

HUMBLER FOR FRIENDSHIP'S SAKE



By
MARJORIE STANTON

Enthralling, Long Complete Morcove School Story, Featuring Betty Barton and the Chums of Study 12

CHAPTER I.

Sensation in the Form

"WHERE'S Betty, then, girls?"
"Don't know, Polly, for the moment"

"Oh, but I know! I saw her, a couple of minutes since, going to the headmistress' room."

"Oh, good! We know what that means, don't we, girls?"

And Polly Linton, who had looked like scampering off again, because of her eagerness to find Betty Barton, the Form's popular captain, now came right into this study where all tongues were on the go.

"Miss Somerfield must have sent for Betty about what's on the notice-board downstairs—that's it, for a cert!" Polly inferred delightedly. "Gosh, and it's going to be a big thing for Betty, too, as captain—"

"Yes, wather!" beamed Paula Creel, handling pocket-comb and mirror as she reclined in Study 12's best armchair. "A pwoud day for Betty, gals, when Pwincess Lauwina comes to the school! Bai Jove, I only wish I stood a chance of being pwesented to the pwincess!"

"But, what ze diggings, why can't we all be presented!" the shrill voice of that dusky imp, Naomer Nakara, rose above the happy babel of talk. "Sweendle, eef we are not! Any old how, I shall be all right, bekas—"

"You!" Polly jokingly rounded upon the jab-

berer. "You'll be hidden when the time comes; put somewhere safely out of sight—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now zen," Naomer protested; "trying to be funny, Polly!"

"Not at all! Only thinking what a pity it would be for the Form—THE Form!—to be spoiled by just one undersized, overfed girl, with a lump of toffee in her right cheek—as usual—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For it so happened that Naomer, at this very moment, was popping a sweet into her mouth, having just consigned the core of a finished apple to the waste-paper basket.

"Well, I shan't envy Betty when the day comes—no, I shan't!" declared Helen Craig, in that jolly voice of hers. "I can quite imagine some girls feeling they'd give anything to be captain for just that one occasion! But I should be scared of doing everything all wrong!"

"I suppose Betty will have to present a bouquet?" Tess Trelawney now realised. "I hadn't thought of that!"

"Of course she will!" cried several whose minds had been actively imagining details of the procedure. "And curtsey!"

"Poor Betty!" laughed Judy Cardew. "It takes you a week to learn how to curtsey properly!"

"How do you curtsey, Pam?" questioned staid Madge Minden, addressing that particular chum. "Like this?"

But Madge, giving her idea of what a Court curtsy should be, was aware that she had much to learn in that respect. Sure enough, Pam Willoughby's example of the correct thing—when a general clamour had compelled her to give it—was so different from the general notion, she was asked to do it again, in "slow motion" style.

Then Polly and others, if only for fun, began to practise the curtsy. It was, as the madcap remarked, something to do on a wet day, by way of indoor exercise.

Hence the astonishment of certain girls who suddenly came to the open doorway and beheld the chums making the elaborate bow to one another.

"What on earth!" was the cry that preceded a burst of laughter; and then came the excitable inquiry: Where was Betty?

The answer was that any who cared to wait might expect the captain to turn up at any moment now. Very strong, too, was the inclination to wait. It became a crowd about the study doorway, the room itself being unable to hold so many girls—all of them anxious for a word with Betty.

She, it was being gaily taken for granted, would be able to supplement the news contained in that official announcement which had created such a great sensation less than half an hour ago.

The various Forms had come out of class, after morning school, to learn that a great day was in store for Morcove School—next week.

Princess Laurina, whilst on a brief visit to Barncombe Castle, as the royal guest of the Earl and Countess of Lundy, would honour the school with a visit.

Not a girl in the school needed to be told more about the princess herself than all the papers had been saying since her arrival in this country a few weeks back. Morcove had read all the cordial accounts of her activities, and had studied the fascinating photographs of her, appearing in the illustrated weeklies.

With delight, Morcove had listened to all the pleasing rumours which were flying about; and now the school was actually promised a sight of this young and lovely royalty.

"We mustn't let the other Forms have the best of it," one of the chatters rattled on. "Oh, I do wish Betty would come in; then perhaps she could tell us the very latest—"

"Here is Betty, coming now!" was the sudden cry from the fringe of the crowd, causing a lively: "Hooray!"

But next moment there was a stilling of all tongues, due to surprise of a painful nature. Betty had not come down the long corridor of studies with anything like a joyful scamper, nor did she have anything to say anent the great day.

To see her, the captain, as she came up, was to experience an acute sense of disappointment. The crowd had parted to let her through, and she passed into Study 12 without saying anything.

She was smiling, but—no, it was not her Betty's usual smile. Those who knew her best—Polly and the rest of the Study 12 "chummery"—wondered if she was feeling a bit upset.

A strange, if it were so, at such a time as this! A row on? The Form didn't want to hear of any rows at present; it wanted, as it were, to have a clean slate against the arrival of the great day.

"Been seeing the Head, haven't you, Betty?" Polly asked, ending the startled silence.

"That's right," Betty nodded. "She—she just sent for me, you know."

"Have anything to say about—next week?" asked one of the others eagerly. "I mean to say, Betty, some of us are wanting to know—"

"Yes, Betty—the arrangements; what are they to be? Do you know?" clamoured half the crowd. "Or isn't it settled yet?"

"Bekas, eef all we are going to do is to stand in a line and shout pipooray when ze princess turns up—sweendle!" yelled Naomer. "Zere ought to be a grand special parade, and a grand special spread for ze whole Form, after-the-wards, and—"

"And flags, and bunting, and each Form do its own decorations—"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! 'Weelcome to Morcove!' in cotton-wool letters, geals, on a wed bagkw—Owp!"

"Then shut up!" Polly said to Paula, after vigorously elbowing the drawler aside, "unless you can think of something better than cotton-wool letters! If our Form—THE Form!—can't make a better effort than that—pooh!"

This being the mood of the majority of the girls now present, Betty's continued silence created some impatience.

"Come on, Betty!" was the slightly testy chorus. "Tell us! You've seen the headmistress—"

"And all I can tell you is this," the captain now broke out, with only the ghost of her usual smile; "I shan't be taking part in anything on the day."

"Wha-a-ât!" It was a perfect yell of incredulity. "What, Betty—you, the captain!"

"Why evêg not, Betty?" gasped Polly. "Not called away from the school, are you? You'll be here next week?"

