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"The Schoolgirls' Own Annual" and "The Golden Annual for Girls"

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



**"IN THE HANDS OF THE WRECKERS!"**

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

A Splendid Long Complete Tale of the Morcove Girls in Unfamiliar Surroundings.



# THE TRAITRESS .. IN .. THE SCHOOL!



By MARJORIE STANTON.

Even though the loyal girls of Morcove School have been turned out of the dear old building which has housed them so long, the work of Miss Somerfield's enemies does not cease, and they have succeeded in obtaining a confederate inside the new school. But they have reckoned without Betty Barton & Co.!

### A Bombshell for Betty & Co.

IT had been very quiet for a little while in the room which served Betty Barton and her chums as a study at Sawnton House.

Betty herself was seated at the table, tackling some captaincy work. Madge Minden was sending off an order to some music publishers for some advanced pianoforte piece.

Then there were Tess Trelawney and Helen Craig—the former putting her paint-box in order for once, the other reading.

Polly Linton and Naomer Nakara were here, and even they were quite quiet—just for once!

But suddenly this too orderly silence was ended.

"Hark! Good gracious, whatever's happened?" was Polly's exclamation, whilst her chums reared their heads to listen.

"Funny sort of sound," suggested Betty.

"It is!" laughed Helen. "Somewhere overhead, isn't it?"

"Is there a tank up there?" wondered Tess, nodding her head towards the ceiling. "It sounds like water washing about."

"So it does," agreed Polly. "I say, is that to be the next commotion in this poor old ramshackle place, the water supply going wrong—some old tank bursting?"

"Oh, Polly, don't say such things!" Helen laughingly entreated. "That would be too awful!"

"Well, we know what an awful has-been Sawnton-House is!" grinned mirthful Polly. "Didn't the back of the kitchen range fall to bits yesterday morning, when the cook was in the midst of her work? Ha, ha, ha! What a life it is!"

"But we mean to stick it!" Betty said blithely, slamming a table-drawer, after putting her work away. "To give in now would be to—"

"Phew!" whistled Polly. She promptly went to the door, opened it, and took a step into the passage. Next moment: "Do come out here and

listen, girls! Now it sounds very much as if—as if—Hark?"

The nature of the alarming disturbance now made Betty ask the others:

"Where is Paula Creel, by the way? Because it sounds very much as if—"

"It does!" Polly grinned again. "Very much! Paula!" she sang out. "Paula, is that you?"

And then, in the most doleful voice that the chums had ever heard, the answer came:

"Yes, wather, Polly, deah! Heah I am, bai Jove!"

The dismal response had come from some flight of stairs just round the corner. A slow and clumsy step, very unlike Paula Creel's usual elegant one, could be heard. So could Paula's sighings and groanings. What, then, was the matter?

With a rush, the girls who were Paula's loving chums went round to the landing, and instantly shriek upon shriek of laughter went up.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear—"

"What are you gwinning at?" wailed poor Paula, and they unhesitatingly assured her:

"You, dear! The sight you are! Ha, ha, ha! Why—"

"Dwop it!" wailed Paula. "You unfeeling wetches, can't you see I am in the thwoes of misery? Look at me!"

They were looking at her, paying her the closest attention, and that was precisely why they simply could not refrain from giving these shrieks of laughter.

"Whatever have you done, Paula, darling? Why, you look half drowned!"

"I have been stwuggling for life!" wailed Paula, clawing a streak of wet hair out of her eyes. "I am dwenched through and through. Ah, dear, it's howwible, most distwessing, simply fwightful!"

"But what—"

"Geals—geals, this wetched house we are using for a school is simply too dweadful! Its wamifications are bewildering—what? I was simply looking around for more woom somewhere to use as a wardwobe. I found a cupboard—yes, wather! It looked a tweat!"

"Only?" chuckled Polly.

Paula groaned again, sorrowfully.

"Only it was not a cupboard at all—wather not, bai Jove! When I stepped into it I promptly stepped down into ten feet of water!"

"Oh, Paula, not ten feet, surely!" demurred Madge.

Then there was a sort of cackle of rage from Paula.

"Haow can you doubt me, when you see the state I am in? A week, a dwoyned wat, bai Jove! Burr! This will be the finish of me. I'm dwenched to the skin. I'm dwoipping—"

"Then run away, and get into dry things."

"I am going to, Betty," Paula said. Yet she still stayed to continue her dismal lamentations. "None of you heard my cwies for healp. Theah was I, by Jove, stvuggling for life amidst the wapids—"

"The what?" asked Polly. "In a tank—rapids?"

"I was, anyhow, wapidly pewishing," insisted Paula. "The water wose and wose. In vain I swam and swam."

"And all your past came back to you?"

"Yes, wather! What are you geals gwinning at? I shall not say anothah word, not one!"

And, with all the dignity that could be maintained when she really was in a most bedraggled state, the hapless one dragged away. Aggrievedly she spoke again, however, over one shoulder:

"Cwuel, unsympathetic wetches!"

"No, dear!" protested Polly. "Oh, of course, we are awfully sorry, you poor darling! We'll help you to—"

"Ooo, yes; queek—queek!" approved Naomer, dancing after the bedraggled one. "We soon show how sorry we are for her, ze poor dear duffer! Paula—"

"Geraway! Na—ow—mer, dwop it! Let me alone! I would wather not! I'd wather you didn't—"

"But we are so sorry—"

"Then don't be sorry! Be anything, but leave me—leave me!" howled the hapless one, vigorously fending off the now too attentive girls. "It's quite all wight, geals. Polly, Naomer, all of you, I pwefer to take care of myself—yes, wather!"

So that roguish couple, Polly and Naomer, did no more than dance round her, like attendant sprites, as poor Paula dragged herself to where she could strip off the wet things, get a good rub down, and then put on entirely fresh raiment, straight from the airing cupboard.

Whilst she was doing this some of her chums went to the top of the house and investigated. They found the scene of the disaster. It was one of those tank-rooms which many large old country houses possess. The door on the landing which served the place was certainly deceptive, but only a duffer like Paula Creel would have walked unwarily into that dark interior, to go down plump into—not ten feet of water, no. That was Paula's exaggeration. Two feet six was nearer the mark!

"Ah, that's better, Paula, darling!" Polly greeted the ever luckless one, when at last she rejoined them all in the study, restored to her usual spick-and-span state. "Have the armchair, dear."

"Thanks, thanks! I am sowwy, geals, if I wather lost my temper—what? I realise that you were feeling extwemely distwessed on my account—yes, wather! But don't come near me, Naomer. I don't want to be kissed—no!"

She subsided into the armchair, with a great sigh of relief.

"And the wost of it is," she deplored, "it happened at a time like this—after tea, when all wovk for the day is over, so I can't get excused fwom—"

"There's prep," Polly reminded her, and Paula sighed again.

"Pwep—yes, wather! Ah, dear! Unless, howevah, I wecuperate vewy wapidly, geals, I shall have to veldne heah, and get one of you kind fwends to do my pwep. When I think of it all, the howwow that wushed over me—it did, you know—when I dwopped into twelve feet—"

"You said ten, Paula," pointed out Betty.

