

SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN AND GOLDEN ANNUALS NOW ON SALE!

# The Schoolgirls' Own 2<sup>d</sup>



**ON THE TRACK OF THE  
TREASURE.**

A dramatic incident from this week's splendid long complete tale of the girls of Morcove School.

A Splendid Long Complete Story of the Girls of Morcove School.



# THE TREASURE AT THE GRANGE!

By MARJORIE STANTON.

There is excitement in plenty for Betty Barton & Co., the famous chums of Morcove School, during their final day's stay at Sandmouth.

### A Proud Time for Paula.

"WELL! It is a pickle to be in, and no mistake!"

"Yes, wather, Polly deah."

"Every single thing connected with our concerts—"

"Our stage fwocks, bai Jove, and stock of pwogammes—"

"And all my music!" put in Madge Minden, smiling ruefully.

"Pweicisly!" simpered elegant Paula Creel.

"All uttahn destroyed, bai Jove, by devastating conflagration that bwoked out—"

"Don't you break out quite so much, Paula darling, with your 'devastating conflagration,' and all the rest of it!" chuckled teasing Polly Linton. "You ought to be a newspaper reporter."

Paula joined in the laugh against herself that went up from the party of Morcove schoolgirls. Ever since the chums of Study 12 awoke this morning, they had been keeping one another laughing. It was one of those times when, not to make a joke of things is to feel one must sit down and weep!

"Just look!" sighed Betty now, her spirits suddenly relapsing as she stepped to the boarding-house window and gazed towards all that was left of Brightwell Pier. "Burnt to the water's edge."

"A week, an uttahn wuin," was Paula's comment on the sad sight. "An all-wound disaster, geals, what?"

"A tremendous pity," agreed Tess Trelawney, feelingly. "It has spoilt Brightwell's holiday season, and as for ourselves, we can't possibly get fresh costumes with which to go on with our concert tour. There isn't time."

"No," came from Helen Craig; "another week or so, and we shall have to think of re-opening day at Morcove!"

"Still, even if our tour has to break off now, we haven't done so badly," Betty said, cheering

up. "The money has simply rolled in for the hospital re-building fund."

"Bai Jove, yes; wather. Geals, I am sure we may congvatulate ourselves on having done wondahs, what?"

"I think we had better just congratulate ourselves on the way we got away from the burning pier last night, along with all those hundreds of other people," said Polly. "Wasn't it a thrilling scene! The flames—"

Polly's always garrulous tongue became abruptly silent as the door opened, revealing one of the boarding-house maids.

"If you please, young ladies, the local reporter has called. I told the young lady—for it's a young lady who reports for the 'Brightwell Argus'—that Miss Redgrave was out. Would you—"

"Eh, what? Yes, wather! Geals, geals, let's have her in, what?" beamed Paula, instantly touching her pretty hair to rights. "And we count our thwilling expewiences, bai Jove, so that—"

"Ooo yes, queek, queek!" dusky Naomer Nakara exclaimed.

"Hush, child!" Polly reproved Her Serene Highness, with mock gravity. "This is no occasion for levity, ahem!"

"We'll see the lady reporter, certainly!" Betty said to the maid blithely. "Will you ask her in, please?"

There entered, a few moments later, a tall, thin, rather angular young lady, with horn-rimmed glasses and a portentous notebook. Taking herself seriously, she conferred a very sedate smile upon all the girls, said "Thank you," for the chair she was given, and promptly began her interview.

"My editor thought you might like to let our readers have your own account of the fire last night? You were giving one of your concerts in the pavilion at the end of the pier, when the fire broke out?"

"Well, yes," Betty said, with modest terseness.

"And—er—that is about all there is to say, I think!"

"Of course, we don't want a lot of fuss made about it," Polly now felt moved to say. "In fact—er—Betty Barton is right; the less said the—er—better."

"But, geals, geals!" Paula exclaimed in some concern, "we may as well take the oppportunity of remarking that the sewious conflagration has proved a distwessing catastwophe—"

"Not quite so fast," Polly said, with a repressed grin; "the young lady can't get it down in the time!"

"Oh, that's all right," the lady reporter assured them, gravely jotting away in the notebook. "You lost all your stage frocks?"

"Yes, wather! Geals, I do not wish to monopolise the conversation, you know, but as we regards those frocks, it is only wight that the public should know—"

"You provided them, for the charity concerts, at your own expense?"

"Oh, never mind about that, please!" several of them entreated. "It's quite all right—"

"Yes, wather! If the 'Bwrightwell Argus' will merely report that we are wecewewing quite well after the thwilling expewience, what?" Paula blandly suggested, from the depths of her lounge chair. "I had a westless night—you might say that, what? Miss Paula Cweel suffered a big weaction after the stwain, but is now—ah—pwo-gwessing favouwably, yes, wather!"

"I shall say that you all seemed very jolly in spite of the upset."

"Thanks, thanks! Then again," Paula said, "without wishing to intwude too much into the intewiew—for Betty should be speaking for all of us. Howewah! A line or two in the paper to the effect that Miss Paula Cweel's voice—"

"A rich contralto," said Polly roguishly.

"Yes, wather! It was not in any way affected by the fire, no! At one time I felt so suffocated with the smoke, bai Jove; the flames were wolling aound—"

"Oh, no," demurred Polly. "Come, Paula!"

"All wight, you know best, deah!" And Paula subsided, leaving the lady reporter to resort to Betty and the rest for further details. She had, however, extracted only a few bald statements from those girls when Paula suddenly sat up again.

"Bai Jove, a thought stwikes me! Does the 'Bwrightwell Argus' publish photogwaphs by any chance?"

"We do occasionally—"

"Bai Jove! And I have a photogwaph upstairs that you may care to have!" Paula said, rising with alacrity. "Miss Paula Cweel in piwewette costume, yes, wather! I'll get it!"

And she did! But the amiable duffer was likely to look in vain for the appearance of her portrait in the "Bwrightwell Argus," for whilst she was gone from the room her chums felt it wise to tell the lady reporter that Paula was just a little—well, irresponsible!

Of this, however, Paula knew nothing when she was conferring the photograph upon the departing lady reporter in the hall.

"Theah you are, what? Wather a good likeness, I twust?"

"Thank you—"

"Delighted, I'm sure!" beamed Paula, as she and her chums attended the young lady to the door. "One realises that a little publicity is desiwable when one has a wick—Good-morning! Wick contwalto, yes, wather!"

"You are the limit!" Polly spoke to the duffer in mock disgust, after the young lady had descended to the pavement. "For sheer conceit and vanity, Paula!"

"Eh, what! How do you mean? If I am pwoessed to have my photograph published, how could I wefuse!"

"Pressed! I'll press you!" Polly said, suddenly laying teasing hands upon the elegant one. "Come on, Naomer! Let's go to press with Paula. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ooo, yes, queek, queek! He, he, he! You—"

"Healp! Ow, stop it, dwop it! Polly—Naomer—"

"If I had you bathing in the sea at this moment, I'd duck you!" threatened Polly boisterously.

