

In this issue: *True*

SPLENDID STORIES, MAGNIFICENT ARTICLES, CROSS WORD PUZZLE,
NEEDLEWORK NOTES, COOKERY HINTS, ETC.

The Schoolgirl's Own 2^d



DARE SHE CHEAT?
A dramatic incident from
this week's long complete
tale of the girls of
Morcovce School.

The First of a Splendid New Series of Morcove School Tales.

THE FOURTH FORM CHEAT!



By
MARJORIE STANTON.

Dolly Delane and Eva Merrick play prominent parts in this grand new story of Betty Barton & Co., the chums of the Fourth Form at Morcove School.

Great Excitement.

"WEALLY, geals, it's time we gwew a bit sewious—"

"No! Decidedly no, Paula!"

"But, Polly deah—"

"The very fact that it's the exam, on Friday for the Grace Pullen Prize is all the more reason for being cheerful whilst we can."

Thus Polly Linton, Morcove's famous madcap, spoke as she sat on the edge of the Study 12 table, swinging her legs.

"One of these days—" began Madge Minden.

"One of these days I shall win the Grace Pullen Prize; I am aware of it!" jested Polly. "In fact, I have a strong presentiment that it will be one day this week."

Paula Creel, lolling in the favourite easy-chair, went off into her aristocratic chuckle.

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Order, you!" Polly thundered at her. "Madge was going to say—what, Madge darling?"

"Only that one of these days, Polly dear, you'll tip up the table, and then—"

"Bai Jove—haw haw, haw!" chuckled Paula afresh. "I would like to see her do it, what? Haw, haw, haw!"

"I'd like to see you win the Grace Pullen Prize," was Polly's withering retort. "You! Lounging about in a study that isn't yours, when you ought to be studying up for Friday. Out of that chair, Paula—"

"But weally—"

"The sight of you makes me wrathful."

"Wathful, bai Jove! Haw, haw, haw! How-ewah," said Paula, putting a check upon her mirth, "that bwings us back to the remark which originated all this talk. Geals, we have only to-morrow and the day after—"

"Aha! Slow music," Polly whispered, being seized with the sudden desire to quote from Shakespeare. And whisking off the table, she trod to and fro with the air of a tragedy queen.

"To-morrow and to-morrow creeps on this petty pace—"

"Bai Jove!"

"To the last syllable of recorded time—"

"Recorded what, Polly?"

"And all our yesterdays," Polly declaimed dramatically, "'have lighted fools the way to dusty death!'"

"Have they weally?" was Paula's surprised comment. "Bwavo! If there are any questions on Shakespeare, Polly deah, you'll win the pwize. Yes, wather!"

"Oh, why doesn't the rain give over?" Betty interposed, getting up to walk to the window. "Torrents all day!"

"That's to make us stick indoors and study up for the Grace Pullen do," was Polly's philosophical comment. "See how hard I am working!"

As she said this Polly began to swing herself forwards and backwards, giving the table just enough of a tilt to keep an ebony ruler on the roll.

"Talking of which, girls—"

"Talking of what, Polly?" asked Helen.

"Of ebony rulers, of course. Here is Morcove's own ebony ruler just coming in. Ta-ra, tum!" she blared, imitating a trombone. "Enter Naomer Nakara, the ebony ruler of Nakara, Africa, North-East 1!"

"Haw, haw, haw! Ebony wuler—haw, haw, haw!" Paula went off hysterically. "How good, geals! Just the colour, yes, wather! And being a queen makes her an—"

"Ebony ruler, me?" shrilled impish Naomer, making a dash at Paula. "You call me an ebony ruler!"

"No, nunno! The credit of the joke, Naomer dear, belongs to Polly."

"All ze same ze punishment for it shall belong to you!" chuckled Naomer, promptly depositing herself on Paula's lap. "He, he, he!"

"Stop it! Heap!"

"Now, children!" Polly rebuked them. "No noise in here. We are all working hard for the exam. See how hard I am— Goodness!"

Slam! Crash! went the table, as Polly overdid the tilting trick for once.

Instantaneously she was sitting on the floor with a few inkpots, rulers, and pens littered around her.

"Hard luck!" sympathised Tess.

"On the contrary," Polly said coolly, "it is an omen for the good. I am to win the Pullen Prize. This shows how I can turn the tables on some of you when I like."

"But that time you turned it on yourself," observed Helen.

"Hooray!" cheered Betty, suddenly whisking about at the window. "The clouds are breaking. No tennis—the courts will be soaking. But we can get a run out of doors, anyhow."

"To recuperate," said Polly, darting for her hat, "from the effects of overwork!"

"Yes, wather!" beamed Paula, looking all the more relieved now that Naomer had kindly got off her lap. "One minute, and I'll be weady!"

"Are there no more to come for a stroll?" questioned Betty blithely. "Where is Dolly Delane? I'll run and see if I can get her."

And away she sped, needing to go only half-way along the Fourth Form corridor to reach the study which Dolly Delane shared with Eva Merrick.

Both these girls were in evidence, Dolly at the table, studying hard, whilst Eva was idling at the window.

"Just clearing up, Betty!" Eva remarked delightedly.

"Yes, and are you coming, you two? We are off for a run. Dolly dear—"

"Oh, I think I—"

"All work and no play—you know the saying," Betty smiled, boldly stepping to the table and shutting up Dolly's book for her. "Is it the Grace Pullen exam., dear?"

"Well, yes."

"Bravo you, to be so keen! But then, we're all keen, really," chatted the Form captain as they went from the room. "Only it doesn't do, Dolly, to let the thing get on your nerves!"

Keen they were, all of them, over the forthcoming contest. Every year the girls of Morcove School sat for the examination popularly known as the Grace Pullen Prize. It was a competition to which a very charming story was attached.

Long ago there had been a Grace Pullen at Morcove School. She was a girl who, after leaving, was made painfully aware of the fact that her parents had found it a great strain to keep her going on from term to term, and this led her to realise that lots of other girls must often be demanding, unwittingly, a more expensive schooling than their parents could afford.

So, when she married and became very well off, one of the fine things Grace Pullen did was to institute the annual prize which was to bear her name for as long as Morcove School existed.

Fifty pounds in cash was the prize, this being the approximate cost of a girl's schooling for one term. The scholar who came out on top in the exam. received not only a cheque for the fifty pounds, but such a memento of her success as, in itself, made the contest well worth going in for. What she did with the money was nobody's concern. If her parents were so well off as not to need the relief, she was welcome to spend or save it.

On the other hand, it had been Grace Pullen's belief that the Morcove spirit in a girl would impel her to pass on the cheque to her parents, if she had the least suspicion that her schooling was putting a strain on their finances.

Every Form in the school sat for the exam., and no exemptions were allowed. This was so that there could never be any snobbish aloofness from the contest, and no looking down on those who seemed eager to go in for it. The papers, of

course, were graded to meet the varying ages of the different Forms.

Betty and her chums felt so tremendously freshened up by that early evening run out-of-doors, after the day's deluge, it proved to them that there are times when—the less you do, the more you do!