"Ten, then."

"And it's really only two feet six."

"Weal, watevah it was!" protested Paula, wearily loling her head. "Heah I am, and I must be quiet. I must have wost."

"And refreshment," Helen agreed, jumping up to go from the study. "Paula, darling, you shall have a cup of beef-tea. I'll get you one from cook."

"Thanks, thanks!" quavered the convalescent. "Beef-tea is a tweek, just the thing. Thanks, Helen!"

There was silence after Helen had departed. Then suddenly Polly giggled.

"Why do you laugh, Polly, deah?"

"I don't know! Only—He, he, he! It is so funny, the rough-and-ready life we are having, generally, here at Sawnton House."

"Wough and weady is not the wovd for it," declared Paula. "It is twying—beyond wovds. Cwamped suwvwoundings, no games field, wooms so dark that you can't see to put your hair to wights! Dweadful, dweadful!"

"Then would you like us to give in, Paula, dear?" Betty asked, with a smile, for she knew what the answer would be. "Would you like us to start agitating to be moved back to dear old Morcove School?"

"Betty, deah—"

"We can, as you know, go back any day we like," Betty rattled on blithely. "It only means agitating for Miss Somerfield's dismissal, that's all! If we girls make a song about the rough-and-ready life, and say we won't stand it, the governors of the school will simply have to get us a new headmistress."

"For the simple reason," nodded Polly, "that those Lupina persons, who have got possession of Morcove, refuse to let the place be used as a school unless Miss Somerfield is turned off, sacked, thrown over by us-girls and the governors!"

"And that's the sort of thing we would do, of course!" Madge said, with her sober smile.

Paula looked ready to cry.

"Dwop it!" she entreated distressfully. "Geals—geals, don't breathe a wovd about Miss Somerfield being sacked! We'll go on woughing it. I'm sure I don't mind. Who ever hears me gwumble? No, geals!"

"Yet nothing would be easier," Polly still jested on. "We have only to demand that our comfort should be put before Miss Somerfield's happiness, that's all, as Betty says. We can send complaints to the governors. We can do what some wretch did the other day, chalk on the wall: 'The headmistress must resign!'"

"That disgwaceful affair!" Paula exclaimed indignantly. "It's a gweat welfief, geals, to know that no geal in the place wote those wovds. We realise that it was the Lupina geals."

"Those girls, yes," nodded Betty. "Surely it must have been Jose Lupina and her sister, Zilla, who did the wall-chalking!"

"So, then," Polly exclaimed gaily, hoisting herself to the edge of the table, "we are all as solid as ever in our support of Miss Somerfield?"

"Yes, wather!"

"One thing is certain," Betty remarked gravely, "if anything should happen to cause Miss Somerfield to think that we girls—I mean all the girls who are here at Sawnton House—are not going to back her up, she would—"

And there the Form captain broke off abruptly, giving heed to someone's rushing step just outside the door.

Next second that door flew open, and Helen Craig came bursting in upon her chums. There was no sign of any beef-tea for Paula. There were signs, however, of Helen's being in the wildest state of excitement.

"Girls— Oh, it's awful!" she panted, utterly breathless after her rush upstairs. "Whatever shall we do? Miss Somerfield—"

"Bai Jove, what—what?" gasped Paula, jumping up, whilst the others also voiced their great alarm.

"Yes, Helen, what?" they clamoured.

And the answer came, in a tone of mingled grief and dismay:

"Miss Somerfield has—resigned!"

#### The Crafty Hand Again.

**C**OULD it be true?

If it were so, then it was the most upsetting bit of news that Betty and the rest had ever heard.

Their headmistress, Morcove's own beloved principal, leaving them!

And in a flash the girls were realising that it might easily be all too true. If such a cry had been voiced by Helen Craig, or anyone else, at Morcove School, there would have been scoffing laughter to answer it. But things were different now. This was not Morcove School, although they could still proudly claim to be Morcove scholars.

"Resigned?" Betty exclaimed tensely. "If she has resigned, then we can guess why! But, oh, we can't have this—can we, girls? It—it's impossible!"

"Wather, bai Jove! Uttahtly unthinkable, geals! Good gwacious—"

"It must be," Madge broke out sadly, "because she wants to put our welfare before her own. Trust Miss Somerfield not to consider her own position for a moment when there is the school's future to be thought of!"

"It all comes of those hateful Lupinas making it known that their spite is against Miss Somerfield herself!" Polly said, standing in a passion, her hands clenched. "They have openly offered to restore Morcove to us as a school, on that one cruel condition—that Miss Somerfield no longer reigns there as headmistress!"

"And so she has resigned, to end the wretched deadlock," was Helen's sorrowful rejoinder. "If you go downstairs, you'll see a notice on the board. Crowds of girls are there."

"Are they? Come on, then!"

That was headstrong Polly, as she sped off. With frisky Naomer a close second in the race, away they all stampeded, falling in with other girls who had just had wind of the great sensation.

A makeshift notice-board had been set up in the entrance-hall of the old country house. Around

this, as Helen had said, many scholars were surging. Then there were those who were walking away with looks that told of acute distress—girls who, having seen the notice, felt that they could not linger there, gazing at it, any longer.

Betty and her chums joined the crowd. By peering over the heads of smaller girls, and between the touching shoulders of seniors, they managed to read the notice. There it was, in Miss Somerfield's own firm, clear hand, the formal announcement that she had tendered her resignation.

Nor were the chums to find that they had been in error when guessing the cause. For this was what they read:

#### NOTICE.

To prevent a continuance of the present hardship in which my scholars have been involved, by



**PAULA KEEPS COOL!** As Paula's chums caught sight of her, shrieks of laughter went up. "Whatever have you done?" gasped Betty. "I have been swimming for life!" announced Paula, shaking her bedraggled self.

the loss of Morcove School, I have this day sent in my resignation to the governors.

It will be no news to my dear scholars to be told that my retention of the headmistressship is the one obstacle to Morcove School being restored to them. They may now, therefore, look forward confidently to being back in their old happy quarters at an early date.

(Signed) ESTHER SOMERFIELD,  
Headmistress of Morcove School.

That was all. More than formal even, almost as cold as it was blunt, the language in which the notice had been couched.

But, ah, only too well the girls knew that it was not the coldness and bluntness of one who felt hurt by signs of waning loyalty! By the very

baldness of those statements Miss Somerfield had attempted to imply a cheerful resignation.

It was the sort of announcement that might be expected to emanate from one who never did the undignified thing, and whose golden rule, whenever trouble was about, had always been, "The less said, the better!"

Paula burst into tears.

"Oh, geals, haow dweadful!" she whimpered. "Pway excuse this gwif, but weally I—Miss Somerfield—such a bwick—what? And now—"

"Now what? You don't suppose she is going?" Betty burst out strenuously. "You don't suppose we are going to let her go? Not likely!"