"Talking of bathing, girls, what about a dip this morning?"

"Ooo, yes, queek, queek! Eet will be jolly!"

"Shall we? Come on, then!" Betty, for one, agreed eagerly, and they were all going to dash up to the rooms to get towels and costumes, when a startling thing happened.

A girl suddenly came rushing up the front steps from the pavement, looking fit to drop, she was so out of breath and heated. Madge Minden was the first to look round and see the girl, and Madge gave a cry. Then the others flashed about, and it became a chorus of bewildered exclamations.

"Amy!"

"Amy, bai Jove! My gwacious—"

"Oh, Amy! Why—"

"Whatever brings you here, Amy!"

They mobbed around the breathless arrival, as she came across the doorstep. Amy Ashdown—their Amy! Suddenly in their midst like this, after days without news of her! No wonder the schoolgirl pierrettes were amazed!

"Amy dear, what does it mean, then? The last we heard of you—"

"It was that telegram you sent us," Polly took up Betty's bewildered cry. "To say that the owners of the Grange had come back from abroad, and you were staying on in service with them. So what—why—"

"Telegram?" panted Amy, her eyes round with surprise. "I sent no telegram!"

"You didn't! But—"

"I was unable to send you a message of any sort," Amy rushed on breathlessly. "They had me locked up at the Grange, and it was only a few hours ago that I got away—in the middle of the night. I—"

"Bai Jove! Geals—"

"Who locked you up, Amy?" gasped Betty. "The Dillons?"

"Laura Dillon and Cora Grandways were secretly living at the lonely house, when it was supposed to be deserted. So, when I went there, I fell into a trap. They caught me and held me until Mrs. Dillon came. It was yesterday that she turned up," Amy spoke on, in between her gasps for breath. "She declared she would get me to say where that paper was hidden, even if she starved me."

"The wretch! Oh—"

"Monstrous, bai Jove! Geals—"

"It's time the police were told," Polly said impulsively. "Just fancy—"

"No, please, there must be no telling the police!" panted Amy, distressfully. "I would have gone to the Sandmouth police directly. I escaped, but—you see, Cora Grandways is mixed up in it all, and she belongs to your school. The

disgrace for you and your school—I had to think of that."

Then there was a pause; one that Betty suddenly ended by saying, as she stepped close and kissed Amy:

"You dear! That's all I can say! Amy, you are splendid!"

"Yes, wather, a weal bwick, what! Geals—"

"But, look here, something must be done!"

Polly burst forth again. "Are we to let Amy suffer so that our school may be saved disgrace? It's only fair to help her somehow. She is an absolute sport, to have had a thought for us and the school. But—"

"Listen, all of you," Amy continued, with more breath by now. "Can you come with me at once—at once?"

"With you—where?" they questioned eagerly.

"Back to the Grange, outside Sandmouth," was the tense answer. "There is not a minute to spare—oh, not a moment! It is a race against time! Unless we are quick—"

"Bai Jove—"

"Those wretches will yet get hold of the treasure they are after! It's like this," Amy spoke on agitatedly. "In making my escape last night I came out of the house by a sort of secret passage. I thought I had covered my tracks all right, so that whilst I was gone the Dillons would not find the passage. But whilst in the train, coming to you this morning, I suddenly remembered; there is just one thing they may see that would tell them of the existence of that passage. If they do see it and start exploring—"

"You think the treasure is there?" Betty said excitedly. "The treasure that there has always been a tradition about?"

And Amy nodded, vehemently:

"Yes! It is such a likely hiding-place—that secret passage. I could not bother about the treasure in the night; I was only thinking of getting away. I had to get away—"

"Yes, wather! But now, bai Jove—"

"Ooo, queek, queek, let us go this meenit!" clamoured Naomer, doing a caper. "I want to hunt for ze treasure! Queek—"

"Here comes Miss Redgrave, thank goodness," Helen exclaimed as the tall, slim figure of their Form-mistress appeared in the hall doorway.

"We'll tell her, and then—"

"Yes, wather! Miss Wedgwave—"

"Look who's here, Miss Redgrave!"

"Amy! Well, I never! Amy—you here! Whatever does this mean, then?" was Miss Redgrave's inevitable cry of amazement.

She soon knew. A rush of words put her into possession of the whole critical state of affairs, and it was not another minute before she and the schoolgirl pierrettes were out of the house, along with Amy.

A couple of taxis sped them to the railway station, where a train was even then at the platform, on the point of starting. A train for Sandmouth!

"Hurry up, there, if you are going on!" bawled the guard.

They huddled in. A gasp for breath, and, ticketless, they simply stormed into a compartment which they found they would have to themselves. The whistle blew, and away went the train—hurrah!

But, whether even now they would be in time or not—ah, how could they be sure!

Not There.

"HALF-PAST ten, is it? Then perhaps that obstinate young thing is beginning to wish she could have some breakfast!"

Mrs. Dillon gave her cruel smile as she made the remark to her daughter Laura and the girl who was Laura's companion at the Grange—handsome Cora Grandways, bane of the Fourth Form at Morcove.

"She has been very quiet this morning—not a sound from her room, mother, ever since we got down," Laura Dillon commented, with a smile just like her mother's. "Must be feeling pretty humpy, even if her spirit hasn't quite broken yet!"

"I suppose you will give her some breakfast now?" came from Cora Grandways, rather uneasily.



POST HASTE FOR THE TREASURE!

Without troubling about tickets, the Morcove girls stormed into the compartment, the whistle blew, and away went the train.

"She'll have this, and she'll have no more!" Laura's hard mother declared sternly, setting a dry crust of bread on a small plate and then filling a cup from the hot-water jug. "She won't come to harm on bread and water; but she'll precious soon get tired of it, three times a day!"

These three, they had come down late this morning, and they had only just finished breakfasting, in a makeshift way, in this great old country house, where their presence was all unsuspected by the outside world. It was camp fare for them at every meal, and, of course, no fire was ever lighted. To get a cup of tea or coffee, they had to use a spirit lamp.

"You two girls may like to come up with me?" Mrs. Dillon invited them, as she moved off, taking the bread and water with her. "And when we are in the room upstairs with the obstinate girl, pitch into her as much as you like, I shan't mind!"

"I mean to tell her that she's a little donkey

to be so stubborn," Cora said, anxious to appear heart and soul with Mrs. Dillon over the bullying tactics.

"And I," muttered Laura, as they all three started the ascent of the staircase, "I shall have more to say than that! The impudent thing—for that's what she is! A mere scullery-maid, and she carries herself as if she was as good as any of us!"

Then the talk lapsed, and the only sound in the lonely old house was the chance creak of a stair as the three mounted flight after flight to that topmost room which had been Amy Ashdown's cheerless prison, ever since she was caught by Cora and Laura in the lonely house.

