

Sparkling Number of THE MORCOVE MAGAZINE Inside!

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2^d



**"You Have Deceived
Me—Deliberately,
Polly Linton!"**

(A dramatic incident from the
long complete tale of Morcove
School within.)

A Serious Time for the Madcap of Morcove School.

What more could Polly do?



By MARJORIE STANTON

Shall She Keep It Secret ?

"BELL for school, girls!"

"Oh—"

"School again," grimaced Betty Barton, Morcove's Fourth Form captain. "We must go in now, and perhaps Polly will be here by break, anyhow."

"Yes, well," said Pam Willoughby serenely, "it was rather early to expect her to be back—nine o'clock."

But Naoma Nakara, the Fourth Form's Royal scholar from the desert country of North Africa, was not so philosophically resigned.

From where she had been waiting about with other juniors, at the main gateway of Morcove School, the dusky one ran to the middle of the road to get a good view of the highway.

"What ze diggings! If it had been me," shrilled Naomer, "I would have jolly well got up at five in ze morning to be here in time for school!"

"Oh, yes," chuckled Helen Craig.

"Bekas—"

"Because, of course, you wouldn't miss lessons for worlds—we know!"

"Bother lessons!" said Naomer. "I am not thinking about lessons!"

"You have got to think about them, right now," laughed Betty Barton. "Come on in!" She threw an arm about Naomer's shoulders, and the chums turned to walk into school. "One comfort," Betty went on, "we know that it's all

right over at Grangemoor School. Dave Lawder has taken a turn for the better. So he is certain to get quite well again now—hooray!"

"Yes, wather!" beamed the Form's beloved duffer, amiable Paula Creel. "And what a relief, bai Jove!"

"Almost as much relief to everyone at Morcove," rejoined Madge Minden soberly, "as to all the boys and masters of Grangemoor. To think that only the night before last he was not expected to recover!"

"Won't Polly be in tip-top spirits when she does get in!" rejoiced Betty. "This week we will be able to get on with the play, I expect. It's been nothing but hindrances and upscts, so far; but now—"

"Ooo yes, now we'll get on—you see!" shrilled Naomer. "I zink we might have been given a whole day off to collebrate! Bekas, it isn't every day that anyone gets over such a serious illness like Dave Lawder had!"

She added, to the great amusement of Betty and the rest, and Miss Everard, the Fourth Form-mistress who had just appeared at the school door:

"I shall be ze next to crock up, you see! Bekas, nuzzing but work, work, work!"

Miss Everard took the dusky one by the hand.

"As bad as that, is it, Naomer?"

"Yes, and much worse! Eet all I can do to keep fit! I am getting as thin as ze rake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That, it is to be feared,

Her brother in a fix—likely to be expelled from his school for no fault of his own! The very thought is sufficient to make Polly Linton burn with indignation and resolve to clear him at all costs—even at the cost of her own popularity at Morcove!

was all the sympathy Naomer got—a peal of laughter from her listeners in the last moment that was left for boisterousness. They had got indoors now, and the hands of the clock in the outer hall were showing one minute after nine, so it was time to sober down.

Monday morning, and another week of the old, old routine in front of all Morcove's girls! But the Fourth Form was in excellent mood this morning. Miss Everard had proof of that as soon as her class had settled down. She looked to see if Naomer, usually rather prone to shirking, was getting on with the first lesson, and Naomer really was!

Suddenly the class-room door opened and someone entered in a rushing way.

Polly Linton!

Away went all the Form's serious concentration upon work. Nor could Miss Everard find it in her heart to quell the buzz of voices which began with a general and joyful:

"Polly!"

"Ooo, good job, bekas—"
"Morning, Miss Everard!" sparkled the girl who was Morcove's born madeap. "Sorry I'm late! I quite intended to be in by nine."

"That's all right, Polly. You had a long way to come, and the week-end has been a trying one for you, we know. Do you feel like work?"

"Well, yes, I think I do!"

Miss Everard blandly indicated that, in that case, Polly might take her seat.

"Before you start, Polly," the mistress considerably added, "is everything still going on all right at Grangemoor School?"

The girl, who had been at her brother's school over the week-end, nodded happily.

"Dave Lawder is better again this morning," she announced; and the Form murmured its gratification. "He had a splendid night. Mother turned up yesterday afternoon, and they say it seemed to do him good to see her."

"I am sure it would," remarked Miss Everard, well aware how much the Lintons, as a family, were to Dave Lawder. "Your mother has not come on with you to Morcove this morning, Polly?"

"Oh, no! She only stayed the shortest while at Grangemoor. My brother and I only saw her for a few minutes."

Having said all that the mistress appeared to want to know, at present, Polly went on to her seat in class, smiling to right and left upon girls who were beaming a welcome.

"Good old Polly!" Naomer suddenly shrieked, "Ooo—queek—"

"Naomer, quiet—at once!"

"Bekas—"

"Silence! Go on with your work, this instant!"

"With ze greatest of ze pleasure," Naomer muttered to herself, taking up her pen again. "Eet will soon be break, any old how!"

Yet, "break," that morning, seemed a long while coming even to the quietest members of the Form. When at last the signal was given, Polly reached the open air, mobbed around by the whole Form. There were even a few seniors and many of the Fifth Form girls to figure as eager listeners to all that she had to say.

"Oh, yes, girls; there's no question about it this time," she answered all the clamour. "Dave Lawder is going to get well. No more relapses. They've collared the germ-thing, or whatever it was, and he's doing fine!"

"Splendid!" was the chorus.

"The car that ran me over from Grangemoor

this morning didn't bring me farther than Cliff Edge bungalow," Polly rattled on. "I ran the rest of the way to school. Dave's guardian wanted to let the car run me to the porch, but I—somehow I felt like a run."

"Dave's guardian—he was with you?" Betty exclaimed amazedly.

"Yes," Polly nodded. "He had heard of Cliff Edge being to let, and he wanted to see it at once. The doctors say that Dave must have perfect quiet and sea air for a time, and his guardian thinks Cliff Edge may be just the place. He'll send down servants from London—including somebody called 'Janet,' who was Dave's nanny once."

"I like the sound of 'Janet,'" murmured Madge.

"I suppose you saw a good deal of your brother over the week-end?" Polly was asked, a few minutes later. In the interval the crowd had melted away, leaving her with only her particular friends.

"Jack? Oh, yes, I saw him several times, for a bit."

It was an answer that astonished Betty and others, by the changed look which accompanied it.

"Yesterday—Sunday," murmured Betty. "We thought of you as being with Jack mostly all the day!"

"He's in Mr. Lethbury's House; I was put in Head's House, to be with the Head's wife," Polly explained. "The trouble was— But I can't go into that. Of course," she hastily changed the topic, "we can go on with the play now!"

"Rehearsal after tea to-day?" suggested Betty blithely.

"Or could we make it after prep?" was Polly's counter-suggestion. "The fact is—er—I'd like to bike into Barncombe, and if you could come, Pam—"

"To arrange about the making of the stage costumes?" was Pam's quick rejoinder. "Yes, well, any time you like, Polly."

"Thanks! Rehearsal, then, after prep., eh?"

"But, what ze diggings, why not ask to be left off prep.?" cried Naomer. "Bekas—"

If it annoyed Naomer to have her great idea received with a peal of laughter, what must her annoyance have been to find that it was now time to go back into class?

Polly appeared to be as happy as any of them on the return to work; but at heart—

Ah, they little dreamed; little did even her usual confidantes, such as Betty and the rest of the Study 12 coterie, suspect what a burden of anxiety was still hers!

Not on Dave's account—no. That was at an end for ever, thank goodness. But in regard to Jack, her own brother, what anxiety still remained!

Should she tell them or not? That was the question Polly was asking herself, whilst she got along well enough in class, that Monday morning. Had the time come for her to tell her best chums, or should she keep it from them still?

Jack, before she came away from Grangemoor, had said she must use her own discretion. And now, if only because she and her chums had always been so used to sharing one another's troubles, she was inclined to favour speaking out.

There was the deterring thought, however, that secrets once shared have a fatal way of becoming known to everybody—and nobody to blame. So she had still not made up her mind at the midday dismissal.

Later in the day, however, impulse decided for her, as impulse so often did decide where Polly was concerned. They had all hurried over tea, and she and Pam Willoughby were due to set out for the run into Barncombe. Pam was going away from Study 12, to get ready for the trip, when Polly suddenly voiced an arresting:

"Wait a bit, Pam—quiet, all, please! There is something—I want to tell you."

A startled silence fell upon the crowded study. Pam dropped her hand away from the knob of the door, facing round in surprise.

