little feared such a thing; but it was to prove the final misdeed which was to end her wayward career at Morcove School!

Naomer's Notions of Tennis!

HA, ha, ha!" The peal of laughter went up from a number of girls who had gathered round one of the tennis courts to watch Naomer Nakara receiving a lesson in the popular game at the hands of Betty and Co.

At present the dusky young lady's notion of tennis was to hit the ball—and hit it hard—never mind where!

She had swiped a couple over the tops of some old elms; she had put another ball into the greenhouse. Advice was lost upon Naomer.

"Ooo, yes, I understand!" she was crying gaily, over and over again, as the mirthful girls tried to coach her. "You hit the ball—"

"Yes, dear; but it is not like cricket! Don't you see, dear—?"

"Ooo, yes, come on, queek, queek!"

So the only thing to do was to serve the wild little pupil with another ball over the net, and see her bang at it with her eyes shut.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why you laugh at me?" pouted Naomer. "I play good tennis, I think! I hit him harder than anybody!"

"Oh, you'll soon burst the racket at the way you are going on," Polly granted, gaily. "You would get a gold medal any day, Naomer, darling, for slugging!"

Madge, the girl who was taking Naomer on in a game of singles, called a warning:

"Service!"

"Ehlo, present! Yes, queek!" panted Naomer, all on the alert.

The ball came over, beautifully served so far as Naomer was concerned; nothing tricky about it at all. She shut her eyes, and—whizz!

"Ha, ha, ha!" went up another shout of laughter, as Naomer skied the ball.

"Boundary!" chuckled Polly.

"Run then—queek, queek!" yelled Naomer, suddenly thinking she had runs to get. "Madge, queek!"

The laughter was simply side-splitting as Naomer dashed forward, and was only checked by finding herself floundering into the net.

"You are in goal now, Naomer—ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly fine game, Naomer's new kind of tennis!" declared Polly. "A cross between rounders, football, and cricket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove, and extremewly stvenuous, too!"

That seemed to be the conclusion Naomer herself had suddenly arrived at. For, all at once, she threw her racket away and came romping amongst the bystanders, fairly blown for breath.

"I not play any more, because you laugh," she pouted. "I hit them hard! Even when I lose a ball you only laugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Madge came up with her nice sedateness, carrying both rackets, and as all the chums had had a fairly brisk turn on the courts, Paula now proposed an adjournment to her study for cake and lemonade.

"We are rather a crowd," laughed Betty.

"The more the mowier, bai Jove," was Paula's beaming answer. "Geals, it is the thing I wegard as so gwatifying—the fact that we are fwends all wound!"

So they trooped back to the school-house, and in a minute or so they were all crowding out Paula's den, those girls who could not get seats mostly lining the walls.

Paula, having dispensed her hospitality, lost no time in dropping down into the easy chair that had been left for her.

"Naomer would make a good side-show for Lady Lundy's garden party," chuckled Polly, like the tease she was. "I say, shall we write and suggest it?"

There was a general laugh; and then someone said mournfully:

"Ah! We are out of it altogether for next Wednesday at Barncombe Castle! Never mind, though; Lady Lundy has been awful kind to us, on the whole."

"She has," agreed Betty. "We really couldn't expect any invitations this time."

"So long as her ladyship isn't a bit fed up with us," put in Tess, and the others stared.

"Fed up with us, Tess?"

"Well, you remember that silver shield presented by her at the singing contest in London," Tess explained. "We won the shield, and then jolly well lost it!"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove—"

"Really lost it, that is a fact," chimed in Dolly Delane. "It should have been hanging with other trophies in the hall downstairs, only—"

"It got lost on the way from London," nodded Betty. "That was a queer business; I often think about it. Jess Lingard was bringing it with her from London to Morcove, and it has always been a mystery how the shield vanished during the journey!"

"Stolen on the train," muttered Polly, glumly. "It must have been whilst Jess was with her fellow-travellers, Stella and Audrey, getting lunch in the 'diner.'"

There were murmurs and nods, showing that the girls had always held this theory.

Then the talk turned upon another matter connected with Jess. The girls were very curious to know why she and her rich relation, Stella Munro, had been suddenly called away to London. It was evidently a family affair; all the same, the Form felt it was their affair, too, because the relations between Jess and Stella had been the cause of a good deal of painful happenings at the school during the present term.

As the girls at last dispersed from Paula's study, nicely refreshed by the lemonade and plum cake, they were saying that there might be a

letter from Jess in the morning to one of them. They must see what the post brought, to-morrow.

And that was exactly what Audrey also was saying to herself, at this moment!

It was only Monday evening. Between now and Wednesday afternoon she must be on the alert to discover if anything else had come by post in regard to the garden party. There might be invitations for other girls after all, although Audrey was inclined to believe that Betty Barton had been specially favoured. She was such a favourite with Lady Lundy.

Then she had to remember that Miss Somerfield and some of the Morcove staff might receive invitations. As to that, however, Audrey was glad to know that there was very little likelihood of the headmistress or her colleagues being able to go to the party. On Wednesday several of the school governors were coming down for a special conference.

The rumour was that the Morcove authorities were considering the purchase of another school, which had gone down under rather bad management.

So, next morning, whilst the chums of the Form were anxious to see if there was any letter from either Jess or Stella, Audrey was interested in the post for her own secret reason.