Back once more in the studies, just as the school chimes were ding-donging seven o'clock, there was not one of the girls who did not fall to at some special bit of study, in preparation for Friday.

Pretty heads had been freshened up by the breeze upon the headland, and now Polly found that she could really spell—a wonderful thing for her!

Another phenomenon—which a certain girl found most "gwatifying"—Paula was coming out quite strong at arithmetic!

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!" was her beaming remark, when she sailed into Study 12 round about eight o'clock to report progress. "Geals, geals, I've been wunning past myself!"

"I'll attend to you in a jiffy," was Polly's ominous murmur, as she nosed into a dictionary.

"Take a seat, Paula."

"I will, geals."

And Paula did, subsiding into the easy-chair with a sigh of profound relief.

Betty suddenly slammed shut her books and jumped up.

"I tell you what," she broke out gaily, "as a sort of last effort to be quite fit on the great day, let's all spend the one 'in front of it' in the open—"

"Bai Jove!"

"From directly after brekker until sunset—splendid, Betty!" was Polly's eager comment. "We are being given all day Thursday off in any case. Those who think it's best to have a final 'swot,' can do so. Those who want to get up steam, will copy us, and be off for a picnic."

"A what? A peekneek, on ze day before? Ooo, yes, queek—queek!" Naomer entered in time to say excitedly as Polly finished speaking. "Let us tell ze others!"

That was soon done. Less than a minute later, practically the whole of the Fourth Form had declared for a last freshening up on the day preceding the fateful one.

Experience had taught them that it was no use studying hard up to the last hour before an exam. One only went into the contest with a tired mind. It was better to forget all about the work for the time being, and so be as fresh as a daisy on the critical day.

But there was just one girl in the Fourth Form who yet had an unconfessed fear that it might be better, in her case at any rate, to make Thursday a last day of hard study.

She was wrong. If any girl stood in special need of a last bit of relaxation, before sitting for the exam., that girl was Dolly Delane. For hers was just a case of the coming exam. having already "got on her nerves."

Poor Dolly! There was a good excuse for the state of anxiety in which she was.

Only too well she knew that there could be no more Morcove School for her, after the current term, unless she won the Grace Pullen. She had not had the heart to tell any of her chums yet; she knew how upset they would be. Nor did she dare own to being desperately keen on winning the prize, lest it should be deduced that the money was going to mean a great deal to her.

Once let anything like that leak out amongst

her chums, and they were quite capable of letting their sympathies run away with them. It would be a temptation to some of them not to do their very best on the day, to know that a loved chum stood in urgent need of the money.

And so, although Dolly chummily fell in with the proposal about a picnic, she did so with many a secret misgiving. A whole day—and the last day before the exam.—to be spent entirely away from one's books!

It sounded all very well in theory. And yet—what a lot more information one could "get up" in readiness for the awful surprises of the exam-paper, if one spent that last day working just as hard as ever.

It was more than strange—it was almost fateful—that Dolly's study mate, Eva Merrick, was very nearly as anxious as Dolly herself about winning the exam., without saying so.

The difference between the one girl's motive and the other's, though!

Dolly, only thinking what a help it would be to dad and mum, the kindest, dearest parents a girl could have; and Eva, only thinking—of what?

Of the glory mostly, it is to be feared. For it was a great honour to be deemed the winner of the Grace Pullen. One was quite the heroine of the school for the rest of the term.

Nor was Eva Merrick unmindful of the fame it would bring one at home. She knew it would be in the local paper. Very likely they would ask for her photograph. Jolly nice to be able to take a copy of that paper away with her, when she went with her people to the seaside, and leave it about in the boarding-house!

For no better reasons than these was Eva wishing she could win the prize. Whether they were reasons strong enough to make her want to "swot," may be guessed. But she chanced to share a study with Dolly Delane, and she had thus had a special opportunity of observing how truly hard Dolly herself was studying. What else could one do then, but go at the work just as Dolly was doing? Both the girl for being so keen!

But they were remaining good friends all the time. Eva's hankering after the prize was not, at present, so great that it made her feel anything more than a good-humoured rivalry.

As for Dolly, there was one thing that she knew was to be valued more highly than all the prizes in the world, no matter how much one might need them. And that one thing was—friendship!

Getting Fit For It.

THERE were loud cheers in the Fourth Form dormitory first thing on Thursday morning.

It was a perfect day for a picnic.

Not for long, after breakfast, did Betty & Co. help to keep the school in a state of happy turmoil. Other girls might be rushing about, still having to consult one another and make up their minds as to how they would spend the whole day's holiday. As for the Study 12 coterie—they were soon ready to be off!

"Well, I hope you have a jolly day," Miss Redgrave said, pausing to turn back when she had walked with the chums as far as the school gates. "It was a good idea, girls."

"Yes, wather! Wefweshment for mind and body, bai Jove!"

"The refreshment for the body is there, right enough," was the youthful mistress's smiling comment on her scholars' bulging knapsacks and satchels. "Or have some of you stuck in a primer

or so, on the quiet, to be glimpsed at during the day?"

"She is a traitor who has," Polly said, with mock grimace. "All books barred—that's the unwritten law for to-day."

"Heah, heah!" Paula agreed heartily. "I know the temptation it has been, geals. I myself had to wrestle with the almost overpowering inclination to— What are you geals gwinning at? Haven't I been working tewwibly hard lately?"

"I haven't observed it," said Polly drily. "But then, why should you work? Of course, you are bound to win the Grace Pullen."

"Yes, wather! I mean—er—what did you say, Polly deah?"

"Oh, nothing. I was only 'pullen' your leg!"
Paula saw the pun at last. Long after the other



POLLY "TURNS THE TABLE!"

Crash! went the table. Polly had overdone the balancing trick for once! Instantaneously she was sitting on the floor of the study with inkpots, rulers and pens littered around her.

girls had stopped looking more or less horrified at Polly's bit of alleged wit, the duffer of the Form broke into giggles.

"Haw, haw, haw! Pullen my leg, bai Jove! How wick, how good! Geals, did you gwasp it?"

"Grasp your leg?" returned Helen blandly. "No, and we wouldn't do such a thing; it isn't done."

"Don't be hard on Paula," interceded Polly pathetically. "Any strange remarks she makes—they are due to overwork and brain fag."

"Er—wreally—"

"Oh, quick march, for goodness' sake!" Betty laughingly put a stop to all the nonsense. "Ta-ta, Miss Redgrave!"

They all had last parting cries for the popular mistress now that she was going back to the

schoolhouse, whilst they themselves went faring off along the sunny highway.

Everyone had favoured a ramble afoot, in preference to having out the bicycles. So there is no need to say that the high-spirited girls were soon finished with the road, and were swinging along with the springy turf of the moorland under their feet.

Every now and then, as some girl or other did a skittish jump to clear a bit of gorse, there was a tell-tale clink from inside a satchel. By-and-by the variety of drinks, some fizzy and some as sweet as syrup, would be a great feature of the al fresco banquet.

"Yes, wather," beamed Paula, when they had only gone a half-mile or so. "And I w propose that we do not pwolong our wamble too long, geals, before—er—in fact, before we wewesh ourselves."

