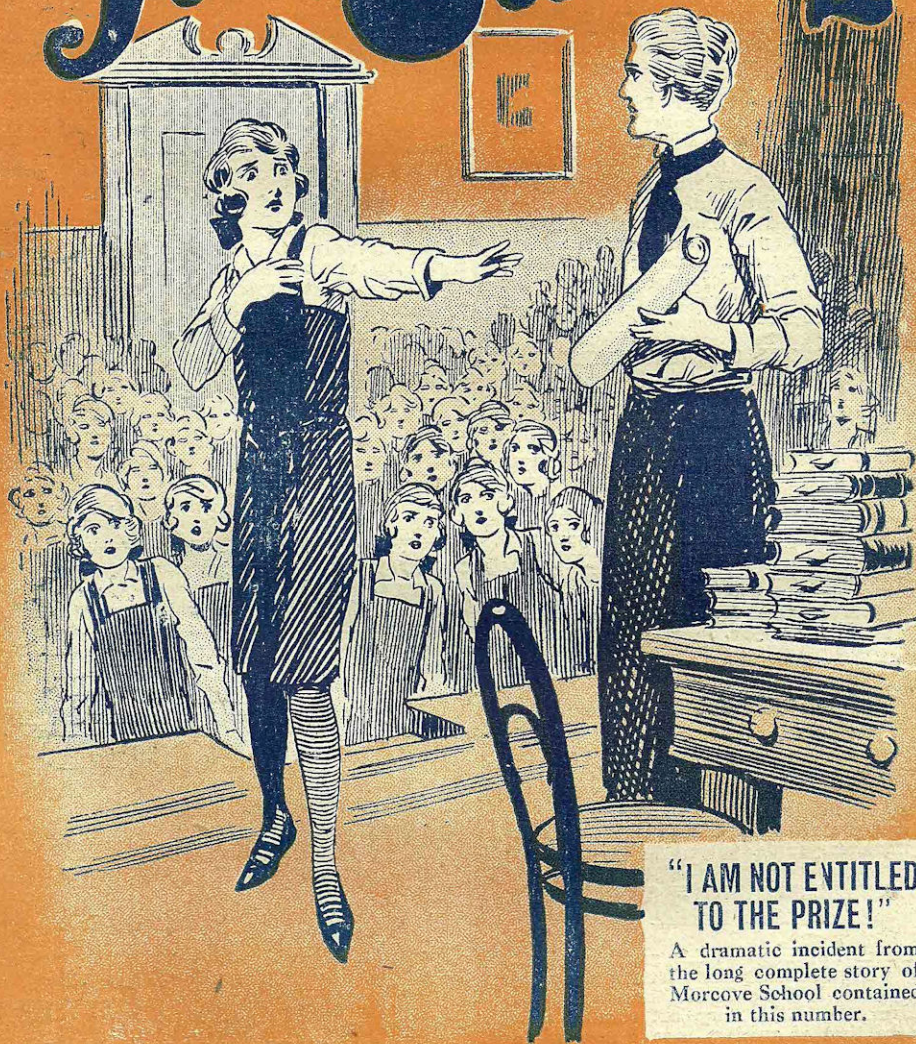


THE PAPER EVERY SCHOOLGIRL SHOULD READ!

The Schoolgirl's Own 2^d

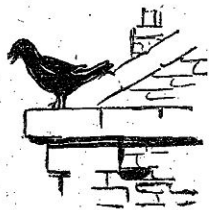


**"I AM NOT ENTITLED
TO THE PRIZE!"**

A dramatic incident from
the long complete story of
Morcove School contained
in this number.

A Splendid Long Complete Tale of Betty Barton & Co.

WHEN MORCOVE BROKE UP!



By
MARJORIE
STANTON.

Little time now remains for Eva Merrick to make amends for her foolish action in taking the examination paper—an action which robbed Dolly Delane of her schooldays! What will Eva do?

"Hurrah for the Hols.!"

"Is anyone awake?"

Was anyone awake!

No need for Morcove School to be treated to the usual clanging of getting-up bell this morning. In this Fourth Form dormitory, at any rate, there were pretty eyes that had opened at day-break.

"Hurrah!" This was Polly Linton, as she gave an extra special leap from her bed. "Breaking-up day!"

"Prize-giving day!"

"The day for going home to weeks and weeks of glorious holidays!"

"Ooo, yes; queek, queek!" was Naomer Nakara's own quaint contribution to the general liveliness. "Now we begin ze best day in all ze term. Hurrah!"

"Hush, child," said Polly, with sudden great gravity. "How can you! How can you make such a hullabaloo, when you see— Behold, Paula Creel is still sleeping, bless her!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

All over the great room happy-hearted scholars paid close attention to their famous madcap, Polly Linton, in expectation of her starting the fun right away.

"Paula dear," cooed Polly, very sweetly and softly, bending over the amiable aristocrat's bed. "Pau-la! Time to get up, Paula, my pet!"

"Eh, what? Bai Jove, Polly deah, bai Jove, gails! Good-morning! I was having such a wipping dream! I dweamt it was breaking-up day!"

"Alas!" sighed Polly tragically. "That is the worst of dreams. One awakes afterwards to the—er—the stern realities of life."

This, as might have been expected, quite frightened the still sleepy-looking Paula. Ever a girl to fall a victim to the gentle art of being "japed," she lifted herself up on one elbow and assumed a look of horrified dismay.

"My gwacious! Polly deah, I know it is often said one dweams the vevy weverse of the actual

twuth. Is it— Healp! Is it the first day of term, then?"

"Alas!" groaned Polly.

"Dweadful, dweadful!" Paula lamented, dropping her head back upon the pillow. "It is twue, then. It is not bweaking-up day, but the first day of term!"

Then Polly suddenly fell upon the duffer and rolled her about.

"Wake up, stupid! Of course, it is breaking-up day! Look alive!"

"Hooway! Yes, wather! But no woughness, Polly deah; no fwivolity, I beg! Now, Polly— Polly—"

"Queek, queek; I help to get her up for ze last time zis term!" shrilled Naomer, rushing across armed with a bolster. "Up you get, queek!"

"Naomer—"

"Queek, zen!"

"Nao— Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do get up, Paula!" Polly urged impatiently, drawing a wail of protest from poor Paula:

"How can a geal get up, when evowry time she twies to wise she is floored again? Naomer, dwop it! Na— Ow, oo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peals of laughter continued, as Paula, in sheer desperation, rolled off the other side of the bed, and then huddled down beside the bedstead, to escape Naomer's further attentions.

"Well, if that isn't the limit!" exclaimed Polly.

"Even now Paula hasn't had enough sleep, girls! She wants to curl up on the floor and have another spell! But she shall have a pillow, so she shall!"

"And ze bolster, he, he, he!" chuckled Naomer, sending that article tumbling after the pillow which Polly had dropped upon long-suffering Paula's head.

"May as well let her have the blankets, whilst we are about it," grinned Polly. "There you are, poor dear!"

"Healp! Dwop it!"

"What are you complaining about now?" asked

Polly: "Want the bed itself, do you? All right, then!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Two pairs of hands—one of them dusky ones—promptly turned the bed and mattress right over on to Paula, who was not seen again for a moment or two. Then, with her hair over her eyes, she slowly heaved up from the mound of bedclothes, which had been burying her.

"You wretches!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You weally are!"

"Breaking-up day, Paula!"

"Weal, yes, I suppose so! Haw, haw, haw!" the victim herself suddenly began to chuckle.