Nothing!

It was a disappointment for Betty and Co., whilst for Audrey it meant intense relief.

If any invitations had come by post for other girls, she would have heard about them at once, she was sure. No girl would keep quiet about an invitation which was bound to make her the envy of all others.

The midday delivery came in. Nothing, again, that need cause Audrey concern. Then the evening post, and again—nothing!

Last thing of all, that night, Audrey was in a trembling state of joyful excitement.

Fifty times over in the last twenty-four hours had she gazed exultantly at the pink card which she had purloined.

To-morrow! Oh, the glorious time she would have! As a change from this hateful school life, a bit of pleasure with a thrill in it, what could be better?

She was a long time getting to sleep, for all her thoughts were of the Barncombe Castle grounds in gala dress, and the people who would be there. The cream of county society, smart people from London, the latest fashions to admire, and herself, in her own way, looking as queenly as any girl there!

But on the Wednesday morning she got a sudden scare.

It was after breakfast, and the letters had just been given out. Audrey was in her study, alone as usual, when she heard a sudden babel of excited talk coming from the Form captain's den.

In a flash Audrey realised that it must be some sensation arising out of the morning's mail. Some fresh communication from Barncombe Castle, perhaps, with the result that Betty now knew that an invitation had gone astray in the post!

With a beating heart, Audrey opened her study door a foot or so, and listened to the babel of tongues.

At that instant Madge Minden went by, on her way to Study 12, where all the chatter was. Her appearance there was the signal for an excited outcry:

"Oh, Madge! What do you think has happened? Such a surprise! Betty will tell you! She has had a letter—"

Then someone boisterously closed the door of Study 12, and Audrey could only hear a confused murmur.

The corridor was deserted, however, and next instant she was slinking along it, to take her stand and listen outside that closed door.

What Audrey Overheard.

"I THOUGHT I heard a sudden hullabaloo!" Madge had laughed, as she entered the noisy study. "Well, what?"

"It is wonderful, Madge!"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove, most extraordinary!"

"Ooo, yes!" That was Naomer, all of a dance with excitement. "It make me want to say hooree! Heep, heep, hooree!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, Madge," cried Betty, "I have had a letter from Jess, and another from Stella."

"That's good!" exclaimed Madge. "And the news is—?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Wonderful! Tell Madge, Betty, darling!"

"When I can get a word in, I will!" chuckled the captain. "Jess writes that she and her widowed mother are no longer penniless! They have come in for a fortune amounting to thousands of pounds!"

"Never!" cried Madge. "Oh, how perfectly splendid!"

"Yes, wather! If evah a geal deserved such luck, geals—"

"Oh, won't we have rejoicings, when Jess comes back to the school!" Polly cried; and, taking Naomer about the waist, waltzed her round the room.

"Jess doesn't say much about how the windfall came along," Betty rattled on. "She merely says that that was why she had to go to London and see Stella's father all at once!"

"But you say there was another letter from Stella?"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove—"

"Tell her—tell Madge!" Polly almost yelled again.

"Am I to hunt for a megaphone, or will some of you keep quiet?" laughed the Form captain. "Stella's letter, Madge, is an astounding document. It says that the windfall for Jess and the mother has come about because she, Stella, wrote and confessed about something to her father!"

Madge looked as if she would like to have all that over again.

"It seems," explained Betty, "that Jess and her mother should have come into the windfall weeks ago. At the time the shop in Barncombe was being sold up, Stella found a document there which told her that Jess and the mother were entitled to a certain inheritance which the Munros have been enjoying for a year or more. And Stella burnt the document—"

"Oh!"

"Yes, wather; we geals all wealise, it was pweety awful of Stella. Only, don't you see, Madge, deah—"

"Tell her! Tell Madge, Betty, dear!" came from Polly for the third time.

Eagerly enough Betty continued, practically shouting every word:

"Stella did the straight thing at last, Madge, when she wrote to her father! What's more, Stella has written this letter to me, so that the whole Form should know! She might have got her shabby part in the affair hushed up, but she preferred to let the whole school know that she



BEFORE THE HEADMISTRESS! Never had Betty or Polly seen the headmistress in such an ominous state of anger. "Your offence, Audrey," she said, "has been a most heinous one!"

did a terrible thing, and was sorry for it, and had made amends!"

"Then all I have to say is," Madge exclaimed promptly, "whatever we may think of the old Stella, the new Stella is one to admire!"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove—"

"Ooo, yess! Heep, heep, hoorree! I like to see everyone happy!" Naomer cried shrilly. "It make me love everyone! Paula, I love you—"

"Oh, gwacious, but don't start wuffling me! Heah, dwop it—help!" wailed Paula, as she came in for some of Naomer's all-too-violent caresses. "Do you wealise, you wascal, I am dressed for school?"

"But, oh!" said Polly, swinging on to the edge of the table, "isn't it just fine? Jess is well off now! What is more, she and Stella are on the best of terms! When they get back to Morcove—"

"And that will be to-morrow," put in Betty.

"We will have a time!"

"Yes, wather!"

All this jubilant talk Audrey heard, as she stood outside the door of Study 12. She now sneaked back to her own room whilst the coast was clear, feeling she had heard quite sufficient.