All eyes were upon Polly's face, and with a shock her chums were realising that only now was that face revealing some long-concealed trouble.

A Second Visit.

It was Naomer who ended the great silence. "What ze diggings, Polly! Bekas, I thought everything was all right, now Dave is getting well!"

"More trouble?" came sympathetically from Betty.

"And what about ze rehearsal?" cried Naomer. "Another washout? You say, queek!"

"There will be a rehearsal all right!" said Polly resolutely. "But I have made up my mind, girls, to tell you why I want to go into Barncombe with Pam. You may think it's waste of time on my part, as the dresses for the theatricals are really Pam's concern. But—"

"Don't we know why you want to go, though?" broke in Helen. "You know of a woman in Barncombe who badly needs some dressmaking work, and you're going along with Pam to introduce her."

"That isn't all," answered Polly softly. "The woman is a Mrs. Marlowe, and she has a daughter, Violet Marlowe. If possible, whilst Pam is seeing Mrs. Marlowe about the costumes for the play, I've got to have a talk with the daughter. I've got to find out something from her if I can."

"What do you mean, Polly?" echoed Betty.

"I must find out," Polly said slowly, "something that my brother particularly wants to know. He can't find out for himself; he's gated."

"Gated!"

"And worse than gated," Polly went on grimly; "going to be expelled from his schoo—"

"Polly!" gasped Betty. "Oh!"

"Oh, Polly, you don't mean it!" was Midge's horrified cry. "Your brother—to be expelled?"

"My gwacious—"

"Bekas—"

"Unless, between now and Saturday week, I save him," Polly continued steadily. "It is all due to a feud between Jack and that perfect Gerald Rennard. Rennard stands well with the masters, and Jack has been ordered to hand in a written apology to Rennard, to be publicly read, by Saturday week. He hasn't the slightest intention of apologising."

"Jack has known for some time," Polly went on, "but has not been able to prove that Rennard is a rotter. If only it could be proved, he wouldn't be kept at Grangemoor another day! And so, girls, I've got until Saturday week—not a day longer—to get hold of proof that it is so!"

Betty said "Phew!" Then, bewilderedly: "But the Marlowes in Barncombe, Polly—where do they come in? Does it mean that it depends upon what you can find out from them?"

"Are the Marlowes something to do with the perfect?" was another question fired at Polly.

"That," said Polly, "is what I have to find out! Jack has reason to believe that Rennard is closely related to them, but he must be able to prove it! More than a week ago, Jack wrote to me, imploring me to do my best—"

"Oho!" cried Betty. "And so that, Polly, was why you took to dodging into Barncombe, making the Form so cross by being absent at rehearsal-time!"

Naomer suddenly rushed at Polly, making the most penitent signs.

"I very sorry, Polly, bekas, I was one of the worst to get on ze hindleg about it! Ooo, I have been dropping ze brick over and over again!"

"Yes, well," smiled Pam, "if it's like that, Polly, you want to get away to Barncombe at once!"

"I do!"

"Jolly good luck to you then, Polly!" exclaimed Betty fervently. "And I hope you come back presently, knowing just what you want to find out!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Weally and twuly, Polly deah; had we geals only realised—"

"Oh, of course," said the madcap, going out of the room with Pam; "I knew you'd feel differently if you knew. But mind, not a word to anyone who can't be trusted."



As Polly Linton and Pam reached the door, it was opened by Violet Marlowe to let a tall, elderly gentleman emerge. It was Dave Lawder's guardian. Polly's heart missed a beat. Would he give away her secret?

"Wather not, bai Jove!"

There was delightful sunshine for Polly and Pam as they cycled into Barncombe. About the first mile from Morcove School they ran by Cliff Edge bungalow, and they noticed that the "To let, furnished," board had been taken down. "Then I suppose Dave's guardian has secured the place," was Polly's comment. "Well, it should be just right for anyone getting over a serious illness, to be able to lie out on the veranda on sunny days, getting our famous sea air."

Pam's was only a nodded response. It was not that she lacked sympathy for the lad who had been so ill. As was the case with those who had been left behind in Study 12, Pam was now feeling acutely distressed about Polly's brother.

"Did your mother get to know, Polly, when she was at Grangemoor, yesterday?"

"About Jack? No—thank goodness! She only paid a flying visit, and, in any case, I suppose the Head and his wife felt that it was not a time to talk about that."

The talk lapsed again, and the two juniors were almost into Barncombe when Pam suddenly remarked:

"I suppose that your brother regards the prefect as such an utter rotter for not owning the Marlowes as relations?"

"You've got it," answered Polly, pedalling along close to her schoolmate so as to be able to carry on any conversation in a subdued tone. "Jack's theory is that Mrs. Marlowe is Renard's own mother, and Violet his sister—think of that! Poor people, struggling along— But you'll see for yourself, Pam, when you get there!"

"If it really is so—then I can't think of a word bad enough for the fellow," was Pam's fierce comment.

"But, remember!" whispered Polly. "Don't let the mother and daughter suspect that we want to find out for certain! As Jack says, they'll 'freeze' at once. They are the sort to prefer to suffer themselves rather than see Gerald shown up."

Pam nodded again.

"And we mustn't forget—when we get to Tanner's Lane," added Polly impressively; "not a word that I have a brother at Grangemoor! Then they would 'freeze'! That would just about spoil all our chances!"

"I shan't do any pumping, Polly; leave you to do that," said Pam serenely. "You talk with Violet Marlowe, whilst I see the mother about the dressmaking."

"That's the idea!" agreed Polly.

Barncombe's quaint old High Street was in front of them now, and Polly was cheering up, realising that the second interview was at hand. She and Pam were expected at Tanner's Lane, she knew. If only—oh, if only this second interview could do the trick!

They dismounted at the corner of the by-street and wheeled their machines to the tidy doorstep of No. 5. Even as Polly's hand was going to the old-fashioned knocker, she heard a girlish voice. Violet Marlowe was in the front passage, making some remark—to her mother, Polly guessed. But that guess, in the very next moment, was proved to be a big mistake.

The street-door was drawn open by Violet, to let a caller pass out—a tall, elderly, grey-haired gentleman, at sight of whom Polly's heart missed a beat.

It was Dave Lawder's guardian!

Point Blank.

"VERY well, Miss Marlowe, then it's all arranged?" the gentleman was remarking, as he came out of the humble little home, when he saw the two Morcovians, recognising one of them instantly.

"Hallo, Polly!"

"Oh—er—er—a chum of mine!" flustered Polly stammered, trying to cover her confusion by hurriedly introducing her companion. "Pam Willoughby."

The lawyer, still holding his hat away from his silver-grey head, bowed with great courtliness. Meantime, Violet Marlowe was keeping the street-door open, and her wan face held a faint smile, as if something in this strange encounter was as pleasing as it was amusing.

"And what, pray, are you young ladies doing here?" asked the lawyer blandly. "I have been recommended to these good people, as I wanted some cleaning done at the bungalow. Miss Marlowe will go in and get the place straight, in advance of the servants I shall send down from London."

"Oh—I see!" faltered Polly.

"Yes, well," smiled Pam serenely. "You liked the look of the bungalow, sir?"

"Charmed with it—the position. The very thing! A busy day well spent, my dears. Everything arranged, and now I must find the car and get back to Grangemoor. By the way, Polly, can I take any message to your brother at Grangemoor School?"

Oh, to see the face of Violet Marlowe as she heard those words! Polly could have groaned aloud. Why, oh why must Dave's guardian have mentioned her brother at Grangemoor!

"Well, good-afternoon, young ladies!" he said, when Polly had failed to answer; and he walked away in the direction of High Street, just as a tidy-looking woman came bustling forward, to join Violet Marlowe at the street-door.

There was an eager smile for the two girls in the refined face of Mrs. Marlowe.

"Will you come in, please? It's about the dressmaking for the play? And that gentleman has just called to put some work in our way, too! Violet dear, we are very lucky!"

But the daughter did not appear to be very happy in her mind as she made way for Polly and Pam to enter. With marvellous composure Pam came to Polly's rescue and began at once about the costume-making, suggesting that perhaps she and Mrs. Marlowe could talk things over together, and as for Polly—was there any need for Polly to stay, after all?

"You have one or two shops to go to?" Pam serenely reminded Polly.

"Yes—er—"

"I'll find you in the High Street, Polly!"

Pam said it, whilst accepting the mother's gestured invitation to enter the small, front parlour, where the dressmaking was done. Nor would Polly have hesitated about effacing herself, but as she turned to leave the house there came a request from Violet for: "Just a minute, please!"

"You might come through to the kitchen, miss," said Violet Marlowe, leading the way thither.