"What can we do, though?" cried one of the bigger girls who happened to hear this fierce remark, and Betty flashed back:

"Do? You Fifth Form girls can do what you like, Anna Silke! We Fourth Form girls— Oh, come on, Polly, all of you, to the class-room!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ooo, yes; queek—queek! Come on, Paula, and not cry, please!" was Naomer's quaint entreaty, whilst she took hold of the emotional one and hauled her away. "Betty means—a meeting!"

A Form meeting, without a moment's delay! That, indeed, was Betty's idea, and eagerly it was taken up. Quickly the room that was being used as the Fourth Form class-room filled with enthusiastic girls. And there would be yet more of them in a minute, for one or two scholars had dashed off to fetch others who would not otherwise know of what was going forward.

These came flurrying in at the last moment, just as Betty was being cried into the chair.

"Chair, Betty! You take the chair!" the clamour had gone up, and so she had allowed Polly literally to push her into it.

The two Grandways girls came in, quite the last to do so. Judith Grandways, now that she had heard the news, was looking as distressed as anyone. She hurried to her place with an air of being heart and soul with the rest of the Form over this business, but Cora Grandways only looked amused.

"A meeting, is it?" Cora commented, rather derisively. "I see! Betty in the chair, as per usual!"

"Well, you don't suppose we want you in the chair, anyhow?" exclaimed Polly scornfully, and there was a laugh at Cora's expense.

These were days when Cora Grandways was absolutely without a friend in the Form which she disgraced, but it must never be imagined that Cora minded being an object of universal contempt.

In her view, it made her quite a person of importance to be the one and only "slacker" in the Form.

Everybody was jabbering, but the instant Betty, with a broad grin, tapped upon the desk in front of her, the seething talk subsided, although Paula's fatuous chuckle still went on.

"Haw, haw, haw! This is all wight; yes, wather! Geals—"

"Or-der!" demanded Polly, and gave a squashing push to Paula as she sat down next to that amiable duffer. "Speech, Betty, speech!"

"Speech, yes, Betty!"

"But need anyone say anything?" responded Betty, looking extremely happy at the unanimity of the meeting. "We have seen the notice of Miss Somerfield's resignation. Well, we all feel—"

"Hear, hear!"

"It can't be allowed; it isn't good enough. Morcove School without Miss Somerfield—"

"Certainly not!" came from all parts of the room. "Impossible!"

"Let's pass a resolution, then," cried Betty. "Do it straight away, and let Miss Somerfield have it. That this meeting of the Fourth Form—"

"Hear, hear! Hear, hear!"

"—Whilst admiring Miss Somerfield for her self-sacrifice—"

"Hurrah, yes! That's it, Betty! Bravo!"

"Er—geals!" Paula said, suddenly on her feet.

"Betty, deah—"

"Order! Sit down!"

"Oh, let her go on! Out with it, Paula!"

"Thanks, thanks!" beamed that young lady, half turning to address the meeting. "Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking—"

At this point Polly groaned deeply.

"I wepeat, geals, unaccust— Who threw that?" Paula asked indignantly, as a ball of paper whizzed past her ear. "You, Cowa? All wight! But I don't mean to sit down. Now, as wegards Miss Somerfield—"

"Ah, now!" sniggered Cora.

"Miss Somerfield, geals, is a bwick. When I say she is a bwick, you will wealise I mean a—er—in fact, a bwick! Yes, wather! Weal, then, the question awises—"

Here Paula had to raise her voice. Everybody was jabbering again.

"The question, I say, awises—"

Paula coughed loudly and stamped a foot.

"The question awises, geals! Do you heah me? Geals, I'm making a speech!"

"Oh, are you?" came the astonished cry from all parts of the room. "Paula is making a speech!"

"Yes, wather!"

"I think you are making an idiot of yourself," Polly said. "The resolution, Betty!"

"Hear, hear!"

Then, the Form captain, having concentrated upon some bit of writing whilst Paula was floundering on, began to read aloud from the scrap of paper:

"That this meeting, whilst admiring Miss Somerfield for her great self-sacrifice in offering to resign, is anxious to see her continue as head-mistress of the school. It therefore begs and prays the governors of the school not to accept the resignation—"

"Hear, hear! I second that!" a dozen of them offered, and a forest of hands shot into the air.

"Carried unan!" was Polly's yelled comment on the general enthusiasm.

"Hooray! Yes, wather! And if I may be allowed to remark—"

"You may not!" Polly informed Paula, forcing her to sit down. "Hold her tight, Naomer—that's the way! Betty—"

"Healp!" Paula's howl of despair was heard, as Naomer hugged on to her. "Dwop it!"

"Girls, just one moment—for one serious word," Tess suddenly stood up to entreat. "I feel that whilst this meeting is on—"

"Yes, yes!"

"We might work something into the resolution about that bit of wall-chalking the other day. That we are certain no girl in the school could have been so horrid as to do it—"

"Oh, you don't even suspect me of doing it!" Cora cried tartly. "How sweet of you!"

"No, we don't think you even could have been as horrid as that," Betty spoke from the chair.

"If the meeting approves, we will embody a remark about it in the resolution."

This was done. Miss Redgrave, the youthful mistress, who was in such chummy relationship with the Fourth Form, came upon the scene a minute later to find the amended resolution being carried with tremendous cheering.

She was shown the scribbled sheet of paper, and although perhaps the grammar held room for improvement, the sentiment of the thing was perfect.

There had been such enthusiasm throughout the meeting.

Only Cora Grandways was heart and soul against this definite token of the Form's love and loyalty towards Miss Somerfield.

Apart from her natural inclination to oppose anything for which Betty & Co. stood, Cora Grandways hated this makeshift school life that was being carried on at Sawnton House.

She came of a wealthy home where everything was done to pamper her, and her liking was all for ease and luxury. At Morcove School she had been able to indulge her love of lavish comfort. There she and Judith had shared a study, and as Judith was of a quiet disposition, Cora had done just as she pleased.

Nowadays, Cora Grandways was only one of five other girls who were sharing one of the upper rooms of Sawnton House as a study. She did not "hit it" with her study mates, and so altogether she longed for the time when the school would be reinstated at Morcove.

Already she had tried in vain to stir up discontent and a bitter feeling against Miss Somerfield. Cora's was the despicable hand that had secretly chalked upon one of the walls: "The headmistress must go!" She had done that in a hope that that phrase would become a sort of slogan in the school amongst discontented scholars.

It was a seed of discontent which she had sown, hoping it would bear fruit. But it had excited nothing but bitter disgust. It was believed that the Lupina girls must have done that bit of wall-chalking. If ever the scholars found out that one of their own number was the culprit—well, it would mean an hour of reckoning for Cora, she knew!

After the Form meeting she went for a turn out of doors, because it was impossible for her to give her mind to scheming whilst boxed up with other girls in the makeshift study. To and fro she paced in the open air, racking her brains for the answer to that question:

What could she do now?

And suddenly her brain proved crafty enough, as usual, to be equal to the situation.

In a flash the idea came to her; she herself must secretly aggravate the difficulties and trials and hardships for scholars and mistresses alike. That was the thing to do! Make life more than difficult for them all at Sawnton House—absolutely impossible!