"Yes, wather! One must weign oneself, I suppose! But—but pway give me time to dweess, gels!"

Even Polly and Naomer were ready to make that concession, simply because the thing was for every girl to get dressed with all speed, and be off downstairs to start revelling in all the excitement and merriment of the great day.

Betty Barton saw Dolly Delane putting the last touches to her toilet, that girl having been up a few minutes before the majority, and Betty went across to her.

"Had a good night, Doll?"

"I—I couldn't get to sleep at first," Dolly was forced to own regretfully. "I suppose I was excited."

The Form captain let a gentle hand fall affectionately upon her chum's shoulders.

"I expect, Doll, you were feeling sad with the thought that it was to be your last night at Morcove. Poor old Doll; it is rough luck!"

"Oh, well," was the subdued answer, all the more pathetic because it was given with such heroic fortitude, "I am feeling resigned by now. Besides—"

"Besides what, dear?" Betty asked eagerly. "Is there perhaps a chance that your people will be able to afford to send you back next term?"

"Ah, no; I don't see how that can possibly be," Dolly dissented softly. "At the very best, Betty—that is to say, if dad does as well as he hopes to do out of the corn harvest—it will only just enable him to keep a home over our heads."

"If only you had won the Grace Pullen prize, Doll!" Betty exclaimed softly, casting a glance round to make sure that a certain girl was not within earshot. "It isn't that I feel the fifty-pound prize is going to undeserving hands to-day. Only, Eva Merrick has often said that the money is nothing to her. And to you, who came second in the exam., it would have been so much!"

"Enough to pay for another term at Morcove, Doll," said Midge Minden, who had joined the two whilst they were quietly conversing. "And the Grace Pullen prize was instituted for just that purpose!"

"I know," Dolly nodded passively. "But there, that's all over now!"

Then, with a bigger effort than her two chums suspected, she gave them a smiling look as she stepped away to the door.

These last hours at Morcove—she would have liked to spend every moment of them in the midst of her happy-hearted, sympathetic chums. But emotions were welling up in her that made her feel she must put herself apart from everybody, after all.

Gone now her last night at Morcove. A few hours—only a few more hours—and then, good-bye

to the dear old school; good-bye to many a chum who, whatever the bond of friendship between them had been, might never cross her path again!

And even before the agonising last good-bye had to be said, what was the painful ordeal that this day held in store for her?

Prize-giving day! A little while, and the bell would be ringing in the hundreds of girls to form the term's last assembly. One by one, the prizes stacked upon the headmistress's table, at the upper end of Big Hall, would be claimed by the loudly-cheered winners. And so at last there would come the moment for the winner of the Grace Pullen prize to step up and receive the fifty-pound cheque.

The winner?

No, not this year was it the real winner of the prize into whose hands that cheque was going to pass. A cheat—a cheat was the girl whom the school would be cheering presently! The shameful means by which the prize had been wrongfully acquired was known only to two persons in the entire school—or so, at least, Dolly imagined—the cheat, and the cheated!

Now she had turned into her own old study, there being a few minutes to wait for breakfast. Overnight, she had felt she must keep away from this particular study, to avoid an encounter alone with her former study mate—the girl who was the cheat. But this morning Dolly hoped for a meeting, on the quiet, with that girl, painful though it must be.

Was there just a chance that Eva Merrick had resolved to make the best amends she could, short of openly confessing?

"If only she would take the chance I offered her last night!" Dolly whispered to herself anxiously. "Surely it was letting her off lightly, considering I might have denounced her, and got her exp—"

She clipped short the ugly word as a step sounded at the study door. Next instant Eva Merrick stood revealed, but at sight of Dolly she checked, as if to back out of the room and sharply close the door.

"Eva, wait! Come here!" was Dolly's quick cry. "I want to speak with you—I must!"

The culprit could not have passed a good night. There was a jaded look in her pallid face as she came into the room and closed the door behind her.

"What is it to be, Eva?" the rightful winner of the prize asked tensely. "It is time you were able to give me your decision. In fact, it must be now or never."

Eva said nothing, only stood and shamefacedly met her questioner's steady eyes.

"You remember the chance I offered you last night?" Dolly went on impressively. "I was not threatening to expose your cheating. I can't do that—I won't do it! But I did offer to let you pass on the prize to me to-day, in the way you wish to, so as to salve your conscience, on one condition."

"I know you did," Eva said huskily. "But I—I don't see how I can agree to that one condition."

"Why not? All I ask is that you end at once the friendship with that hateful girl, Cora Grandways. All the girls have noticed a change in you for the worse since you became so thick with Cora. What else was to be expected! Then, Eva, for your own sake, and the sake of the Form, either promise to give up Cora, or else—"

"What's the use of talking like that!" burst

out Eva wildly. "I can't break with Cora—no, I can't! I—I daren't!"

"Eva! Why, what do you mean, you daren't?" A sudden miserable sob followed Dolly's shocked words.

Eva Merrick had turned away, and had her hands up to her face, crying like one in torment.

A Scare for Naomer.

"EVA!"

The cheat's victim had stepped quickly across to her and taken her by the shoulder, turning her about.

"What did you mean, Eva, when you said that just then? You dare not break with Cora? Why—why?"

"Ah, don't keep on at me! It's no use——"

"I am not keeping on at you about the wrong thing you did, by which I was cheated out of the prize," Dolly answered softly. "I am only wanting to find out why you are unable to break with Cora Grandways. Unless you do break with her, I warn you, for the very last time, I shall not fall in with your wishes!"

"Yes, you will! Oh Dolly——"

"No!" that girl cut short the imploring whimper flatly. "I absolutely refuse. Your idea is to pass on the prize to me publicly, the school being given to understand that it is simply your gratitude to me for the way I saved you from what might have been a serious accident. Really, you want me to have the prize so that your conscience will be eased."

"Yes, Dolly, I did think that if I handed over the prize——"

"Eva, two wrongs never yet made a right! You know very well that nothing short of confessing can ever properly set this thing right. As a matter of fact," Dolly went on, with excusable indignation, "by handing over the prize in the way you wish to, you stand to gain more glory in the eyes of the school! It's all wrong! Still, since you are afraid to confess, I have been willing to let you make this half-hearted atonement. In return, though, I must have your solemn promise that you will be done with Cora!"

"And I tell you I can't be done with her!" Eva burst out again, gesturing despairingly, with the tears streaming down her cheeks. "I'd be as badly off as ever!"

"What!"

Dolly was looking staggered—even aghast—with dismay. The guilty girl's miserable admission had seemed to convey a very terrible meaning.

"Does Cora know, then—does she?" Dolly asked at last breathlessly. "Oh, Eva, does Cora know that you cheated, and has she been using her knowledge of your guilt to——"

"Don't ask me! I won't answer—I won't!" was the hard-driven cry. "It's no use, Dolly. Go away, and—and do what you like!"

Dolly moved towards the door, but paused.

"I shall do this, and only this, Eva," came the parting murmur. "If you try that half-hearted atonement, and ask for the prize to be passed on to me—I shall refuse to take it!"

"And you will tell them why, will you?" Eva spoke back huskily, taking a stride towards the other girl. "You are going to denounce me, after all?"

"No, Eva. Don't you know me better than to think such a thing?" was Dolly's reproachful exclamation. "I shall not give a hint to anyone. If only you would pluck up courage and confess,

throwing yourself upon Miss Somerfield's mercy! Eva, won't you—won't you do that, after all?"

"I can't! I have left it too long! No, no——" "Sh!" Dolly silenced the despairing voice sharply, for she could hear someone on the point of entering. And Eva, by a tremendous effort, quickly pulled herself together.

