

EVERY SCHOOLGIRL LOVES—

The Schoolgirls' Own 2^d



**IN HIDING FROM
HER CHUMS!**

(A dramatic moment from the
long complete Morcove story
inside.)

A Powerful Complete Story of the Girls of Morcove School, featuring Grace Garfield.



By MARJORIE STANTON.

Grace Turns Back!

A MILE away across the nightbound moorland, lights were shining out brightly in the darkness. They were the lights of Morcove School.

With a bit of luggage dropped down beside her Grace Garfield stood all alone in this desolate spot, looking back.

Her own old school—there it was, and this was the hour when every study held a couple or so of happy-hearted scholars. The school from which she herself had fled in guilty shame as soon as darkness fell!

"I wonder if they have found out by now?" she was thinking mournfully. "I think they must have done so. Dolly Delano must have found that letter which I left behind in the study when she went in to start prep. She would tell the others at once. Besides—"

That farewell note to Dolly Delane had not been the only one this runaway girl had left behind her. So at this moment she could picture her head-mistress thrown into great alarm, perhaps an hour ago, by the letter found in her private room.

Certain it was, at any rate, that the alarm had already gone up. For all Grace could tell, even now search-parties might have started out in quest of her, the runaway, whilst the police in Barncombe town were also getting busy. And yet here she stood, tragically hesitant, when her intention had been to put mile after mile between herself and the school.

"After all, had I better do it?" she quavered miserably, still gazing across the moorland. "I have money in my pockets and perhaps I could get a situation somewhere. But wasn't it more cowardly than ever for me to run away like this? Won't they think even worse of me for it?"

These were wiser thoughts than had been Grace Garfield's a few hours ago, when she rashly made up her mind to run away.

Then her feeling had been that, although the time had come when she must make a great confession, she simply could not own up in front of others. The confession must be one that would only become known after she had run away from the school.

But now her state of mind was fast changing.

She was realising the cowardice of running away.

PAYING FOR HER DECEIT!

At last Grace Garfield's guilty secret is out, and the whole school knows how she has been deceiving the girl who is her best friend. You will love this fine story of how she made atonement for her deceit.

Only now, when the rash act was committed, did she see that the cowardly flight was likely to spoil the good effect of her confession.

It had cost her such a tremendous effort to confess at last. Why then—why had she been so foolish as not to make the extra effort which remaining at the school had demanded?

What a pity it was! A thousand pities, and she knew it now. She should have stayed to face it out. The stern condemnation of her headmistress, the bitter reproaches that were to be expected from the victim of her wrongdoing, the contempt of all the other girls—to have endured all this would indeed have been doing something to restore her own lost sense of self-respect.

"Yes—oh, I can see," she sighed aloud to herself. "It was a mistake! I can never believe that anyone will have a scrap of pity for me now, but I will go back at once. Yes, I will go back—I must!"

Tears suddenly glistened along her lashes at the decision, but she blinked them away and threw back her head.

Taking up her bit of luggage, she turned back along the dark footpath by which she had come thus far, after her hour or so in hiding. The distant lights of the schoolhouse, always shining out so cheerily, seemed to welcome her on.

In her heart something whispered that she was doing a really fine thing at last—better by far than any half-measures! And so she found her pace quickening, a sudden eagerness seizing her.

Suddenly a different kind of light glimmered through the darkness. It was the wavering light of a lantern, only a short distance away. And—hark! Voices were sounding, the murmur of several girls talking excitedly.

Grace stopped dead.

A search-party! Was there any doubt that here were some of her own schoolfellows, forming one of perhaps several parties that had been sent out, under proper control, by the head-mistress?

After the first throb of excitement, the impulse seized Grace to rush on, letting her loud cries tell the searchers that their quest was at an end.

Then it flashed upon her that if she ran to them like that it might be thought afterwards that she had only disclosed herself because she had felt certain of being tracked down. In that case she

would be in the shameful position of a runaway who had been forced to give herself up.

Realising in what a false light this would show her, she instantly turned aside from the path along which the searchers were coming. The rough moorland offered any amount of cover.

She had only to run quickly and silently for a few yards, and then a clump of gorse bushes loomed before her in the darkness. In a flash she dodged behind the bushes, then stood perfectly still.

Even as she took her stand in that hiding-place she saw the lantern-light marking the swift progress of the search-party along the moorland path. Some of the voices became faintly audible—just enough for her to recognise them.

Betty & Co.! It was so. These were no other than the chums of Study 12, and amongst them—Dolly DeLane!

But, although her Form-mates were now close at hand, Grace could not catch any of the remarks that were passing. She was much too far away for that. She could only surmise that the anxious murmuring concerned this quest of her, the runaway.

Rapidly the batch of girls went by, and the lantern-light became obscured to the hidden scholar by intervening bushes. She waited until almost complete silence prevailed, then crept from behind the clump of bushes, to regain the path.

No sooner was that path reached than she broke into a run, feeling more eager than ever to get back to the school and face things out. That the girls would remain out much longer she could not believe. Probably they had only been given permission to go across the moor as far as a certain wayside cottage, there to ask if a girl had passed that way since nightfall.

Such was her eager haste, her steps became clumsy ones in the deep darkness, and perhaps it was her own stumbling rush along the path that kept her from hearing anyone else. The first she knew of them being other searchers, coming after that first batch, was when she breathlessly ran round a twist in the path, and found two more girls right in front of her.

Grace stopped dead. So did they. Then one of them switched on a torch, giving a triumphant cry as the brilliant ray flashed full upon the runaway.

"Why, here she is—here is Grace!"

It was, of all girls, Cora Grandways who voiced the exultant cry. With her was Judith Grandways, her younger sister.

Grace steadied her breathing and spoke calmly enough:

"Yes, here I am. And it's all right, you two. I am going back—"

"Oh, are you?" sniggered Cora. "Now you are caught, I dare say!"

"You needn't talk like that!" protested Grace. "I was on my way back to the school, before I ran into you like this."

"Were you really? Sort of had enough of it, have you? Changed your mind, eh?"

"Yes, I have changed my mind. I have come to my senses. I know now that it was a useless, mad thing to do—running away as I did, instead of—"

"Well, have you seen any other girls in the last few minutes?" interrupted Cora impatiently. "Judy and I have been told by Miss Redgrave to get after them and warn them not, on any account, to go farther than the cottage."

"Some girls went by without seeing me," Grace admitted candidly. "I think they were the Study 12 girls—"

"And you never showed yourself?"