"Paula wants lunch at once!" Polly promptly announced.

"Ooo, yes; queck, queck!" was Naomer's immediate cry, and she slewed her satchel round and began to unstrap it. "I so hungry!"

"At half-past nine!" laughed Madge. "Oh, I say!"

"No," said Paula. "Once again I have been miswepresented. I was merely w proposing that we should—er—just moisten our lips—what? Just a dwop or so, geals, don't you know. So weweshing, so wigoating, yes, wather!"

"Greedy!" said Polly, as she joined in the general unstrapping of the haversacks and satchels. "Still, just a taste, perhaps!" as she brought forth a stone bottle of ginger-beer.

"Yes, wather!" came delightedly from Paula, jerking free the second strap of her satchel. "Geals, don't twouble. I have enough here to go all wound the party, bai Jove. It gives me much pleasure—"

But at this moment something began to give Paula the very reverse of pleasure.

As she gaily turned back the flap of her satchel her expression changed to one of mingled amazement and horror.

"Healp!"

"What's the matter now?" asked Polly, letting off the cork of her ginger-beer with a terrific pop.

"My gwacious! Howwows!" gasped Paula, gazing down into the satchel. "I've bwrought the wong satchel!"

"The sort of thing you would do," said Polly, putting a thumb over the fizzing bottle. "Whoa, steady! Ha, ha, ha, sorry, Paula!"

"Sowwy, bai Jove! You've dwenched me!" howled that long-suffering one, skipping back to dodge the hissing foam. "Dwop it!"

"Not I!" And Polly affectionately took the bottle to her lips. "Ooo, scrumptious! The shaking up has imparted a special fizziness!"

Meantime, poor Paula was returning her horrified gaze to her satchel.

"Books!" she moaned. "Cwammed with books, not things to eat and dwink, bai Jove! Geals, geals, heah's a twagedy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And yet you laugh! Look what I've bwrought away by mistake! Look what I've got to dwag about with me all day!"

"Now you really will win the Pullen prize," chuckled Betty. "The only girl amongst us who can put in a bit more study before the exam. comes off. But how on earth did you manage to do that, Paula dear?"

Dismally poor Paula began an explanation.

Some time back she had made a clearance of a number of old primers and so on, by packing them away in a satchel. This morning, like the rest of the girls, she had delightedly packed a satchel with food and drink for the picnic. And then—

"You had a look at yourself in the glass," chuckled Polly.

"Yes, wather! That is to say—"

"Two looks—in fact, half a dozen; and in the end you were all behind, and snatched up the wong satchel?"

"I wegwet to say," Paula sighed sadly, "your theowry is appwoximately cowwect, Polly. Ah, dear, a whole bagful of books, bai Jove, to be dwagged around!"

But now her pretty face suddenly lit up.

"Bai Jove, geals, to-morrow is the Gwace Pullen exam!"

"You don't say?" exclaimed Tess.

"Heah is a good oppwunity—a ware chance, geals—for any of you who want to fweshen up your minds!"

"Nothing doing!" Polly said flatly.

"Geals, I merely wish to wemark, any of you who would like to avail yourselves of a—yes, wather—a weally wiah source of knowledge—what? You can have the lot, bai Jove! A load off my mind!"

"A load off your shoulders—no, thanks!" declined Helen Craig. "But cheer up. You shan't starve, Paula, nor yet go parched!"

"Certainly not!" agreed Polly.

And she passed the ginger-beer.

After that the march was resumed, and now the joke was to implore Paula to detail what she had brought with her for lunch.

"You might tell us!" coaxed Polly. "It's something out of the ordinary, we know. We girls have only got fresh-cut sandwiches and nice juicy fruit patties. You've gone in for an elaborate lunch, of course."

"Polly deah, pway—"

"Fricasse of maths—delish!" said Eva Merrick, smacking her lips at the imagined repast. "Latin grammar au gratin!"

"And then those lovely tasty things—what do they call them?" exclaimed Trixie Hope. "Sort of rissole thing?"

"You must mean grilled history on toast," said Polly. "Got any of those, Paula darling?"

"She has plenty of something, that's certain. What a heavy satchel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dwop it!"

"Now I should have thought you would be the one to do that," remarked Polly, causing another burst of merriment which grew to yells of laughter when Paula did "dwop it."

Suddenly unlooping the strap from her shoulders, Paula tragically dropped the unwanted load of books into the midst of a gorse bush and marched on. It was left to Dolly Delane—ever the willing horse—to retrieve the abandoned load and determine to fag it along, because "it seemed such a shame," as she said.

In a minute Paula was amiably inquiring if she could "weliave" Dolly of the self-imposed burden, just as if it was conferring a favour to offer to do so! In the end the wretched load was hauled along by different girls in turn, and perhaps it was that unwanted bit of luggage which decided them to choose an early hour for lunch.

They did not do so badly by the choice made. Many a mile farther might they have rambled,

and come upon no better spot for a picnic than the moorland quarry whose rocky walls were soon re-echoing with the excitable cries of Naomer.

It was to be no snatched meal, this eleven-thirty lunch amidst such romantic surroundings.

The girls had brought a spotless cloth with them, and when this had been spread upon the ground, it was a delightful task to set out plates and cutlery, along with all eatables.

And now it could be seen what a choice of liquid refreshment there was. The bottles alone were all sizes and shapes. Lemonade might be the great stand-by, but Betty & Co. liked a taste of such delectable concoctions as cold clove-water, red-currant wine, ginger syrup, and so on—all "home made." That is to say, they were study brewed!

Close in under the steep wall of the quarry the girls laid their cloth, for it was a veritable sun-trap just there. Paula had seldom looked so blissfully content as she did at present, having ensconced herself in a comfortable seat between two great-boulders, which latter served as arm-rests.

"Well, are we ready?" Polly burst out gaily at last, standing back to survey the spread. "Sound the trumpet, then; bang the gong, for I tell you I'm famished!"

With Naomer quite the sprightliest of them all, they eagerly settled themselves around the "spread," except that Dolly Delane did not stir from where she was conning a book filched from Paula's unlucky satchel.

"Dolly, wake up! Dinner!"

"Yes, wather; haw, haw, haw! A wegular wepast, bai Jove!"

There was rather a guilty look on Dolly's face as she closed the schoolbook and let it drop. No one twitted her about breaking the day's unwritten law; all the same, she felt rather shame-faced.

It happened to be rather a useful primer that she had picked out of the satchel a minute ago, and—oh, dear, was there too much one could cram up, in readiness for to-morrow!

To-morrow! And unless she, out of all the girls in the school, pulled off that valuable prize, it must be good-bye to Morcove for her at the end of term. If only, then—oh, if only she could win it!

She had a right to say that to herself, Dolly felt, rather selfish though it sounded. For, indeed, there could be no other scholar in all Morcove who needed the prize more than the girl whose schooldays were numbered!

Dolly's "Bit of Luck"!

"**G**EALS, geals, now that we have weached the end of our weally wipping wepast—" "Silence, please! Paula is going to make a speech!"

