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



**THE MISTRESS THEY  
WANTED BACK.**

(A dramatic moment in the fine long  
complete Morcove story within.)

Another fine story of Study 12 "Boarding Out."



By  
MARJORIE STANTON

*Worse and worse grow things for hapless Study 12, boarding out at Barncombe under the rule of Miss Cunliffe. "Lines" and harsh words from morning till night is the daily rule, but the tyranny of the new mistress does not end there, as you will see when you read this engrossing tale.*

#### Is it Rebellion ?

**B**EFORE you girls go in to your breakfast! Polly Lanton, have you done your lines?"

"Yes, Miss Cunliffe."

"And you, Paula Creel?"

"Yes, wather—"

"That stupid phrase again! Haven't I said I will not allow you to talk like that! Naomer Nakara, what about your imposition?"

"He is finish!"

"What an expression to use! Really, I have known some peculiar girls at other schools; but some of you who belong to Morcove would be more at home in a side-show."

Miss Cunliffe, auxiliary mistress of the Fourth Form, was not making that last remark jokingly. With the Form captain and six other girls lined up in front of her, she was being as snappish as possible.

"All of you who have impositions to show, bring them to me at once. The rest, remain at attention!"

Quite a comical performance ensued. It appeared that Madge Minden was the only girl who had not been "lined," and so her six companions suddenly dashed away, leaving her quite alone, hands down and chin up!

Poor Madge stood thus in the entrance hall of the boarding-house at Barncombe, where she and her chums were being housed at present, in consequence of alterations at the school. The pleasant odour of a good breakfast emanated from the

near-by dining-room, and no doubt Miss Cunliffe enjoyed the refined torment that it was for the girls, to smell eggs and bacon that were fast getting cold.

After pacing about the hall in an imperious way, she stopped in front of statue-like Madge.

"Didn't you have any lines to do?"

"No, Miss Cunliffe."

"No, I remember now; you are the girl I merely lectured, for keeping on at the piano for a whole hour on end. Music is all very well, but we don't wish Morcove scholars to let all the High Street know how well they can play."

Madge's face hardened, two red spots beginning to burn in her cheeks. She might well be angry, too, at being accused of showing off. If over-modesty about one's special talent be a fault, Madge had it.

"In future, when you want to play, you will ask my permission first. You hear me?"

"Yes, Miss Cunliffe."

"Then why don't you answer, instead of standing—sullen! Less noise there!" the nagger cried at Polly and the rest, as they came whirling downstairs again.

"Into line again! Into line, I said!" And she pushed and pulled at one or two of them, before taking Polly's sheaf of lines from her.

"Pages not numbered! Go and do it! Paula Creel, yours next."

"Oh, thanks, thanks. Er—"

"What's this! This smeared page!"

"Er—a wegwelttable accident, Miss Cunliffe. Owing to the wapidity with which I had to proceed with the work, I—"

"Pure carelessness. Go and do that page again."

"Thanks; but—er—as wegards bwakfast—"

"That page first!"

"Then I shall be late for school, what? I mean to say—"

"I will see that you are not late," Miss Cunliffe promised, ominously. "Now, you others! Is this how the Form captain writes an imposition? I will pass it, but the writing is shocking. Naomer—"

"Ooo, yes, queek, queek, look at him!" the dusky one exclaimed, eagerly offering her batch of lines. "I am so hungry!"

Miss Cunliffe provokingly took the "impot" nearer the window, to examine it by a better light. A full half-minute she was there, returning then in an infuriated manner.

"I never did!" she burst forth, her eyes glowering upon little Naomer. "To say nothing about the spelling—how dare you get the sheets in this sticky state! What were you eating at the time?"

"Ze chocolate, please. I not able to keep him from getting on ze page. He always do."

"Meaning, that you have been accustomed to hand in work done whilst you were stuffing sweets! Have you had any chocolate this morning?"

"He was only a little bit—in case we are late for breakfast," Naomer quaintly explained, with perfect truth.

"You cannot want any breakfast, after spoiling your appetite with sweets first thing. Go away and get on with those lines, afresh, until the bus turns up to take you to school."

"You not mean me to have ze breakfast?"

"Wait and see." Miss Cunliffe felt rather daunted by the readiness for open revolt which Naomer's flashing eyes proclaimed.

"I would like to know for certain, please!" the dusky one insisted, standing her ground. "Because, if I not get any breakfast, then I shall—"

"You will what? Make a complaint to Miss Somerfield, will you?" Miss Cunliffe smiled bleakly. "When I tell Miss Somerfield why I have to punish you girls—because of your impudence, your insubordination—you will not get much sympathy from her."

"Ah, bah, I not want sympathy; I want ze breakfast, and I shall get him, too!" cried roused Naomer, going away with a passionate step.

The mistress did not call her back. That might be genuine impudence, what Naomer had just said; all the same, it was rather intimidating! Feeling rather uneasy, Miss Cunliffe decided that, in a few minutes, she would let all the banished victims come to the breakfast-table, getting just enough to eat to prevent their complaining to the headmistress.

But Naomer, as she flung off, was also frowning a decision. Reaching the sitting-room where Polly and Paula sat glumly pen in hand, she flung down her own "impot" and announced:

"I go out to my breakfast, that is all—yes!"

"Bai Jove, Naomer—"

"I go to the Creamery—"

"Same here," said Polly, promptly jumping up. "Excellent idea. You coming, Paula?"

"Yes, wather! At least—weal, yes, I wather think I will," Paula reached the daring decision: and she, too, pushed back her chair and stood up. "For at pwesent I am weduced to a state of starvation."

The dining-room door was closed, and the girls' outdoor things were in the now deserted hall. Quickly, calmly, the rebellious trio put on hats and coats, marched to the street door, and passed out. No one heard or saw them go. The famous Barncombe Creamery was only a few doors along the High Street.

"There we are," said Polly, plumping down at a corner table.

"Yes, wather! I pwesume, miss," Paula addressed the waitress who had approached, "you occasionally pwovide breakfast?"

"Oh, yes, miss!"

"Thanks, thanks. Then will you kindly pwovide us with breakfast for three?"

"Queek, queek!" urged Naomer. "Never mind ze egg on ze toast. Ze cream bun will do for me!"

"You wascal," chuckled Paula.

"I not a raskikkle. What about yourself?"

"Bai Jove, that's true enough. Howevah," Paula said, with a desperate smile, "we have wather done it now, what?"

"We have," agreed Polly, blithely. "And a jolly good job, too!"

#### A Trap for the Chums!

JUST as Polly, Paula, and Naomer were finishing their very hasty "brekker" at the Creamery, a tall young lady stalked into the shop.

"Howwows," breathed Paula, hurriedly setting down her cup.