"No; I had a reason, and I felt sure it would not make much difference to them. I shan't say any more!" Grace declared, feeling exasperated by Cora's enjoyment of the whole upset. "I am going straight on now to the school."

"Wish you luck!" jeered Cora, whilst Judith, by nature so very different from the elder sister, remained silent and sorrowful. "You're going to get it, my girl!"

As Grace started to hurry on again, she heard Cora say a domineering "Come on, Judy!" Evidently the latter girl was inclined to stand still, stricken with dismayed thoughts of the stern punishment in store for the runaway. Punishment, so Grace herself believed, that would be summed up in the one dread word—expulsion!

"But I don't care—I mean, I am not going to let the fear of expulsion keep me from going back!" she panted to herself, with all the pluck that had come of true repentance. "Let them turn me out of the school! It will be what I deserve, I know. But first they shall see that, after all, I had the courage to face it out!"

With a vividness that gave her heart for the coming ordeal, she saw how this voluntary surrender, as it might be called, would do something towards redeeming her in the eyes of all. As she sped on, with but a short way to go now before she reached the roadway, she was thinking of her parents.

"Dad and mother—they'll not be quite so ashamed of me!" was her poignant thought. "They'll know it cost me some pluck to go back and stand the racket. And perhaps some of the girls will even—"

"Stop! Who is that?" was the sudden ringing cry that reached her in the darkness. "Is that you, Grace Garfield?"



A FRIENDLY RECEPTION. Dolly put an arm about Grace as though nothing had happened as she opened the door of No. 12 study. "Girls, here's Grace back again!" she cried, and they welcomed her with smiling faces.

At the same instant, and for the second time that night, an electric torch flashed out. Once again Grace Garfield stood in the full glare of the brilliant ray, white-faced and wide-eyed.

The roadway was just here, and the torch was held by one of several persons grouped upon the highway, just where the moorland path joined it.

Huskily Grace answered the challenging cry—one that had come from her own Form-mistress. For it was Miss Redgrave who held the torch, two or three seniors clustering near her.

"Yes, Miss Redgrave; I am—I have come back!"

"Grace! Oh, how glad I am of this!" was Miss Redgrave's fervent exclamation, as she rushed towards the runaway. "Come along back to the school! Come with me—"

"I want to!" was the half-sobbing cry that broke from unhappy Grace. "It was wrong of me—cowardly—to run away. I know it now. I should have stayed to face things out. I want to do that, Miss Redgrave—yes, stand my punishment back!"

"For running away?"

"For everything!" the girl cried out, in great anguish. "For the way I cheated Dolly Delane by keeping that huge sum of money which should have gone to her! For not owning up immediately I found out that I had been rewarded by mistake! It was all so wrong of me, and I made it worse by being a coward. But now—"

"That's enough, Grace. Say no more—steady! How you tremble!" the Form-mistress exclaimed in alarm, as she took hold of the runaway. "You are upset, and no wonder. But—"

"Oh, take me back! Let me face it out—everything!"

And with that last broken cry of heartfelt remorse Grace Garfield became a half-swimming figure for the mistress to save from falling to the ground.

Cora, as Usual.

"THEN we shall not be able to see her to-night?"

"Miss Redgrave says not, Betty."

"Oh, well, never mind! The great thing is, she is back!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Gweat wejoicings!"

And Paula Crecl arranged a cushion for the back of her neat head, as she reclined in Study 12's armchair.

Five minutes ago the batch of chums had come storming back into the schoolhouse, with one or two other search-parties.

Like a good many others, Betty & Co. had even hoped to get word with Grace. But she had been packed off to bed in the san., so as to be ensured a good night's rest under the care of nurse.

"I don't know how you others feel," said Polly Linton, gravitating towards the study's private larder, "but searching for a runaway who was all the time running home again has made me peckish!"

"Ooo, yes; queek—queek!"

"Nothing doing, Naomer," Polly mock-sadly informed the dusky one, as she opened the cupboard door, "except the powdered sugar in an empty tin of Turkish delight. You can have that if you like!"

"Ooo, zank you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Naomer did not mind being laughed at by her chums. Retiring to a corner, she sat down, and promptly dabbed her pink tongue-tip into the sugar.

"Yes, come along in, Dolly!" cried Polly, as Dolly Delane appeared in the study doorway. "We want to speak to you."

"We do," agreed Helen Craig. "This is our first chance of saying how glad we are and all that, at your having got what should have been yours from the first."

"Pweicely!" exclaimed Paula, sitting up with the intention of launching forth into one of her big speeches. "Words fail me, Dolly, dear. How-eh, we geals do congwatulate you on your good fortune—yes, wather! That five thousand pounds—"

"It will make a bit of difference at home, won't it, Dolly?" was Betty's glad comment. "We know! We can just imagine what a blessing the money will be!"

"It—it comes at the right time, that's all I am going to say," was Dolly's smiling remark.

"Wrong!" contradicted Polly flatly. "You are going to say a lot more than that, Dolly. We know what you're going to say!"

"Yes, wather!"

"You're going to stick up for Grace to every girl in the school who is not ready to forgive her!" pursued Polly.

"Well, Dolly, you'll not need to do that with any of us," put in Madge Minden gently.

"Hear, hear!" cried Tess. "Of course, it was, not the thing to do, we know, but, supposing it had; been one of us, we might have done the same. It was such a great temptation. We can't judge Grace too hastily."

"That's what I feel," answered Dolly earnestly. "Grace didn't set out to cheat me. The fortune came to her by a pure mistake on the part of Daphne Cranford. By the time Grace found out that it was a mistake there had been time for her to get used to having the money—"

"Pweicely! And, geals—"

"Order!" thundered Polly, thumping the table. "Paula, how dare you, when Dolly is speaking? Go on, Dolly! Chair!"

At this instant Naomer smacked her lips so loudly over her enjoyment of the sugar that the other girls pealed with laughter. Then Dolly was listened to with becoming gravity.

"Another thing to be remembered is that Grace, after all, did own up of her own accord. She came back to-night quite of her own accord, and that also shows some pluck. So—"

"Pweici—"

"Half a sec., Dolly, whilst I eject Paula!" requested Polly, bearing down upon the occupant of the easy-chair. "Out of this, Paula!"

"But—"

"Ooo, yes; queek—queek!"

"Healp!" wailed the oft-teased one, as Naomer joined with madcap Polly in carrying out the ejection. "Wow, that powdered sugar—all over my hair, my fwock! Naomer, Na—ow—mer, dwop it!"