It must have been a wonderfully tidy kitchen for Polly to note that about it, in her present state of mingled agitation and despair. She found herself alone there with the daughter of the humble home, whose look was ominously reproachful.

"You have a brother at Grangemoor School!" came instantly and sternly. "Miss, you did not tell me that at the first meeting. You evaded the question—for I remember asking you! You deceived me—deliberately!"

Polly reddened. Speak she could not, needing time to formulate an answer that would not make matters worse. They were bad enough!

"Now I do not know what to think of you," Violet Marlowe resumed sadly. "I thought you only very kind in seeking us out to put work in our way. But evidently you had some other motive!"

In the midst of all her distress of mind, Polly was yet realising that the girl's speech was educated, even cultured. Yet mother and daughter were in such humble circumstances as these!

"What do you mean?" Polly said. "Why should you think I evaded your question, Violet Marlowe? What should it matter to you if I have a brother at Grangemoor or not?"

"You don't understand," Violet Marlowe said, almost in a whisper. "I think someone at Grangemoor School has set you on to—drawing me out."

Again the flush returned to Polly's cheeks.

"You have a brother there, Miss Linton, and you did not wish me to know it!"

It was on the tip of Polly's tongue to say: "Then what about you? Haven't you a brother at Grangemoor, too—a prefect of the name of Gerald Rennard?" If she refrained, it was only because she felt sure that such a pointed question would go like a dagger into this other girl's heart.

That this was no mistaken idea was evidenced by Violet Marlowe's sudden anguished murmur:

"Now I do not know what to do, and mother will be just as upset! You have brought us work only as a means of getting to know us and of trying to find out—"

"But—oh, please!" was Polly's half-frantic entreaty. "There has been nothing mean or underhanded in it all, I am sure! The needlework is a help, isn't it?"

"A tremendous help—a blessing," Violet acknowledged readily.

"Then you will be that much better off, anyhow! As for wanting to find out things," Polly floundered on, "even there I meant no harm to you, and would have taken jolly good care that no harm came. You and your mother should be all the better in the long run. My brother and I—we both felt sure of that!"

Her thought of that, soul of chivalry that he was, brought a rush of self-defensive words:

"And my brother, let me tell you, is a real sport! He would rather die than gain by anybody's loss! At this moment he is—he is— It is only because he is so splendid, that things are so hard for him! And as his sister, I want to help him; I've simply got to help him, there! If you had a brother—"

Polly broke off. Her listener had turned very pale.

The sudden pause brought to both girls the pleasant murmur of talk going on in the front parlour.

"It is no use," Polly burst out at last in her downright way. "Trying to find out in secret



Betty Barton gazed witheringly at the Fifth-Form inter-rupters. "Are you going to stay?" she demanded. "That depends!" laughed their rivals. "Are you girls going to sing? If so, we're off!"

has failed, and it has given you offence. Now, to be quite open! Have you a brother at Grangemoor School? Is his surname a different one from yours, for some reason or other? Is his name—Gerald Rennard?"

Violet Marlowe turned to the bright stove to shift aside a kettle which was boiling so merrily that its lid chattered.

"You have not answered," exclaimed Polly miserably. "You didn't like my evading your question at our first meeting—although I did have a good excuse! Now you evade me!"

Violet Marlowe turned round, looking Polly straight in the eyes.

"We are at cross purposes, miss, and no good will come of talk. I begin to see that your motive for evasions may have been just as honourable as any motive of mine could be. Very well then; I am no longer offended."

"That's good of you," gulped Polly.

"We will let it rest at that, miss. About the needlework—mother will probably go on with it, simply because she would hate to let you down. Just as I shall go in to clean that bungalow out Morocco way, although, if I had known—" She paused, frowning; and then:

"But it means that we shall probably leave Barncombe as soon as possible. It won't do for us to live here."

Polly's heart was sinking. "I am certain—as certain now as Jack has been," she was thinking. "But what proof have I obtained—what proof?"

The dressmaker's daughter moved towards the passage, as if to conduct the schoolgirl to the street-door.

"You were to meet your schoolfellow in the High Street, miss? Very well then! But one thing more—if you still go on trying to find out things, you won't succeed. I tell you that, quite plainly. Wild horses would not drag it out of me!"

Polly gave a wild gesture.
"You sound as if I have done you the unkindest thing, Violet Marlowe! And yet—"
"You have given me great pain; but I have said I believe you did it with honourable motives."

The speaker signed to Polly to go before her along the narrow, dingy passage, and the street-door was reached without another word being said. Freezing! Ah, how correctly Jack had guessed what it would be if these Marlowes did but suspect that someone at Grangemoor had instigated the inquiry!

They were not going to divulge anything. Instead, they would go right away from the district, all for a motive that one could only admire. Not through any disclosure made by them was one of their own flesh and blood to be shown up!

There may have been a son and a brother who had broken their hearts by his own heartlessness, treating them as cast-offs. But that was to remain their private grief, not become his public disgrace.

"Good-afternoon, miss," Violet Marlowe said simply; and Polly was out in the mean by-street, with the door closed upon her.

She took hold of her bicycle and walked away with it, emerging upon the main street.

"Phew!" she fumed, thinking of the way matters had gone. "Oh, dash!"

A great rage suddenly swept through her—rage against Violet Marlowe even, for having thus ended her quest. All very well for that girl to be loyally silent about her cad of a brother; but what about Jack—what about Polly's own brother?

Then, as suddenly as it had come, the wild rage passed. Polly felt quite ashamed of the paroxysm. How could one possibly think less of Violet Marlowe for the attitude she had taken up? No, of course; it was all to her credit that she could be so loyal to her scapegrace brother. Besides, it had not been put to the girl that Jack was going to be expelled. Violet did not know that matters were as serious as that.

"Yes, well," came Pam's characteristic murmur, as she rejoined Polly all at once. "That was a rather bad mistake, Polly!"

"Awful! Couldn't have been worse. Oh!" Polly stamped.

"We'll get back to school now, I suppose?"
"I suppose so! Yes, come on. There's prep. to be done in time for the rehearsal."

"I liked Dave's guardian," Pam remarked, a little later, cycling along the open road with Polly. "He's a dear."

"He should have been at the other end of the world! In his musty, fusty, dusty old office in town—ugh!" fumed Polly. "He just about dropped the biggest brick that ever was!"

"I know, dear. After that, you couldn't hope to do much good, could you? Did Violet Marlowe freeze?"

"Freeze! Zero wasn't the word for it."

"Even though you made a clean breast of things—as I suppose you had to?"

"I said as much as I dared," sighed Polly, grinding along on her unrolled bicycle. "One thing I simply could not explain, Pam—how

could I? That Jack owes it all to Gerald Renard that he's to be expelled in a fortnight! If you had seen Violet Marlowe's face—well!"

There was an understanding nod from Pam.
"But cheer up," she advised calmly. "I wouldn't despair, Polly."

"Oh, I am not going to despair!" Polly declared, with a sudden brilliant smile. "You never know! When you think of Dave—how ill he was last Saturday night, and how much better he is now! No, I don't despair, Pam; but I have a feeling that I shall be pretty short with everybody at rehearsal later on."

Polly and the Play!

SOMEbody coming into the music-room at Morcove School tip-toed as soon as she saw Naomer, all by herself at the piano.

It was the opening chorus to "Merrie Morcove!" that Naomer was picking out with one finger.

"Bekas, what ze diggings, I will get him right!" the dusky one said to herself, unaware of Madge Minden's stealthy advance from behind. "O," Naomer sang to herself, making a fresh start upon the keyboard, "O, we are ze girls of— No, he doesn't sound right!"

Then a pair of hands came round in front of her eyes and closed over them gently.

"Polly Linton!" guessed blindfolded Naomer. And she went on picking out the tune.

"Bekas, eet make no difference to me whether I see ze notes or not," she very truthfully remarked. "Ah, bah, here is how I play ze old joanner!"

The dusky one's hands having started to prance up and down the keys pretty heavily, Madge thought it high time to drop her own hands away from that pair of sparkling eyes.

"I knew it was not Polly!" cried the dusky one. "Bekas Polly would have pulled my hair before she let go! Queek, Madge, sit down and play ze dance I am to do, before ze others come in!"

Thus, a minute later, there was an inrush of other members of the Fourth Form, just when Naomer, on an imagined stage, was doing her own special dance, into which there crept many an Eastern touch.

"Encore!" applauded Betty gaily; but Polly said:

"Hop it, Naomer! No time to waste! Hurry up, girls, and close the door, and never mind those Fifth-Formers. This evening we are going to get a proper rehearsal!"

"At last!" added Helen Craig. "Cheers!"