For it was Miss Cunliffe.

"Come out of that!" she began at them, regardless of the shop attendants, who were inclined to look amused. "Were there ever such troublesome girls! Come away, this instant!"

"We must pay first," pleaded Polly coolly. "Ticket, please, miss!"

"One bill, miss, yes, wather," Paula said, getting some money ready. "It has been my treat."

"Treat," echoed the auxiliary mistress, standing tight-lipped during the necessary delay of settling up. "I will teach you girls to go off for treats, in flat defiance of my authority. Miss Somerfield shall hear about this!"

"Right-ho," said Polly. And she looked Miss Cunliffe straight in the face, with no sign of trepidation.

Then, when the madcap's steady nerve was taking the expected effect, Paula went the best way about dispelling the mistress' uneasiness.

"Personally," Paula began, in her extremely polite and well-meaning way, "I should have preferred not to webel against your authority, but—"

"Oh, you do admit that it is open rebellion!"

"Yes, wather, and I am extwemely sowwy—"

"Not so sorry as you will be, when I have reported it!"

"I was about to remark, howevah; we weally had to pwovide ourselves with some nouwishment. Without food, one pwishes—"

"I was going to let you have breakfast. Just as if I would have let you go to school without," Miss Cunliffe defended herself hotly. "You girls have put yourselves quite in the wrong. Don't think I am gong to be censured! Come along, this instant! The bus is waiting!"

With that, she strode back to the shop doorway, but Polly was not mistaken. Mabel Cunliffe was having second thoughts about reporting the little rebellion. There had certainly been the threat of a belated, cold, and meagre breakfast for the three of them; and would Miss Somerfield approve that as a means of disciplining girls, however tiresome?

No; it would be best to say nothing, after all! That was the auxiliary mistress' final thought about it, as she sat in the bus with her charges, bound for Morocco School. She had her own secret motive for making things as hard as possible for the girls.

By oppressing them, she was certainly adding to the sorrows of Miss Redgrave—and how she wanted to do that! She would never rest until



she had made Ruth Redgrave's life no longer endurable at the school! But—she must be careful.

Racking her brains during the rest of the 'bus-run to Morcove, she was still left without any crafty idea as to how she could do something that would be a feather in her cap, whilst damaging the other mistress in the eyes of Miss Somerfield.

"I am not getting on as fast as I want to do!" was her irritable thought.

But it was, at least, some satisfaction to her vindictive nature to see how worried Ruth Redgrave looked, when the 'bus had reached the school. The chums were bidden, as usual, to march to the school porch in strict order, and the Form-mistress was sorry for what they were having to put up with—no mistake about that.

"Morning, Miss Cunliffe—morning, girls," Miss Somerfield herself smiled upon them all, as they entered. "Nice and punctual!"

Mabel Cunliffe, whilst the chums went to the coat lobby, followed the headmistress to her private room, for Miss Somerfield had made signs that she wanted a minute's talk.

"I see you are using a firm hand with the Modena girls, Miss Cunliffe—but not too firm, I hope?"

"Oh, I think not," exclaimed the auxiliary mistress, silkily. "If I were not a little strict, they would be turning up like a rabble by the 'bus. They seem to think, you see, that their being at Modena is the same as being on holiday."

"That was what I was afraid might happen," nodded Miss Somerfield, perplexedly. "So natural for even our least tiresome girls—and Betty and the rest have always been that—to get a bit out of hand when boarded away. At the same time, we don't want conditions made irksome."

Irksome! If Miss Somerfield had only known!

"Oh, you can trust me," declared Miss Cunliffe, sweetly. "Girls will be girls, of course. I find I have to be a little strict, now and then, simply because, if I may say so, Miss Redgrave was perhaps too indulgent."

"Not too indulgent, surely?" smiled Miss Somerfield. "What you mean is, Miss Redgrave's way is to lead, not drive?"

"Oh, quite! And, of course, the Modena girls are her special favourites," insinuated Miss Cunliffe, with an air of not thinking it a reflection on another mistress, that she should have favourites. "That's quite all right, under ordinary circumstances. But I think you did wisely, Miss Somerfield, in placing me in charge at Modena. If I may say so!"

"It was, I feel convinced, the best thing to do—best for Miss Redgrave herself. Had the special conditions induced the girls to be a bit unruly, she would have been greatly tempted to make allowances. Not that she is lax, I am sure, but only that she likes to see every girl—happy. But then, so do you, of course!"

"Why, of course, Miss Somerfield!"

After that, Mabel Cunliffe felt perked up again. She was standing well with the headmistress, and even though Miss Redgrave's prestige still stood so high—well! It might be only a matter of time to get it badly damaged. But how—how to bring that hated rival low?

The day passed without the formation of any cunning plan in the mind of Mabel Cunliffe. As regards a plan to lure the girls themselves into

a bit of disgrace that would, perhaps, point to over-laxity in the past, she was no more fortunate.

Back at Modena with her girls, early that evening she told them that she was going out for awhile.

"I want to go round to the public library," she remarked, casually. "I may, after choosing a book, stay to look at the magazines in the reading-room. I trust you girls to behave whilst I am gone."

Not until the girls had heard the street door close, and had even made sure, by watching from the window, that she really had left the house, did they feel safe. Then, however, Paula dropped back into an easy chair.

"Gweet wejcoings!"

"It's a trap for us," said Polly—and Paula sat up sharply. The others looked less surprised.

"A twap?"

"Of course," chuckled the madcap, perching herself on the table-edge, in the old Study 12 manner. "She has gone out, hoping that we will—break out!"

"Bai Jove, Polly. Your ewdution is remarkable. I would nevah have dweamed! I merely imagined that she was wleviating us of her twying pwesence; a brief wespite, don't you know."

"Well," said Betty, "if she hopes to catch one or two of us doing a run out into the town, she's going to be disappointed. Madge, let's have some music!"

"Yes, wather! And I will just sit heat, in perfect peace for once—"

"To play ze game of draught with me, Paula—"



**BREAKING BOUNDS.** Cissy clutched Cora by the shoulder. "Look, Cora—look!" she gasped. Plainly visible to both of them was a shadowy figure. A mistress!

"Naomer, no! Dwaughts distwact me. Be good, Naomer."

"All get on with your impôts!" suggested Polly.

But Naomer took one of her flying leaps and landed on Paula's lap. There was a muffled: "Healp!" and then some dismal groaning from the ruffled one, as Naomer made herself right for being nursed.

"Play up, the band!" requested the madcap. And Madge, sitting down at the piano, began to play, not minding how much her chums were soon chattering away. She never did want any audience, but her own modest self; and this evening she was careful to play only the softest pieces, lest the High Street should hear!

