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# The Schoolgirls' Own 2<sup>nd</sup>



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**RIVAL CLAIMANTS!**

An exciting incident from this week's long complete tale of Morcove School.

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



## THE GIRL WHO NEEDED A FRIEND!

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By MARJORIE STANTON.

*There is a strange mystery surrounding Mary Cavendish, of the Fourth Form at Morcove School—a mystery in which Betty Barton & Co. become involved. You will enjoy this most enthralling story.*

### The Fifth Form Raid.

**B**ETTY BARTON sat up in bed and listened. All should really have been quiet in the Fourth Form dormitory at Morcove School, but Betty, who had been lying awake for about ten minutes, sat up and pricked up her ears, for to those keen ears had come a queer sound.

She blinked about her and rubbed her eyes, but there was nothing at all to be seen. All was in utter pitch darkness, and although the curtains were drawn wide apart not a vestige of light came through.

Heavy clouds were hiding even the stars, and there was no moon at all. It was just the very night to hear queer sounds, and Betty's heart beat rather more quickly than usual as she groped for the candle.

But the candle was not to be found—the candle that usually stood beside her bed. Pushing back the clothes carefully so that as little noise as possible should be made, she put one bare foot on to the cold floor. The other followed, and Betty sat on the edge of her bed for a moment, thinking.

For the sounds came more clearly now, and they did not sound half so frightening.

There was whispering and a faint, soft laugh—girlish whispering it was—and that, coupled with the laughter, told her pretty clearly that it was not burglars.

But it didn't seem to come from inside the long dormitory. No one apparently was awake, and the whispering distinctly came from outside.

Now there came the sound of stumbling, more whispering, and then—silence.

As captain of the Fourth Form, Betty had to think quickly quite often, and she thought very quickly now. Her hand groped out into the darkness for the next bed, and then, finding the pillow, roamed down to the face.

"Polly—Polly, wake up!"

There was a rustle then, and Polly Linton sat bolt upright, blinking hard.

"What's the matter?" mumbled Polly.

"Shush!" hissed Betty warningly. "Wake up, it's a raid!"

Polly Linton, having just been aroused from slumber, had not gathered her wits completely, and rubbed her eyes and blinked still rather perplexedly at Betty.

"What's a raid?" she asked. "Go to sleep—" and Polly fell back on her pillows again.

By that time, however, Betty had left her and was groping across to the bed on the other side—a bed in which a slumbering figure was gracefully curled. There was no ceremony about Betty, however, as she awoke that figure to life. She put forward her hand, and it alighted on a most aristocratic nose. It alighted very hard, too!

"Oh, gwacious!"

The graceful figure awoke to life, and Betty gave a faint, startled gasp.

"Paula—sorry, dear, but there's a Fifth Form raid—quickly!"

"A waid, bai Jove!" mumbled Paula. "Something landed on my nose, you know! I wather fancy it was a pweepice, Betty! In fact, I'm certain it was! Do you think it was a pweepice? I was just motawing down a woad, you know—"

Betty caught Paula by the shoulder and shook her fiercely.

"Never mind the motoring or the road," she said anxiously. "You've been dreaming. I can hear whispering outside. It's the Fifth—they're going to raid us—pillow fight!"

Polly Linton in the bed near by heard that clearly and she jumped out of bed at once. Trust Polly, the madcap of the Fourth, to be ready for a pillow fight.

"My goodness," said Polly in loud tones, "where are they, Betty?"

"Shush!" said Betty, half in anxiety, half laughing. "Not so loudly. They think it's a surprise."

"Yes, wather—a gweat surpriswe," mumbled Paula Creel. "Bai Jove, I shall cwouch wight down in my bed, deah geal, and twick them vevy cleavahly, y'know!"

"You jolly well won't!" whispered Polly in penetrating tones. "You'll get a pillow and hop about!"

"I wefuse to hop about," murmured Paula dreamily. "I'll cheeah like anything, Polly. Go in and win, deah geal—"

But Polly Linton, having been roused herself, was allowing no quarter to her friends. She went up to Paula's bed just as Betty ran hurriedly along to others, and caught Paula's bedclothes and whipped them off in a most skilful manner.

Paula gave a wail as the keen, cold air of the dormitory smote her, and she sat up, but there

was no hope of getting that bed comfortable again, and she put her feet on to the floor, shuddered, and groped for a dressing-gown.

By that time half a dozen girls were awakened and were sleepily preparing themselves for action.

Outside there was a shuffling and whispering still, so that it became apparent that the Fifth-Formers were marshalling their forces. Often and often there were struggles between the Fourth and Fifth, and more than once the Fourth had raided the Fifth Form dormitory at dead of night, and vice versa.

But this was to have been a surprise attack! Little did the attacking force dream what preparedness there was inside the dormitory!

"Pillows ready, girls?" whispered Betty anxiously.

"Rather!" echoed Polly. "A good swipe and a strong one! I pick out Carla for her beautiful nose!"

Carla Vansittart, of the Fifth Form, had a fine nose of which she was very proud, and even in the darkness it would make a fine target for Polly, so there they were chuckles.

"Yes, wather!" agreed Paula Creel. "But where's my comb, Betty? I can't find my comb anywhere. Give me a light, deah geal!"

"You don't want a comb," said Betty, "you want a pillow!"

"What you want is co-mence," chuckled Polly. "Your hair will get ruffled quickly enough, Paula—Shush—shush!"

"Ready!" muttered Betty. And then even, Paula realised that it was time for action and not for vanity. She picked up her pillow and stood upon her bed as though guarding a castle.

But Betty and Polly and Madge Minden had crept to the door in the darkness and were awaiting the attackers there. Someone was going to get a surprise attack even as the Fifth had planned, only it wasn't going to be the Fourth!

Slowly, very slowly, the Fourth Form dormitory door opened and a figure came through.

"Shush, girls!" came a whisper.

"Not a sound?"

"Wait till I say go!"

"You've just said it!" sniggered someone.

"Shush!"

In the darkness the three Fourth-Formers were with their pillows nicely poised.

One, two, three Fifth-Formers had entered, their figures dimly visible, and the tallest of them halted for a moment, and stretched out her hand for the electric light switch.

"Go!" she said.

Go it certainly was, for Betty, Polly, and Madge took that as their signal. With one accord they brought down their pillows. Millicent Gay, the leader of the Fifth, received one pillow very hard indeed upon her head, and her hand was knocked clean away from the switch. Down to the floor she went, with her friend collapsing on top of her from a mighty blow of Polly Linton's.

"Give it to them!" shrieked Polly. "We'll teach them to surprise us!"

"Buck up, Fifth!" wailed Millicent from the door. "Oh, dear—"

"Wally wound!" called Paula. "Wally wound like anything, girls! Wouse—Gwacious!"

A battle royal there was in the doorway now, but some enterprising Fifth-Former had switched on the light, and Polly, Betty, and Madge were

driven back into their dormitory as Carla Vansittart, of the Fifth, swung her pillow mightily.

With the bright light glaring into their eyes and the noise of the pillow-fighters so close at hand every girl in the dormitory was soon awake, and it took only a second for them to realise just how things stood.