At this hilarious moment in Study 12, Ellen the parlourmaid, appeared, so Polly and Naomer dumped down the easy-chair in which they had been bodily carrying Paula towards the door.

"Yes, Ellen?" asked Betty.

"If you please, young ladies, I was to tell you there's some supper set out downstairs for all those girls who took part in the search for—"

"Oh, hooray! Supper! Paula, do you hear?" cried Polly. "Cold beef and pickles!"

"Dwop it! Do stop dwwagging me about!" squealed Paula. "Look at me!"

But, with a surprise supper on offer, the girls were not going to hang about simply to look at

Paula. Away they rushed, falling in with others who were scampering along to the stairs.

Five minutes later Morcove's Fourth Form table in the great dining-room held a full score of girls, all doing justice to a meal that was amusingly simple. Even dainty Paula relished a slice of cold boiled beef, helped down with pickles.

Suddenly there was a silencing of chattering tongues, for Miss Somerfield had appeared. It was not that the scholars lived in awe of their headmistress—far from it. But it was instantly felt that she now had some comments to make on the recent upset.

"Well, girls," the headmistress spoke aloud from the upper end of the room at last. "I am sure you are all as relieved as I am that Grace Garfield is safely back at the school."

"Yes, yes, Miss Somerfield!"

"Yes, wather!"

Then every girl in the dining-room sat mute and still, hanging eagerly upon Miss Somerfield's next words.

"I want to say here and now, my dear girls, that, although Grace Garfield is sleeping over at the san. to-night, she should be back in her usual place to-morrow morning. For she is none the worse for her escapade, I am glad to say, except a little unstrung, which was to be expected. Girls of Morcove School, you all know what led up to Grace Garfield's going off like that. I will not dwell upon the false position she was in. I prefer to plead the best excuses—"

"Hear, hear!"

Trust Betty & Co. to be as hearty as any of them in sending up that shout!

"For there are excuses, girls, and what makes me so glad is that Dolly Delane herself was the first to urge them!"

"Good old Dolly!" the Fourth Form acclaimed its Doormat. "Hurrah!"

Miss Somerfield, entirely approving the demonstration, allowed it to have its way. Then she resumed:

"Yes, girls, we may be proud of the fact that Morcove School has a girl as generous-hearted as Dolly Delane. She would not have any of us withhold forgiveness from Grace Garfield. Much as Dolly Delane has been the loser, whilst being deprived of the fortune which was wrongly bestowed upon her study-mate, she yet has only one thing to say about it all—forgive and forget!"

"Good old Dolly! Hurrah!" the whole school vociferated.

At the Fourth Form table, as if Dolly herself were not crimson enough with confusion at having to sit there and hear her praises sung, she had to endure Polly's thumpings on the back.

"Our own Doormat—"

"Yes, wather!"

"Ooo, yes; queek—queek!" shrilled Naomer, leaving her place to rush round and hug Dolly.

"I must kees you—queek!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then, girls," wound up the headmistress, after joining in the laughter, "that is what I, your headmistress, invite you to do. Grace Garfield, you may be sure, has suffered quite enough in her own mind. We know that the temptation must have been great. We are all human, and five thousand pounds is a dazzling, tempting fortune.

"She should not have kept it as she did. It was a very wrong thing to do, we know. But, on the other hand, we must remember that she did own up of her own accord at last, and not only put things right for Dolly Delane, but was brave

enough to return to school, after running away, to face it out.

"So, since Grace Garfield is so deeply penitent, and since Dolly Delane herself has urged it, we must all do our best to forgive and forget."

The applause of the girls was loud and hearty, and Miss Somerfield seemed fully satisfied as she departed.

It was no use the girls returning upstairs to their studies. In a minute the bell for call-over would ring. So there was a general standing about downstairs, with the affair of the mistaken reward still the one topic.

Once or twice Dolly Delane tried to efface herself, but she was always caught in time by Polly or one of the others. The girls were amused at the embarrassment it was for Dolly to be quite the heroine of the hour, but they were also full of admiration at her dislike of all fuss.

"Dear me," Cora Grandways scoffed, suddenly putting herself amongst the Study 12 crowd, "aren't we pleased with ourselves to-night—oh, yes!"

"We are proud of Dolly—why not?" Polly rounded hotly upon the malicious one.

"By all means!" smirked Cora. "Dolly's the rich girl now, isn't she? So nice to have one really well-off girl amongst the lot of you—so handy! He, he, he!"

"Take, O take that face away!" requested Polly witheringly. "I wonder if you ever will approve anything that the Form does, Cora!"

"What chance is there?" was the shrugged retort. "Look at the things the Form does—the whole school, come to that!"

"Because we admire the way Dolly has behaved about all this—"

"I'm not talking about Dolly!" snapped Cora, relishing the squabble. "It's Grace I'm thinking about, and all this piffing forgive-and-forget stuff!"

"You'd like to see her expelled, of course!"

"Oh, no!" retorted Cora, with her exasperating grin. "I am only amused at the way she has tricked the lot of you!"

"Tricked us? How?" several of them asked in chorus.

"If you want to know—by coming back after she had run away!"

"But—" Polly laughed with scornful disgust. "Anybody else but you, Cora, would see that's one of the great reasons why she should be forgiven. She had the pluck to come back and face it out!"

"Yes, wather! Corwa—"

"Tell me this!" flared out Cora, glorying in scoring a point. "Do you really think she would have come back if she had expected everybody to be against her?"

"Certainly we think so!" Dolly herself answered warmly. "We are sure!"

"Are you? I'm not!" sneered Cora, drawing off a step. "I'm quite sure it was just the other way about! Grace Garfield only started to come back after she had heard you talking on the moor!"

"What?"

"When you were out searching for her," Cora spoke on fiercely, "weren't you chattering about her all the time—saying how there were excuses to be made for her, and all that?"

"Yes, we were," nodded Betty quickly.

"And Grace heard you!" flashed Cora. "She must have done! I know, by what happened afterwards, she must have been hiding when you passed. Hiding from you—see? Ask her to-morrow if she wasn't hiding, dreading to be seen! If she

can deny it—well, it won't be the first falsehood she has told!"

Cora mimed away, chin in air. Once again hers was the malicious joy of having plumped a bomb-shell right into the Study 12 "camp."

The chums' astounded state caused a great silence for a while. Then Polly exclaimed:

"Can it be true? If it is—well!"

"There is only one thing to be done," Betty declared, frowning perplexedly. "The moment we can get hold of Grace herself, we'll ask her. That's what we must do—ask Grace!"