It was only Cora who came in, after all—Cora, the girl who shared the secret! What Dolly had feared was that it would be one of the Study 12 coterie, in which case there would have been blank amazement at Eva being found in such a state of distress on prize-giving day!

"Hallo, Dolly!" Cora greeted that girl, as they almost brushed shoulders in the doorway. They had not taken notice of each other before this,



PITY POOR PAULA! "Do get up, Paula!" Polly urged impatiently, drawing a wail of protest from poor Paula. "How can a girl get up when she is teased like this?" complained Paula, shrinking down to avoid further attentions from the teasers.

this morning. "Getting ready to cheer the prize-winners, eh? He, he, he!"

There came into Dolly's face such a look of furious anger and disgust as she had not shown even whilst talking with the cheat. All along Dolly had felt that perhaps Eva was more to be pitied than blamed, because she had been more weak than wicked. But this girl—this evil genius of the Form!

"I only wish I could be at Morcove, Cora Grandways, on the day you get expelled for good!" Dolly felt amply justified in saying fiercely, as she passed out. "I'd know how to cheer then!"

Next moment she was out of the room and pulling the door shut behind her.

What could she do now? What had she better do in the face of this revelation? Cora's conduct deserved to be exposed at once; need one have any scruples about denouncing her? But how

could her hateful game be ended without Eva's own guilty state being revealed!

Polly Linton came prancing along the corridor. She flung an arm lovingly about Dolly's shoulders without stopping, and drew her on to Study 12.

"Let's have you whilst we can, Doll darling! And here is Paula—"

"Yes, wather, haw, haw haw!" simpered the elegant one, showing herself at a study door which the two were passing. "Geals, could you spare a moment to healp me stwap the last twunk?"

"Delighted!" cried Polly, and she sailed into Paula's study, from which both Helen Craig and Naomer Nakara were at present absent. "Which trunk, Paula?"

For there were boxes and trunks and bags everywhere. The study was like a Waterloo platform at holiday time.

"Heah we are, bai Jove! Haw, haw, haw! yes, wather, geals!"

"Oh, that's the one!" Polly assumed a business-like air. She walked round the trunk, scrutinising it, then knelt down. "I very much doubt if it can be done," she pronounced gravely. "We'll try, though."

"Thanks, thanks! As a matter of fact, geals, my wardrobe has weached wather wemarkable woportions during the term. Surpwising what a few fwocks—"

"A few! Stand that side, Paula. Take hold of this end of the strap that you have passed round the bag!"

"Thanks, thanks! Yes, wather!"

"And pull hard," said Polly blithely, "when I say so!"

She remained kneeling, ready to squeeze the jaws of the bag together at the critical moment.

"Now, Paula—pull! Pull away! Pull harder!"

"My gwacious—"

"Harder!"

"My deah Polly, I can't pull any—"

"Yes, you can!"

"Dweadful, dweadful!" panted Paula. "Something will— Ah, deah, something will bweak, I'm sure!"

And it did!

The strap suddenly broke at a pierced spot, causing Paula to topple backwards with a loud, dismayed howl.

"Healp!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash! The elegant member of the Fourth Form landed amongst other bits of luggage, in her best going-away frock. Polly simply sprawled over the unstrapped trunk, almost weeping with laughter, whilst Dolly sat down, doubled up with mirth. A very dainty pair of feet and ankles—Paula's—were shaking about in the air.

"Healp!"

"You pulled too hard!" bleated Polly.

"Duffer!"

"That's a nice thing to say!" wailed Paula, sitting up and sweeping the hair out of her eyes.

"After telling me to pull hard—"

"But I didn't tell you to pull too hard—now did I?"

Paula considered this. She suddenly saw the truth in it, and began to chuckle.

"Haw, haw, haw! Weally, Polly! But what a week I am!"

"Yes," grinned Polly, looking the dishevelled one up and down. "No wonder they call it breaking-up day! Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a sudden interruption. The door

crashed open, and Naomer whirled into the room, looking quite grief-stricken.

"Queek, queek!" she panted imploringly.

"Ooo, queek; my tame jackdaw—"

"Good gwacious, Naomer! You—"

"I go to give heem his breakfast, and he ees not there!" was poor little Naomer's half-tearful lament. "He has gone off—"

"Without even saying good-bye? Disgraceful of Jimmy!" said Polly. "But cheer up, darling. You know he has escaped from his cage once or twice before—"

"Before he always come to meet me; but he not meet me this morning!"

"He might have stayed to receive his end-of-term prize!" joked on Polly. "All right, Naomer dear, we'll come and help you to hunt him out. He must be somewhere!"

Naomer must have been yelling the dismaying news to everyone she passed, whilst she was pelted up to the study, for those who went speeding back with her found lots of other girls high-spiritedly faring forth to "scout round" for the errant Jimmy.

The feathered rascal had been a prime favourite all this term. The escapades in which he had been involved would make a story in themselves. Time after time he had been found guilty of letting himself out of his cage, although it was sometimes whispered that Naomer did not often fasten up the cage door properly.

Be that as it might, Jimmy richly deserved his reputation for getting into scrapes. One or two wing feathers had been very carefully and quite painlessly stripped, so that he could not fly far. And for this reason all the girls except Naomer felt sure that he would soon be in custody once more.

Naomer, however, was loud in her wails of dismay. She half tearfully declared that he had been able to fly better and better just lately. He had, too, gone farther and farther afield on each succeeding occasion of his playing truant.

"And supposing we not find him at once?" sighed Morcove's royal owner of the feathered rascal. "We not here to-morrow, any of us. Eet is breaking-up day!"

"And Jimmy apparently knew it," laughed Betty. "He must have said, if others could break up, why shouldn't he? But we'll find him, Naomer!"

"Yes, wather; haw, haw, haw! Geals, I simply couldn't west until the young wascal is wecovered, what?"

Thereupon Paula absent-mindedly sat down for a rest on a garden-bench, whilst her many chums scattered to search the shrubberies and inspect such likely places as the potting-sheds and even the gym. On one occasion Jimmy had been found practising "stunts" of his own on the horizontal bar.

Suddenly there was an excited shout from Polly.

"Look, girls—look! That bird up there on the roof!"

They all stood still to gaze eagerly, and one after another they voiced the conviction—it was Jimmy!

"Yes, wather; haw, haw, haw!" beamed Paula, gazing upwards along with the rest. "The wascal is combing out his feathers, bai Jove, and you can see the stwipped ones!"

Naomer began to run to and fro, wringing her hands distractedly.

"Ooo, queek, queek; what shall we do? We

must get him down! Ah, bah, he is a bad raskikkle to get up there!"

"Jimmy—hi! Jimmy, Jimmy boy!" Polly shouted up to him, and there came back a distinctly defiant:

"Squawk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Queek, queek!"

"Squawk, squawk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was not the least doubt; Jimmy was just as determined to stay up there as his royal mistress was eager to get him down. Nor could the girls quite see how the wayward pet was to be recaptured whilst his defiant mood prevailed.

He must have been at large ever since day-break, mounting higher and higher about the great building by means of the short flights that he was enabled to make. When first sighted, he had been perched upon a sloping portion of the roof, and now, even as the amused scholars still gazed up at him, he carried impudence a step farther.

They saw him strut a short distance over the tiles, and then flap his wings and make a fluttering assault upon a chimney-pot. Next moment he was perched on that chimney-pot, and his renewed squeakings sounded like a cheeky "How's that?"

