

Meet HER HARUM-SCARUM HIGHNESS ("Princess of 1,000 Pranks") Inside

The SCHOOLGIRLS' 2^D OWN

No. 780. Vol. 30.
Week ending
January 18th, 1936.
EVERY TUESDAY.

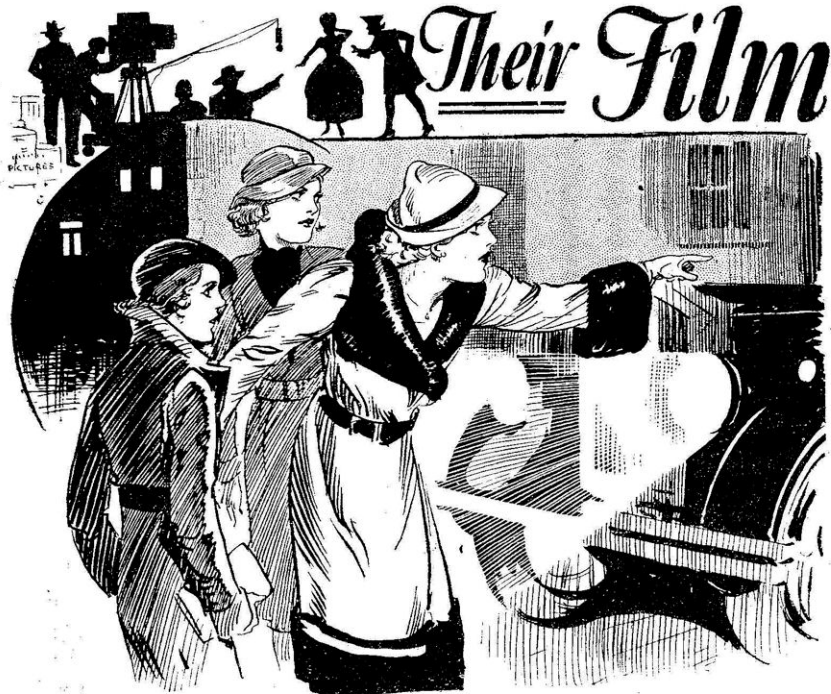


MORCOVE HELPS TO MAKE A FILM

A humorous incident from
the enthralling long Mor-
cove holiday story inside.

There Are FIVE ENTHRALLING STORIES in This Issue

Magnificent LONG COMPLETE Story of the Famous Cluims of Morcove School—



Pretty, talented, adored by all Film Fans, one would have thought Anna Goldring the happiest girl in the world. But she wasn't! And it was Betty and Polly Linton who discovered the astonishing reason why—their film friend had a strange, dark secret!

Lights o' London

IN breathless silence the vast audience was listening to the last lines of "Fate Takes a Hand"—that new film over which all London had gone mad.

Fascinated eyes strained to watch the closing scene as it was revealed so vividly upon the screen.

There she was, for the last time—Anna Goldring, so young and so beautiful, and such a marvellous actress!

Hers the bewitching voice which spoke the final words, whilst her smile of happiness-at-long-last was something to want to remember for ever.

Then the enchanting picture vanished. Rich

curtains began slowly to draw together in front of the screen; the organ vamped; lights in the auditorium came on for the interval.

"AND now, girls—what do you say? I think we might go!"

"Yes, Betty—certainly!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove—"

"Don't want to stay for anything else after that! Just too perfect for words!"

"Wasn't she wonderful!"

"Marvellous!"

"And to think that she is staying at our hotel!" Betty Barton, of Morcove School, it was who had started this burst of talk.

She and her special cluims of famous Morcove, with "the boys," had come along in force this afternoon to see the famous film.

"Hi, wait ze bit, though!"

"Sh!" that dusky innp, Naomer Nakara, was playfully admonished by madcap Polly Linton and others. "Come on, kid. I say, girls, what a crush!"

For the juniors were having to writhe past some of the scores of patrons who, from time to time, were eagerly floundering to seats just given up.

With the lights on, the eager looks of these people who had not yet seen the film were in

—in Which Betty Barton and Co., on Holiday in London, Are Caught Up In—

Friends' Secret!

striking contrast with those who had. Morcove and Co., filing out, almost envied newcomers their treat-in-store.

"Yes!" sparkled Bunny Trevor, as they all drifted out of the thronged cinema; "I wouldn't half mind going back, presently, to see it all over again!"

"If you could get in," chuckled Betty. "Oh, but she was just perfect!"

"(hawming—chawning!)" beamed pretty Paula Croel. "A weal genius, yes, waiher!"

And the chorus of praise for Anna Goldring started all over again. Morcove and Co. agreed that this afternoon's treat had been quite the best yet!

The juniors had been having some fine treats, too, during the last few days—in Town for part of the winter holidays.

To be staying at the Hotel Majestic—as some of them were doing—even this was pretty good going! One of the latest and most palatial of all the fine hotels in the West End, the Majestic was a show in itself.

Then the girls and boys had done a couple of pantomimes, and grown-ups had taken them about during the dry, sunny days, to savour some of those novel delights which enrich the holiday life of London to-day.

"Goodness, where are we all?" Betty laughed, in the cinema foyer.

Then she saw three of her chums bunched together in front of some of the photographic "stills," advertising the film. She slipped through the press of people and got to them.

"Coming, girls? We'll lose Naomer! She and Tubby will be off together, to get tea somewhere in a hurry!"

Next moment the girls had Polly's nonsense-loving brother Jack touching his cap to them, as if he were a doorman.

"Taxi?"

"Can you pay?" asked Polly sweetly.

"Me—pay!"

"Then you don't ride with us. Taxi for Morcove; bus for Grangemoor," the madcap decreed. "Hooray—you're the one, Tom!"

Bunny's brother had earned this compliment by "bagging" a taxi with the flag up in mid-street.

Joyous youth that he was, Tom could be seen standing on the running board and signalling grandly as the huddled-up driver steered for the kerb.

All tongues were going. Pam Willoughby was going straight back now to her parents' Town house in Halkin Street, and she was taking with her those chums who were staying at the same address.

So there was a good deal of "Bye for now!" and "About-to-morrow!" with Naomer all the while crying:

"Can't we get some tea?"



By Marjorie Stanton

At last, however, those who were going to the Majestic crowded into the taxi, which set off with a gr-r-rrrr!

A check in the traffic, next moment, and they could look out of the window to see an enormous placard-portrait of Anna Goldring, on the cinema's facade. Then they really sped away.

"Oh, dear!" Polly suddenly sighed.

"Why?" Betty grinned.

"Only another week of this, and then—Morcove again. School—classes—ugh!"

"Study Number Twelve, and the hockey field!" was Betty's more cheerful way of thinking of next term.