The bell for call-over began its familiar clangour. Betty & Co. drifted off together to take their places in the assembly, and Cora, when next she saw them, rejoiced to see how the charge she had made against Grace Garfield was still a damper on their spirits.

Their Forgiveness Withdrawn.

TRUE or false—which was that charge of Cora's to prove?

To the chums of Study 12, anxious to get Grace Garfield's own indignant denial, it was very trying to learn next morning that that girl would not return to school life during the day.

Nothing was wrong with her, but in the opinion of Miss Somerfield and the school nurse Grace would be all the better for a complete day's freedom from excitement.

In any case, she was to undergo one trying experience before the next few hours were out. Her father and mother were on their way to Morocco to inquire into the whole matter.



CORA MAKES MISCHIEF! "But it is n't true, is it, Grace?" said Dolly. "You didn't come back just because you heard us saying we would forgive you?" "She did—she did!" came a voice from the door as Cora Grandways entered.

So the school gleaned just before morning classes, and all agreed that it was just as well for Grace that she should be alone in the san. when her parents arrived.

Even though it was so certain that her father and mother would be more sorrowful than angry, more ready to pity than upbraid, what a painful interview it was bound to prove!

Mr. and Mrs. Garfield had not arrived by the time the school came out of classes at midday, but they were expected at any moment. Dolly, seized with one of her generous impulses, called her best chums together.

"Look here, Betty, all of you," she began to plead, the moment the muster in her study was complete, "I want to suggest our doing something. My idea is that, to give Grace more heart to face her parents, we—well, send her a message."

Down came Polly's hand upon Dolly's back in a sound slap.

"You again, Dolly! The right idea, as per!"

"Brilliant inspiration, goals—wather! Sowt of wوند wobin—what?"

"Come on, let's do it!" cried Betty, promptly dropping into a chair at the table. She snatched a sheet of paper and a pencil. "The idea is to let Grace know that we are all prepared to be as friendly as ever, because of the way she has owned up—"

"Precisely! May I suggest the wight wording, goals? 'To Gwace Garfield, at pwsent incarcerated in the san.—'"

"How I wish I could find such words!" sighed Polly. "Go on, Paula!"

"We, the undersigned members of the Fourth Form, bai Jove," dictated Paula, "herely wecord our—er—our—er—"

"That's two 'ours.' And we shall be hours more at this rate!" chuckled Polly. "Look here, Betty, you know what to write!"

"But wait!" pleaded Paula. "I have the exact phwase! 'The weal facts of the case having come into our possession—'"

"How many 's's' in 'possession,' Paula?"

"Er—er— But surely you know how to spell a simple word like that? I mean to say—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am composing the letter; I can't spell it for you. Good gwacious, be reasonable!" was the protest that further delighted the other girls.

In the end, of course, a message was concocted far simpler than any that Paula would have reeled off.

In a few lines Betty wrote that they wanted Grace to know that, not only were they more sorry than anything else over what had happened, but that she could be sure of finding them as friendly as ever when she returned to the school-house.

"Signed, sealed and delivered," said Polly, as she added her signature to the others. "And now, it doesn't need another brain-wave of Dolly's to tell us that this note should go across at once."

"Tout-de-suite!" agreed Trixie.

Betty took the note across to the san., handing it to nurse at the door. Only just in time! Even as the Form captain ran back to the school-house, she saw a car turn in at the gateway, and this proved to be the arrival of Grace Garfield's parents.

The chums did not see anything of the visitors, everything taking place at the san. That afternoon it was drill for the Fourth Form, and as they marched out for open-air exercises they saw Miss Somerfield saying good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Garfield.

For the rest of that day it was a great happiness to the girls to think of the note which they had sent Grace, just in time to give her a better heart for the encounter with her parents. It must have helped her a great deal, they believed. And they were right.

Now that Grace's interview with her parents had passed off, she was continually gazing at the warm-hearted letter which all the Study 12 chums had signed. Her eyes shone with the emotional gratitude she felt about it.

More than the girls would ever realise, it had helped her to face her crestfallen parents.

Her father and mother had come to her in mingled sorrow and annoyance. Their love for her had naturally made them eager to excuse the temptation to which she had fallen.

There had been no reproaches, only sad regrets and a great thankfulness that, after all, she had done the right thing.

But Grace would have felt still full of shame if her parents, and her parents alone, had been the ones to talk like this. It would have seemed to her that only parental love had been able to overlook what she had done.

The letter from Betty & Co., however, had made all the difference in the world.

She had let her parents read it, and she had seen how it had comforted them to know that her own schoolfellows shared their feelings. At the first chance, she was going to tell the girls that they could have done nothing kinder than to give her such a timely assurance of their renewed goodwill.

That chance came to Grace the following midday. She returned to the schoolhouse a few minutes before the dismissal took place. Whilst the hum of industry was still going on in all the class-rooms, she passed alone up to the Fourth Form quarters, there to start life again in the study which she shared with Dolly.

Soon the schoolhouse knew all the usual commotion of boisterous girls suddenly set free from work. Out of doors scampered scores of them, but Grace soon heard familiar voices in the Fourth Form corridor.

Then suddenly the study door opened and Dolly came in.

"Oh, Grace, back again!"

"Yes, I—"

"Let me tell the others! They had no idea—"

"Wait a moment, Dolly, please!"

And so, with good-hearted willingness, Dolly promptly closed the door.

Then there was a pause. This was the first moment for the two girls to be facing each other again since all was put right. Both were acutely conscious of the greatness of the moment. They looked at each other, tongue-tied.

"Well, Grace—"

"Well, Dolly?"

Another pause. Then:

"We don't want to start a lot of talk about things," suggested Dolly generously. "It's all over now."

All over! Little could she imagine what an ordeal of anguish was yet to be this other girl's, as a fateful sequel to what had gone before!

"Dolly, I want to say a few things—I must," faltered Grace, flushing slightly. "This is my first chance of saying how finely I think you have acted all along towards me. You spared me! Another girl in your position would soon have denounced me, instead of giving me the chance to—come to my senses and—make good, as I hope I have done."



FOR DOLLY'S OWN SAKE! "Oh, I'm sick of you, Grace!" cried Dolly bitterly as she went to the door. "You are not honest with me, after all!" But Grace said nothing in defence of herself. For her chum's sake she remained silent.

"Of course you have made good—absolutely, Grace! So let it go at that."