There was, however, some further delay in getting the door closed, to ensure that privacy which serious rehearsing demands. A few tire-some Fifth Form girls had followed the juniors to the music-room, and those bigger girls took some keeping out!

Then, when the door had been made fast against the ribald crew, not all the commotion made by the Fourth Form musical comedy party could drown various scuffling cries from outside.

"Early doors, sixpence entry!" was one raucous cry. "Programme! One penny the programme!"

"Not worth it!"

"Please, constable, is this where they are giving 'Merry Morcove'?" appealed an old-maidish voice; and the make-believe policeman answered, with suitable gruffness:

"Dunno about 'Merrie Morcove,' ma'am, but this here is the lunatic asylum!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Hey, do you hear that, you in there?" And the music-room door was thumped and banged.

The juniors had heard, right enough. Polly, already stationed so as to conduct the rehearsal, looked grim.

"Take no notice and they'll go away," she sighed. "We had better begin with the opening chorus. Ready? One, two, thr—"

But already a travesty of the opening chorus had started in the passage:

"O, we are the girls of Polly's Form,
Juniors, mostly potty!"

Polly raged around, hands over her ears.

"Ha, ha, ha!" the mockers outside pealed.

"Over again, all!"
And they sang the whole
verse this time:

"O, we are the girls of
Polly's Form,
Juniors, mostly potty!
We think we can act,
and dance, and
sing,
But Morcove
knows we
are dotty!"

"Ugh!" Polly
raved.

"Disgwaceful!"
Paula said with
great indignation,
from where she was
lined up with the
rest of the chorus.

Then Betty, as
captain, went to the
door and opened it.

"Are you girls go-
ing to stay?" she
demanded.

"Ah!" that de-
pends!" one of the
Fifth Form teasers
answered. "Are you
girls going to sing?
If so, we're off!"

Shrieks of
laughter from the
teasers.

"Shut the door!"
Polly stormed at
Betty, who accord-
ingly slammed it.

"Look here," Polly glaringly addressed the
chorus, as if they had been causing the trouble,
"we are going to begin!"

"All right zen, begin! Get ze jerk on, Polly,
bekas—"

"H'rrp! One word more from you, Naomer;
one word!"

"Morcove calling!" cried someone in the pas-
sage, imitating the voice of a wireless announcer.
"Miss Polly Linton will now sing, 'I want to
see my br-r-rotter!'"

"Hooray! Order, please! Hush!"

In the music-room, Polly waited until there
was such silence outside that she thought a start
might be made.

"We'll miss the opening chorus to-night," she
whispered. "Let's begin with—"

Thump! the door was pounded.

"I want my money back—do you hear in
there? Charging a shilling for the stalls, and
they don't tip up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ladies and gentlemen," spoke a very lofty
voice, "we are the girls of Morcove School—yes,
wather! Don't run away! By kind permission
of the Fifth Form—"

The rest was loud cheering.

Something had got to be done. Every junior's
face was expressing that opinion.

A whispered debate was held in the music-
room. The juniors had to speak very, very
softly, for there was sudden silence outside the
room, suggesting that the teasers were on the
alert.

As it was certain that another attempt to start

the rehearsal would
only bring fresh dis-
turbances, a sortie
was decided upon.
One great swoop,
scattering the lot of
thom!

Betty tip-toed
across to the door,
her Form-mates
ranged behind her.
A pause, and then
the captain whipped
open the door,
charged out—and
found a deserted
passage!

The "enemy" had
fitted. This may
have been because a
charge by over-
whelming numbers
had been expected;
or again, it may
have been simply
because someone
had been heard com-
ing this way from
the stairs. For at
this instant a girl
even older than the
oldest Morcove
senior appeared be-
fore the juniors, in-
stantly exclaiming
chummily:

"Hallo, girls! I'm
in time to see the
rehearsal?"

There was one
great and joyous



"Hullo, girls, am I in time to see the rehearsal?" asked
a familiar voice. There was a united cry from Betty
and the rest. "Lady Evelyn! How nice!"

cry from Betty & Co.

"Lady Evelyn!"

"Hooray! How nice!"

"Gorjus!" capered Naomer. "Bekas, you will
be able to tell Lady Lundy what a fine play
he is!"

As for Polly, she felt a personal relief as well
as great delight. Here was youthful Lady
Evelyn Knight, only daughter of the Earl and
Countess of Lundy, and it was obvious that the
visit confirmed the forgiveness which Polly had
seen in Lady Lundy's sweet smile the other day.

"Come in—come in, Lady Evelyn!" dinned
the juniors.

"I want to," was the laughed response. "It's
ages since I've seen anything of you all! But
mother is very hopeful of holding a matinée at
the Castle that will help local charities."

"Hooray!"

"Well, we hope we can deliver the goods," cried Betty. "Thanks to Polly! May I introduce Polly Linton," joked the captain, "the famous playwright? The world's greatest school-girl prodigy!"

"We've met before, I think?" Lady Evelyn carried on the joke. "Oh, and I've a note for you, Polly, from mother."

"What about me for a poggidy?" yelled Naomer. "You wait till you see me do my dance!"

Polly, meanwhile, was ripping open the note, and those of her chums who watched could tell, as she read it, that it was giving her further delight.

"Your headmistress is coming along in a minute," Lady Evelyn gaily chatted on. "Any chance of seeing the whole thing rehearsed?"

"You shall hear every line!" declared Betty.

"This note—it is good of Lady Lundy!" burst out Polly. "She says we can fix three weeks from next Wednesday for the matinee. It is the earliest date she can arrange—and it will do splendidly, won't it, girls?"

"Fine!"

"A good way off, but all the better," said Betty. "We've had hindrances and upsets. Polly here has been bothered out of her wits!"

"I've been a great trial, I know that," grimaced the Form's playwright. "But—three weeks! Just right!"

Even as she said it, however, with every sign of enthusiasm, there was a pang at her heart on account of Jack. Three weeks.

"He'll have been expelled by then!" was the thought that marred all her delight. "Oh, what's the use of going on with anything! How can I? And yet I must!"

Yes, she must bear up, for the Form's own sake. She herself had started the whole enterprise by taking it into her head to write the play at a time when— Ah, what a care-free girl she had been then!

Miss Somerfield came in, accompanied by Miss Everard, and these distinguished visitors were also provided with seats well clear of the "stage." Then the rehearsal began, and all went well.

Time after time the privileged audience of three clapped an item and pronounced great praise. Time after time they laughed uproariously over some bit of nonsense.

Polly, of course, was not in charge throughout. She figured in the play, and her part was a leading one—not because she had put herself forward, but because the Form had insisted that she must play a big part. Imagine a Fourth Form play without its madcap! This evening she was word-perfect, and the only trouble was that she was so amusing, girls who were acting could not go on at times, they were thrown into such convulsions.

Betty and others did not say so; but they—the few chums who knew—were marvelling at Polly's ability to rehearse the farcical part with such success when there was so much trouble upon her mind. Her brother under threat of expulsion from his school, and Polly at her wits' end to save him.

She heard from him a couple of mornings later, but it was only a short note to say that Dave was making splendid progress. They hoped soon to be able to get him to the bungalow, where he could convalesce under the most favourable conditions.

Not a word did the note contain about Jack

himself. And so Polly knew that matters were unchanged; the outlook was as black as ever. How, indeed, could any change come about at that end?

By a strange fatality it had fallen to her to do the one thing by which Jack could have been saved. And not only had she failed up till now, but these last days of the time limit must flit by—uselessly!

If only that Marlowe girl had never found out that she, Polly, had a brother at Grangemoor School! What a difference it would have meant!

The hour came by when Polly, poor girl, had to write and tell her brother what a catastrophe there had been. The fact that he, in his letter, had been bravely silent about his own impending fate did not mean that she must be silent, leaving him to wonder how she was getting on and to hope for the best.

Yet she wrote that letter and dropped it into the Morcove post-box, to go away afterwards and play up for her side in a keen hockey match. Stormwood School had sent over a team to play Betty's team that Wednesday afternoon. Morcove won by a single goal. It was touch and go! And victory might have gone to the visitors if Polly had allowed her private anxiety to spoil her play.

In the evening there was another rehearsal, and again she was equal to the effort that it demanded to bear up.

Followed two more days of schoolwork unrelieved by any "halfer." Then Saturday came round again, and the week was gone—one of Jack's last two weeks at his school!

In the gathering dusk of that Saturday evening Polly drifted off alone for a saunter round the school grounds. She had these few minutes of freedom in between one activity and another. Games, the play, school-work—what there was to do always! But as for being able to do anything for Jack—no. There was no hope now.

Suddenly Betty was with her, with a smile that was eloquent of loyalty and sympathy.