"Bai Jovel! Haw, haw, haw! Weally, geals—"

"Wait till he gets hungry for his breakfast," Betty soothed poor, anxious Naomer. "He'll come down in a hurry then, I dare say!"

Other sympathisers chorused to the same effect. It was the best thing to do—the only thing, in fact—to leave him to come down of his own accord presently, a possibly sadder and wiser Jimmy.

Meantime, their own breakfast was on the tables indoors, as the din-din of a bell proclaimed. Boisterously they scampered back to the schoolhouse, and although Naomer was all for staying in the open to keep her reproachful eyes upon the inconstant Jimmy, she was not allowed to do so. Betty and Polly and the rest of the Study 12 coterie took care of that.

"Don't fret, Naomer darling," they all soothed her lovingly. "You'll get him again."

"But how extwemely dwell that it should happen, geals, on bweaking-up day!" Paula could not help chuckling. "Haw, haw, haw!"

It was to prove more than a droll occurrence—even a fateful one!

Ere another hour was out, what a dramatic bearing the escapade of Jimmy the jackdaw would have had upon the whole great drama of this prize-giving day!

What Betty Found.

BREAKFAST was over, and now the girls of Morcove were dispersing through the big schoolhouse once again, collecting their last things and getting quite ready for the joyous home-going.

Those chums of Naomer's who had time to spare ran out with her to see if Jimmy was still perched aloft on the chimney. But Betty, for one, simply could not find time for running out of doors. As Form captain, she always had fifty little things to which to attend on breaking-up day.

So away she sped for Study 12, mounting a staircase that seemed only half big enough for all the tearing up and down that was going on this morning. Some girl with an armful of cricket-

stumps spilt the lot all down one flight, to the accompaniment of shrieks of laughter. Betty was one who got mixed up in the resulting scramble, and it was she who came into collision half a minute later with Cora Grandways.

Cora was rushing out from the Fourth Form corridor just as Betty was turning into it. A large cardboard hat-box that Cora was carrying served as a buffer, receiving a bash that rather knocked it out of shape.

"You clumsy lump!" snarled Cora, jumping at the chance of heaping abuse upon her hated captain. "Can't you see where you are going?"

"Can't you?" Betty retorted, and she would have passed on, but the other girl dropped the box and quickly barred the way.

"One of these days," Cora seethed fiercely, hardly able to keep her clenched hands off the Form captain, "my word, I shall give you something!"

"Out of my way, Cora, please. I have a lot to do!"

"You would have, wouldn't you? Bah, get along out of my sight, Betty Barton! And wait till next term, that's all!"

With the malicious threat, the spitfire of the Form suddenly shot out both hands to give Betty a violent push that would send her headlong up the corridor. Betty adroitly evaded the vicious thrust, however, and calmly retaliated by sending Cora spinning.

Backwards staggered that girl, and before she had quite recovered her balance one foot of hers had stamped down heavily on the hat-box—squash!

That made Betty go on her way laughing. It was not often that she repaid Cora in her own coin; but this was breaking-up day, and it seemed good to let the spitfire have something to remember during the holidays.

Cora quickly departed with her box, and it was a quiet moment for Betty as she passed along the corridor. So quiet, in fact, that she distinctly heard a sound from one of the studies that made her stop dead in amazement.

Surely that was nothing else than a half-smothered squawk of Jimmy the jackdaw's coming from this particular study—the one that Dolly Delane used to share with Eva Merrick?

"My word, has he fallen down that chimney he was perched upon?" Betty suddenly wondered.

Next second she was inside the study, finding it deserted by its usual tenants. But, sure enough, something very much alive was in the chimney!

Betty dropped to her knees in front of the empty fireplace and turned her head so as to try and see up the flue.

The tunnel-like darkness baffled her. But if her eyes could do no good, her ears were most useful.

Plainly she heard a wild fluttering and hoarse squawking, which told how poor, adventurous Jimmy really had ended up by falling down the chimney-pot.

Now he was at the bottom of the chimney, doubtless wondering how on earth he was ever to get out of the soot and smother.

Already his desperate flutterings had brought down a lot of soot, and also some scraps of paper which one or other of the girls of this study had popped up the chimney for tidiness' sake, as Betty imagined.

"Jimmy! Here, Jimmy! Come on, then!"



BETTY MAKES A DISCOVERY.

Kneeling down, Betty began to piece together the scraps of paper. Suddenly, as she interchanged two or three of the scraps, she saw the completed message before her eyes! "Who cheated?" she read. "There is one who knows!"

she called up to him encouragingly. "Come out of that, you silly!"

The flutterings ceased, and a feeble squawk seemed to be Jimmy's dismal "How can I?"

Then Betty quickly bared her right arm and put it as far as possible up the flue. She was not going to care if she became as black as a sweep over the rescue work; that unlucky pet of Naomer's had got to be extricated!

For a few very uncomfortable moments she was groping the sooty hand about, just above the opening into the chimney, before she suddenly gripped hold of two cold claws. She had got him now!

"There now—quiet, silly!" she laughed, starting to haul Jimmy down, very gently. "Ha, ha, ha, you are in a state!"

He was!

The feathered rascal, who was in the habit of keeping himself just as spruce as Paula Creel—and what more could one say than that?—was now what Paula would have called "a weck, a wuin!" as Betty set him free on the hearth.

His sooty feathers were all lying the wrong way. He could hardly see out of his eyes for the smother he was in. And when he began to flap around, to get himself to rights—well, Betty skipped clear!

Alone though she was, she had to laugh outright. It was so ludicrous to see Jimmy hop on to the back of a chair and start making a very necessary toilet there.

Betty left him at it, and began to think about her own state and the state in which the fireplace was. Before running away to put herself to rights, she felt she might as well tidy up the hearth. So down she knelt again, and began to gather up the pieces of paper that looked so unsightly.

As she did so, she could not help noticing what one or two scraps of paper held in the way of girlish handwriting:

"Cheated" was one startling word on a tiny scrap of paper. "WHO KNOWS!" was written in the same big, round hand on another scrap.

Betty found herself amazedly laying out all the scraps, as if they were cards with which she was playing patience.

"The exam.," she read. "There is——" And again: "Who——"

"This is queer," the puzzled girl muttered, rearranging the scraps on the hearth. "It is something about cheating at an exam., apparently. But—— Ah!"

She suddenly interchanged two or three of the scraps, and then had a complete intelligible message under her horrified eyes:

"WHO CHEATED AT THE EXAM? THERE IS ONE WHO KNOWS!"

She jumped up, agasp with dismay and horror. The exam.—cheating! And this was Eva Merrick's study! Eva Merrick was the girl who had won the Grace Pullen prize! By cheating?

"Someone must imagine it to be so," was Betty's appalling conviction, "or this message would never have been sent to Eva. She tore it up and put the scraps safely out of sight up the chimney. If the bird had never tumbled down——"

She broke off her excited mutterings, to stop in front of the littered grate again, examining other pieces of paper.

Some were of no consequence at all. But suddenly she sifted out certain scraps that seemed as if they had once formed a printed leaflet. She read some of the print.

A question paper for the Grace Pullen exam.!

"My goodness," panted Betty tragically, "I recognise the very questions that were set for us at the Grace Pullen! But how did this question paper come to be torn up and put out of sight up the chimney? The papers handed round on the day of the exam. were all collected afterwards. Miss Redgrave herself collected and counted them!"

There was no need for Betty to ponder further. The thing was doubly proved. Eva Merrick really had cheated! Eva had possessed herself of a question paper prior to the exam.!