Then out of bed most of them crawled to join in the fray just as the army of Fifth-Formers swarmed in mass into the dormitory.

"Back up, Fifth!"

"Rally, Fourth!"

"Tess—Trixie!" panted Madge Minden, who was sorely pressed.

But Paula was in action now, with Tess Trelawney and Trixie Hope dashing up, still half asleep.

Crash! went Paula's pillow at someone, and Polly's wild shriek very quickly told her who that someone was.

"Oh, bai Jove," murmured the distressed Paula, "I'm vevy sorrowy, I thought it was Carla, y'know! I'm—Ow!"

Down went Paula like a log.

"It was Carla," said that girl, and laughed in her peculiar way. She was a tall girl, with a shapely face that would have made her beautiful even without her magnificent eyes.

Yet beautiful though she was, she looked cruel as she gazed down at Paula. There was no fun in Carla's pillow-fighting—no harmless, merry rivalry!

The other Fifth-Formers were getting real fun out of it, and were laughing as they were hit or as they hit someone else. To Carla, however, it was something more desperate, and she pushed on past Paula as that girl sat up gasping.

"Pway come back, Carla!" exclaimed Paula excitedly. "Help me up, someone! I want to give Carla what for!"

"Help you up!" laughed Gertrude French.

"Why, of course! There, goodness if she hasn't fallen down again!" she laughed in surprise. Considering the biff she had given Paula with her pillow the moment that girl was erect there was little cause for surprise!

"Rally, Fourth!" said Betty desperately.

"Oh, dear, don't slack, Mary!"

She waved her hand then at Mary Cavendish. Mary, a girl who had been in the Form a week or so, might have been excused at not knowing what to do under the circumstances, but she had the force of example before her.

"Get your pillow!" said Betty impatiently.

But there stood Mary beside her bed, as though she could not see what was wanted. Yet one would have thought a mere child would have grabbed the nearest pillow and jumped into the fray. It seemed so obvious!

Mary, however, just stood by, looking at her pillow doubtfully and then at the combatants.

Once only did she make an effort to join in, and that was when Carla came towards her. Tess Trelawney had just rolled over, and it was for Tess's pillow that Mary dived. She got it and swung it over her head.

But Carla approached her, and Mary dropped her arm and drew back, afraid.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Polly Linton breathlessly. "Don't funk, Mary!"

Polly, at least, was not funkng; such a mighty biff she gave that her pillow flew right away. A Fifth-Former took it and hurled it into the distance, so that Polly stood weaponless.

Down went Mary then under a swipe from

Carla, and Polly made a rush to Mary's bed just as that girl staggered up.

The only pillow left unused was Mary's, and Polly took possession of that. She grasped it firmly and swung it—swung it high over her head to give Carla a really good one, when Mary, dropping Tess's pillow, wheeled upon her with a sharp cry.

"Stop—stop! That's my pillow!"

Polly Linton hesitated half-way in that swing, she simply couldn't help it. A girl's talking of her pillow in a pillow fight, studying how her pillow was being used! Never had Polly heard such a thing. Bad enough to have a girl fanning, but that she should not want to risk an uncomfortable pillow afterwards, that was too much!

Up went the pillow just as Carla herself advanced.

But it did not hit Carla. At the critical moment Mary Cavendish jumped forward and caught Polly's arm. Down went the pillow to the end of its swing—down—upon a spiky end of the bedstead. There was a ripping sound and from the pillow came a shower of feathers. Feathers scattered in a cloud, but there was something else, too, something that gleamed—something that rolled upon the floor with a queer, chinking noise.

"Gold!" gasped Polly.

"Gold coins!"

Round the floor amongst the beds those coins rolled, a dozen or more of them, gleaming in the light and chinking as they came into contact with the bedsteads.

**A Very Queer Mystery.**

"GOLD!" said Betty Barton breathlessly. "Oh, my gracious, whatever next?"

"And out of the pillow, too!" gasped Polly Linton. "Well!"

But there was one girl who did not seem to be in the least surprised, that girl was Mary Cavendish. She jumped forward and, on her hands and knees, scraped the coins together. Now her face was scarlet, and how confused she seemed.

All the while Carla Vansittart stood there watching her with a most extraordinary look on her face. Once Carla stooped and picked from the floor one of the golden coins, which she eyed in the light, turning it over and over in her slim, graceful hand.

The pillow fight suspended, other girls gathered round her, girls of the Fourth and of the Fifth—the lion and the lamb together.

"It's not modern," exclaimed Madge Minden curiously. "Why, how old they are—seventeen hundred this one!"

"Yes, yes! And a William and Mary this!" remarked Tess Trelawney. "They can't have been in the pillow all this time!"

So seriously did Tess make that remark that there was a positive shriek of laughter.

"Gracious, I do hope not!" said Betty Barton merrily. "That pillow is nothing like two hundred years old. I should think—"

She turned then to Mary. Mary seemed to know something about this, and it became perfectly obvious whose coins they were.

"Our little miser," said Polly Linton, with a smile. "Hiding gold coins in a pillow-case. So that's why you didn't want to join in the fight, is it, Mary?"

Mary did not reply. She was counting her coins anxiously, and turned to Carla.

"How many have you there, please?" she asked.

"One!" returned Carla shortly. "And one which I intend to keep!"

How queer that remark! The cheek of it! Betty Barton would have stood up for Mary there and then had she seemed to require it, but Mary, after a moment's hesitation, nodded her head in meek agreement.

"All right," she said.

"Where did you get them, anyway?" demanded Carla, and her thin eyebrows drew together over her large dark blue eyes.

But Mary did not answer that question. She hung her head and turned away from the girl. But there was no escape. Carla caught her by the arm and asked the question again, this time more fiercely.



**THE SECRET HOARD!** Feathers scattered in a cloud from the burst pillow, but there was something else, too! "Gold!" gasped Polly. "Gold coins!" The girls looked in amazement at this strange discovery.

"Answer me!" she insisted.

"Yes, answer the K.C.!" mocked Polly Linton.

"Did you, or did you not, on the umpteenth instant—"

"You be quiet!" flashed Carla sharply. "I don't want your interference, Polly Linton. I'm speaking to Mary. I want to know how she came into possession of these coins?"

"And what's it to do with you?" asked Betty Barton in natural surprise. "Mary has come by them honestly, I suppose. She probably collects coins."

"Collects them—yes, oh, most obviously!" sneered Carla. "But from where, that's what I want to know?"

Carla was most unpleasant, and she really got the backs of the Form up by her insolent way.

Such cheek it was raiding them and then adding this insult to that injury. As though a girl could not have old coins without being suspected of stealing them!

"Weally, Carla," said Paula sternly, "I must regard your mannah as being the worst of bad taste! Yes, wather!"

"Oh, you keep quiet!" retorted Carla. "No one is addressing you, no one cares what you think! I asked Mary a question, and I insist that she answers!"

What a murmur there was then from the Fourth! Even the Fifth looked somewhat taken aback. For Carla, judging by her manner of address, might have been a mistress, or, at least, a monitress, instead of a Fifth-Former.

