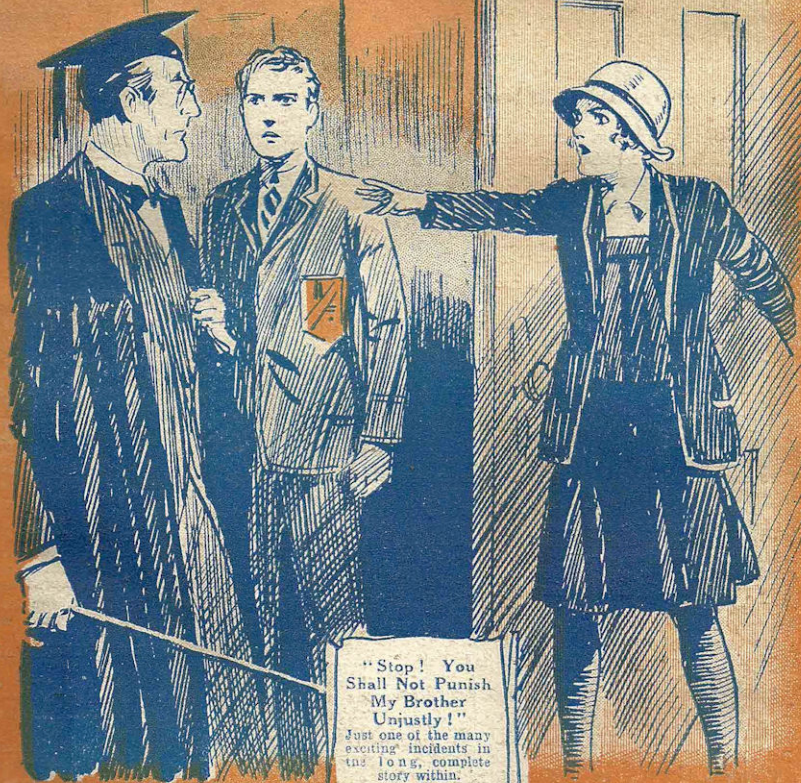


“Their Brothers—the Rebels!”

MARJORIE STANTON'S
Gripping Tale of the Chums
of Morcove School Inside.

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2^d



“Stop! You
Shall Not Punish
My Brother
Unjustly!”

Just one of the many
exciting incidents in
the long, complete
story within.

A School Story That Is Entirely DIFFERENT, Featuring Betty Barton—

THEIR BROTHERS



Stirring times at Grangemoor School! The boys at war with their new Head! Such is the extraordinary news that Betty and Co. receive. And then, almost before they realise it, the Study 12 chums are drawn into the whirl of exciting events, and embark upon an adventure that promises to be memorable indeed!

What a Change at Grangemoor!

"HAVE you got any money, Polly, bekas—"

"What!"

"Bekas, ef you have, you might lend me—"

Slam!

"The idea!" said madeap Polly Linton, of the Fourth Form at Morcovo School, after slamming the study-door. "Coming in here to borrow—"

She broke off there. Study 12's door was opening again. Round the edge of it came the face of that dusky innp, Naomer Nakara.

"Bekas I have just as much right to come in here as you have, Polly! He is as much my study as he is yours!"

"That is not the point," said Polly grimly.

She rose. She seized a ruler.

"It's this greediness, Naomer! You only want a loan because we shall be cycling through Barncombe on our way to Barncombe Castle. What have you done with all the money you had?"

There came a burst of laughter from Betty Barton, the Fourth Form captain, and two or three other girls who were in the study.

"I zink I lent you some of what I had, Polly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That is not the point," argued the madeap.

"What I object to is—"

"Eet seem to me you object to paying back—"

"Ha, ha, ha! She's got you this time, Polly!" chuckled Betty.

"Very well," the madeap said with meek bleakness. "If these others don't mind your wasting money on pastries, it is not for me to say anything. How much do I owe you, Naomer?"

"I zink it was six shillings."

"Think again!"

"No, bekas I am sure! Wiz ze interest—"

"The wh-a-a-at!"

"Inter—"

Bang, slam!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Girls, don't laugh!" Polly admonished her convulsed chums, after ejecting Naomer once again. "I wonder at your showing such bad taste! I am going down to get ready to be off. You will find me at the cycle-sheds, probably pumping a tyre. There is half-a-crown." Laying the coin upon the table. "If you would kindly let Naomer have it, with my compliments. I shall not make it more. It would not be good for her."

Whereupon, with an air in keeping with this dignified speech, Polly walked out. Naomer was in the corridor, disposed to be after her creditor again. But that creditor blandly ignored her!

Then suddenly Polly changed to a run for the stairs, down which she meant to go with whirlwind speed.

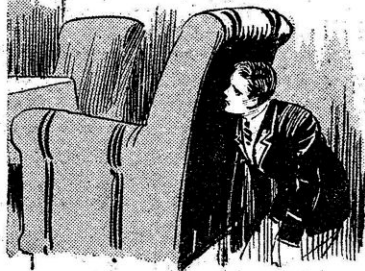
She and her chums of Study 12 expected to enjoy themselves hugely this fine Wednesday "halfer." They were to be off and away now, on their bicycles, to Barncombe Castle—that ancient and historic country seat of the Lundy family.

Once again Countess Lundy was arranging a big affair by which she hoped to benefit local charities. Once again, too, she was enlisting the aid of some of the schools. Morcovo would be there on the great day, so, too, would Grangemoor, where at least two Morcovians had each a brother.

—and Her Chums, and Some Amazing Adventures at Grangemoor School!

— THE REBELS!

By Marjorie Stanton



Polly had not been mistaken about that bicycle-tyre. It did need pumping. In fact, it needed a good deal of fiddling with a half-perished valve before it would stay up. She was still fiddling in a very slap-dash manner with the whole thing when Betty and the rest came along to get their machines.

"I don't wonder they call it a tyre," fumed Polly. "It's only made to tire you before you start."

However, she did not appear to be the least bit fagged out when starting off with her chums. There was, indeed, an inclination on the part of Polly to break all records for the run down to the main gateway. She led, Naomer's shrill assertions that she herself was winning having more excitement in it than truth.

As for the rest of the chums, whether they shared some of the skittishness of Polly and Naomer, or, like Madge Minden and Pam Willoughby, rode quite sedately, or, like that elegant junior, Paula Creel, came on a good way behind—they all chimed their bells very merrily as they passed out to the road.

As if in answer, came the school's own chimes, ding-donging the quarter-past two.

"I say, we're late!" called back Polly. "Come on, girls!"

"Non-stop to the castle—we shall be all right," was Betty's confident response. "There, long before the boys turn up."

"Seems ages since I last saw my dear, dear brother," was Polly's next cry as they all whizzed along. "Doesn't it seem a good while to you, Judy?"

"I haven't seen Dave," answered Judy, "for a fortnight."

"We mustn't forget that he is Dave Cardew now, not Dave Lawder any longer," remarked Helen Craig. "Really, Judy, it does make it nicer now that your brother's surname has been made the same as yours—Cardew."

Judy Cardew nodded. "I think so," she said happily. "After all, he was born a Cardew, same as I was! Mother

would have liked him to keep the other name, out of respect to the memory of the old lady who left him all her money. But mother began to see that it would be too confusing as time went on; people would always be wondering and having to have it explained why he and I had different surnames."

"Especially as you and Dave will be inseparable when you leave school!" Polly said in roguish allusion to the great affection of Dave and Judy for each other. "Not like Jack and me!"

"Now, Polly!" several of them rebuked her. She laughed.

"But you know Jack and I only meet to quarrel!"

"Oh, what fibs!"

"Bekas—"

"But I am going to try and keep the peace with Jack whilst we're all rehearsing for this Lady Lundy affair," the madcap stated virtuously. "Girls, it will be fun, won't it?"

A chorus of expectant delight answered Polly. Even Paula, having all she could do to keep pace with the others found breath enough for a beaming:

"Yes, wather!"

"No mistake," said Betty blithely. "there are times when a few boys do help to make a thing a success. And it won't be Jack, for one, if he doesn't help to make it go with a bang. Dave, too, although he is so serious—one of the best, always."

"It was awfully decent of Lady Lundy to write to both schools, with the idea of working in some of us Morcovians and some Grangemoor boys!" cried Helen.

"Jolly decent of Miss Somerfield to give us the go-ahead," rejoined Betty. "But, then, our headmistress always is such a sport."

"So is Grangemoor's Head," added Judy. "I've heard Dave say—"

"Oh, and I've heard Jack say!" chimed in Polly. "Yes, their Head is the goods. There have been times, we know, when Jack has been into rows! But what headmaster could put up with Jack for long—I ask you!"

"Now Polly!"

"Bekas you know very well you zink all zo world of your brother Jack!"

"It's not what I think," said the madcap. "I'm not his headmaster. If I was, I'd care him good and hard."

"Hark at her! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Every day—"

"Isn't she the limit, girls!"

"I am disgusted with you!" panted Naomer, as she pedalled her hardest, keeping alongside Polly. "You don't deserve a brother at all!"

"Such things," said Polly, "are sent to try us. Half-way!" she commented on a milestone.

"Hurrah! Girls, I wonder if we shall see Lady Evelyn at the castle? Do hope so."

In youthful Lady Evelyn, the only daughter of the Earl and Countess of Lundy, Betty & Co. had a friend whom they adored. She was such a sport, such a ripper! Like the earl and countess, Lady Evelyn was away a great deal from the castle; but, when there, she liked nothing better than to do a run over to Morcove and look up the chums.

Soon the brown-tiled roofs of quaint old Barncombe came into sight, and a little after this the scholars reached the picturesque High Street.

They hoped to ride straight through to the other end of the town without once having to dismount on account of traffic. But some steam farming "tackle" was rumbling through, and that, in conjunction with a few lorries, whacked them. Down from their machines the chums had to hop, to wait a few moments.

"Hallo, you girls!" shouted a boyish voice above the din of the passing machinery.

They all looked round.

"Hallo!"

It was no joyful response from Morcove, although the schoolboy who had drawn attention to himself was wearing the Grangemoor cap and tie. If it had been Jack, now, or Dave—but it wasn't! Betty & Co. recognised in this particular Grangemoor boy a certain "Ginger" Heldway, and he was not one to their liking.

"What, are you on the way to the castle, with the others?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Ginger Heldway; and he must have noticed the relief that this conferred upon Morcove. "Smatter of fact," he threw out, "you needn't think any of the chaps will be there this afternoon, because they won't!"

It seemed to afford him great satisfaction in saying so.

"They will," said Polly. "My brother Jack is one of them, and Dave Cardew is another; and when those two say they'll do a thing they do it."

She stamped.

"And I don't see what there is to grin about, either!"

"Don't you?"

"No, I don't—idiot!"

"No, well, you must excuse me!" And Ginger Heldway indulged in another chuckle. "It's rather funny."

"What is?"

Polly was not the only one to have lost patience with this large, loose-limbed, red-headed boy. They all knew him to be one who would rejoice over any upset to the plans of Jack and Dave.

"Your expecting to see them," he grinned, "I think they'll be able to take a part in that Barncombe Castle business?"

"Why shouldn't they? It's all arranged!"

"Is it?"

"Well, isn't it?" chided Morcove.

He only grinned all the more.

"What the dickens is the joke?" Betty asked him angrily.

"Oh, no joke—for Jack and Dave and a good many more!"

And, obviously glorying in not being included in some misfortune that had befallen his schoolmates, Ginger Heldway turned away to go into the Barncombe Creamery.

"HORRID FELLOW!"

"Wretch!"

"Extremely aggvavating—yes, wather!"

"How I do dislike him—always did!" fumed Polly. "He's the one, of course, who is so fond of toadying to that prefect who had his knife into Jack at one time."

"Prefect Rennard—Rennard the Fox," murmured Madge. "But this can't be anything to do with Rennard, surely?"

"But what is it?" Polly stamped. "Ugh, I hate a mystery—and of course that Heldway boy knew it was just the way to peeve me!"

"Hope it's not illness?" wondered Pam Willoughby.

"Jack wouldn't be ill!"