#### Not What She Expected!

MISS CUNLIFFE was only a few minutes at the public library.

Having selected a book, she returned to the neighbourhood High Street, making her way back to the boarding-house. But she did not go indoors.

What were the girls up to, in her absence? If she gave them time enough, would they fall to the temptation to make a daring jaunt-out of doors?

Such was the crafty reason for her taking her stand at a point from which she could keep observation on the street door, without any risk of being seen from the sitting-room windows. She was being most careful about this latter precaution, guessing that the girls would certainly peer out from the window, before daring to venture forth.

Five minutes crept by—ten. Still no development! In the largest street, Mabel Cunliffe's handsome face revealed a growing impatience. Dearly she wanted some, if not all of the girls to fall into the trap set for them.

If only she could catch them in the act of doing a run-out into the town at this forbidden hour, she would be able to make great capital from it.

At last she would be able to go to the Head-mistress with a complaint that none could say she was not justified in making!

Stealing out of bounds—that most serious offence! And how easy it would be for her, Mabel Cunliffe, to point to the escapade as being proof that discipline had become far too lax under the old regime!

Thus, by any lawless act which Betty & Co. might rush into, to-night, Miss Redgrave herself would be made to suffer in the end.

Ding, dong; ding, dong! lazily chimed the Town Hall clock. Half-past seven. Twenty minutes, at least, since the girls had been left to themselves in the boarding-house, and still there was no stealthy opening of the street door, to let some of them come slipping forth!

Biting a lip vexedly, Miss Cunliffe passed along the pavement, on the Modena side of the way. Opposite the street door, she paused to listen.

Very faintly, some piano-music was audible from the first-floor sitting-room, also the pleasant chatter of the girls. Not very promising, this!

"But I'll stay out a little longer," the crafty mistress decided, moving on again. "Give them time to get restless."

As lifeless as ever, was the quaint old town, now that nearly all the shops had closed. Mabel Cunliffe felt as bored as any policeman on his beat, as she strolled about, going up a side road

and back again, now and then, to vary the monotony.

And then, suddenly, her heart fairly leapt with joy.

Not for nothing had she endured this fire-some vigil! When a few more paces would have brought her back into the High Street, after a turn in one of the by-ways, she had seen two girlish figures go past, swiftly. And they were a couple wearing the outdoor dress of Morecove School!

After the momentary pause, Mabel Cunliffe went forward quickly. Turning that corner into the High Street, she looked in the direction that the girls had been following. Just in time she saw the pair of them enter one of the very few shops that showed lighted windows. The Creamery!

Slowly she proceeded towards the shop, and then—the miscreants being still in there—she took her stand in the recessed doorway of a next-door shop, which was closed.

From that hiding-place she could keep watch, and suddenly she saw the two girls come hurrying out of the Creamery doorway. She made ready to pounce, fully expecting them to come this way; but they went in the other direction, and when she put her head out to peer after them she suddenly realised they were not Modena girls after all!

Morecove juniors they were—from the school itself! They were taking to bicycles now, having left the machines leaning against a blank wall.

"Cora Grandways and Cissy Norton!" The mistress whispered the names of the couple whom, at last, she had identified. "None of my girls, after all—both of them! All the same—yes, I like the look of this!"

For in a flash it had become clear to her that this was a reckless escapade by girls under the charge of Miss Redgrave. Perhaps it could yet be made to appear as if her laxity were to blame!

Like two red stars in the darkness were the tail-lamps of the youthful cyclists as they set off for the road back to Morecove. The mistress, as she stared after them, looked angry at her own impotence. Impossible to follow the pair, or she would soon have been doing so.

How had they contrived to leave the school? By what means were they able to get indoors again undetected? Find the answers to these questions, and then, perhaps, she would have found the means of getting Miss Redgrave blamed!

But nothing about it all could be done to-night. Reluctantly Mabel Cunliffe resigned herself, little guessing how easily she was to discover the culprits' "modus operandi" in the morning!

#### What is Coming Now?

NEXT morning, even before Mabel Cunliffe and her girls had reached Morecove School, she saw how Cora and Cissy were doubtless contriving their after-dark excursions into Barncombe.

From the 'bus window, the auxiliary mistress was gazing at the distant schoolhouse, one corner of which was now smothered with scaffolding. She saw builders' men going up and down the ladders, and in a flash she guessed!

That was how Cora and Cissy managed to slip in and out of the building after dark! From their own study they could slip round into one of those that had been partially demolished by the workmen. Down the ladders—a perfectly easy and safe descent—and away they could go!

After such a startling discovery as this, it would

not have been Mabel Cunliffe to fail to think what her next step must be. There was a certain moment during the day when she suddenly gave a smiling nod to herself. That was when a most daring scheme had suddenly suggested itself, offering a splendid chance of involving Ruth Redgrave in dire disgrace.

When evening came, she was off out again, as on the previous night. And Betty & Co., left to themselves, were all chuckles.

"Doesn't anybody want to run along to the shops whilst the Terror is gone?" Polly mirthfully inquired. "Such a fine chance!"

"No, thanks," smiled Betty, whilst the others shook their heads, laughing. "We might fall into a trap!"

"Yes, wather!" beamed Paula, shaking up a cushion for her neat head. "And, without wishing to be uncharitable, geals, I only hope that the Tewwow catches a thundering big cold by prowl-in aound in wait for us."

"You say she did just the same last evening?" came from Dolly Delane. "She must be—the limit!"

Dolly was back again as one of the boarders at Modena, now that she had quite recovered from her bad ankle. Nor could she look anything but supremely happy, in spite of the fact that being with Betty and the rest meant being at the mercy of the Tyrant.

"Lovely night out of doors," Tess remarked, after taking a peep from the window. "I can just imagine how she is counting upon one of us doing a scoot to the Creamery!"

But the chums were mistaken this time. Miss Cunliffe to-night was not lurking in the town, on the look-out to catch them breaking bounds. She had something far more promising than that to do.

After fetching a bicycle from the shop where machines could be hired, she pedalled for a short distance out of the town, in the direction of Morcove. Dismounting at a dark section of the road, she turned out the lights of her machine, concealed it behind the roadside hedge, and took her stand in a safe bit of shelter.

She was waiting for Cora and Cissy!

But they did not come. Evidently the escapade had not yet become a nightly one. It was so easy, however, and they were so likely to enjoy the fun of doing it over and over again, Mabel Cunliffe was able to bear the disappointment patiently.

Next evening, at the same time, she was at the same watch-point on the open road. For ten minutes she waited, not a soul going by, and then suddenly two cycle-lamps glimmered in the darkness.

Here they were, Cora and Cissy, at their daring game once more!