"Haw, haw, haw! No, Polly deah—no, geals, I merely wise," simpered Paula, getting herself into a kneeling posture round the cloth, "to wpose a toast."

"Hear, hear! Hip, hip—"

"Geals, heah's to the geal who wins the Gwace Pullen—what? With a thwee times thwee, bai Jove!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!" cheered the merry picnickers heartily. "Hooray, hurrah! The girl who wins the Grace Pullen!"

"And may it be a girl who really needs it!" put in Betty earnestly.

"May it be the best girl, anyhow!" added Dolly Delane.

"Yes, wather! Howeverah—"

"That almost goes without saying, doesn't it, Dolly?" smiled Eva Merrick. "Who can imagine any girl getting the prize who didn't deserve it!"

"My word, I'd like to see a thing like that happen—at Morcove!" laughed Polly. "Paula dear, do eat up this last salmon sandwich!"

"Er—thanks, thanks, but not after fwait-tart—what? I—er—I am being wather careful," Paula excused herself amiably, "on account of to-morrow being the great day. Yes, wather!"

"Then I will," said Polly, and she did!

"You'll be dreaming to-night, Polly," warned Madge.

"Dreaming of the prize-giving, yes," nodded the madcap, steadily working through the salmon sandwich. "Already I hear the voice of Miss Somerfield announcing: 'Members of Morcove School, I now have great pleasure in presenting the Grace Pullen Prize that was won by Polly Linton!'"

"Haw, haw, haw! If you aren't a wegular wepaw, Polly," chuckled Paula. "As a mattah of fact, I suppose dweams do come true sometimes, geals? I had a dweam last night, yes, wather; I dweamed that I won the Gwace Pullen!"

"Indeed!" said Helen drily, whilst the others laughed. "And what did you do with the prize, Paula?"

"Bought some nice new fwocks, I wather fancy. What else would one do with a cash pwize, bai Jove?"

"You don't need the money, that's certain," said Tess. "Which of us does, come to that?"

"None of us do—does—which is it?" grinned Polly, mixing herself some sherbert. "Gracious, I do hope that grammar doesn't get set for a subject! Well, here's to to-morrow, and may the best girl win, as I think a previous speaker remarked? And now to clear away!"

Dolly Delane roused to life when this was said. She had been having another anxious train of thought that was unsuspected by the other girls. To think that Paula, if she won the prize, could spend it all on frocks! And the others—they were all freely admitting that to any of them the prize would be a windfall, to be more or less lavishly spent. None of them would fail to give a share of it to this good cause or that. But there it was; winning the prize was no real vital necessity to any of them apparently, whilst to her it would be oh, such a blessing!

She jumped up along with her chums, always the first to make herself useful. And it was just like Dolly to take on the job of getting all waste paper and empty bottles packed together, to be dumped somewhere safely out of sight, whilst most of her chums had the pleasanter task of folding away the cloth and packing up the utensils.

In the end, Dolly stepped apart with a good load of rubbish, seeking a spot where to dump it. It was a golden rule with Betty & Co. that no litter must ever be left about after a picnic. So Dolly sought about for some little hollow in the floor of the great quarry, into which the stuff could be thrown.

There was just the right sort of place not far from where the girls had been sitting. It was a spot where brambles had started to grow over a quarried pit. Dolly approached it warily, and took a last step before casting her armful of rubbish into the hole.

As she did so she gave a sharp little cry. Round



MISFORTUNE FOR DOLLY. The girls looked around as Dolly gave a cry. The girl was falling sideways, with one foot caught in an unsuspected pitfall which had been hidden by the brambles. "Dolly has hurt herself!" gasped Betty.

flushed her alarmed chums at the sound, to see her losing her balance and falling sideways, with one foot plunged down into some unsuspected pitfall, hidden by brambles.

"Dolly! Oh, she has hurt herself!" gasped Betty and several others, and they rushed to her aid. "Dolly dear—"

"My gwacious—"

"No, it's all right—at least, wait a bit." Dolly panted, at the same time raising a rueful smile as she began to extricate herself. "Yes, I'm all right now."

"All wight, bai Jove, when you are simply squirming with pain, Dolly dear!"

"Oh, I'm not!" was the hapless girl's brave disclaimer, and she laughed jerkily. "I—I've only jarred my left elbow, that's all. Lucky, my foot didn't get hurt when it shot down like that through the brambles."

"But that elbow, Dolly—oh, are you sure—"

"Yes, Dolly; don't make light of it, if—"

"My gwacious, if she has spwained it, geals!"

"No, no, you girls mustn't be so alarmed," she pleaded, giving the same brave smile again, as she rubbed the elbow and worked it about. "It—it only smarts a bit."

"Let's look," insisted Betty gravely.

So the sleeve was furled back, and all eyes anxiously inspected the damaged elbow. It was slightly grazed, and was already turning blue.

"You see, it's nothing, girls!"

"Dolly, it is nothing to make light of, if that's what you mean," said Betty. "With the exam. coming off to-morrow."

At that, Dolly turned white to the lips. The exam! Good gracious, if this should prevent her from sitting for the Grace Pullen contest!

Madge suddenly put herself close to the victim

of the mishap, for her sudden deathly pallor looked like a sign of faintness.

"She had better get back to the school and have that elbow dressed," said Polly, and there were many murmurs of emphatic agreement.

"Yes, wather, Dolly! Don't wun any wisks, bai Jove!"

"Ooo, yes, queek, queek, you go back to ze school," Naomer urged. "I not like to sink of you in pain."

"It's not—not so painful now, girls—"

"Still, dear, do go back. And one of us will go with you," said Betty. "Poor old Doll! What a shame—"

"Weally, geals, it's wotten luck! Howevah, cheer up, Dolly. It's the left elbow, and you don't wite with that!"

Dolly was cheering up, right enough. She felt that unless she kept smiling she would suddenly be in tears.

These compassionate chums of hers—they were not to know what a dire catastrophe this was going to prove, if it resulted in her failing to sit for the exam. But she herself knew only too well, and her state of mind was panicky.

The injured elbow was quite clean after the mishap, and so all her chums had to do, or could do, was to bind it up very tenderly, and then make a sling for that arm out of several handkerchiefs knotted together.

This done, she was ready and willing to set off back to the school, although she was all against anyone accompanying her.

"It isn't fair to spoil—"

"Dolly, either one of us goes with you, or we all go," Betty said flatly, and there was a chorus of assent. "I think I ought to be the one—"

"No, let me," offered Eva Merrick. "I'm Dolly's study mate. We've been such good chums lately, haven't we, Dolly?"

"Yes, Eva! Oh, yes! But—"

"Very well, then, let Eva go with you," Betty assented.

She was only too glad that Eva should have a chance of doing the proper thing by her study-mate. Eva had not always been one of the best of girls, and it was good to see her coming on like this.

So it was settled, and in a few moments the two girls were off, many a heartening cry from Betty and the rest following Dolly as she hurried away in company with Eva.

Temptation Comes.