All the same, she was second to none in the enjoyment of what Mighty London had to offer—the very thrill of the roaring tide of traffic and the crowded pavements; wonderful shop windows; a glimpse of Hyde Park with the sun going down like a ball of fire into the wintry haze; and then the Majestic, and such interesting people going in and out!

And it was just one of the very best moments

to be coming in out of the January cold. The spacious lounges and palm courts had filled up for tea-time; lights glittered everywhere, and the band was playing.

Polly's feet simply had to make a few sliding motions in tune with the Viennese waltz which rose above the pleasant buzz of conversation.

"There's mother!" she gaily remarked. "Oh, she's got someone with her!"

But Mrs. Linton, over in a lounge corner, waved the "Come on, all!"—so across they went. Jack and Tom were now at the girls' heels, after taking the revolving door as if it were a goal. Grange-moor, however, felt it had better be a bit decorous now, Jack wondering softly, as he fingered his school tie:

"Who is the peach, boys?"

The girl of about nineteen who sat taking tea with Mrs. Linton certainly was dazzlingly beautiful. Whilst Paula Creel felt that she had never seen lovelier clothes worn with better grace. Betty was thinking: "What character, too!" and Polly and Bunny: "Her eyes!"

"A few—just a few of the young people whom I am having to mind at present!" Thus Polly's mother lightly introduced the seven to this adorable girl, who was in obvious delight at their turning up.

"Polly darling—and you others! This young lady—staying in the hotel—"

"But I know!" was Polly's ejaculating cry, almost loud enough to be heard all over the place. "You are—you must be!" she jerked, ardently agaze at the stranger.

And they all said:

"ANNA GOLDRING!"

"Meet Anna Golding!"

MRS. LINTON laughed.

"Quite right—"

"But, mumsie!" Polly raved on. "Oh! Sorry, Miss Goldring, but—but—"

"How nice of you," rippled the young film star, Morcove's joyful state being a compliment that had to be acknowledged. "But now I must go—"

"What! Oh, no—no! Miss Goldring—"

"I thought that Mrs. Linton here looked a wee bit lonely, and it ended in my taking tea with her. But now you are all back—"

"You must not, please!" Polly and Bunny both implored, eagerly restraining the film star from going away. "Why, we have just been to see the film!"

"Oh, and did you like it?"

"Like it!"

"When we got in," Jack chuckled, setting chairs with Tom for the general sit-down. "Gosh, talk about a football scrum!"

"And a British picture, too—that's so fine, on top of everything else," Bunny said rather deliriously. "We're so glad that you are—British!"

"London, and proud of it."

"Then mustn't London be proud of you," Betty said. "And all that film was made at a studio just outside London? I say! Any chance of—being shown round one day?"

"Whenever you like!"

"Hooray," said Polly. "And your autograph, some time perhaps?"

"I'm greedy," Bunny cried. "A signed photograph for me!"

"It was those scenes where you were down-and-out that got me," Madge exclaimed, in her own staid way. "Living in that top-back room in a

London slum; struggling for a living—and yet your smile for that gossipy old landlady when you came in out of the wet street—"

"It was all—very real to me," came in a very quiet way from the film star who was London's latest rage.

Their own eager voices ceased for a while; they saw she had lapsed, suddenly, into thoughts that must have been saddening.

Then, as suddenly, she shook off her pensiveness, saying with a recovered smile as she glanced about the hotel lounge:

"Just as this seems, now, to be all a dream!"

"Your dream of fame, I dare say," laughed Betty, "come true!"

"Fancy being as famous as you are to-day!"

Bunny said enviously. "You haven't anything to wish for now!"

"Haven't I?"

There was just time for the film star to finish an amused laugh and then she had to say an "Excuse me!" as a smart pageboy presented a note on a salver.

The girls could not help noticing that it was a note which had not come through the post.

Then they saw her look very upset at sight of the handwriting, and they were surprised.

Fame and fortune hers to-day! Talent and rare beauty alike had placed her, whilst still in her teens, in the forefront of her profession. So they had all felt sure that the message which had just come to hand would be only a pleasing one. An invitation to a dinner party, or a request for an interview—at the least, some eager screech penned by one of her million admirers! But no!

A disturbing, distressing message it was, that those lovely eyes were scanning. And now retaining the note after crumpling it up, she rose.

"Sorry! I must tear myself away. I was so enjoying it, too!" Her eyelids fluttered as if vexation had left her half-tearful.

The two boys stood up, and from Mrs. Linton and the girls her parting smile went to them as she moved away. Softly the band played on, whilst their gaze followed that slim, exquisitely lovely figure sauntering across the lounge.

When, a few moments later, she had stepped into a lift and was being taken to some floor above, it was to the juniors as if they had been seeing her again in some film play; scene—the Hotel Majestic!

"Oh, mumsie, isn't she sweet?"

"I like her immensely," Mrs. Linton declared. "So perfectly natural—unspoiled by her great success. She has a private suite, it seems, on our floor."

"She must be rolling!" Bunny gasped. "That frock of hers must have cost a pretty penny, I know!"

"Did she tell you anything about herself—how she came to be on the films, and all that?" Betty clamoured. "The school she went to—I wonder!"

"No, she said very little about—well, about her origin," responded Polly's mother, whilst the waiter set down a Majestic tea for the girls and boys. "I fancy, somehow, she has no one belonging to her."

"And what a shame, if it is so," Madge feelingly murmured. "All London flocking to see her in that film; and yet she has no people of her own to go to, no home where they might have been so proud of their Anna."

"Anna Goldring; is that her real name, mumsie?"

"My dear, I didn't ask her! We really only

talked about the Majestic, by way of a start. She said she loved it here, but that, all the same, she would never have chosen such a place, only the studio people wanted it so. Then you all came in."

The piano and the violins ceased, and it seemed quiet all at once.

"She has known what it is to be up against it," Betty presently murmured. "You must go to see that film, Mrs. Linton. The bits where she was alone in London—"

"Paula cried—"

"Yes, wather! Although weally, Polly deah, you needn't tell the world!"

"Oh, it was nothing so dreadful to do, considering," Polly made amends. "I don't mind saying I was glad we were in the dark. And then we came along back and found her sitting here! Instead of a back room in the slums, it's a suite at the Majestic now. Why, her own life must be just as romantic, if only we knew it, as the girl's whose part she took in the film!"

"I long to see that suite," Betty sighed, nibbling a macaroon. "Perhaps to-morrow?"

She said this, never imagining how soon some of them were to see the film star herself once more, and what a strange adventure was to be the outcome of that second meeting.

Only a few minutes later, when Betty and Polly were upstairs, getting rid of outdoor things in the pretty bed-room which they shared, there came a tap at the door. And it was Anna Goldring who entered. She was dressed for going out.