"Yet it sounded like something affecting a lot of them at Grangemoor," observed Tess Tre-lawney. "Some row or other, and half the school gated?"

"But," demurred Betty, "wouldn't the Head feel that he must let those boys come over to Barncombe Castle, even though they were mixed up in the trouble? It's an appointment for this afternoon."

"At three," remarked Helen. "And it's striking three now!"

A pause.

"Oh, goodness," said Polly. "What's the use, if they won't be there! Besides, we want to know what it means! Isn't this feeding, Judy? Isn't it enough to make anyone see red?"

"It comes of seeing red," smiled Judy. "That boy's hair! Seriously, though, I'm going to worry if I can't find out why Dave and the rest couldn't get away. Days ago, it was arranged. Their Head would never dream of cancelling the arrangement. Think how it would offend Lady Lundy."

"When it's all to be for a good cause," added Madge.

"I sink we all better go into ze Creamery, bekas that boy is there, and—"

"And I think we had all better keep out of the Creamery," said Polly grimly. "Wild horses would not drag me into the Creamery! I wouldn't have another word to say to him—the monkey!—not even if you— But I know what I will do!" she broke off. "I'll go over to Grangemoor now—I will!"

"In which case," said Judy calmly, "I shall come, too."

"Whilst we others go on to the castle and make the best explanations we can!" Betty pondered aloud. "Um! It's a long way to Grangemoor on bikes, you two. Still!"

Then Helen voiced an excited:

"Look, though! Look who is here!"

A magnificent car was drawing into the curb, making not a sound as it pulled up. Morcove might not have been sure that it was one of the Barncombe Castle cars, since they could not see whether it had the Lundy crest on the gleaming panels of the doors. But there, unmistakably, was Lady Evelyn at the wheel.

She first flourished a gloved hand at them through the windscreen, then shipped out on to the pavement with graceful agility.

"Cheerio, everyone!" was her affable greeting as they surged to meet her. "You are going along now to the castle? I'm just coming myself. Mother has been called away, but that needn't matter a scrap! She has explained to me— Well?"

Youthful Lady Evelyn was discerning perplexity in the girls' faces.

"Er—I wonder," said Betty, "did Lady Lundy explain anything to you about the Grangemoor boys—why they wouldn't be turning up?"

"But aren't they turning up?"
 "Doesn't look like it," said Polly gloomily.

"You haven't heard anything, then?"
 "No! And what have you been hearing?"

They told her: "Not much." But, as Lady Evelyn was quick to agree, what little they had been told only made the position all the more bewildering, not to say annoying. She was at one with Betty & Co. in feeling that there must be no attempting to find out more from Master Ginger Heldway. The way to treat a boy of that sort was to leave him severely alone.

"Besides!" And suddenly Lady Evelyn's bonny face lit up. "I've the car with me now! What simpler than for some of you to jump in with me—"

"Oh, and what better, too!" cried Polly.
 "Judy, do you hear this? A few minutes and we'll be at Grangemoor!"

"Yes, bekas—"
 "You!" Polly rounded on her royal impishness. "You don't suppose Lady Evelyn wants you in the car!"

"But I rather think I do," smiled her youthful ladyship, dropping a hand caressingly upon Naomer's shoulders. "I can manage five—six of you, say. Oh, I can take the lot of you easily, if you don't mind a squeeze. Do you?"

Did they! It took the chums only a few seconds to run their bicycles into the bakehouse yard—a recognised "parking place" for Morcove machines—and then they were fitting themselves into her own twelve-cylinder, coach-built Rolsler.

"Can you manage?"

"If you can!"

Lady Evelyn's answer to that was to set a dainty foot on the starter. Twelve cylinders started to life with scarce a sound, and one of the finest cars of the last Motor Show glided away.

At which moment Ginger Heldway came out of the Creamery. His eyes, never very attractive on account of yellow lashes, now looked as if they would drop from their sockets.

For Polly, as she was driven away with her chums, had been just in time to say, very sweetly, from one lowered window of the car:

"Good-bye, Carrot Top!"

"And that," said he of the red hair and loose limbs, "is just like her cheek—dash her!"

WITH THE town left behind and the open road going straight ahead, the car braked into an effortless forty.

"Gorjus!" sparkled Naomer, who had the honour of sitting next to the young lady-driver. She wriggled round to inquire of those sitting at the back:

"How are you enjoying it? Isn't it comfortable-bubble enough for you, Paula?"

"Yes, wather!"

Paula Creel might well

beam the answer. Occupying a corner seat, she had found that the car was fitted with a "peach" of a vanity-case on that side—pocket-comb, mirror, gold powder-box, and all. Paula was examining these at her leisure.

They left the undulating main road after a few miles, and then the scenery became lovelier than ever. It was a winding, tree-lined road they were now coursing along, and suddenly one of the windings brought Grangemoor School into full view.

"Already!" Polly cried.

The car slowed down to go in at the main gateway. Then the girls could see the great range of buildings even better. As at Morcove, there was a drive up to the main building, between green playing-fields; but Morcove had not the various "Houses," each named after the master who was in charge, as was the case here at Grangemoor.

"That's Jack and Dave's house, Lady Evelyn, over there to the right," called out Polly. "Mr. Fenwick's."

The youthful motorist nodded, but held on towards the centre building.

"The man to see is the Head!" came from Lady Evelyn.

It was the mid-week "halfer" here, as at Morcove, or so the chums supposed; yet they could see no footer or other games being played, and this surprised them. The only boys to be seen, for the moment, were the very few who were hurrying across paved yards or along cloistered paths from one big building to another.



"How funny, your thinking that Grangemoor will take part in the fete!" Ginger Heldway grinned spitefully. "Why, it's all arranged!" cried Polly. "Is it?" the boy answered tantalisingly, and would say no more.

"I don't believe it can be a halfer, after all!" was Betty's exclamation. "And yet that's strange! Wednesday always is."

"And what about Ginger?" exploded Polly. She could not think of that boy without a grimace. "He was in Barncombe. There may be something special on, of course; but—"

"Ooo, look—quick, look!" And Naomer, whether it was manners or not, pointed.

Now that the car was almost amongst the pleasantly dispersed buildings, the occupants could all see a certain asphalted yard where the boys were being drilled.

A stalwart drill-sergeant had them there, shouting them in a tone so stentorian that every word reached Betty & Co.

"Shun! Stand easy! 'Shun! Form FOUR-R-RS! Form—"

"Goodness!" gasped Polly. "There's Jack!"

"Yes, bekas—"

"And Dave," said that lad's sister Judy, staring at the distant squad. There sounded a prolonged roar, resembling the bursting of breakers upon Morcove's rugged shore. That was the drill-sergeant, singling out some hapless lad for not being smart enough.

Then the car sighed itself to a standstill at the porch of Head's House, where the drill-yard was out of sight round a corner. But the girls, as they alighted, could still hear the drill-sergeant's voice, storming away, and the precise crash of boyish feet moving. It seemed to Betty & Co. that the boys must be perfect at the various exercises.

"So what does that Big Noise want to go on at them for?" grimaced Polly. "I wouldn't stand for it!"

Judy said not a word, but she looked upset. "I'll just inquire!" remarked Lady Evelyn, wearing a spirited smile. "You'll be around, girls, if I— But here is someone!"

It was the pompous-looking porter of Head's House, in his brass-buttoned frock-coat and gold-banded top hat.

"Yes, what is it?" was his lordly inquiry. "We wish to see the headmaster, please. If you would let Dr. Halden know that—"

"Dr. Halden is not at Grangemoor," interrupted the porter loftily. "If you mean the Head, then the gentleman you want is Dr. Trouncer."

"Oh! Is Dr. Halden away, then?" "Dr. Halden has been ordered six months' rest, miss, and even then it's not expected that he will come back."

The chums turned to one another astounded; but Lady Evelyn retained a direct, smiling look for the overbearing porter.

"We will see Dr. Trouncer—"

"You won't get him to see you, miss—"

"Oh, I think we will," said the girl who had driven the chums here. "Lady Evelyn Knight, just tell him, wishes to see him—at once." The porter coughed, reddened, and made a sign that the whole drove of callers might step inside and wait. The girls, feeling a strange kind of amusement mingling with their vague dismay, began to troop after Lady Evelyn into the fine entrance-hall; but one Morcovian at least got no further than the top of the steps.

Polly Linton—she had been behind others, for once in her headstrong life, feeling strongly tempted to slip away and get a look at the boys who were drilling. And to that temptation she promptly succumbed when she heard the drill-

sergeant's voice coming round from the drill-ground:

"As you were! Fall out, Linton!"

That meant—her brother.

"Once too often, my lad—and don't give me any of your lip!" the drill-sergeant's voice was storming on. "I've been watching you, Linton! Now you can go to the Head and say I sent you. The rest—shun! 'Shwere! Form—Four-r-r-r's!"

Polly found herself running, alone, to meet her brother on the drill-ground.

Morcove Must Not Know!

"JACK!" He was walking moodily out of the asphalted yard, his eyes upon the ground, when someone came round a corner to voice his name like that. His eyes flew up and then stared amazedly.

"Polly! Goodness, Polly, what on earth are you doing here?"

"We're all here—Betty and all of us, I mean. You saw a car just now?"

"Didn't take much notice of it. Couldn't, when there was Old Serj blazing at us all."

"It's Lady Evelyn's car. She brought us over to Grangemoor. She and the rest have gone in to see the Head."

"They have? Why?" "Well!" said Polly. "Weren't you and Dave and some others to be at Barncombe Castle this afternoon, by appointment? Instead of which, we find you being drilled!"

Jack looked as black as thunder.

"It isn't being drilled. It's being hazed about until you feel like mutiny."

"We noticed! Has the drill-sergeant always been like that?"

"No. He would have liked to be, but he wasn't allowed. Now he's got his chance, and isn't he just glorying in it, too!"

"But why? How? Jack, what has happened?"

"We've got a new Head, and there it is, Polly; 'when father says turn, we all turn.' You never saw such a change over as there is. Grangemoor isn't a school any longer; it's a prison, a penitentiary sort of place. The new Head is a brute, and we chaps—I tell you, some of us are feeling fed up. He only took over this week, but, by jimminy, we've had more than enough of him already."

"And Dr. Halden—"

"Ah, that's a rotten business, Polly!" her brother exclaimed feelingly. "He had a sort of breakdown—worse than a breakdown, it's whisper. Sudden, like a stroke. All through overwork, they say."

"How terrible!"

"It is. I know I used to go on about our Head, but I never meant it really, Polly. I was often in his bad books, too, I know; but that doesn't alter the fact, he was a decent sort. No nonsense about him, ever; but he gave you a square deal. Now he's gone, and we've got this new bloke in his place—and I've got to go and see him now, by the way."

"Must you go for a moment, Jack?"

"I don't mean to hurry," was the grimly smiled answer. "I'm not so keen as all that to improve my personal acquaintance with old Shudders."

"Who gave him that name?"

"Why, I did, as a matter of fact, and it's stuck."

Polly, in spite of her distress on Jack's account, had to smile.

"The other name is certainly pretty awful, Jack. Trouncer!"

"Trouncer by name, and trouncer by nature."

"Does he—"

"He does!" nodded Jack fiercely. "He's done more caning in his first week than old Baldy did in a year. So wish me luck, Polly; he's not likely to have run out of canes, although he's breaking them two or three a day, they say."

"Wait though!" Polly implored, becoming rather frantic. "Oh, this is shocking, Jack. Who is he, then? I mean to say, how did he get the job?"

"It's what we chaps can't make out. The whole school is wondering."

"I should have thought one of the House masters would have been appointed."

"Yes, anyone would have thought so. And, instead, this man has come right in over their heads. I suppose some of the brass hats on the governing board thought there should be a new broom. Well, they've picked one—a birch broom, with an emphasis on the birch."

Whilst Jack was saying this, he and Polly had become aware of the drilling scholars starting to march about in the yard that was just round the corner. There was the regular tramp, tramp of feet, with the attendant cry from the drill-sergeant:

"Pick 'em up there! Halt! Harris, do you want to be sent after Linton? Quick—march! Left—wheel! Right—wheel!"