"Oh, yes, I shall be here. But—I shan't be acting as captain. That's all."

All! But, calmly though Betty had said it, her listeners were now too astounded for words.

"So, really, girls," she took advantage of the astounded silence to say, steadily, "you might just as well go away. In fact, I'd be glad if you would. Er—there's another notice on the board by now that will tell you something you ought to know."

For a moment or so no one moved. Girls were agape, spellbound, staring at the captain blankly. Then, as she made it very clear that not another word would be got from her, a sudden flitting away started.

In twos and threes at first, then in bigger batches, the crowd dispersed. Soon only Betty's best chums remained; and as even they plucked her by the sleeve in vain, at last they ran from the study, to go downstairs.

"Bekas, queek—what ze diggings!" shrilled Naomer, almost capsizing Paula during the excitable exit. "Zis looks to me like a sweendle! Has Betty got ze sack as captain, or what?"

"Oh, shut up kid—just as if!" Polly fumed, dashing up the corridor. "And yet—Goodness, I wonder—"

There must have come into Polly's mind, just then, some agitating conjecture which caused her to whip about and run back to the study, where Betty had been left all by herself. Back into that study rushed the madcap, a couple of seconds later, and, closing the door quickly, she went and stood right in front of the captain.

"Betty!"

It was more than an ejaculation of dismay from Polly. Her voice had a note of horror in it.

"Betty! Does it mean that, really? You—you have lost the captaincy?"

"Yes—it means just that, Polly dear. But don't—"

"They are all to see it on the notice-board downstairs, are they?" Polly panted. "By order of Miss Somerfield?"

"Yes."
"Betty!" was the other's cry of dismay. "But why—why?"

"I can't tell you, dear."
"But I can guess," Polly said hoarsely. "Something to do with last night—isn't it so?"

Shaking her head in stubborn refusal to explain, Betty moved aside, so as not to have her chum's eyes boring into her.

"Right!" Polly said in a queer tone at last. "Then I am going to find out for certain—straight away!"

And with those words she was gone.

CHAPTER 2.

Nothing Can Save Her

POLLY LINTON, having whirled downstairs, did not make for Miss Somerfield's room without being aware of a very excited crowd in front of the notice-board.

But she would not waste a moment by turning aside to read for herself that fresh announcement which had created a second sensation in the school.

Darting along a ground-floor passage, she came to a door marked "PRIVATE," and tapped it. Almost before there had been time for a responsive "Come in!" she was turning the knob to enter.

Miss Somerfield, the idolised headmistress of Morcove, looked aside from some writing to accord the intruder an amiable smile.

"Well, Polly?"

"Please, Miss Somerfield, I want to know why you have taken away the captaincy from Betty Barton!"

Question and tone might have seemed too blunt to be respectful, but Miss Somerfield knew Polly's headstrong nature and made allowances for it.

Laying down a pen, the headmistress rose, as if prepared to deal quite reasonably with this girl whose eyes sparkled so excitably.

"Betty won't say why it is!" Polly rushed on rather wildly. "And I think I know why she won't! You—you didn't order her not to explain, did you, Miss Somerfield?"

"No. But I can very well realise she would feel too ashamed—"

"Oh, Miss Somerfield, but I think you are wrong," Polly did not hesitate to say flatly. "Betty has done nothing to be ashamed about, really. No! Why she won't tell us girls is only because she wants to spare—me!"

Miss Somerfield gave a violent start.

"Spare you, Polly?"

"Yes! And now that I've said that, I dare say you can guess that I'm to blame for what Betty did last night! You have taken away the captaincy because you found out—didn't you?—that she had been out of bounds!"

"Yes, Polly—"

"I knew, I knew!" she cried out distressfully. "It could only be something to do with last night! Well, Betty didn't say why she went out of bounds, did she?"

"Betty refused to name the girl whom she had aided and abetted, and for that reason I have deprived her of the captaincy," the headmistress stated sadly. "I gave her until this morning to make up her mind to disclose the other girl's name. She still refused, and so—"

"Miss Somerfield, listen; oh, please—"

"I will listen to anything you have to say, Polly."

"I was the girl whom Betty aided and abetted, as you call it," came the frank admission. "She knew that I had gone out of bounds—for a certain reason. Then she discovered that you had been warned that a girl was out of bounds, and she—she did her best to come after me and save me from being caught."

"What is more, she did save you from being caught by me?"

"Yes! And as Betty saved me like that, last night, you don't suppose I'm going to let her suffer now? Miss Somerfield—"



"Please, Miss Somerfield—oh, do let Betty off!" Polly pleaded. But the Headmistress shook her head. "No, Polly, I can't do that!" And so, Polly realised, the Captain must continue to suffer—because of her!

"Betty must still suffer, Polly—"

"Oh, no, no—"

"Yes, I say. The refusal to name you as being the original culprit can be regarded as loyalty to a dear chum, and I'm not the one to ignore a motive of the kind. But this must be understood by you as well as Betty now. She did a thing unbecoming to the office of captain of a Form. It is bad enough for any girl to condone another's wrong-doing; to aid and abet her makes it all the more serious. For a captain to do such a thing is—absolutely unpardonable!"

"I—I knew that, too, at the time," Polly said huskily. "That's why I begged her not to help me in what I was going to do. It was a mistake to let her know about it, but we are such chums, somehow—"

"I understand, Polly. And again, I appreciate

the fine loyalty that has brought you here to try and beg Betty off. Now you would like to be the only one to suffer punishment?"

"Yes! Yes, please, Miss Somerfield! Anything you like, for me; but do—do let Betty off!"

"Polly Linton, you ask the impossible. Remember, you are not righting Betty in my eyes."

"Oh, I know I am not! But—"
 "Your disclosing yourself as the first girl to go out of bounds last night simply means that I now have another girl to punish. Nothing you have said can alter—"

"But, Miss Somerfield—listen! Betty knew that I had gone out of bounds for—a very important reason! It wasn't as if I had just slipped out for—fun."

"And still I don't see that that clears either of you. Oh, no, Polly, and you must be well aware that in NO circumstances is a girl justified—"

"I see," Polly sighed. "All right then—"
 "You must tell me, though, what this important reason was," the headmistress continued gravely. "All I know at present is that, last evening, warning came to me by an anonymous message that a girl was even then going out of bounds to visit a certain house—Gorselands, five miles from here—in secret. I went in my car to that house, personally to investigate the matter. Meantime, however, Betty had contrived to warn you, and so I found out—nothing! Polly Linton, the affair cannot be left in that state. Now you must tell me why—"

"I'm afraid I can't, Miss Somerfield."
 "Polly! When I am your headmistress! Come, come!"