It took Betty a few moments to calm herself down. She carefully placed all the fatal scraps of paper on a blotting-pad, and then finished tidying up the grate.

Meantime, Jimmy, the jackdaw, was feeling quite himself again, and hungry after the escapade. Not a smile could his eloquent squawkings draw from Betty, however. She had never been more upset than she was over this dramatic revelation.

Eva Merrick a cheat!

The first thing was to dispose of Jimmy. It proved easy enough to do. Gladly he let Betty take him up, and she had only to carry him out into the corridor to be able to hand him over to another girl—Helen Craig.

"Oh!" laughed Helen.

"Yes, here he is," Betty said, forcing a smile. "He fell down the chimney of Eva Merrick's study. Take him, will you, Helen, and—and if you see Eva, you might say I am wanting to see her."

"Right-ho! In Study 12, Betty?"

"No, in her own study, thanks."

Helen went off, with Jimmy riding like a falcon on Helen's wrist, and now Betty darted back into Eva's study and hid the scraps of paper for the time being. She was simply bound to get a wash and tidy up herself after what she had been through.

In less than a minute she was back in the study, and out came the tell-tale scraps of paper from where she had placed them. Then she sat down and waited—waited for Eva.

The moments dragged by. To and fro in the corridor scampered girls of the Fourth Form, getting more and more boisterous.

Breaking-up day! Prize-giving day! But for the Form captain now there could be no finding the least bit of happiness in what the day meant.

One scholar in the school had disgraced Morcove and herself by cheating at an exam. And the guilty girl was Eva Merrick, a member of the Fourth Form!

"I dare not confess!"

THE door opened. Eva Merrick came in.

"I'm told you want to speak to me, Betty?"

"Yes, Eva. Look here at what I have found—scraps of paper that came down the chimney just now, along with that tame jackdaw of Naomer's."

Betty was speaking as calmly as she could in the face of the awful upset. There was not much to choose between Eva's guilty countenance and the Form captain's troubled looks.

"You cheated at the exam., Eva! You have no right to the prize that is going to be handed to you before another hour is out! The Grace Pullen prize rightfully belongs to Dolly Delane, the girl who came second!"

Eva was bereft of speech. She stood there, nodding in a dull, hopeless way.

"Well, what about it?" Betty asked steadily. "I mean to say, Eva, I can't allow this injustice to poor Dolly to take place. Dolly, of all girls—forced to leave school this term, simply because she didn't win the Grace Pullen!"

Betty corrected herself in a sad tone:

"Or, rather, Eva, Dolly did win, but she must leave because you cheated her out of the prize. Time is getting on. What do you intend to do?"

"Betty, I— Oh, can't you understand! I'm sorry! I did it in a weak moment!"

"That's taken for granted, Eva, and I'd be the first to forgive and forget if you made atonement. Will you do that this morning—now, at once, before the prize-giving comes on?"

"Listen a moment!" the wretched girl burst out hoarsely. "I have told Dolly my idea is to say that I want the prize to be passed on to her. I can't own up that I cheated—oh, Betty, I dare not! But I will do the best I can and ask Miss Somerfield to present the prize to Dolly!"

"On what grounds, Eva? You'll have to give a reason!"

"I know," the culprit nodded miserably. "I—my idea is to say that I hand over the prize in gratitude to Dolly for the way she—she saved me from that accident in the sidcar."

It was Betty's turn to nod.

"Dolly did save you that time—saved your very life, perhaps. And yet this is the best you can do, Eva! Is it fair? How can you expect me to be satisfied? You'll get cheered to the echo for 'generosity,' when all the time Dolly has every right to the prize!"

"But what else can I do?"

"Confess! Go at once to—"

"No, I can't—I daren't! I've already told Dolly—"

"What! Does Dolly know, then?" gasped out Betty. "Eva, you mean to say that Dolly knows she had been robbed of the prize!"

"Yes, she—she knows—yes!" gulped the guilty girl.

There was a pause.

"And she has been silent—poor old Doll, how splendid of her!" was Betty's earnest murmur at last. "Rather than denounce you, she will end her schooldays! She is going to stand there in Big Hall presently and hear your name called for the Grace Pullen! Eva—oh, how can you—how can you do it!"

Then Eva sat down and cried.

"Haven't I been punished enough, Betty? The misery—"

"You have been punished for your cowardice in not owning up. You have not suffered yet for the actual cheating, that I can see. Eva, I don't believe you will be made to suffer for that, if only you will own up!"

Betty was standing close by the weeping, moaning girl now.

"Throw yourself on Miss Somerfield's pity, Eva!"



EVIDENCE OF HER GUILT!

"Look at those papers, Cora," said Betty. "They are to be shown to Miss Somerfield the moment you interfere with Eva Merrick again. You must leave her alone. Do you understand?"

"Ah, that's what Dolly says!" sobbed Eva. "It's all very well to talk. I have left it so long. I—there's another reason besides. No, I can't—it's no use!" She sprang up wildly. "In any case, I'd go home without the prize, in disgrace!"

Her voice fell to a husky whisper. "They'd have to know at home! Put yourself in my place, Betty! Oh, Betty, I know I've been a hateful wretch to do this thing, but—"

"Pull yourself together, Eva; I'm wanting to help you, not upset you. But all I can say is, do—do confess at once!"

"If only I could!" moaned Eva. "But no, I can't!"

Again there was a pause, except for Eva's piteous, half-stifled sobs.

"Don't think I am not sorry for you, Eva," said Betty. "But I must think of Dolly. If the money meant nothing to her—but it means everything! Another term at this school! Eva, can you expect me to forget that?"

"No, Betty. I—I quite understand."
"Then you won't be surprised if I say, unless you confess, I shall have to den—"

But Betty could not say it, after all. With the guilty girl suddenly looking at her in an agony of fright, the Form captain realised that she would no more be able to denounce the girl than Dolly had been able to do so!

"The half-hearted atonement would be better than none," Betty exclaimed all at once desperately. "But Dolly will not let you pass on the prize to-day? I don't wonder."

"She would, Betty, only—I couldn't accept her condition—I daren't!"

"What condition?"
Eva shifted about the room, screwing up the handkerchief with which she had been drying her tears.

"Dolly said I must promise to be done with Cora Grandways. On that condition, she would let me pass on the prize to her, without anything being known about her being entitled to it. But I—I—"

"Ah, I understand!" Betty exclaimed tensely. "Cora has known about the cheating! She is the one who wrote this message that you tore up! She knew; she used her knowledge to compel you to drop us Study 12 girls and go with her!"

Before Eva could answer, the Form captain was gathering up the fateful scraps of paper very hastily, with a resolute look in her eyes. She was over by the door next moment, ready to quit the room.

"Before I go, Eva, do you want to be done with Cora?"

"Yes—oh, yes, yes! I can see now; I have been—"

"Very well, then, consider yourself done with her!" was the dramatic cry which left the guilty girl staring joyfully. "I'll deal with Cora! You make the promise, do you, to pass on that prize to Dolly?"

"Yes, yes! Oh, Betty, if only you will—"

"I'll settle Cora!"

And with that grim assertion, Betty was out of the room, closing the door sharply.

In an infuriated manner she darted up the corridor and past Study 12, going round the corner to Cora's study.

In that "den" Judith Grandways was attending to the labelling of some luggage. Cora was standing by the window, whistling a popular tune.

"Judith dear, do you mind, a moment?" Betty

said, and the younger Grandways girl—never a party to any of her sister's scheming—at once went out.

"Now then, Cora," the Form captain began instantly, "do you see these?"