Down crouched the watchful mistress, the bushes well screening her. Sure enough, in a minute or so the girl cyclists went skimming by, pedalling hard for the town.

She did not call out to them. Instead, when they had passed on, she lit her own cycle's lamps, mounted, and rode away—to Morcove.

"What's it to be, Ciss?" was Cora's grinning inquiry as the pair of them reached the main street of Barncombe. "A pop into the cinema, or coffee and cakes at the Creamery?"

"Oh, the cinema," was Cissy's fancy.

So they went to the cinema.

Cissy, whilst wanting to be just as audacious as her crony, really had not sufficient nerve. More than once, whilst Cora was laughing at some absurdity on the screen, Cissy was uneasily peer-

ing round, shrinking into herself as she sat there in the darkness—afraid!

But they had better luck than they deserved, and eight o'clock found them cycling back along the lonely road, their latest escapade an entire success. It only remained for them to get back into the grounds by the usual stealthy means, put the machines away for the night, and then go up the scaffold ladders. Easy, all of it, after the practice they had had.

"Now, steady!" Cora whispered, realising how nervously Cissy was treading towards the scaffolding after they had shedded the bicycles. "One would think this were the first time!"

"I think we had better—make it the last, Cora," quavered uneasy Cissy. "You know what it is—doing a thing once too often! Oh, who's that?"

She said it in a gasping whisper, whilst stopping dead and clutching Cora by the shoulder.

"Look, Cora! Look! Isn't that someone—"

"Sh, quiet!" hissed the Grandways girl. "Keep still!"

Mute and motionless they stood, their eyes dilating into the darkness of the starry night.

Plainly visible to them was a shadowy figure that they took to be a mistress! Both girls were even convinced that the lurking figure was that of Miss Redgrave, and why she did not come towards them, voicing a challenge, they could not understand. For she could see them. It had been too late for them to dodge back or even duck down.

Then, stranger still, the figure glided away.

Without a word, the youthful mistress had retreated amongst some ornamental trees, leaving both girls free to go on again.

So agitated were the guilty pair, however, that for several seconds they remained as if rooted to the ground. In the darkness, they met each other's frightened eyes.

"Come on!" Cora breathed at last. "Up to our study—quick!"

"But—but what's the use? She saw us," was Cissy's despairing murmur. "Oh, Cora, we've done it now!"

"How do you know?"

"Cora, we saw her looking straight at us—"

"Oh, well, if we're for it, we are for it. But she didn't speak. That makes me wonder if she is going to give us away. Come on, anyhow!"

One behind the other, they came to the foot of the scaffolding and went up the ladders. It was Cissy's heart-in-mouth feeling all the time that perhaps Miss Redgrave was still watching them from below. She had not stopped them, because she wished to find out how they would get indoors undetected.

Cora, for her part, was fast getting over the panic. Hers was the desperate belief that Miss Redgrave had felt afraid to say anything, and would be afraid to report it, because she might be held to blame. Those ladders—Miss Somerfield might consider that the Form-mistress should have recognised the chance they offered girls to break bounds.

Meantime, down below in the night-bound grounds, the youthful mistress had crept to where a bicycle was standing, its lamps extinguished.

Silently she got it clear of the grounds, lit the lamps, then rode away—to Barncombe. Miss Redgrave all this time was marking French papers in her study. It was Mabel Cunliffe who had suddenly confronted Cora and Cissy, and now Mabel Cunliffe could go home to the boarding-house in a rejoicing mood.

She had it in her power, she was sure, to bring about Miss Redgrave's summary dismissal from the school.

#### Miss Cunliffe Strikes.

"SEEMS to be pretty perky this morning, doesn't she, girls?"

"Yes, wather! I was just about to remark—"

"What can it be?" wondered Betty, looking amused. "Can she have caught us out over anything?"

"One would think so," smiled Madge. "Can't imagine her being so pleased except when she has trouble in store for others."

"Well, what have we done?" asked Tess.

"All I know is, I've done my impots!" said Polly, with a grimace.

"And I—"

"And I—"

"Yes, wather! Deplovable slavery it has been, gals; but we are free—"

"Until the next whack!"

"Howwows!"

"Sh!"

And the talk changed abruptly.

The day had begun in rather wonderful fashion at Modena. No half-hour's nagging before breakfast; no being kept at table, in a state of stern silence, until the arrival of the 'bus.

Hence the amazement of Betty & Co., and the belief that behind this comparatively lenient mood of Miss Cunliffe's there lurked—trouble!

Yet they really could not recall doing anything which was going to give the Terror a chance of coming down heavily upon them by-and-bye—at the school.

"Attention, form two deep," the auxiliary mistress gave the order, the moment she joined the girls in the hall. "The 'bus is here, and we'll start at once. By the right, quick march!"

The paired girls, as they passed out, were nudging each other. This early start for school—why was it? Not to give them any time for a bit of play or gossip with the other girls, that was certain! But had Miss Cunliffe her own malicious reason for being early at school? An interview to be sought with Miss Somerfield? It looked ominous.

In the 'bus there was the usual painful silence, due to the standing order that forbade talking. Miss Cunliffe was content to sit in her own pet corner, quite indifferent to her charges. She was deep in thought, and now and then her lips assumed a faint smile.

She was first out of the 'bus when it reached Morcové School, and instead of paying any attention to Betty & Co., she at once strode into the schoolhouse.

Girls in the vast front hall saw her sending a searching glance round. Then she accosted a couple of them.

"Cora Grandways and Cissy Norton—do you know where they are?"

"Upstairs, Miss Cunliffe."

So upstairs she went, seeking that study which she knew to be theirs.

Cora and Cissy, lounging in easy chairs, got a bad fright as the door flashed open and in stalked this young lady.

"Attention, you two!" she addressed them sharply, whilst she closed the door behind her. "I said—attention!"

Cora straightened herself a little more. She and

Cissy were suddenly realising that they had not such a friend in Miss Cunliffe after all.

"Last night I saw you two girls in the town," was the point-blank accusation she fired at them.

"What have you to say for yourselves?" Nothing! Worse than that, the denunciation had come as such an utter surprise, that both girls' looks gave them away.

"Does Miss Redgrave know?" At that question, Cora as well as Cissy became all the more flustered.

"Answer me! What is Miss Redgrave doing in the matter? For your looks tell me that she does know! Am I to take it that your own Form-mistress has turned a blind eye to your going out of bounds?"

Then Cora had the wit to realise what Miss Cunliffe was at.

"Yes, Miss Redgrave did know," the astute girl answered, with apparent reluctance. "She—she saw us."

"Saw you! When—where?"