"You two girls—you can do me a great service if you will," was her startling remark. "I have asked Mrs. Linton and she says it will be quite all right for you to go with me."

"Go with you?" stared the Morcove pair. "Where?"

They felt that this beautiful girl was still very upset—suppressing an inward agitation.

"To—another part of London; never mind the district," was the vague answer. "But I will be as frank as possible. I have to be at the studios by eight in the morning. I shall be on the set all day. You girls, by doing what I ask you this evening, can save me from such an upset as would ruin me for the work—I know it would!"

"As soon as you like, then," Betty eagerly responded. "At once?"

Anna Goldring nodded, and instantly both chums were resuming their hats and coats.

"I have 'phoned down to the hotel garage, and my car will be ready at the door, for me to take over."

Betty and Polly exchanged puzzled glances as they went with the film star

to the lift and descended with her to the ground floor.

As the strange request that they should accompany her seemed to be a sequel to the receipt of that upsetting note just now, they did not like to ask questions. They followed her out to the hotel steps in a bemused state.

Her car was at the kerb—a small but costly Roysler saloon. She saw them into it, offered them a rug, then took her seat at the wheel and drove away.

A Mysterious Mission

THE fine car, leaving the West End behind it, made a course that both girls could tell was northerly. But they did not know London well enough to be able to name the quarters through which they were being whirled.

Peering out, all the while the Roysler alternately made one of those safe little rushes or crept across some bus-congested junction, they could see their surroundings becoming poorer, meaner.

The Roysler now, with its fur-coated young lady at the wheel and its two Morcove schoolgirls, was a rarity to be stared at.

"Cooo, look!" Betty and Polly heard more than once.

Then they turned aside into a street of dwelling houses that was dark and narrow. They still went on, until suddenly—just round one more corner—the car drew into the kerb and stopped.



Becky took the folded currency notes from the envelope, then faced Betty and Polly with a sneering smile. "Two 'fans' of hers, are you?" she commented, referring to their film star friend, and the Morcove chums knew by her manner that she felt not the slightest gratitude for the gift.

Anna Goldring, by a sign she made as she got down from the wheel, caused Betty and Polly to alight.

At the first glance around, they were filled with the sense of being only one street away, as it were, from slums worse than any through which they had been brought.

This particular street in which they stood with the film star was one of old, tall houses that had, with one striking exception, gradually formed part of the general squalor.

The exception was the house at the corner. It had a tiny front garden, behind iron railings, where some shrubs were still kept trim, and the porch and window sills were smartened up by a recent coat of paint.

"You see that house at the corner, girls?"

They both gave a little start. Anna Goldring was directing their attention to the very house which they had instantly noticed as being in a class by itself.

"I want you to call there for me," she whispered on. "There is something—this—that I want you to hand to the person to whom it is addressed."

Betty was being given a small but bulky envelope; but as it changed hands Polly, by the light from a street lamp, could see just as well as her chum; the envelope was addressed simply to "Becky."

"Very likely Becky herself will open the door to you," Anna Goldring murmured on. "If she asks you inside, it will be quite all right. There is nothing to fear. Perhaps you will see someone else. If so, take a good look at him, won't you?"

"At 'him'?" Polly echoed, angling for ampler information. But it did not come.

"I shall take the car a little way farther along this street and wait for you there. Thank you so much for what you are doing for me," came in a fervent undertone. "You will never know, perhaps, what a help it has meant."

She was getting back, even then, to her seat at the wheel. For a moment or two Betty and Polly stood transfixed upon the pavement, watching her; but she did not look round. The car glided on with her, and both schoolgirls felt that she had not wished them to see her face just then—perhaps because of the anguish it held.

"Well!" Polly said under her breath. "What a queer business!"

"Yet I have an idea what it means, dear. You know, I'm sure there is money in this envelope. It feels like currency notes."

They walked towards the house at the corner. At the pavement-gate they saw a tarnished brass plate affixed to the iron railings.

"Oh—d'you see, Betty? A doctor's house! 'Dr. Jervoise,'" Polly read the name that was on the plate.

"Then that," Betty nodded, "accounts for this house being different from the rest. They're pretty awful, Polly!"

A flagged path led the girls to some porch steps. The ancient fanlight told them that the hall was not in darkness. Betty selected the right bell-press.

Tr-r-ring, ring!

The silence which came again after that ring at the bell seemed almost eerie. Not only was there silence in the house, but a silence everywhere close at hand.

The roar of London life seemed to come at them from afar like a deep note on an organ; but at this spot to which they had been brought so

mysteriously, it was as if life were too tragic, too furtive, to be lived except—in silence.

But now a quick footstep sounded and a latch was drawn back. The door came open, revealing a tall young woman who, the light being behind her, was, for the moment, only a dark silhouette to Betty and Polly.

"From Miss Goldring—"

"What! Oh, I see!" And this was followed by a hard little laugh.

"Are you—Becky?"

"You've got something for me, have you? Come in, then!"

They expected to be conducted from the hall, with its old-fashioned furnishings, to some sitting-room or other just as out-of-date and faded. And instead, this Becky—whoever she might be—took them to a most beautifully furnished room, where a good fire burned and the electric lights were enclosed in artistic shades.

Nothing was wanting to make this room, at any rate, absolutely luxurious. The girls' immediate belief was that Becky had determined that she would have one bright and lovely place to resort to, in this old-fashioned house in this awful neighbourhood!

Betty handed over the note.

No word of thanks came from the recipient—only a curt:

"Sit down, both of you!"

And so they sat together on a costly settee and watched her—took stock of her as she stood in front of the hot fire, opening the envelope.

She was good-looking, in a rather sharp-featured way. Her clothes were expensive; hair and hands alike suggested that she was no stranger to beauty parlours. But, Betty and Polly felt, not all the wealth in the world could ever have bought her that charm, that adorable loveliness which was Anna Goldring's.

Out of the ripped-open envelope came a folded wad of currency notes. As Betty had expected! Without counting them, Becky placed them on the mantelshelf. There had been no accompanying message for her to read.

"Huh," she said, with a cold smile for both girls. "So you're at that hotel, too, I take it?"

"Yes."

"Two of her fans, is that it? You've seen the film, of course?"

"And we thought it wonderful!"

"Oh, I don't want to know what you thought of it," came the interruption in a voice bitter with envy. "She's all the rage, we know. But does anyone know—can she say—how long it is going to last?"

"Anyhow," Betty exclaimed, standing up, "you might wish her well, surely, over the film she is working on now?"

"Might I?" was the flashed retort. "If either of you were me, perhaps you might—not!"

"Oh, I can't believe that," Polly impulsively protested. "It doesn't take long to tell what people are like—by nature. And Anna Goldring is, we are quite, quite sure—a dear!"