"There's another thing, though. Yesterday, Dolly, when I was in the san., you and the others sent me a letter. I do feel ever so grateful about that. Miss Somerfield had told me that I need not fear the school would be down on me. All the same, it was such a help to me when my parents came, to be able to show them that letter."

"We hoped it would be," Dolly responded simply. "Very well, then; now for the fresh start that we are going to make, and no more talk about the wretched business. Some of the girls are in Study 12. I can hear them. Grace, you'll come along with me?"

"I— Yes, I—I will."

On that Dolly whipped open the door, then put herself beside the girl who at one time had been cheating her out of a fortune. As they went along the passage Dolly put an arm about her study-mate with careless affection, as if nothing had ever happened to interrupt the friendship.

"Girls, here's Grace, out again!"

"What! Oh, I say—"

"Bai Jove—"

"Ooo, queek—queek!"

"Come along in, Grace!" cried Betty and four or five others. "Jolly day—a halfer, too!"

"Yes, wather! Gweat wejoiings! Heah, Gwace, have my cheah!"

"YOUR chair!" Polly echoed scathingly, and Paula was bundled out of the way with more violence than ceremony. "Grace, you are coming out with us this afternoon?"

"Of course she's coming out with us!" cried Betty blithely. "A jolly good bike-ride is the programme. See if we can't do a run to Stormwood and back. That lovely spin—"

"Pwecisely! And as wegwads—er—tea?"

"Tea at one of the cottages on the way," proposed Madge.

"Hear, hear!"

"Grace felt sure that even in this project for the 'halfer' there was a kind-hearted consideration for her position. Unless she was mistaken, the chums had avoided all idea of a lavish tea in Barncombe, lest it should be a stinging reminder of how she was no longer the girl with a fortune, able to spend freely.

She suddenly blurted out:

"I know you girls are generously intending to say nothing about—everything. But I must say, as I have already said to Dolly, that letter you girls wrote me—"

"That's all right, Grace!" interrupted Betty. "As a matter of fact, there is one thing we rather want to—to ask you."

"Yes, wather! Geals—geals, let's get it over!"

"We will, and have done with it!" nodded Betty. "The fact is, Grace, there is a certain girl who has been mean enough to suggest that you only came back, after running away, because you know that you would—well, get off all right."

Grace was suddenly staring at them in dismay.

"So we said we would ask you straight out," Betty continued calmly. "She challenged us to do that."

"Who challenged you?"

"Cora—she's the girl," answered the Fourth Form captain, with a frown. "The night before last she started saying horrid things about your coming back of your own accord. She said you only came back like that because you had heard some of us saying, whilst we were out searching for you, that, of course, we would forgive you!"

"But it isn't true, is it?" Dolly broke out indignantly. "Grace, you didn't come back simply because of what you overheard us saying?"

"She did—she did!" cried a voice that belonged to none of the chums, and there in the doorway stood Cora Grandways.

She strode into the study, looking ready for a scene, eager as ever to upset the harmony.

"Are you going to deny it, Grace Garfield?" she exclaimed. "Remember, I met you on the moor the other night—Jud and I met you!"

"That's so," assented Grace, pale with anger at this mischief-maker's intrusion. "But what difference does that make? I was on my way back then."

"We know you were!" snapped out Cora. "You had just made up your mind—all in a moment—to come back to the school. And why? Simply because you had heard these other girls talking about their eagerness to overlook everything!"

Grace found the eyes of Betty and the rest upon her very steadily.

"Is that the case, Grace?" asked Polly. "Is it?"

"I see how I am placed," Grace answered huskily. "If I were to admit that I overheard your remarks, you wouldn't think much of me for having come back of my own accord?"

"It would alter our opinion of you," Betty stated reluctantly. "We believed that you came back with the brave intention of facing everybody's anger, but if you knew you could count upon being forgiven—"

"And she did know!" fired up Cora again. "You girls, weren't you jabbering about how ready you were to forgive her, if only she could be found? When you were going along that moorland path, just before I overtook you—"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Betty exasperatedly. "We were talking in that strain—naturally!"

"Yes, wather!"

"But Grace didn't hear us!" argued Dolly. "How could she?"

"Easily enough," grumbled Cora, "if Grace had gone into hiding near the path, to let you run by!"

"Did you do that, Grace?" questioned Polly. "Oh, let's have an end to this! Were you hiding near the path?"

"Yes, I was."

"Aha, what did I tell you?" crowed Cora. "She admits it! Now what do you all think of her? Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a telling silence for a moment. Grace saw what shocked and disappointed looks were suddenly confronting her. But if she was aware of the significant change in Betty, Polly and Paula—in Madge, Tess, and Helen—so also was Dolly. And it was Dolly who ended the painful pause by explaining tensely:

"I want you all to understand, if there is going to be any fresh upset between you girls and Grace on this account, then I am on Grace's side. But you, Betty—you, Polly—all of you will surely accept her denial?"

"What denial?" interposed Cora. "She has admitted that she was in a position to overhear the talk. So I am right, you see!"

"I'm talking to these chums of mine," Dolly reminded the spitefire. "You can go! I must know at once, girls, whether this is going to—make a difference."

"I am afraid it is," sighed Betty. "It is hardly the same thing. But still—"

"If you believe it, I don't!" exclaimed Dolly. "Grace owned up of her own accord about the fortune, and she came back of her own free will, after running away—came back out of sheer pluck! Won't any of you believe that?"

"How can we, Dolly," asked Tess, "after Grace's own admission?"

"Very well, then!"

And next instant Dolly Delane had gone from the room, as if to show that she and Study 12 must part company now.

Cora went out, fairly doubling up with laughter. Grace, after standing in a kind of daze for a brief space, as if stunned by this sudden deadlock which had arisen, also went from the study.

Clear as crystal, she saw how it was with them all. There were those who were now convinced, much to their sorrow, that she had come back only because forgiveness could be taken for granted! But Dolly would rather be estranged from her chums than share that odious belief. Dolly had already broken with the girls for that very reason! And now it was for poor Grace Garfield to wonder desperately what she could do to bring Dolly and the others together again.

"For I cannot let Dolly give up their friendship on my account!" was the agitated thought surging through Grace's mind. "It's what she intends doing, like the girl she is, but I—Oh, I must suffer anything rather than see this going on!"

Now was it long before she came to see, plainly enough, how she needs must suffer, sacrificing her own happiness so that Dolly, who had been so good to her, might be saved from this last too-devoted action!

What Matter the Cost?