"You open the door for me, Laura," the mother said, when they had come to it. "My hands are full."

Eagerly the heartless woman's daughter stepped forward to twist back the key. Giving her handsome face a malignant look, the girl sent the door swinging wide open, and strode in.

Next second she was standing dumbstruck, whilst Mrs. Dillon and Cora Grandways—they, too, stopped dead just inside the doorway.

Gone!

Their helpless prisoner—she was not here! In the dim light that filtered in through thumb-holes in the window's fastened shutters, they stared around amazedly, incredulously. Gone!

"My goodness!" Cora was the first to gasp in dismay. "But where, then—What—"

"Escaped—from this room! But how—how?" panted Mrs. Dillon wildly. "The door was locked! The windows—"

"The shutters are still shut fast," Laura exclaimed, finding her tongue at last. "Yet she has got away—escaped—flown to tell the police, perhaps!"

"Oh, don't—don't say she has done that!" quavered Cora, falling into a sudden tremble of dread. "I don't want the police to come here and—and take me—"

"Bah, you need not be uneasy, Cora," Mrs. Dillon said testily, setting down the bread and water. "If the police do turn up you can easily slip away. In any case, I'll undertake that you don't get put into court along with us. But—I wonder, has the young monkey told the police? How long has she been gone? Oh, this is maddening!"

Laura suddenly ran wildly from the room to look forth from a landing window.

"No one, as yet!" was her gasp of relief, as Cora came hurrying to her side to gaze out also. "How are we to know, though, what's going to happen, or what to do now!"

"How did she escape—that's what I want to know!" they heard Mrs. Dillon fuming in the room from which the bird had flown. "Outside aid? But how—how is it possible? How was it managed, in any case?"

Cora and Laura stole back to the room in nervous fashion, to find their grown-up companion pacing wildly about, looking this way and that for a clue. And there was none. Nothing, nothing whatever to show how Amy Ashdown, after being locked in there for the night, had managed to get away!

Again Laura made a sudden frantic rush from the room, going downstairs this time. Cora followed, just as excitedly. It seemed high time to hunt the whole house through, to try and find out how the escape had been brought off.

"Of course, if someone knew that we were holding her prisoner," Laura whispered tensely, "then

that outsider may have broken in during the night, crept upstairs, and unlocked the door—"

"Leaving the door locked again after Amy had been got out?" Cora took her holiday crouching just as tensely. "That's what I was thinking. Let's look around; then— But there's no need! Here we are, Laura—look here!"

Their frantic rush down through the great house had brought them to the kitchen. Cora gave the cry that told of a sensational discovery as she stepped through into the scullery.

There a small window had been tampered with in the night. It had a muslin curtain across it, and only now were the girls noticing that the glass had been broken.

"Oh!" gasped Laura. "Mother, come and look! This window—"

"Someone got in there, is that it?" was Mrs. Dillon's agitated exclamation, as she joined the girls in the scullery. "Then the girl did not effect her own escape. She was rescued by a friend—"

"I wonder—I wonder if it was the Morocco girls!" Cora burst in excitedly. "If so, we may hope that the police have not been told!"

Mrs. Dillon turned eagerly upon the girl, who was herself a Morocco scholar.

"You think, Cora, that those girls—"

"They know I have been concerned in it all and I belong to their school," Cora reasoned cunningly. "They would hate bringing the police into the business."

"If only we could feel sure that Amy was rescued by those girls!" breathed Mrs. Dillon. "It's had enough that she has got away. Once again she has escaped us before we could get the secret out of her. But if only no action is taken, we may yet have time—"

"To start the old searching once more?" Laura said, rather glumly. "Mother, what's the use? We have searched and searched and never done any good! Father's not here, either, to help us now!"

"No, that's the worst of it," frowned Mrs. Dillon. "Your father will not be down until this evening, and by that time— Oh, how maddening it is!"

And she stamped a foot furiously.

"There isn't a soul to be seen in the grounds," Cora said softly, after peering out of a window.

"What about creeping out and seeing if we can find signs out there? There may be something to tell us whether or not Betty and the rest were the rescuers!"

Both Laura and her mother seemed to think this a good suggestion. Mrs. Dillon gave a nod of approval, and at that Laura quickly stepped to the back door, unlocked and unbolted it, and stole forth into the open air.

Cora crept out after her, whilst the mother remained within the house, perhaps intending to resume that desperate search which, so far, had been all in vain.

"We must keep our eyes open for any tracks," Cora said in guarded tones to Laura, after they had started to sneak around the garden. "Paths that are as dry and gritty as these very often take just as good footprints as a wet path. If there were several girls, there should be some sign."

"Yes," Laura agreed, with every appearance of yearning to clear up the doubt. "We'll have a thorough look round, although we must be very careful not to be seen. Thank goodness, the mansion stands in its own grounds."

"And in such a lonely bit of country," Cora

rejoined. "Bother, Amy and the person, whoever it was, who rescued her! This is sickening!"

"If it should prove to have been Betty Barton and the rest—you'll remember it against them?" Laura suggested darkly, and Cora nodded fiercely.

"Trust me! But what's this, Laura—look! A faint footprint on the path—only one!"

"Mine or yours, perhaps, made days ago," considered Laura. "If not, it seems as if Amy made it last night."

"But if she had friends with her?"

"There should be other footprints, however faint," Laura assented gloomily. "How can the girl have escaped without outside aid? The broken window, the locked door—it all points to a rescuer in the night!"

So they muttered between themselves, in a state of ever-increasing suspense, whilst they continued to scout round in this stealthy fashion. Relying upon the gravel and cinder paths to furnish them with helpful indications, they very seldom raised their eyes from the ground. By-and-by, however, Cora held up her head, sighing with weariness after so much anxious prying about. In a frowning way she stood and looked around, and it was then that she gave a gasp of wild excitement.

"Laura, look—look! That ventilation grating in the wall!"

With a pointing hand, Cora excitedly directed the other girl's attention to the house wall, and now it was Laura's turn to stare, her lips formed into a soundless "Oh!" of surprise.

Some ten feet or so from the ground there was what had always been taken for a ventilation grating in the very old masonry of the house. Ivy grew about it, and the rusty iron bars across the opening had done much to convince everybody that it was only a ventilator. Thus there had never been any curiosity because the opening visible from outside the house could not be accounted for from inside.

But now—the iron bars had been tampered with!

It was this that left the two girls agape with amazement. Some of the iron bars had been broken right away, others had been bent aside.

"Do you see, Laura? There's room for a girl to squeeze in or out of that opening now! Did Amy, then, get out that way?"

"But how did she get away from her room in the first instance? The door was locked this morning!"

"Supposing she got away, after all, by her own efforts," Cora said excitedly. "She might have entered the house by the window, just to keep us in the dark as to how she did escape! I say, we ought to let your mother know about this, anyhow!"