"When we were coming back—getting into school—in the grounds—"

"I see! Very well," the auxiliary mistress said, smiling fiercely, "now you will both come to the headmistress. Stop—not like that," she cried, as the hapless pair started to shamble away. "Walk in step!"

There was a minor sensation downstairs, when Cora and Cissy were seen to be "in custody," as it were, with Miss Cunliffe as their escort. Betty & Co. were just then enjoying a chat with some of their Form-mates, and Miss Redgrave had come amongst them. With sinking hearts the chums heard Miss Cunliffe call, in passing:

"Miss Redgrave, will you come with me to Miss Somerfield's room? It is about these girls!"

Ominous again, and yet—in vain Betty & Co. tried to see how there could be any real trouble for Miss Redgrave, arising out of anything which Cora and Cissy might have done.

Half a minute later, Miss Somerfield was interrupted at some very early morning work by a tap at the door. It gave her a painful surprise to see the two mistresses enter, bringing with them a couple of crestfallen juniors.

"Well? And now what is the trouble?" the headmistress exclaimed, with a mirthless smile.

"Perhaps I had better speak first," Mabel Cunliffe broke out silkily. "Last evening, these two girls were out in the town!"

"What!"

"They have admitted it," continued Miss Cunliffe. "I taxed them with it the moment I got here this morning. I would have preferred to have nothing to say about it to you, as they are girls under Miss Redgrave's charge; but it seems that Miss Redgrave intended to say nothing herself."

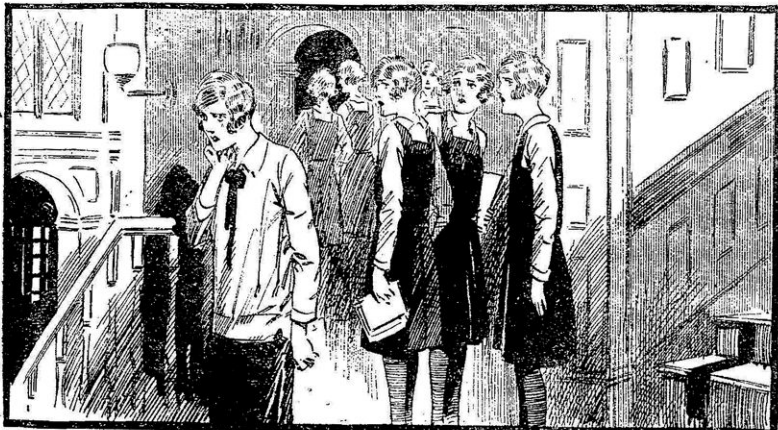
Miss Somerfield was left astounded, incredulous—not a little indignant, too—by the words. She looked at Miss Redgrave, standing pale and mute, and then at the auxiliary mistress.

"That is a very serious thing to say about your colleague, Miss Cunliffe! It is tantamount to a charge of gross neglect of duty!"

"But what would you have had me do?" protested Mabel Cunliffe composedly. "Surely this school is not run on a hushing-up policy?" She smiled. "I know you too well, Miss Somerfield, by now. You wish discipline to be enforced."

"Most certainly! But Miss Redgrave here enforces discipline!"

"It is very disagreeable for me," deplored Mabel



**WHAT'S WRONG WITH MISS REDGRAVE?** In the act of rushing into Hall, the chums stopped dead. They saw Miss Redgrave come from a dim passage, to go towards the stairs. Her face was ashen and her eyes "swimmy." "Bai Jove!" breathed Paula. "My gwacious!"

Cunliffe. "But my position is this. I cannot hope to keep my girls under control at Modena, when girls in the school itself are able to break bounds, their mistress turning a blind eye—"

"Miss Cunliffe, you are repeating," exclaimed the headmistress rather warmly; "those two girls were out of bounds last evening—"

"With Miss Redgrave's knowledge!"

Once again the headmistress looked astounded. After staring at Mabel Cunliffe in a shocked way, she turned to the other junior mistress.

"Is there any justification for this, Miss Redgrave?"

"None whatever!" burst from Ruth indignantly.

"Miss Cunliffe, either you must substantiate your words, or your position in Morcovoe School must be relinquished at once. On what grounds have you felt compelled to suggest that Miss Redgrave has winked at these girls' bad behaviour?"

"I am most willing to explain; then perhaps you will understand," said Mabel Cunliffe virtuously, "why I had no alternative but to make the statement. Just now, I asked these two girls if Miss Redgrave knew that they had been out of bounds."

"I meant by that, had Miss Redgrave caught them in the act, and was she already dealing with the matter? They looked so flustered and confused. I pressed them on the point, and then Cora here admitted that Miss Redgrave did know. She saw them. Yet Miss Redgrave had not taken any steps about it at all."

The headmistress turned to Cora and Cissy.

"Is this so?" she asked sternly. "Miss Redgrave saw you?"

"Ye—yes, Miss Somerfield."

"Explain! Tell me everything!"

#### Verdict—and Sentence.

"IT'S as I've already told Miss Cunliffe," gulped out Cora. "Miss Redgrave saw us last evening, when we were getting back into the schoolhouse. We—we only slipped out for—for fun. We thought she was going to overlook it."

"Overlook your breaking bounds! Girl, you must be mad," was Miss Somerfield's roused cry. "Miss Redgrave—"

"The truth is not being told," that young lady protested huskily. She was deathly pale. "I did not see these girls last evening—"

"Oh!" burst out Cissy and Cora together. "Why, we saw you looking at us in the darkness!"

"No, you did not see me," dissented Ruth Redgrave vehemently. "Impossible! I—"

"But we did see you looking at us, and then you went away," Cora rushed on wildly. "Cissy here—she says the same! And why should we say it, if it were not the truth?"

"That is what I fail to see," Miss Somerfield commented unhappily. "Why these two girls should have admitted that they were seen by you, Miss Redgrave, except that the truth was surprised out of them! But it occurs to me; could you two girls have mistaken someone you saw for Miss Redgrave?"

"No!" Cora answered quickly and sullenly. "We were both certain. And we took it for granted that she—well, she didn't want to get us punished. We'd done nothing very terrible, after all!"

"As to that, you will hear my views presently. Go away, both of you, to the detention-room," the headmistress said in her most commanding tone. "Miss Redgrave, and you, Miss Cunliffe, remain, please!"

Then, with the door closed after the slinking departure of the two juniors, the situation seemed to become tenser than ever.

"It is a very terrible thing, this," deplored the headmistress. "I can imagine nothing much worse than for one mistress to have to complain of another. Yet I do see that you, Miss Cunliffe, were compelled—"

"Much against my will, I assure you!"  
 "And I believe you. There is no reason why I should not. Even if you could be suspected of wanting to make trouble for this college of



yours, those girls were speaking honestly just now. Miss Redgrave, they did see you watching them." Why, then, did you not take action in regard to such a flagrant breach of discipline, after catching them in the act?"