"They're wondering what's become of you, Polly! Coming in, dear?"

"Yes, I suppose so, Betty! But——"

"I know, Polly. And you are being awfully brave. It has been a trying time for you lately, and no mistake. This time last week—last Saturday evening—Dave was not expected to live."

Then Polly suddenly turned to her best chum with a brightening face.

"Betty, I'm glad you reminded me of that. I said it had taught me never to despair, and I have been getting down—again."

"We all must, dear, at times, when things seem——"

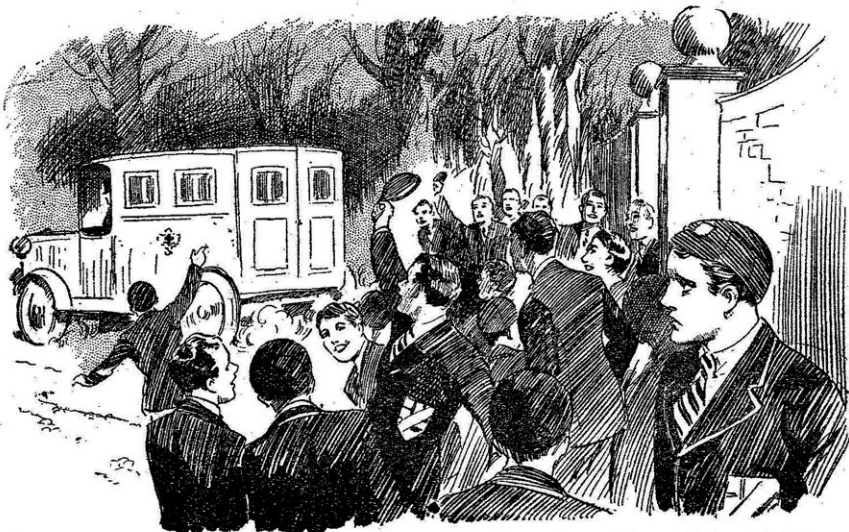
"I mustn't! Got too much to do! Oh, come along in, Betty; and if the others are willing, why not have a rehearsal?"

No Other Way!

NOT often did Miss Somerfield or any of her colleagues call upon a Morcove girl to run an errand. When it did happen, it generally meant a little treat for the girl who chanced to be dropped upon.

And that was what the headmistress thought it would be for Polly when she called that junior to her after school on the following Monday.

"Polly, you can go—you'll enjoy the run," said Miss Somerfield, having caught Morcove's madcap at the porch. "To Cliff Edge bungalow, Polly, with a message that has just come through on the 'phone."



Down to the gates the boys of Grangemoor School followed the ambulance that was taking Dave Lawder away on his convalescence. Jack Linton turned away—alone.

Polly felt the blood instantly pulsing faster in her veins. Cliff Edge bungalow—where Violet Marlowe was cleaning and caretaking!

"Dave Lawder's guardian rang me up to ask if I could pass on a message to the young person who is working there—they are not on the phone at Cliff Edge," pursued Miss Somerfield lightly. "Simply to say, Polly, that two servants from London are coming to-morrow instead of the day after, and will she get in things from Barncombe—groceries, and so on."

Polly's only response was a mechanical nod. Little did the headmistress, passing on, imagine what agitation had seized the girl.

To meet Violet Marlowe again! They had seen nothing of each other since last Monday, when all had ended so hopelessly for Polly. Now she felt a kind of dread of another encounter, and yet something whispered that perhaps—perhaps good might result!

The other juniors had already rushed out to games. Polly was to have joined them for a half-hour's practice before tea, but she suddenly streaked across the grass to Betty, panting the explanation:

"Got to go across to Cliff Edge bungalow, Betty—Miss Somerfield's doing."

"What! Phew! Shall I come, too?"

"No, thanks, Betty. I almost think I had better go alone."

And with that she was off, going down to the gates at a run. It would have been quicker to seize hold of a bicycle, but Polly was in no real haste. Her running only arose from agitation; out on the road, she dropped to a saunter, wanting to feel calmer than this before she reached the bungalow.

All the nervousness was still with her, however, as she neared the lonely, picturesque home-stead, where it basked in the sunshine on the

grassy cliff-top. Was it to prove a bit of great good luck that she had been picked for the errand? Or was the encounter to mean nothing but renewed embarrassment for both of them?

Smoke was curling from one or two chimneys, and Polly could tell, even as she made her way up the gravel drive to the porch, that hard work had been put in to get the place to rights. The brass rim of the bell-press was as shiny as could be.

Polly rang, and heard a brisk step bringing someone to the door. Now, if only this had been a chance for friendly talk! If only Violet Marlowe had never been put on her guard!

The door opened, and Polly noticed how the dressmaker's daughter recoiled at sight of her, letting a pained look replace a pleasant smile. It was as if Violet Marlowe were exclaiming:

"You!"

"I have a message," said Polly, and she gave it, aware of her listener remaining "frozen."

"Need you have come with the message?"

"Miss Somerfield picked upon me."

"You might have got some other girl to come in your place?"

Perhaps it was wrong of Polly to feel so stung, but she was only human.

"Oh, what I might have done!" she cried out irritably. "I might have cared nothing when I learned that my brother at Grangemoor School was in such trouble! I might not be caring that these are his last days at the school—a school that used to be proud of him!"

The outburst took startling effect upon the dressmaker's daughter. After recoiling a little, with a sudden expression of horror, she made a sign to Polly to enter.

"No, I won't come in," Polly declined, already regretting the angry exclamations. "You told me last time I saw you—"

"Come inside, please!" the other girl implored, and then Polly passed with her to one of the sitting-rooms.

There was a good fire going to keep the place well-aired, and the French windows stood open to that sunny veranda where Dave would be able to lie back in his invalid chair on suitable days, enjoying the sea air and the ocean view. The room showed what hard work Violet had put in. It was spotless.

"Your brother is leaving Grangemoor School?" Violet resumed tensely. "You did not tell me that before!"

"He will have to leave. There is until next Saturday evening to save him," Polly said heavily. "If by then he has not handed in a written apology to a certain prefect, to be read before the whole school, he will be expelled."

"And that prefect's name?"

"Gerald Rennard!"

Was it another agonising shock to Violet Marlowe to hear that name given in association with such an appalling situation? This time Polly could not tell. The other girl's face had become inscrutable.

"I did not tell you that other time, I know," Polly spoke on drearily. "I felt—I felt I mustn't go so far. But I am not a good hand at keeping things back really. Jack and I are alike in that. It's a fault, of course. It is the fault that got him into his present trouble. He said things about Gerald Rennard when that fellow was made a prefect—said that he wasn't fit to be a pro."

"You mean," faltered Violet Marlowe, "he spoke without being able to prove the truth of it?"

"Yes. But one can be sure of a thing without being able to prove it!"

"Of what is your brother so sure, then, about that prefect?"

"Shall I tell you in plain words?"

"Please!"

"Jack is sure that Gerald Rennard is your own brother, and that as a brother he has acted shamefully. There—I've said it! Jack is certain he has disowned both you and his mother! And is it to be supposed that Grangemoor School would not uphold Jack, if it were proved? The very headmaster, who intends to expel Jack—wouldn't he alter his mind at once, knowing that Jack is being incriminated on the word of such a fellow? Is it right—?"

Polly broke off to collect herself. Then: "But you," she resumed in a voice changed to intense sadness—"you cannot be expected to put my brother's welfare before your own brother! Oh, I know, I can guess how you feel! All the same, it—is going to be terribly hard on Jack. He doesn't deserve it."

Violet had listened, half-turned away. Now she looked round at Polly.

"To talk like that, miss, is to assume that Gerald Rennard is my brother—"

"Well, isn't he—isn't he? You would like to be able to say 'No!' But—"

"I am entitled to say 'No,'" came the steady answer. "I am entitled to say, as I did that other time, that wild horses would not drag it out of me. And you'll certainly do no better with my mother, in Barncombe."

The speaker added quietly:

"Any day now I may be told I am wanted here at the bungalow no longer. My mother finishes the work on the stage costumes by

Friday. We gave notice to leave our little home last week. On Saturday we leave Barncombe."

"Oh!" Polly exclaimed distractedly. "It is too bad! You can't be wanting to go away!"

"One hasn't always to do what one wants," said Violet Marlowe, drifting to the window.

Polly took a raging turn about the room, then stopped.

"It is too bad that there should be this cruel upset for you and your mother, just as there is a cruel hardship upon my brother—simply that a mean sneak may be allowed to go on, not shown up! It amounts to that! Gerald Rennard is your brother, and you'll put up with anything, you'll let Jack suffer anything, rather than have Grangemoor School know how worthless Gerald Rennard is!"