At any other time this sensational news about Stella and Jess would have agitated Audrey as much as it had excited the chums of the Form. Stella had been the last of her fawning friends. Whilst that friendship existed, Audrey had done all she could to encourage the then shifty girl to put every possible slight upon Jess.

But Audrey had prowled along to the door of Study 12, dreading to hear a lot of talk going on about to-day's garden party. Not a word about it!

And so her predominant feeling was one of intense relief on that account. As for Stella and Jess—hang the pair of them. The one was no more than the other to Audrey now!

Classes started, scholars settling down to the morning's work with that dash of zeal which always showed itself on a Wednesday or Saturday. No school in the afternoon—hurrah!

Audrey could have smiled, her cynical, malicious smile, as she saw how high-spirited the chums of the Fourth were all that morning. If they had been going to the garden party, as she was going, then there might have been some reason for their being so light-hearted!

Precisely how they were going to spend the "halfer" she neither knew nor cared. She did know that by three o'clock that afternoon she herself would be at the gates of Barncombe Castle. And so she was!

Audrey Enjoys Herself.

"SHOW all tickets, please! Pink cards this way, please!"

The uniformed attendant was voicing this cry monotonously, as he stood at one of the several entrances to the grounds of Barncombe Castle.

Audrey Blain sauntered up with an air of being entitled to go in and out of the place as if she was quite one of the household; but the man promptly tapped her on the shoulder.

"Your card, miss?"

"Oh, there you are!" she said, disdainfully, simply to impress people round about.

The bit of impudence was wasted upon the attendant. He tore the card in half, returned one portion to "her majesty," and waved her on.

And then Audrey was quite at ease. Not only that; she felt plunged, in a moment, into all the happiness that she had been so eager to enjoy.

The day was perfect, and brilliant sunshine had induced all the grand folk to make more of a fashion parade than ever of this great outdoor function.

Never for a moment was Audrey forgetting that this was a private affair. None of your charitable functions, such as Lady Lundy sometimes held, when anybody could come in for a shilling—and sixpence after five o'clock!

All these hundreds of people—ladies and gentlemen and their sons and daughters—some from the great country houses round about the district, others from far and wide, in their swagger cars—they were invited guests, their high station in life vouched for by the fact that they were on Lady Lundy's "list."

Audrey even flattered herself that she had little about her suggesting membership of a Fourth Form at boarding-school. She had put on her best summer frock, her best hat, gloves, stockings, and shoes; and there was one very special feature of her dress—a costly silk scarf.

Audrey had waited until she was well away from Morcove School, on her bicycle, before she unwrapped that scarf and donned it, draping it about her shoulders in burnouse fashion. It was an addition to her toilette that would not have been approved by any of the mistresses; such things were considered unbecoming to a girl still in the Fourth Form. But Audrey was "on her own," and she was not going to label herself "Morcove School, Fourth Form," if she could help it.

A band was playing on the velvety lawns, and there the people were sitting about who had

already sauntered around to admire the grounds in all their summer glory. Audrey decided to join the throng that was listening to the music, and find a vacant chair that would be near to some party of jolly girls.

But now, as she went with her mincing step towards the main lawn, her heart gave a leap.

Lady Lundy!

There was the charming hostess of the day, doing her best to greet everybody in a nice, informal manner. She was one of those warm-hearted people who would not for worlds let anybody suffer a slight, and so she was all on the alert for fresh faces in the crowd, even whilst she was kept in talk with friends who had already received a handshake.

Audrey had been spotted, and she dared not bow from a distance. Taking a grip on herself, she minced towards her ladyship, whose smile was an invitation for the girl to approach.

"How do you do!" exclaimed Lady Lundy cordially, giving her hand to the schoolgirl. "I might not have recognised you as a Morcove scholar, only I seemed to remember your face. Let me see, you are—?"

"Audrey Blain, your ladyship."

"Ah, of course! One of the girls who were at the singing contest in London! But not the girl who lost the shield, on the way home, I hope?"

Lady Lundy jested. "What a sad business that was—so vexing! And Betty Barton, where is she?"

"Oh, er—"

"Lost in the crowd, is that it?" was the laughing remark. "Well, we are a rather big party to-day!"

"Lady Lundy, what a lovely party you are having!" Audrey took the opportunity to gush. "Oh, it was so kind of you to send that one ticket!"

"I am very sorry I could not invite all the school this time," her ladyship said with genuine regret; "but I thought that a card sent to Betty Barton, as captain of the Form—my Form!" she added, with a most adorable smile—"would be taken as a sort of compliment to the Fourth as a whole!"

"Yes, Lady Lundy. And—and—"

"My daughter is somewhere round about," Audrey was interrupted genially, as the hostess saw other newcomers with whom she must speak. "And if you see Betty Barton, mind you tell her that she must come and speak to me! Or I shall be most offended!"

It was said with a light laugh; all the same, Audrey knew that Lady Lundy would be really entitled to be offended if a girl guest flouted the hostess to whom she was beholden for a day's happiness.

Well, Betty was not here! She was playing tennis on the Morcove courts; and let her stay there!

Audrey drifted amongst the folding chairs that had been stood about on the grass, and paused by one that was at the end of a row.

"Excuse me, is this chair engaged?" she asked very sweetly of three girls who were in the adjacent seats.

"Oh, no. Do sit down," one answered, with a friendly smile. "Charming weather, isn't it?"