"My answer is that I knew nothing," Ruth Redgrave said, with head up and eyes aflash.

There was a big pause. Miss Somerfield moved about the room in a state of acute distress.

"Yes, well," she said at last; "on the evidence, Miss Redgrave, I am forced to the conclusion that your version cannot be relied upon."

"That means you do not believe me?"

"I believe this—am forced to believe it," was the grave reply; "although you have been one to do your best to preserve discipline, you have lately been lacking in the will to bring girls to account for misdemeanours, when you have found out that such misdemeanours have occurred. It was so last night—"

"No!"

"I think it must have been so. Finding that those two girls had been out of bounds but were then slipping back into the house, you had the too-late feeling about it all. I can well believe that you resolved to do your best to prevent a recurrence of the folly; but that, in such a flagrant instance, was not good enough."

"Oh, I can't stand this!" was the anguished cry wrung from Ruth Redgrave. "If it is to be believed that I have been playing for popularity, trying to show how lax I could be, as compared with others—"

"It is either that," Miss Somerfield stated with pained conviction, "or else, as I prefer to think, your firmness has broken down. In any case, it will not do at a school like Morcove."

"Then you wish me to—leave? You wish me to leave at once, is that it? Indeed, I feel that I—I cannot go on for even another hour. Face the girls, whilst this is hanging over me—"

"I agree, Miss Redgrave; it would be a great mistake, even if it were a tolerable situation for you: I will bring the matter up at the next meeting of the governors. Meantime—"

Miss Somerfield had to stand silent for a moment, getting her emotional voice under control. Then:

"You must consider yourself suspended from the school, Miss Redgrave."

"Thank you. I realise that you are putting it as kindly as possible," gulped Ruth Redgrave.

"As for your past kindnesses, you know how I have appreciated them. Miss Somerfield, I wish you and the school—good-bye!"

She opened the door, passed out, and went blindly along one of the passages of the school from which she would soon be gone—for ever!

#### The Sadness of Farewell!

"OH, this suspense!" sighed Polly.

"Deploable, wretched!" groaned Paula.

"Give me all the twynny in the world in preference to this, geals, what?"

"There's a row on, right enough!" Betty mumbled glumly. "Look how the school is being kept waiting for first assembly. And Cora and Cissy—"

"They're caught out over something, that's evident!" was Helen's gloomy comment on the recent departure of the reckless pair for the detention-room.

"It's Miss Redgrave I am anxious about."

fumed Polly. "How has she been dragged into it?"

"Hallo, the bell at last!"

"Yes, wather! Geals, geals!"

"Ooo, ycs, queek—queek!"

But the chums, even as they felt ready to dash for their places in Big Hall, thinking that the muster would bring some announcement in its train, received a sudden check.

They saw Miss Redgrave come from a dim passage, to go towards the stairs. Her face was ashen grey, her eyes looked "swimmy." But only a half second's sight of her stricken looks was granted the chums; then the Form-mistress held her face away.

They all stood still, hesitant.

"Bai Jove!" breathed Paula. "My gwacious!"

"It's as we feared," exclaimed Polly fiercely, and she clenched her hands. "It must be that Miss Cunliffe! She has— Oh, too bad! Shame!"

"I'm going to ask—going to know!" was Betty's roused cry. "Miss Redgrave, wait!"

They all ran to her. In an instant she was ringed about by the girls, not only the chums, but by many other members of the Form.

"Miss Redgrave!" The compassionate cry became a chorus. "What's happened? What's the trouble?"

"You must tell us, please! We are your girls!"

"No longer my girls," was the sad murmur that answered Madge's gentle entreaty. "You ask me to explain. I do not feel that it is fair to others to do so: I can only say, girls, I am—leaving!"

The word fell upon their ears, although so softly spoken, like a thunderclap.

Their Form-mistress, their own chummy Miss Redgrave—leaving!

"Never!" was the incredulous cry from many of the staggered girls.

"Yes, Betty—all of you, this is good-bye!" Ruth Redgrave said, mounting the first step or two of the stairs. "Miss Somerfield has been very right and kind about it all. Never imagine for a moment that I feel unjustly dismissed. In the circumstances, I—I—"

"Dismissed! Not leaving of your own accord? But that's worse than ever!"

"Yes, wather! Deploable! Dweadful, dweadful! Miss Wedgwa—"

"Girls, you must go into Big Hall, and leave me to go away. Good-bye!" the ex-mistress said with brave composure. "There is a lot that I would like to say if only— But it would be too upsetting for you as well as for myself. We have always been such friends, happy together, and—"

"The Fourth Form, hurry up there!" called the voice of Miss Cunliffe, from the doorway of Big Hall. "Aren't we late enough as it is!"

"You be bothered!" Polly muttered, casting a glaring look in the direction of the Terror. "Miss Redgrave—"

"Hush! No more now, girls. Good-bye, good-bye!"

"But I shall kiss you; ooo, yes, queek—queek!" shrilled Naomer, suddenly springing after Ruth Redgrave up the stairs. "For I love you, yes!"

"Tell that girl to come down!" sang out Miss Cunliffe. "There is to be no more nonsense!"

Then, if only because any demonstration was likely to distress Ruth Redgrave all the more, the

girls tore themselves from her. They went towards Big Hall, talking in a roused way.

"Silence!" commanded Mabel Cunliffe.  
 "Shame!" shouted Polly. "Shame, shame, shame!"

"Five hundred lines, Polly Linton!"  
 "All right; five thousand, if you like. But I say it's a shame!"

"Deplorable—yes, wather!"  
 "Everyone of you—take your places in Hall," the auxiliary mistress bade the scholars in a stern tone. "The next girl who speaks will go before the headmistress by-and-by."

"Shame!"  
 "Polly Linton, at break you will go to Miss Somerfield."

"Just what I wanted," said Polly.  
 And her looks showed that she meant it!

**More Changes at Morcove!**

**B**UT the madcap, by simply "asking for it," was to do very little good by having to report to her headmistress.

The Fourth Form's hothead was only a couple of minutes with Miss Somerfield, so that when the other girls saw Polly coming away from the private room so promptly, they knew that not much talk had passed.

Nor had it. Miss Somerfield was in no mood to enter into a discussion. The subject of Miss Redgrave's suspension came very near to not being touched upon!

"Why were you sent to me, Polly?"  
 "Because I was cheeky."

"It must have been pretty bad—cheek. Polly, we are going through trying times in the school, and we must pull ourselves together, or we shall never pull together. Go away and do a page of French that I will see, and be a better girl."