Jack bent a frowning glance in the direction from which that hounding voice was coming.

"Sergeant Japp is just in clover now, with Shudders giving him a free hand. This is the school's halfer, Polly. I and others were had out on to the drill-ground at two o'clock, and there we've been ever since."

"We saw that Heldway boy in Barncombe. He was all grins about something, and so—"

"He would be," Jack muttered blackly. "No drill for Heldway. Rennard the Fox would see to that."

"Is Rennard then—"

"Having the time of his life, yes!"

"Jack, you mustn't stay here," Polly suddenly realised dismayedly. "They're marching this way."

"He won't bring 'em out of the yard, Polly. Anyway, who cares! It's how I feel. And, I say, I'd like to see you again before you go, Polly. If I can, I'll get out to you."

"Yes, do! But now—"

The rest was an urging gesture from Polly—too late! Although the marching scholars had not shown themselves outside the yard, their sergeant had suddenly made a circling run to keep after his victims, and so he had seen round the corner.

He had seen Jack and his sister in talk together, and, with a belated "Halt!" to the squad he now came striding towards these two.

"Linton!"

"My sister, serj."

"I don't care if it's your grandmother! 'Shun, when I'm talking to you! Didn't I send you to the Head?"

"I'm going."

"It looks like it! Now, my lad, you'll go to the Head—with me! As for you"—to Polly—"be off out of here!"

"There's no need to be rude," said Polly.

"No," said Jack, clenching up his fists. "Not with me on hand."

And there they all three stood; brother and

sister meeting, calmly and fearlessly, the glaring eyes of Sergeant Japp.

"This is boring," Betty Barton remarked to those who were waiting with her in the entrance hall of Head's House. "And what's become of Polly, I wonder!"

"I zink, perhaps, she has gone to find if zero is a tuckshop," whispered Naomer. "Shall I go and see if I can find— Ooo, though, here comes somebody at last!"

Unmistakably, their wait was now to be ended. They heard a thick, loud voice—a man giving his opinions and orders in a most autocratic manner as he came towards the hall with, it was to be presumed, certain subordinates.

Next second the owner of the voice appeared, and sure enough he had a couple of worried-looking members of the staff with him, although they were now being dismissed with final commands.

"Very well, Fenwick, you'll do that, you understand! Better see to it at once! And don't forget what I said, Dawson—that list of names by five o'clock!"

Messrs. Fenwick and Dawson, Housemasters both, turned back, whilst the new Head of Grangemoor School came on with his self-important stride, a tall man, with a forward-hanging head that gave him a swooping appearance.

He barked at Lady Evelyn and the batch of Morcovians:

"Well, what is it?"

"Dr. Trouncer, we thought it best to run over from Barcombe Castle in the car, as the boys who were expected there this afternoon—"

"Oh, ah! But I can't bother about that now," he cut Lady Evelyn short, roughly. "Much too busy. I shall be writing."

He strode on, to leave them all, then turned back.

"You can save me the trouble of writing. Lady Lundy your mother? Very well then; just tell her, with my compliments—"

"But, Dr. Trouncer, there is nothing very complimentary to my mother in this," demurred Lady Evelyn.

He glowered upon her.

"A man who is as busy as I am, young lady, has no time for bandying words. You'll please take the message—that Grangemoor School cannot be bothered to take part in her flag day, or whatever it is. That sort of thing may have been all very well when Dr. Halden was here. But we have changed all that."

Again he strode on, to pass into the open, doubtless expecting Lady Evelyn and the girls to efface themselves abashed. But they did not. Lady Evelyn followed him into the open, and so did Betty and the rest.

"Dr. Trouncer—"

"I can waste no more time!" he volleyed. "I want to see those boys at their drill. I— But what's this!" he broke off, staring. "Who's that—girl!"

It was, as the others instantly realised, their beloved madcap coming this way with her brother and the drill sergeant.

Grangemoor's new Head struck his glasses upon a beaked nose, to take a better look, then removed them. He turned to the group behind him.

"This girl anything to do with you?"

"Yes," said Betty. "She's one of us, sir, Polly Linton."

"Linton? Oh, I see! I—see! Well, Sergeant Japp, what's the trouble here?"

Sergeant Japp saluted.

"This boy again, sir. 'Shun, Linton! He's being very troublesome; can't get him to do a thing right. I sent him to you—that would be a quarter of an hour ago—"

"Five minutes," corrected Jack.

"Silence, boy!" thundered the new Head.

"Five minutes is more correct, sir," said Polly.

"Will you—?" The rest, for Polly, was a sweeping gesture, directing her to rejoin her chums. But she ignored it.

What happened was that the chums and Lady Evelyn now joined Polly.

"I found Linton talking with his sister, instead of coming to you, sir."

"Is that so! Very well, boy, go to my study, and wait! I'll be there presently to deal with you," said the new Head, with a glare.

"Sergeant, I will go along with you to the drill ground to see those boys."

He turned to Lady Evelyn and the girls.

"Is that your car?"

"It is."

"Don't keep it standing there then, Good-day!"

And he strode towards the drill ground with his zealous sergeant.

BETTY'S ENDING a brief silence with a staggered: "Well!" set free other tongues.

"Yes, bekas—"

"Of all the—"

"Bai Jove, monstuous, what?"

"Too bad!"

"Abominabubble!"

"The absolute limit!"

Then Jack left off frowning and called up a cheerful smile.

"Bye, Polly, in case I don't see you again. 'Bye, girls! Lady Evelyn, it was brickish of you to run them over—"

"Not at all, Jack. I'm so sorry about everything. Whatever does it mean?"

"Polly knows; she'll tell you," was the quite cheerful remark with which he stepped away, to pass into the Head's house.

He did not look back, perhaps because he guessed that his sister and all of them were gazing after him troubledly.

Nor did he glance aside at the house porter who was again standing about in the hall. In happier times for Grangemoor School, old "Beetle"—as the boys had called the porter—had not been a bad sort. Now he was trimming his sails to the changed wind, like a good many others. Not to be wondered at, perhaps!

How the school had changed within a week! The very notice board which Jack passed on his way to the Head's study was smothered with pinned-up notices, all decreeing changes; new rules, restraints, drastic orders that you found you had broken before you had memorised them. Gosh, it wanted some sticking, these days, did the old school!

He reached the study—a fine large room, with French windows on one side and windows in another wall that fronted the drill yard.

At once Jack stepped to one of these ordinary windows, and he saw that the new Head was there in the yard with Sergeant Japp, and—Oh, heck! Some other fellow was "for it" now. There was a boy who had been called out of the ranks, apparently to be stormed at.

"Geo, it's Dave!"

The window was slightly open. Jack stooped

so as to have his face to the space that was free from glass.

"You don't think it was fair, do you!" he heard Dr. Trouncer thundering at Dave. "You think you can break ranks to give me your opinion."

"I broke ranks, sir, to protest—"

"I don't care what you broke ranks for, boy! You broke ranks, and having done so, you won't go back. You'll go to my study! You'll get what Linton is going to get, that's all!"

Jack drew away from the window, straightening up. He had a lip between his teeth.

As if this were not agitating enough, suddenly Jack heard a girlish voice coming at him—from the French windows.

"Jack—Jack!"

He spun round, to stare in that direction.

It was Polly again. She had come alone to the French windows, opening one of them by simply working the latch, so that she could whisper in to him.

"Polly, you little—"

"I can't help it, Jack. I—"

"It'll be the end of the world for you if he catches you there. Go away, go away!" Jack waved wildly.

"I can't," was Polly's all-sufficient answer. "It's such a shame, so unfair! Oh, Jack—"

"Beat it, Polly, there's a good girl," he implored. "Do, Polly! I'm all right."

He darted across the large room to look out from one of those other windows, then darted back.

"Old Shudders is coming now!"

Polly saw her brother making signs to her from inside the room to go away, and she looked about wildly. She was on a veranda that had tubs of ornamental shrubs to serve as a shelter from the wind. It flashed upon Polly that one of them might shelter her!

And then, as she turned to carry out this manoeuvre, it rather alarmed her to find one of her Morocco chums creeping to the veranda just as she herself had done a minute since.

"Judy!"

It was Polly's inference that Judy had come to try and coax her away—had come with a message from the others. But Judy's first deep whisper proved that this was not the case.

"I—I had to come, too, Polly! It's Dave now."

"What!"

"Dave's on his way to the study to be caned; I suppose the same as Jack."

"Oh! Oh, Judy—"

"I heard," that girl murmured, "and—it was no use; I could not remain with the others out there at the car."

Polly, already crouching amongst the shrubs, made a sign to her schoolmate and chum to huddle down out of sight in the same way.

"Where are the others now, Judy?"

"With the car down by the gates. They'll wait for us, I suppose."

"Don't care if they don't—but they will, of course! All I know is, I just couldn't go away leaving Jack to be—'Sh!"

"Someone coming?" Judy's eyes asked.

"Yes!" breathed Polly, trying to get more out of sight than ever. "The Head himself—and he's coming this way to go in by these windows! Hide yourself better than that, Judy. Quick, quick—hide!"

"GOSH!" JACK LINTON was saying to himself. "Oh, heck!"

He could see all that was taking place—the two girls out there on the shrub-bedecked veranda with only a few moments more in which to render themselves invisible; the new Head striding along a side path, to come in by the French windows, bringing Dave with him.

"And think yourself lucky, boy, that I have not caned you in front of the Form!" the Head was booming at Dave, as they mounted the few steps to the veranda. "What, this window standing open? I didn't open it!"

He came into the study with a stamping step, to give Jack a glaring look.

"You opened that window, boy?"

No answer. It may be guessed that Jack was not going to say that his sister had opened it from the outside. But how he rated himself, inwardly, for not having been in time to close it again!

"The pair of you—stand there! I have not made it public punishment—this time," said Dr. Trouncer, hitching his gown more comfortably about his burly shoulders, as he crossed to where his cane was kept. "But I hope to send you back with looks that will tell the rest. Insubordination! The one thing I am not going to allow—insubordination!"

He found the cane, and he swung it through the air—swish!

"David Cardew, I'll deal with you first. To make you understand when your drill sergeant sends another boy to report to me, it is not for you to question the fairness. Hold out!"

Dave held out his right hand.

"But I still protest, sir—"

"You do, do you?" And Dr. Trouncer lifted the cane a little higher, to make it a still harder stroke.

Swish!

"Now do you still protest?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hold it out—where I can see it, boy!"

SWISH!

"And now do you still protest?"

"Yes, sir."

"Boy, you will tire before I do. Hold out that hand!"

Again the cane slashed down upon the upturned palm.

"Now the other!"

Swish!

"Stand over there. You next, John Linton! So you, boy, have been checking the drill sergeant all the afternoon, have you?"

"I am not aware that I have, sir."

"You'll soon be aware that I prefer to believe the sergeant. Why, boy, your very looks at this moment are enough! But we'll alter them for you, Master Linton, as we mean to alter a great deal else. Hold out, Linton."

Swish!

"The other."

Swish!

"The right hand again."

SWISH!

And then—a girlish cry:

"Stop! You can't do that! You're a brute. a wicked monster!"

And there was Polly in the study, with Judy close behind.

* * * * *

THE NEW Head of Grangemoor School lowered the cane he had been wielding with such old-fashioned vigour. His head poked forward from the gown-bedraped shoulders.

"What do you mean, girl—what do you mean



"Good-bye, Carrot-top!" waved Polly from the car as they moved on. The chums were on their way to Grangemoor School, but how little they dreamed of the shock that awaited them there!

by it!" he said fiercely. "And you!" he rounded upon Judy with unabated ferocity.

"I am Dave's sister," said Judy faintly. Unlike Polly, whose anger was all for working itself off, Judy was feeling all the worse for trying to bottle up her indignation.

"Well?" glared Dr. Trouncer. "And does that give you the right? Upon my soul!" he fairly roared, and strode aside to touch a bell-post. "I don't know what the world is coming to! You young people, nowadays!"

He walked round to his desk and seized a pencil.

"Your school, you two?"

"Morcove," they said together.