"Delightful! And how lovely the grounds look!" purred Audrey. "I have seldom seen them look better!"

"Are you often here? You must know Lady Lundy quite well!" exclaimed one of the other girls. They were a stylish, jolly trio.

"Oh, fairly well."

The band played on. Sitting there, in the sunshine, amidst a bevy of swell people, and with three tip-top society girls making themselves quite nice to her, Audrey felt she was enjoying life thoroughly.

And all on a stolen invitation!

In For It Now!

THE afternoon had worn on, but still the cars were bringing fashionable people to the great garden party, whilst persons arriving on foot were directed to the less congested entrance, where that stolid attendant was still crying:

"Show all tickets, please!"

Two girls, who hardly looked dressed for the occasion, now approached this worthy, who droned at them mechanically:

"Your pink cards, young ladies?"

"We have no invitation cards," answered one.

"We have not been asked—"

"Then I am sorry, but I cannot admit you!"

"No, We didn't think you would," exclaimed the other girl; "but my friend here has a letter—"

"For Lady Lundy, please! If you will just tell us how we can go about delivering it to her?" pleaded the first girl, with a lack of "push" that quite won the attendant over.

His grim features relaxed, as he realised that this was not a case of two girls trying to bluff their way into the grounds.

"Ah, a letter, eh? Um! Might I ask where you come from?"

"From Morcove School. This letter is from our headmistress; we were asked to cycle over as fast as we could, and that is what we have done," answered the first girl. "It contains great news!"

"Pass along inside then; that's good enough for me," declared the cautious attendant; and next



UNDER SENTENCE OF EXPULSION!

"I don't want your sympathy," snapped out Audrey insolently, "I only want—oh, revenge!"

instant he had forgotten all about the youthful pair, as he resumed his slogan:

"Show all cards, please!"

The two girls hastened forward after passing the barrier, looking excitedly around.

"Oh, Betty, darling, isn't it gorgeous!"

"Yes, Polly," answered Betty, in a tone of awe similar to Polly's. "Wonderful! Only, I do feel rather uncomfortable—as if I had cadged this visit!"

"Stupe!" the madcap rebuked her. "When you know we were called away at a moment's notice from the tennis to see Miss Somerfield, and that she herself suggested our coming here bang away! I say——!"

"Well, dear?"

"How on earth are we going to find Lady Lundy in such a crowd as this?"

Betty smiled.

"Oh, we shall spot her quickly enough. If you don't mind prowling around with me, Polly——"

"Not I! Betty, I wouldn't have missed a sight like this for worlds! I——"

"Oh, look! There is Lady Lundy; and we can catch her whilst she is alone!" Betty suddenly jerked out, making a dart towards the elegant figure of her ladyship. "Now to see her look ever so pleased at the news we have brought!"

"Yes, Betty. I say! You do all the talking, won't you?" Polly pleaded, coming over rather shy for once in her lifetime.

But Betty also was just as shy, as she went a step in advance of her chum up to her ladyship, and faltered:

"Good afternoon, Lady Lundy! If you please, we were sent with this note——"

"Oh, Betty Barton, there you are at last!" exclaimed the genial lady, whilst she took the note. "And who is this? Polly Linton, I fancy?"

"Yes, Lady Lundy."

"Then where did you come from?" smiled that lady indulgently. "Did Betty smuggle in two friends on her pink card?"

"Pup-pink card?" stammered Betty. She turned and gazed at Polly, who looked equally bewildered.

"The pink invitation card that I sent you for the garden party," Lady Lundy exclaimed, surprised at the girls' amazed looks. "You were here an hour ago, Betty. Your friend told me so!"

"An hour ago—me—here? No, Lady Lundy! Excuse my contradicting you——"

"But how perfectly absurd it is!" cried her ladyship. "I had a chat with the school friend of yours who came with you—the girl, Audrey Blain."

"Aud——Phew!" Polly half whistled. "Au-drey Blain!"

And Betty, hardly knowing what she was doing, repeated stupidly:

"Pink card—me!"

The letter from Miss Somerfield was still unopened by Lady Lundy, nor did she look like attending to that missive until this little mystery was cleared up.

"I must get to the bottom of this," she said rather gravely. "Did you have a pink invitation card by post, Betty, to admit you and one friend?"

"No, Lady Lundy——"

"Oh, no, no!" volleyed Polly, who had feared she was going to be too shy to say a word! "We girls were only wishing we could have a glimpse of the party, Lady Lundy; but, of course, we understood! We all agreed that you have always been very good to——"

"But——"

"——To all of us Morcove girls, especially the Fourth Form, and so——"

"A card was addressed to you, Betty, by post. What is more," Lady Lundy pursued, looking graver than ever, "Audrey Blain gave me to understand that she was the friend whom you had brought with you, Betty. And you have only just turned up—with this letter?"

"Ye-ye-yes, Lady Lundy! We——"

"You two girls," her ladyship said briskly, "whilst I read this note, just try to find Audrey Blain! I must have an explanation from that girl. I do not like to feel that any invitation of mine has got into the wrong hands. Will you find her, please?"

Then Betty and Polly went off, feeling as if all the breath had left their bodies.

Audrey here! Here, on the strength of an invitation which she had intercepted in the post!

"Polly——"

"Betty——"

"I say, it is going to be a frightful row for Audrey, if she can't get out of it! Polly, how can we—save her?"