And she held out the scraps of paper.

"Look at them, Cora, but don't think you are going to get them!" Betty went on passionately, whilst Cora quailed at sight of the incriminating scraps of paper. "They are to remain in my possession, ready to be shown to Miss Somerfield the moment you interfere with Eva Merrick again. You have been leaving her with no choice but to go about with you. You've been doing your best to get her to be your crony. It must stop now! Do you quite understand? The next time you—"

Betty's commanding words suddenly changed to a furious "Ah, would you!" as Cora came at her with a rush, trying to snatch away the pieces of paper.

Next moment the two girls were struggling together all over the room. Cora was like a wild cat for savagery, Betty was furious with indignation. Never yet had Morceve School witnessed such a desperate struggle between a couple of its scholars!

Chairs were turned over with a crash, ornaments were swept from the mantelpiece; the carpet was kicked up and books were tumbled off the table, to lie amongst the pieces of luggage, amongst which the two girls were waging the battle royal. Still the desperate tussle went on for possession of the scraps of paper which Betty held screwed up in her right hand.

At last, however, the Form captain's indomitable spirit prevailed against one that was merely blind fury. Betty thrust Cora off, and that girl lost her balance as she stumbled backward over a bit of luggage and went down flop!

In a flash Betty was out of the room, the pieces of paper still in her keeping. Hastily putting herself to rights, she walked round into the main corridor, and, as it chanced, she came face to face with Dolly Delane.

"Come in here, Doll," Betty invited her, throwing open the door of Study 12. "Have you seen Eva in the last minute or so?"

"Yes, I have," was Dolly's agitated answer. "She says you have found out!"

The two had Study 12 to themselves for the moment. Betty closed the door and gazed at her heroic chum admiringly.

"I have found out what you have known all along—yes," said Betty softly. "What a brick you have been, Doll!"

"Oh, I don't know about that! Anyhow—"

"Doll darling, I have drawn Cora's sting," Betty went on quickly, for at any moment some of the other girls might come romping in. "So, if you will be satisfied to let Eva pass on the prize to you, she can do that now."

"Oh, Betty!" came with a sort of sob of joy from Dolly. "Satisfied, you ask me! I will be more than that. I—"

"Then all I can say is, you are jolly generous," was the Form captain's emphatic interjection. "It isn't getting justice for you at all, Doll. The school will never know who really won the prize. It is going to applaud Eva all the more for passing on the prize out of supposed gratitude to you. Still, dear, if you don't mind—"

"And I do not, Betty. I would have preferred a thousand times to see Eva confess, but she is simply too much afraid. Apart from that, I don't care a rap about any credit I have lost in the

eyes of the school. I can only think of poor dad and mum at home, and what a blessing that fifty-pound prize will be!"

"Enabling you to come back next term? Yes, Doll! And you will always have the satisfaction of knowing that you really won it. You will—Hark!"

Up through the noisy schoolhouse there had come the slow clang-a-clang of a bell.

"The assembly!" Betty said tensely.

And now the study door flew open, and several girls came romping in.

"Fall in!" was madcap Polly's boisterous cry.

"Roll up, girls, for the prizes!"

"Yes, wather; haw, haw, haw! Geals—geals—"

"I not give Jimmy any prize, ze raskikkle!" grinned Naomer. "I give him ze good talking to instead! Ah, bah, he ees not a bit sorry for ze scare he give me!"

Clang-a-clang! Clang, clang-a-clang! the bell went on.

"Come on, girls—come on, Dolly darling! Down to Big Hall!" cried Betty serenely. "I'll meet you again down there. I must just run now to speak to Eva!"

Away she sped, and next moment was with the unhappy cheat in that other study.

"Eva, it's all right; you need not be afraid of Cora or anything she threatened to do! The assembly is ringing—"

"Yes," Eva said huskily, nodding dully.

"And you will let Dolly have the prize, will you?"

"Yes, Betty—yes!"

The answer, although spoken so low, had the ring of a solemn promise in it. Betty felt satisfied. Without another word, she quitted the study, and fell in with all the boisterous girls who were flocking away to Big Hall.

The Hour Comes.

"I JUST had to turn back and put my hair to rights!" beamed Paula Creel, as she came stepping daintily down the mustered line of Fourth Form scholars in Big Hall. "Woom for one, geals!"

Her usual place was between Polly and Naomer, so she took the step that should have left her in that position. Polly and Naomer, however, roughly elbowed her away.

"Heah, geals—"

"No room for girls who haven't won prizes!"

"Bai Jove, but—"

"Try next door, Paula!"

"But—but, Polly deah! Naomer—"

"Say please!" commanded Polly, relenting a little.

"Haw, haw, haw! Haow frivolous you are, you geals! But pway let me in! Thanks, thanks! Oy!"

"He, he, he!" tittered Naomer, after fetching Paula another playful dig in the ribs with an elbow. "You want all ze room!"

"Far fwom that being the case— My gwacious, geals, do let me have woom to bweathe! Ow, dwop it, Polly! What—"

"You are so rough," complained Polly, shoudering against the long-suffering elegant. "Next term, Paula, I shall look for an improvement in you!"

"You will look in vain for me next term," was the tragic prediction. "I wefuse to weturn to Morcove. My life, this term, has been too disswessing for words!"

"Sh! There come the mistresses, Paula!"

"Yes, wather! Howevah, I was wemarking, what with one and anoath of you," Paula simpered on dolefully, whilst the ranks of girls rapidly quieted down, "I go home this bweaking-up day weduced to a week—"

"Silence, please!" someone called.

"A wuin; yes, wather! I weturn home with wuined fwocks, and wuined looks, and—"

"Who is that girl talking?"

"Bai Jove, I must apologise, Miss Wedgrave!"

The fact of the mattah is—

"Paula Creel, silence, please!"

"With pleasure," Paula insisted upon saying politely. "Haw, haw, haw! Yes, wa—"

"Paula Creel, am I to speak again?"

"Pway forgive me, Miss Wedgwave!"

Even then Paula was not done, but she said the rest in a whisper. Also, she heroically suppressed the yelps that would have been excusable, owing to Polly's still making her elbow felt.

They were calling the roll now. Rapidly the names were run through and answered, whilst the huge muster became more and more impressed with the solemnity of the occasion. By the time the last name called had been answered, the vast hall was as quiet as a church.

Betty Barton was only one of scores of scholars who felt profoundly moved by the scene. The line upon line of Morcovians, the mistresses, now all gathered on the dais, where the headmistress was standing at a great table heaped high with the prizes. The prizes themselves—what an imposing array! And upon the whole impressive gathering the summer sunshine was flooding aslant through the great stained-glass windows.

Just fancy if this were one's last breaking-up day!

That thought of Betty's inevitably led to thoughts of Dolly Delane. Well, thank goodness, Dolly would not have to leave; after all! Presently Eva Merrick would be called up to receive the Grace Pullen prize, and then she would say how she wished it to be passed on to Dolly Delane.

A shame that Dolly was not to be known to all as the real winner of the prize! But this was better than nothing for the girl; and, alas, it was the very best one had been able to bring about, short of denouncing Eva.

The expectant hush of hundreds of girls was suddenly broken by a ringing cheer. Miss Somerfield was about to address them.

"Girls of Morcove School—"

"Hurrah! Hooray!" was the deafening cheer with which the scholars proclaimed the love and loyalty to the school and its honoured principal.

At last Miss Somerfield could make herself heard, and she launched quickly into a brief yet careful survey of the term's work.