No wonder, then, that the Fourth resented her manner.

Carla stood there proudly, looking very much like a mistress, but Polly Linton picked up a pillow and swung it high.

"I'll answer that question," said madcap Polly. "And this is my answer!"

Then Carla's dignity vanished completely, and she dodged aside as the pillow whizzed down. In a moment there was turmoil again; in a moment pillows were swinging furiously, and there were squeals, laughs, and exclamations.

But this time there was more battle in the fighting. The Fifth were getting too uppish by far, thought the Fourth, coming into the dormitory and acting like mistresses.

"Down with the Fifth Form swank!" said Polly defiantly. "Out with them!"

"Yes, wather—charge!" said Paula excitedly. "Charge—charge— Oh!"

Too late Paula hesitated in her devastating career. Right up to the doorway she charged, just as that doorway opened and a figure in a dressing-gown entered.

Biff! went the pillow, and the newcomer staggered back in fright and dismay.

"Oh," gasped Polly Linton, "that's done it! Paula, you duffer—"

"Oh, Paula!"

But Paula was already assisting the newcomer to her feet, all flushed with confusion. It was no small offence to knock down a mistress in that manner.

Miss Massingham rose to her feet and blinked about her.

"Really—really," she gasped, "what is the meaning of this? Who knocked me down then? I demand an answer! And what are you Fifth-Formers doing here?"

She looked at the pillows and at the feathers flying about on the floor, and she needed no verbal reply.

"I see," she said grimly, "a pillow fight! Disgraceful—positively disgraceful! Every girl concerned will take two hundred lines!"

"Yes, wather! I'm fwightfully sowwy, Miss Massingham, I didn't mean to knock you down! However, it might have been worse, you know!" Paula added consolingly.

Miss Massingham drew herself up.

"So it was you, Paula. I am glad to hear that it might have been worse. Myself, I am unable to conceive such a possibility. I did not think that you would ever act like a hooligan, Paula!"

"Good gwacious!"

"But you will take an extra fifty lines for carelessness as well as for breaking the rules. Now disperse, everyone, at once!"

Gladly enough the Fifth Form dispersed, walk-

ing sheepishly past Miss Massingham out of the dormitory. She had a good deal to say to them in the corridor, too, and there was scarcely a Fifth-Former but returned to bed a sadder and wiser girl.

The Fourth, too, were very much sadder, for two hundred lines to write meant the occupying of their time for many a spare hour. On the morrow probably Miss Massingham would deliver them a little lecture that would be worse even than the lines.

So there were groans as the girls went to bed. "And to think," said Polly sadly, "that if we'd finished the first time and not started again all would have been well."

"Yes, wather! Howevah, we couldn't have Carlah dictating, y'know," pointed out Paula. "It's so infwa dig!"

"Such cheek," agreed Polly, "and swank! What does it matter to her where Mary got the gold coins, although," she added more quietly to Betty as she snuggled down in bed, "I must say it's rather queer."

"Queer, yes," yawned Betty. "But if she likes to collect coins why shouldn't she, and a pillow's a pretty safe hiding-place. It isn't Carla's business that I can see."

And Betty turned over in bed and prepared herself for sleep. But Polly Linton looked thoughtfully down the line of beds to where Mary Cavendish was trying to punch and stuff her pillow into some semblance of a comfortable shape.

A queer girl, Polly thought Mary Cavendish was, and she resolved to give her a few hints. Mary was too meek, Polly thought. Mary ought to stand up for herself more and not let Carla dictate to her. Who was Carla, anyway?

Certainly not the Lady Magnificent she thought she was. Perhaps her mother did own large estates near the school; perhaps the family was very old, but that did not excuse arrogance at Morcove.

Carla would have to learn that she was not so very much, after all, at the school—not a mistress nor a monitress, not even a member of the mighty Sixth! The only way to point that out to her forcibly was to cheek her and actively resent her commands.

But Polly Linton was rather sleepy, and she closed her eyes in slumber long before she had fully decided just what she was going to tell Mary Cavendish.

Mary, however, lay awake a long time, turning restlessly in her bed, looking very worried indeed, and very anxious. There was a load on Mary's mind, and before her always was a frightening vision—the vision of Carla Vansittart asking questions and demanding a reply.

For some reason Mary was afraid of Carla, and for the same reason Carla treated Mary as a serf, as someone whom she could order about as she pleased. It was all very queer—very queer indeed.

#### The Mystery of Mary Cavendish.

"I WANT a word with you!"

Carla Vansittart, haughty as usual, came to a standstill in the quadrangle at Morcove and addressed herself curtly to Mary Cavendish. Mary was sitting on a stone seat under a leafless tree, looking at the old stone building of Morcove with the ivy trailing over it.

"Me?" said Mary, and started to her feet.

"Yes. Come along to my study."

Carla half turned away, as though expecting

Mary to follow her. But other girls were watching. There was Polly Linton not far away, arm-in-arm with Paula Creel, and Betty Barton trying to bounce a tennis ball as high as the lowest branches of a neighbouring tree.

So Mary hesitated.

"I'm here," she said. "What do you want to say?"

"We can't talk here. Come to my study."

"But I can talk here," said Mary quickly. "I share no secrets with you. What do you want to say, please?"

Her hair, nut brown, was with most attractive lights in it. She had grey, clear eyes. Yet those clear eyes were not so firm as the tone of voice hinted they should be. Mary was afraid of something.

"I told you," repeated Carla in painfully cold, clear tones, "that I want a word with you in my study. I shall be there in ten minutes' time. You can wait for me—room four, it is!"

And off strode Carla in quite imperial manner, a swaggering walk that made Polly Linton toss her head in annoyance.

"Any orders for me?" said Polly flippantly.

"Yes, wathor!" said Paula. "Pway give your commands to youah humble servants, Carla!"

But either Carla did not hear them or did not choose to heed them; anyway, she walked up to two friends of hers who were walking arm-in-arm some fifty yards away.

"Swank!" sniffed Polly Linton. "Gracious, I wonder she ever sees us at all with a nose like that obscuring the view!"

She turned to Mary Cavendish, full of good, sound advice, but Mary was gone, walking across towards the school.

In sheer amazement Polly stared. She had not for one moment imagined that Mary was likely to obey such an order. What she had intended to tell Mary was just how to answer Carla when she "rode the high horse." But this was really too much!

"Mary!" she exclaimed. "I say, come back!"

"Mawy, deah geal—"

But Mary Cavendish hesitated but for a moment in her stride, then went on more quickly. So Polly ran after her and caught her by the shoulder.

"I say," gasped Polly, "you're not going to wait for Carla in her study?"

Had she been able to then, Mary would doubtless have ignored that question, but to do so was quite impossible. Flushed and confused, she looked Polly full in the face.

"I may as well hear what she has to say."

"Let her say it here, then!"

"Yes, but—but it may be private."

Polly Linton stared, and Paula Creel, who had with unusual lack of lethargy hurried up, shook her head sadly.