"But I— No, I am not going to say why I had to go to that house," Study 12's fiery member insisted, stubbornly shaking her head. "I can't!"

"Then how do you suppose I can deal leniently with you, Polly?"

"Oh, I don't expect you to! I did a wrong thing in going out after hours, of course. I suppose I ought to be expelled. But I'm thinking of Betty—her part in it all, which was quite different—credible—"

"Creditable! In so far as it revealed loyalty to you, Polly, as chum—yes. But I have to strip this business of its personal factors and consider it only from my standpoint as headmistress. I have always had a great admiration for Betty. But for once she has fallen badly—"

"All my doing!" Polly exclaimed miserably. "Oh, look here, Miss Somerfield! Make the punishment twice as stiff for me, and let Betty off!"

"Once again, no! I will, however, let just one thing weigh with me. That is, your statement—which I believe, Polly—that you did not steal out last night for any piece of folly. I will now believe that Betty would not have aided you, only she felt that you deserved to be helped."

"Paying, Miss Somerfield walked to and fro reflectively for a few moments. Then, facing Polly again, she spoke with slow impressiveness.

"Betty will have back the captaincy when this offence has been purged by a suitable suspension. She is suspended until the end of next week, which means that she will forfeit the special honour which would have come to her, as captain of the Form, of being presented to the Princess Laurina."

Polly, wanting to start fresh implorings, could only gulp. Her heart seemed to be in her throat.

"And you, Polly Linton—you will be punished by not having any part in certain treats which are to come to the Form during Princess Laurina's stay at Barncombe Castle. I am sorry, but—"
 "That's quite all right, Miss Somerfield. I

deserve it," Polly said. "But couldn't you—I mean—about Betty—"

"No! That is my last word about Betty," said the headmistress implacably. "Now find Pam Willoughby and tell her that I wish to see her."

Polly was taking her underlip between her teeth as she turned away to the door.

She was not an emotional girl, but as she passed from the room there was a puckering of her chin, because of an inward struggle with the grief that had come upon her. Grief on account of Betty, whom she must so soon face again, after failing—failing to get her absolved!

POLLY overtook Pam on the stairs, and by giving the message, caused that chum of hers to turn back, to go to the headmistress.

Pam had come away from the notice-board whilst almost all other girls were still crowding in front of it, caught up in talk.

Then Polly went up more flights of stairs, turned into the long corridor where the Form had its studies, and so came to Study 12.

Betty was alone—over by the window. She turned round when Polly entered, and it must have shocked her to see the look in that chum's face. Such misery Betty had never seen before in Polly's eyes.

A shaking hand of Polly's closed the door. Then she moved to meet the girl who was approaching her. Suddenly the silence was riven by a heartbroken cry from the one whom the Form called its madcap.

"Betty! Oh, Betty darling! All my doing!"

"Sh, dear! It doesn't matter—"

"It does, it does! You were the captain, and now—"

"Yes, but I did it for you, Polly, because—you know— You had so much to do for the sake of your brother Jack."

"And I failed—last night!" Polly said fiercely. "That is what makes it all a thousand times worse. It has been all for nothing, in the case of both of us!"

"You will have another chance someday soon—something tells me that," Betty murmured comfortingly. "It was splendid of you, Polly, to go to Miss Somerfield about it; but I wish you hadn't, because now the Head knows everything."

"I thought I might get her to let you off, Betty! But she wouldn't!"

"How could she, Polly?"

"I expect Pam will be made captain—"

"Then, let's agree, Polly; not a word to Pam or any of them about things they don't know—that is, about last night," was Betty's earnest whisper. "Pam must not be allowed to know why I've lost the captaincy. If she finds out that it was because of something I did for you, she'd be most unhappy at having to take my place. Best thing, dear—say nowt, eh?"

There must have been something in this suggestion which intensified Polly's admiration for Betty. There came another cry:

"Oh, Betty, you're a brick!"

And then, whilst they heard a scamper of feet in the corridor, giving warning of a bursting in of other girls, they clung to each other like the loving chums they were—adrift in a sea of trouble!

CHAPTER 3.

The Price She Must Pay

IN the studies, at tea-time that afternoon, there would have been nothing but jubilant discussion of the great day that Morcove had been promised. only—something had happened.

Why—why had Betty Barton been temporarily deprived of the captaincy by the headmistress?

No official explanation had been forthcoming, nor could enlightenment be obtained. Betty herself was preserving a good-humoured but stubborn silence. Attempts to "pump" Miss Merrick, the Form-mistress, had proved useless.

Then there was Pam Willoughby, now appointed to act as captain for the time being. On the theory that Miss Somerfield, when appointing Pam, had offered her some explanation, many girls in the Form had bombarded her with questions.

All in vain! Pam knew nothing as to the reason for a change which she herself was far from relishing. She said so, and her word was not to be doubted for a moment.

All the Form could do, therefore, was to try to find its own solution to the puzzle. Rule out that Betty was not in disgrace over anything—for when had Betty been known to bring disgrace upon herself?—and girls still had to ask: Why—why, then, HAD this thing happened?

One answer to the riddle began to be resorted to at last. Here and there a girl voiced it as a possible explanation, and yet it seemed so incredible! Betty had been suspended because she was felt to be not socially good enough for the special duties that would devolve upon a Form captain on the great day.

In other words, she was not good enough to be the one to meet the princess!

Now, Morecove had always been proud of being free from snobbery. So, even the girls to whom this idea occurred were careful to add the opinion:

"If it is so, shame!"

Other girls simply yelled with disgust at the mere suggestion of Miss Somerfield's having acted for a reason of that kind. Morecove's headmistress do a thing like that? Oh, impossible!

And yet—

What other explanation could be found? There was none!

On and on flowed the talk in this study and that, and the more the girls debated, the more they were forced to assume that, after all, that must be the reason.

Very significantly, as it seemed to the girls, Pam Willoughby had been given the temporary captaincy, and, of course, Pam was more used to meeting distinguished people.

No need for anyone to instruct Pam how to act in the presence of the princess! No fear of Pam making a "mull" of it!

So it really did look as if Miss Somerfield had decided: not Betty, but—Pam!

Pretty rotten for Betty, if it were so; and not pleasant for Pam, to say the least! For Pam was a member of the Study 12 "chummyery," and thought all the world of Betty. But the headmistress, of course, could have her own way at any time.