Just like Betty to say that! Nor was it unlike the headstrong madcap of Morcove to say disgustedly:

"Save her? Let her save herself, if she can—that's how I feel about it! The cheat—swindler! And look! There she is, palling up with some girls, who can little suspect the sort she is!"

Betty's eyes had a gleam in them, as they also picked out the shameless culprit, reveling in the joyous time which she had obtained by her sheer dishonesty. The Form captain and her chum went straight across to where the girl was sitting, and Audrey was in the midst of a light laugh over some pleasantry, when she was suddenly aware of Betty and Polly's presence.

Audrey's laugh broke off short. She turned very pale for a moment, then forced a ghastly smile.

"Hallo!" she said sweetly. "How did you two get here?"

Her companions—the three nice girls—became very embarrassed. They could see the angry disgust in the newcomers' looks.

"We know how you got here, Audrey," Betty said sternly. "Lady Lundy knows, too! And she wishes to see you!"

"I don't believe you!" Audrey said huskily, trying to put on a bold front before the girls whom she had made friends with. But they, after exchanging glances, were already getting up to walk away.

"I am sorry there has been this unpleasantness for you," Betty felt it right to say to them, as they were moving off. "But——"

"Oh, you needn't apologise," the eldest answered, with all the grace of a well-bred girl. "Apologies, if they are due, should come from another quarter, apparently!"

And with that thrust at Audrey the speaker stalked off, taking the other two with her.

Then Audrey gave play to the passion that was in her.

"You little monkey!" she hissed at Betty. "Never happy unless you are making trouble for me! Get out of my sight! I am here, and here I mean to stop—so there!"

"Audrey, take my advice and come back with us to Lady Lundy," Betty said quietly. "If you don't, she is in the mood to send a policeman after you! It takes a lot to anger her; but she is angry now."

"I won't!" Audrey said, so loudly that several people turned surprised eyes upon her.

It was her suddenly becoming the cynosure of all eyes that made her stride away at last, her cheeks aflame. Betty and Polly attended her through the vast assemblage of fashionable people, and suddenly the furious girl snapped out at Betty:

"Don't keep so close! I am not your prisoner, even though you are the precious captain of the Form!"

Then she strode on again, and was artfully making for the way out of the grounds before Lady Lundy should see her; but the desperate plan was frustrated. All in a moment, Lady Lundy was confronting the culprit.

"So there you are!" her ladyship exclaimed, with quite a withering glance. "Now tell me, Audrey Blain, how did you get admitted to these grounds to-day?"

Audrey tried a shrug, implying the intention to remain stubbornly silent.

"You entered by showing a pink card that was posted to Betty Barton!" Lady Lundy went on. "You gave me to understand that Betty was here, and that you were the friend whom the card entitled her to bring. In other words, you purloined the card in the post!"

Audrey was very white in the face again, except for a red spot in either cheek.

"It means a good deal more," Lady Lundy pursued angrily. "You cheated my intended schoolgirl visitor out of the invitation, and made me liable to be offended with that girl, for flouting my kindness to her! For such a despicable thing as this, Audrey Blain, some girls would be expelled from their school!"

"Lady Lundy—" Betty began, in great distress, but was answered by a gentle gesture.

"You, Audrey, will return at once to Morcove, and report to the headmistress! You had better say frankly why you have been sent to her by me, for I shall communicate all the facts to her. As a matter of principle, I am bound to do that!"

Betty and Polly looked at each other in dismay. From the way Lady Lundy was talking, it was evident that no one could intercede successfully on Audrey's behalf.

She was in for it now, and no mistake!
"Go along," the lady exclaimed imperiously. "It is for your headmistress to deal with you. A more disgraceful action on the part of a girl, who ought to know better, I have never met with!"

She waved Audrey away, and then returned her attention to the letter which Betty and Polly had been sent with from the headmistress.

"This note from Miss Somerfield, girls—I cannot tell you how glad I am to have the news it contains. You know about it?"

"Yes—oh, yes—"

"It appears that the silver shield has been picked up in a railway tunnel, by a man working on the permanent way. The railway authorities, remembering Miss Somerfield's formal complaint to them that a silver shield had been lost, sent it on at once, with the suggestion that it must have been thrown out of the carriage window."

"Yes, Lady Lundy," exclaimed Betty; "but—how impossible that seems!"

"Not so impossible as that it could have fallen out," was the answer. "Luggage does sometimes fall from the hat-rack, but who ever heard of luggage falling out of the window? Besides, the window would surely be drawn up whilst the train was in a tunnel!"

Betty and Polly were both silent then, for Lady Lundy's argument was unanswerable.

They could only hope that she would not pursue the subject much farther, in case she formed the very same theory that they had reluctantly formed.

"Well, my dears," she said, suddenly remembering the claims upon her time, "now you are here, you must stay and enjoy yourselves for a little while. When you get back to school, give my kind regards to Miss Somerfield, and say how greatly obliged I am for her note. It was good of her to let me know at once!"

"Miss Somerfield would have telephoned," Betty remarked, "only your line was constantly engaged."

Lady Lundy nodded.

"Yes, the line has been very busy all day; but that won't prevent my getting on to Morcove School, by and by!"

She dismissed the girls with one of her nicest smiles, and swept away, leaving Betty and Polly in anything but the mood for a garden party.