"I should just think we ought!" Laura agreed emphatically, starting to run round to the back door. "That hole in the wall looks, now, as if it was a way in and out of the house!"

"A secret passage, is there? Laura, supposing—"

"My goodness, yes! Come on!" urged the other girl, rushing for the back door. "If there is a secret passage to be got at, then, depend upon it, the treasure is there!"

Nor was Mrs. Dillon inclined to think otherwise, directly she had heard about the discovery. With that covetous gleam in her eyes which always came with any thought of the reputed treasure, she rushed the girls back to where the hole in the wild wall could be seen.

"A ladder, you two—quickly!" she suddenly

gestured. "If I cannot get in through such a narrow opening, then you girls will? Only think—it may be that there is a secret passage, and that there the treasure can be found!"

"Yes, mother—all right! Come on, Cora—a ladder!"

"The house steps will do, Laura!"

"Right ho!"

And together they sped back once more to the scullery.

It was hard for them to take time and be cautious about getting the kitchen steps round to the hole in the wall. Beseated as the two girls were with the fear that every moment was of vital value, they wanted to rush the folding ladder out of the house and along the path, regardless of the clatter such haste might cause.

If—if that really was a way into a secret passage up there! Then already the treasure might be considered as good as theirs, unless—unless this last moment hunt for it was frustrated by the sudden appearance of the police or Amy and her chums.

Between them, Laura and Cora set the short ladder in position, and then the former girl ran up the rungs eagerly. She put her eyes close to the opening in the wall and peered in.

"It's all dark, mother—"

"Of course it would be," was the impatient comment; "but—"

"I'm going in!"

"Yes, do, Laura! Quick, whilst I run and get you a candle and matches. You'll go in after Laura, will you, Cora?"

For answer, Cora Grandways set foot on the ladder and went up as far as she could, Laura being already on the topmost rungs. In a minute Mrs. Dillon was back with the candle and matches. She passed them up, then stood upon the path, trembling with suspense, and annoyed at having to stand idly there, because the opening was not big enough to let through an adult.

Laura wriggled through, then took in the candle and matches.

"Come on, Cora! It's some sort of passage, right enough!"

"Ah, then we are all right!" was Mrs. Dillon's exultant comment. "We shall do it yet! The treasure must be there, if it is anywhere in the house! A secret passage—the very place! Go on, girls, go on, and I will—Hark, though!"

The agitated woman suddenly turned about in great alarm, and listened.

Was there someone coming, or was it only a fancy born of guilty uneasiness?

"A few minutes more—oh, if we can only have a few minutes longer!" she panted to herself, after listening and hearing not a sound. "Even if we cannot get the treasure away, we can hide it somewhere else! Those girls—what are they doing now, I wonder? What is the candlelight showing them?"

#### In Time or—Too Late?

"THAT'S the Grange, is it, Amy—over there?"

"Yes, Miss Redgrave."

"Then we'll get down here, all of us, and go the rest of the way on foot."

As she spoke, Morcove's youthful Fourth Form mistress bent forward in her seat to rap a signal to the driver of a taxi-cab which had been engaged at Sandmouth station.

A second taxi was following, for Miss Redgrave and the girls made a party of nine in all. When the first vehicle drew up on the open country



**A BREATHLESS MOMENT!** "They've gone!" breathed Cora. "Now we can get away—" "No, no," she heard Laura mutter passionately, "we don't go without the casket."

road, the second driver naturally pulled up, too. Both worthy fellows were feeling a bit mystified, and they were likely to remain so. Betty & Co. had no intention of accounting for the urgent haste there had been to come these few miles from the railway junction.

"You don't wish us to wait, to take you back, ma'am?" one asked Miss Redgrave, after the entire party had alighted.

"No, thanks. Good-day, and thank you!"

"Good-day, young ladies!" responded both drivers, all the more cordially because of the liberal tips that Miss Redgrave had conferred.

Another moment, and the schoolgirl pierrettes were hastening after Amy down the country road, along with the mistress. The two vehicles growled noisily as they made the difficult turn on the roadway, then went purring back to the town.

"If the enemy is still at the Grange, they'll have heard those taxis," predicted Betty. "Perhaps, though, they'll imagine it's the police!"

"I wonder—oh, I wonder if we are in time?" fumed Polly. "It will be such a shame if they have got away with some tremendous treasure that rightfully belongs to the owners of the mansion."

"Bai Jove, yes, wather!" palpitated Paula. "I can't wun any faster, but I don't mean to dwop behind, bai Jove. Geals, what's the time?"

"Getting on for mid-day," answered one of them.

"Mid-day!" exclaimed Amy tensely. "And they have had ever since first thing this morning to scout round the place, giving them the chance

to discover that way into the secret passage! Oh, I feel certain somehow they have found it!"

"But not the treasure, Amy. Cheer up, we may yet be in time!" Madge rallied the anxious girl, with a loving smile. "They may even have fled the place when they found you gone from the room in which they locked you."

"Haw, haw, haw; yes, wather! That would be gwand, geals! I weally am too bweathless for wowsds, howevah!"

They all were, more or less, and, in any case, suspense had them too much in its grip for the girls to feel like talking. On and on they hurried, Amy taking them by a route which avoided the cross-roads, where there was a cottage. Over a field of stubble, then across a big meadow—so they came at last to the boundary of the private park which lay in front of the stately old mansion.

After that it was a swift dash across the grass and through some shrubberies to the house itself. Not a soul was to be seen—but did this mean that the enemy had flown, in fear of the police? That was what the next minute or so must decide!

Amy led them first of all to the back court.

"Here we are! Here is the window I broke open after my escape!" she said, pointing to the little scullery casement. Then trying the back door: "This is locked! So, if we are going to enter the house, we must climb in at the window!"

"One moment, though," demurred Miss Redgrave. "Will you show us that strange place you came out at, Amy dear, after feeling your way through the secret passage?"

"Yes—this way!"

And off they chased again, led by Amy. She soon had them grouped on a garden path, looking up at the hole with the broken grating.

"The ivy is a good deal bashed about," Polly remarked. "Did you do that, Amy, in the night, whilst escaping?"

"I didn't think I damaged the ivy as much as that," was the grave reply. "Has someone been here this morning? Have they been in there? Oh, if they have, girls!"

"I say, aren't these the marks made by a ladder being set upon the gravel?" Betty exclaimed, pointing down at the path. "You had no ladder, Amy?"

"Oh, no, I had to let myself drop from the brickwork—"

"Then they have seen that hole and its broken bars," was Miss Redgrave's regretful cry. "They have had a ladder and clambered in—"

"Weally, it's too bad!" lamented Paula.

"After all the wush—"

"But where is a ladder, that we can climb in now?" Polly exclaimed in her headstrong way.

"They may be in there now; if so—"

"Ooo, yes; queek, queek! We shall catch them! Queek!"