On which, exit Polly.  
 But she decided to go back. No sooner was she outside the room than she was tapping before re-entering.

"Please, Miss Somerfield—"  
 "Well?"

"It's an awful sickener about Miss Redgrave. Could you tell me, please—"

"I can tell you nothing, Polly. Run away."  
 "Not even say if—if there is a chance of her coming back?"

"No, Polly. As soon as I can make a statement I will."

This time, as Polly went out, she met Miss Cunliffe just coming in.

"I have put that notice on the board, as desired," the madcap heard the Terror say to the headmistress, and so she dashed away to discover what the notice might be stating.

In the main hall she found the board mobbed about by girls of all ages. Those who could not get near enough to read the notice were crying:

"Read it out!"  
 "Cora Grandways and Cissy Norton, gated for the rest of term!" came the chorus from those who were close enough to the pinned-up sheet. "Ethel Courtway to act, pro-tem., as assistant-mistress of the Fourth Form—"

"Whew! I say—"  
 "Hooray! Ethel's all right, anyhow!"  
 "Yes, wather! Gwreat wejoiings—hooway!"  
 "Miss Cunliffe appointed Form-mistress—"  
 "Wha-a-a-at!" went up the screech of dismay.

"Howwows!"  
 It was all too true, however.  
 Within an hour, the chums knew even worse. Although Miss Cunliffe had assumed the Form

mistress-ship, that did not mean that she would no longer have charge of the Modena contingent.

It was considered more important for her to be with those girls, out of school hours, Morcove's head girl, Ethel Courtway, being quite capable of looking after those juniors who were housed at the school.

It was the chums' worst fears come true. It was the thing which they would have given anything to prevent, if only—the means had been granted them!

Their chummy mistress—what had become of her now? When would they see her again? Gone—she was already gone from Morcove. Her career ended, so far as that great school was concerned, and her credentials, doubtless, blemished!

"Tewwible," Paula said almost tearfully at a moment, that evening, when Miss Cunliffe was off the scene. "Geals, I'll be the next to leave you."

"I wish you would," Polly said with mock tartness. "Then we'd hear no more of your continual groanings."

"I don't gwoan, Polly—"  
 "You do!"

"I merely gwieve—"  
 "Well, what's the use of grieving!"

"Hear, hear!" Betty agreed, with a cheering-up look.

"The thing to do"—and Polly slammed a hand upon the table—"is to jolly well buck up and see to it that we get Miss Redgrave back!"

"Bai Jove, Polly deah, if I could think—"  
 "If only you could, Paula! But, of course, it does need some brains."

"As wogards bwains, Polly—"

SUNDAY	5	2	19	26
MONDAY			20	27
TUESDAY			21	28
WEDNESDAY			22	29
THURSDAY			23	30
FRIDAY			24	31
SATURDAY	2	against	18	25

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"Yes, poor dear, it's not your fault, only your misfortune."

"Pwecisely—er—that is to say— Oh, of course, you goals must laugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Is it ever any use blubbing?" Polly argued stoutly. "Nay, nay. But I want to be serious—"

"You can't be—"

"Yes I can, Betty," insisted the madcap. "And I am dead serious when I say that we may yet have the luck—if only we watch out—to set matters right. Miss Redgrave must have been unfairly suspended, although, no doubt, Miss Somerfield felt convinced that it was pure justice. So—"

"One moment, pway. Let me speak, for I am woused," Paula said, suddenly rising from her easy-chair. "I agree! Polly has hit the nail on the head, what?"

"Sit down," requested the madcap, "or I shall hit you on the head—"

"No, Polly deah—goals! I really must make it quite plain. Polly has brougnt me wound by her wousing words. I was depressed—yes, wather. My misewy has been deplowable. But my spiwit is woused, and I wish you to understand, goals; I am quite willing to concentwate, with you, on the wighting of this wong!"

"Those in favour?" asked Polly skittishly. "The resolution before the meeting is, that— Oh, dash it, here she comes again!"

And a lightning change came over the happy

gathering in the Modena sitting-room. Books were flung open, easy-chairs were vacated, voices hummed over lessons being got by heart.

Not a moment too soon, either! Miss Cunliffe entered. She stood still, to cast a stern glance upon all the busy bees. Then, with that bleak smile which betrayed her delight in suppressing their girlish high spirits, she sat down to remain with the luckless girls right on until bed-time!

if They Can Prove it!

**A**NOTHER day had come for Betty & Co. to attend school; and how strange it seemed, how sad, not to see Miss Redgrave at her usual place in front of the busy class!

Never for a moment was she out of their thoughts. Time after time each of the sorrowing chums felt a special pang as the fact came home to them anew—she was really gone. Dismissed! For the word "suspended" was really only a gentler way of saying that she had been summarily relieved of her duties.

And there, in her place, stood Mabel Cunliffe, handling the Form in general very amiably. She could afford to be pleasant, now that her purpose had been achieved! Only to Betty & Co., when they were at Modena, was she the same nagger whom they had endured all along.

Nor had signs been lacking that she was quite disposed to soften towards those girls now. Only the chums were in no mood to let her be all false sweetness, simply because she had ousted Miss Redgrave, and no longer needed to make their lives a misery for the sake of distressing their erstwhile mistress.

Rightly or wrongly, Betty & Co. felt that anything of that kind would be a disgraceful hauling down of their colours. They wanted no truce, no false peace with the interloper who, by dint of scheming which had yet to be shown up, had struck at a more than popular mistress. One whom they had grown to love, even as Ruth Redgrave herself had surely loved them!

So, in very spirited style, the chums let Miss Cunliffe see that they wanted none of her sham relenting towards them. Her first hints that she did not mind being nice to them, now that all was over, met with bold rebuffs. All was not over! So said Betty & Co.

This stand against her soon caused Miss Cunliffe to become the Terror again. She was done with winning smiles, and gave them the sharp side of her tongue again. Her eyes gleamed with the rage that was evidently hers, at their refusal to give in. She knew it all arose from loyalty to the mistress they had lost.

Meantime, it was as if Miss Redgrave had passed clean out of their lives.

Nothing was heard or seen of her. After a day or two, at Morcove School it was as if she had been gone a great while. She was not forgotten, but she was not talked about.

It was the kindest thing to do, the girls said—let it drop!

Then suddenly matters took a dramatic turn.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and the weather had been so wet that all outdoor games were suspended. At Morcove, girls were free to hold study gatherings, play indoor games, or slip out between the frequent showers. At Modena, it was a case of sitting cooped up with Miss Cunliffe, until she announced that she would take them for an airing, as the rain had stopped.

"Anotnah cwocodile!" groaned Paula, putting on hat and coat. "Dweadful!"