Swiftly, too, she thought of one way at least in which the mischief could be started. Thanks to that unpleasant experience of Paula Creel's, in connection with the water-tank at the top of the house, Cora could see a fine way of causing the most appalling discomfort.

"Just before bed-time—that will be the moment!" she said to herself, with a wide grin. "If what I am going to do doesn't damp some of their spirits—damp them! Flood them, more likely! He, he, he!"

She could not help tittering softly to herself.

It was going to be such an upset for everybody at Sawnton House!

Patiently she waited that evening until the moment was at hand for the school to assemble in its all-too-cramped hall downstairs. As soon as the bell began to ring she made her way to the top landing of the great old house.

There she skulked out of sight for a minute or so, in case anyone else might chance to run up. But no one did so. As it happened, there was a great eagerness to go down to assembly to-night, for it was expected that Miss Somerfield would have something to say about the resolutions which had been passed by the various Forms. Copies, of course, had been handed to her.

At last Cora felt that the moment had come. Although the bell was still ringing, she dare not delay any longer. If she should be late in taking her place in the muster, suspicion might afterwards fasten upon her.

Creeping forth from her lurking-place up there at the top of the house, she stole round to that landing on to which the tank cupboard opened.

She listened, and could smile to herself with the assurance that there was no risk of being surprised in the midst of her mischievous task. Her hand unlatched the cupboard door and drew it open, and then—click! she switched on a pocket electric torch.

The thin bright beam shone before her upon the still surface of the great tank. It was one that held hundreds of gallons, and there was the usual ball-tap to regulate the supply.

Quick as a flash Cora did the deed. With the light held in her left hand, she reached out her right arm—bared to the elbow—and grasped the copper ball that floated upon the water at the end of a bar.

A hard, savage wrench Cora gave that part of the appliance, with immediate results.

A moment more, and she had left the ball-tap slightly jammed and twisted, so that water was rushing in at the nozzle, although the tank was not needing any further supply.

One thing had yet to be done, however, before the mischief would be complete.

There was an overflow pipe, and Cora did not want to stop this with anything like a cork, or it would be obvious to everybody by-and-by that the tank had been tampered with.

What she did was to pick a piece of mortar from the lath and plaster above her head and press that into the overflow pipe.

Out went her light after that, and next second she had made her cautious exit from the tank cupboard, still hearing the water squirting into the tank even when she had closed the door.

A handkerchief dried her wet hand and wrist. She rolled down her sleeve, and was then ready to go down to her place in the assembly.

Her deed was done! Now to wait and see the disturbing effects of it!

#### Miss Somerfield Speaks Out.

CORA GRANDWAYS just escaped being the last girl to join the muster downstairs. Two or three other girls, belonging to a higher Form, came in a moment after her, as she was very relieved to notice.

She could sense the excitement that prevailed. There was none of the usual laughter and talk up to the last moment before "Silence!" was called. The whole school was silent already—impatient for the roll to be called, according to custom—so that the expected pronouncement by Miss Somerfield might be heard.



**A STARTLING STATEMENT.** The door flew open and Helen Craig burst into the study. "Girls, it's awful!" she announced. "Whatever shall we do? Miss Somerfield has resigned!"

Then the beloved principal of the school appeared with a brisk and graceful step. The hall was so small for so many girls, little space could be maintained in front of the first line for the headmistress and any of her colleagues to take their stand. Again, how different from Morcove School, where "Big Hall" had its dais, with tables and a rostrum!

But had Big Hall at Morcove ever rung with a louder, heartier cheer than suddenly went up to-night at Sawnton House? Surely not!

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" was the heartening cry which the Morcovians gave as they saw Miss Somerfield confronting them all at last. "Morecove for ever! Miss Somerfield for ever—hurrah!"

Then—sudden and profound silence, obtained by the merest gesture from the headmistress herself.

Even though she stood upon the same level as the scholars, instead of upon a dais, how dignified she looked! That was what Betty and others were thinking whilst they held their breath to listen.

"Girls of Morcove School—my own dear girls!" Miss Somerfield began, and even as soon as that emotion rushed upon her. A lump must have come into her throat, for she could not go on, and there would have been a painful pause, only the girls gave another cheer.

"Dear girls, all of you," the troubled headmistress was able to resume at last, with hard-won composure. "I have in my hand to-night copies of certain resolutions which have been passed by the various Forms. Although those resolutions vary in their wording, they all convey the same loyal and loving wish. They—you—Oh, my dear girls, you have been so good, so splendid, in this time of trouble!"

She looked down, hurriedly wiping her eyes.

"I am asked to understand from those resolutions—and I do understand, girls; they leave no shadow of doubt—that it is your wish to go on

putting up with conditions as they are, rather than be reinstated at Morcove on the condition that has been named."

"Hear, hear! Yes, wather! Ooo, yes, yes, we love you!" were the cries that came from Betty, Polly, Paula, and Naomer, along with similar expressions of loyalty from all the other girls. "You are not to leave us, Miss Somerfield. Please!"

"How sorry I am that I must leave—ah, girls, there is no need for me to say," the headmistress exclaimed emotionally. "For leave you I must. I—"

"No, no! No!"

"Yes, girls," she answered their entreating cries, with wonderful fortitude. "Nothing in all my life has ever given me greater joy than these resolutions of yours have conferred upon me this evening. I know you mean every word. I know that it is going to grieve you that I must resign. Yet resign I must."

"No, no!" they protested again. "We can't let you! The school won't be the same without you!"

"When you say such things, my dear girls—oh, it is a great temptation for me to abandon all idea of resigning," was her husky response, when silence had fallen again. "But I have had it made so clear to me, as you know; I am the stumbling block to your going back to the dear old school of which you have been dispossessed. My resignation is all that is demanded—"

"All!" Polly could not help shouting out passionately. "It is a jolly sight too much!"

"Hear, hear—"

"Yes, wather! Hooway! Geals—"

"Sh—sh!" entreated some of the Form-mistresses, and once more the scholars hushed down.

"That the stipulation is an unfair one, a cruel one, I need not say," the headmistress went on distressfully. "But from the very first hour when this trouble cropped up, our position has been a helpless one. The law itself can give us no redress. Not because the law is at fault, but because—"

"They are a lot of villains, those Lupinas!" some girl in the Sixth Form exclaimed scornfully. "Shame on them!"

"Shame—yes, shame!" the angry cry was taken up. "Shame!"

"They are people who do not play the game—that is all I am going to say about them," the headmistress spoke on sadly. "They say outright that when I resign, then you girls can have back the schoolhouse and playing-fields, not before. The governors have been very good to me. They have begged me not to resign—"

"Then don't resign, Miss Somerfield!" a score of the girls chorused. "We can stick it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"That you are willing to put up with things as they are, I know full well, and I admire and love you all the more for it," Miss Somerfield said. "But all the years I have been the principal of this school, I have taught the rule: others before self. I am not going to preach one thing and practise another. I see it as a duty—a sad and painful duty, yet one that I must not shirk. I shall see the governors again, and tell them—my resignation holds good!"