"You see," Betty joined in, with spirit, "it's not our business, but—we have just brought you all that money! Part of her earnings, no doubt?"

"That money!" the spitfire echoed, darting her fierce eyes to it. "So she told you, did she? Made out that it is money being cadged—"

"No—"

"She didn't care to say, anyhow, that it is money more than owing—to me, yes, to me! Not that one penny of it goes upon myself," the

bitter voice raged on. "She knows that, well enough! She's only sent it to ease her conscience."

"Oh, look here," Polly bridled, "you can't go on like this about Miss Goldring—abusing her to us. If she won't meet you, it can only be because you upset her—ruin her for the work. We don't know who you are—"

"So she didn't tell you? Then I will! Her sister, that's who I am! A sister who has stayed at home and has stayed by father, which is more than she would ever do. Self, self, all the time—that's what she has been! And so there she is, nowadays, with her suite at the Majestic, whilst I can go on dragging out my life all amongst these slums!"

"That is your side to the story—"

"All right; she would tell you different, no doubt—and you'd prefer to believe her! But, understand this, the pair of you," the young woman spoke on vehemently, "I could produce someone who would bear me out, and that would be—her own father, who disowns her!"

Betty and Polly turned to each other, aghast at those last words. Then, as they returned their horrified eyes to the speaker, they saw how she smiled exultantly over the shock she had administered.

"He told her, two years ago, never to show her face again. Unjust, cruel of him, was it? You don't know him," the hissing voice added, "or you could never imagine any such thing! Ask the people round here what they think of Dr. Jarvis Jervoise, and they will tell you something!"

The fierce challenge left both schoolgirls reduced to silence. They were feeling very upset.

Anna Goldring—disowned by her father! It was too terrible for words.

"I'll see you to the door, but I won't come out to speak to her, where I suppose she is waiting," Becky Jervoise said with a wide grin. "I might make a scene, and there mustn't be anything like that. We must consider her work—her fame."

"I am sure it is terribly hard work," Betty submitted, as she and Polly followed this bitter young woman back to the hall door. "She has to be at the studio by eight to-morrow, and it goes on all day."

"Hard—work! She should have a taste of my life."

A vicious tug at the latch, and the door was open to let Betty and Polly pass out. They murmured only a hasty "Good-night," without looking into that hard face again. The door was closed upon them immediately, and they stepped together back to the pavement—silent in their distress of mind. They hardly knew what to think now!

"I WILL soon run you back," Anna Goldring promised with a smile of enduring gratitude. "And so you will soon be with your chums again—enjoying yourselves."

"Oh, that's all right. And—er—by the way," Betty felt it wise to add, "even if we tell the others, you needn't be uneasy. I mean, it won't get into the papers."

"Ah—thank you!"

They all three resumed their former seats in the car. Sitting ready to drive away, Anna Goldring did not immediately touch the starter.

"She told you something, then?" was suddenly asked without any looking round.

"That you are her sister—yes."

"Stepsister, she should have said."

Then Anna Goldring started the car. Sitting behind her, Betty and Polly nudged each other in excitable relief. "Stepsister!" All the difference in the world, of course! And now they wondered all the more—wanted to ask Anna at the first possible opportunity—had malice done its best to mislead them in other directions?

Soon the two girls could talk without the least risk of the film star's overhearing them. The noise of London was all about them again, as the car darted and dodged along, working back to the West End and the hotel.

Polly, after looking out of the window, turned her head to speak to Betty, but kept silent when she saw her chum lolling back with eyes closed under knitted brows.

Then Betty opened her eyes.

"I was seeing bits of that film, Polly, all over again, just then—in my mind. Oh, Polly darling," in a deeper whisper than ever, "it simply can't be that she did something to deserve being cast off—"

"By her own father—no!" Polly breathed fiercely. "If she simply fell out with a stepfather—another matter altogether."

For a few minutes after that they, who had glimpsed Slumland this evening, had the imposing Town houses of high Society looming upon either hand. Then the car pulled up outside the awning'd entrance to the Majestic.

"I shall just run her round myself to the garage," Anna's musical voice called to the two girls as they alighted. "If I don't see you again to-night—to-morrow will be quite all right for you and your friends to visit the studio; that is, if you care—"

"Oh!" Betty and Polly cried out together delightedly. "How perfectly lovely!"

"Ask for me when you get there, and I will contrive a few minutes, even if I have to turn you over to somebody else afterwards."

"Miss Goldring—"

"Oh, make it Anna."

"Well, then—Anna!" went on Betty. "At that house there was a brass plate—Dr. Jarvis Jervoise. Father, or—or only stepfather?"

"Father."

Simply that for answer; and then—she drove on round to the hotel garage, leaving the two Morcove girls looking after her.

On the Set!

AT two o'clock the following afternoon Morcove and Co. turned up in force at the outer-London studios of Ambassador Films, Ltd.

They had come down by train to Elmsham, the fine winter's day making it a pleasant walk for them out to the home of Camera-land.

No ornamental ground, no Palace of Art could have fascinated them more than did their first peeps into buildings which, as they came along from the station, had looked so very freakish.

And all this bewilderment and astonishment came before the girls and boys had been shown anything of the actual "shooting" of a scene.

A young lady from the office, accustomed to showing people round, was making the tour of the place one of ever-increasing fascination. In other words, the best was being kept to the last!

Knowing that they were to meet Anna Goldring presently, and even have the thrill of seeing her "on the set," Betty and most of the others were quite content to go on being shown round like this, taking everything in its proper sequence.

But there was dusky Naomer to start pining aloud for the really "gorjus" side of the Elmsham industry.

"Bekas, what ze diggings, with a bit of luck we might get a chance in a crowd scene! Anyhow, I want to see some of ze desert islands, and kafreedrals, and sky-scrappers zat you see at ze pictures."

"Quiet!" Betty half-seriously hissed, for the young lady guide, as she suddenly halted them, had made a smiling sign for silence.

They had come to the entrance to a large, long building inside which some scene for a film play was even then being shot.

As, on tiptoe, they followed their guide into the building, they saw before them a wide passage running all down one side, serving various sections of the floor space. Half-way along the side-walk were the cameramen and other technicians, with all their paraphernalia.

There were cameras and tall tripods—some on trucks—and step-ladders, and shaking cables that took the current to screened lights which were rigged up in the most extraordinary positions.

Beckoned on again, they all got close enough to the staff man to be able to see the scene itself—an open-air one. And there was Anna Goldring herself, acting with another character who took the part of an elderly Society woman.

But Anna Goldring "on the set" at this moment, was hard to recognise as the Anna Goldring of the Majestic Hotel. It was not simply a case of humbler dressing. Her make-up—to the Morocco girls, that seemed anything but beautifying.