One by one she named the various achievements which stood to the credit of certain girls and certain Forms, cheers frequently interrupting remarks of legitimate pride.

Then she touched upon the holidays that were beginning that day, and there were fresh cheers as she alluded to the very novel holiday project upon which certain girls in the Fourth Form, with the help of their junior mistress, were embarking.

Perhaps Polly and others who were vitally concerned were listening to all this with smiles of special delight. But Betty was thinking all the time of the coming moment when Eva must step up for the Grace Pullen prize.

"Within a week from now," Miss Somerfield

spoke blithely, "Miss Redgrave and a party of Fourth Form scholars are banding together to form a holiday concert party. They will tour the seaside and other holiday resorts in aid of a most deserving charity—"

Prolonged cheering!
"The re-building fund for the Barncombe Cottage Hosp—"

Deafening cheers!
"And I am sure we all hope that this effort, which the parents of every girl concerned have whole-heartedly supported, will be a great success!"

More wild cheers!
"And now, girls, we come to the prizes. This term—"

Once again Miss Somerfield was speaking without being heard.

"Hurrah, hooray!" cried the girls.
But at last the high-spirited assemblage could settle down to a routine of silence for the prize-winner's name to be called, and then there were deafening cheers when each girl went up to the table.

In this fashion dozens of the handsome, well-won prizes were proudly and blushing carried away from the table, each one being received at the hands of the beaming headmistress. Girls had cheered themselves into a breathless state, yet they were still able to go on somehow.

"With regard to the Grace Pullen prize—"
"Hurrah! Bravo, Eva Merrick! Eva—E—va!"
"The prize this year, as you all know, has been won by Eva Merrick. If that girl will please come forward and—"

"Hurrah! Bravo! Well done, Eva Merrick!" mingled with the hand-clapping. "Bravo!"
"Haw, haw, haw; yes, wather! Bwavo, Eva!"

That girl was going up now for the prize. Pale as death—but that may have been pure shyness—she worked her way round one side of the hall to the dais, and stumbled up the steps on to that low platform. Miss Somerfield turned to receive the unsuspected cheat with a cordial smile, holding in one hand the diploma which was to be given to the successful winner, while on the table beside her lay the envelope which contained the fifty-pound cheque!

And now that the critical moment had come. Betty's heart was pounding rapidly; so, too, was Dolly's.

Would Eva stand true to her promise? Would she keep her hands off that undeserved prize, saying that she wished it to go to another girl—not a girl she had cheated, but a girl to whom she was merely grateful? Would she do that? If not—then what could be done about it all?

"Well, Eva dear—stand closer," began Miss Somerfield, in an exceedingly happy tone. "It is with the very greatest pleasure I hand you this prize, knowing how hard you worked for it, and how thoroughly you deserve it! Your paper at the examination was a most creditable performance. It—"

The watching and listening assemblage of scholars realised that the headmistress had suddenly faltered in her speech. It was because Eva Merrick had interrupted by starting some faint murmurings.

What was the girl saying? Miss Somerfield appeared to be getting startled.

"Good gwacious, geals—"

"Sh, Paula! Listen!"

Intense silence now reigned. Every girl present

was straining her ears. Betty heard her heart going thud, thud. Eva must be making the promised request that Dolly should have the prize.

And then—
Betty knew that it was nothing of the sort that Eva was saying in a dry-throated, faint voice. The entire assemblage could distinctly hear Eva Merrick declaring huskily:

"I am not entitled to the prize! I cheated—I cheated, I tell you! I cheated at the exam!"

Eva Makes Good.

TREMENDOUS joy was Betty's predominant emotion, as she heard what Eva Merrick was saying in front of the whole assembled school.

The girl had done a thousand times better than merely keep her promise to pass on the prize—she had confessed!

Betty and Dolly had kept side by side when the muster took place. Now they nudged each other excitedly, and met each other's eyes for an instant. To those two girls only was Eva Merrick's dramatic confession proving a joy rather than a horrifying experience.

They had said nothing to any of their chums, simply out of consideration for their feelings on what ought to be a day of unmarred delight. So for Polly, Paula, and all the rest, as for the scores of other girls, it was a moment when they began to seethe with excitement, even whilst they wanted to keep quiet and not miss a word.

But for Betty and Dolly, this same thrilling moment was one of pure joy—joy on Eva's own account, that she had done the right thing at last, the brave thing, and would surely find mercy in the end!

"Betty, do you hear?" came Polly's aghast exclamation. "Eva is saying—"

"Yes, wather! My gwacious, geals—"
"Sh, sh! Quiet! Let's listen!"

Yet even when the Study 12 chums hushed themselves, such a lot of whispering and rustling went on in other parts of the hall, that nothing of what was being said on the platform could be properly heard.

It was like the sighing and rustling of a forest when a storm is rising. And indeed a storm was rising here in the heart of Morcove School—a gathering storm of indignation that would presently be let loose upon the head of guilty Eva Merrick!

A great trembling seized Betty. She feared the threatened outburst. On a sudden impulse she whispered along to some of her chums:

"Polly—Paula—all of you! We mustn't hiss her—nothing of that sort! She has done a fine thing!"

"But—"

"She has confessed, so give her a chance, girls!"

Louder the angry murmur was rising, partly because the inability to hear properly was making a number of girls impatient.

Then suddenly Eva was seen to break down and hide her face in her hands. Someone hissed. The storm of righteous indignation broke loose, but it was instantly quelled by Miss Somerfield's raised hand.

"Girls! Silence, please—one moment!"

At once there was dead quiet, except for the piteous sobbing of Eva Merrick, as she stood there in sight of all, with Miss Redgrave compassionately soothing her.

"It seems that Eva Merrick is not entitled to the prize," came Miss Somerfield's clear, ringing voice. "She has suddenly owned up before the whole school like this, confessing that she possessed herself of a question paper on the day prior to the examination. That, of course, gave her a most unfair adv—"

"Shame! Shame!"
 "Sh! Order!"

The interruption died down, Miss Somerfield ignoring it as being quite excusable.

"You are pained, girls, deeply grieved and shocked, and so am I. At the same time, we must remember this. Eva Merrick has plucked up courage to make a clean breast of her wickedness and folly. I cannot do other than ask you all to let that fact stone in some slight way for her previous action."

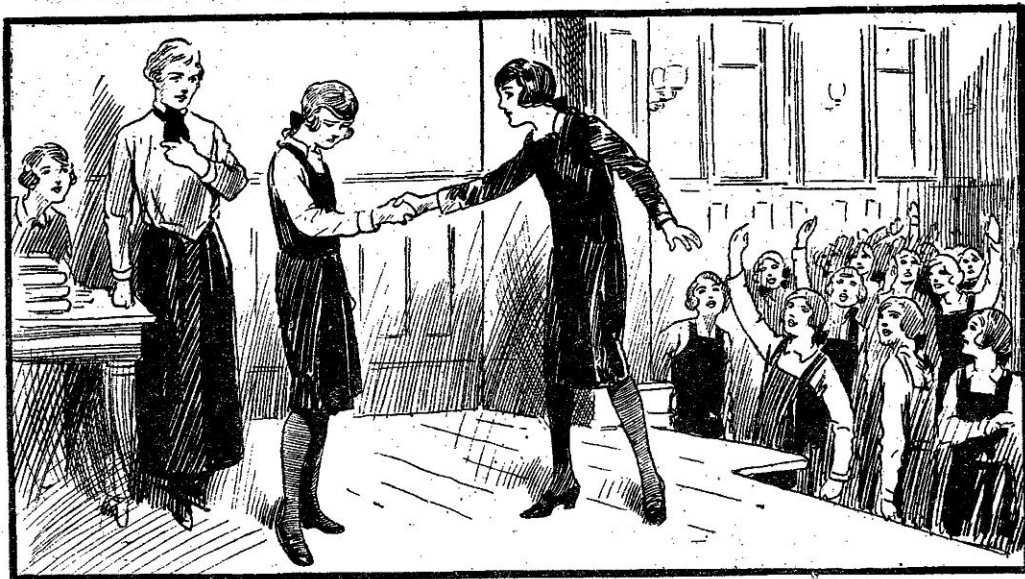
"Yes!"
 "Yes, wather! Of course, geals! Bai Jove!"