A sort of despairing sigh from all the girls was the first sound that came after Miss Somerfield's firm declaration. Then a murmur of entreaties arose, and gathered force, quickly becoming a clamour of beseeching cries.

"No, don't resign—don't! Miss Somerfield, please! We girls want you—you!"

"Once again, and for the last time," was the

steadily answer to all this, "I must resign, girls. Already you have been subjected to such hardship, that I—"

And there, with dramatic suddenness, this solemn scene was interrupted.

One of the maids had come rushing in, too excited to stand on ceremony. She spoke agitatedly to the first mistress she met—it chanced to be Miss Redgrave—and that young lady repeated the announcement in a dismayed tone.

"Miss Somerfield, I am told that a perfect flood of water is spreading over the top landing! We look like being flooded out unless something can be done at once!"

The scholars heard, and their comments were at once half-hilarious and half-serious.

"Water—flooding the place out! Good gracious—"

"Oh dear!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped Paula. "Is it that tank again, I wonder? You remember, geals—the tank upstairs where I—"

But Paula, if she had said more, would have been without a listener.

The mustered girls had broken ranks. Betty & Co. were but a few of the scholars who went rushing away to view the astounding sight—if they could get near enough to see it—and to do their best in this sudden great emergency.

As for Cora Grandways, she hardly knew how to keep a straight face as she exulted over this bit of trouble that her crafty hand had brought about!

#### Simply Too Awful.

"OH, I say! Oh, good gracious—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But how awful! Floods of it!"

"Flood isn't the word for it, Polly dear."

"Wather not, bai Jove! Geals, pway be careful! It's wushing awound in towntwits!"

The chums had kept together in the general rush to get upstairs and see what was happening. Now, like all the rest of the girls who packed the upper flights of stairs and the landings, they were having to give way, step by step, because of the water that was coming from higher up.

Of all the strange experiences with which Betty & Co. had met at various times, this was surely the oddest—and the most uncomfortable!

The top landing was known to be completely under water. The very stairs were fast becoming cataracts! Nor was the flood going to behave itself, so to speak, by merely running downstairs without invading any of the rooms below.

The cry suddenly went up that water was pouring down through the cracked ceiling of one of the makeshift dormitories. It was a room that was just under the tank-chamber—one of the Fourth-Form bed-rooms, alas! Thither Betty & Co. rushed, and a staggered group they made at the doorway, gazing in upon the appalling scene.

Drip, splash—drip, drip, splash! fell the water that was copiously leaking through the old and cracked ceiling. Sodden plaster came down in portions that fell crash to the floor, or else dropped plop! upon some bed or other.

The chums' beds! No wonder the poor girls stood aghast. This was worse, far worse, than a wet night under canvas.

"Yes, wather!" groaned Paula. "Ah, deah! Oh, healp, whatever shall we do, geals? Wuined—all our beds! Dwenched thwough, you know."

"He, he, he! What a jape!" Naomer shrieked, doing a caper. And then the others simply had to laugh. But Paula groaned again.

"Dweadful—dweadful! This ends it, geals, as

wegards living at Sawnton House! I mean to say, you know, how can we, what? No west for one's weavy head to-night! Look at my night-dwess case—drowned!"

"A case of rolling up on the floor somewhere, by and by, that's certain," Betty predicted, with a glum smile. "Never mind! Stick it, girls!"

"Hurrah, yes!" Polly agreed heartily. "Poor old Sawnton House, it is a place, but we'll not let a thing like this damp our spirits."

"Damp our spiwits, bai Jove!" echoed Paula tragically. "I should say it's going to drown them!"

"Oh, misery—"

"Who's a misewy?" squealed Paula. "I merely remark that this is beyond a joke, geals. I don't gwumble as a wule—oh, no. But look at it—look at it, you know!"

Paula herself was quite content to look at it. Not so Betty and Polly and the rest. With everybody crying out that something must be done to tackle the flood at its source, the girls got a fresh glimpse of the flooded stairs. Then two of them, at least, showed their resourcefulness.

"Here goes!" said Betty, suddenly plumping down on an as yet unflooded part of the landing, to take off her shoes and stockings. "I'm going up!"

"Same here!" chuckled Polly, following suit.

A few seconds later, peals of laughter mingled with cries of "Bravo, Betty—bravo, Polly!" as those two came pressing through the retreating crowd in their bare feet.

Gaily the resourceful pair paddled upstairs to the top landing. The door of the tank-chamber



#### CARRIED WITH ENTHUSIASM!

"I move the resolution that Miss Somerfield should continue as Head!" cried Betty. Instantly a dozen girls seconded the resolution, and a forest of hands shot into the air. Only Cora Grandways refrained!



was slightly ajar, for the flow of water had washed it open. They drew it quite wide, and then paddled to the very edge of the overflowing tank.

"The overflow pipe—that must have got choked, for one thing," Betty reasoned. "Where is it, then?"

"I've got hold of the ball tap—it's jammed down!" Polly cried out, above the noisy plop and splash of the water. "That's strange, Betty!"

"It may be worn out, Polly. The house is such an old— Ah, here we are!" Betty broke off joyfully as she came upon the "overflow" pipe. "Something stopping it up, but— That's better—I've done it!"

She quickly backed out of the tank-chamber to examine what she had pulled away from the overflow pipe. It was a piece of mortar, and it puzzled her greatly to know how a thing like that had got jammed into the pipe.

Then Polly, with a triumphant "Hurrah!" emerged from the tank-chamber. She had wriggled the poised ball about until it worked again, and now, therefore, no more water was flowing in.

"All serene!" the girls were happy to be able to cry as they went scampering down in their bare feet through the shallow flood. "There won't be any more after this."

"As if this isn't enough already!" some of the girls could not help answering, with rueful laughs. "Goodness, what a state the place is in!"

Even amongst the scholars, there were many who could hardly go on treating the catastrophe as a joke. As for the mistresses, they were very seriously alarmed.

Whilst Betty & Co. had been tackling the trouble at its source—a bit of presence of mind for which they were to be warmly thanked by Miss Somerfield later on—other girls had set about catching the water in basins, and mopping it up with sponges and towels.

All the same, much of the upper part of the makeshift schoolhouse was bound to remain more than damp. And there was that Fourth-Form bed-room—utterly untenable now!

Cora, of course, was secretly rejoicing. What delighted her all the more was the fact that the ramshackle state of the house was blamed for what had happened. It was being freely said that there would be these little calamities as long as the place was made to do duty for a schoolhouse, after being empty for years.

"And then, girls, you talk of carrying on still!" was Miss Somerfield's own sorrowful comment on it all, as she mingled with them when the excitement was subsiding. "Ah, I tell you it will never do! You need to be back at Morcove, and it is for me to get you reinstated at the dear old school."

That night Betty and her chums had to "shake down" as best they could in more makeshift quarters than ever. Ethel Courtway and other seniors offered to give up their cramped quarters to the girls who had been swamped out of their so-called "dorm." But the inseparables begged to be allowed to "carry on," Paula resigning herself as cheerfully as ever to a couple of blankets spread upon the floor.