It all, of course, had something to do with the photograph, just the same as details in the built-up background looked so unreal, and yet, when this film came to be shown, here would be a scene that thousands would suppose to have been taken in the very heart of Mayfair.

The cameras stopped; somebody standing by them voiced a "Cats, cats!" as his gratified comment on how well the squabble between the two characters had gone off, and Morocco and Co. could give tongue now. Everybody else was doing so with a vengeance.

Cigars were re-lit, cigarettes dived for. Various individuals became inclined for horseplay.

The producer himself, in the best of tempers, loomed towards Morocco and Co. in his belted greatcoat. He began by making them all feel very welcome, and he ended by taking the boys away to see "gadgets" that would not be likely to interest the girls.

Then Anna was suddenly in the midst of Betty and her girl chums, still in character dress.

"Like some tea, you girls? I can get you a cup, standing—five minutes I've got, and then I must get changed for the next shot. Terrific day!"

"We're in the way, Anna?"

"You're telling me! It's lovely to have you all. Only, we are pushing on whilst the going is good. There are some days when we seem to do nothing but have rows. I am afraid I don't easily get over upsets, either."

She hurried them to a canteen where numbers of film folk were snatching a few minutes together. To Morocco, the impression was that of a football crowd having got out of an excursion train to storm a station buffet.

The interlude was as fleeting as it was jolly. Rapidly the crowd melted away, leaving emptied cups everywhere and a floor splashed with spilt tea and littered with cigarette-ends.

"And now I must fly," Anna suddenly announced. "But I shall be free for a bit presently—after the next shot. You're coming across to see it, of course?"

She was gone, and Polly turned about and fixed Naomer with withering eyes.

"Is that a second bun? When you know what a lunch you ate, at the hotel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He was an early lunch," Naomer pleaded.

"And zere is no hurry, any old how. What I want to know is where are all—ze boys?" she was going to say, when her eyes goggled at the sight of her own favourite, Tubby Blood, trundling towards them all at his best speed.

At first the girls imagined that Tubby was simply in haste to sample the canteen. But he explained that he had come to look for them, not refreshments, and he was about to explain why, when Jack and Tom skated upon the scene.

"Boys!" panted Polly's brother. In his joyous moments he always treated his sister and her chums as if they were so many Grangemoor school-mates. "We're taken on!"

"What-a-at!"

"It's the biggest thing for us, boys, ever!" Jack raved. "Tea-shop scene, and Anna as a waitress! That producer johnny—"

"He's a sport!" put in Tom Trevor.

"—He wants some of us to come in for teas, if you get me, whilst the shot is being made! If we spoil the shot, then it must be done again; but I've told him— Oh, boy, see us just about making a crasher of that scene!"

"Gorjus!" Naomer capered and clapped. "Bekas, what ze diggings, just ze thing for us, when you know how often we crowd into ze Barncombe Creamery, after school! Hooray—"

"Come on, then!" Polly exclaimed again. "But where?"

Jack, who had been fully instructed, explained that there would not be room for all of them in the scene. The producer, he said, had insisted upon the three best-looking Grangemoorians—"which means, of course, Tubby and Tom and myself!"

"But the girls must be pretty?" Polly inferred. "Not at all," said Jack blandly. "And so that's where you get a chance, Polly! Something for the audience to laugh at when it sees the film; and so I suggest—you, Polly; and we'll have Naomer, and Bunny; oh, and Paula, of course!"

"Bai Jove! I must pwotest, howevah—"

It was a protest that went unfinished. The others, if they were to infuse real "out-of-school" fun into the scene, had got to have Paula with them.

They went off with her, and it was for those girls who were left behind to imagine how Paula would feel, if she had to receive some of that awful make-up upon her pretty face.

Dave and Jimmy were to be seen, roaming about in an all-noticing way. It was very doubtful if this more level-headed pair of Grangemoorians needed to be consoled, because they were not to figure in the scene. All the same, Judy was for rejoicing her brother, and Pam was not averse from having Jimmy to talk to again.

So, next moment, Betty found herself trailing after the diminished group of girl chums with whom she had been left.

She rather lagged behind because her thoughts had suddenly reverted to the previous evening—the strange journey in the car, the house at the corner of that gone-off street, and Becky Jervoise with her spitfire nature.

Those few minutes with Anna Goldring, just now, must have rendered Betty as reflective as she was at this moment. For there had been an acute sense of Anna's coming to them all, during that brief interval, in perfect spirits. To-day she was caught up in the work—as she had feared she might not be!

As to the existence of that dread, yesterday evening—a very real dread for anyone doing such work as hers—there could be no doubt.

"Suppose, then, Polly and I had not acted as go-between, like we did?" ran Betty's mind. "The money we handed that Becky person—it had been demanded; of course it had! I don't forget Anna's upset look, when the note came for her at the hotel. What a shame, that she should simply have to buy a bit of peace, or else—"

Betty's mind, in spite of its agitated state, saw the cue in those words and took it.

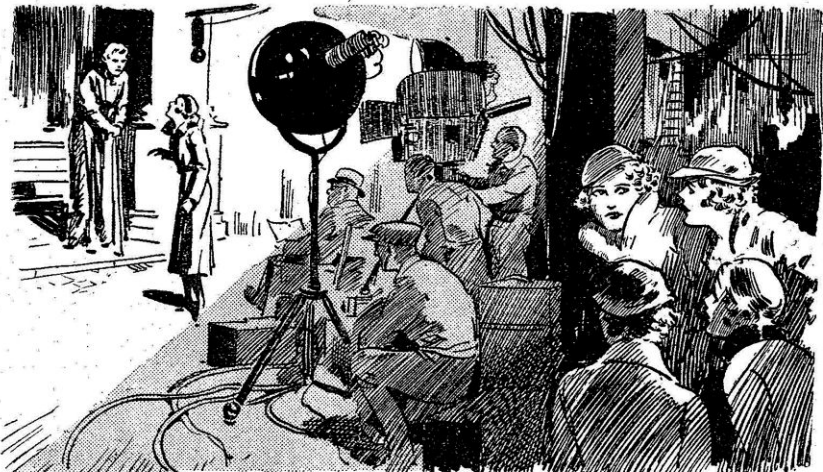
"Yes, I do!" she said instantly. "And you had better—turn her over—to me!"

Betty Stands Between!

"DO what, miss?" stared the girl clerk. "Take me somewhere—oh, won't you—where this person who has called can be seen by me!" Betty rushed on. "But you must—please!"

She was afraid her voice sounded wild, but, anyway, it was not half as wild as were her inmost feelings.