"Morcove," jutting the word upon his pad. "Right, Morcove School will hear about this! Meantime, I don't know what sort of a school it can be, that you—"

"It's one of the best schools in the land!" flared out Polly hotly. "As this school used to be, we know, before—"

"Girl!"

"Well, look at you!" After saying which, Polly broke down, nearly crying.

"Dr. Trouncer, sir—please—" said Jack, coming forward to stand beside his sister.

"Linton, over there this instant! You think I am going to indulge softness, sentiment? But that's just the way with you youngsters these days. So much licence, freedom, indulgence—it's why half the school are what they are. Full of insubordination! Idleness and impudence!"

The door opened at this moment to let in a

scared-looking maid who had answered the Head's ring at the bell.

"Go out with these two girls to the car, Mary. And if you want to keep your job, don't come back unless you can report that the car has gone away with them—all of them."

Both Jack and Dave were now giving their respective sisters imploring looks.

"Good-bye, Jack," said Polly huskily, and she went out of her way to pass close to him, just to take his hand. As she seized it, she could tell that it was still wanting to curl with the pain from those stinging slashes with the cane.

"Bye, Polly," he said thickly. "And don't you worry."

"That will do!" stormed the new Head, banging books about on his desk. "Be off, you two, when I say!"

THE CAR came out by the main gateway of the school, and the girls noticed a senior standing about very much as if he were on "point duty."

He stared into the car as it glided by him, and there were those who knew him instantly.

"Renard the Fox!" muttered Betty Barton.

Polly Linton and Judy Cardew nodded, but neither spoke. Several of the girls were able to see out of the back window of the saloon car, whilst others made use of lowered side windows. Thus they could still observe the prefect—at a moment when two scholars were approaching the gateway, to return within bounds.

Those two boys were walking most circumspcctly. Even so, the prefect halted them, finding some excuse, evidently, for a reprimand.

"What a shame," murmured Madge Minden.

"Most pwooking, yes, wather!"

Polly looked at Paula Creel, then met Judy's eyes, and smiled qucerly.

On sped the car, running them back to Barncombe, Lady Evelyn being too intent upon her driving to have any comment to offer. The girls could tell, however, that she was very indignant.

"As for me," said Naomer suddenly, "I am disgusted! I zink he should take ze sack pretty queek. What ze diggings, eet is enough to make all zo boys go on strike—and good job eef they do. I would!"

It was Polly's playful custom to disapprove of everything the dusky one said. She did not disapprove, however—jokingly, now. Polly was not in the mood for nonsense. She gave Naomer a grateful look, and then sighed.

It was close to Barncombe Castle where, a few minutes later, Betty & Co. alighted. They had called out to Lady Evelyn to set them down here instead of her running them down into the heart of the town. She would only have had to turn back, and turning was not easy in the High Street.

"Good-bye then, girls," she said, rallying herself from a rare fit of despondency. "I can't say how sorry I am. I feel it just as if I myself had a brother at that school."

"As we all do," was Betty's quiet rejoinder. "But we can't feel sorry that we have been over and found out. It was good of you."

"Your own halfer—wasted," she remarked. "As for Grangemoor's half-holiday—had it been knocked on the head, or what?"

"I'd like to knock him on the head," fumed Polly. "I mean—the Head!"

There followed a little talk between the chums and Lady Evelyn about that part which it had been intended the two schools should play in connection with the Great Fête. It now looked as if

Grangemoor would never be able to co-operate with Morcove; but Betty & Co. were advised by Lady Evelyn not to give up hope—and not to say too much at their own school.

"I don't know, girls; it all depends, of course, on how Dr. Trouncer has managed to get that position; but I should think he will soon get a rap over his own knuckles. I'd just wait for a bit to see how things go on."

"We do want the boys to come in over it all, if only we can get them!" exclaimed Betty.

"Remember how splendidly it has worked at other times? But that man has butted in, and—Oh, don't let's talk about him!" she wisely broke off. "So good-bye, Lady Evelyn, and thanks ever so!"

"And don't forget," came Naomer's shrill, farewell cry, last of all, "whatever happens, we shan't let you down, no! Bekas, Morcove is still Morcove, any old how!"

"If only Grangemoor were still Grangemoor," Polly murmured.

Her chums could tell that she was in an explosive state of anger, and they tried to handle her carefully. Unfortunately, it was a soothing suggestion from Naomer—that they should all adjourn to the Creamery, in the town, that proved a spark to Polly's gunpowder. She went off bang, so to speak, halfway along High Street.

"Tea! Who wants tea—and very likely it's another of his 'improvements' at the school to half starve the boys! Food is all you think about, Naomer!"

"Not ze bit of it, bekas—"

"Sh'rrr! You didn't see your brother being caned!"

"Bekas I haven't a brother, so how could I!"

"Judy and I know—don't we?" Polly raged on wildly. "There was Judy's brother being caned simply for protesting that the sergeant had been unfair to Jack. We saw them being caned—caned!"

Her face worked as if she were feeling the capings as something that she herself had suffered, not merely witnessed.

Then suddenly she saw how upset Judy was looking, and she sighed.

"Oh, bother, I'm a donk to let myself be carried away like this. Talk about something else, girls, do! Here's poor Judy, hardly knowing how to—"

"Well, zen—tea!"

"Come on, then—tea!" cried Polly with a grimness that compelled laughter. "And as for Old Shudders—"

"Who?"

"Shudders! That's their name for him, girls."

"Ha, ha, ha! Lovely!"

"Bai Jove, expressive, anyhow, what?"

"Bekas every time you see him, he give you ze creeps!"

They found a couple of tables for themselves, big party that they made, in the famous tea-shop, and a waitress came up.

"I don't feel I want anything," Judy remarked.

"What ze diggings, eet no good going on like this," objected Naomer. "Look here, zis is my shout, bekas I have ze half ze dollar that Polly paid back."

And the dusky one proceeded to give such a lavish order, it was certain that no "half-dollar" would cover it. But this only provided a bit of amusement, and a little uplift of that sort the chums could do with now—all of them.

At the least, Jack and Dave were popular

chums of theirs, and, apart from this, they were bound to regret that a school like Grangemoor should undergo such drastic and unhappy changes.

The passing round of cups did not fail to revive drooping spirits. Soon Polly's mood was altogether different. She became all sparkling talk about what the end of it was bound to be; how the boys in general would never stand for such treatment, and so there would be riots and the burning of Old Shudders in effigy on the drill-ground.

"And good job!" Naomer rejoiced over all these exciting predictions. "Bekas, eef ze boys go on strike, and shut themselves up, zen we shall help them, yes. Bekas zey will want plenties of food, and we are ze ones to deliver ze goods, hooray!"

The tea-party pealed its laughter, and that made sundry other Morcovians, who had dropped in for a cup, look across at Betty & Co.

"What's the joke, you girls?" inquired Etta Hargrove, taking tea at a nearby table with a couple more juniors with whom the chums were always on the best of terms.

"Sorry," Betty laughed across to them; "not at liberty to say at present."

"No, bekas—"

"Sh'rrp!"

The teashop, however, was not depending entirely upon Morcove patrons this afternoon, and thereafter Betty & Co. took care not to be quite so free in what they said about the Grangemoor sensation.

Two or three of them were aware of one customer, a complete stranger to them, having started to pay close heed to all the chatter. This was a girl of eighteen, at least, taking tea by herself.

The chums had noticed her when they first came in, as having the appearance of a town-dweller, down here for a change of air and rest. She was good-looking, but she appeared at present to be nervous and worried.

Perhaps it was because, whilst on an enforced holiday—after an illness maybe—she felt dull and lonely, that she had sat round to pay more attention to the now jolly scholars.

Suddenly a certain Form-mate of the chums came stalking in to seek a table, and her entry had a disagreeable effect upon them all. Bound to be so, when this newcomer was Cora Grandways—handsome, dashing Cora, the enemy of Study 12.

"Hallo!" She spoke across to Betty & Co. with her wide, ill-natured grin. "What, didn't they give you tea at Barncombe Castle?"

She sat down—at the table where that stranger to the place was having tea and cakes. None of the chums had answered Cora's sneering remark, and so, if only to repay disdain with disdain, she picked up a picture-paper.

"Tea and pastries," she said ungraciously to the waitress, without looking up.

Betty gathered from her chums that it would be as well to "get a move on." They did not care to afford ill-natured Cora an opportunity of publicly airing her animosity. It did Morcove no good, that sort of thing.

"ARE YOU at the same school as those girls?"

Cora Grandways looked up sharply from the picture-paper.

The girl who was a stranger had broken the ice with that smiling inquiry. Cora, always glad of anybody to talk to who did not belong to Morcove, smiled back.

"Yes, I'm at Morcove. Know it?"

A shake of the head.

"I'm a stranger down here. Got to go on quietly for a bit, you know."

"Oh—been ill?"

"Got run down rather, and the doctor said get away. The air's supposed to be good round here, isn't it? But—I don't know—"

"Not feeling much better for the change?"

"Well, it's a bit dull, isn't it?"

Cora laughed.

"Dull! You've hit it. This town is poisonous to me. But there's nowhere else in reach of Morcove."

"Where's Grangemoor?" inquired the stranger.

"I heard those other girls talking about it."

"Grangemoor? Oh, that's only a big school—a boy's school, you know, several miles from here. There's nothing out that way that would



"Go to my study, boy, and wait!" thundered the new Head of Grangemoor at Jack Linton. The chums were amazed. Surely Dr. Trouncer wasn't going to punish Jack for talking to his sister!

interest you! Two of those girls have a brother each at Grangemoor."

"So I gathered," nodded the listener carelessly. "They have been over there to-day, I take it—"

"Have they? They were to go to Barncombe Castle and meet some of the boys there!" exclaimed Cora. "To arrange some stunt they've to do together for Lady Lundy's charity fête. Is that why they were getting tea here? They have not been to the castle!"

"They seemed very excited about something," smiled the pallid stranger. "Something about a new headmaster at Grangemoor who is hazing the boys about."

"Really? That's interesting!" said Cora, leaning over the tea-table in her eagerness. "What else did you hear? And, I say, you might tell me your name, perhaps? If you're to be down here for a bit and are lonely, I may be able to put you in the way of some society. I have a few friends—not at the school; living round about, I mean."

"Thanks; that would be nice," was the smiled response. "My name's Jackson—Elsie Jackson, and I come from London."

"I'm Cora Grandways. It's rather nice to have met like this, isn't it?"

And Cora put aside the picture-paper as being quite done with, now that she had this Elsie Jackson to talk to.

It seemed to Cora well worth while—especially as this girl had overheard that talk about changes at Grangemoor!

Off They Go!

BETTY BARTON & Co. to be back at their own school again, after seeing that other school to-day in all its changed and unhappy state—what poignant feelings it aroused!

The same pleasant spirit prevailing as usual, here at Morcover! Every scholar a happy one, and encouraged to be so!

The chums slammed their machines away in the cycle-shed, then went in sprightly fashion across to the great schoolhouse, mingling with school-mates just coming in from games, meeting others who were just coming out again, after sociable study teas.

Then, at the porch, there was Miss Everard, Fourth Form mistress, standing about in no "point-duty" manner, but looking so entirely glad to see scholars—her own juniors in particular!—getting the best out of their "halfer."

"Well, Betty!" she greeted the Form captain, at the same time including Betty's special chums in her smile. "How did you get on at Barncombe Castle?"

"Didn't go there, after all, Miss Everard!"

"What!"

"Bekas—amuzzer washout," burst forth Naomer; and then she received a silencing dig in the ribs from Polly.

"We learned from a Grangemoor boy in Barncombe that nobody would be coming over, after all, from his school," Betty explained. "So it was all off for to-day."

"Pity! You might have stayed in and played that match, after all. But why was it—do you know? No illness over at Grangemoor, I hope?"

"Oh, no, but—er—well, there's some row on," Betty vaguely answered. "We met Lady Evelyn in the town, and she advised us to go on hoping that matters will be fixed up all right, in good time."

"There is plenty of time, of course," remarked the Form mistress. "I am only thinking, such

a pity your afternoon has been wasted. I wonder what the trouble can be at Grangemoor."