SLOW of step, Grace Garfield came to the study which she shared with Dolly Delane. She went in, to find Dolly over by the window, staring out in a stung-up, unseeing way.

"Dolly!"

"Yes, Grace? I say, I am awfully sorry that there has been this fresh upset!"

"It's not worth upsetting yourself."

"Oh, but—"

"It's all because of Cora, that detestable girl!" said Grace.

But the other shook her head, frowning.

"Cora, like the mischief-maker she is, may have started the bother," Dolly allowed angrily. "But what annoys me is that Betty and the rest believe this thing against you!"

"They could hardly do otherwise."

"I think they could, and should!" broke from Dolly warmly. "It is not being fair to you. Goodness knows, I am fond enough of Betty and the others. I can't stand it, though, if they are going to believe what isn't true!"

"Dolly, you should not have fallen out with them on my account. Your goodness of heart—"

"Oh, rubbish!" exclaimed the Doormat, with a queer laugh. "What else could I do, Grace? If Betty and those girls take that view, so will the rest of the school! All Morocco will be feeling that the school was much too quick to praise you for showing pluck. You only came back, so they will say, because you *knew* you'd get off all right."

After a passionate turn about the room—unusual for her—Dolly resumed:

"The moment you admitted that you were in a position, whilst hiding on the moor, to overhear their talk, they jumped to the conclusion that you did overhear them. But, Grace, can I go and tell them now that you overheard nothing distinctly? I want to get rid of that belief of theirs. Will you tell me exactly what little you overheard, so that I can go and tell them?"

But Grace remained tight-lipped, bravely silent, when it would have been so easy for her to voice the truthful answer: "I overheard—nothing!"

Let her say simply that to Dolly, and the girl would believe her. She was all eagerness to believe. But the others—what of them?

Grace had her doubts. It was not that Betty and the rest were ill-natured. She felt sure that it would be expecting too much of them to believe that. She had owned that she had been in a position to overhear their compassionate talk. Then, again, everything pointed to her having turned back to the school after overhearing them. Yet they were to be asked to believe that she had really heard—nothing!

No, it would never do. She felt tragically convinced of that. The result, instead, would be Dolly's increased annoyance, because the other girls could not accept the unsupported testimony. The breach between Dolly and her chums would become wider than ever!

Faced with these stern facts, Grace also found herself faced with Dolly, who was waiting for a response to that earnest plea.

"I will do that, Grace—go and tell the girls exactly what little you did overhear—if you will only tell me! If they don't believe you then—But they will—they must!"

Yet, even as Dolly said the words, her very tone betrayed the same doubt that was Grace's. There could be no certainty of Betty and her chums resting satisfied with such an unsupported testimony. Dolly herself knew that.

"I am not going to say what I overheard," Grace spoke at last huskily. "The girls must think what they like!"

"Grace, if you talk like that—I want you to clear yourself—don't you see? They would be only too glad for you to do that!"

"Yes, well, I—As it happens, I can't clear myself!"

"You can't?"

"No!"

Dolly stood suddenly drawn back, aghast at such an answer. After a pause, she asked in a palpitating manner:

"How do you mean, Grace? Are you as good as telling me that they are entitled to think what they do? If so, it means that I should never have stood up for you!"

"You should never have fallen out with them as you did just now, Dolly. I—I didn't ask you to—stand up for me."

"No, of course not. But I felt I must! I felt sure that they were wrong. But do you mean you honestly could not deny the charge? Betty and the rest are really entitled to think—less of you?"

"I suppose so. Yes, if you put it like that."

Thus Grace answered, and there was nothing in look or tone to show how self-sacrificing that answer was. What wonder, then, that Dolly suddenly lost all patience?

"Oh, I'm sick of you!" was the bitter cry that burst from Dolly. "You are not honest, after all, with me, Grace—no, you are not! One moment you lead me to believe that you are a good girl at heart. Then something comes to light, or you are forced to make admissions, and I feel—disgusted!"

She drew off to the door.

"That's what I am—disgusted! I have been standing up for you when you didn't deserve it! I have gone for Betty and the rest, when, as a matter of fact, they are in the right and I'm in the wrong. You did overhear their talk on the moor! You only came back because you knew that you could count upon forgiveness! They don't think anything of you now, and—neither do I!"

Dolly gave herself no time to see how the disgusted cries took effect upon her study-mate. She slammed out of the room, rushing straight back to Study 12.

"Dolly! Why—"

"Oh, I've been an idiot to stand up for Grace!" she abused herself passionately. "She has admitted it. It really was what she overheard you saying that made her suddenly decide to come back and face us all. There was no pluck about it, no wanting to atone. She simply knew that she was to be let off!"

"There!" cried Polly, whilst the others exchanged excited glances.

"Bai Jove, geals, dweadful—dweadful!" lamented Paula, dropping down into the easy-chair. "What can we think of the geal after that?"

"I have told her what I think of her!" panted Dolly. "Oh, but I do think it is the limit! As her study-mate and all that, I was ready to believe in her, even if you others couldn't. But now, after her own admission—"

"The best thing will be to let her alone," sighed Polly. "You, Dolly—you had better use this study. We'll find room for you. We can't have you boxed up with Grace after this."

"Wather not, bai Jove! Insufferable!"

Dolly did not answer. She sat down and stared at the floor in a drooping way.

"Too bad!" muttered Betty. "But enough of this, Dolly. You come along out with us, and after dinner you are to join us in that jaunt. You know, Dolly," added the Form captain, with sudden great tenderness, "this all comes of your being just too good-hearted."

"Yes, wather! You have shown Gwace Garfield more consideration than she evah deserved, Dolly."

And at that very moment, in the other study,

Grace Garfield was resigning herself to what must come now.

It could have been avoided, but only at the cost of a painful breach between Dolly and the others.

So, to enable that girl to be on as good terms as ever with her chums, Grace Garfield was prepared to be—shunned by the Form!

The Dark Days Creep By!

SHUNNED by the Form! Held in contempt as a girl who never could have been so very penitent, after all! Coward when she ran away, and only very artful when she decided to come back! So they thought her—now!

Nor could she blame them for having turned against her. Since they had been amongst the very first to admire her apparent pluck in coming back to face things out, they were entitled to be disgusted now that they were convinced that her pluck had been a sham.

Cold-shouldered from morn to night, ignored during the hours of play, and in the evenings—alone! For Dolly would not work with her in the study. It was not that Dolly wanted to stress the feeling against her, Grace.

On the contrary, Dolly avoided the study simply for the sake of minimising the painful embarrassment. But the very loneliness—how hard it was to bear, every bit as hard as the open scorn which met her whenever she was not alone!