"But wait—I know a botter dodge!" Amy electrified them all by announcing. "Let some of us get into the house and enter the secret passage at the other end—from where I started! And the rest can stay here—"

"To catch the wretches if they come out, with some of the treasure, perhaps!" nodded Betty.

"Splendid!"

Polly laughed.

"My brother Jack would just love this," she said. "Grand sport!"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove, a bit too thwilling to be comfortable, however!" Paula puffed. "I can't get my bweath back, no!"

"Eet is ze great jape," Naomer exulted,

clapping her hands. "Oh, we shall beat them, you see!"

Not another moment was wasted in talk. Leaving Tess, Helen, and Madge on guard outside the exit from the secret passage, Miss Redgrave ran with Betty, Polly, Paula, Naomer, and Amy round to the back door.

It was Polly who climbed in at the broken window, and unlocked the door to let them all into the scullery. From there they at once moved forward very quietly, listening all the time.

Not a sound was to be heard except their own faint footfalls and their sharp breathing. Had the enemy flown, or were they hiding about the house? That was the question.

"We must be very careful not to get caught in a trap," Miss Redgrave murmured. "Keep your eyes open, girls."

"Yes, wather!"

"If they have got on to the treasure, then, of course, they've gone!" sighed Amy, in terrible suspense. "But have they found it—have they? This way, and we'll soon be in the secret passage!"

Up the stairs she led them—flight after flight, to the topmost landing. Then, darting to the door of the room in which she had been imprisoned, she found that it was locked, and that the key was gone.

"No key, so what shall we do?" she exclaimed. "I expected to find the key still in the lock, but someone has—"

"Do? Have that door open in a jiffy—like this!" Polly the headstrong cried, simply hurling herself against it. "Come on, Morcove!"

"Bai Jove—"

"Oh, you'll never manage!" Miss Redgrave said, with a laugh at their impetuosity. "Not in that way, girls!"

Nor did they. It was a case of fetching hammer and chisel from downstairs before the locked door could be overcome. As soon as those implements were brought into use, however—snap! went the hasp, and into the room flocked the girls, Miss Redgrave following.

"Now then, here we are!"

That was Amy, as she ran to the fireplace and knelt down, to take up and fling aside fractured pieces of the great old hearthstone.

"Phew!" whistled Polly, as the dark cavity was revealed. "You went down there, Amy, did you?"

"I did. It's quite safe—"

"I'm vewy glad, geals, I was not Amy last night," muttered Paula, looking rather scared. "Bai Jove, it's a wather frightwening opewation, surely, going down there!"

"Candles!" clamoured Polly, and she and Naomer sped away to fetch them from other rooms. They were hurrying back with a nice useful haul, when they both checked to a standstill, looking startled.

"Hark! Was that someone downstairs?" Polly whispered. "It sounded like a stealthy tread. I do believe those people are still about the house!"

But eagerness to explore the secret passage was too much for them, and they ran on again to the room from which the mysterious passage could be entered.

Candles were lit, and Miss Redgrave herself went first. A bed-room chair had been skilfully lowered through the opening in the hearth, to serve as something upon which the searchers could alight.

The Treasure Has Been Found.

**M**EANTIME, the three Morcovians who were on guard outside the house were rather feeling that they must be missing all the fun.

It was like being set to watch a rabbits' burrow from which the bunnies have bolted. Time after time they listened intently, without hearing the faintest sound from behind that dark square hole in the wall, with its broken bars.

What they did hear suddenly was the very faintest click on the stone paving of the back court, as if someone was stepping cautiously there and had yet made one betraying sound.

The three girls looked at one another questioningly. Had they better go and see? Was it the enemy, or perhaps only Miss Redgrave or one of the girls?

Tess, Madge, and Helen—they decided without a word of talk. One of them would creep round to the back court, to see whose step it was they seemed to have heard.

Helen went, whilst Madge and Tess remained on guard near the exit from the secret passage. In a minute, however, they heard a rallying cry from Helen:

"This way—quick! It's Mrs. Dillon, and she's off across the field!"

The loud cry was followed by the sound of Helen dashing off in hot pursuit, and instantly the longing to give chase took hold of Tess and Madge. They rushed away, running harder than ever when they turned a corner of the house walls and saw Mrs. Dillon a good way ahead, fleeing as for dear life.



**MORCOVE TRIUMPHANT!** "Stand still!" ordered Betty Barton sternly. "Laura Dillon, you are caught, and that treasure is ours!"



"After her! It's only right to stop her!" Tess urged furiously. "Why should she get off scot free?"

Was it to prove a fatal mistake, however—this sudden excited pursuit of the fugitive woman? It looked very much like it.

For now, when the exit from the secret passage was no longer being watched by the three school-girls, some faint sounds issued from that hole with the broken bars. Voices! The cautious whispering of two girls—Laura Dillon and Cora Grandways!

And now, of a sudden, their faces showed at the opening. Furtively the two girls were peering out, their eyes enlarged with fear.

"Where have they gone, Laura?"

"Given chase to someone—mother, it must be," was the low and tense answer. "Oh, I do hope she gets away! Anyhow, let's get out of this!"

"Yes, we must, whilst there's a chance! You go first, Laura!"

"But stay! After all, why not go back and fetch that casket we have found?" Laura whispered desperately. "It's not very heavy, and—"

"Laura, it's no use; we must get away. Come on!"

"No, not without the casket!" the other girl refused passionately. "Mother has very likely bolted off on purpose to draw those girls after her. She is relying on my getting the find out of the house, after all, and get it I will!"

"You are mad!" panted Cora. "It's too late! Didn't we hear sounds, as if—"

"Bah! They were somewhere high up in the house. We can rush down into that crypt place, Cora, and fetch the casket."

"No, I tell you. Oh, Laura, those girls may be back here any moment, then we shall be cut off! I'm going!"

"Go, then! Look here, though; wait down there!" implored Laura, as Cora began to wriggle out from the hole in the wall. "Do that much for me, Cora! Wait down there, and I'll fetch the treasure casket myself. I'll manage the weight somehow!"

Cora did not answer. She was already in the open air, dropping down to the ground. The other girl peered out.

"You all right, Cora? No one coming?"

"No one yet. But they—they may be back any moment! Laura, do come now—now, whilst there's time!"

"No, not whilst there is still time to get the casket!" was the vehement answer. "Wait there; be ready!"

Then the white, tense face that had been peering out was withdrawn.

Laura Dillon, covetous daughter of a covetous mother, had rushed back to get the treasure that had lain hidden for centuries within these ancient walls!

#### Where is the Treasure?

"GRACIOUS, where are we getting to now?"

"It's quite safe, if you come carefully.

Mind your heads!"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove, a secret passage!"

"Sh! Better not talk too much, in case!"

They were all in the mysterious passage way now—Betty, Polly, Paula, and Naomer, along with Miss Redgrave and Amy Ashdown.