In spite of Miss Everard's interest, the girls felt that they could not trust themselves to speak about Dr. Trouncer and his methods, without displaying a degree of heat which would embarrass Miss Everard.

So they all scampered up to the Fourth Form quarters, finally dispersing—with the usual understanding that Study 12 would find them all together again later on. Rarely did an evening wear on towards Big Hall and bed-time, without a jolly gather-round in the captain's study and some foraging in the corner cupboard.

Madge Minden and Pam Willoughby were the last to turn up at Study 12 that evening. After "prep," they had been down to the music-room. They came in to find Grangemoor under discussion again. Judy was here, saying little and looking sad; but Polly had not reacted from her natural disposition to treat the affair as so much fun.

"I've just been saying," she remarked to the last comers, sitting upon the edge of the table, with a nice juicy apple to bite at; "supposing I rang up Jack in the morning?"

"And supposing Dr. Trouncer answered the 'phone, is that it?" smiled Pam. "Yes, well!"

"He'd have a fit!"

"Good job! Bekas ze sooner he has ze fit, ze sooner ze boys stop having ze shivers!"

"Phoning up is all off, of course," said Madge. "They used not to mind, if there was a genuine reason; but now it's different."

"There may be a letter from Jack or Dave in the morning; and then again, there mayn't!" said Polly.

But there really was a letter from Jack next morning.

As the rest of the chums came into Study 12, after madcap Polly, she passed the letter to them to read.

"Grangemoor School,

"Thursday.

"My dear Polly,—This may be the last you will hear from me, as some of the chaps having been trying to get off letters to their people about Old Shudders, and now there is a rumour about a censorship.

"Atmosphere very tense here, working up for a big bust-up, some of us reckon. We fellows in Fenwick's are not going to stand for it much longer, anyhow, whatever other Houses do. We're holding a meeting about it Saturday night; if forbidden, then, after lights out in the dorm. I'm to speak at it, and so's Dave. Dave's done a crashing article for the school mag, not as I would write it, but jolly clever and cutting; you should see it! The chap who does the mag is going to publish it, but I doubt if it will ever come out, as the school—can't go on like this, and there's talk of a bar-out.

"Can you beat it, there's a rumour that old Shudders got the job because it was the special wish of Dr. Halden, when he was forced to pack up suddenly, that Dr. Trouncer should be sent for to take his place. We chaps can't make it out at all, must be a mistake, but they say it's true!

"And that's apparently why the rest of the staff can't jib. They thought all the world of the Old Man, and can't bear the idea of going against his wishes. But why did he have such faith in a chap like Dr. Trouncer beats me?

"Now, Polly, don't you worry. We shall keep

our end up. But don't be surprised if you hear there's been a jolly old schemozzle.

"All the best,

"JACK."

"Bai Jove," gasped Paula, "then it wcaly is sewious!"

Polly took back the letter, folded it up, and pocketed it.

"I must go over," she said in her downright way. "Somehow I must get over to Grangemoor. Letters will be no use now. If they can stop letters from going out, they can stop them from going in. Well, to-morrow is Saturday."

She turned to Betty, who was looking very reflective.

"I'm thinking," muttered the captain, "how it can be arranged! There's an inter-Form match in the afternoon. And we didn't play last Wednesday. We ought really— But still—"

"I must go," insisted Polly. "I simply must!"

"And so must I," spoke Judy quietly. "Dave has not written to me. I didn't expect him to. He will have less to say than ever just now. But I don't feel I can go through the weekend—"

"Neither of you can be expected to," Betty declared understandingly. "And I'll do all I can. Meantime, we must hope that Morcove doesn't get wind of the trouble. If Miss Somerfield hears, that will certainly be an end to your going."

"One good thing," exclaimed Helen Craig. "Dr. Trouncer doesn't appear to have written to Miss Somerfield about last Wednesday! Yet you two said he made a note on his blotting-pad."

"Too busy making trouble for himself amongst the boys," Betty shrewdly reasoned. "I expect he is an awful muddler really. People who are all fluster and temper are not generally efficient. He'd be the sort to let things slide that really matter, and go on being just a big noise."

"There'll be a bigger noise at Grangemoor than he can ever make," predicted Polly. "That is, if I know Jack and a few more like him! But, Betty—"

It was a moment before Polly spoke again, and so her words, when they did come, seemed very impressive.

"Nothing must happen to-morrow, Betty, that's going to make things awkward for you. I'm not forgetting that you're captain. So, understand, if I—if I have to do something desperate, it will be nothing to do with you."

"Oh, it won't come to that, Polly!"

Later in the day Betty had grand news for her chums.

"It'll be all right, girls; I've fixed it up with Miss Everard about to-morrow."

"You have?"

"There'll be four of you excused from games and given leave to go over to Grangemoor. Miss Everard needed some talking round; but I managed in the end. Made it clear that the game wouldn't suffer. Pointed out that it's not often any of you either miss praece or ask to be left out of a team."

"And who are the four?" clamoured Polly.

"You Polly, of course, and Judy and Naomer and Paula. Miss Everard didn't like the idea of only two of you going. You know she always does prefer to see a party made up for an excursion. She asked me which other girls could best be spared to make it four, and"—Betty smiled at Naomer and Paula—"I'm afraid I said you two!"

"Good job, bekas—gorjus!" capered the dusky one. "Bekas you can play hockey any old time, but it isn't every day you get ze chance to see a school at war with its jolly old headmaster! Is it, Polly?"

"Er—no."

"Paula would rather not go," laughed Polly. "On the contrary, I—er— Yes, I'll go," said the elegant one. "With pleasure, yes, wather! That is to say—"

"As long as you can keep clear of the brick-bats!" chuckled Helen. "Wish I were going."

"You're to come on the field to-morrow, Helen, and play up for the Form with the rest of us," Betty remarked cheerfully. "They also serve who stay at home and play hockey."

"Only they miss the fun," rejoined Polly. "You couldn't have managed it for yourself, Betty?"

"Oh, I could have managed it perhaps, but I—well, I felt it better to stay back."

"You are a sport, Betty. You—"

"Burr!"

"No, bekas, so you are!" yelled Naomer, and to mark her further appreciation she hugged the captain about the neck.

"So all you want, to-morrow, is a fine day," was the bland remark from Betty with which the talk ended.

Thereupon Polly flew downstairs to inspect the barometer. It was high, and the needle never moved even when Polly gave it one of her hardest taps.

But even this was not satisfying enough, and Polly and several more of them had to be in the wireless-room at the appointed time for the weather report.

They came away from that room in gay mood. For the western district to-morrow's forecast was "Fine, calm, local mist or fog."

Certainly anything like a dense fog would cause Miss Everard to cancel the four girls' leave; but Study 12 reckoned that the risk of fog would only apply to early morning and after nightfall.

Saturday morning seemed to justify this conjecture. There was thick mist first thing; then the sun got through, and at "break" all Morcove was feeling sure of a brilliant "halfer." Polly spent her "break" looking over her bicycle, with particular regard to tyres. She wanted to be ready for riding away with her fellow-excursionists directly after dinner without a moment's delay.

"Well, Polly," the Form-mistress remarked to her at the midday dismissal, "so you are going to bike over to Grangemoor to see your brother?"

"Yes, Miss Everard."

"You and the others will have a lovely afternoon for the ride. Now you will be back in good time, all four of you?"

"Oh, yes!" Polly cried. "The days are so much longer now."

Later Miss Everard made a point of sauntering out to the games-field, intending to watch the inter-Form match.

Betty was there with the rest of the Fourth Form team, waiting for the Fifth Form players to come out.

"This is a lovely afternoon you've all got, Betty."

"Perfect. And, Miss Everard, the ground is—"

Surprise suddenly robbed Betty of the power of speech. Her eyes, as they glanced about the

sunny field, had fallen upon a certain school-mate greeting a much older girl who had just strolled in by the main gateway. The school-mate was Cora Grandways, and the surprise for Betty, the staggering surprise was to recognise instantly in the visitor that older girl who had been so noticeable in the teashop last Wednesday. She and Cora, they had become friends, then. "Who is that young lady, Betty; do you know?"

Miss Everard murmured the question now that she had looked to see the cause of Betty's staring.

"I'm afraid I don't, Miss Everard."

"Come to look on at the match evidently," the mistress inferred with diminishing surprise. Very often a fine "halfer" brought people out from the town to see Morcove at games.

For a moment or two Cora and her friend stood chatting; then they came across the grass to Miss Everard. Although the mistress went to meet them Betty was bound to hear the opening remarks that began a couple of seconds later.

"Miss Everard, may I introduce Elsie Jackson? She is down from London for a change of air after an illness and finds it rather dull. And she would like to see over the school and watch the play."

"How do you do," responded Miss Everard, with her usual cordiality. "I hope you are feeling better, anyhow. Yes, by all means get a look over the school."

"It's very nice of you," exclaimed Elsie Jackson, looks and voice alike being calculated to impress Miss Everard favourably. "What a fine school it must be."

"Come on, then, Elsie!" cried Cora gaily. "Up to my study for a few minutes' rest after the journey here. Oh, and Miss Everard"—turning back—"have you heard about Grangemoor School?"

"No, what?"

"This young lady tells me that things are in a strange way over there. She's heard that the new headmaster is having trouble with the boys."

Betty's heart had already gone flop. Now she found Miss Everard turning round to her.

"You hear this, Betty, about Grangemoor?"

"Yes, Miss Everard."

"Polly and the others have not yet started, I hope?"

"I think they have."

"Oh, but run and see—quickly!"

"But I know they have," said Betty, going red and white in the face by turns. "They've been gone this last twenty minutes."

"There now! Had I known, I would never have dreamed of letting them go!" was Miss Everard's regretful cry. "You didn't know, did you, Betty, about trouble over at Grangemoor?"

"Yes, I'm afraid I did, Miss Everard."

"You did! Then, Betty, I am surprised; I am very annoyed."

Eyes that were usually so kind and favouring fixed the Form captain with a look that brought a deeper flush to her cheeks. She could say nothing, would not dream of trying to beat about the bush. This stern reproachfulness, she deserved it.

"The other players are here, Betty, and so you must start the match. But understand," her Form-mistress added, "I am very disappointed in you—very!"

And she walked away.

A Storm Brewing!

"IT hasn't kept so wonderfully bright, after all."

"Just what I was going to say, Polly." "In fact, bai Jove, we seem to be widening into one of those fogs, geals."

"It's nothing," cried Morcove's madcap, whirling along with her three chums. "Only a patch from the moors. I don't suppose they've got it at Morcove, so they won't be uneasy."

Judy Cardew smiled aside at Polly Linton.

"You don't feel like turning back?"

"I do not!"

"No, bekas, we have come too far now!"

Then Polly smiled. She had a very different reason from that for not being inclined to abandon the trip. A spot of fog—pooh, when she would have been ready to go through fire and flood to get to Grangemoor this afternoon!

"And here we are!" panted Polly joyfully, a little later. "Those are the school grounds, the other side of this hedge on our left, and it's only a few hundred yards to the—Hallo!" she broke off in surprise, then laughed.

For suddenly several schoolboys had come bursting through some weak spot in the boundary hedge, in full view of the Morcovians.

One after another the boys scrambled through, and as fast as they straightened up, brushed themselves down and set their caps to rights, they showed looks of reckless jollity.

Polly and her chums understood in the very moment in which all this happened. Here were certain boys, probably from the Fifth Form, who were breaking bounds. They should have been as free as air, this being a Saturday afternoon, and free they meant to be, never mind the new Head, with his new rules and regulations.

"Good luck to them!" chuckled Polly, when the lawless ones had been dropped behind. "You can't wonder."

"Jolly well no!" said Naomer. "And I hope zey can find somewhere to get a good tea, bekas—"

"Goodness, look out, girls!"

And Polly, braking her machine sharply, hopped down from the saddle. The others, instantly following suit, were given no chance to ask "Why?" They saw Polly rushing her bicycle off the road, to hide herself and it amongst some trees forming the edge of a very foggy bit of woodland, and they guessed that they had better do the same.

"I thought we had better," Polly whispered, as soon as they had found shelter along with her. "You didn't see him?"