AN almost deserted schoolhouse confronted the two girls when at last their hasty walk was over. Nobody seemed to have been able to resist the inducement to spend the glorious "day off" out of doors. Even the few scholars who had perhaps dined at the school must have been quick about it, immediately departing for the open air.

"You'll show that arm to matron, of course," Eva said, as she and Dolly passed indoors. "I do hope it will be all right to-morrow. It ought to be if you rest it."

"I hope so, too!" poor Dolly was fain to own.

"As for me, I had better find Miss Redgrave and let her know," Eva chatted on chummily. "Then she'll come and see you, Dolly."

"Thanks, Eva. You are good to have abandoned the picnic on my account. Perhaps it would be just as well to tell Miss Redgrave."

Accordingly, whilst Dolly departed in quest of matron, who was certain to be about the place, Eva scampered away to get a word with the Forn

mistress. That young lady's study proved to be deserted, however, and it became Eva's necessity to try the headmistress's own private room. On "off" days of this sort, Miss Somerfield and her colleagues sometimes assembled in the former's private quarters for a leisurely chat.

A minute more, and Eva was in that side passage on the ground floor which served Miss Somerfield's private room. She tapped, and was astonished not to receive any response whatever.

Was the very headmistress, then, away from the school just at present? Perhaps she had proposed a run in the car with some of her colleagues, Miss Redgrave included?

Eva was taking no liberty in opening the door and walking in. Her idea was to see if there were signs of Miss Somerfield's having gone out for any length of time. If she was just taking an after-lunch saunter round the grounds, her desk would bear witness to this. The headmistress always drew down the roll-top cover of her large desk when intending to be absent for long. That prevented the enormous litter of papers dealing with current affairs from getting disturbed.

The desk was open now, and that satisfied Eva. She was certain that any minute might see the headmistress come in, very likely by way of the room's French windows, for one of the glass doors was standing wide to the sunshine and the summer breeze.

"I had better not wait here, though," the girl reflected, after a little hesitation. "Perhaps I ought to go out by this window and try to find Miss Somerfield. She always likes to know at once, when—"

And there Eva's calm musings abruptly ended. She was suddenly giving an excited stare at certain batches of printed leaflets set out in small bundles on the desk.

Violently her heart pounded. She wrenched her gaze from the leaflets, but it was magnetised back to them.

The printed question papers, for the Grace Pullen exam.!

That was what they were—she had seen it at the first glance. The words "Grace Pullen" formed part of the heading, in Gothic type.

Vividly she realised how she was being tempted all in a flash like this. Let her move a couple of steps closer, and she could read the very questions which no scholar's eyes were to be allowed to see until the examination started!

Again she tore her eyes away, and again they returned to the leaflets.

Five or six different batches of printed sheets there were, each batch tied about with a band of silk. Eva moved at least one step forward, and saw that there was a different batch for each Form in the school.

Another step closer she moved, and then she was looking at the top leaflet in that batch which would be assigned to the Fourth Form.

It was all over with Eva then. Before she fully appreciated the enormity of the offence, she was excitedly scanning the questions.

Hark, though, was that a step? Someone coming?

No!

Agasp with fear, she still stood there, eagerly devouring the very questions that would confront her in the examination hall to-morrow. "Translate the following passage from—"

Goodness, what a difficult passage it was! She would never be able to do that, it was certain! She was such a duffer at French! But the paper gave the author, and the book—one of which there were dozens of copies in the school, for it

was rightly deemed to be the best bit of French literature in existence. If she could memorise the paragraph now, she could hunt it up in the book, and then—

But now a still more reckless idea flashed upon her.

The batch of leaflets had been sent down from London unnumbered, and it held far more question papers than the Form would require. Supposing then—supposing she quickly abstracted one? Would it ever be missed?

Had they been counted here at the school? If not—

Hark again! No; it was still all right! That had only been the breeze stirring the roses outside the French windows. She was safe—safe! Not a soul had seen her come in, and not a soul need ever know that she had been here!

Next instant, Eva had succumbed to the fresh temptation.

Agitatedly she bent forward and drew out one of the Fourth Form question papers from the batch. Guiltily watching first this door and then that door, she got the sheet away, left the remainder in as neat a batch as ever, and then rushed silently from the room, stuffing the purloined paper in her frock pocket.

No one to see her as she crept away! So, then, even if the purloined paper was ever missed, there could be no taxing her with the deed.

All the same, she suddenly turned sick with shame and dismay at what she had done.

Cheating!



HAD THE BEST GIRL WON?

"You—you must be feeling awful about having lost the examination," Eva said huskily. "You—you should have won." "The best girl has won, Eva," said Dolly. "I am a little disappointed, but what have I to grumble about?"

By her sudden rash and weak action, she had obtained the means of certainly winning the Grace Pullen Prize. She could go into the hall to-morrow, simply primed with answers to questions that would only then be giving other entrants the usual horrifying surprise.

The next Eva knew, she was upstairs in the study that she shared with Dolly Delane. That girl had not come in, and Eva was only too thankful for the solitude.

Cheating!

"Oh, I won't be so mean, so hateful as to do it," she almost wept to herself. "I can't!"

But now she realised that the thing was as good as done. It could only be undone by her going to Miss Somerfield and confessing, with the result that an entirely new set of questions would have to be set by the headmistress herself.

Better that than to go on with the fraud—for a fraud it would be. And yet—and yet—

The door opened, and Dolly came in.

"Hallo, Eva, did you find Miss Redgrave, then?"

"No, I couldn't. I looked in her room—"

"It's just as well she hasn't been bothered. Matron says my arm ought to be quite all right to-morrow if I keep it resting and remain quiet all day."

"That's good, Dolly! What—what shall you do with yourself, then?"

"Why," said Dolly, with rather a half-ashamed smile, "I think I shall sit here and read up some of the subjects that—"

She paused.

"No, I won't!" was her sudden firm decision. "Somehow it doesn't seem fair! I mean, we girls all agreed to keep off preparation work for the exam., to-day, and so I hardly like to start in now, whilst the others are making holiday."

"Nonsense, Dolly—"

"That's how I feel about it, anyhow, Eva. It would seem like—well, almost like cheating!"

Eva had nothing further to say after that word had come from her study mate. She went out, burning inwardly with shame.

Unless She Wins.

"HOW do you feel this morning, Dolly darling? How is the arm now?"

"Oh, splendid, thanks—can hardly feel it, girls," was Dolly's bright, smiling answer, as she opened her eyes to see half a dozen of her chums crowding around her bed in the Fourth Form dormitory.

"You think you'll be able to sit for the exam., dear?"

"Oh, yes, Betty! I'm not going to drop out for a thing like this."

"Then I think you ought to be the one to win the prize!" was Polly's hearty comment on Dolly's plucky remark. "Hooray! 'At last the great day dawned!'"

"Yes, wather," came dreamily from a certain girl who was only now waking up, and waking very slowly, too. "Gwand morning for our picnic, geals, what?"

"Picnic! Ha, ha, ha! Wake up, duffer!" chuckled Polly, starting to belabour Paula with a pillow. "Yesterday was the picnic. To-day is the exam.!"