Pam must do as she was told, and Betty must just find comfort in the knowledge that it would never have been the Form's wish to see her standing aside like this.

A word from either Betty or Polly, and what a different state of mind the Form would have been in! But they were adhering to the decision not to say anything.

Polly had not wanted to be silent; very soon, however, she realised that any disclosure would be certain to create turmoil in the Form, just at a time when all should be harmony, on account of the coming great day.

Girls were settling down to a passive acceptance of the change in the captaincy, as being

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something deemed to be for the best in the eyes of Miss Somerfield. Also, there was Betty's own cheerful acceptance of her fate to help the Form in general to stop murmuring.

But if—if it had become known that Betty was really suffering punishment for something she had done for a chum's sake, then there would have been a move to get the headmistress to relent.

Polly had good reason for knowing that nothing would shake Miss Somerfield, so it would have been a nasty clash—with Pam, very likely, calmly refusing to act as captain. All this, at a time when every day was bringing fresh news to the girls, as to what they might expect to enjoy next week!

Morecove, it now appeared, was to have more than one treat in connection with the princess' visit to the district.

All Barnecombe was to be on fête on the day Princess Laurina arrived for her stay at Barnecombe Castle. The schools would all be given a holiday, and the streets were likely to be lined with scholars.

Morecove itself was to send contingents of girls who would form up in the castle yard—a special honour, to be shared with boys from Grangemoor. That famous public-school had a strong cadet corps, and the boys were to turn up in khaki, to form a guard of honour.

In her mind's eye, Polly could see the whole scene as it would be when the hour came; an hour that might have meant well-deserved distinction for Betty.

The princess, alighting from the car that had brought her through the cheering crowds in the beflagged streets, would inspect both guards of honour—Morecove as well as Grangemoor. And Betty—Betty would be only as others who were "in the ranks."

"Something's got to be done!" the deposed captain found Polly muttering fiercely, in Study 12 on the Friday afternoon.

"Now, now!" Betty smiled. They were alone together, Paula and Naomer having been kept in. "You don't want to think about it, Polly dear."

"But I must! If only something could happen to get you re-instated in time for all these doings, Betty. Pam would be only glad, of course. As for me, it would be an answer to my greatest wish in the world—bar one."

"You mean, about your brother," Betty was feelingly saying, when the door opened just wide enough to let Madge Minden put her head round the edge of it.

"Polly—your brother's here!" Madge could have had no idea of the violent shock which this announcement meant for Betty as well as Polly. These two girls turned to each other in a greatly startled way. But the one was as careful as the other not to let Madge suspect what mingled feelings the news had created.

Jack, here at Morcove! And so, now, there was to be an encounter with him that could hold, for Polly and Betty alike, none of the unalloyed joy which any meeting used to bring.

Others in the school did not know; but Polly had found out, and had shared the painful secret with Betty—that Jack, apparently, had gone all wrong just lately.

It seemed impossible—and yet there was that proof of it! Jack, who had always seemed the soul of honour, who was looked-up to at Grangemoor as a fine fellow, straight as a die—and yet he had sunk so low!

It had all, evidently, begun through his association with bad company. There was that excuse for him; he had been led astray. And yet, if Jack were all that he had always seemed to be, he would not have been so weak as to fall like this!

"He's here with Judy's brother, and Jimmy Cherrol and Tubby Bloot," Madge supplemented, looking very delighted. "Their Housemaster brought them over in his car for the run—I fancy, because of next week's affair."

"The princess?" Betty inquired.

"Yes. Mr. Challenor wants to make some final arrangements with Miss Somerfield."

Polly nodded.

"We'll go down and find the boys."

But even as she said that, there came a very significant hubbub in the corridor. Much of the commotion was girlish laughter, accompanying jocular remarks in a boyish voice.

Then, having gone a step beyond the Study 12 threshold, Betty and Polly saw all four boys coming down the corridor with a flock of girls. Jack it was who had them all on the laugh, he being at the top of his form, evidently, as a fun-maker.

"Hallo, Polly-wolly," he greeted his sister. "Any tea going? Always such swagger teas in Study 12—and see what a nice clean collar Tubby's put on, hoping to sit next to Naomer."

"And then, afterwards," Jack rattled on, "we can talk about next week. Oh, boy! See the first battalion of the Grangemoor Die-Hards, presenting arms to the princess, what what!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter was coming again as Jack now produced a monocle and screwed it into his right eyes, striking a very military attitude.

"Company!" he said to his three chums, as if they were soldiers on parade. "Slope hipe!"

Then he treated Polly as if she were the princess.

"Your royal highness!" He bowed. "May the officers and—h'm—other ranks—of the Grangemoor Thirsty-Thirsts welcome you to—"

"You may not!" Polly cut him short, with all her usual make-believe contempt for the brother she adored. "Ape! And I don't think we can give you tea in Study 12—"

"Wow!" said Jack, letting the eyeglass fall out of his eye. "Company! R-r-right turn!"

But now there was a shrill: "No, bekas—" from Naomer, as she dashed upon the scene, her time of penance in detention just completed.

"What ze diggings, we must give zem tea!" yelled the dusky one. "Bekas—gorjus! Pipooray, grand treat! Fall in, everybody, queek! How are you, Tubby? Bit of luck, bekas, we have a new cake to start, zis afternoon!"

Betty was careful to preserve amused looks—for all the other girls were in such merriment over Jack's continued nonsense. Naomer's overwhelming invitation had given him the cue for more foolery, all of it unforced—and that was

why Betty, even whilst she smiled, felt a pain at her heart.

How could he be as spontaneously jolly as ever, she was wondering, when he had, as she and Polly knew, such a big secret trouble to face?

She thought of all that Polly had told her, about Jack—of how he had certainly sunk to disgraceful practices, like gambling and betting.

Whether it was cards, or backing horses, he had got heavily into debt with a certain fellow named Steve Marshall—so Polly had confided, sorrowfully declaring that there could be no doubt about it all.

Polly knew for a fact that Steve Marshall held a letter which, if brought to the notice of the authorities at Grangemoor, would be sufficient to get Jack expelled.

Yet here he was, just his usual jolly self! Anxiously though Betty might study him now, she could not detect the least sign of his forcing the gaiety.

So one could only infer, with greater sorrow than ever, that he was in a hardened, graceless state; not inclined to worry at all!