"Him?"

"Old Shudders, flying down to the gateway, in his gown and all," laughed Morcove's madcap. "I just glimpsed him through that hedge on the other side. Thank goodness for this mist; it may have saved us from being seen by him. I'm sure he'll come this way. He must have got a hunch that boys are sloping off for the afternoon in spite of some gating order, and so—Hark! He's at the gateway, storming at someone, a pre-, most likely."

"Sh!" gestured Judy.

He was coming. Already they could hear his pounding step on the highway and his angry mutterings. Apparently he had bidden some prefect on point-duty at the gateway to run in one direction, whilst he himself came this way like a raging bull.

A few moments more and the ambushed girls

saw him go tearing past, gown flying, his face dark with anger.

Polly whispered as she waved after him.

"Bye-ee!"

"Think he'll catch them?" questioned Judy.

"Not he. They're half a mile down the road by now. And then this fog. For no mistake, girls," Polly remarked, "it is thick along this valley now."

"We'll have to start back early," murmured Judy.

"Yes, wather!"

"We'll have to get a talk with Jack and Dave before we do any starting back," was the mad-cap's chuckled retort. "I must see Jack."

"Things are no better over here, that's evident," sighed Judy. "It looks as if the boys have started open defiance. There was a prefect at the gate."

"There isn't now," Polly commented blithely, and Naomer added an exuberant:

"Good job!"

They had stepped clear of the trees to look along the road, being able to see just as far as the gateway. No one was in view.

"Then come on, girls, before Old Shudders comes back. And look here," spoke on Polly eagerly, "why not leave the bikes where they are? They'll be quite safe, and handier there perhaps than somewhere in bounds."

"I think we might," nodded Judy; so they did, and the next minute found them past the gateway, going on foot towards "Fenwick's." The Head's house, needless to say, had no attractions for Morcove at present.

No games were being played, and although the fog could have had something to do with this the girls felt sure that there was another reason. So many scholars had been lined and otherwise penalised, there were not enough left to make up teams.

But although this was a "halfer" at Grangemoor without all the usual excitement of some match or other, played to the accompaniment of roar upon roar from onlookers, Morcove could discern boys in twos and threes fitting here and there, as if such activities were not supposed to be.

"Shame!" Judy murmured indignantly. "You can tell; it's getting the boys worked up."

"Yes, bekas— Ooo, listen. What ze diggings," said Naomer, stopping dead. "Over there."

"That's Fenwick's," stated Polly, and her eyes sparkled because of the tell-tale din which, coming from that schoolhouse, had excited Naomer's comment.

At this instant two or three more schoolboys went looming by in the thickening mist, making for Fenwick's.

"There's something afoot," said Polly. "Come on then, and we may just catch Jack and Dave."

The foggy afternoon must have rendered the building rather dark. Several ground-floor windows in a row were lit up from within, and it looked as if it were one very big room there, where a great number of scholars were assembling. Could it be for a punishment class? Morcove wondered.

"Rotten shame, if it is," grimaced Polly, as they all four carried on towards the building. "But it hasn't started yet, anyhow, and no master can be there, the row they're making!"

"I zink we better be queek," said Naomer.

Polly's eyes were upon the row of lit-up windows.

"We could go across to one of them first, instead of going to the door and inquiring for the boys. We could take just a peep."

"We might see the boys and tap at the window to let them know," Judy furthered the impulsive idea. "Then they could at least come to the window for a few words, just in time perhaps."

There was an emphatic nod from Polly, and she went on again in very determined fashion, taking the others with her. By a slight diversion of their steps they came half a minute later to one of the windows of the great room which was in such commotion, the house-porch being just round a corner.

It was a low sill to the window, and the four girls had only to stand on tip-toe to be able to see over it into the room.

At first glance they feared that it was indeed a case of a punishment class being about to start. This was a large class-room right enough, and many scholars were in their accustomed places apparently, as if expecting a master's entry at any instant.

A few other boys were larking about in the desks, and there was much shouting of remarks, some of which excited laughter, cheering or booing. Feeling was running high, as the girls could tell.

Then suddenly Polly correctly fathomed the meaning of the turbulent scene.

"Goodness!" she whispered the others tensely. "I know what it means, girls. The meeting. This is the meeting that Jack spoke about in his letter!"

"Bai Jove!"

"It's just about to start!" Polly spoke on,



"This young lady tells me they're having trouble with the boys over at Grangemoor," Cora Grandways informed Miss Everard. Betty Barton's heart sank. Miss Everard would certainly blame her, because she had obtained permission for her chums to go there this afternoon.

with glee in her eyes. "Oh, how I want to hear the speakers! Jack will be one, for a cert." "They'll see us at this window," whispered Judy. "But can't we go round to one at the back of the room? Then they'll all have their backs to us."

Polly nodded in great excitement. They had all four drawn away from this window, so as not to be noticed by any of the boys.

"Come on, girls."

And at that very instant in the crowded classroom there went up one stentorian shout in a voice familiar to the girls.

"Come on, boys, make a start!"

Polly's brother Jack, and that appealing shout of his had met with a deafening:

"Hurrah-h-h!"

FOUR PAIRS of girlish eyes looked in over another window-sill a few seconds later to see how orderly all the assembled boys had become.

The larking about had ceased; no one was out of his place, unless it was a certain Grangemoorian who seemed to be acting as chairman. He, a rather lanky youth, with a huge forehead and glasses, had taken his stand at the master's desk, in front of the class.

And he was speaking already, a very attentive silence having been accorded him; but what he was saying the four girls outside the window could not gather.

Unfortunately the chairman had begun with a mumble, otherwise Polly and her chums must have heard. For the window was open at the top.

Polly soon lost patience.

"Bother him, why doesn't he speak up!"

"Yes, bekas—"

"Sh'rrp!"

They listened harder than ever, but it was no use.

The girls, however, were not alone in feeling impatient. To their great joy, from all parts of the meeting there soon came sharp cries of:

"Speak up! Get on with it, Baldwin!"

Chairman Baldwin lifted his voice for a moment, then let it drop again, mumble, mumble, mumble. And that did not suit his hearers at all. Interruptions were so general as to create uproar, before which Master Baldwin suddenly fled from the "Chair," causing roars of laughter.

"Good job," said Naomer softly. "Bekas, he was a washout, anyway."

"Terrible," said Polly, her face glued to the window-glass now.

Then, to her delight and pride, she suddenly heard one name being called—one boy being shouted for above the high-spirited hubbub.

"Lin-ton! Now, Jack! Come on, Linton!"

"There he is," whispered Judy, "next to Dave."

Polly nodded. Her brother was on his feet, trying to demur to the proposal that he should speak; but his schoolmates were not going to listen to him—until they had him out there in front of all the desks. Nor would they listen to anyone else, that was certain.

"Rah!" they cheered him. "Go on, Linton! Hi, attaboy!"

So at last he walked out to the master's desk, and what an uproar it was then! Cheers, whistlings, shouted slogans, the thump-thump of feet—it even outdid anything of the same sort that Morcove's Fourth Form had ever known.

"Now," breathed Polly, "Now we shall hear something!"

"WELL, CHAPS—"

"Hurrah-h-h!" And some heavy bootwork. "Good old Linton!"

"First of all, you fellows, I am sure you would like me to say how we sympathise with friend Baldwin. Whether it is that he's got a sore throat, or misunderstood the nature of this meeting, he deserves our sympathy. We hope he will soon recover, and that we shall have the pleasure of hearing him read a paper on the Habits of Earthworms, or something like that."

Great laughter, Master Baldwin polishing his glasses as he paid the very gravest attention.

"Now, gentlemen, as time is getting on," the new chairman termed his joyous schoolmates, to their increased delight, "I will now ask anyone who has anything to say with some pep in it—"

"Hear, hear-r-r!"

"To hold up his hand."

Up shot a forest of arms.

"Gentlemen," Jack cried again, "pray silence for the Honourable Bob Halliday!"

"Hurrah, good old Bobby!"

In one of the front desks a fair-haired, good-looking boy stood up. It was probably a little affectation of his to which Fenwick's was accustomed, that he screwed a monocle into his right eye.

"Mr. Chahman, cheps," he said, that being his accent. "I merely went to seh, don't you know, that I anticipate—er—ructions at Grangemoor unless present grievances are remedied."

"Ha, ha, ha! Hear, hear! Go on, Bobby!"

But the Honourable Bob, with charming consideration for speakers to follow, had sat down.

The watchers outside the window nudged one another, bottling up their laughter.

"Gentlemen, I shall now call upon Comrade Calligan."

"Hurrah! 'Rah!" Thump, thump, thump!

"Switch it on, Cally!"

Jack's reason for dubbing Master Calligan "comrade" was apparent as soon as this young hopeful rose to speak. Looking like a budding prize-fighter, he was endowed with a voice and a fluency that would certainly, in years to come, make him an idol of the masses.

"Gentlemen," said Calligan impressively, "the need of the day is Progress, and when I say Progress, I do not mean Retrogression! Therefore, gentlemen, whilst I am often, as you know, in opposition to many of the views held by members of this distinguished House—"

Loud cheers.

"To-day, gentlemen, to-day," shouted Calligan, gesturing with a fist, "I find myself ranked in line with all those who wish, who are determined, to make a stand, to put up a fight, in fact, against this man, this tyrant—"

"Hear, hear-r-r!"

"This infamous and, I will say, this unspeakable reactionary who goes by the name of—"

"Shudders!"

"Gentlemen," said Calligan solemnly; and then with a shout: "gentlemen! Shall the clock of Grangemoor be put back a hundred years? Shall it be put back a minute even? With our consent—never!"

Terrific cheering.

"And so I say, and so I am sure you will all agree with me, gentlemen; rather than submit, rather than go on, rather than continue—we will UNITE!"

"Hurrah!"
 "We will FIGHT!"
 "Hurrah!"

"Gentlemen, let other Houses do as they think fit. Fenwick's will unite, and Fenwick's will fight! We are not worms, we are not cowards; we are MEN, gentlemen, yes, MEN! And so I say—"

"And so say all of us," the chorus started, at this moment—rather to Calligan's annoyance. He had wanted to say a lot more. He was not nearly at his final peroration yet. But Fenwick's was singing, and he had to sit down.

"And so say all of us,
 And so say all of us,
 For he's a rotten old tyrant,
 For he's a rotten old tyrant,
 And he's asked for what he
 is going to get,
 And so say all of us!"

"Hurrah!"

Other speakers followed. Only one of them advised caution, and he was howled down—to the huge delight of four girls who were still enjoying the proceedings.

In a line outside that classroom window were Polly and her chums, sparing not a moment to exchange whispered comments, sparing not a glance either, for the scene behind them—foggy and cheerless one that it was.

The same thought was in the mind of each girl. This was history in the making, this great indignation meeting, and they would not have missed it on any account!

"And now, you fellows," they heard Chairman Jack say presently, "I should like to get Dave to say a few words—just for once!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Dave, yes, come on, Dave! Order! Chair! Chair!" the meeting dinned; and there was a burst of cheering when Dave stood up which proved Fenwick's regard for its quiet, serious one. Judy felt her heart swell with pride. Her brother!

"Fellow members of Fenwick's," said Dave, when deep silence had fallen. "I should like to propose that this meeting appoint a deputation to wait upon Dr. Trouncer to demand an immediate change."

There had been nothing from any of the previous speakers so practical and so genuinely pleasing as this. The cheering lasted at least half a minute, with fellows on their feet, making frantic gestures of approval.

"I second that!" the formal cry was at length heard, and then Jack shouted:

"Those in favour?"

He had them all holding up their hands.

"Carried unan."

"Hurrah! Hip, hip!"

Then Morecove heard certain names being shouted, over and over again.



Several boys came bursting through Grangemoor's boundary hedge. "Good luck to them!" said Polly. "It's supposed to be their half-holiday; I don't blame them for breaking bounds!"

"Halliday! Linton! Calligan! Cardew!" were the shouts which mingled with cries of "Order!" and "Chair!" and much cheering, and an untimely attempt to start more singing.

Jack held up his hand.