"Oh, cwumbs! Forgive the expvession, Polly deah, and do—dwp it with the pillow! Dwp it, I tell you! You'll thwove me into a state of confusion, and I weally must pweserve a clear bwain to-day. Yes, wather. The Gwace Pullen, bai Jove!"

"I think Dolly should have had her brekker in bed," said Madge, watching that girl give a vince as she started to dress. "Poor old Doll! It was a shame."

"She won't be poor old Doll when she wins the prize, anyhow, will you, Dolly?" cried Polly, coming across to give her a kiss. "Here, let me give you a hand, dear!"

Except for that very gentle helping of Dolly to make her morning toilette, Betty & Co. were beginning the fateful day almost as boisterously as they had begun yesterday's day off from work.

Naomer was well in evidence, along with Polly, as a merciless tormentor of their beloved Paula. The very fact that Paula wanted to look particularly elegant this morning was sufficient to warrant the teasers leading her a terrible life!

"Ah, dear!" Paula bemoaned her lot on the way down to breakfast. "I have a stwong suspicion, geals, there is a conspiwacy amongst you to send me into the hall feeling a week and a wuin. You don't want me to win the pwize. All wight, you'll get no study tweek fwom me when I do win it!"

"Oh, come!" chuckled Polly. "You know very well you are in grand form! So are we all, after yesterday, except poor Doll—"

"I'm really all right I tell you," persisted yesterday's victim, and there was that in her looks and tone which carried conviction.

She still had the arm in a sling, and when she went before matron and Miss Redgrave about it, after breakfast, they advised her to let it remain so. Of course, it was going to tell upon her handwriting; but fair allowance would be made for the disability. The great thing was that she had had a good night, and felt, as she said, "just splendid!"

But she was not the only one who, feeling "just splendid" round about nine o'clock, began to feel quite otherwise during the last hour before the exam.

Up to ten-fifteen the scholars were free to do as they pleased, and whether they went out to the games field, or up to their studies, they were all alike in being in a state of acute suspense.

"Gwacious, I can't manage my hair pwoperly this morning," lamented Paula, despairingly pocketing her vanity glass at last.

"And I can't read what I am looking at," sighed Polly, closing a primer. "If you asked me what's twice two, I couldn't answer!"

Madge and Tess drifted in, to be followed by Helen and Trixie.

"Well, how does everybody feel?" grinned Tess. "They say it's going to be a stiff paper."

"Thanks for telling me," groaned Paula, subsiding into the armchair. "Geals, I'm wather indisposed. I wondah if I might be exc—"

"No you don't," said Polly grimly. "You've got to go through with it, like the rest of us! Cheer up! We—"

"Listen! The bell—"

"Ow, hearp!" shuddered Paula, as the assembly bell began to din through the great schoolhouse. "Polly deah—Betty! Wait for me! I—weally—"

But they were off, and it was for Paula to follow them, full of misgivings, although she recovered sufficiently at the foot of the stairs to filch out the vanity glass again!

A few minutes later, and quietly the various Forms were filing into the great hall, where all was as solemn as a church.

Quickly the last rustle of frocks gave place to silence, and now the Form mistresses themselves came round with the papers. One for each girl

to start devouring with her anxious eyes, to see what the dreaded questions were like!

"There must be no talking," Miss Somerfield herself formally announced, looking so altogether different from the genial headmistress of Morcove as she sat at her desk on the hall's dais. "You may begin!"

Then it could be seen, by those who stood silently watching, who the girls were who were going to dash at an easy question first, and who were the ones unable to let go of some awful problem that was spellbinding.

Here a scholar instantly seized a pen and bent to her first spell of work; there a girl sat frozen, as it were, by the mere sight of the printed leaflet. A few sighs were heard, emanating from girls who felt bowled out by every item in the set!

But at last the scratch-scratch of nibs was the prevailing sound, with nearly every pretty head in the great-hall bent low over the desk.

Miss Redgrave and her colleagues exchanged glances now and then, but they never spoke. Fearing to distract the girls, they stood sentinel-like in various parts of the hall.

Once only Miss Redgrave felt entitled to make an exception to the rule that no entrant must be spoken to. She noiselessly stepped to where Dolly Delane was forging along, with Eva Merrick on her left.

"Can you manage all right, Dolly dear?" the youthful mistress asked softly. "The arm—"

"Yes, thank you," was the subdued answer.

Dolly knew better than to repay that compassionate inquiry by brooking into a lot of talk.

As a matter of fact, the damaged elbow was throbbing rather painfully now. The nervous strain seemed to be the cause. But Dolly's answer had been quite truthful; she was managing all right, and, oh, the blessing it was to feel how well one had got on!

Miss Redgrave stepped away quietly, giving a glance to Eva as she did so. That girl seemed to have got on very rapidly; she must be finding the paper an easy one to tackle. Yet how pale and shaky she looked!

Strange how a girl could make such headway, when she seemed to be all in pieces!

"Ohé, I so mis'ble!" Naomer complained aloud, all at once. And then she remembered where she was, and dived her glossy, dark head low again. A titter went up, relieving the tension, and some girls said afterwards that they got on all the better after that. Polly was one!

At long last—but how soon it seemed to the girls—there came the impressive warning from Miss Somerfield:

"You have five minutes more!"

Only five minutes!

Good gracious, nearly every girl in the hall was breathing to herself, and there were how many more questions to answer! Even where there was only one, it was the worst of the lot!

Then:

"Pens down, please! Arms folded, girls! Will the Form mistresses collect the papers, please?"

It was done, amidst a silence hardly less tense than that which had endured for the best part of two hours. And then—what a sudden change from deepest gravity to the greatest levity, Miss Somerfield becoming quite human again as she gave the smiling:

"Dismiss!"

Away flocked the girls, the youngest of them jostling their seniors in the rush to be first out-of-doors, where one could breathe freely at last.

"Yes, wather, my gwacious," palpitated Paula, as she came with a sort of giddy step to where Betty and Polly and others had already formed into a chattering group. "Pwostwate, geals! Don't speak, pway! It will take me a month to wecover frowm this!"

Inevitably the talk was all of the question paper, the girls comparing experiences. Polly could not understand how any girl had been able to answer the lot. Naomer chucklingly owned that she hadn't answered one!

"That short essay we had to write on 'Fair-play'—how did you get on with that, Paula?" asked Betty. "There seemed no time!"

"Dweadful, dweadful!" groaned Paula. "How-eh, I began by saying that fairplay is being a bwick, what? And then—"

"Then what?"

"Weal, geals, I just let it go at that, what? Just wuled two lines undah it, bai Jove, and pwoceeded with the next!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After all, you needn't laugh!" Paula protested then. "In some wespects, I wather fancy I made a vewy cweditable appeawance. Yes, wather!"

"Well, I'm amongst the also rans—just as well to know it," Polly said blithely. "Shan't be buying any War Loan this year. Hallo, Doll! How did you get on?"

"Phew, don't ask me!" laughed Dolly. "Pretty awful, wasn't it? I just had time to finish—"

"What! I say, here is a girl who actually tackled the lot! Bravo, Doll!" Polly complimented yesterday's victim. "In spite of the elbow, too!"