Not for the first time, by any means, Study 12 was soon accommodating all four boys as well as some half-dozen girls at its tea-table. As the party included artless little Naomer, and the always genial Tubby, and jolly Helen Craig, it would not have been doomed to dullness even if Jack, for once, had not been up to mark.

But he showed unflagging spirits—was the life and soul of the gathering, as usual. More than once he had them all "in fits," causing Betty to think to herself:

"Well, I just can't make him out!"

Polly was living up to her reputation as the maid of Study 12; but Betty knew that it was the desperate playing of a part in her chum's case—a comedy part, played with an aching heart.

As for Jack—no, his jollity was not put on. That inference of a few minutes ago was the correct one—must be! Whatever folly he had been indulging in of late, whatever acquaintances he had made in secret, he didn't care!

Anyhow, he must have been thinking neither his sister nor anyone else knew about it all. But there were those who knew—and his sister was one!

Suddenly, when the tea-party was all light talk and laughter, it was interrupted by a message brought from the headmistress.

Would the four Grangemoor boys please go down to see her and Mr. Challenor, and Miss Somerfield would also like to see—Pam Willoughby.

Pam frowned as she rose to go away with the boys. She had, of course, been sent for as being captain for the time being. She, not Betty, was to be present during some discussion in connection with next week's reception of the Princess Laurina at Burncombe Castle.

As for the boys, they tactfully refrained from comment on Betty's humiliating position. They had their gentlemanly instincts, none more so than Jack. That had always been the fine thing about Jack, the roystering fun-maker. In a moment he could show himself to be, at heart, such a young gentleman. And yet—lately he had plunged into folly, and worse than folly—

Betty was conscious of his giving her a fleeting glance, as he went with the others from the room. It was a look that seemed to say he would like a word of serious talk with her before leaving.

She dreaded the arrival of any moment that would provide opportunity for talk in private. For she was under solemn promise to Polly not

to reveal, by word or look, that Jack's debt to Steve Marshall was known to them. But such a moment came, half an hour later, when the boys had put on their hats and coats to go back with their Housemaster to Grangemoor.

Betty and the other girls had come downstairs after clearing away the tea-things. During the general good-bye in the Front Hall, Jack got her to himself for a minute.

"Didn't care to say anything upstairs about it, Betty," he said, in an earnest tone. "But—what's put you out of favour with the head-mistress?"

Even if she had been free to tell him, how could Betty have let him know—that it was all because of something she had done for Polly, whilst Polly was doing something for HIM!

"Oh, we don't want to talk about that, Jack," she smiled. "I don't mind in the least!"

"All we chaps could get Pam to say, on the way down from the study—she wishes herself well out of it all."

"Ah, Pam's a brick!" Betty nodded. "Wouldn't have anybody's feelings hurt for anything!"

"Well, I don't know what it all means," Jack grimaced. "But Polly—she didn't seem quite herself, at tea-time. I noticed, trust me! Look here, is there anything, Betty, that you two girls are keeping from everybody else? That's what I'm wondering!"

Betty said the only possible thing. "You'll know some day, Jack. And now—they are waiting for you, so—good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Betty! Next time I see you and Polly, it will be at the castle, I suppose? So-long, then!"

Next moment he was gaily crossing the hall to mingle with those with whom he had to go away in the waiting car, and at that same moment Betty saw Polly, in the background, regarding him with a last, serious, loving look.

THESE came another moment, that evening, when they talked about him—Betty and Polly, alone together quite by chance, in Study 12.

Prep was finished. Madge and Pam had looked in, but had gone away to put in half an hour at the music-room piano, and others had gone with those keen pianists. Often, some dancing was to be had in the music-room when work was over for the evening.

"You didn't say anything about it all, Betty?"

"To Jack? Not likely!"

"Neither did I, nor shall I," Polly gloomed, "until I've really been able to do something to help him."

So the subdued talk began, after a long, heavy silence, during which either chum had known what was in the other's mind.



Jack addressed Polly as if she were the Princess. "Your royal highness, Grangemoor welcomes you!" And Polly, even while she joined in the merriment, was sad at heart. For she alone knew that Jack was now nothing but a waster!

"Do you think it possible, Polly, after all, that there is some mistake?"

"You mean—that Jack isn't saddled with that debt to Steve Marshall? But haven't I said, over and over again," was Polly's anguished murmur. "I know for a fact he's got a letter that implicates Jack. Steve Marshall is holding it over Jack's head like a drawn sword. Steve Marshall—a bad lot, as we all know; a fellow with whom Jack would never have had any dealings, if—if only this change hadn't come about."

"And yet," Betty exclaimed gently, "I could see no change in Jack to-day—could you? He seemed just the same as ever—such a ripper. Polly, a brother to be proud of!"

"I'll be proud of him again, some day, even if I can't feel proud of him now," Polly answered lumpily. "I'll save him somehow! Then I shall be all right—and so will he."

"Yes, dear," Betty was quick to agree. So vividly did she understand that—against all reason perhaps—Polly was still counting upon another chance coming her way ere long, and that it was only this desperate reliance upon a heaven-sent chance which kept her from blank despair.

Faintly, now, some piano music penetrated to this study where these two girls were alone together. It sounded as if Madge and Pam together were duetting some dance-music, as they sometimes did for the sake of other girls who had

flocked to the music-room. And Betty, wanting to save Polly from some of her constant brooding, suggested tenderly:

"Shall we go down, dear?"

"Yes, come on!"

The way Polly responded, the liveliness with which she hitched back her chair and jumped up, it all evidenced a gratefulness to Betty for having proposed a diversion.

She—Polly—would be the madcap still, in front of other girls, in spite of all the worry that was spoiling her life! Or, at any rate, she thought she had it in her still to bear up as bravely as all that.

But, in the very act of passing out with Betty, she turned back. Suddenly she was down in her chair at the table again and, with her two elbows thumped upon the table-edge, she buried her face in her hands.

Instantly, there was a loving, rallying hand upon the seated girl's shoulders, as they shook with the paroxysm of grief which had taken her.

"Polly darling—Polly!"

"Oh, I can't—I can't go down!" Betty was answered, in a breaking voice. "To see them all so happy together; nothing to worry about, nothing to be ashamed of! Whilst I—I have to think of him—my own dear brother—"

"Hush, dear."

"Go away, Betty, and—"

"No, I shall stay, dear."

And, staying, Betty was rewarded in the end by seeing Polly over the worst of her storm of grief—even looking quite bright again, because of that comfort which only friendship can confer.

CHAPTER 4.