"I am very sorry about your brother—"

"Oh, to say you are sorry—"

"Very well then," shrugged Violet Marlowe, crossing towards the room-door. "I am utterly heartless—"

"So you must be! I'll never speak to you again after this!" Polly cried out wildly, striding away to the front door. "Never!"

"It will be better, perhaps, if we never meet again," the dressmaker's daughter agreed.

At the porch Polly flashed round.

"No, I won't say it!" she decided, and never yet had she put greater restraint upon herself.

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, miss!"

There was calm politeness in Violet Marlowe's remaining at the porch door for a few moments, watching Polly go striding down to the roadside gateway. But afterwards—

Afterwards Violet Marlowe went back to the sitting-room, pondering things so deeply that presently she began to murmur softly to herself:

"His last few days at a school that used to be proud of him—so she said! To be expelled—the brother of a girl like that! Well may she think me heartless! But I am not—I am not!"

Rising, she moved about the room in a reflective manner for several minutes. Then, drawing up a chair to a writing-table, she sat down and set a sheet of notepaper in front of her.

Not at once did she begin to write her letter. There were some moments during which she sat with her face buried in her hands. But at last she dipped a pen and headed the letter with her Barncombe address.

As for the address on the envelope, when finally the missive was ready for the post, that was:

Mr. Gerald Rennard,
Grangemoor School,
North Devon.

"Rennard"—the Fox!

GERALD RENNARD stood alone in his study at Grangemoor School, frowning at a letter which he had received from No. 5, Tanner's Lane, Barncombe.

Confounded nuisance! Here was that sister of his writing to ask—nay, to order—him to take steps to save Jack Linton from being expelled!

If this was very annoying to the prefect, there was, at least, one paragraph in the letter that afforded him a good deal of relief, not to say sly amusement.

"Polly Linton does not know that I have made up my mind that Jack Linton shall not be expelled. Of course, to have told her that I was

going to write to you would have amounted to an admission that I have a brother at Grangemoor—a thing I have not admitted yet."

Perfect Rennard whistled against the edge of the sheet of notepaper, pondering the position. If he did not clear Jack Linton, his sister had threatened to make their relationship known. He had always dreaded the "disgrace" of its becoming known that he had a mother and sister in extremely poor and struggling circumstances. Hang it, he thought, why had they been so squeamish in the past, refusing help from the same source which had enabled him to go to Grangemoor and want for nothing?

The moment Grangemoor School discovered that he had refused to have anything to do with his needy mother and sister, Jack Linton's case against him would be substantiated. He would be called a cad, unworthy to be a prefect—all that Jack Linton had said about him would be found to be true.

Suddenly, as if a way out had occurred to his naturally crafty mind, he read the letter right through once again.

Then he grinned.

"Got it! That's the idea," he chuckled to himself. "I'll put Violet's mind at ease by promising, and then—she'll never be any wiser even if I don't keep the promise! She and mother are going right away from Barncombe as soon as possible. So is it likely that they will ever hear, even if Jack Linton is expelled after all?"

He went on in a changed tone of bitter malice: "And he has got to go, that fellow! Any attempt on my part to beg him off will make the school suspicious. It isn't as though he were whining for a patched-up peace. He is still as much against me as ever."

Glancing at his watch, the prefect moved to

the table. He intended to get the deceiving letter written at once, and posted—not in the school's post-box—falsely promising his sister that he would make it all right about Jack Linton. She needn't worry any more; only let her keep her mouth shut!

Even as Rennard sat down to write, however, the door opened and his own Housemaster came in.

"You'd like to see Dave Lawder before he goes, Rennard? They are bringing him down to the ambulance now, to run him to that bungalow where he is to convalesce."

"Oh, yes, sir! Good!" cried the prefect, who had stood up very politely when Mr. Lethbury entered. "Are you going down, too, sir?"

The gowned master nodded, and the pair of them kept together on the way downstairs and then across the grass to where, outside the "san," a hired ambulance was even now receiving the blanket-swathed patient.

All Grangemoor seemed to be there, putting no restraint upon its jubilation. Nor was nurse really cross with Dave when he drew an arm from the warm blanket to wave to all his school-mates.

Mr. Lethbury and Gerald Rennard came up only at the last moment, when the vehicle was ready to glide away.

"Now, boys, stand back! That's enough," the Housemaster genially admonished the frenzied mob. Then, noticing one boy who went on speaking to the occupant of the ambulance through the glass:

"Linton!"—sharply. "Stand away, there!"

Afterwards Mr. Lethbury turned to the prefect with a grieved expression.

"That Linton again! I don't know how it is, Rennard! And he has done nothing yet about that apology!"

AS usual, the appearance of the Morcovce Magazine means that your Editor has to content himself with a half-page letter this week! Still, being, as you know (I hope); a most uncomplaining and retiring individual, I make no complaint. But don't be surprised if, on opening your SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN next week, you discover that I have appropriated a page and a half for myself to make up for it!

Still, perhaps it is just as well that I haven't any too much space at my disposal this week, or I might be tempted to blurt out a certain B-G S-C-T which I have now already trembling on my tongue-tip (or should I say finger-tips, as I'm typing?). I wonder if you will guess what this concerns? Perhaps, if you read my letter very closely you will get a clue. Now then—attention, please!

The long complete Morcovce story you will be reading next week brings the present series to a close. I think you will be able to get some idea of what a splendid story it is and how greatly you are going to enjoy it when I tell you the title. It is, "WHEN DAVE LAWDER TOOK CHARGE."



Your Editor is always delighted to hear from you, whenever you care to write. His address is "The Schoolgirls' Own," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be enclosed for a reply.

For weeks now Polly Linton has been worried by the problem of her brother's disfavour at his school, and she has found it all the more difficult because she has not had the help of that most staunch of chums, Dave Lawder. But now that Dave is so much better in health, and now that he is as close to Morcovce as Cliff Edge bungalow, perhaps he will be able to help! You will love reading just what part he plays and just how things work out. Also, the great play comes off at last. So, altogether, you can imagine this is a story not to be missed on any account!

Splendid further instalments of "CINDERELLA OF THE CASTLE" and "PARTED FROM HER MOTHER," and another fascinating complete story of the chums of Foulks' Circus, entitled "THE RIVAL STARS," and featuring Mimi, the girl trapeze artiste, combine to make next Tuesday's SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN a really great number.

By the way, this is the last of the circus complete stories, but don't let that make you too downcast. Be sure to read my letter next week.

Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

"No, sir!"
 "M well! He knows what it is to be for him if he remains as obdurate as this," was the Housemaster's comment as he walked off.

The ambulance, with Dave's guardian sitting next to the driver, and nurse riding inside with tucked-up Dave, to see him safely through, glided away.

"Hurrah! Good old Dave! Next term, Davey boy!" vociferated Grangemoor School.
 "For-r-r-r—"

And the singing started:

"For-r-r he's a jolly good fellow,
 And he's a jolly good fellow,
 And Dave's a jolly good fe-all-low,
 And so say all of us!"

"Hip, hip—
 Hooray!"

Down to the gates they chased the departing



Is Your
 Answer Here?

K. HAMER (North Wales).—Thank you for your letter. I am pleased to know how much you like the Free Gifts. I hope your brother's toe is quite better again. Yes, do write just as often as you like.

EVELYN PALMER (Stoke-on-Trent).—Thank you for sending me your little joke. How do you like Miss Marston's new serial? Please write me a longer letter next time, and tell me more about yourself.

LILAC AND LAVENDER (Manchester).—So glad you like THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN so much; thank you for your good wishes. No; the story you mention was not a true one, but it was very popular with all my readers. How are you liking Elise Probyn's present serial?

"HILDA" (Prestwick).—Glad you had your wish gratified before you had even expressed it, Hilda, and I hope you have liked every one of the circus tales. Hilda means "Battle maid," Dorothy, "a gracious gift," Helen, "light."

MOLLY TARTLETT (Salisbury).—What an uncommon pet you have, Molly, haven't you? None of my other readers possesses a jackdaw, as far as I know. He sounds a most amusing bird! I'm glad you like "Parted From Her Mother," and that you enjoyed the "Popular Book of Girls' Stories."

BLUE-EYED DOLLY (Derry).—I'm afraid I couldn't answer in the next issue of SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, Dolly. You see, that issue and several after it were already printed when I got your letter! Glad to hear your next letter will be "a very long one"; you must tell me all about your pets and your doings and how you are getting on at school. You won't be at all nervous next time, will you, because really, you know, there's no need!

vehicle, shouting and cheering. Then the ambulance picked up speed on the open road, and Grangemoor saw it pass from sight. Jack Linton saw it for the last time, and he turned away—alone.