Candle in hand, the latter was leading these staunch friends of hers down the flights of steps that would have been as black as night, if the searchers had not provided themselves with lights.

A sense of extreme caution was upon them all. Not only were they picking their way along very carefully, but at every step they were on the alert for a sound or sign telling them that they had not this place to themselves, after all.

Those remarks a moment ago—they had been voiced by this or that girl in the softest of whispers. And now it seemed best to keep quite mute, whilst the slow and stealthy advance went on.

Down and still downwards, treading rough stone steps that had known no footfall for how many hundreds of years until Amy, last night, came this way!

At last they reached that stage of the strange prowl where the steps began to go up and down in very erratic fashion. It caused the girls utter bewilderment, and at every other moment Paula, for one, was wishing she could exclaim aloud in her amazement.

Then there came a fairly long flight of descending steps, and from the top of these the searchers saw, below them, a sudden patch of daylight.

No need for Amy to pause and whisper back what this meant. They knew that down there was the hole in the wall by which she had achieved her escape last night, after breaking away the old and rust-thinned bars.

But now the rather agitating thought seized all of them: If they had come as far as this, and were in sight of the exit near the ground level, what of the treasure upon which they had expected to come?

So far they had discovered nothing—no valuable hoard, simply lying about in the passage, where perhaps it might have been dumped down in haste all those centuries ago; no side passage or recess, forming the treasure's storehouse.

Anything of that nature Amy would necessarily have passed unheeding last night, since she was without a light and so anxious to escape. But they had candles now, and they were not in any hurry to get out, only in a hurry to find the treasure, if treasure there was!

So, with rather disappointed feelings they now went cautiously down the last flight of steps. They would come to the false ventilation hole in the great old walls, and apparently the only thing would be to scramble out into the open air.

Polly suddenly whispered in a fretting manner:

"I say, what a fearful shame, if the treasure really was lying about in this passage we have come along! No wonder it's gone, in that case!"

"We know that those wretches have found their way in here this morning; that's only too true," Betty whispered back ruefully. "And so, if the treasure was—"

"Sh, sh! What's that?"

They all stood still, half-way down the steps, and listened.

A faint sound had seemed to come to them—a dull thud. But from whence they could not tell. It was certainly from neither before nor behind them in the passage.

"A door in the house may have banged," Miss Redgrave suddenly conjectured. "It sounded like that."

"Yes, it was a sound rumbling through the walls," Betty responded.

On reflection, it seemed likely that any noise made about the house would be heard within the secret passages, so they resumed the descent, attaching no importance to what had been heard.

A few moments more and the daylight was

glimmering in upon Amy's face as she got close to the opening in the outer wall. She blew out her candle, then looked forth, drawing back sharply with a gasp of excitement.

"Sh!" she gestured, then whispered with extreme caution:

"The girls we left on guard out there—our girls—they have gone! Cora Grandways is there now!"

"What!"

"My gwacious, that geal!"

"Cora—waiting about out there?" Miss Redgrave said agitatedly. "Oh, let me look."

They all looked in turn, without showing their faces at the opening, and every pair of excited eyes beheld the girl who had been with the Dillons during their rascally attempt to get the treasure for themselves.

Cora Grandways, ever the one to take up with those who loved rascality; there she was—standing sentinel-like on the path, below the exit from the secret passage.

And why? For what reason was she loitering there?

Above all, what had become of Madge, Tess, and Helen?

Miss Redgrave suddenly made a sign to the girls to draw away from the broken-barred opening, for a whispered discussion.

"Surely," she said softly, "our three girls have not been set upon, and made captives for the time being?"

"You mean, whilst a search for the treasure still goes on?" Polly questioned excitedly. "In that case, the Dillons are still here!"

"And if they are still here—one blessing, it means they have not yet got the treasure!" Betty exclaimed.

"Bai Jove, that's a welief, anyhow, geals! But—"

"Hark!"

This time, they had heard a sound that had the opposite effect from making them stand and listen. It was a sound of voices from the open air—voices they knew. With a rush they were back at the opening, crowding there to look out. And now—what did they see?

Their three girls—Madge, Tess, and Helen—there they were, after all, back on the garden-path!

Polly impulsively hailed them with a:

"Whee-est! Madge—Tess—Helen!"

"Hallo—"

"Where were you a minute ago, girls?" Miss Redgrave whispered out. "We looked out and only saw—"

"We have been chasing Mrs. Dillon across the park, but she gave us the slip. We might have caught her after all, but we felt we must get back here," Tess answered breathlessly. "What have you found?"

"Nothing yet. But we have just seen Cora Grandways—"

"Seen Cora!"

"Standing where you are standing now—"

"Yes, wather! Geals, geals—"

"Oh, then, that accounts for it!" Tess answered excitedly. "We thought we heard someone scuttling off through the shrubbery. We were just going to investigate."

"Better stay there, girls," counselled Miss Redgrave. "And it looks as if we shall have to join you."

"Without having found the treasure, after all!" sighed Amy.

Then Polly exclaimed:

"Don't forget though, they haven't found it, either! Or they would not have been still hanging about the place, would they? Oh, I say, do let's see if we can't—"

"Yes, wather! Miss Wedgwaye—"

"Have another try—we must!" clamoured Polly. "Surely it must be somewhere, when there is this secret passage!"

"Ooo, yes, queek, queek!" Naomer almost squealed.

"Don't think I want to give up," their youthful mistress said, looking just as desperate as any of them. "We will go back and look again."

"Examine the walls, that's the idea!" said Polly. "Ev'ry inch of them!"

And another minute found them doing this, by the light of the candles, their excitement at fever-pitch as they kept on telling themselves—the treasure must be here, if only they could find it!

### The Casket in the Crypt.

THIS small, crypt-like place in which she stood, alone—how dimly it was illumined by the candle that she carried!

So Laura Dillon was saying to herself as she stood and gazed around.

Not a moment must be lost—she knew that only too well. Yet, for the life of her, she could not help being arrested by the awe-inspiring nature of the vault.

Nor was it surprising that she even felt a panicky inclination to rush away, abandoning all idea of getting the treasure upon which she and Cora Grandways had come a little while ago.

It was so unnerveing to know oneself to be all alone now, and not merely alone, but with the secret door by which she had entered shut fast behind her.

Her nervous glance strayed behind her to some steps leading up to that door. It was one that had been very cunningly devised. The outer facing was made to look like brickwork, matching the walls of that first secret passage. It opened and closed by means of what seemed a very simple catch; yet supposing there was some ingenious arrangement—some spring fastening? She might find, when she wanted to get away, that she could not get out!

Now that this appalling thought had seized her, she simply had to turn back and go up the steps to the door. She held the candle close, so as to be able to give the inner side a keen scrutiny.

As she did so, she got a bad shock.

It was the moment for her to hear rustling sounds from the other side of the closed door—the sounds made by several persons going by in that first passage.