That left Cora Grandways raging with anger against the always hated band of chums. She could never hope to hear them start complaining. But for them to put up with this sort of thing so cheerfully—it was such a lead to the rest!

Still, she clung to the belief that a few more upsets would prove too much for some of the girls,

in spite of all the attempts of stout-hearted ones to get them to "stick it."

Nor did she fail, next day, to let Jose Lupina and that girl's sister, Zilla, know, what she had done!

#### Paying Out Polly.

THE Lupina girls were out and about in the beautiful grounds of Morcove School, when, a little after midday, they heard a motorcycle pull up outside the gates. It was Cora Grandways, and she was making signs from the road that she wished to speak with them.

"I mustn't stop," she began, the instant they joined her in the roadway. "It's too risky at this time of day. But there was just something I wanted you to know about, you two. You'll laugh when you hear it!"

And then, still astride the saddle of her motorcycle, the girl who was the traitress in the school gleefully told Jose and Zilla about the flood at Sawnton House.

The South American girls went quite wild with delight. Ivory teeth were displayed in all their loveliness by their pretty owners. There were soft laughs and shruggings of narrow shoulders, and at one moment the younger girl looked like throwing her arms about Cora and kissing her.

"But I really must not stay now," Cora deplored, whilst she sat ready to kick-off the engine. "If I can get to see you soon, I will—trust me!"

"We do trust you, yes," Jose Lupina said, with all the vehemence of her southern nature. "We see that you are the one to help us. Cora, come to us this evening—yes?"

"This evening! I don't know—I'll try; but—"

"Yes—yes!" Zilla urged, clapping a hand affectionately upon Cora's shoulder as that girl started the engine. "We shall make you so welcome, if you come! Good-bye, but for only ze present, you hear?"

Cora nodded, and then rode off back to Sawnton House.

She was very elated at this friendship she had struck up with the Lupina girls. The very sort for her—bold, brilliant girls, fond of dress and of a cigarette on the quiet, and finding a delight in mischief. She only wished they could become Morcove scholars, but that was too much to expect. If ever they did, what fine cronies they would make!

Jose and Zilla, for their part, were finding in Cora Grandways the only British girl they had ever really liked. They had no use for girls who were fond of sport and of playing the game. Even if Manuel Lupina and his wife had not been urging on the two daughters to play an active part in the present campaign, Jose and Zilla would have gloried in being at warfare with the Morcovians.

Nor was it long after Cora had departed that the two South American girls had a sudden grand chance of indulging their spite against one Morcove scholar—the very one against whom they had the biggest grudge!

Polly Linton was riding by on a push-bike, when suddenly she found herself literally ambushed by the couple. They darted out from a hiding-place close to the boundary wall of the old school, and simply pulled her off the machine.

"Caught you, yes—ha, ha!" Zilla Lupina exulted as she and her bigger sister together seized hold of the solitary Morcovian. "And you—you are the girl who smack my face that time, I think? Very well, I not forget, you see!"

"In our country we never forget or forgive!" Jose said harshly, keeping a fierce and tight hold upon Polly.

Indignantly that girl was struggling; but it was a case of two to one, and she was unable to struggle free. With unstrained violence, the Lupina girls hustled her up a side lane, where there was a way into the grounds of the old school. The bicycle was left just where Polly had been pulled off it, beside the road, whilst the girl herself was hustled towards the old schoolhouse by her gloating captors.

"We think you would like to see the old school again—yes?" mocked Zilla. "Very well, we shall show you—oh, yes! Ha, ha!"

"You pair of wretches, let me go!" Polly panted, making another spirited, but futile, struggle. "I have to go to the railway-station on an important errand. You shan't treat me like this!"

"Is there anyone to stop us? No!" chuckled Jose. "You have no friends with you, and we can do with you as we please!"

"So!" Zilla said, beating Polly about the shoulders. "And so!" as she smacked her across the face. "Come on, and have a look at the study you used to be in!"

And, in spite of Polly's undiminished resistance, she was simply haled indoors and forced to go upstairs.

Nor was the least part of her humiliation that which came of seeing the dear old schoolhouse in such a changed and spoilt state.

Bully her as much as they might, these hateful girls would never bring a tear to her eyes. But she felt how easily she could have wept now, to find Morcove School like this.

The old familiar school, yet every bit of it changed—ruined! In so short a while, it was almost incredible the amount of harm the place had suffered. Had malicious damage been done to it wilfully? She was forced to believe that this was so. Here and there the handsome wallpapers had been scribbled over, or even peeled off in strips. Electric-light shades had been smashed, and the fragments of glass were still waiting to be swept up.

These things she noticed whilst she was being hustled upstairs. Worse awaited her when at last her relentless captors had pushed her before them down the old familiar Fourth Form corridor to the door of Study 12.

"Your study, I think?" grinned Zilla, throwing the door wide. "Look, then, by all means! We have the greatest pleasure in showing you. Ha, ha!"

The old study once again, bare and ruinous!

Here, too, the walls were scribbled over, and even the window had been smashed. Sheer agony it was for poor Polly Linton to be held fast by the girls and forced to gaze in upon the forlorn room that used to be hers and Betty's.

Study 12—in the old days, how bright and comfy and full of jollity always! And now—this!

It seemed to symbolise the havoc and ruin which the Lupinas had done to the entire school in their lust for revenge.

"You see?" Jose said, with a stern malice that was different from Zilla's mirthful savagery. "You can go to your friends, then, and tell them what you have seen!"

"But before you go——" laughed Zilla, and with the word she started shaking Polly furiously.

In a few moments the poor girl was reeling with giddiness, for her tormentors spun her round and round, shrieking with laughter as they did so.

Then Zilla snatched off the victim's school hat, and took a drop kick with it, sending it up the passage.

"Morcove School—there is no more Morcove School!" was her jeering comment on the badge that the hat bore. "Morcove School is finished!"

The tormented girl was free now, but so dazed and giddy that she could not instantly walk away. She rolled weakly against the wall, with her tormentors still mocking at her.

"Well, go on out of this!" Jose bade her fiercely. "We do not want any silly Morcove girls here, thank you! Take your hat and go!"

Polly was getting her breath back, and at the same time she was making up her mind what to do. They had had the best of it so far, but the laugh should not be quite on their side—not if she knew it!

There they stood, full of pride and mockery, this handsome, lavishly dressed pair, with their excessively fine looks. All that was honest British girlhood rose up in anger against them, and suddenly—

Smack—smack!

Across the face of either girl she struck an open-handed slap, then fled, picking up her hat as she ran.

With the Lupina girls giving chase, mad at the tit-for-tat which she had dealt them, down through the old schoolhouse Polly dashed. They did not overtake her in the house, and once outside the place she easily left them farther and farther behind. The girl who had often won races on Sports Day was not going to let a couple like that overtake her!

A minute more, and she was on her bicycle, pedalling as hard as she could go for the station. Dolly Delane was expected to-day, and Polly's errand was to find out how the trains were now running, for Miss Redgrave had an idea there were some alterations.