"I don't quite get you," the girl clerk said with a smiling frown. "This caller has asked for Anna Goldring—"



Fascinatedly Betty & Co. watched what was happening. Anna Goldring, their friend, was taking part in a scene, and the Morcové party did not want to miss a moment of it.

"Miss—excuse me!"

It was the same young lady from the office who had acted as guide until Anna had come off the set a while ago.

"There's somebody else, now, wanting Miss Goldring. As she was with you, a few minutes since—"

"Oh, but she has left us, to get ready for the next shot," Betty hastened to explain. "She'll be—in one of the dressing-rooms, I suppose."

The girl clerk, nodding her understanding, stared dubiously at a slip of paper she held.

It was one of those printed slips which a caller had to fill in.

"Becky," the girl clerk quoted aloud—and Betty's heart gave a violent leap. "That's all she has put—just 'Becky.'"

"You say—Becky?"

"Yes, why? I'm wondering what I ought to do. Know anything about this, then?"

"I know! But—I tell you—it will be best if I see her—"

"First, do you mean? Before I fetch Miss Goldring?"

"Yes—no—oh, at least, do as I say, for a start," Betty implored, "and very likely it will save Anna Goldring from being bothered. She is up to her neck in it to-day, you know! Hinder her, and I suppose you'll hold up the whole thing? Well, then!"

"Better come with me, then," the girl clerk nodded, and Betty found herself going across to that fine red-brick building where the £ s. d. of the business was carried on.

For the life of her she did not know what she was going to do, except feel her way to opposing any meeting between Anna and the stepsister.

Succeed she might not, but—it was worth the attempt, a desperate attempt! This was neither the time nor the place for the film actress to come in for another cruel upset.

Life at Morcove had taught Betty that pure jealousy could cause a girl to commit the most insensate action; and now it looked as if Becky Jervoise were here simply for that reason.

The spiteful girl was ready to do her worst, even though any blow struck at the object of her malice would recoil upon her own head.

"Even if I have to go under with her—I'll yet drag her down!" That was evidently Becky's state of mind.

The room to which Betty was conducted seemed to be set apart for interviewing. The clerk went away to fetch the visitor, and Betty felt sure that this privacy would not be disturbed during the talk to come.

She had been invited to take a seat, but she moved restlessly about the small room, asking herself:

"How—how am I to handle her? How will it be possible for me to compel her to go away?"

The door opened and she heard the girl clerk's voice saying:

"In here, miss."

Then Becky came in, and the door was softly closed behind her.

A more dramatic moment Betty had seldom known. She saw the pale, sharp-featured face of the ill-natured girl twitch with surprise and anger.

"I asked for my sister!"

"You mean your stepsister!"

That retort at least checked Becky Jervoise in the act of turning to whip open the door and go indignantly out of the room. She dropped her hand away from the knob and stood facing Betty still.

"Well?"

"You can't see Anna—"

"Oh, can't I? You say that, do you?"

"And I mean it!"

Nor was Betty merely bluffing.

She knew—thank goodness, she knew the line to take now! At first sight of Becky—the way that girl was dressed—an idea had come. Deeply anxious, a few moments since, over the seeming inability to cope with the menace, now Betty was feeling sure of success.

"If you don't stay and listen to me," Betty said sternly, "I'll use that telephone, and then—you'll be put out."

"How dare you!"

"The film people will not think it half so dreadful of me to be butting in like this—even though I am only a schoolgirl—than they will of you, if they learn why you have come here to-day."

"Why I have come here is not their business—nor yours!"

"It is," Betty dissented flatly. "You want to make a scene. Your stepsister is putting in a very hard day's work. She is on the set even now. You'd like to upset her; so smash her up that she won't be fit to carry on. And if the film people get fed-up with her and her moods—tell her to take a rest—tear up her contract, because of the loss, the waste of time and money—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I'm going to say it, for it's true! You won't care. You'll be glad! I know your sort, and what paltry jealousy can make you do. You'd even rather see Anna crash, than go on seeing her famous, rich—although her downfall would mean no more money for you to get out of her."

"Lies—all lies!"

"But it isn't lies," Betty calmly persisted.

"Didn't you demand money from Anna yesterday? Didn't I and a chum of mine come to your house with a lot of money from Anna?"

"It was not for myself! You don't know everything!"

"Not yet; but I am finding it out—by degrees. There is wicked deception—"

"There is not!"

"Then why," Betty played the card upon which she was relying, "have you come here dressed so shabbily?"

A trump card, right enough! Becky Jervoise—for the time being, at any rate—was beaten. Her face admitted it.

"Dressed like that is how you come here, thinking to show yourself to Anna. The money you get out of her—not for yourself, oh, no! But that's the cruel deception. You do spend it on yourself—"

"Another word!" panted the spitfire, advancing with a hand raised menacingly; but Betty did not flinch.

"All right, then—no more, and you will simply go, away—"

"Not without seeing Anna, I tell you!"

"And I tell you, you are not going to see her! Fair play for Anna—that's what I am after."

"These clothes—they are the best I've got!" Becky blustered viciously. "What do you know about my circumstances?"

"I know that—and my chum Polly will bear me out—last evening we saw you wearing most expensive clothes. There was every sign that you take good care to have all you want. I've no doubt Anna wishes you to be comfortably placed. But to trick her into thinking that the money she sends you goes in other directions—"

"Oh, I'll not listen to you a moment longer!" Becky stamped. "I want Anna, and I will—I insist—"

She stopped in the midst of that passionate outburst. Betty, who had stood with the extension telephone within reach, had whipped the receiver from its hook.

The response was already being made—the burble of an inquiring voice, audible to Becky, even.

"One moment, please." Betty spoke into the instrument, and then, covering the mouthpiece with her hand, she looked across and spoke to Becky.

"Are you going straight from this room, right out of the place?"

"I—you—"

"Back to London by the next train? Look sharp; I'm keeping someone waiting."

"You little beast!" Becky hissed, with that beaten look in her hard eyes. "All right, then—for this once—"

"This once is all that matters—now," Betty said.

She called into the 'phone:

"Sorry, I shan't want you, after all." And returned the receiver to its hook.

"I'll come with you," said Betty of Morcove School. "Just to see you off the place!"

DONE!

Betty had saved the situation which, only a few minutes since, had been so critical! It was all right for Anna now. There would be no scene. That detestable stepsister of hers had gone.

And so Betty could go joyfully in search of Judy and those others from whom she had slipped away just now to engage in that wordy duel.

She found them, at last, inspecting with great amusement the relics of what had been a film scene, built up in the open, on a little hillock.

"Oh," Betty laughed, "a bit of the African jungle—twenty miles from Marble Arch! But isn't it time we went to see them shooting that teashop?"