This scare took her mind off the fear of being locked in and unable to get out. The Morrove girls were prowling up and down the passage and its stone steps. The danger, then, was not of being unable to get out, but of leaving the vault presently, laden with the rich haul—only to fall into the hands of those girls!

In an agitated manner she moved away from the closed door, going down these inner steps that made the floor of the vault below the ground level.

In one dark corner, the coveted treasure lay.

Here it was—yes! An old and worm-eater casket, of quaint design, with some initials carved on the lid. The wood was so rotted that it had become as light as sawdust. And she and Cora, awhile back, in their feverish excitement over the thrilling find, had easily picked a hole through one panel with their mere finger-nails. A tiny

hola which, when the candle was held close to it, had afforded them the brilliant gleam of at least one costly jewel!

Apparently, the small chest was simply stuffed with gold ornaments and priceless jewels.

Setting the candle in a safe place some distance away, Laura now put both hands to the chest and lifted it. Heavy was not the word for it! But she could just manage—she must manage to carry it away, scrambling along with it to the exit where, she hoped, Cora would still be waiting, without the other girls knowing.

If only she could do that! Smuggle the treasure away under their very noses, leaving the girls none the wiser!

The mere thought of such a possible triumph gave Laura the strength she needed.

Getting a good purchase on the casket, she lifted it up, holding it to her chest. After the first staggering step or two she steadied herself, and she was going slowly and quietly towards the crypt steps when—

"Ooo, queek, queek, what ees this I have found!" A strange girlish voice became audible, yelling excitedly on the outer side of the crypt door. "Queek, everybodies!"

Laura gave a gasp of wild dismay. The door had been noticed, even as it had been noticed by herself and Cora earlier in the morning!

What could she do now, except wait, hoping against hope that those girls—

But ah, it was all up with her already! Only too well she realised what the increasing commotion out there meant. They were talking excitedly as one and another of them felt about for any cunningly concealed means of unlatching the lock. If they found it—

And they had found it! The rusty iron mechanism had given its tell-tale screech; the door was being swung inwards on its grating hinges. The girls were rushing down into the crypt!

"Hurrah!" was the victorious shout some of them gave, as they all came swarming down the steps. "We've done it!"

"Yes, wather! But—"

"You! You there—stand still!" Betty was the first to shout at Laura, as they ran in upon her, where she stood with the casket clutched up to herself. "Laura Dillon is it? Laura Dillon, you are caught, and that treasure is ours!"

"Yes, wather! Dwp it, you thieving wascal! Geals, geals—"

"Keep back, all of you," was Laura's panted cry. "You shan't touch me! You—"

"Bah, what's the use of adopting that tone?" Miss Redgrave exclaimed scornfully. "Laura Dillon, you and your mother are beaten at the wicked game you have been playing. That casket—"

"It is the Monk's Treasure!" Polly's voice rang loudly in the crypt. "You have no more right to it than we have!"

"Yet you said just now it's yours!" snarled Laura, whilst two or three of them closed in upon her and simply dragged the casket from her.

"It is ours to take care of, until the owners of the Grange can claim it," Miss Redgrave said calmly. "As for you, my girl, both you and your mother will be lucky if—"

"Let me go!" Laura suddenly demanded, with a startled glare in her eyes. "If you do anything to me—hand me over to the police—it will mean getting Cora Grandways into a bother as well! I warn you!"

"Silence, and stand there for the present," Miss Redgrave bade the girl sternly, with a gesture. "Let us look at the casket, girls!"

"Ooo, queek, queek, open eet, yes, please!" Naomer began to implore, clapping her hands and cutting capers. "Queek!"

"Yes, wather! Ha, ha, ha! This is bettah, geals! Bai Jove, how thwilling!"

Those who had taken the casket from Laura were setting it down. Candles were held nearer, and then it was seen that one little hole in the powdery wood offered a glimpse of the contents.

"Jewels!"

"Hooway! Geals, geals, how gwand!"

They crowded around, almost forgetting Laura's presence in the excitement of having the treasure casket under their very eyes. And that was Laura's chance—one that she did not fail to seize.

In a flash she was up the crypt steps and at the door, dragging it round behind her as she rushed out. There was a booming thud! and she was alone in the outer passage, leaving the others shut in the crypt. And if it took them several minutes, or even hours, to get out, so much the better!

Even as she scrambled away, making for the exit on to the garden, she could hear a muffled hubbub coming from the crypt. And she laughed—harshly, savagely—picturing the frightened state into which those imprisoned girls had been plunged.

Serve them right! They had got the treasure; let them get the fright of their lives along with it! That was her venomous thought, as she made all haste to get away from the house.

For now it was a case of her and her mother getting clear of the neighbourhood with all possible speed.

Even though Cora was implicated, that Morcove mistress might yet feel inclined to inform the police, and then—

"Oh, and what a rage mother will be in, too, when I have to tell her!" was Laura's bitter exclamation. "The treasure lost to us—lost! It's maddening, and what we shall do now I simply don't know: That casket of valuables would have set us up for life!"

In this mortified frame of mind she came to where the daylight was streaming in through the opening in the outer wall, and she simply dashed at it, expecting to see Cora waiting below. What was her amazement and dismay, then, to see—not Cora, but three more of those schoolgirl pierrettes, calmly on guard!

"Those girls are all over the place!" she fumed, turning back. "I must try some other way out. There must be one, for we know there was a way in upstairs that Amy discovered last night. Oh, how I wish I were out of this and miles away already! Bad enough to have been beaten; but to be caught again—handed over to the police!"

And crazily she turned to go back up the tortuous passage that led right to the top of the house.

#### All's Well with Amy.

**M**EANTIME, Betty and the others in the crypt were indeed having a bad scare, finding themselves shut off from freedom by that slammed door.

They were utterly without implements of any sort, and unless they managed to open the door from the inside—what could they possibly do for themselves! Break down the door? Impossible!

But the scare, bad as it was, mercifully lasted only a few minutes.

Then suddenly, by the light of the candles, they found that one of the ancient boards lining the thick door could be easily broken away in pieces, it was so mouldered to touchwood with age and damp. Behind that board there was some of the rusty mechanism of the lock. No sooner had a portion of the board been torn away than Miss Redgrave put her hand in and felt cautiously amongst the ironwork.

The anxious girls saw a look of relief flash into her face as she started to tug and pull at some bar or other. A moment more and the hasp of the lock grated back, and how the girls cheered as they let the door swing wide open.

"Hurrah!"

"Now for the casket!"

"Yes, wather! Geals——"

"Ooo, I love him!" Naomor laughed, capering around as a couple of her chums took up the weighty treasure and rushed it towards the doorway. "He is heavy, yes?"

Even so, one corner of the casket was stove in, and out of that smashed corner fell a fine sample of the contents.