"Ah, well," Jack thought, "I shall soon be gone, too."

He passed Gerald Rennard near the porch of Lethbury's. The prefect was standing with many other fellows. He glanced at Jack, but the others did not; they had no use for Jack, these days, believing that he had followed a perverse and quite unjustifiable course in regard to Rennard.

With a stern-set face Jack went in and mounted to his study. He kicked the door shut behind him—slam!—and crossed to the window.

Tuesday. Only three more days and then Saturday. How the time had flown since he was given that fortnight in which to make up his mind to apologise publicly to Rennard!

Very lonely it seemed; lonelier than ever, now that Dave was gone. Even though he had been away from the study for such a long while, quite lost to the life of the school, Dave had been at hand, over there in the "san." Jack had been allowed in to see him at times.

Now he was gone, and there was nobody else. Michael Heriot—Jack had even fallen out with Michael over this business about Rennard. Michael would be sorry some day. All Grangemoor would be sorry. Or would it never be known, even in years to come, just what sort of a fellow the school had had in its "perfect" prefect?

Jack shrugged dolefully, and turned away from the window.

"Must write to Polly later on," he decided stoically. "She and Dave—there's nobody else to touch them! If ever a sister did her best by an unlucky brother, Polly has done her best by me!"

And so, by the same night mail that took Gerald Rennard's deceiving letter to his slighted sister, a letter went upon its way from Jack to Polly.

It would not have been Jack to write anything but a cheery, still hopeful letter to his sister. She mustn't worry. After all, they had thought it was all U.P. with Dave, and yet he had come through! One never knew!

But Jack, smoothing a clenched fist over the gummed-up envelope, after he had finished the letter, had felt that the end was at hand for him.

Here was another day as good as ended, and all that it had done for him had been to set him and Dave far apart, so that now he was as lonely as all this.

Lonely! And with nothing to do now but resignedly await the end!

Polly had done her best, but it seemed as if she had been able to accomplish nothing—nothing at all!

And that was exactly what Polly herself was thinking as she paced gloomily up and down the quadrangle at Morcove School, unable to concentrate on anything but her brother's plight!

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

Three more days! What can Polly do in three days to save her brother from expulsion and undeserved disgrace? You must not miss reading next week's great long complete Morcove story to learn what happens now! Entitled "WHEN DAVE LAWDER TOOK CHARGE," it is a tale you will love reading, so order your SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN for next Tuesday right away!

THE MORCOVE MAGAZINE

No. 48

Week ending, March 14th, 1931

SPRING IS HERE!

By BETTY BARTON



HO'D be an editress? No sooner does spring send her first messengers than the spring poets spring out of their winter sleep. This year there has been an even greater crop of poets in the Fourth Form, and I have been almost snowed under with verses from would-be contributors.

Take this one, for instance:

"Ze skrumtchus spring he is here at last,
And ze leafs zey are on ze bough,
And ze nastiful snows and ze fogs are passed,
So I'll go to ze tuck-shop now!"

I need hardly tell you who is the authoress of that particular effusion. I also think you will be able to guess who has written the following:

"The spwing, the spwing, the glowious spwing,
The birds gaily sing as they fly on the wing.
They bwing, they bwing their message of
spwing,
While they cling on the wing to the spwing that
they bwing!"

There are thirty verses altogether in this "poem" of Paula's—yes, it was Paula who perpetrated it—and the word "spring" appears no fewer than two hundred and ten times!



Polly Linton's attempt is, alas! more truthful than poetic. Here it is:

"Look out for thunder,
And look out for flood,
There's no need to wonder
At oceans of mud;
For storms off the coast
This season will bring;
Just let me hear you boast
About 'glorious spring!'"

I very greatly fear I cannot quote more here, for the number that I have received is legion, so I ask you, as a friend, no more poems to me send, or I'll wish that I were in another region!

For a hard-working editress deserves some peace, I guess, so with poems of this description please be sparing; lest the verses that you write us, shall be used for fire-lighters when the next time study tea we are preparing!

Goodness gracious, I believe I've fallen a victim to "spring poeitis" myself! Good-bye!

MORCOVE NEWS

By Our Special Reporter POLLY LINTON

Dot distinguished herself in class the other day. Miss Potter had explained to the Third-Formers that an "anecdote" was "a short, funny tale." Then she asked for a sentence introducing the word. This was the sentence which Dot wrote: "Helen Craig's terrier ran down the road with a can tied to his anecdote."

Lena Grayson, of the Sixth, is rather a pompous girl, and in the post office at Barncombe the other day, she was sending off a registered letter. "I say," she complained, "must I stick these stamps on myself?"

"You can if you like," replied the post office girl. "But it's the usual thing to stick them on the letter!"

One of the "infants," having a music lesson, was asked what "ff" meant. Her reply was "Pump, fump."

Two girls from Barncombe House were talking the other day. "What month do you think is the best to go back to school after the holidays?" asked the first. "October," said the second.

"Why, there's no such month!" said the first, and the second replied: "That's why I said October!"

The other day Dame Steggle, who keeps the school tuck-shop, put up a notice which read "Ici on parle Francais." When Madge went in, she remarked on the fact that she did not know Dame Steggle spoke French. "Nor do I, Miss Madge," said the worthy dame. Then Madge asked the reason for the notice—and couldn't help laughing when she discovered it.

It appears that a traveller had sold it to Dame Steggle, and told her that it meant "Bless our happy home"!

FOURTH FORM ACTIVITIES
By MABEL RIVERS



THE weather is rather treacherous just now and as we cannot make the most of our time on the playing fields in consequence, the indoor activities of the Fourth Form are coming to the fore. (No pun intended!) Here are some of them:

The Debating Society.—One is always sure of some fun when the Debating Society meets. Paula, who "wather fancies herself as an awnter, bai Jove!" likes to push herself forward, and we generally allow her to do so, for her speeches are of that rambling kind which invariably end in Paula tying herself up in knots, and reducing the rest of us to hysterics.

When we think Paula has spoken long enough, we let Naomer loose! And if you've never heard a "debate" between Paula and Naomer—well, you've missed a treat!

The Dramatic Society.—Madge Linton is the leading light of this society, for Madge can play anything, and, although she plays the piano best of all, she can also play any part for which she is cast. Paula and Naomer also play with the Dramatic Society—but they generally play the giddy goat! As you know, just now Polly is producing a wonderful new play she has written, and so the Dramatic Society is kept busy.

Fourth-Form Auto-Cycle Society.—The president of this is Cora Grandways. She is also the committee, the secretary, and all the members! She cannot even get another member to ride pillion with her!

T.F.L.L.F.T.P.—These initials stand for "The Fourth Form League For Teasing Paula!" Needless to say, Naomer is all the officials and members combined! Occasionally Polly Linton lends a hand! Probably this will be the most "active" of all Fourth Form activities this coming season!

W.S.F.S.—You won't guess what these mysterious letters stand for. This is a very exclusive society in which Paula Croel is the sole member. It is the Watching Spring Fashions Society, and at the moment it is very lively, for Paula is trying to decide what she is going to have in the way of new hats and frocks and so on for the Winter holidays!



WHEN NAOMER RAN AWAY FROM HOME! Naomer, as you all know, is the girl-queen of Nakara, a vast desert country in North Africa. When she was proclaimed queen, a number of girls went to the ceremony, and then left Naomer in her palace. But Naomer was sad at having to part from her friends and managed to "stow away" upon a French aeroplane, which took her to a port in the Mediterranean.

There she got aboard a ship and came back to England. She was followed by some people she met on the ship, who wanted to steal some jewels which she had brought. Luckily Naomer managed to dodge them, and suddenly turned up at Morcove, to our intense amazement.

To save the jewels she threw them overboard from the ship, but, by good luck they were recovered—and after that it was decided that Naomer had better remain at Morcove until her education was properly finished.

* Needless to say, we were very glad to hear this decision, for already Naomer had become very popular with us. She was the quaintest little thing in those days, very proud of her knowledge of English schoolgirl sayings, and one of her favourite exclamations was "Elo, present!" She used to bob up at all sorts of unexpected corners during her first weeks at the school, delighting to surprise people by springing up in front of them with her quaint greeting.

THE SCHOLARSHIP GIRL WHO MADE GOOD. Jess Lingard, of the Fourth, is a scholarship girl, and is also the cousin of Stella Munro. Stella was rather snobbish when Jess first came, and Audrey Blain worked on this snobbishness to turn Stella against Jess.

Jess, in addition to being a very clever scholar, is also a good singer, and she was mostly responsible for a choir from Morcove winning a valuable silver shield in a contest in London. Jess was given the shield to take care of, and Audrey tried to get her expelled by stealing the shield, throwing it out of a train window, and putting the blame on Jess.