From what Polly found out by inquiries of the station-master, the changes were such as might very easily hinder Dolly's arrival. She had a long way to come, with many changes, and the connections looked like being awkward ones.

Sure enough, after tea that day a telegram arrived at Sawnton House from the girl who was on her way. It said that she had got as far as Exeter, and could not get to Morcove Road much before seven-thirty.

Miss Redgrave came to Betty & Co., in their makeshift study, with the telegram. She intended to go in a car to the station to meet Dolly, and she thought perhaps a couple of the girls might like to go with her.

"There won't be room for more than two of you, because of Dolly and her luggage, coming back," she said. "But, Betty, if you and Polly like to come——"

"Like to come!" was Betty's delighted exclamation. "When it's Dolly, too, we are meeting—our own old Dolly!"

"I'd go to meet Doll at the station," declared Polly, "if I had to walk all the way!"

So, in the twilight, they set off from Sawnton House, along with their chummy mistress, little dreaming how even this apparently simple journey was to have such a fateful bearing upon the feud between Morcove School and its enemies!

## Cora Nearly Caught.

CORA GRANDWAYS, out for an evening run on the famous "combination," had no idea that a car containing Miss Redgrave and Betty and Polly was coming after her, along the road from Sawnton House.

Cora had wheedled permission from the headmistress to be allowed to run into Barncombe.

It was rather late in the evening, but Cora was known to be such a clever driver of the motor-cycle, and the machine always made such a mere nothing of a ten-mile run, that the favour had been granted.

And how was Cora intending to repay that favour? How else, except in the most unkind, treacherous way? Barncombe was not to be her goal this evening—oh, dear, no! Her journey was to end miles short of the quaint old Devonshire town—at the gates of Morcove School!

Joyfully she was astride the saddle, keeping the outfit going at a steady eighteen miles an hour. Uphill and downhill, all alike to Cora, the fly-away possessor of this expensive machine, which her dotting father had bought for her some time back. In a few minutes she would be at the old school, enjoying a chat with her new-found friends, and this was a prospect that pleased her mightily.

What a sense of malicious delight it gave her, too, when she pulled up at the gates of Morcove, to see that offensive placard still advertising the famous schoolhouse as being for sale!

The gates were closed, but not locked. Standing them wide open, she remounted her machine, and drove it gaily up the drive, giving a skittish blare of the motor-horn, to let the Lupina girls know that she was arriving.

Better if she had not indulged in that noisy announcement!

For this was the very moment when Miss Redgrave and the two girls were coming quietly along the road from Sawnton House in the school car.

"Hark!" Polly suddenly exclaimed, rearing her head to listen. "Surely that is Cora Grandways' motor-horn I can hear? I know its note so well."

"It is quite likely Cora's," Miss Redgrave assented unconcernedly. "I know that Cora begged a pass from Miss Somerfield for a run into Barncombe. She must be just a little in advance of us now."

A few moments more, however, and evidence of a very startling nature had come under the notice of the occupants of the car. In the act of running quietly past the gates of the old school, Miss Redgrave suddenly called upon the driver to stop.

"Those gates are open, girls!"

"Yes," Betty said tensely, "and there are wheel tracks which look very much like those Cora's tyres make! Surely, though—"

"I declare I heard the noise of a motor-cycle just before the engine was shut off!" Polly exclaimed excitedly. "Up yonder at the old schoolhouse! But what does it mean? Cora a visitor there?"

"That's why we are going to get down and investigate," Miss Redgrave said, very gravely. "What right has Cora, or any other girl, to have dealings with those Lupina people?"

The youthful mistress gave a softly spoken order to the chauffeur. He was to go on to the way-side railway-station, and pick up Dolly Delane and her luggage, and then run her back to this spot. By the time he returned with his passenger Miss Redgrave and her two girls would doubtless be ready to go along back to Sawnton House.

Quietly the school car purred on again, whilst Miss Redgrave and her scholar companions

instantly made their way very warily into the grounds. Very cautiously the three advanced, avoiding the main drive, and wending towards the schoolhouse by way of shrubby paths.

At the end of one such leafy alleyway they had the facade of the house exposed to view. In one ground-floor window at least, a light was showing, and they wondered—was Cora in there, with the Lupina girls?

Still going on very cautiously, Miss Redgrave looked round to make a gesture of warning to her companions.

"Sh!"

"I see the motor-cycle!" Polly whispered fiercely. "Oh, how disgraceful, shameful, that Cora should be up to a thing like this!"

Meanwhile, in that ground-floor room of the schoolhouse, Cora was making herself quite at home, at the invitation of the two Lupina girls. Now that she was lounging back in an armchair, they passed her the cigarettes, and she did not hesitate to light up.

"Thanks, Jose!" she said, with her wide grin, after being given a light. "I do like coming here to be with you!"

"We would like you to stay a long while, and have dinner presently," Zilla smiled. "Our parents are so pleased to know that there is one girl at least, belonging to Morcove, who is on our side. We have told them how you mean to—"

"Zilla, sh!" was the excited exclamation that suddenly interrupted the younger sister.

Jose had gone to the window, to take a peep at the night, and now she was looking round dismayedly.

"There are some people outside who belong to Sawnton House! A mistress and two girls!"

"What!" Cora gasped, bounding up from her chair. "My goodness, then they have followed me here! Or at least— Oh, in any case they know I am here! My motor-cycle is at the porch!"

"Yes!"

"Then what shall I do?" she panted, casting away her cigarette. "I ought not to be here, of course. They—they'll say it's treachery!"

Agitatedly she darted to the window, and took a very wary peep round the edge of the blind.

"Miss Redgrave, Polly, and Betty!" she named the three, under her breath. "Of course, it would be those three, dash them! And now I'll be expelled!"

"Expelled? What is that?" asked Zilla blankly.

"Thrown out of the school!" Cora said hoarsely.

"They have been wanting to find an excuse for doing it, and now they've got it. They'll report this, and then— Wait, though! Ah, I know!"

And she brought her hands together with a little clap.

"It's all right; I can beat them, after all!" she said excitedly. "I'll pretend the bike broke down. You two come to the front door with me now—quick, before they knock!"

The Lupina girls grinned and nodded, showing how they appreciated Cora's quick-mindedness. In a brace of seconds they were seeing her out by the front door, Cora talking in a manner calculated to deceive Miss Redgrave and the Study 12 couple.

"I am much obliged to you for letting me leave the outfit here for the night," was her loud remark. "I will come over to-morrow to see if I can get the engine to go again. I can't think what— Hallo! Why, here is Miss Redgrave and two of the girls!"

"Good-night!" Jose and Zilla said, none too

amiably, to deceive the intruders further. "We do not mind the machine being left here, as a favour."

Then they closed the front door, leaving Cora to step away from the porch to meet the Sawnton House trio.

"Cora," Miss Redgrave began sternly, "this requires an explanation, your being here! How can any girl with a regard for the school and its headmistress have dealings with the very people who have turned us out of Morcove?"

"Oh, but, Miss Redgrave—"  
"You pleaded that you wished to run into Barncombe, and then you rode direct to this place, to see the Lupina girls!"