"Polly," broke out Betty at last, "do we want to hang around here?"

"I don't Betty! Do you?"

"Not with Audrey fairly in for it, as she seems to be!" Betty sighed. "Suppose, then, we get back to the school? Would you mind?"

"I would rather—much rather!" was the emphatic answer.

And five minutes later they were pedalling homewards, foregoing what might have been a glorious bit of pleasure, all because of their grave anxiety about Audrey.

The Form captain's inveterate enemy; the bane of the Form, as the girl had been for many a day now. Yet, because they were the girls they were, neither Betty nor Polly could feel happy as they wondered—had Audrey's hour struck?

Bowled Out at Last!

MISS SOMERFIELD came back to the solitude of her private room at Morcove School with a relieved expression on her comely face.

It was getting on for seven o'clock. She had just seen a number of the school governors off from the porch, after what had been a very satisfactory conference, and at this moment she seemed to be saying to herself: "Well, that's over!" in a gratified manner.

With a little sigh of happiness at the restful pause that she looked like enjoying, the headmistress seated herself at her desk, starting some pleasant musings. And then—

Tr-r-ring, tring!

That was the telephone bell, close at hand on the desk, and Miss Somerfield laughed softly as she bent across to answer the call. No peace for her, after all!

"Yes; who is that?" she asked. And the answer came: "Lady Lundy speaking!"

The telephone talk lasted at least five minutes, with Miss Somerfield at this end of the wire getting all the time more and more agitated and distressed. When at last she rang off, there was a look of great anger in her usually tranquil countenance.

"Ellen," she said, when she had summoned that maid, "has any Fourth Form scholar been asking for me?"

Ellen shook her head. No scholars at all had been around whilst the governors were here.

"Then find Audrey Blain in the Fourth Form quarters, at once, please! And if Betty Barton

and Polly Linton are there—but they may not be back yet—I want to see them also!

"Very good, ma'am!"

The maid withdrew, and Miss Somerfield was to know a few minutes of fuming about the room before the door was tapped, and then thrown wide, revealing Audrey, Betty, and Polly.

"Ah! Come in. Audrey, when did you get back?"

"Please, Miss Somerfield, I—I—"

"When did you get back, Audrey?"

"About an hour ago, please. You were engaged with the governors, or so I imagined, and I—I—"

"That does not matter. You were told by Lady Lundy to report back to me, and you should have come direct to my quarters, even if it meant being told to wait!" Miss Somerfield said sternly. "I may as well tell you, Lady Lundy has spoken to me over the 'phone about the disgraceful action you have committed. Is it any use my asking what you have to say in extenuation?"

Never had Betty and Polly seen the headmistress in such an ominous state of anger.

"You are silent, Audrey! I am not surprised! I agree absolutely with Lady Lundy—your offence has been a most heinous one! For her to shield you was quite impossible, as such grave points of morality were involved.

It was coming now; fiercely the storm that Audrey's own reckless conduct had worked up was breaking at last about her head.

"Look at the offences involved in your disgraceful action," Miss Somerfield went on sternly. "You tampered with the school post-bag. You stole a letter addressed to another girl—"

"It was not a letter, Miss Somerfield; it was only an unsealed—"

"Bah!" exclaimed the headmistress, disgustfully. "Even if it was a mere circular, you know very well that your purloining it was a most dishonest action! Do you think Morcove School can harbour girls who do things like that?"

She was keeping her indignant gaze upon Audrey all the time.

"And then, armed with the stolen invitation, you took advantage of the half-holiday to go to the garden party. The card was intended for Betty and a friend, and my permission would have been asked, of course. You go alone, without my permission! Really, Audrey Blain, the whole thing is outrageous!"

The girl was standing speechless, perhaps hoping for the storm of anger to spend itself and leave her not much the worse off after all, when Miss Somerfield continued in a changed tone:

"There is something else, now that you are here," she said, very gravely. "To-day the railway company have sent me the silver shield that was lost on the w.y from London!"

Audrey jerked up her head, and the startled action showed that this was news to her—a frightening bit of news.

"The railway authorities say that the shield was found in a tunnel, and so it must have been deliberately thrown out of the window. It certainly could not have fallen out, because the windows would have up whilst the train was in the tunnel. Audrey—"

Miss Somerfield paused impressively.

"You were travelling with Jess Lingard on that journey. You and Stella were her companions. I ask you, do you remember that tunnel? Did you—did you have anything to do with the loss of the shield?"

Betty and Polly, standing silently by all this time, felt that Audrey's fate was sealed. For,

with Miss Somerfield's keen gaze upon her, the girl was going all to pieces.

Desperately she was trying to fight through with some of the old cool bravado; but her eyes could not meet Miss Somerfield's.

"Well? Look me in the face, Audrey!"

And she could not do that.

There was a moment's awful pause; then Miss Somerfield spoke with more ominous calmness than ever.

"I am going to get to the bottom of this, Audrey Blain. The two girls with whom you travelled are in London; but I am going to get them on the 'phone. Yes, I am going to question them, just as if they were here in this room!"

And with the word she took up the instrument and put through a call to London.

"Betty and Polly, you may go; I shall not require you after all, perhaps. If I do, I will send for you, so be in your study," she said quietly. "Audrey, remain here."

She added, as the two chums turned back to the door:

"Not a word about all this to the other girls, please!"