"Hurrah! Good old Doll! Bravo, bravo!"
 "Ooo, yes! Queek, queek! Give her ze cheer!"
 "Heep, heep—"
 "Hurrah!"
 "Hooway! Geals—geals, how gwand, what? Bwavo, Doll!"

Thus the Study 12 chums did their part towards the general uproar, whilst Dolly Delane shyly wriggled her way past girls who were clapping her on the back. As Dolly approached the platform, it was observed that Miss Somerfield spoke a word to Eva Merrick, urging her to withdraw quickly, and so be spared the humiliating ordeal she was undergoing.

But now a fine thing happened.

With a sudden brisker step, Dolly gained the platform, and made a little run to overtake the retiring Eva. Dolly caught one of that girl's hands, and shook it—a mute, yet eloquent, sign of



A NOBLE GIRL'S FORGIVENESS! In a moment Dolly had caught one of Eva's hands and was shaking it in a mute yet eloquent sign of what she thought of the girl who had atoned for her wickedness by confessing after all! "Bravo, Doll!" cried the other girls.

"Sh! Sh!"

But in vain now the various mistresses appealed for silence. The assembled school was being swayed and overwhelmed by quite a different feeling from that of a moment ago. Hissing gave place to a certain feeling of admiration. Whatever a Morcove girl had done, she had made atonement, at least.

Nor was there the slightest doubt that the very principal of the school approved this sudden wave of emotion which had greeted Eva's eleventh hour confession. Miss Somerfield could be seen standing close to the still weeping Eva, patting her soothingly.

"Poor girl," some of the scholars began to murmur, "she has been through something, I know!"

"Yes, wather! Bai Jove!"

"Dolly Delane!" Miss Somerfield suddenly called loudly. "Will Dolly Delane step forward, and—"

what Dolly thought of the culprit for having confessed, after all!

"Bravo, Doll! Bravo!"

The school went off its head again. The hand-clapping filled the air with a thrashing sound, whilst cheer after cheer went up. Naomer Nakua broke ranks, and did a caper. Polly forced Paula to give her a pick-a-back, and whilst the elegant one staggered about with her human load, the madcap waved a handkerchief.

"Bravo, Doll! Bravo!"

"Yes, wather! Howevah— My gwacious! Heap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And now Eva was gone, pityingly attended on her way to the headmistress's private room by Miss Redgrave. Miss Somerfield became all smiles again as she stepped towards shy Dolly and offered an envelope, the Grace Pullen Prize of a fifty-pound cheque!

"Next term's fees—that's the stuff!" exulted

Polly, dropping down from Paula's back at last. "Pouf! I can't cheer any more, girls. But keep it up, some of you!"

"Look at me!" wailed Paula, sweeping the hair out of her eyes. "A weck—a wuin! Haw, haw, haw! Nevah mind—what? Wather not, bai Jove! Geals, this is gweat!"

"Here she comes—Doll, our own old Doll! Good old Doormat! Hurrah!"

"Hooway!"

Shy as ever, looking as if she wanted the earth to open and swallow her—Dolly was amongst her own loving chums again. Happy—how happy she was! Yet there were tears in her eyes.

When mother and dad came to be told about all this! Oh, what a wonderful breaking-up day it was for her! And it was not to be her last breaking-up, after all. The prize was hers! This feather-weight envelope, it held a cheque for fifty pounds. She was not dreaming. No chance of doing that, when she was being so slapped on the back!

"Yes, wather!" chuckled Paula Creel, a couple of hours later, in the midst of all the final excitement of the scholars' going away in droves to the station. "Weal, geals, ewewything is all wight now—what?"

"And so good-bye, until next term, to dear old Study 12!" cried Polly, casting a last blithe look round the familiar den. "Coming, Betty? Coming, Paula—Naomer?"

"Ooo, yes! Queek—queek!"

Her Serene Highness dashed away then and there, perhaps to bolt down to the grounds and say another loving au-revoir to Jimmy, the jack-daw. Paula, hatted and gloved for the journey, was all smiles as she arose from the favourite arm-

chair. Betty slammed shut a table-drawer, and turned the key.

"Ready!" cried Betty gaily. "And so, girls, a week-to-day we get together for the great holiday adventure!"

"What a spree it will be!" laughed Polly, hoisting herself on to the table-edge for the last time that term. "The Morcove Concert Party—ha, ha, ha! No crying off, Paula, when the day comes!"

"Haw, haw, haw! I shall be theah, geals!" was the beaming assurance. "Yes, wather! I with-draw all the thweats I have ever made of bweaking with you, Polly, deah. You are a gweat twial. Howevah—"

"Cab's waiting!" Tess rushed in to say. "All luggage down?"

"Yes—yes, wather!"

"We've not seen Eva!"

"You'll see her downstairs," Tess promised. "She is facing all the girls as they go off, looking so relieved, so happy once again."

"She well may," murmured Betty, moving with the rest towards the door. "If Eva hasn't made ample atonement for the thing she did—well! Hallo, Doll!"

"Cashed that chequo yet, Doll?" gaily cried Polly. "You are coming with us by the school special, aren't you, dear?"

"Part of the way, yes," was the happy answer.

"And next reopening day you will be driving up with us, as per usual!" exclaimed Betty. "How jolly it is to know it, Doll!"

Someone went past in the corridor, alone, nose in air. It was Cora Grandways.

"Haw haw, haw!" chuckled Paula, whilst the others grinned at Cora's disdainful bearing, put on to cover her crestfallen state. "I suppose you'll be back next term, Corwa—worse luck?"

"Yes, I shall!" the spitfire of the Form flashed about to say fiercely. "And you can look out for trouble, some of you, next term!"

"Yap, yap!" Polly responded saucily, and Cora flung on again, white with suppressed passion.

"I say, we've broken up! We are going home for the hols!" the madcap now cried boisterously. "Hurrah! Hooray! Good-bye, Study 12! We are coming back again!"

"Bai Jove, wather! Geals, I—Yahroo! Polly, dwop it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Madcap Polly suddenly dashed away, and after her, more or less decorously, came the other girls—Paula last of all, surveying herself in a pocket-mirror as she walked. It had been like Polly to tip Paula's hat over her eyes at the final moment.

"Dweadful—dweadful life!" lamented Paula, doing a fresh toilette as she stepped along. "But, theah, it's no use gwumbling. I'd be pweicious misewable, geals, if I were not coming back to Morcove next term."

"So would I," said Dolly, very quietly, and once again, as she cast a last look back, tears of gladness sprang into her eyes.

"You never know how much you love Morcove School," said Dolly softly, "until you are leaving it, as you think, for ever!"

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

In next week's issue commences a magnificent new series of tales of Betty Barton & Co. on holiday. The first is entitled "The Morcove Concert Party!" and in it you will read of the many happenings which the chums experienced on their unusual, but exciting, holiday.

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