Thanks to Betty, the shield was discovered, and Audrey's craftiness was laid bare. The story came out, and Audrey was expelled from Morcove.

Do You Remember

By DOBLY DELANE

Of course, our readers cannot be expected to remember such things for instance. But I wonder how many of you remember the following:



MORCOVE'S GIPSY GIRL. Zonia Moore was a gipsy girl who was befriended by Betty and Co., and who eventually came to Morcove—to the annoyance of a few snobbish girls, who proceeded to "make things hot" for her. Betty and Co. stood by her, and eventually were able to arrange things so that Zonia should go to Stormwood School, which is over the moors away from Morcove.

At that school, however, things were made even more uncomfortable for Zonia, for the Captain of the Fourth Form there was a most unlikeable girl. Things changed, however, when Stormwood School was taken over by Morcove, and a number of our girls were sent there to help to pull that school together.

Judge of their amazement when they discovered that the Fourth Form Captain was none other than Audrey Blain under another name! Audrey, furious at being discovered, tried to discredit all the Morcove girls—and went too far! Again she was expelled, and with her going Stormwood began to improve tremendously—so much so, in fact, that when our girls left, the Stormwood girls unanimously elected one of Zonia's greatest chums as their form captain!



THE GIRL THEY SHIELDED! Camilla Loretto was an Italian girl from Lady Evelyn Knight, the daughter of the Earl of Lundy, met in Italy. Camilla was trying to escape from a scoundrelly uncle and cousin who were trying to get her grandfather's will from her, in order to seize the property which, by rights, belonged to her missing father.

Lady Evelyn brought her to Morcove—only to find that the plotters who were trying to get the will had followed her.

Betty took charge of the will, while Camilla was forced to remain in hiding. Unfortunately Diana Forbes gave away the secret of the hiding-place where Betty had put the will, and Mariana, the cousin of Camilla, broke into the school and took the paper.

Naturally the chums were despondent, for, just as things had promised to run out well, this setback had come. But, luckily, Camilla had seen Mariana enter the school, and, guessing what she was after, had followed her and snatched the paper from her.

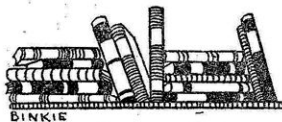
All ended happily, with Camilla's uncle and cousin finding themselves defeated, and Diana Forbes, who really didn't deserve to be helped, being saved from serious punishment by Betty.

Morcove Memories

Remember?

LY DELANE

ected to remember such things as when Miss Somerfield first came to Morcove, y of you remember the following happenings which have occurred at our school?



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UNFRIENDLY COMER TO MORCOVE.—Most girls are pleased to think that they can go to Morcove. But Elsie Ashby was different. She had been expelled from her former school, and was sent to Morcove to "make good." Perhaps she might soon have done so, had it not been for Ursula Wade, who tried all she could to prevent Elsie from becoming friendly with the girls of Study 12.

Elsie, not realising the depths of Ursula's perfidy, was inclined to put things down to injustice, and so she relapsed into a reckless mood towards Betty and her chums, and made matters worse. She was forced to seek the friendship of Ursula.

That friendship was to have a serious effect upon her, for Ursula, to save herself from being punished for buying cigarettes, made it appear as though Elsie was to blame. Things were too much against Elsie—and she was told that she was to be expelled!

She had done her best to befriend and reform Ursula—and this was to be her reward! Sadly she prepared to leave Morcove—and then came the great surprise! For her wonderful example had stirred the heart of even Ursula, and when things reached this point, Ursula broke down and confessed the truth. And so Elsie Ashby, instead of being expelled, found that her patience and kindness had not been wasted after all!



MORCOVE TO THE RESCUE.—On a never-to-be-forgotten occasion the Fourth Formers stayed at Weir Hall, the magnificent house which belongs to Paula Creel's father, and it was on this occasion that they fell in with Lena Thurloe, and her cousin Lionel. Lena and

her father wished to blacken Lionel in the eyes of the Morcovians, and Lena made things appear as though Lionel had stolen a necklace from Weir Hall. The Morcove girls saw through Lena—but it was too late! Lionel, believing that he could not prove his innocence, ran away from his uncle's home.

The faith of the Morcovians—and especially of Pam Willoughby—was not to be shaken, however, and, thanks to Pam, they discovered that Lionel had been seven miles away when the theft occurred. Quickly they got on his track, and brought him back; to tell him that the perfidy of Lena had been made clear, and that his name was cleared.

Then, when it was discovered that Lena's father was hoping to keep money which he had held in trust for Lionel, Lena and her father cleared off, while Lionel started a new life under the wing of another uncle.

Our Book Corner

NAOMER NAKARA
—NOVELIST!

HAT ambitious young lady, Miss Naomer Nakara, M.F.F. (Member of the Fourth Form) has, this week, been revealed in a new light. She has turned her steps along the paths of literature, and, although her first novel has not yet been published, a typewritten copy can be hired upon payment of a fee of two chocolate eclairs. (Cream buns will also be accepted!)

Miss Nakara is a modernist in style. She does not confine herself to ordinary words, and does not scruple to introduce new words to make her meaning clearer. Whether they will make things clearer to the reader or not remains to be seen. Here, for instance, is a passage from "Ze Girl Who Did Not Like Maffematrix," as her story is entitled. The extract is given from the original text:

"I zink zis is abominable," exclaimed Miss Messing'em, lo-quaciously. "Zis prepashun is glumfully ridiculous."

"Neborah Nokemud preser-vated a gloomful silence. She had honestly done her gratefullest endeavours to bring to a successful accomplishment the enervated task which she had been attempting.

"But her infnitical ingenu-italness had met with no praiseful compliments. She realicised that she was incompetent to achieve the differentiation of the maffematrixal problematic which her Form mistress had devolved upon her."

As a novelist, Miss Nakara is what she herself might describe as a "perfectful scream!" We advise anyone who wants a good laugh to take along a couple of chocolate eclairs to Miss Nakara's study at once! They will not regret the outlay. This novel is worth its weight in stale pastry!

To-day's Short Story

It was in the Fifth Form-room and Millicent Ashwell had been more than usually stupid.

"Come, come!" said Miss Massingham. "What is the quickest way to produce sawdust?"

Millicent stammered.

"Er—er—" she began; but Miss Massingham's patience was exhausted.

"Come, come!" she said again. "Ues your head, Millicent!"

OUR PUZZLE EXPERT Says—

CAN YOU READ IT?

(Exclusive to the Morcove Magazine)



IPHERS are always interesting things, so here is one which I have evolved especially for readers of this little paper of ours. To begin with, you will need a "key-word," and I suggest that this should be the word "MORCOVE." Now you must construct a chart by

putting down the key-word, and, underneath it, placing the figures which correspond to the position in the alphabet of the letters forming the word.

For instance, "C" is the first letter of the key-word which appears in the alphabet, so that "C" is figure 1. "E" is figure 2, and so on. When two similar letters appear, the second takes the number after the first, so that the key-word and key figures are as follows:

M	O	R	C	O	V	E
3	4	6	1	5	7	2

Now rule off a number of spaces under your key-word and figures as shown. To turn a message into cipher you must write the words from left to right. Then write down the vertical columns in their numerical order—and you have your cipher!

To give you an example of how it works, I will show you how to write the following message: "I hope you will all have a very merry Easter."

M	O	R	C	O	V	E
3	4	6	1	5	7	2
I	H	O	P	E	Y	O
U	W	I	L	L	A	L
L	H	A	V	E	A	V
E	R	Y	M	E	R	R
Y	E	A	S	T	E	R

The cipher message, therefore, reads as follows: PLVMS OLVRR IULEY HWHRE ELEET OIAYA YAARE.

In order to read the message, the person to whom it is sent must put down the columns in their proper order on her chart, when the message will appear as you first wrote it down.

Just to finish up, here is a cipher message based on the same key-word. Can you read it? If not, you will find the solution below.

PAF HEE IER HWI ETI OES THN.

Here is a "Skeleton Word Diamond," which reads the same across as down when you have completed it. Cover up the solution, shown below, and have a real, good try to solve the puzzle before consulting it.

			P			
		—	—	—	—	
		—	—	—	—	
	P	—	—	—	—	A
		—	—	—	—	
		—	—	—	—	
			A			

Clues:—1. Beginning of "pie"; 2. Half a Spanish coin; 3. Portions; 4. Covered walk; 5. Tale; 6. Cunning; 7. The first letter.

SOLUTION
P
P E S
P A R T S
P E R G O L A
S T O R Y
S L Y
A

