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A MAGNIFICENT LONG COMPLETE TALE OF THE GIRLS OF MORCOVE SCHOOL.



THE RIDDLE SHE MUST SOLVE!



By MARJORIE STANTON.

Deeper and deeper grows the mystery which surrounds Mary Cavendish of the Fourth Form, and Betty Barton & Co. become more baffled than ever over it. You will enjoy every line of this splendid complete story.

Mary, the Mystery Girl.

"SO mum's the word, remember!"
"Yes, wather! Pway remember that, Polly, dear girl," admonished Paula Creel.

Paula was lying back full-length in an armchair before the pleasant fire that burned in Study No. 12 on the Fourth Form corridor at Morcove School, in Devonshire.

Paula usually was in an armchair, and now she looked perfectly comfortable and at ease. Tea was finished, as the empty, crumb-strewn plates showed, and Betty Barton, Polly Linton, and the languid Paula had pulled their chairs to the fire.

"Oh, my word!" said Polly Linton merrily, and shook her fair, fluffy hair. "I do like that! You're the very one to talk, Paula."

"Bai Jove! I shall be as mum as an oystah," said Paula sleepily. "Yes, wather! Twust me, you know."

Betty Barton looked at Polly Linton, and they both smiled. They knew Paula's brand of caution, highly though Paula herself might esteem it. When it came to a matter of dressing or "form," then Paula was a girl one could listen to with respect, but on other matters of judgment she was not to be taken at all seriously.

"Perwaps," murmured Paula as she lolled back gracefully—"perwaps, after all, I won't come, although I don't like twusting you out alone, you know."

"Pooh!" scoffed Polly. "We'd be safer than you, anyway. Who nearly fell through a skylight last time we crept out of school?"

"Oh, weally! My foot slipped," murmured Paula. "It might happen to even the most cahful geal. But you'll want a leader—"

"There's me!" said Betty, with more modesty than grammar.

"Yes, Betty's leader," agreed Polly. "Goodness, she's captain of the Form, isn't she?"

Paula made a wise inclination of the head. At least, she thought it was wise. Polly Linton just giggled, as though it were meant to amuse.

"That's all vewy well," remarked Paula, after due deliberation of her words. "But this is wheah bwains come in, you know. Subtlety is wanted heah! The Cweels have been venowed for subtlety."

"Ahem!" said Polly.

"Yes, wather, you know. When William the Conqueror wanted an adviser, whom did he consult?" she demanded triumphantly.

"Old Moore," suggested Polly, with a mischievous glint in her eyes.

"Bai Jove, weally—not at all!"

"Hereward the Wake," from Betty, as though it were the answer to some deep riddle they had to contemplate.

"No, of course not! How absurd!"

"I know," said Polly brightly. "It was a spider—a spider that hung from the ceiling when the cakes were burning by the fire, and, after looking at that spider, William never smiled again."

Paula took their banter quite seriously, and actually started up in her chair.

"Good gwacious, how silly you are, Polly! You've got it quite wong, you know. It wasn't William the Conqueror at all that saw the spider. It was Henry, before the battle of Agincourt—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't!" implored Betty, laughing merrily. "One historian in the family is enough, Paula."

Paula's worried expression cleared, and she smiled.

"I believe you were wagging," she reproved Polly. "I was going to say that William the Conqueror went to a Cweel for advice. Yes, wather! And that was why he won the battle of Hastings."

Polly shook her head.

"Then the Creel must have advised Harold—not William," she decided. "You've got it a little mixed. It was Harold who lost the battle."

They would have kept up that ragging for a long time then, but the door of the study opened and a girl came in, a girl who looked even more tired than they.

In the doorway she halted, but Betty jumped up, with an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, goodness, if I hadn't forgotten you, Mary!"

Mary Cavendish looked dead beat. Her fair cheeks were flushed, and it really did seem that she could not stand a moment longer.

"Gwacious, yes," gasped Paula. "I was nearly pwestwate myself, you know. But if you have walked all that way—"

What a look Betty gave Paula at that! A frowning look, as though to say, "Hush, you

silly!" Polly did more than give a look. She gave Paula a gentle push—just gentle enough to send Paula back to her armchair again with a flop and a gasp.

"Have some tea, Mary," murmured Betty hurriedly.

"Yes, and some toast. Paula will make some toast," said Polly. "Up, Paula!"