A Chance—And Nothing More

MONDAY morning—first day in what was to be such a memorable week for Morcove!

Excitement running high in the school! Girls, now that they were out of class, talking of nothing else but the coming visit of the Princess Laurina and all that it meant for Morcove!

But Polly Linton sauntered alone where she was likely to encounter nobody belonging to the school. To have hung about in bounds, constantly catching scraps of talk about the one great topic, would have driven her mad; or so, at least, she was inclined to think.

She had come out for a wander round so as to be away from Betty, even. Not that Betty was likely to say anything irritating—not likely! In her case, it was simply a matter of keeping out of her way, so as not to let her see how moody, how full of black despair, one felt at times.

Somehow, it seemed such a length of time, now, since the appalling fact of Jack's secret indebtedness to Steve Marshall had become a burden upon one's mind and heart alike.

One chance, and only one had occurred, of doing a thing which could smash the cad's hold over Jack. That chance had failed—ah, and what the cost of it had been to Betty, the loyal chum who had aided one in the desperate effort!

Another week begun! And it looked as if each passing day was to find despair alternating more and more frequently with hopeful moods. At this very moment, it seemed to have been the purest folly to rely upon another chance turning up.

The young scamp who held that threatening letter was living with relations only a few miles from Morcove—at a house called Gorselands. But what a fateful combination of circumstances it would have to be to produce another chance of one's getting hold of that vital letter.

So Polly, reduced to low spirits by the nagging anxiety, was having to say to herself at this mid-day hour, whilst she drifted along one of the quiet roads which traversed the wide moor, just beyond the school bounds.

It would not be her to fail to cheer up again, presently; but—this was Monday morning, of all times, the one when cold reason is apt to send a douche over cherished hopes.

Suddenly she heard a car coming her way along the undulating, winding road. She glimpsed it momentarily when it was still a quarter of a mile away, and it was not the terrific pace alone that caused her to bear it in mind after it had vanished in a dip of the road.

The Gorselands' car—she had recognised it on the instant—a bright yellow one, built for speed. And perhaps the cad himself was driving, now. She knew that much of his idle, aimless existence was given to dashing about the countryside.

To know that he might be going to whizz past in the next few moments was something that kept her at a standstill beside the road, in great agitation. She knew him by sight, but had never seen him since she got to know about the letter.

If it was he in the car now—how it would madden her to see him, lolling at the wheel. Young blackguard that he must be, exulting in luring decent fellows like Jack—fellows who were still only at school—upon the road to ruin!

The car, at this moment, was coming on much less audibly, because it was in a dip of the road. When it topped the rise, and if—IF he should be at the wheel—she would feel she must shout to him.

"You rotter!"

But it was a very different shout from that which Polly was sending up, only a few seconds later. It was a frantic warning cry to someone in danger of being run down.

"Look out—oh, look out!" was Polly's shout.

Afterwards, she learned that it was a girl from one of the few moorland dwellings who had stepped out to cross the by-road, making her way home from the town.

At the moment, Polly only realised that it was someone who seemed to have appeared from nowhere, to be right in the way of the car just as it whizzed up out of the dip—still going at a terrific speed. And in that moment the schoolgirl knew that to shout a warning was not enough.

The other girl had lost her head, and it would have been death for her, the moment's hesitation which she was showing—but Polly dashed at her.

In a flash, the terror-stricken girl was simply swept out of the way of the car, the momentum which Polly had acquired, by her swift dash, causing her to bear the girl safely out of the way.

The car raced by, missing the pair of them by inches only. Then, as might have been expected of a reckless driver, there came a belated and over-violent manipulation of the steering and the brakes.

Polly looked round to see the car go on most erratically for a few yards, and then—crash! A wheel had struck the low bank of grass beside the road.

There was no overturning, but the car stopped with such a jar as seemed to lift its back wheels clear of the ground for a second. A final thump, and then all was silence after the violent commotion. And whoever had been at the wheel was not getting out.

Steve Marshall, was it—and he, injured and senseless now? Polly wondered.

But here was the girl who had had a most

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certain escape from death, very white of face and shaking violently after the appalling scare. Polly had to say a word to her.

"I say, don't go for the moment. The driver may be hurt—may have put his head through the windscreen! So we may have to—"

"Yes, miss—oh, yes, let's go and see!" the cottage-girl quavered. "But—fancy you saving me like that, miss! I—I'd have been killed, I'm sure."

"Oh, I don't know about that—"
"I do," Polly was shudderingly answered. "I was scared stiff for the moment; cars are not things I am used to, living where I do, right away on the moors. It's a wonder—I mean, 'twas a mercy—your doing, miss, that I'm alive now!"

"I could see you didn't know quite what to do," Polly modestly closed the talk about her brave deed, whilst hurrying with the cottage-girl to the car. "There's still no sign of life!"

Then, getting close enough to peer in through the side windows, they both saw the driver—a young man in country tweeds—lying all anyhow in the driver's seat, his head lolling and his eyes closed.

The windscreen was starred where his forehead must have banged into it, but not the tiniest splinter of glass had come away.

"Gosh!" Polly emitted. "Good job that windscreen's made of safety glass! He's been knocked senseless, but he isn't cut ~~about~~ the head."

Steve Marshall! He it was—the very fellow!

But, although the after agitation of the accident was increased for Polly fifty-fold by her discovery that it was he, there was no immediate sense of his having been, as it were, delivered into her hands.

At first she could only think of him in his injured, unconscious state—needing first aid.

She turned to the cottage-girl.

"Here—I don't know your name—"

"Maggie Pendwick, miss."

"Well, Maggie, we've got to do something for him. Best thing, I think, one of us stand by, whilst the other runs for help."

"I'll go, miss—let me!" the cottage-girl entreated nervously. "I shouldn't know what to do if I were left here; but I can run—fast—to get help."

"Very well, then. But where—"

"Why, the school, miss—isn't that nearest?"

"Perhaps it is. All right, then. But I say—"

But Polly was not to have the chance to say the rest. The other girl was off, running hard in a bee-line for Morcove School, leaving her rescuer of a minute since on the grimace.

"Oh, bother!" Polly muttered to herself. "Do hope she won't go and tell some wild story of my having saved her, when, after all I only—well, pushed her clear!"

This, and an uncomfortable, little laugh, was followed by a moment or two of gloomy staring at the still, lifeless-looking motorist.

Steve Marshall! There he was, the very fellow who held Jack's incriminating letter!