Stray gold pieces that had trickled out of bags long since rotted to dust, and jewels of immense size and value, mostly emeralds—these were what were soon passing from hand to hand—Miss Redgrave and those girls who had been in the crypt, having lost no time in joining Madge, Tess and Helen on the garden-path.

"My word, what a treasure it is, and no mistake!" Polly said gaily. "Amy dear, what will your master and mistress say about it all, when they get the news!"

"Ah, I know one thing they will say, and that is—it will make them rich enough to keep on the old house that they love so well! And I—I shall be with them again, I hope, as their serv——"

"Servant! Don't be a goose," cried Betty, laughing. "Why, Amy, you yourself are made for life now! Of course you are!"



**"COME ON MORCOVE!"** With this cry Polly Linton hurled herself on the door, and the others quickly followed suit. "You'll never manage it, girls!" said Miss Redgrave. "We must get a hammer and a chisel."

"The heavier the better!" chuckled Polly, who was one of the two carrying the casket away.

Between them they soon had it at the exit into the garden, and it was like Polly to act up to the dramatic situation by shouting into the open:

"Madge—Tess—Helen! We've got it! Gold and jewels—the Monk's Treasure—bags of stuff!"

"Hurrah!"

Even sedate Madge went wild with joy. The casket was being shown to the three of them, from the window with the broken bars.

"Let it down to us—we'll break it's fall!"

"It's got to come, anyhow, whether it smashes or not," Miss Redgrave said blithely. "Steady, then. Look out, down there!"

"Right-ho!"

And out of the opening in the wall the casket was tumbled, to fall heavily towards the three girls' waiting hands.

They did not save it from going flop to the ground, but they did break the fall, and thus the rotted wood was saved from flying to splinters.

"Yes, wather, haw, haw, haw! You'll be given a share of the tveasure wight enough, Amy deah, as a reward."

"What about all you girls, then?"

"What about Cora, by the way?" Polly suddenly questioned. "She's not been seen again, Madge—Tess?"

"No. We thought we wouldn't leave this spot whilst you were in the secret passage, in case——"

"And what about Laura, too?" burst out Betty. "After that trick she served us in the crypt, I would like to catch her again. If only to tell her what I think of her!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Geals, she nadn't the slightest wegard for our feelings, what? Weally, some people are——"

Paula's aggrieved voice broke off abruptly. She and her companions had all heard a tell-tale sound from the direction of the mansion's back premises, a motor-cycle suddenly giving the roaring whirr of its engine!

Away rushed the girls, although Miss Redgrave

wisely remained to keep an eye on the treasure. With Amy in their midst, the chums of Study 12 tore along a path, turned a corner, and then sped across a yard. The sound of the engine still came from a lot of ramshackle outbuildings detached from the main premises.

Nor had the girls finished dodging amongst the sheds and stables before the motor-cycle could be heard moving off. Guided by the sound, they flew on faster than ever, and suddenly they emerged upon a cobbled yard, only to see the outfit speeding off down the tradesmen's path, with a familiar figure in the saddle.

"Cora! There she is—it's Cora!" panted Polly. "Scooting off—"

"And well she may!" was Betty's bitter rejoinder. "After the part she has played in it all, from first to last."

Perhaps it was an instinctive fear of being followed that made Cora glance behind her, as she drove the motor-cycle and empty sidcar down the long path to the quiet country roadway.

She did more. True to the incorrigible nature that was hers, she suddenly gave a sort of mocking, defiant wave of one hand.

It was as if, even in the midst of all the alarm, she still retained that brazen impudence which Morcove knew so well.

"Do your worst! I defy you!" was in that farewell wave of Cora's.

A few moments more, and she had sent the famous "outfit" roaring out on to the roadway, and Betty & Co. could guess that the journey just begun would not end until the detestable girl was with her indulgent, pampering parents.

"She must have had the motor-bike hidden, in readiness for flight, all the time she and Laura were at the house in secret," Amy Ashdown

murmured. "How sad it is to think that she is a Morcove girl, when all of you—"

There was a sudden shining in Amy's eyes as she looked at Betty and the rest.

"You have been so splendid!" Amy said emotionally. "As kind and true to me, every one of you, as that girl and the Dillons were false and cruel!"

"That Cora, I suppose we shall still have to put up with her at Morcove School!" sighed Polly. "She will manage somehow, or her parents will, to make black seem white. But that's our look out, Amy, dear. As for you, your troubles are all over now."

"Yes, wather! And congwats, Amy, deah!" beamed Paula. "I can see you being quite a wick geal in the days to come, and, bai Jove, you deserve it, if ever a geal did!"

And here, too, along with all Amy's trials and troubles, ends the story of Betty & Co.'s doings during that fateful summer holiday.

It was very wonderful, when they looked back on it all, to realise what had been crowded into those eventful days when they were touring the seaside towns as schoolgirl pierrettes.

Not only had they collected quite a large sum for the laudable object they had had in view—the hospital rebuilding fund—but there had been such a thrilling share in all the scheming and mystery which had centred around the Grange.

The first news of the finding of the treasure made a great stir far and wide, public excitement reaching its climax when it became known that the gold and jewels were valued at no less a sum than twenty thousand pounds!

To-day little Amy Ashdown has a nice nest-egg in the form of exactly a tenth of the total sum. She is no longer the willing little domestic in the employ of Mr. and Mrs. Langrish, but is their adopted daughter.

The Dillons were never heard of again, so it is impossible to say how Laura Dillon fared after the utter failure of that desperate attempt by her parents to secure the great treasure.

As for Cora Grandways, Polly's shrewd prediction was fulfilled. Cora turned up just as usual on re-opening day at Morcove School.

The reason was that Miss Redgrave had found the headmistress going through such a worrying time in other directions, it seemed best to let the case against Cora stand over for the present.

Nor, much as it was to sicken Betty & Co. to see their inveterate enemy amongst them again, would they have had Miss Redgrave do other than spare Miss Somerfield all knowledge of what had transpired in the "hols."

Poor Miss Somerfield! How the girls of Morcove School were to feel for their beloved headmistress when the next term started! How sorry they were to feel for themselves as well when—

But that is the beginning of another story altogether, the strange story that will record the doings of Morcove's scholars from that hour when, trooping back for another term, after the summer holidays, this astounding news greeted them. They were to be—turned out of Morcove!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

"Turned out of Morcove!" is the title of the story which begins a fresh series of splendid tales dealing with the chums of Study 12. Next week will be a special opportunity for friends of yours to start reading "The Schoolgirls' Own," if they do not already take this famous journal. Tell them in time!

### Exclusive Photos of

## FAMOUS FILMS

Exclusive photographs of the BIG SCENES in the following pictures are to be found in *this week's PICTURE SHOW*. Don't miss this splendid number.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN in "The Gold Rush."

MARY PICKFORD in "Annie Rooney."

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS in "Don Q."

and

D. W. GRIFFITHS' latest picture, "Sally of the Sawdust."

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