Mary Cavendish smiled rather wanly and rubbed her nose. A small, attractive little nose it was, for she had a very pleasant face, that was good to look upon. Perhaps she wondered at the confusion her entrance had caused, but if she did she made no comment.

"You see," said Betty, "you've been at Morocco such a short while, and we're so used to having this study to ourselves, that we'd—we'd forgotten."

"And we didn't think you'd be back so soon," said Paula, with an admonishing glance at Polly Linton.

"It's a pity you don't do more thinking," observed Polly darkly. "Harry up with that toast, Paula!"

"Oh, really—not for me," protested Mary. "I can get tea in the hall, perhaps—"

"Too late," smiled Betty.

"Then perhaps the tuck-shop—"

They were not allowing that, however, and Polly took the girl firmly by the shoulders, to push her into the comfortable chair that Paula had just that moment vacated. It was not often, Polly explained, that Paula vacated a chair, and the wisest thing to do was to take opportunity by the forelock.

Plump into the armchair Mary went, and lay back, smiling.

And as she sat back her shoes were exposed to their gaze. Her shoes were mud-covered, and with clay adhering to the soles.

"Been walking?" said Polly casually.

"Yes."

"Far?"

"Oh, along the shore!" Mary answered, and her tone clearly implied that she did not wish to give further information.

"Well, we've cycled," sighed Betty. "Paula set such a tremendous pace—"

At that gibe Paula wheeled round from the fire, and Polly laughed.

"Yes, I can well imagine that," smiled Mary. "I should think Paula positively races, doesn't she?"

"Goodness—like an express train!" mocked Polly. "She's afraid of police traps, I think—and mouse traps."

Then it was that Mary, looking down at her feet, caught sight of the clay on her shoes and of the sand that had collected inside her heels. She looked up quickly and anxiously, as though wondering if the girls, who were so readily getting her tea, had noticed that. Too.

"Would you mind if I went to change my shoes first?" she asked.

"Not at all! Of course!"

Mary was far too relieved to be suspicious of that over-readiness. How was she to suppose that they wanted her to go out of the way for a moment?

Straight to the door she went and into the corridor. Then no sooner had she gone than Polly Linton, assuming a look of terrible ferocity, shook her fist at Paula, by the fire.

"Duffer!" she said. "Goose!"

"Oh, I say—"

It was Mary who spoke—Mary who, opening the door to peep in—and Polly Linton jumped, and

went the colour of a peony. For there she was, with her fist outstretched at Paula Creel, while Paula blinked at her.

"They're quite—quite—ahem!—simple," stammered Polly. "You just grip tightly, like that, Paula—hard, you know—and—"

A sigh of relief finished that sentence, and Polly Linton patted her head, for Mary had gone out again with her hat, which she had left in the chair.

"Narrow escape, that!" murmured Betty. "We don't want her to suspect."

"Yes, wather! I mean, wather not," nodded Paula. "You vewy neahly gave the game away, Polly, deah geal. You should take the lead fyom me—"

"Oh, yes, and be surprised that she got here so quickly," said Polly scornfully, "when we're not supposed to know where she's been!"

"Gwacious!" gasped Paula. "I nevah thought of that, you know."

"No you never think of anything," admitted Polly. "I sometimes wish you would."

Polly, of course, was not as cross as she sounded; for it was rather difficult to get really cross with Paula Creel. Paula meant so well always, even though she did not do the right thing.

"All the same," murmured Betty as she took the kettle from the fire to make the tea, "she did come home quickly. I should say she went along the sands. Considering that we cycled, and that we haven't been home more than half an hour—"

"And then she didn't come when we did," nodded Polly. "Yes, she has hurried, Betty, and I wish we knew the way—"

"So that we could go that way to-night," murmured Betty, following Polly's train of thought accurately. "Yes, we don't want to walk the way we went this afternoon, do we? But how does one get along by the cliffs, I'd like to know. Just a mile from here there's a piece one simply can't cross without going at least three miles round by land, or else across that small bay."

Polly nodded her head. She remembered that place. There was quite a wide bay with three jutting headlands, and, unless one swam across or rowed across, the only way was round by the road they had used that afternoon.

"She didn't swim," mused Betty. "So she had a boat. That seems obvious."

"Yes, but we haven't," said Paula Creel quickly. "You hadn't thought of that, Betty, deah geal. There are boats for hire, but if we went down at midnight to hire a boat they might think we'd broken bounds."