And so they went out with sealed lips, whilst they felt that, even if they had been free to speak, they would not have wished to voice a word.

To go away and tell others would be like hitting Audrey when she was down!

Audrey Blain's Banishment!

THAT night was spent by Audrey Blain in the Detention Room of Morcove School.

Everything had come out. Guilty, and doubly guilty, had she been found by her headmistress. And in the morning she was to be expelled!

There was not the least hope of the sentence being modified.

Miss Somerfield had been angry enough over the affair of the purloined invitation-card; and on top of that awful exposure had come evidence of her—Audrey's—guilt in connection with the lost shield.

The headmistress had been as good as her word, and had spoken with both Stella Munro and Jess Lingard over the telephone. Jess, without knowing why she was being asked, had answered that she remembered the train entering a tunnel at a time when she and her two companions were preparing to have lunch in the dining-car.

She could remember perfectly well that the carriage window had been drawn up throughout the journey. Audrey had refused to have it down, and that dispute had fixed the incident in Jess' memory.

She remembered, too, that Audrey had turned back alone to the deserted compartment, just before the train entered the tunnel.

Proof positive in Miss Somerfield's opinion! Stella Munro had confirmed Jess' statements; and so, with the guilt as good as brought home to her, the wretched Audrey had broken down at last and confessed. Yes, she had thrown the silver shield out of the window. Why? Oh, because she had wanted to get Jess in disfavour with other girls, that was why!—admitted with a sudden burst of the old insolence.

And so, here she was now, set apart from the schoolgirls she had so often wronged—the girls she had so often tried to set against one another—and these were the last hours she would ever pass under the roof of Morcove School.

That the girls would find a chance to display their utter scorn, their joy at her going, she was

certain. And the shrinking dread of being exposed to their contempt on the morrow made her wish there had been a chance to run away during the hours of darkness.

But such a desperate deed was out of the question.

She was not alone. A bed had been made up for her, and another for Miss Redgrave, whose sad duty it was to serve as a kind of wardress over this scholar, whose heinous offences forbade her being allowed to pass another night amongst the other girls.

Audrey was sure, as she lay sleepless upon her bed, that Miss Redgrave was sleepless, too. Yet no word broke the deep hush of night-time. Audrey was hardening her heart. No; she was not going to start crying, and to plead that she was sorry, thus making Miss Redgrave point out, all over again, how grave the offences were for which expulsion was to be the penalty. Hang Miss Redgrave! Hang the lot of them! As for that Betty—

The old malicious hatred against the girl she had been unable to strike down was raging fiercer than ever in Audrey's heart.

along, and she writhed with the thought of the despicable girl she really was—she who had vaunted herself as being a cut above everybody else! She was crying silently before she fell asleep at last, with the dawnlight just beginning to glimmer at the barred window of the room.

Then she seemed to be awakened instantly by a rousing touch, although it was eight o'clock by that time. Miss Redgrave spoke a gentle "Good morning, Audrey," and bade her get up at once, as the maid was going to bring in breakfast.

"I am afraid you did not sleep well, Audrey, and no wonder," sighed the youthful mistress, as she made her morning meal with the wretched culprit. "My advice to you is—"

"I don't want your advice, or anybody's," Audrey snapped out insolently.

"At least accept my sympathy, then," was the patient rejoinder. "For I do feel sorry for you, Audrey. You—"

"I don't want your sympathy, either! I only want—oh, revenge!"

Miss Redgrave winced with pain.

"Revenge, Audrey? Come, come, you must



HER PARTING SHOT! "If I ever get the chance, Betty Barton," the expelled girl hissed, "I'll be even with you yet! If it is ten years hence it will make no difference to me!"

As guilty wretches often do, she found one person—and that an entirely innocent one—to blame for her being brought to book at last. Somehow Audrey held the conviction that it was all Betty's doing, and if ever she could get even with her—even if it was ten years hence—well, then, Betty had better look out!

Thus the impenitent culprit was spending these last hours in blind and useless rage against everybody but herself, and most of all against Betty.

Oh, if only she could get a chance to say a few things to that Betty, before the cab drove off with its disgraced scholar to the railway station!

But, for all her harsh resolve not to let this hour of reckoning break the bad spirit that had been her undoing, in the end the short summer night was long enough for Audrey to give way at last.

So slowly the hours dragged by, she had time in which to think of all the reckless deeds, the waywardness and folly which she had committed, and which she had tried so often to lead others into.

She saw herself as others must have seen her all

surely realise that it is as wrong of you as ever, to—"

"I don't care! And if you can't do anything but try to lecture me," Audrey said, gulping down some tea, "you had better leave me alone. I don't want any more bossing in this school!"

So there fell a painful, tense silence between the girl and her sad wardress—a silence that was only ended when the chimes were sounding nine o'clock. Then, as instructed overnight, Miss Redgrave requested the girl to pass from the Detention Room to the big hall, where, as usual at this hour, the whole school was assembling for the morning roll.

The scholars were already in their places when Audrey was led in by a side door on to the dais at the upper end of the hall, where Miss Somerfield occupied a rostrum on all formal occasions. The headmistress was there this morning—a composed, dignified figure—with every sign of regret at the painful task it was her stern duty to discharge.