"Weally, deah geal, you must not obey the Fifth. You are new here. When you have been here as long as I have you will know bettah, pewwaps. But one cannot expect wise heads on young shoulders, bai Jove!"

Mary simply had to smile at that. If anything, she was older than Paula, and in her heart she considered herself wisor as well.

"I think I'd better," she replied quietly. "There's a reason—"

"A reason!" exclaimed Polly, with a frown.

"A reason why you must allow that girl to treat you like a slave! My goodness, it must be a strong reason!"

But Mary was not to be drawn, although she knew how queerly Polly was looking at her. She just shrugged her shoulders.

"I'd better go," was all she said. "I won't let down the Fourth, if that's what you're afraid of, though. I'll speak to Carla quite plainly and quite firmly. Only here"—she made a sweep of her hand—it's not possible. You understand?"

They did not, but because there was no alternative they nodded their heads in agreement.

"I suppose so," said Polly doubtfully. "Though I'm blessed if I see—"

"Wathor not! A Fourth-Formah bows her head to no one, bai Jove, except mistresses and monitresses and the Sixth," said Paula seriously. "Howevah, you know bettah, pewwaps!"

Mary smiled a queer little smile and nodded her head shortly. Yes, that was her own opinion that she knew better, and she walked straight on across the lawn to the open doorway of the school, and across the polished floor of the hall, up the winding staircase to the Fifth Form corridor.

And there in Study No. 4 she waited, standing up and looking about her casually. It was a quite interesting room, but obviously Carla's. There were ornate vases, filled with flowers that were expensive and usually unobtainable at this time of the year, there were Japanese prints on the walls and an expensive carpet on the floor.

A step came in the corridor, a firm step that was just like Carla herself. One could almost imagine the swagger that accompanied that step—the slight sway of the shoulder, the aloof carriage of the head.

Carla flung the door wide open and hesitated on the threshold.

"Oh, here you are!" she observed in a tone that clearly showed that she was not quite sure that Mary would be there.

And how triumphant was the glance that she flashed at the girl, triumphant with just a little malice, too!

"Yes, here I am," agreed Mary. "Now, what do you wish to say?"

"Oh, I have heaps to say to you," said Carla, and she flung herself into the comfortable arm-chair, just to show, Mary guessed, that she was the superior person who sat while the other stood.

"I would like you to be quick, I have work to do."

"Oh, you would like me to be quick!" mocked Carla. "And pray what does it matter what you like? It strikes me, Mary Cavendish, that you have a great deal to learn. I don't like your swaggering ways in the least!"

"My swaggering ways!" gasped Mary.

"Yes, your swagger," returned Carla coldly. "It ill becomes a gutter girl—a pauper—to adopt such fine ways, even though she may have found a little gold!"

A pink spot showed in Mary's cheeks, and she drew herself up.

"If you have called me here to fling my poverty in my face—"

"Not your poverty, but your riches," interrupted Carla, with a leer. "Your new-found wealth. A fine thing for a girl who is being sent here by charity to have gold coins in her pillow, and valuable coins, too!"

Mary stood like a statue, and the harsh words rolled off her harmlessly. Let Carla say what she pleased, let her heap insult upon insult! What did it matter, anyway?

"My mother sent you here—goodness knows why—and I'm not proud of you. I want you to



**A STRIKING RECEPTION.** Biff! went the pillow, just as the door opened and a figure in a dressing-gown entered. The new-comer staggered back in dismay. "Paula!" gasped Polly. "That's done it! It's Miss Massingham!"

remember that here we are not distant cousins but strangers!"

"It is my wish, too," nodded Mary. "I do not want to shout my shame to the world."

Like the flick of a whip in Carla's face that was. One could almost see a streak of white in the scarlet cheeks.

"Your shame!" she exclaimed. "My goodness, is that the return for my mother's generosity? Shame, indeed! Where would you be but for our kindness? But for my mother you would be in some orphans' home, where your father ordered you to be sent!"

"My father! That is not true!"

Then only did a flash of temper come into Mary's eyes, and she started forward with hands clenched, as though prepared to force those insulting words back down the arrogant girl's throat.

"Oh, it's true enough!" scoffed Carla. "Your father did not leave a penny—not a penny! He died a pauper!"

A sharp cry Mary gave, cry of a wounded animal.

"My father was one of the best gentlemen that has ever breathed—yes, and one of the cleverest, too! There was not a man in the country who knew more about chemistry!"

"Chemistry?" laughed Carla. "I do like that! A mere eccentric person dabbling with chemicals in a lonely house that was falling into the sea. Only a fool would have lived in such a place, with the sea tearing the foundations from below!"

"A brave man, you mean!" said Mary dangerously, and her cheeks were white and glazed and her eyes hard and staring. "A brave man. He lived in that house—all that was left of the giant estate that was stolen from us by the Vansittarts!"

Her tone was cold and measured. Carla sat bolt upright in her chair simply bubbling over with rage.

"My goodness, the cheek of it!" she exclaimed. "You—you have the impudence to stand there and say that—you, who are being kept by the Vansittarts, clothed by the Vansittarts, and schooled by them!"

"Schooled, clothed, and fed by what is ours by right!" retorted Mary proudly.

"That is not true! Your father told you that, but he was silly!"

Mary Cavendish drew back a pace and picked up a heavy book.

"Say that again," she said in awful fury, "and you'll regret it, Carla! You may say what you like about me, but my father is dead, and I, at least, respect him. I love him still, and only you, who are not fit to lick his boots, would dare say a word against him!"

Carla cowered back afraid until that firm right hand was dropped. But the gleam in the eyes was still there and the proud chin was as proud as ever.

"I dare say anything I please!"

That was the Fifth-Former's retort—a retort that had nothing of its former arrogance and very little of the sneer that marked most of her words.

She had received a bad set-back, and Mary was mistress of the situation—for a moment.

"About me—yes," shrugged Mary. "I don't count!"

"You don't! And if I have any more impertinence from you I shall report it to mother. Mother will take you away from the school then, and send you to the poverty where you belong—send you to some industrial school, where you will have a little of that grand spirit knocked out of you!"

Such was Carla's sneer now, and she rose to her feet, as though feeling once again that she held all the cards in this queer game.

"Your mother may do as she pleases!"

"Then she shall!" shouted Carla vindictively. "I'll have you turned out of this school and sent back where you belong. I'll see my mother this very afternoon, and to-night will be your very last night under this roof. And I'll tell her about that mysterious gold of yours, and ask her to see that nothing has been taken from the house!"

Mary, however, was not listening; she turned to the door and quietly opened it, closing it almost as quietly.

But now she hurried out of that corridor and down to her own study.

And there she stood in the middle of that study trembling with the aftermath of her outburst of passion.

"Oh, what a fool I am!" she groaned. "Oh, daddy—daddy, don't let me lose my temper! Oh, daddy, I do try so hard not to! I must be meek—I must be—and I shall win!"

A mist of tears there was in her eyes as she leant upon the window-sill and looked across the distant field to where the Atlantic lay—the wide, stretching Atlantic upon which she had looked every morning on rising until she had come here.