"Well, it's over now," Betty remarked happily, "and the best girl will win, as she was bound to do. It won't be me, I know. Question No. 7 floored me!"

"Did it? I found No. 7 quite easy," Dolly exclaimed. "But have you seen Eva Merrick? I want to know how she got on."

Eva did not turn up whilst the girls were drifting about in the open air, still discussing the recent ordeal. So at last Dolly ran indoors and up to the studies. She was feeling rather concerned about Eva, for that girl had looked so upset when the exam. came to an end.

Barely two minutes after this, when Betty and the rest were going by a certain Fourth Form study, they were startled by the sound of a girl's wild sobbing.

Betty quickly entered that study, and the others crowded in after her, with alarmed looks. Dolly and Eva were there, and the latter was weeping hysterically, with her hands up to her eyes.

"She's feeling the strain," Dolly murmured sadly. "It has been a bit too much for her. Never mind, Eva; you'll feel better presently."

The others had not the least doubt that Dolly was right about the cause. They had known the thing happen after other exams. A girl re-acted from the strain, and became quite hysterical, as Eva was now.

"Bai Jove, this is distressing!" sighed Paula. "But cheer up, Eva, what? Just think how wiping it will be if you have won the pwize!"

"Don't—don't talk to me about the prize!" the unstrung girl scared them all by crying out wildly, whilst she sprang up from her chair. "I don't want the prize! I hate—I mean, I wish I had never— Oh, leave me alone! Leave me to myself!"

And, gaped at by her bewildered schoolfellows,

she rushed across to the door, and was gone, still crying wildly.

Waiting for the Verdict.

DOLLY DELANE herself did not get through the rest of that fateful day without suffering a bit of a bad relapse.

It helped her to explain away the other girl's sudden hysteria all the better, when she herself seemed to give out all at once and to have upsetting emotions.

From the crest of a great wave of hopefulness she went down into troubled waters again. All the self-confidence with which she had come away from the examination hall—it seemed like so much rash self-conceit now.

Had she really done so well after all? How could she be so confident of winning? There must be plenty of other girls in the school who had done just as well and better. No, no; it was madness to look upon the prize as being as good as hers. The utmost she must allow herself to say was that she had at least done her best.

That was not to be gainsaid. Oh, when she remembered some of those brain-racking minutes, with the question paper before her eyes! And then to think that the desperate efforts were to prove all for nothing, perhaps! No fifty-pound cheque for her after all, in the end, and no more Morcov School after this term!

That evening, like a good many other girls, she felt she must write home to give an account of the exam. But she could not do it, and it was then that poor Dolly wept at last, after bearing up bravely ever since midday. Luckily, she was alone at the time. Eva, still very moody, was keeping away from the study this evening.

The tears simply had to flow like this, now that Dolly was trying to write to the loved ones at home who were in such straits nowadays. If only—oh, if only she could have the joy of telling them, in a week or so's time, that she had earned next term's fees, by winning the Grace Pullen!

It had almost broken their hearts to have to tell her that this term must be her last, unless affairs mended. And matters at home at the farm had not improved—far from it. The latest was that foot and mouth disease had suddenly made havoc of her dad's cattle.

Sunday evening found her able to write home at last, and even able to write quite cheerfully. Perhaps she was no different from other girls who were in suspense about the result, in starting to feel tremendously sanguine again.

The thought had crept back into her brain, and was lodging there; she *might* be the fortunate one, envied of all! She had tried so hard, and, really, some of her answers must have been good; it was not conceit to think so. Well, well, one must hope on! Not long now, thank goodness!

In other years, the authorities in London had been very good in notifying the result within a week of the exam. So, Morcov School now yearned for next Friday, because then the winner's name might go up on the notice-board. But Friday morning came, and there was no news. All day the school waited in a fever of suspense that met with no alleviation.

Saturday—still waiting!

Sunday, of course, could not possibly bring the result. There was no delivery of letters. Only an evening collection, with one of Dolly's amongst all the letters home that the girls had penned.

"Well, mother darling," she wrote that evening, "I should think we'd know in the morning. Oh, how sorry I shall be, for your dear sakes, if I

haven't won! But I feel awfully excited and hopeful this evening, somehow. I feel as if I must be the winner, if only because I needed the prize so much!"

There were some early risers next morning!

Even Paula Creel was up and dressed before first bell.

The postman, when he came to the porch with his first delivery, had half the school surging around. No one felt any shame in trying to "spot" a likely looking letter, addressed to the headmistress, amongst the batch of missives.

"Goodness, I don't—no, I don't believe it has come even now!" fumed Polly.

"Dweadful, dweadful!" groaned Paula. "What can a girl do? If I have won, I want to know! I want to wash out and order a grand spread, to celebrate!"

"It isn't," said Madge, "that I have the least expectation of being the winner myself. But I would like to know just who has won!"

"And if it is one of the Fourth—hooray!" rejoined Betty. "That's what we want to see; the prize coming to our Form, anyhow!"

They went into class in anything but a mood for work, and it was Polly who caused a great sensation by suddenly passing word round that she had seen a telegraph-boy come up the drive. Telegrams were frequent at the school; still, it might be—

And it was!

All in a moment the class-room door flew open, and Miss Somerfield herself came in with an elated step. She beamed with delight, waving the "flimsy" that she had opened but a minute ago.

"Our Form!" Betty whispered excitedly. "It must be!"

"Well, girls, I can see you have guessed what I have to say!" was Miss Somerfield's laughing comment on the sudden stir of excitement. "It is my very great pleasure to inform you that the Grace Pullen Prize has been won by a Fourth Form scholar."

"Hip, hip!" Polly jumped up to shout, waving her hands. "Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hooray! But the name, Miss Somerfield—the name!" clamoured the Form. "Who is the girl?"

"The girl is Eva Merrick!"

"Hurrah! Bravo, Eva—bravo! Well done, Eva Merrick!"

"Yes, wather! Haw, haw, haw! Eva, I congratulate you! See you later, Eva, what? Geals, geals—"

"Sh! Silence for a moment!" entreated Miss Redgrave, herself all smiles of pride and joy. "Your headmistress is still speaking."

"I only wish to add, girls, that another Fourth Form scholar is mentioned as having run Eva very close. Dolly Delane—ah, there you are! From the wording of the telegram, Dolly, I gather that you very nearly tied with Eva. Better luck next time, Dolly!"

"Yes, wather, haw, haw, haw! Bwavo, Dolly!"

"Cheer up, Doll! Better luck next time!"

But ah, they did not know that there could be no "next time" for her, now. The one chance—that was what she had had. And she had—lost!

"The Form may have the rest of the day off," wound up Miss Somerfield, still looking tremendously gratified. "And now, before I go to announce the result in other class-rooms, I must formally congratulate Eva Merrick on her very creditable success."

"Come forward, Eva," enjoined Miss Redgrave

softly. "Your headmistress— But what is the matter? Catch her, someone; she is fainting!"

Dolly caught her as she toppled sideways, giving a swooning sigh.