From this it was a sudden leap of Polly's mind to the thrilling thought:

What if that letter from Jack were upon him now—in his breast-pocket even whilst he lay here like this, with all the senses knocked out of him!

Polly glanced around, whilst her heart started to pound violently.

No one in sight. As surely as she lived, this hour had brought her, most fatefully, another chance!

She opened that door of the car which served the seat on which he was huddled.

Still glancing about warily, she undid the top button of his tweed overcoat, so as to be able to get at the breast-pocket of his jacket.

Her mind seemed to be in danger of reeling with the excitement of the moment, the tremendous issue which hung upon—this one moment!

Her hand fumbled its way to the breast-pocket. She felt a pocket-book; the letter might be in that, or it might be one of the papers which were in the pocket with the elastic-bound book. Oh, hang, it was now or never! Have the whole lot out, and then—

And then, at the very instant when she was starting to withdraw all the contents of the pocket, Steve Marshall opened his eyes.

They looked up into hers, dully at first, and then full consciousness of her and of what she was doing seemed to rush into his mind.

"Here," he rasped, with a sickly grin, "what's the idea?"

And Polly knew, then, that once again her chance was—GONE!

CHAPTER 5.

Polly Speaks Up

HER hand let the notebook and papers drop back into the pocket from which she had been withdrawing them.

But Steve Marshall, with that understanding look in his eyes, gripped that hand of hers at the wrist and held her as if she were a thief, caught in the act.

"No," he laughed throatily. "No, you don't—Polly Linton! What's mine's my own!"

"You wretch—you cad!" she panted, losing any sympathy she might have been feeling for him on account of his accident with the car. "Let me go! I don't want to hang about now that you have recovered."

"No, what you wanted to do—I know!" he chuckled. "Go through the papers in my pocket, and if there was one that had to do with your brother—you'd stick to it, eh?"

He roused out of his huddled state, passed a hand across his bruised forehead, then smiled with still more self-possession.

"Well, there IS a paper in my pocket that has to do with your brother," he heartlessly admitted. "And you are not going to have it—see? Your brother—huh! So he's been whining to you, has he?"

"Nothing of the sort!" Polly raged. "He doesn't know that I know! But I'd like you to know that I felt quite entitled to do my best for him—as you have done your worst, you cad!"

"I'd like to hear him call me that," the young scamp laughed. "You—you're only a kid of a schoolgirl, of course, so I can't touch you. There, beat it, Polly Linton! Don't want any help from you over my little upset—"

"I don't know that you would get any help now, even if you did want it," she flashed.

It maddened her to see him as he floundered out of the car, starting to button his greatcoat

over the jacket which held the fateful paper. To Polly, it was as if he were locking that letter away in a safe again.

"You ought to go to prison—"

"Oh, what for?"

"For more than one thing," she said passionately, "The way you were driving, just then—"

"Piffle!" he laughed. "That other kid of a girl was to blame. She should keep her eyes open. Where is she now? I'd like to tell her something she won't soon forget."

"She ran off to get help, expecting me to stay around, but I'm off now myself—and I shan't come back," Polly said fiercely. "You're not so shaken up that you can't manage for yourself. Anyway, I'm done with this business!"

"Right!" he chuckled as she started to stride away. "Glad you've got the sense to chuck it in altogether—"

She faced round.

"I said, Steve Marshall, I am done with this— not done with you!"

His only response to that was a loud guffawing; laughter proclaiming mockery of her as a foe beneath contempt.

Coming at a moment when she was suffering fresh heartbreak over the failure of her second attempt, this careless scorn rendered her almost frantic.

If only—oh, if only she were a boy instead of a girl, so that she could set about him and give him the hiding he deserved!

As it was, she could only strike off across the moorland in a direct course for Morcove School. Her mind was in such a chaotic state that she hoped not to meet the cottage-girl again, returning with the aid that had looked like being needed.

Out of her disordered mind she wanted to cast all further thought of this morning's happening. "Any rate," she vowed to herself as she floundered along, "wild horses would not drag me back to argue with him—the beast!"

And to that resolve she adhered when, almost inevitably, there had to be an encounter between herself and the cottage-girl, bringing others to the scene of the accident.

Polly was almost back at the school bounds when she met the cottage-girl hurrying along with Miss Merrick, a couple of Morcove gardeners, and the headmistress's chauffeur.

"No, I didn't stay," Polly answered some surprised looks. "He's not hurt, and—I don't think he's worth bothering about!"

Then, lest anything should be said about what she had done for the cottage-girl, she ran on again, to get in bounds. Never let there be a word about what she had done for Maggie. That was nothing. A trifling thing, at any rate, any other girl would have done!

But, before another hour was out, Polly was sent for by the headmistress, to whom the deed figured as a most heroic one.

In vain Polly denied any claim to having saved the life of the cottage-girl. Maggie's own version was the one Miss Somerfield preferred to rely upon.

"And it means, Polly, that as part of the reward you deserve, I must at once cancel the punishment you were to undergo for last week's escapade. In other words, you will be allowed to take part with the rest of the Form in everything connected with Princess Laurina's visit!"

"Oh, all right, and—thanks, Miss Somerfield; but—"

"Also, I shall make a point of mentioning your

bravery before prayers, this evening. I consider—"

"Oh, no, Miss Somerfield, please! Because, really—"

"Polly, why will you always argue with me? I administered justice unswervingly the other day, and I will do the same in the present instance. I have not the slightest doubt you did save that cottage-girl from being injured for life, if not killed, and you deserve a far better reward than to be merely let off the punishment you were to undergo."

"Then—look here!" Polly burst out, with a sudden inspired look. "Can I—can I beg a favour, Miss Somerfield, on the strength of it?"

"Certainly, Polly! Anything within reason—name it—"

"Miss Somerfield"—and now Study 12's madcap was smiling bonnily—"can you reward me, then, by letting Betty Barton be captain again in time for the princess's visit?"

"What!"

"That's all I ask, Miss Somerfield; it's all I want. And—oh, can't you?"

"I could, yes, Polly, of course, and I would, gladly!" Miss Somerfield exclaimed, conferring a very admiring and tender look. "For you to have asked something that would benefit Betty and not yourself—it is very fine of you. But—how about Pam?"

Polly burst out laughing.

"Pam? Oh, just as if she'd mind! The very opposite! Pam will be only too glad if it can be Betty, after all! You see if I'm not right."

"Very well, then—"

"Miss Somerfield! Oh, thanks ever so—ever so!" Polly exploded. "That's something like! And—and it will take place at once?"