The Atlantic was her friend, and now too far away to be heard, and her father was dead! Oh, if only they knew how clever he had been, and how he had yearned to give her all the best in the world.

He wanted her to be a great scientist, a chemist who should earn the awe and respect of the world, and now was her chance. Here she could get the grounding to earn a scholarship and go to university, if only she would be meek.

And here perhaps she could fight the enemy—the Vansittarts!

But, oh, if only there were some way of gaining fame without their aid! But a pauper she was not. It was not for charity they were sending her here. Carla did not know; Carla would never know, dearly though Mary loved to tell her; but Mrs. Vansittart was playing her cards cunningly, and using the Cavendish brains for her own end.

That Mary knew, and it did not make her love her relations any the more.

Her own pride might suffer in taking their patronage, but her father's last words still rang in her ears.

"One day you will come into your own, Mary—one day you will be mistress of these estates, with the proud Vansittarts, thieves and rogues, begging for the crumbs that fall from your table!"

One day—one day, perhaps, for Mrs. Vansittart was no fool!

#### Treasure Trove.

"Oh, deah! Oh, gwacious! Betty, stop!"

But Betty Barton did not stop. She leaned heavily on her pedals and switched to the lowest of her three speeds. Three speeds on a bicycle was a necessity in that part of Devon, and even with a low gear the hill-climbing was not easy.

Polly Linton, with her school hat on the back of her head, was ploughing up the hill grimly towards the skyline at the top, and Betty Barton, very nearly done, was only a yard or so behind. Poor Paula, however, was well in the rear and gasping painfully.

"Oh, gwacious—oh, deah!" gasped Paula. "I think pewwaps I'd bettah walk!"

She did so, and puffed and gasping, she leaned on her saddle and mopped her face with a dainty handkerchief.

It was Polly who had suggested the ride and Betty who had agreed. Paula, of course, would much have preferred a nice comfortable "west" in the armchair by the fire.

Indeed, she had just got comfortable with a few cushions and a novel when Polly, in her mad way, had tipped up the armchair and rolled Paula on to the carpet.

There was nothing for it then but to accompany them, and here they were, miles from Morocco, near to the windswept shore of the Atlantic, on the top of high cliffs that looked down on to the foaming surf that beat in a watery mist over the rocks below.

Clearly Paula could hear the beat of the sea, and at the top of the hill Polly Linton had whipped off her hat and was waving it frantically.

"The sea—the sea! Come on, Paula!" she shrilled. "Buck up! Never say die!"

Paula waved her hanky feebly and called back, in such a hollow voice:

"Yes, wather! Pway wun on, deah geal; I'll wait heah for you!"

"Oh, come on, slacker!" laughed Betty breathlessly, and not for worlds would Betty have admitted how near to "dead beat" she was. "Only a few yards up the hill, you know, Paula!"

Paula knew that all too well.

She looked back whence they had come, at the long hill down which they had coasted, and she groaned. There was no way out of this save by climbing a hill. Really, it was too awful! And this was Polly's idea of a ripping afternoon!

"Oh, deah! Oh, for a cup of tea," sighed Paula, "and an armchair!"

"What!" shrieked Polly. "Didn't hear!"

"A cup of tea!" shrilled Paula. "I'm pwo-stwate with exhaustion. I shall collapse—I know I shall!"

Polly Linton, arms akimbo, looked at Betty and whispered, then the two of them came rushing down the hill at a far greater pace than they had ascended it.

"There's a house in sight," said Polly. "They're sure to give us tea, you know—positively certain to—and buttered scones!"

"Think of that, Paula," smiled Betty; "and an armchair probably."

"Bai Jove, you weally think so?"

"Sure of it," said Polly. "We'll help you up the hill, eh, Betty?"

"Won't we just," nodded Betty, and poor Paula was too far gone to see the gleam of fun in Polly's eyes. Such mischievous eyes Polly had, too!

"That's very nice of you," she sighed. "Of course, I am not weally tired, you know—mercly pwo-stwate. The Cweels are used to being dwiven about."

"Like sheep, I know," nodded Polly, in sympathy. "Shall I yap like a sheep-dög? Perhaps that will revive the old instinct. Bow-wow! Wo-wow!"

"Woof, woof!" said Betty.

And they laughed merrily at the extraordinary expression on their chum's face.

"Weally," murmured Paula, "what a howwible noise, Polly!"



**ROUSED TO ANGER.** Mary Cavendish picked up a heavy book. "You may say what you like about me!" she cried, in fury. "But if you say anything more against my dead father you will regret it!"



"Perhaps they're driven as motor-cars," said the madcap of the Fourth thoughtfully. "Honk, honk!"

Then it dawned upon Paula, and she looked quite serious.

"Weally, dear geals, I mean dwiven about in cawwiages and things, you know. The Cweels always had magnificent horses and wode like anything!"

Polly Linton grinned cheerfully.

"All right, we'll be the horses. Gee up, Betty!"

And Polly caught Paula by one arm and Betty by the other. Polly's energy really did seem inexhaustible, but Betty was laughing almost too much to run.

Firmly they took the aristocratic Paula, and off went Polly at an alarming pace. They simply dragged Paula with them, stumbling over the stony road, and in danger of falling every second.

"Oh, stop! Pway stop!" she wailed. "Polly, I shall fall!"

"The Creels never fall," said Polly. "They ride like anything—you just said so! I'm galloping now. Are you galloping—yes?"

"Yes, rather!" laughed Betty.

"Stop—whoa! Whoa!" panted Paula. "Oh, deah, stop, horses—I mean, whoa up!"

"I'm running away now," said Polly. "I've got the bit in my teeth."

And straight up the hill Polly dashed, with Betty, too exhausted to follow, collapsing by the roadside in fits of laughter at the sight of Paula stumbling forward and panting and gasping as the inexhaustible Polly ran madly on at a gallop.

They certainly reached the top of the hill, and there Polly collapsed by the roadside, rolling over and over with laughter as Paula fell straight down and fought for breath.

Not for five minutes could they move on after that, and Betty, in the meantime, brought up the bike for Paula.

But they were quite contented sitting there looking across the fields to the distant blue sea and the old crumbling house on the edge of the cliff.

"Is that the place?" murmured Paula when she had recovered. "So you really think we shall get a cup of tea theah, Betty? I don't suppose they'll have my special tea."

"Shouldn't be surprised if not," nodded Polly.

"We ought to have sent them a telegram, really."

"The point is," said Betty, "how are we going to get across? Can we take our bikes, or shall we lower them under the hedge?"

"Carriage and pair, as before. A Creel couldn't arrive in any other way," said Polly, with a reproving shake of the head. "I'm surprised at you, Betty!"

"Weally, Polly, I should wefuse to be cawwiages—I mean dwiven. I shall walk. On second thoughts, pawwaps we could just stay here. I shall fall asleep at any moment!"

Betty Barton, who was leaning over an old stone wall gazing across at the house, pursed her lips and frowned.

"That's about the best thing to do really, for I don't honestly think there's anyone in that house."