For two or three days this went on, and who could say when it would end, if ever? Grace herself knew this. No breakdown of her own fortitude should ever end the ordeal—no!

And so, for all she could tell, the term would drag itself out, and on Breaking-up Day she would go home at last, still the object of their undesired contempt.

Holidays over, and back she would come again to another term of schooling, and even then, perhaps, the stigma would still be upon her—a disgrace that had yet to be lived down, for forgotten it never would be!

It was strange, when she looked back on it all, how this had become the totally unexpected sequel to a lapse for which she had surely done her best to atone!

Time after time, in the loneliness that came of the self-assumed disgrace, she sat thinking of all that Dolly had done for her, and of this that she was doing for Dolly now.

Did it balance things at last? It would in the end, that was certain. By the time this bitter feeling against her had died down she was likely to have suffered as much for Dolly's own sake as that girl had ever suffered for her!

Grace did not say this to herself in bitterness. Rather did she feel a kind of passionate satisfaction in balancing her own great sufferings at present against those that Dolly had endured. She was glad—yes, glad that Fate had given her this chance of repaying one good turn with another.

And never once did she see Dolly consorting with the other girls on the old friendly footing without feeling rewarded.

"If I had chosen to act differently," she could say to herself, with legitimate pride, "you would have been at arm's length with those girls now, Dolly, and they with you! I could have selfishly consoled myself with your friendship, Dolly, if I had chosen to let you stand beside me, against them. But you would not have been happy, and it was up to me to save you from being unhappy."

Then one wet evening a thing happened that did

great credit to Study 12. Betty and one or two others came to Grace in her loneliness.

"Look here, Grace, we've been talking about you," Betty began feelingly. "It's no use denying that we have found it hard to get over this business. But if you like to come round to Study 12 now—"

"Do come!" instantly pleaded Dolly, as Grace merely shook her head. "It's no use, we can't go on like this!"

"Wather not, bai Jove! Weally, Gwace, you should come!"

"Very well, then," she assented, slowly getting up from her chair. "But you can't really want me."

This drew the vehement assertion that the chums were all for giving her another chance. When she was with them in Study 12 there was ample evidence of the generous desire to relent towards her. Nothing was said about the past, and Polly and Naomer did their fair share in keeping the talk in safe channels, teasing Paula in the old laughable way.

But the very effort to put Grace at ease was disastrous. All the vivacious talk and the joking about seemed to her a ghastly attempt at cheering up when there was really nothing to warrant a changed spirit. She felt that this was even worse than being ignored. After a little while, she made her excuses and came away.

Dolly followed her out of the study. A few moments more and the two girls were alone together for the first time for many days.

"Why didn't you remain with the others, Grace?" came Dolly's earnest question. "You have seen how willing they are to—"

"I have seen them trying hard to make me feel at ease, but with the best will in the world they could not do it!" broke from Grace distressfully. "It is no use, Dolly! People can't help their thoughts, and I can never be with those girls again without their thinking of what I have done."

She added resolutely:

"I'll not put them to the trouble of such make-believe. It is only spoiling their happiness. I'm best out of the way."

"Don't talk like that, Grace. In time—"

"I wish I could believe so!" exclaimed the unhappy girl. "But Morcove is no place for a girl like me."

"Well, from now onwards," Dolly said gently, "I am going to—to take up my old life with you, Grace."

"You are not! You can't, Dolly! I musn't allow it!" was the other's agitated cry. "You belong to the rest—"

"Listen, Grace! If I have kept away from you lately, it has mostly been because I felt that you would only be more miserable than ever with me on hand. It's true I flared out at you just that once. I was suddenly angry—very bitter, I know. But I—I soon got over all that. I've often suggested to Betty and the rest—"

"I can quite believe you have!" exclaimed Grace. "If the truth were known, I expect you had a lot to do with their offering to have me back. But it doesn't answer. Do you think it is any relief to me to have you pleading for me? You go away and be with them, and leave me to myself. Leave me, for I don't want to—to have you around me!"

"Oh, all right!" was Dolly's pained response, and, with a shrug, she went out.

Then, alone again, Grace dropped down into a chair, her face still retaining the wild look which had attended that hard-driven cry.

The words had been true enough, in the sense that she had used them. She did not want to profit by Dolly's pleading. It was certain that she—Grace—was still the rock upon which the friendship between Dolly and the others might be split. That was not to be! And if Dolly, at such a risk to her own happiness, persisted in the well-meant effort, then she must be discouraged somehow or other. If nothing else would do it, there must be an offensive flouting of her overtures.

From that hour—for Dolly did persevere—life became harder than ever for Grace Garfield. She found herself really forced to keep the good-hearted girl at a distance by being rude and sullen to her.

There were two or three days of this, during which Grace felt that the sequel to her bad lapse in the past was fast reaching its appalling climax. Would she be able to endure to the end of the term? How could she, when the secret anguish of her unhappy position was growing every moment more acute?

She, who had fallen to one temptation in the past, was now in terrible dread of yielding to

retention of the fortune, been tempted to run away? And now—

"What else can I do, when I can't go on like this any longer?" she asked herself in tragic despair. "Oh, let me get out of this—go home and tell them I must never come back to Morcove! At least, that will be doing better than staying on and giving in, only making misery for Dolly!"

The mournful murmur was succeeded by a spell of apathy that lasted—how long she never could have said. It was a Saturday afternoon, and she seemed to be the only girl left within doors. At least, the Fourth Form quarters were deadly quiet.

Here she sat, alone in her black despair, feeling that nothing was left to her but a choice of evils. Either a weak giving in to what her heart longed for, setting herself right with Dolly and never minding the others, or another flight from the school.

Suddenly she found herself seated at the study table, taking paper and pen to start a letter—another farewell letter, to be found after she had fled!



SHUNNED BY THE FORM! Grace was cold-shouldered from morn to night by the other girls, held in contempt by them, as a coward and a cheat. But still she kept silent. Dolly had done so much for her—she was doing this for Dolly now!

another. This time it was the temptation to be weak and accept Dolly's offered devotion, even though it certainly meant a resumption of trouble between Dolly and the other girls.

There was not the slightest doubt that the moment she—Grace—did indulge the longing to enjoy Dolly's generous support that girl would become a far, far too zealous advocate. There would be renewed arguments in Study 12, a continual bringing up of all the old wretched business. The enormity of the supposed offence would be revived in the minds of Betty and others, and thus Dolly, before she knew what she was about, would have broken with them again.