"Put a sock in it, chaps, for a moment. Is it your wish that Dave and I, with the Honourable Bob and Comrade Calligan, act as a deputation?"

It was! The meeting declared itself in favour of exactly that idea, with tremendous fervour.

"Right," said Jack; and Polly could see, just as well as any of those inside the classroom, the look of grim delight which her brother's face had assumed. "That being the case, boys, I can now move the adjournment of this meeting, nem con, sine die, and ultra vires! With one jolly good cheer for fairplay and all that—"

"Hurrah-h-h-h!"

"And as for old Shudders—"

"Boo!"

"A better one than that, chaps—"

"BOOOO!"

"Stuff to give 'em," commented the chairman, really satisfied with that effort. "And now, boys, will you all please stand and sing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" as they crashed to their feet. Jack, seizing a blackboard pointer with which to beat time, said: "Whoa! Start fair, chaps!"

"Gorjus," whispered Naomer, dancing up and down. "Ooo, how I wish I was one of zem! Bekas—"

"Sh'trrp!" hissed Polly.

They were singing now; letting their voices go all together in a fine, inspiring chorus:

"Jolly good pals are Fenwick's lot,
Hurrah, hooray!
Caring for nobody, not one jot,
Hurrah, HOORAY!
So; Shudders, look out, for we're
about,
And what do we mind if you hear
us shout!
Booo! Booo! Booo!
That's what we think of YOU!"

After which, and with some final cheering and cries of "Sez you!" the meeting broke up.

It was all over, and Polly Linton, like her chums, turned away from the class-room window. She was going to say, gaily: "Now to get a word with Jack and Dave!" But surprise struck the word from her lips.

Someone had come up behind all four girls without a sound to warn them. How long he had been standing there they had no idea—perhaps only a moment or so; but here he was, looming largely in the fog.

Dr. Trouncer!

All four Morcovians wished that the ground could have opened to swallow them up, so fierce he looked, so filled with rage.

"And what did I hear you saying?" he glowered upon Naomer. "You wish you were one of them, do you?"

"Yes, bekas—"

"Silence, impudence! I never did know of such abominable impudence!"

"What about yourself?" retorted her royal impishness. "Your abominable bullying! Bekas, zat is what it is, and eef ze boys are going to strike, eet is your own—"

"Girl, another word, and I will have you expelled from your own school!" cried Grange-moor's new Head; but Polly had already gestured garrulous Naomer to be silent.

There was a very terrible silence, except for the dying away laughter and cheering and booing of Fenwick's riotous crew. Dr. Trouncer was paying heed to these tell-tale sounds within the schoolhouse, even whilst he stood glaring at each of the girls in turn.

"Are there more of you?" he demanded at last.

"No, sir," said Polly.

"You have come here—how?"

"On our bikes, sir, from Morcove."

"Very well, now you will come with me to be dealt with accordingly. Follow me."

He strode away, only to go round to the entrance to Fenwick's, and this was considerable relief to the girls. If he had been taking them across to his own schoolhouse, it would have been with very different feelings that they followed him. As it was, they could believe that there was yet a chance of having word with Jack and Dave.

His angry stridings changed almost to a run as the porch was reached, and the girls could tell that he was going in with a rush, like this, to take Fenwick's by surprise. Some of the boys were there in the entrance-hall, but any surprise which Dr. Trouncer gave them was nothing compared with their amazement at seeing—four schoolgirls in the well-known Morcove uniform! "Silence!" he commanded; but it was too

much to expect Jack and Dave, who were amongst those present, not to give startled cries as they each recognised a sister.

"Polly! Gosh—"

"Judy!"

"Silence, I say!" thundered Dr. Trouncer again. "Boys, do you hear me?"

"Yes, sir; but—"

Jack got no further with his very reasonable demur. He had the new Head striding at him, to deal him an open-handed smack on the head.

"That, for your impudence, you young monkey!"

And now there was a sensational silence, for Jack was looking strung up, his hands clenched as if—very much as if he were minded to go for Dr. Trouncer then and there.

The provoked lad so far mastered his temper as to confine himself to a husky:

"I won't stand that, sir! Any more and—"



"I will leave you to deal with these girls," Dr. at the girls, and yet they knew that

"You'll go to your study, boy, and stay there, that's what you will do!" thundered Dr. Trouncer. "You, too, David Cardew. Let every boy go to his study and remain there until further notice! Halliday," he addressed the Honourable Bob, "is Mr. Fenwick about?"

"I fancy not, sir."

"Mrs. Fenwick?"

"I really couldn't say, sir."

"Is that your impudence!" the Head glared, simply because the Honourable Bob was looking so deliciously imperturbable. "Go away, boy! All of you—go, I say! And you girls—"

He swung round, to find Jack and Dave in eager and subdued talk with them.

"Didn't I say!" he fairly roared. "You two boys—now go across to my House and await me there! This way, you girls, this instant!"

It had been only a few words that Polly and Judy had been able to exchange with Jack and Dave; but those few words, and the affectionate,

loyal smile which each sister was able to give her brother at parting once more—it made the day's excursion seem well worth while.

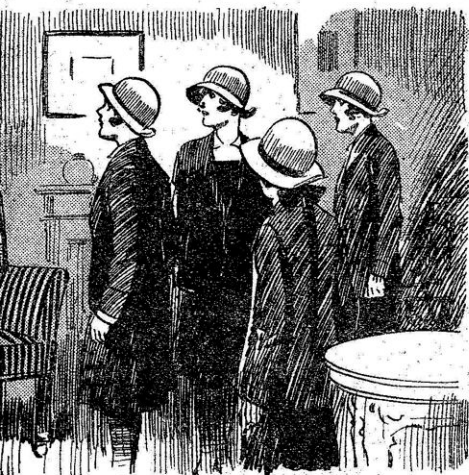
A few moments later the girls were behind Dr. Trouncer when he reached a first-floor door and tapped at it.

"Come in," requested a gentle, feminine voice. He threw open the door, and it was for Polly and her chums to follow him into a very beautiful apartment, furnished as a drawing-room.

Gracing this room was Mrs. Fenwick, the Housemaster's charming wife. She was alone, and she came away from a window as Dr. Trouncer brought in the Morcovians.

"Mrs. Fenwick, these girls—"
 "Oh! Why, surely I remember all of you!" was Mrs. Fenwick's rather distressed outcry. "Polly Linton? And Judy Cardew, isn't it? And you others—"

"Mrs. Fenwick, for I have no time to waste,"



rouncer said acidly. Mrs. Fenwick looked sadly and understood why they had come.

struck in the new Head. "The fact that these four girls may have made your acquaintance on a suitable occasion in the past; the fact that two of them have brothers in this House—it does not excuse their being here to-day! This is NOT a suitable occasion—"

"There, Dr. Trouncer, I am forced to agree with you," said Mrs. Fenwick sadly. "Girls, why did you!" she exclaimed gently, and yet her looks proclaimed—she appreciated what a compelling cause there had been.

"So will you deal with them at once, Mrs. Fenwick?"

"Why, certainly. Some tea—"

"Tea!" she snorted. "I would not give them tea. I would see them packed off this instant! But there is this fog—look at the fog now! Well, I leave you to arrange how to get them back. But I do not wish you to communicate with their school. I will do that!"

With which ominous remark, he conferred a

final look of wrath upon the four Morcovians, and let his furious stride take him from the room.

On Hand!

BY the faint sigh which escaped the Housemaster's wife as soon as Polly and the others were alone with her, they could tell how present conditions at Grangemoor School grieved her.

"You had permission to come, girls?"

"Yes, Mrs. Fenwick; but it is only right to say," Polly added, in her outright manner, "Miss Somerfield doesn't know that things are—well, like this, at Grangemoor."

"And I would be very sorry for it to be known," was the sorrowful rejoinder. "You girls knew, however, before you set off to-day?"

"Oh, yes."

A nod from Mrs. Fenwick implied that she needed to be told no more. She understood!

"It was a beautiful, bright afternoon when we set off," Judy remarked. "Much as we longed to come over, Mrs. Fenwick, had we known that it would set in as foggy as this—"

"You would not have been allowed to start, whether you wanted to or not—of course! Well, you cannot ride back in this," said Mrs. Fenwick. "That is out of the question. There is a train from our nearest station to Barncombe at six-fifteen—nothing until then. But how would you go on from Barncombe?"

"There's nothing in the evening—until the last train of the day," said Polly, "at eight-fifty, getting us to Morcove Road about nine-fifteen."

"Late! And how would you go on from there?"

Polly, the one addressed, shrugged.

"They might be able to send a car—"

"I don't like the idea of a car in a fog," Mrs. Fenwick exclaimed. "It is never safe. In a district like Morcove, it is possibly dangerous."

She turned away to the window. "Outside all was a dense white, drizzling mist, as dense as could be.

"No, she faced round again to say decisively. "I cannot help what Dr. Trouncer may have to say; he is a bachelor, and as girls you are in my care. I owe it to Miss Somerfield to do the best for you. I can sleep you the night, and that is what I must do. My husband, if he were here, would approve. At any rate, you must have some tea."

She crossed to a bell press and touched it.

"Mrs. Fenwick," exclaimed Judy, as soon as there was an opportunity to resume talk, "we really don't want to give you all this trouble."

"No, bekas—"

"Do let us get our bikes," chimed in Polly earnestly, "and find our way to your railway-station somehow, and get home as best we can! We can 'phone from Barncombe—"

"I would not dream of allowing it, girls," was the gentle refusal. "It does you credit; but we all know how baffling and dangerous these fogs can be. The very trains may be hours late. Sit down. Oh, Rosalie," as a parlourmaid entered in response to the summons of a few moments ago, "some tea for these girls, please."

As soon as the maid had withdrawn, Mrs. Fenwick resumed:

"You girls must be feeling very upset over what you know to be going on. Like my husband, I feel one thing, and one thing only, tying my tongue. We had the very greatest regard for the former Head, Dr. Halden. He lived for the welfare of Grangemoor School; it has been over-work on account of the school that has caused

his breakdown. Now it seems to us, we must bear in mind that his particular wish was that Dr. Trouncer should officiate temporarily. There has been much to cause many of us great surprise, great distress; but it was Dr. Haiden's express wish—"

"So we heard, and we can't understand!" burst out Polly.

"Bai Jove, most extwoodwinaway, yes, wather!" "Bekas—what ze diggings, he is what ze boys are calling him, this old Shudders joker," blurted out Naomer. "A jolly old tyrant!"

"I would not have said myself that there is anything particularly jolly about—about the gentleman in question! But now I must ask you to excuse me, whilst I go away and arrange for you for the night. Make a good tea when it comes!"

Naomer, at any rate, let a big smile proclaim that she would do that, right enough. As for Paula, she now seemed more concerned for her appearance than her "appetite," after the long cycle ride and the finish up in the fog. Paula fetched out her own pet pocket-glass and comb as soon as she was alone with her chums.

"Weally, geals, heah we are, and heah, I pwesume, we must stay, bai Jove!"

"Good job!" "Not the thing to say, Naomer!" was Polly's jecting rebuke. "Nice thing. And a nice row there'll be about this at Morcove! So long as Betty doesn't come in for any of it, though—who cares!"

"I'm sure I don't," Judy smiled seriously. "I wanted to be as near as possible to Dave—and I am!"

"Ditto me, as regards Jack!" nodded Polly blithely. "Oh, and who would have missed that indignation meeting? Wasn't it just perfect?"

"Yes," said Judy. She drifted to a window, only to be reminded that there was nothing to be seen. But, ere there had been time for her to turn away, sounds came from another building, close at hand in the enshrouding fog, and they were sounds that made her stand still to listen.

"Sh!" The foggy window being the best place for hearing what was going on, Judy's chums quietly joined her there.

It was Head's house from which those sounds were coming—sounds that were bound to make the girls, as they heard them, look at one another in acute distress.

"He's thrashing a boy!" panted Polly. "Oh—!"

"But listen!" The victim, whoever he might be, had suddenly changed from yelps of pain to shouts of revolt against cruelly past all bearing.

The girls heard the boyish voice continue for a few moments in some room of the house over the way; then the Head's voice overwhelmed it, and they were sure that more slashes with the cane were being given.