Dolly's were the pitying arms that went about the guilty girl who had beaten her—by cheating!

The Cheat and the Cheated.

HERS, the coveted prize, and with it all the fame and glory that the great achievement meant! But—she had won by cheating!

And now—ah, what a conscience-stricken state of mind was hers!

At this moment when she was alone in her study, nearly an hour after going to pieces like that in front of the whole Form, she felt well-nigh crazy with the false position into which her own weakness and folly had drawn her.

How could she—how dared she ever be silent about the wretched deed that was her guilty secret at present!

fully, when it was she who should have been acclaimed the winner!

"No, I can't! Oh, why did I ever fall to the temptation?" was Eva's moaning murmur to herself. "I shall have to confess now. I must—I must, even though it may mean expulsion!"

Hark! There they were, two or three of the girls, already pounding upstairs. Now, then, to tell them at once—at once! For every word they would have to say was going to be so much coals of fire upon her guilty head!

"Well, Eva, feel all right now?" cried Betty gaily, as she and a few chums came surging into the room. "Gracious, you do look bad still! What a funny girl, to be so knocked over by success!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Geals, if I had won the great pwize, bai Jove, I'd be cwazy with delight—what! Eva, we have been awwanging something— Betty will tell you!"



GOOD NEWS FOR THE FOURTH! "Girls!" announced Miss Somerfield above the stir of the excitement. "It is my very great pleasure to inform you that the Grace Pullen Prize has been won by a Fourth Form scholar!" Instantly a cheer broke out. "Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Sheer cheating had put her in possession of the prize that was of such great magnitude, a money prize that she did not really want from the money point of view, whilst there may have been others competing who were secretly in such need!

Sheer cheating, and it was her own study-mate, by a fateful chance, who was the unsuspecting victim! Dolly should have had the prize. Dolly's would have been the winning paper, but for the one that had been achieved by downright fraud!

Livid with dismay, trembling all over, the wretched culprit gave a moaning sigh as she got up from her chair and paced about the room.

In a few minutes the girls would be rushing up to her. They were at dinner now, and were relying upon her being quite herself again, and full of legitimate pride, by the time they came romping in to renew their congratulations.

But was she to let them load her with their compliments, their sporting delight in the way she had beaten the lot of them? Dolly, above all, taking her own defeat so bravely and so cheer-

"It's this, Eva," said the Form captain heartily. "In honour of your great win, and the credit it brings to the Form, we want to have a special Form tea!"

"Yes, wather! We are pwoud of you, Eva—pwoud!"

"Details later!" went on Betty, laughing. "We only want to know. You will come, won't you?"

"And be the guest of the Form?" chimed in Polly. "Speeches—"

"Yes, wather! I mean to pwepare a speech that will make histowy!" beamed Paula. "I may not be able to win pwizes, but I can talk—what! Yes, wather!"

"You'll come, Eva?" several of them clamoured, for really she still looked so agitated that they were afraid she was going to refuse, out of pure dread of being fussed over.

If they had only known! If they had but known that the very intention of paying her such a great honour was proving a fresh temptation to the girl! For it was so.

Just as she had yielded to the first temptation, simply because her heart was set upon revelling in the glory of being the prize-winner, so she was going down again before this talk of holding an "official" tea in her honour.

It was just the sort of thing after which she had always hankered. It was only a fraction of all the fuss that would be made of her, at school and at home, if she kept silent.

"Of course, you'll let us do it, won't you, Eva? Just say, and then we'll be off to arrange details!"

"Yes, wather! I shall want to pwepare my gweat speech!"

"Eva, yes or no, dear?" they clamoured again. "N-yes!" she said. "I— All right, yes!"

"Hurrah! Come along, then!" cried Polly riotously. "Hallo, Doll! I say, you come along with us to Study 12, because—"

"We are sort of going into committee on ways and means," laughed Betty, "about the Form tea in honour of Eva's triumph!"

"I'd love to come, but may I make it five minutes from now?" Dolly answered; her looks and tone proving how finely she had borne up under the great disappointment of having just missed the prize. "I ought to get off a telegram to the people at home."

"All right, dear," Betty delayed a moment to say, whilst the others swarmed away. "You didn't win, Doll, but you certainly can be proud of so very nearly winning. Your parents will be proud."

So they would, Dolly knew. But, ah, would they not be all so heartbroken, too, when it meant that the daughter they loved so dearly had failed to do for herself what they themselves were prevented

from doing by misfortune? They had implored her to wire the result, whether good or bad, as soon as it was known, and so—

She took the blank telegraph form that she had brought upstairs with her to the study table, and found a pencil. Betty and the rest had all gone now, and only Eva was here.

"Dolly—"

"Yes, dear?"

"I—I—I want to tell you— I mean," Eva floundered on huskily, "you must feel awfully sick at having lost, when you—you should have won!"

"The best girl has won, Eva, so what have I to grumble about?" Dolly looked up from her writing to say, with a smile. "I certainly am disappointed, because— Well, it is going to upset the future rather."

"Do what?" gasped Eva.

Dolly finished her bit of writing, then stood up to go and send off the wire.

"Eva, we are chums, and I am sure I can trust you to keep a confidence. I don't want the others to know; it will cause such all round regret. If I had won the Grace Pullen, I could have been able to come back next term."

"You mean— Oh, Dolly, you mean that you really needed the money?"

"My people are going through a bad time, Eva. Farming is in a bad way, and just lately dad has been extra badly hit. They'd make any possible sacrifice to keep me at school, but they have reached the limit, and so—"

"You are going to leave?"

"As I haven't won the Grace Pullen, yes," Dolly answered simply, stepping to the door. "But don't let that worry you, Eva. Don't tell anyone else at present."

"Dolly, wait! I—I can't take the prize!"

"Nonsense!" laughed Dolly, preparing to leave the room. "It was a fair contest, and the best girl has won."

"But, Dolly," stammered Eva, "if I had only known—if I had only known!"

"Why, Eva, what is the matter?" asked Dolly, suddenly alarmed by the look in the other girl's face. "You have nothing to reproach yourself about. Perhaps, if you had known, you would have deliberately lost the exam. That was what I was afraid of. That is why I mentioned nothing of my misfortune to the others."

"But, Dolly, it—it doesn't seem fair that I—I should have the prize when it really means nothing to me, and yet it means so much to you. Oh, if only I could hand it over to you, or—"

"Don't be silly, Eva!" said Dolly. "I almost wish I had not told you what it means to me, now that you are taking it like this. But you're not yourself, dear. You are overwrought. It's the aftermath of the exam. I'll leave you alone a while to recover."

With the serenity that comes of sublime resignation, the cheated girl went out, and softly closed the door behind her.

And there, left alone in the study, the cheat herself crashed down into a chair, and wept wildly again, in fresh torment over the guilty secret that she had not the courage to confess!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

What will happen now? Will Dolly, the girl who should have had the prize, be compelled to leave her old school, because she has been cheated, or will Eva's better nature assert itself? Do not miss next week's splendid complete tale, which is entitled: "The Silence of Dolly Delane!"

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