They all returned to the vast, long building where so much of the actual film-making was done. Cameramen and others were ready, and the juniors, suitably stationed, saw the realistic scene which had been created in this particular section—just such a teashop as one finds in any fair-sized town in the kingdom, with a cake-counter, pay-desk, and all else complete!

A few moments more and there was a growled request for silence, and then the filming of this episode began. Again Betty and her companions saw Anna as the heroine of the film-play—this time as a newly engaged waitress.

Other waitresses and some customers were in evidence; but there were a few tables vacant. A manageress stalked about, and Anna's was the unhappy part of a novice who could please no one.

All the acting was clever, even down to the ragged newsboy who came to leave his "second extra," and who was slipped a cake—by Anna.

There were even passers-by on the pavement, the busy street being seen through the glass of the shop-door.

Suddenly some more customers came in—schoolgirls and schoolboys; Polly and Jack, and the rest of them!

As soon as Betty had seen how her film-acting chums crashed down into chairs at two of the vacant tables, just as if the teashop were their own popular "Creamery," at Barncombe, she stole a glance at the watchful producer.

He, in turn, was exchanging delighted glances with colleagues. Even the chief cameraman was shedding some of his grim professionalism, as Morcove & Co. intensified all the realism by its fooling about.

During the next minute or two, Betty and her equally attentive chums were in great danger of bursting into loud laughter. Having to bear in mind the sound-recorder, they suffered convulsions owing to bottled-up mirth.

Polly and her companions in the scene were really being no funnier than they were, as a rule, during any plunging-in for tea-and-cake at the Barncombe Creamery. But it was this fidelity to real life that made their play so effective.

Anna had to wait upon them, and they treated her just as they would have treated any waitress in real life who was obviously in danger of "the sack."



Becky entered with her stepfather, Doctor Jervoise. "What is it, then?" he rapped out. "I've no time to waste!" Betty and Polly realised, as they saw his hard look, how difficult their task would be.

They were kind to her, doing their best to cover up all those mistakes for which the eagle-eyed manageress was on the look-out! At the same time, they had glorious fun with other "customers," who were there to be teased. Jack had just dealt with an irate customer—an elderly gentleman, who had thumped the table. Unfortunately for him, Jack had slipped a plate of fruit salad under his descending fist, and the contents had strewn themselves over his face.

Fat Tubby was, of course, well in the picture—sitting next to Naomer. And Paula—how her fatuousness helped! The lot of them, they had only to be themselves to be—a scream.

"And I wonder," Betty chuckled to herself whilst this bit of nonsense went on, "what Morcove will say—and Grangemoor—when the film comes out!"

Finally, the manageress had to ask them to leave. The chums who were looking on guessed that intense drama was to follow the comedy stuff, and they felt that the film-people must be highly pleased at the way Morcove & Co. "packed up."

As something to set audiences screaming with laughter, before being suddenly moved to tears, nothing could have been better than the juniors' fighting retreat, carried on with a manageress who was "shoo-ing" them out of the teashop.

Soon enough, after that, came the expected change to drama, calling for the most emotional acting by Anna herself. And now Betty, caught up though she was by the play's interest, yet found herself thinking of the might-have-been.

If—if Becky Jervoise had not been foiled in her malicious purpose just now! If she had obtained only a minute's talk, even, with Anna!

The consequences might have been utterly ruinous to this talented actress—one who, whatever her faults and failings in the past, surely did not deserve to be struck at so cruelly to-day.

Ah, and what if, after all, Anna had been more sinned against than sinning, in connection with the father from whom she was estranged?

That stepfather—out of jealousy and by her deep cunning, the cause of that tragic breach?

It could be so. Was it, then—was it? Not the slightest use putting that question to Anna herself. To have been victimised, she must have been so cleverly duped that, to this very day, she had not the slightest suspicion of another's wrongdoing. But how about taking certain steps to find out for oneself?

There could have been no more unsuitable moment than this, for Betty's mind to leap to a sudden, daring decision.

She was still watching the scene that was being filmed; and yet she found herself thinking, determinedly:

"I know! I'll get hold of the father!"

And that was how it came about next day that Betty and her best-of-chums turned up at the corner house to ask for—Dr. Jervoise!

What a Father!

TR-RING, ring!

Once again the visitors' bell at the doctor's house was ringing, under pressure of Betty's finger upon the ivory stud.

She dropped her hand away and then turned to Polly, beside her in the porch.

The wintry day was dark—inclined to be foggy. They smiled excitedly at each other through the gloom.

"Now," Betty muttered, "what's going to happen—I wonder!"

The door opened, and it was Becky Jervoise who looked them up and down in mingled surprise and resentment.

Betty retained her smile.

"Afternoon! Is Dr. Jervoise in?"

"Why?"

"Oh, we'd like to see him, that's all."

"So SHE has got you to do this, has she! Too ashamed herself—"

"Nothing of the sort," Betty answered that sneering voice. "Anna doesn't even know we're here."

"Well, you can't see him! You think he's got time to waste upon you? Anna hasn't told you, I suppose, that her father is a man who works himself to death in this poverty-stricken part? If ever there were a poor man's doctor, he is that! Besides, we're not waited on hand and foot here, like Anna is at the Majestic! Our only maid is having her afternoon off."

"What you say about Dr. Jervoise makes us feel all the more anxious to see him. If he is that sort of man—kind to the poor—"

"Oh, now I get you!" And Becky burst out laughing. "You think you can get round him—to forgive Anna, and all that? I can see you doing it! But—yes," she suddenly decided, her eyes taking on a sharper glint, "you shall be given the chance!"

"Thanks—"

"Just to put an end to your poking your noses into other people's affairs! Come in, then! And I'll see if I can get father to spare you a minute."

They followed her into the same room where

they had talked with her two evenings ago. Becky at once went away.

At first Betty and Polly had nothing to say to each other. They expected the doctor's step-daughter to return at any moment with him. But the minutes crept by, and still the two schoolgirls were waiting.

"A poor man's doctor—I believe her, Polly, anyway, when she said that," Betty tensely whispered at last. "And so he must be a large-hearted man; just the sort, surely, to be able to forgive and forget!"

"If he can't, then Anna simply must have done something very dreadful," Polly murmured back grimly. "His own daughter! Even an ill-natured man might be expected to forgive a lot when it's his own daughter."

Betty nodded and looked very grave and earnest.

"We are doing our best, anyhow, Polly. If—if nothing comes of it, then—well, it will be a blow!"

Polly grimaced.

"Don't talk about failure, Betty! It will be fine if we can bring them together again!"

They lapsed into silence, listening eagerly for the first sounds that should give warning of Becky's return with Dr. Jervoise. But still this anxious waiting went on, in a room that was so gloomy, any flicker of the coals in the grate caused a welcome if fitful illumination.