Audrey's entrance meant nothing, except a sudden deeper silence than ever. At that moment

if she had cared to do so, she might easily have believed that every other scholar in the school was feeling sorry for her, as, indeed, they were. But she preferred to hug the idea that they were wishing they could hoot her; and so, still swayed by the old vanity and hauteur, she simply tossed her head defiantly.

Then the roll was called, just as usual. Only, when the Fourth Form section had been reached, and Miss Massingham, as mistress of that Form, called: "Audrey Blain," there was no answer.

There was, instead, a profound stillness, ended by Miss Somerfield's saying solemnly:

"The name of Audrey Blain is expunged from the roll of Morcove School!"

Silence again, whilst Miss Massingham took pen and drew a line through the name!

Then, at a quiet sign from the headmistress, Miss Redgrave motioned to Audrey to follow her out by the way she had entered.

Audrey, deathly pale, straightened up stiffer than ever. She sent a defiant glance all over the ranks of scholars, and then, with a sudden harsh laugh—another bit of foolish bravado—she flung out of their sight.

"Is my cab ready?" those in the hall heard her demanding insolently of Miss Redgrave. "I want to clear out of this! I'm glad to be going! The hateful school—I've been fed up with it for months!"

"Hush!" entreated Miss Redgrave. "Oh, Audrey—"

"Ha, ha, ha! What do I care!" the girl laughed wildly again, meaning her words to be heard by the girls who were still mustered in the hall. "I was never your sort, and you were never mine!"

The Form's assistant mistress begged her not to make any more disturbances, but to go up quietly and put her things on for the journey. The girl's luggage was packed, and had been taken down to the cab, so it would be only her own fault if she was not gone with all speed.

These Threats Will Be Remembered.

BITTERLY enough Audrey Blain was realising that everything was her own fault; but still she chose to think of herself as the victim of others' enmity. And was she to go, she asked herself fiercely, without voicing a last word of scorn and undying hatred against her chief enemy?

With the mad mood growing every instant fiercer, she even hurried her toilette, so as to get downstairs before the girls should have gone into class. Never mind if it meant being hooted after all! She would have a last word with Betty—that hateful Betty!—before she was driven off.

Miss Redgrave was to go to the railway station to see the expelled scholar into the train, and so she also was putting on her outdoor things. Audrey, thus left alone for the moment, whirled out of the room and down through the house, just as the scholars were going to the various classrooms.

She saw all the chums of the Fourth Form, with Betty Barton in their midst, and, like a mad thing, she rushed up to them, to stand right in front of the captain.

"One moment, you, before I go!" she stormed, passionately. "You are proud of yourself to-day, aren't you? You have been against me all along, and it is a great day for you, this day—that is seeing the last of Audrey Blain at Morcove School!"

"You talk sheer nonsense," Betty answered

calmly. "You speak as if I had done my best to get you expelled."

"And so you have!"

"Oh!" was the indignant cry from all Betty's chums. "Are we to stand this? Shame on you, Audrey—shame!"

"Bai Jove, yes, wather!"

"When you know that Betty, if she has saved you once from expulsion, has saved you a dozen times!" Polly panted hotly.

"Nothing of the sort!" Audrey answered fiercely. "She has been up against me all along, and I owe all this to her—I do, I do, and I don't mean to forget it!"

"Very well," Betty said soothingly. "That is enough—"

"Is it?" was the sneering retort. "Enough for you, doubtless, to know that I am clearing out! But it is not enough for me! Betty Barton, this is my last word to you!"

Audrey, bending malignantly towards the unflinching captain, was clenching her hands as if she would like to strike Betty to the ground.

"My last word, and pay heed to it!" the expelled girl hissed. "If ever I get the chance, I'll be even with you yet! If it is ten years hence, it will make no difference with me! As long as you and I are in the world together—I will do all the harm I can!"

Again there was a shocked cry from the girls standing round.

"Shame, shame! Oh, you bad girl! Shame!"

Audrey drew back a step, laughed her wild laugh again, and then strode away.

At the porch, where her cab was waiting, she faced about, casting a last sneering look into the school.

"Done with Morcove—and a good job, too!" was the cry she sent ringing through the house.

Thus, to the very end, the same wilful, shameless girl, whom they had known all along, Audrey Blain, turned her back upon the school which she had too long disgraced to be deserving of pity now.

And yet that pity she could have had, even in this dark hour of her self-wrought downfall, if only at the last she could have shown a little regret!

Well, she was gone; and in whatever sphere the passionate, beautiful girl might continue her selfish career, Morcove School, at any rate, would know her baneful influence no more. Let her be forgotten then—so the chums of the Fourth agreed, in the greatness of their good nature. As for those harsh threats, how foolish it would be to treat them seriously!

The world was wide, and was it to be supposed that Audrey Blain would ever cross Betty Barton's path in the time to come? That was the way Betty and Co. made light of those parting threats, as it was only right they should do.

But, ah! Wide though the world might be, destiny in its own time and way was to bring Betty Barton and Audrey Blain face to face once more. And, when that time should come, how well would Betty recall the savage threats that were uttered against her on the day when Audrey was expelled!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

(And so Audrey Blain came to leave Morcove. Will she endeavour to carry out her threat? Time alone will show. Next week we shall have a fine holiday tale of Betty Barton & Co., entitled "Morcove on the Farm," and the adventures of the Fourth Formers will keep you interested and amused. Do not fail to order your copy in advance.)