"Oh, don't say that!" implored Polly. "There must be; it wouldn't be empty!"

"Well, where's the field-glasses?" said Betty. "We can soon settle it!"

The field-glasses were strapped on Polly's machine, and they were soon unhitched and focused correctly for the distance. Field-glasses

were things needed by the sea, and Betty, a good leader, did not forget them.

"No one there at all," she said. "But it looks to me as though part of the house is hanging over the sea."

"Over it!" gasped Polly. "Oh, goodness, don't say that, Betty! What, falling into the sea!"

Betty nodded and handed her friend the glasses. They had explored most of the places within cycling distance of the school, but they had never come here before. In the first place, the only route had lain across a field; a gate had guarded that before. But the gate this afternoon had been open, and Polly, of course, had insisted on going through. Then they found a little unsuspected lane that wound down and round and about in mysterious fashion.

"How awful!" said Polly as she took the glasses. "You're quite right. And goodness knows where this place is, either. I wish we had a map."

"Pwobably somewhere near St. Ives," said Paula feebly.

"St. Ives, silly, that's hundreds of miles away," laughed Polly.

"We've widden quite a hundred miles," insisted Paula, "pwobably more. On second thoughts, you know, this is pwobably Land's End."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gracious me, it's not more than five miles!" laughed Betty. "You're so lazy, Paula, that's all it is. I don't suppose, though, that any Morcove girl has been here before."

"No fear!" exclaimed Polly, and how her eyes gleamed at that thought. They were explorers, with a new tale to tell at school. "I'm for exploring it," she added. "Think of the fun of going into a house that's falling into the sea! I've often heard of them, but never been in one!"

"Nor I!"

"Bai Jove," shuddered Paula, "wather not! I should wefuse to go in, Polly. Suppose it fell in when we were there!"

"We can swim," said Polly carelessly. "Such fun, you know. There's no one about—Hallo!"

She had just lowered the glasses, and Betty caught her arm excitedly. At the same moment they had seen a figure on the cliff-head, a figure that stood there with arms outstretched towards the sky and sea, a black figure silhouetted on the blueness-beyond, a skirt flapping in the breeze.

"Bother!" said Polly in annoyance. "We're not the first, after all!"

Betty did a sly chuckle to herself at that. How Polly imagined that there was any part of England unexplored she could not think; of course there was someone there!

But Polly was really cross about it, and she focused the glasses anew, and focused them with great displeasure on the distant figure.

"A woman—no, a girl," she announced, "and, my hat—"

She almost dropped her glasses then, so great was her surprise, and just in time Betty caught a strap.

"Now what?" asked Betty. "You nearly smashed them!"

Polly pointed out to the figure, all excitement, and her eyes shining.

"A Morcove hat, lying on the grass! Look—look!"

Quickly enough then Betty picked up the glasses and stared at that figure as it changed position and became pensive, the arms limply by the side.

True enough, a Morcove hat lay on the grass. There was no doubting that school ribbon. But the girl—what clothes she wore! In fascination Betty examined that ragged figure. Strange clothes for one who had a Morcove hat—ragged clothes, torn and old and dishevelled!

Light brown hair flowed in the breeze, and now—now the girl turned so that for a second her face was turned towards them, and in that one second Betty recognised the distant figure.

Down clattered the glasses to the end of the strap, just missing the stonework, and Betty stared at Polly Linton in blank surprise.

"You saw her—you recognised her?" she exclaimed.

"No. Who?"

Betty Barton puckered her brows and murmured the name.

"Mary Cavendish—Mary Cavendish, without a doubt."

Then Polly snatched at the glasses; but the girl was gone, and in disappointment she lowered them and turned to Betty.

"But how could it be? We left her behind, and she didn't pass us. You must be mistaken, Betty."

"But the school hat! Besides, how could I mistake her?" asked Betty. "I know her face as well as anything."

"But what's she doing here?" insisted Polly. "There's a mistake somewhere, or something very queer."

And Polly jumped on to the stonework. From the stonework she clambered on to the only tree that stood for miles round, a barren old tree, the remains of what had once been pasture land before the sea had stolen away the land.

And from the top of that tree she focused the glasses on the house and on to a figure that lay down full length beside it, just where the ground fell away from the old walls.

"She's digging," whispered Polly, "digging for something! Now—Hallo! Goodness, Betty, quick!"

Betty Barton clambered up the tree, while Paula, much excited, waited down below. Some moments it was before Betty was able to focus the glasses on to that figure, but then she gave a sharp exclamation.

"Gold—gold coins, and she's digging them out from under the house! My goodness, Polly, so that's where she got the gold from—treasure trove!"

Polly Linton's face was flushed with excitement and her eyes gleamed brightly.

"Treasure trove, and she hasn't said a word to us about it! Oh, Betty, the cheek of it!"

Really concerned Polly was, but Betty had to laugh. Betty saw the humour of most things, and this struck her as being really funny.

"Well, why should she?" she queried. "I really don't see why she should spread it about. I wish we had the luck, but we haven't."

"There may be other things," pointed out Polly. "We could go across now to her, or—or we might go some other time when she isn't here."

"At night," said Betty quickly. "Oh, if we dared! What fun, but how eerie!"

"Oh, who cares!" scoffed Polly. "I'm not afraid of a silly old house. There might be all sorts of queer things hidden there—all sorts of things! Betty, dare we?"

"I wonder!" mused Betty. "No reason why we shouldn't. Treasure-trove is public property and has to be reported to the Crown, daddy says.

That means the Government, I suppose. But it would be fun finding some things."

"Oh, let's!" said Polly, clapping her hands.

"To-night, Betty!"

"Perhaps!"

"And you, too, Paula," said Polly, a gleam of fun in her eyes.

"Me!" gasped Paula. "Good gwacious, I shall have to keep watch and ward, you know, at Morcove. I'll let you in, deah geals, when you come back!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Good for Paula!" laughed Polly.

"Blessed if she doesn't deserve tea for that! I know a nice place for tea, too—Morcove!"

"Hear, hear!"

And so down the hill they went, all excited and eager for the expedition they had planned for that night.

"And to think of Mary finding it out! Mary's not so simple as she looks!" said Polly. "I shall have to revise my opinion of her. But why those rags, I wonder!"

"A disguise, deah geal," said Paula. "Pew-waps you ought to wear a disguise to-night. There's a wipping false beard in the property box!"

"Disguise!" laughed Polly. "A fine disguise with a school hat lying by. And how ripping we should look with beards and drill dresses. But there's certainly a mystery here, and we're going to get to the bottom of it. Mary's not going to pick all the plums, eh, Betty?"

"No," said Betty absently. "But first come first served, and all I'm wondering is if Mary's first. There's Carla."

"Carla! Has she something to do with this?" hazarded Polly. "If she has, all the better. Then it'd be Fourth against Fifth, and jolly good luck to little us!"

But there was a great deal more in it than Polly guessed, or even that Betty, shrewd as she was, could surmise. For Betty and Polly this might be a mere treasure hunt, for Mary Cavendish it was something a great deal more!