"I must see Pam first. Go and find her now, Polly, and send her to me. That is all, except this," was the addition which halted the madcap on her run out of the room.

"Yes, what?"

"No more breaking bounds, Polly! For, the next time—you'll force me to expel a girl whom Morcove can ill afford to spare!"

And Miss Somerfield, as soon as she was alone, permitted the smile to come that she had kept back whilst saying those final words.

"That Polly!" she murmured to herself. "What a girl she is!"

CHAPTER 6.

Morcove On Parade

AND so, after all, the hour came when Betty, as captain once again, stood holding a bouquet for presentation to her royal highness, in the courtyard of Barncombe Castle.

Not Pam, but Betty!

As nicely drawn up as soldiers on parade, were all the girls who belonged to the Form, with their captain distinguished by her sash of office and the lovely flowers that she held.

Grand weather was favouring this, the first of many auspicious occasions resulting from Princess Laurina's visit.

Under a bright sky, contingents of scholars from Morcove and Grangemoor were marshalled at this favoured spot.

Morcovians, in their smartest outdoor things, faced Grangemoorians in khaki. And so, during the "stand easy" before the arrival of the car, many a chaffing remark could be exchanged between the girls and boys.

Betty and her chums were exactly opposite Jack Linton and his chums, and this enabled

Naomer to toss across an apple to "Tubby," who had been compelled to "fall in," with no bags of sweets or fruits to show as a bulge in this pocket and that.

In khaki, Tubby looked a bit stouter than ever, and it was one of the jokes of the moment that he was liable to cause every shining button to fly off, by drawing breath excitedly when the princess would be inspecting the guard of honour.

As for Jack, he had a false moustache, which could be attached and detached with great facility, and he was putting it on every now and then, to obtain a more military appearance by its whiteness.

He was in great form as the fun-maker of the Die-Hards, keeping the girls opposite in fits of laughter. And yet—still so incredible!—he was that same Jack who was in the toils of Steve Marshall.

It was all chatter and laughter close to the car for a minute or so, and then the big group that had formed began to disperse.

Her Royal Highness the Princess Laurina, with Lady Lundy, Miss Somerfield, and others still in attendance, had started to pass between the lined-up scholars.

Oh, but she was wonderful—marvellously lovely, and so gracious! Morcove would not have missed this sight of her for anything!

Etiquette forbade her speaking to one here and there, but she had such a delighted, affectionate smile for every one of the girls—and the boys!

Motionless stood Betty until—never-to-be-forgotten moment!—she had the princess pausing in front of her, with Miss Somerfield and Lady Lundy still close at hand. Then it was all Betty could do not to go floppy, for her knees seemed



"From the girls of our Form—with our best wishes," Betty said. And as Princess Laurina accepted the bouquet, there was a burst of cheering from Morcove.

For every joke Jack could make, Polly was ready with another to cap it. But—ah, the effort it was costing her, to hide her anguish behind the mask of mirth! Betty knew; Betty, still the only one who shared the secret!

Suddenly the cheering started in the beflagged High Street of quaint old Barncombe. Now the car was coming! What a roar of cheers it was, growing louder—louder, as the car came on, climbing Castle Hill at last. "Hurrah! Hurrah!" "Isn't she sweet!" "Welcome!" "What lovely flowers!" and many other cries were heard.

Policemen saluted, Pressmen clicked their cameras, hearty cheering started in the courtyard itself.

Out of the corners of their eyes the excited scholars glimpsed the much-talked-of princess, who had one or two other notabilities as travelling companions.

The car stopped, a liveried footman belonging to the castle staff opened the door, and in another moment Lady Lundy was greeting her royal visitor.

to be giving way. As captain, she was to be presented!

"May it please your Highness," she heard Miss Somerfield saying softly, "the captain of the Form—Betty Barton."

That, Betty knew, was the cue which she must take in becoming fashion—or else be the laughing-stock of the entire school for the rest of the day!

She stood forward, made her curtsy correctly, and offered the glorious bouquet.

"From the girls of my Form, if your Royal Highness would graciously accept the flowers, with our best wishes!" she said simply and prettily.

"Oh, but how lofly!" sparkled Princess Laurina, burying her adorable face in the scented blooms. "That is sweet of you—very, and I thank you all, from the bottom of my heart!"

Betty curtsied once more, and took two retiring steps that placed her in line with her schoolmates again. She thought it was all over, but Princess Laurina lingered, sending her smiling eyes all along the line.

"Morcove School," said her Royal Highness, delightedly. "Oh, but I have heard of you all, you know, as a school! And now I have met you, and—I hope to meet you all again, soon, at your school! Meantime, I hope you are going to enjoy yourselves?"

"Yes, bekas—"

That shrill voice from the ranks must have been intending to tell her Royal Highness what the plans were for spending the rest of this memorable day off from school work, but Polly treated Naomer to a checking nudge.

At the same instant Betty shouted:

"Three cheers, Morcove, for Princess Laurina!

Hip, hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

Three times over Morcove sent up that ringing cheer, after which, with the princess going upon her way into the castle, the scholars were free to break ranks and set about enjoying themselves down in the town.

"COME on, boys!" vociferated Jack, meaning his sister and her chums as well as his own special friends. "I booked a table at the Creamery—"

"Corjus!" shrieked Naomer. "Bekas, now we can let ourselves go—hooray! And you'll sit next to me, Tubby, and never mind how many buttons burst, bekas, it is all over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All over, yes—whew!" Betty puffed. "And I only hope I didn't make a mess of it!"

"You were splendid, Betty," came Pam's valuable assurance. "And I'm so glad the Barncombe Herald man snapped you—"

"What!"

"Of course he did, just as you were curtseying," Polly gaily put in. "And so you'll be in the picture page of the Herald, next issue! Here, girls, let's call in at the Herald office on our way to the Creamery, and order our extra copies."

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!"

"Come on, boys!" Jack was insisting.

"Whoopce!"

"Come on, girls!" Polly cried, just as gaily.

For she would still be the inadcap in front of him and all the rest. She would still not let him suspect that she KNEW. Betty must still be the only one to share her secret and the sorrow that it meant.

Ah, and what a fresh pang of that sorrow it gave Polly Linton, when presently Steve Marshall passed her on the High Street's crowded pavement.

For, as he went by, recognising her, he treated her to a mocking grin, and his hand went up to tap a breast-pocket, cruelly reminding her of what was there!

THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.

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