Yet the temptation to give in became such a tormenting one that at last Grace reached the hour when, alone as usual, she suddenly burst into tears of despair.

This, indeed, was the climax, the great crisis. Either she must give in or else—go away. And there again, fatefully enough, was the repetition of a former temptation.

Hadn't she, when hard driven about her guilty

She dipped her pen, and shakily began to write. The words came readily; her mind was charged with what she had to say. In a few minutes the lengthy missive was finished, and as she read it over she felt a kind of pride. For the letter had an honest flavour. It WAS honest! There was nothing to be ashamed of this time in what would be read by others after she had flown.

Then suddenly she turned against that very letter, hating it as one of the meanest things she had ever accomplished.

Snatching it up from the table, she tore it up, angrily casting the pieces into the waste-paper basket.

"I made up my mind to bear everything, and I will—I will go on bearing it, after all!" she panted fiercely.

"Running away—cowardly thing, as it was that other time! No, I'll still struggle on. Things can't get harder to bear than they are at present. They've reached the limit—oh, it must be so! Anyhow, I won't be a coward again, with thoughts of running away!"

At that very instant she became aware of an

untimely commotion in the schoolhouse that was rather startling. It sounded like a lot of girls, come back in the middle of the afternoon, all in great excitement. And—hark! They were Fourth Form girls! She could tell by their voices, and then she heard them turning into the passage after the mad rush upstairs.

A moment more, and the study door flew open. Dolly whirled into the room, and after her swarmed others, and the one cry was:

"Grace, Grace! It's all right, Grace! We have made such a wonderful discovery—about you!"

Such a Surprise!

AMAZEDLY she stared at them. If their words and looks meant anything at all, some great deliverance had come for her in this her darkest hour.

It was climax upon climax, surely! The last scene of all in a drama that had begun with her mistakenly coming in for the fortune.

"Yes, wather!" beamed Paula, arriving close upon the others' heels, gasp for breath. "Now we know how we stand!"

And she promptly sat down. "It is like this, Grace," the Form captain hastened to explain. "Just now we were having games out on the moor. Naomer and Polly were hiding amongst some bushes, and they found a button on the grass—a button that goes with our outdoor coats."

"So we knew it must have come off a Morecove girl's coat," chimed in Polly, "and, although at first we did not think anything of the find, we wondered who had been there before us. Anyhow we saved the button—"

"And then," Helen Craig took up the talk excitedly—"and then, Grace, Dolly suddenly remembered that she had seen you sewing on a fresh button a day or so after—you know!"

Grace nodded, pale as death with sudden excitement.

"Yes, that's so," she assented breathlessly; "I did find I had shed a button that evening I—ran away."

"We found this button," cried Betty, displaying it. "in a hiding-place well off the moorland path! There is a holly tree—"

"That's where I hid that evening whilst you went by!" Grace exclaimed, never thinking how the others were to cry out, joyfully:

"Just so!"

"Yes, wather!"

"Dolly here said at once that it was probably where you were in hiding," Betty rushed on. "And then Polly had an inspiration. She said we could test whether anyone hiding there could overhear talk from people going by on the path. We tried the test—"

"Talking exactly as loudly as we were that evening—a little louder, if anything!" Polly chimed in again. "Two or three of us were listening, the others doing the talking. And, Grace—"

"Yes, what?" she panted.

"Not a word could be picked up—not a word!" cried Betty. "At that distance the voices were a mere murmur. Grace, as soon as we had found out this we knew that you never could have been influenced by anything we were saying, because you didn't really overhear anything!"

"I never said I did," answered Grace.

"But—no, perhaps you didn't," exclaimed Dolly; "but you let us think that you had overheard, that it was all true! You would not let me cling to the belief that it was unjust to you—"

"No," nodded Grace tensely; "I thought I would

never be able to prove it. It meant that you would be the only one to believe me, whilst these others would be forced to doubt me. It meant that you would break with Betty and the rest. You even did so—"

"She did!" burst in Polly, with an admiring glance at Dolly. "And now we all understand!"

"Yes, wather!"

"You preferred that Dolly should doubt you, with us, rather than that she should quarrel with us over you!" Betty exclaimed at Grace. "In fact, you have been doing a fine thing, Grace!"

"A weally bwickish thing, bai Jove! Gwace—"

"All that you have suffered has been undeserved!" cried Helen.

"I don't think so," answered Grace tremulously.

"I have regarded it as the punishment I earned that other time. The two things go together. One led up to the other."

"But, Grace, what has this latest affair led to in the end?" was Dolly's emotional cry. "I can tell you; we all know."

"Yes, wather!"

"It has made us think ill of you at a time when you were really doing a very fine thing," Betty said. "We are so sorry, Grace!"

"Sowwy, bai Jove! Fwightfully wegwetful, Gwace, weally and twuyl!"

"And it's going to be a long time, we are quite aware," said Polly ruefully, "before you can forgive us!"

Even as the words were said, however, Grace was ready with her answer:

"A long time to forgive? Why should it take me any longer to forgive you than it took you to forgive me that time? Why talk of forgiveness, girls, when you had every reason for acting as you did?"

"Grace!" rang out Dolly's admiring cry. "Oh, Grace, that's finer of you than ever! After that—"

"Wather, bai Jove! Fwiends all wound—what? Hoowah—hoowah!"

They closed in upon Grace, ready to overwhelm her. But just then she caught sight of the waste-paper basket, with its torn-up letter, and she made an appealing gesture for silence.

"Wait a bit!" she faltered. "In this basket—do you see? This is a letter I tore up only a few moments before you rushed in. I had felt like running away again—being cowardly once more. And now I feel that if I had not changed my mind and torn up that letter, I—I never would have been cleared. It seems as if the very moment I resolved to go on everything came right at last!"

"And doesn't that show!" cried Polly. "Oh, I say, but don't let's stand about in talk! Study 12—"

"Ooo, yes; queek—queek!"

"Tea—"

"Yes, wather! Geals, geals—"

"Come along, Grace! Come along!"

They bore her off, every schoolgirl heart as happy as could be. She and Dolly had a hand on each other's shoulders, and as they passed to Study 12 they exchanged glances, and their looks were those of two girls whose bond of friendship was freshly sealed by all the anguish there had been!

THE END.

So at last Grace's troubled affairs were righted, and she resumed her old position in the esteem of Study 12. Look out for the first story in a fine new series next week! It is entitled "The Mystery From The Sea!"