#### The One Who Plotted.

AT a window in the old house a woman stood watching; A good-looking woman she was, simply dressed in a close-fitting hat and a tight winter coat, with expensive fur at the collar and cuffs, and a pair of stout yet well-shaped shoes showing just below the hem of fur.

She smiled as she watched, a queer smile of amusement and scorn. Not for a second did her eyes take their attention from the lonely figure on the cliff-head. She watched every movement of the ragged girl, who sat there cleaning up the gold coins. Some were clean and some were old, stained, and marked.

A valuable find it was, and the girl seemed obviously pleased.

Two more minutes the woman gave her, and then quietly turned and walked through the deserted corridors of the gaunt, lonely house, past the chemical-stained floors to the portion that jutted over the sea.

Through a gap in the floor one saw the sea below fighting against the crumbling face of the cliff, eating it away each second. And a shudder of fear ran through the woman as she drew back.

The house was doomed, and soon it would be one more of a long list of the sea's victims. Soon it would be part of the giant ocean that stretched away across to America.

So she turned from that, and made her way out through a side door so softly and silently that the girl sitting on the cliff-head heard her not at all.

And still softly the woman approached until, when a yard away, the girl, with a cry of fright, stared up.

Her jaw dropped and her eyes opened wide. Down on the grass the gold coins fell, and some rolled down the cliff to the sea, but she did not heed them.

"Oh, you!" she gasped.

"Yes, Mary, I! You did not expect me?"

Mary Cavendish, her face white, jumped to her feet.

"You've been watching me—spying!" How she controlled her temper she did not know.

But some great force kept it down, and she controlled her words though her thoughts ran free as the air.

"Spying? Why, no! Only looking at you and admiring your hair in the breeze!" smiled the woman. "Such pretty hair it is—and such pretty playthings you have there!"

As though she would hide them, Mary gathered the coins, and then, realising the utter stupidity of the action, she dropped them back on to the grass and shrugged her shoulders.

"I didn't know you were here, Mrs. Vansittart," she said.

"Mother, dear. Call me mother now," said the woman, and her smile was twisted and queer.

"Mrs. Vansittart," said Mary.

The woman laughed and clapped her hands.

"Dear, dear, what an obstinate child it is!" she said smoothly. "Such wild, care-free spirits! So like you, Mary, to be here alone playing by your friend, the sea, and with those pretty bits of gold!"

"Gold?"

Mary raised her hands and then covered the coins. How dark her face was then. Always this woman was spying on her, always defeating her at every twist and turn. How had she guessed that she was here, how had she heard about the coins?

No one ever knew. Mrs. Vansittart just found things out. She was like that—cunning and sinister and so smooth—always smiling in that crooked, twisted way.

"Don't say," murmured Mrs. Vansittart, "that you found those coins amongst the ruins here, Mary, my dear. How really quaint! To think that they have been buried here ever since my ancestors owned the place!"

"Ours!" said Mary quickly.

"Why, yes, yours," smiled Mrs. Vansittart. "A queer point it would raise in law. Am I to presume that because it is found on my property it is mine? Undoubtedly it was buried by a predecessor, and as I have inherited this it belongs to me. Yet the Crown would claim some."

"Yes," said Mary; "I suppose so."

"Where did you find it?" Mrs. Vansittart asked.

"Over there?"

She pointed to where the earth was crumbling away from the wall, and Mary Cavendish listlessly nodded her head. What use trying to keep it as her secret? This woman knew everything!

"A sweet child you are," sighed the woman, and edged herself close to Mary on the grass. Had it not been too obvious an action, Mary would have moved away, so great was her distaste. But she did not, common sense at last prevailing.

"You are going to be famous one day, perhaps,

Mary," murmured Mrs. Vansittart, as she folded her long hands about her knees and looked across the Atlantic to the far horizon. "You are working at your chemistry?"

"Yes, very hard."

"And you will win scholarships, perhaps," said Mrs. Vansittart. "How splendid that will be, Mary; and meanwhile—"

"Meanwhile," said Mary rather contemptuously, "I am working on the stuff you require."

"And not saying a word about it, like a good girl?"

"Not saying a word," echoed Mary. "Why should I?"

"Goodness knows! There's something about you, Mary, one can trust you implicitly. I know you will say nothing of this to Carla. I do not wish her to know."

"Carla hates me!"

"Poor Carla, she does not understand you!"

"She doesn't understand anything," said Mary bitterly. "She thinks I'm there on charity. It's true you pay my fees, but I am experimenting for you. If you could have got someone else to do the experimenting," she remarked, with abstracted cuteness, "you would have. I'm the last resort, and in return I get my schooling!"

Mrs. Vansittart frowned.

"You put it a little coarsely. Say rather that I am schooling you out of kindness and love for your father."

"Why should I tell an untruth?" said Mary pertly. "You hate me really. But what does it matter? This is just a business bargain. I make the discovery for you, and you pay for my schooling."

"Yes, a business bargain. But, my dear Mary, take the terms. I am quite sure a sensible girl like you will not overlook that. If I should cease to want that chemical I have set you to discover, I am at liberty to remove you from Morocco."

Mary turned quickly, suddenly anxious.

"You would not do that?"

Her grey eyes, frightened, stared into those large, mysterious eyes of her distant relation. So deep those eyes were, so full of expression, and yet, despite their beauty, so cruel.

"I am ready to do anything, my dear Mary, when I am thwarted, and I am sure you will always remember that Carla, despite her faults, is my daughter. That formula I have set you to discover, what is it to me? How are you so sure that it is not just a test of your ability to concentrate? You hate me, I know. Well, well, perhaps there is justification. Your poor father poisoned your mind against me."

Mary clenched her hands, but she did not reply. And still Mrs. Vansittart spoke on.

"Don't jump too hastily to conclusions, my dear child. There is nothing more dangerous. The gift horse may be looked in the mouth, but it does not show a nice sense of gratitude; and what is gratitude but an anticipation of further gifts to come?"

Mary shrugged her shoulders, for the woman was talking above her head. She feared her enemy most when she talked like this, and now she half closed her eyes and looked at her measuringly.

What did all this mean—to what was it leading?

How she shuddered as a lean hand was put firmly on her shoulder; how she longed to cast it

off and draw away, but she sat motionless, controlling herself admirably.

"Work hard, Mary. Do your best, and do not trouble yourself about my motives. Despite what your father has taught you I may yet mean well. Perhaps I am giving you scope for your pride—so powerful is your pride. Perhaps I am merely giving you an incentive. All I ask you to do in return for your schooling is to work hard. That is enough; nothing else matters. Now let's see if there's any more treasure to be found."

Hating the woman though she did, Mary could not but follow her to that corner where she had found the gold, could not but join in the search.

But the search lasted only a short while, when Mrs. Vansittart straightened herself and yawned.

"Shall we go back to tea now, my child? You must be hungry, I am sure. Fancy your wearing that old rough torn dress again! Dear, dear, you must be very sad and lonely! But, my child, would it be better to put the past behind and work for the future? That is what I want you to do.

that the woman could so subtly make her believe that she was only a mean, ungrateful girl with an inherited hatred, the carrier-on of a useless vendetta.