"Oh, it's terrible," muttered Judy. "It sounded like such a small boy—poor little chap!"

Polly, greatly roused, took a furious turn about the room. She was going to explode with anger, that was certain, when the door opened after a gentle tap—for the maid to bring in the tea, as they all supposed.

And instead, in walked Jack, with Dave beside him!

Betty Has No Regrets!

"WHAT!" gasped Polly. "He has said you boys might—?"

"Not he!" Jack said, with a grimace. "He can be hanged. But it's all right, girls.

Mrs. Fenwick said we could have just one minute."

"How sporting of her," exclaimed Judy. "Oh, she is so understanding, and so kind!"

"Too kind, in fact," retorted Jack playfully. "When you girls have come butting in like this, just as if we chaps hadn't got our hands full enough in any case; and she goes and orders tea for you even!"

This was a grinned comment on the entry of Rosalie the maid, with a tea-tray.

With a half-abashed and a half-amused look, Rosalie set down the teathings and then effaced herself.

"Dave old lad, just in time!" said Jack. "You and I can drink out of the basin—"

"No, bekas, I share my cup with Paula, and Polly shares with Judy, and zere you are—gorjus!" was Naomer's much better idea. "Ooo, zis is jolly; tea on our own, and time for a jolly good talk!"

"Dave will do the talking," chuckled Jack, in sly allusion to his chum's well-known love of remaining mute. "But I will say one thing for Dave, he found his tongue just now."

"At the meeting, you mean?" sparkled Polly.

"No!" cried her brother. "I mean, when we were over at Head's house. You see, we were no sooner there than Bob Halliday turned up, and comrade Calligan. They'd agreed that they might as well join us, and so lose no time over the deputation stunt."

"And did it come off?" clamoured Judy.

"It did. That's what I'm saying," grinned Jack, as if he had the most pleasurable recollections. "Dave weighed in a treat. You were the goods, old lad, putting everything so nicely. All dictionary words, too, some I'd never heard before, but they were the goods. You should have seen old Shudders—"

"But what was the result of the deputation stunt?" the madcap implored. "And do have this tea, boys, whilst you can get it!"

"We chaps ought to be waiting on you," said Jack. "Brown or white, Naomer, or both, or cakes, or what? The result of the deputation was that certain boys are to be caned in front of the whole school at seven o'clock this evening—boo-hoo, and I'm one of them!"

In spite of his flippancy, the girls became quite upset again. The tempting eatables, and the cups of tea that would have been so refreshing—all were forgotten. Polly jumped up so excitedly that she nearly upset the tea-things.

"Caned," she echoed, "before the school?"

"Let him," shrugged Jack. "It will bring things to a head, that's all."

"We can't let him!" cried Polly wildly. "We won't!"

"Oh?" chuckled Jack. "You think you can stop him, do you? I'd like to know how! My dear old Polly-wolly, and you others; you musn't worry yourselves on our account. Not good for little girls to—"

"How you can joke!" fumed Morcove's madcap. "When you know what he is with the cane!"

"We certainly do know that," grinned Jack.

"Only a minute ago," Judy said tensely, "we heard him. Fancy, it was such a thrashing we could even hear it being given—to some poor boy—"

"And, bai Jove!" exclaimed Paula. "I could have cried!"

"Well, have some cake instead," Jack said cheerfully. "Nunno, girls, there's nothing you can do—just as if! Mrs. Fenwick says she is keeping you the night on account of this awful

fog; but please, please don't you come along to see us caned. It's going to be painful enough without that—eh, old lad?"

"Surely," said Judy to her brother, whilst she held him by the shoulder to keep him a moment longer, "surely someone will interfere! Mr. Fenwick—what about him?"

"We doubt if he will be back," muttered Dave. "It's not supposed to be known, so don't you girls say anything; but Fenwick went off after lunch to try and get hold of one of the school governors. The others live at a great distance, but this one—perhaps—"

"Gosh, look out, boys!" came Jack's sudden whispered warning. "Hark!"

"Howwows," gasped Paula, turning quite pale. "Yes, bekas— But queek, you two; hide—hide!"

"Yes, Jack—Dave," Polly added her frantic entreaty. "Hide! Here, behind this couch—quick!"

For a moment Jack and Dave were all for making a speedy exit; but even before there had been time to open the door they could tell that Dr. Trouncer was pounding upstairs and that it was too late!

They fell away from the door and then each ran to cover. Jack dodged behind the big settee and huddled down out of sight; Dave flashed to one of the windows and got behind a curtain. Judy just had time to push the fabric back into place screening that boy, when Dr. Trouncer walked in.

"Ah!" he said, glaring around the room. "Mr. Fenwick not here? My telephone won't work." Probably he had broken it during some burst of temper. "I want to use the one here. But what," he flamed out, "do you girls mean by this? Why aren't you gone?"

"Mrs. Fenwick doesn't wish us to go, sir—"

"What!"

He whipped about and ran out of the room again, closing the door behind him with a bang! And Polly raised her cup to her lips quite steadily, and sipped, smiling.

"That's right," said Jack, crawling out from cover. "Make a good tea, anyhow. Gosh, I thought we were for it that time, boys! Oh, heck, what a life! And you girls don't make it any better for us, you know!"

"We hope to," said Polly blandly; and then Jack looked hard at her, somewhat seriously.

"I believe you've got a hunch, Polly! What is it then?"

"That's my business," said she as blandly as before. "Just listen to him now!"

The new Head had encountered Mrs. Fenwick somewhere on the ground floor and was pitching in for her about the Morcove girls.

As this tirade established the Tyrant's whereabouts, Dave and Jack thought it just as well to slip away now. On tip-toe they crept from Mrs.

Fenwick's drawing-room, leaving the girls to themselves.

Then Polly set down her cup. She stood up. "I've a idea, girls. You stay here and tell Mrs. Fenwick if she comes in I shall soon be back."

RINGING UP MORCOVE!

Polly Linton could hear Dr. Trouncer doing that at a telephone in this schoolhouse as she found her way to some side stairs which sheer instinct had told her must be there.

Boldly she flitted across the fogbound quad to that big building, avoiding the main entrance. The lights were on in none of the ground-floor rooms of Head's house, but many windows up above were illumined. She guessed that they were the windows of studies where seniors were having tea.

So, then, she was in luck! She had only to find a side door— Ah, here was one, hurrah!

In she went, and could then consider herself as being almost in the Lion's Den, though not quite. But she would be in that Den itself ere another minute had sped, if only the luck would hold!

In the dim light she groped her way to the Head's own room, then, with all the determination and courage that were hers, she walked straight into the Head's sanctum, and as boldly walked in.

The Head had left one silk-shaded lamp switched on. By its light she hunted around, and she soon came upon a cane—so recently in use, alas, that it needed no hunting for. But were there others perhaps?

There were, and in a few moments she had them. A stock of canes—a bundle of them, as surely no man in his position, unless he were a born bully, would have thought to have by him. But he had done this thing; had actually got himself an entire bundle of canes, so that as fast as he broke one—

Polly's face was a study in indignation at this moment. She had had that thought just then: as fast as he broke one he would use another.

"But not if I know it," she said to herself fiercely. "Are there any more, before I go?"

She searched around hurriedly, but could find no more; and, indeed, the one bundle was more than enough, anyone would have said!

Never faltering in her purpose, she took that bundle of canes with her as she flitted away, and during the next minute or two she was running as fast as possible down the school's main drive to the gates.

Not a soul did she encounter in the fog, and so, all out of breath with running, she reached the spot, beyond the school-bounds, where the bicycles had been left. She was going to bring all four bicycles into bounds for the night, before returning to Mrs. Fenwick's drawing-room.

But, before handling the bicycles, Polly un-

(Continued on next page.)

At the Cost of the Captaincy



by Marjorie Stanton

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the string that held all those canes together, and then, one by one she broke them up.

Crack, crack, split—crack!

A dozen in all, and she broke each so that if found, it could never be used by the tyrant. With the fury to which she had been roused by them and being what she was, she broke the canes and flung them into the bushes.

"And he shall not have the chance of suspecting any of the boys doing it, either," she muttered to herself passionately. "I don't mind his knowing that I did it! Thank goodness, Betty didn't come with us to-day! I wouldn't have Betty mixed up in this for anything, for Betty, as captain—"

"YES, BETTY Barton—come along in; I want you!"

No mistaking Miss Somerfield's stern mood.

"Those four girls in your Form who had leave to go over to Grangemoor School this afternoon—they will now have to stay the night there!"

"This fog—"

"Oh, the fog! That is the reason for their not being able to get back, no doubt; but, Betty, the reason for their going to Grangemoor—what about that?"

Seldom had it been Betty's unhappy lot to see her headmistress looking so angry.

"I understand, Betty, that you obtained leave for those girls—although you knew? You knew the state of affairs at Grangemoor, only made known to me in the last hour or so! Isn't it so?"

"Yes, Miss Somerfield, I—"

"Then, Betty, I am very, very angry with you; so angry, so disappointed, you may yet find it costing you your captaincy!"

Betty did not move.

"You may go. That is all I have to say for the present—except this, Betty! You quite understand; if I hear of any of those girls having participated in the trouble over there at Morcove School, I shall hold you responsible!"

And when Miss Somerfield said that it seemed to Betty that her very hours as Form captain were numbered. For she knew Polly—only too well she knew that headstrong, impulsive chum!

"But I don't mind," she was saying to herself, as she went away with that dread threat hanging over her head. "If it were to be done again I would do it—yes, I would. Knowing how Polly and Judy both wanted to stand by Jack and Dave!"

END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

("AT THE COST OF THE CAPTAINCY!" is the title of next week's grand tale. Don't miss it!)

Read and Enjoy No. 5 Of—

Penelope's Diary



IT seems only the other day that I was writing in you, diary mine, telling you about the exciting happenings during the first week of term—and yet here we are breaking up

again for holidays next week!

At home, Norman and I are having many a wordy battle over the Boat Race. Norman is Cambridge; so, of course, he's ever so pleased with himself considering the Cambridge crew have won so many times since 1920. Your poor little Pen is still loyal Oxford, ever since the time, 'way back in Lower Three, when Margaret Burton of the Sixth went to Oxford after passing examinations and bursaries, the very sound of which make me pale even now.

Margaret was marvellous. Sometimes she used to sit with us in Lower Three for prep. periods, and occasionally she'd take us for games. I used to chase her most fervently for autographs and even a smile, but although I've long grown out of that, I'm still awfully fond of her, and look forward to her letters. She writes to me every month, and mummy is going to ask her to stay with us for a fortnight of her summer vacation!

I told you I was a frightful chatterbox, didn't I? And so I must be, for I see I've wandered right away from the subject—which was the Boat Race.

Daddy's going to take us to see it, of course, so,

thinking I'd score over Norman, I asked daddy if we might have the car decorated in dark blue this year to bring Oxford luck.

But, of course, that mean brother of mine had already asked if it might sport light blue! I was furious, but daddy was a dear, and said we could each decorate half the car. Norman could have one side and I the other. I was frightfully bucked, and being the "lady," Norman very condescendingly allowed me to choose which side of the car I preferred.

He was awfully surprised at my quick decision, and began to suspect a catch when I said "right!" But after walking very ponderously round the car trying to look like a successful mixture of Sherlock Homes and Sexton Blake, Norman just put down my choice to a feminine whim, and immediately started on elaborate plans for making his side look striking.

But I knew daddy wouldn't want the car to look as if we were taking part in a flower and ribbon carnival, or something, so my plans were much more modest.

So I spent much of my careful savings during the term on perfectly stunning royal blue satin ribbon. Norman's taste runs to quantity, not quality, and he's bought yards and yards of pale blue bébé ribbon as well as plenty in bright artificial silk. You know how horribly it creases, don't you?

But, of course, we're not doing the actual decorating until Saturday.

I'm just wondering whether the weather will be fine or not. I know it usually rains on Boat Race day, and that was why I selected the right-hand side of the car. The left side will get all the splashes from the gutter, and I have thought of lots of uses for that blue satin ribbon of mine.