**POLLY LINTON'S PLEA.** "Please field—" Miss Somerfield—"Well?" "It's an awful sickener about Miss Redgrave," said Polly, greatly daring. "Could you tell me please—" "I can tell you nothing, Polly," said the Head.

"Stick it!" counselled Polly gaily. "We could have her smarming over us now, if we liked to turn traitress to Miss Redgrave, but—"

"Twaitwess? I will pewish first, geals—yes, wather!"

"She can make us into a crocodile or anything else she likes," said Polly. "I'll be the hind legs of an elephant before I give in to her! Let her know it, too, I say!"

"So we will," rejoined Betty grimly.

And so they did.

Pluckily the girls put up with the indignity of being marched out into High Street, two-by-two fashion. There was no sullen obedience to the irksome command. Instead, the chums openly made a joke of it, whilst they managed to convey that such cheerful martyrdom was all on account of Ruth Redgrave.

And now it was that the great sensation happened.

Suddenly, as the girls were going in step along one of the outer roads of the town, a young lady came from a little villa on the opposite side of the way.

The ex-mistress!

Excitably, Betty & Co. saw the slim, gwaeful figure that had been so dear and familiar to them. It was Ruth Redgrave and no other—here in Barncombe, and apparently lodging in the town!

That she had never wished to run into the girls like this was only too apparent. Now that it was too late for her to turn back or do aught else to avoid them, she became visibly agitated. She gave them one nervous glance at a distance, then looked down, walking quickly.

All this in the first moment or two. Then, their feelings getting the better of them, the chums suddenly broke ranks and started to rush across the road.

"Stop! How dare you!" came the fierce cry from Mabel Cunliffe. "Come back, Polly Linton—Naomer! Will you obey me, instead of behaving like a rable?"

She had clutched at those two, the most impetuous of all. Polly's face was a study in rebellious expression. She looked as if she were ready to wrench herself free, and perhaps she would have done so. Perhaps all the girls would have openly defied the tyrant, but they received an imploring sign from ill-fated Miss Redgrave.

Tragic almost though it was, the gesture that she made, it compelled Betty & Co.'s submission to Miss Cunliffe's authority. The march was resumed. Miss Redgrave had soon passed from sight. Left, right; left, right! the scholars stepped along, and not a murmur was heard.

In half an hour the so-called exercise was over, and then Mabel Cunliffe thought fit to lash the girls with her tongue, now that they were back at the boarding-house.

"Another time, you will take not the slightest notice of Miss Redgrave when you see her! I wonder she has the impudence to stay on in the district!"

Polly said boldly:

"She may have her own good reason—"

"I'd like to know it!"

"No doubt you would!"

"Silence! Giving me your impudent answers again! But I am well aware," the mistress smiled tartly, "you like to think of Miss Redgrave as a kind of martyr!"

"So she is!"

"Madge Minden, I don't want any of your impertinence either! Miss Redgrave has only got



**STUDY 12 "TAKES THE AIR."** When the rain had stopped, Miss Cunliffe took the girls out for an airing. "Another cwcodile!" groaned Paula. "Stick it!" counselled Polly grimly.

what she deserved, and the sooner you girls have done with your silly sympathy—"

"We shall never do that!" burst out Betty vehemently. "Never!"

"Never!" others took up the cry, in chorus.

"It was a shame—"

"Silence, every one of you!"

"We don't change," Polly spoke on, in sheer defiance of the command. "You thought you'd try being nice to us, after you'd got your own way about Miss Redgrave, but—"

"If you say one word more!" stormed Miss Cunliffe, lifting a hand menacingly. "The things you say prove that it is just as well for Morcove that Miss Redgrave has been suspended. She was all for a few favourites like you. She would allow anything to go on, so long as—"

"Untrue!"

"Betty Barton, five hundred lines for that! Now, all of you—up to your room! I am not going to have impudence! I am going to have obedience!"

Upstairs, after the door had been slammed shut, Polly broke out furiously:

"I know what she will have in the end, if we can manage it—a taste of what she has given Miss Redgrave! The sack!"

"Yes, wather! Geals—geals, we weally owe it to Morcove School—"

"We do," agreed Helen fiercely. "The idea of that dreadful person going on for term after term without being shown up—"

"Too dweadful!"

Madge Minden turned round, where she stood at the window.

"Poor Miss Redgrave! I seem to see her still! So awful to her to be out of a job—so fine of



her not to want us to worry about her! That sign she made—"

"If only we could get word with her, now that we know she is in the town!" was Betty's wistful murmur. "If only we could even get a message to her it would be something!"

"A great relief! Yes, wather!"

"Well, why not?" said Polly eagerly. "I took the number of the house from which we saw her come away. Got a letter off to her, signed by all of us! Tell her—"

"How sorry we feel—yes," interjected Tess. "And how we hope to see her back in her old place some day!"

"More than that," was Betty's quick rejoinder—"if we are going to write, then let us tell her straight out that we have made up our minds never to rest until—"

"That's it!" nodded the others resolutely. "Until—"

"Until," spoke on Betty, with slow emphasis, "we have found out how it was that Miss Cunliffe managed to get Miss Redgrave blamed for a thing she never did!"

During the telling silence that ensued, Polly began to look particularly brain-racked.

"That night when Miss Redgrave is supposed to have seen Cora and Cissy getting back into school, and yet she took no action, was it—could

it have been Miss Cunliffe who was lurking in the school grounds?"

"Bai Jove—"

"She was away from Modena that evening. It was one of the evenings we thought she was setting a trap for us," Polly whispered on. "Were we wrong? Was she at the school instead?"

"I say!" exclaimed Betty, whilst they all gazed at shrewd Polly in a marvelling way. "If that was the case!"

"Yes, wather!"

"Prove it, and we shall have done all that's needed!" Polly spoke on excitedly. "Prove it, and we shall have saved Miss Redgrave—got her back to Mercove, and got rid of Miss Cunliffe for ever!"

"Oh, my gwacious, gools, if only it can be contwined! The wejoiings—what?"

"It is going to take some doing, especially after the two or three days that have gone by," Betty reflected gravely. "Still—"

"We've jolly well got to do it!" was Polly's characteristic remark. "And do it we will!"

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

And, since Study 12 has made up its mind on the subject, you may expect some very exciting developments in connection with it in the near future! Don't miss reading them in "The Righting of Ruth Redgrave," next week's fine Mercove story.

## This Week's Birthday Gifts List!

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Name .....

Address .....

I declare myself to have been registered in your Birthday Gifts Club prior to Saturday, October 8th, and as the date given here (*here state date*) ..... is the day on which I was born, I wish to claim a (*state name of Annual you would like*) .....

.....  
in accordance with the rules of the club.  
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, October 15th, 1927.