But not once as she walked did she look back.

Mrs. Vansittart's brows knit as she watched her until she disappeared from view, and then the woman strode briskly up to the waiting car. And what a surprise it was for her when Carla jumped out of the car!

"Yes, it is I, mother! What a time you've been! I went home, and they told me you were here. Who was that?"

"A friend, dear," said her mother. "How cold you are, and how excited!"

Not a word did she allow her daughter to say until they were in the back of the car, with rugs round their knees.

Then—

"And what is it, Carla, that brings you to me in this queer haste?"

"That girl Mary!" burst out Carla furiously.



**A MYSTERY OF THE CLIFF.** Betty caught Polly's arm excitedly. At that moment they had caught sight of a figure on the cliff-head a figure that stood there with arms outstretched. "It's a Morcové girl!" cried Polly.

Leave this place alone, and not keep the old wound open by returning here and sorrowing. The past is dead. Come!"

Firmly she took Mary by the arm, and waited while she changed her dress. Frequently she looked at her watch, and then nodded her head as a car drove up the winding road in the distance and halted, to run in a farmhouse gateway half a mile away.

"There is the car," she murmured. "Are you coming?"

Mary shook her head.

"No; please, I must get back to the school. I can walk along the cliff here, and there's a path down, a short cut. Please, I'd rather not!"

"Oh, as you like!" said Mrs. Vansittart pleasantly. "But no moping. Just work hard, Mary. Put the past behind, and keep the future under observation."

She kissed the girl, and Mary turned aside, hating herself for the insistent something within her that told her to distrust the woman, angry

"Oh, mother, how I hate her! She could just as well have gone to the poverty where she belongs. Suppose they find out at school that she's my cousin, and her father the hermit that died in that terrible house?"

"They will never find out. I have instructed her upon that. She does not force herself upon you?"

"No, but she's there!" pouted Carla peevishly. "Someone may find out. It lets me down terribly. She works at chemistry all day long, just like her father."

"Yes, she's working to get a scholarship, my dear."

"Why should she?" said Carla savagely. "I hate her! She isn't a bit grateful. A girl with decency would do things for me at school—get my meals and so on, do little jobs of needlework—but she never does."

"She wouldn't," admitted Mrs. Vansittart. "Poor Carla, I'm sorry it upsets you, but it is all for the best!"

And she stroked her daughter's face.

"All for whose best?" asked Carla pertly. "Hers?"

And her mother's retort was queer and mysterious:

"Ours, my dear—and, in particular, yours!"

Such meaning there was in that, so seriously was it uttered, that Carla gave her mother a swift, anxious glance.

"Why, mother," she exclaimed, "what could that child do? How does her schooling affect us? Why should we keep her? Her father only ran us down. He hated us! He——"

Mrs. Vansittart looked grim for a moment and stern.

"My dear Carla," she exclaimed, "please trust me to know my business best! Mary will not interfere with you at school, but her being there is for your ultimate good. Of that I am sure. Later, perhaps, you may have to keep an eye upon her—I do not know. One cannot tell."

"Mother, what do you mean? You've got some reason for all this, something I don't understand!"

But Mrs. Vansittart shrugged her shoulders, and said no more. But for the rest of the journey she looked out of the window at the scenery, and Carla pettishly curled herself up in the other corner and wrapped the rug tightly about her legs.

It was too bad, she thought—too utterly bad! If only mother would confide more, instead of being so mysterious! Sometimes she was afraid of her mother. Never was she able to understand her at all. But her fear was not the same fear of Mary Cavendish.

That girl, walking back to Morcove, fought hard against the wind that blew from the sea and the faint drizzle of rain.

But she heeded neither the wind nor the rain.

She was looking into the beyond, and wondering the true reason for Mrs. Vansittart's desire to have a chemical that would obliterate the writing on paper without injuring the paper itself, a desire that was not to be told to anyone else.

And the more Mary thought, the more she was convinced that she was working so hard to discover this formula that would, in some queer way, be a trap for her own downfall.

If only her father were there to advise her, what would he say? Would he advise her to trust that woman? No, never, never, never! Yet what else was there to do? Oh, if only there were friends in whom she could confide! If only there were some girl in the school she could trust!

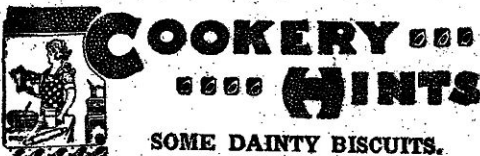
But she was afraid of them all, and her promise held her lips fast. But Mrs. Vansittart was clever, and her schemes were well laid.

In some way, she was weaving a web to trap Mary, and the cunning part was that she was making Mary weave the web herself. Oh, that was it, Mary was sure! But there was no proof. There was no proof, only that instinctive distrust to guide her!

Utterly alone she was, with her wits against the world—her wits against that mistress of cunning, Carla's mother!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

This splendid new series of Morcove School tales promises to be especially interesting. Does it not? Tell your chums about the strange mystery which surrounds Mary Cavendish, and urge them to begin reading this series without delay. Next week's splendid complete tale is entitled "The Riddle She Must Solve!" and you will find it every bit as exciting and interesting as the foregoing. Order next week's copy now!



**M**AY and I have discovered a real economy—making our own biscuits. The money that we save by this industry we put away towards girl friends' birthday presents.

Here are a few of our recipes.

#### Orange Rings.

*Required:* Five ounces of flour, two ounces of margarine, two ounces of white sugar, one ounce of ground rice, the rind of one orange, and a little cold milk.

First rub the margarine into the flour—the same as for pastry. Next, grate the rind from the orange, add it to the margarine and flour, also add the ground rice and sugar, and mix the ingredients together.

Make a well in the centre of the mixture, pour in a little cold milk, and mix it into a stiff paste.

Roll the paste out on a floured board, cut it into rings, and bake the biscuits on a greased tin until nicely browned.

We have invested in a set of both plain and fancy cutters—they're quite cheap—so we are able to make our biscuits quite ornamental. We stamped out the

biscuits with a fancy cutter, and then cut a small hole in the centre of each biscuit with a plain cutter, making a change in shape from the ordinary round biscuit.

#### Lemon Rings.

These are made the same as orange rings, lemon rind being substituted for orange rind.

#### Flavoury Biscuits.

*Required:* Four ounces of flour, two ounces of margarine, one ounce of grated cheese, pepper and salt, and cold water.

Rub the fat into the flour, add the grated cheese, pepper and salt, and mix into a stiff paste by adding cold water.

Roll the paste out on a floured board, cut in rounds and bake in a moderate oven until crisp.

The cheese biscuits are cut out with a plain cutter, and cut the small holes in the centre of the biscuits with a fancy cutter, making a change in shape from the sweet biscuits.

#### Tips on Baking Biscuits.

Biscuits should be placed in a fairly hot oven, and when partly baked moved to a cooler part of the oven. They should not be baked immediately under the browning sheet, or the tops will cook too quickly and then burn.

DOLLY HOPE.