"Not at all!" Cora answered blandly. "I was on the way to Barncombe, when the engine broke down. I couldn't go any farther. The most I could do was to push the thing out of gear, up the drive to the schoolhouse. I have asked permission to leave the outfit here for the night."

"That is the truth, Cora?"

at heart she was happy enough. They might suspect what they liked. How could they prove it?

In the moonlight, as they all stood waiting for the car to come along and pick them up, her eyes glistened as they regarded Betty and Polly, coldly standing apart from her.

It was one of those moments when Cora Grandways felt all her undying hatred of those two girls surging up in her. As Betty gave her a glance at last, the ill-natured girl snapped resentfully:

"Well, who are you looking at?"

The answer was swift and to the point.

"I am looking," said Betty steadily, "at the girl who, we now know, wrote those hateful words on the wall at Sawnton House."

"Yes, Cora," Polly spoke fiercely, yet without letting Miss Redgrave hear. "It was you—you who chalked on the wall: 'The headmistress must go!'"

"Can you prove it?" sneered Cora.



**SOME MYSTERY HERE!** As Miss Redgrave and the girls came up to the house they could see that a light was showing in one ground floor window. Miss Redgrave made a gesture of warning to her companions.

"Yes, Miss Redgrave."  
"Then how was it that we heard the engine working when you were at the top of this drive, if you say that the engine had broken down?"

"I— It worked again for a few seconds," Cora hastily got out plausibly. "Then it stopped again. If you don't believe me, I will prove to you that the engine won't go now."

There was an edge as sharp as steel to Miss Redgrave's voice as she answered:

"You know more about the engine than any of us, Cora. You can make it prove anything, I have no doubt. Come with us now, and we must find room for you in the car back to Sawnton House."

Cora gave one of her sharp and violent shrugs, as if to say: "Oh, all right! If you don't believe me, don't!" She was a good hand at posing as the injured innocent. Sullenly she dawdled behind the others during the walk down the drive. But

And again she was answered with a steadiness that told upon even her audacious nature.

"We shall prove everything in the end!" Betty declared sternly. "And then—we know who will go from the school, Cora Grandways! Not the headmistress, but—you!"

Cora grinned, but at heart she was feeling just a little afraid—afraid, once again, of that fine spirit in Betty & Co. which had so often, in the past, brought all her malicious scheming to nought!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

So Betty and Polly now have their suspicions confirmed, and they know that Cora Grandways is a friend of the enemies of Morcove School. But what can Betty & Co. do, in view of Miss Somerfield's decision to resign? You should place an order now for next week's issue, so as not to miss the next long complete tale, which is entitled: "When the School Stood at Bay!"



# COOKERY HINTS

## A Delicious Fruit Gingerbread.

WHEN May and I ask a few chums home to tea, of course we're anxious to give them a nice tea, but buying is terribly expensive.

So we were delighted when Miss Grill gave us her recipe for a fruit gingerbread which is delicious and quite cheap, too.

### Fruit Gingerbread.

*Required.*—Eight ounces self-raising flour, two ounces margarine, one ounce brown sugar, one ounce and a half treacle, half ounce ground ginger, quarter teaspoonful bi-carbonate of soda, one egg, one ounce seedless raisins, half ounce candied peel, and a little cold milk.

First, we found and weighed the ingredients and placed them on the kitchen table in readiness. Next, we lined a medium-sized Yorkshire pudding tin—sides and bottom with greased paper—also lighted the gas in the oven.

We were then quite ready to commence mixing the cake.

Whilst I creamed the margarine and sugar—stirring them together with a wooden spoon until

they looked like cream—May put the flour, raisins, ground ginger, and peel (cut in slices) on a large plate and mixed them well together.

Having creamed the margarine and sugar, I beat up the egg and mixed the three ingredients together. May added her dry ingredients to the moist ones, whilst I stirred with the wooden spoon.

The bi-carbonate of soda and treacle were next added to the cake mixture. The soda was put in a basin, three tablespoonfuls of cold milk added, and the mixture stirred until the soda was dissolved. On the top of this mixture we poured the treacle, and then quickly added it to the other ingredients, stirring briskly the while.

### Baking the Gingerbread.

The mixture was then quickly turned into the tin, and the cake baked in a quick oven for fifteen minutes. For the first five minutes we stood the cake on the top shelf in the oven—the hottest part—and when it had risen and slightly browned, moved it to the middle shelf, and for the last five minutes to the bottom shelf.

After the cake was baked, we removed it from the tin, tore the papers off and stood the cake on a wire stand to cool.

Before placing the cake on the tea table, we sprinkled a little white sugar over the top, which gave it a nice, finished appearance.

We were surprised when the cake cut up into eight fair-sized pieces!

DOLLY HOPE.



### The Bird Lovers' Badge.

FOR the Bird Lovers' Badge, Guides are requested to state what they know about fifteen wild birds which they have personally studied in the open. Here, for instance, are a few particulars about the barn owl which might be useful to those who are seeking to win this badge.

Owls are classed as nocturnal birds. There are at least six different varieties, but the best known are the barn owl and tawny owl. The barn owl is sometimes called the white owl, or church owl.

They usually awaken about dusk, and remain awake the greater part of the night, during which they make weird hootings and screeches.

The plumage of this bird is a tawny-yellow on the wings, which are also mottled grey and white. Sometimes the markings are really beautiful. The front part of the body is white, and its short legs are covered with feathers.

The owl is a great friend to the farmer, for, with its strong hooked beak, it catches mice and rats, which sometimes infest barns and out-buildings, and do much damage to stores. Owls, therefore, live in barns and old sheds, because they can get their food easily here, although they like wooded country, and are often to be found living in holes of old trees. Their eggs, which vary from four to six, are white, and are laid in old walls, barns, or trees.

The tawny owl has all the characteristics of the

barn owl. It has the same habits. The only difference is in its appearance. It is brown in varying tints, sometimes intermingled with grey and red-brown hues.

### Judging Sheep and Cattle.

THERE is a saying that you can never learn too much. Most Guides will agree with me on that point. Little bits of information gleaned from here and there will help you in most unexpected ways.

If you were asked to judge if a herd of cattle were in good health or not, perhaps you would think this a difficult task set you. Here are some points worth remembering.

Healthy cattle move slowly, not briskly, across a meadow, and do not drag their feet. If an animal is sick, it will cower under a tree close to the hedgerow and keep apart from the herd. You will always find, too, that a sick animal, whether belonging to a herd of cattle or wild animals, is put "in Coventry" by the healthy members of the herd.

When you see a herd peacefully grazing it is a good sign to judge by. If they are disturbed, healthy animals stretch themselves when they get up for a few moments, and then move off down the meadow.

When judging an ox, look and see whether it has a level, straight back, and that none of its bones seem to stick out. The coat should be smooth and glossy. Where there is an unhealthy look about the skin, it is called "staring" by farmers and cattle-breeders. Take note, also, of the eyes. They should be bright, and the muzzle, or nose, should be moist and cool, not watery or hot to the touch.

Such little signs as these point to whether the cattle you are judging are fine, healthy specimens.