A quarter of an hour at least—and still Betty and Polly were alone together.

But it did not do to treat this delay as a bad sign. They preferred to think that he had been too busy to come at once. At any rate, Becky had not returned with the message that he refused to see them.

Suddenly, and at the end of what must have been a full half-hour of waiting, they heard foot-falls outside the room. The door opened and Becky sauntered in, followed by a tall man of very professional appearance.

"Dr. Jervoise," the stepdaughter announced blankly, and then stood aside as if she meant to remain, but not to take part in any conversation.

As well as they could, in the bad light, Betty and Polly scrutinised him eagerly, in hope of seeing in his looks more than one sign of a nature that could be moved.

But, to their dismay, he looked a hard man. His deep-set eyes, under thick brows, were not kind eyes. A heavy moustache seemed to hide a bad mouth.

"What is it, then?" he rapped out harshly. "I've no time to waste!"

"Dr. Jervoise," Betty began—and her voice faltered because of his forbidding attitude. "We've got to know your daughter Anna. She's staying at our hotel—"

"Living in the lap of luxury—eh?"

"Oh, but as to that, doctor; the film-people will have it so. I—I suppose, being famous, she—she has to do things that help publicity. They like her to be written about in the Press—little paragraphs—"

His bitter laugh interrupted.

"Anna must be taking good care that the Press doesn't get hold of too much of her private life—before she became what you call 'famous.' I call it cheap notoriety."

"Dr. Jervoise, that's unfair!" Polly fired up in her usual headstrong way. "Anna has won real fame! She is very talented—a daughter to be proud of!"

"You think so?" he said with a sudden quiver of anger in his voice. "You have come here to tell me that, have you—like your impudence!"

"We have come, doctor, hoping to be the means of—of bringing you and Anna together again." Betty pleaded with returning courage. "The more we see of her, the greater we admire her. We've been told—by your stepdaughter here—that Anna did something you never can forgive. But—"

"Neither can I; neither would I, if I could!" he said furiously. "No! I have no daughter Anna now!"

"But, surely—"
"My time is valuable—although I give it mostly for nothing," he added with a wry smile. "Enough of this nonsense, this stupid interference—"

"But, doctor," Polly burst in again, "if only you knew how it hurts Anna to know—"

"She has 'fame,' hasn't she? Money—more to spend in a year than my work amongst the poor and at the hospital has brought me in a life-time! You, mere schoolgirls, to talk of her being hurt! Remorse—that's the word; but, there, you are only so young, and I'll not discuss things with you."

"We have seen her doctor, looking as if—"
"You have seen her on the films—acting—"

"Ah, but at the hotel—"
"Whether on the films or in private life," he caught Betty up harshly, "you have only seen her acting! She is a clever actress, and that's the best that can be said for her. As for all the rest—"

He was backing away to the door as he spoke. "Let her go on with her life, as I am content to go on with mine—with one here who really is a daughter to me! Anna Goldring is a name I see upon the hoardings. The other Anna I have forgotten."

He went out.
Slam!
Violently he had closed the room-door, after ending with utterances so pitiless.

"You see!" Becky Jervoise at once spoke, smiling exultantly. "I knew you were only wasting his time—and asking for an upset for yourselves. So now—better go. I don't want to say anything!"

She conducted them back to the street door, and their dazed state had not passed off when they found themselves walking away together amongst the dreary rows of houses.

They had come here by bus, this afternoon, after looking up Dr. Jervoise in the London Directory. Now it was to take them six or seven minutes to get back to the bus-route—and they felt they could do with the walk. An interview like that—it wanted some getting over!

From first to last his manner had been appalling in its harshness. His every word—shocking, coming from a father in connection with one who, whatever she had done to grieve him, must always be his own flesh and blood.

"Whew!" Polly fumed. "Didn't do much good, did we?"

"No, we didn't! And now—I suppose that ought to decide us. The fault, then, really was on her side, and it must have been a terrible thing she did."

"From the way he spoke!"
"And yet, Polly— Oh, somehow, I can't let it convince me!" Betty said thoughtfully. "There's still a lot we don't know about the unhappy business:"

"It is Anna's pining to get back to him, even

if he has lost all his love for her," Polly muttered. "That's what makes me feel sure she isn't to blame. 'Actress,' he called her. Only acting, even in private life!"

"I can't believe that, dear; I just can't!"
And this disbelief was only strengthened when, at the Majestic Hotel that evening, Betty came into touch with the film-actress again.

They met in the richly carpeted corridor where Anna Goldring had her private suite and the Morcove girls their bed-rooms.

Betty was on her way to the lift, to go down-stairs, when she met the film-star just slipping her key into the lock.

"Had a happy day?" Anna chummily inquired. She looked fagged, but there was nothing forced about her gentle smile. "Come in and see my place, Betty. You've all been wanting to, haven't you?"

The beautiful apartments were such as to keep any girl gazing around for minutes on end, lost in admiration. But Betty soon returned her eyes to the film-star, who had dropped down into a deep armchair. So tired!

"What have you been doing to-day, Betty?"
"Oh—going about."

"I've been on the set since half-past eight this morning. They'll be the death of me yet! Oh, well—it brings me lots of money, anyway."

"And lots of happiness, too, Anna?"
"Of a kind—yes."

She got up. Leaving her sable coat in a soft pile upon an armrest of her chair, she drifted about the room.

"I mustn't stay," Betty offered. "Shall we see you downstairs by-and-by? How I wish you were not so tired, that you might feel like going to the ball-room afterwards."

"Oh, I'll come down, if only to see something of you and your chums."
"Thanks!"

Betty turned away to let herself out, then hesitated. After a moment she faced round.

"I wonder, Anna—I wonder if you'll greatly mind my asking? When you said—the other evening—your father— You meant us to feel that you still care for him?"

"Care for him! Oh, more than I can say—"
"Then that really is what is spoiling life for you; that you are never with him now—"

"And never will be again."
"Oh, Anna, but why? They say he is such a good man—"

"So he is. That's why I mayn't go near him." Amazing answer! But Betty could not press for a clearer one.

She saw the film-actress turn away to hide a sudden look of anguish. Real anguish? Or was this little movement only one more bit of "acting"?

Be that as it might, tactfulness made Betty go from the room without another word. She had no sooner closed the door behind her than she was aware of a darting step, bringing Polly to speak with her in the corridor.

"It's a sum I can't do," Betty ruefully smiled. "Must give it up, dear, that's all!"

"Oh, I know you!" snorted the madcap. "Whacked, you say; and to-morrow you will be going at it again—harder than ever!"

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

DON'T miss next Tuesday's enthralling long Morcove holiday story entitled: "Morcove's Feud For Another," by Marjorie Stanton.