"Probably, certain," grinned Polly. "What a brain you have, Paula. And what do you think she'd done with her boat? Brought it back here? My opinion is it is moored up handily for her to go across. That's what has happened to her boat. There's many a little creek where one could drag a boat up and leave it in a cave."

"Rather!" agreed Betty. "But for goodness' sake not a word about it, Paula. We mustn't let her know we saw her on the cliffs. And we mustn't let her know that we saw her digging out gold from under that old ruined house."

"Bai Jove! As if I would, deah geal!"

"Well, don't!" advised Betty with a smile. "We might gag you, but I think the best thing to do is to drop into Madge Minden's study for a chat, you know."

"Hear, hear!" agreed Polly. "Provided Paula doesn't chat to them. We don't want even Madge to know this yet. Goodness, Betty, what a haul for us!" she murmured, and her eyes positively

gleamed. "Everyone in the Fourth's longing to know where Mary found that hoard of old gold coins—"

"Yes, wather, and we know," smiled Paula. "It's tweasuah twove, and we might find something very valuable, mightn't we?"

But the study door opened to admit Mary Cavendish, and Betty put her finger to her lips. Mum was the word!

Top Dog.

MARY CAVENDISH smiled in delight at the tea that was prepared for her. There was toast that Paula Creel had made; there was a nice hot pot of tea, and, if she wanted them, three doughnuts that had just been brought from the bag in the cupboard.

What could any girl want more for tea, even if she had walked some miles across country in the growing dusk?

"It is sweet of you," she murmured. "I am so grateful. I should have been in earlier really. Only I went for a walk, and you know how difficult it is to judge time."

"Yes, wather. We only just got back ourselves," smiled Paula. "How you managed—ow—gwacious, don't pinch me, Polly deah—"

"Sorry to leave you and all that, Mary," said Betty briskly. "But we've got to go and see Madge—"

"Yes, come on, Paula," Polly said, even more briskly, and caught Paula very firmly by the arm and led her from the study.

The door closed upon them, and Mary, in some surprise, looked after them, wondering at the strangeness of their manner. But she shrugged her shoulders and sat down to tea.

Lingeringly she ate the toast and sipped at her tea, taking her time-over her meal.

She rose at last and removed the things from the table to do the washing up. But she changed her mind and put them to one side on the small table where they were usually left, and slipped a coin inside for the housemaid to find.

The maids were not compelled to wash up the teacups of the Fourth Form, but they did so, and picked up a considerable number of tips.

That done and the table cleared, Mary sat down to do her prep. But, even with the books before her and the clean paper ready, she did not start work. She was in no mood at all for work, and presently she took from a small, buttoned pocket inside her dress some gold coins and placed them on the table.

How they gleamed in the light and how old they were! Some of them were of good shape yet, however, and the marking upon them quite clear, for some of those coins had come from a metal box which, while suffering the passage of years itself, had yet left its contents quite safe and unharmed.

William and Mary coins they were, that told of long, long years ago, and Georgian coins, too, very—very old. She wondered at their history, and wondered who had buried those coins in the place she had found them.

The coins were spread out on the table, and so engrossed was she with them and with her thoughts that she did not hear the soft opening of the door, and did not know that she had a visitor until that person stood towering above her.

But a shadow fell across the table and she started violently.

"Oh," she gasped. "Oh, how you frightened me, Carla—"

Instinctively her hand went to cover the coins,

but they had been seen, and the tall, dark girl beside her smiled knowingly.

"Still admiring the hoard, miser?" she asked. A handsome girl she was, some three years older than Mary, with a dark face and dark blue eyes—fine eyes, but cruel—and a prominent nose that did not, however, rob her of her beauty.

But to Mary there was nothing handsome or beautiful in the face of Carla Vansittart. She saw only cruelty. Her relation the girl might be, but between them no love was lost.

"Yes, still admiring the hoard," she said defiantly. "And why not?"

"Why—oh, because it is not yours by right!" shrugged Carla.

Mary compressed her lips. "Oh, I suppose your mother has told you, has she? And you think that you can claim what



THE GIRL AND THE GOLD! Mary started as the tall girl entered, and stood looking down on her. "Still admiring the hoard, miser?" Carla asked. "Oh, how you frightened me, Carla!" gasped Mary, as her hand went out to cover the coins.

was found in my father's house, just because the property is supposed to be yours?"

"Supposed!" broke in Carla quickly. "No, there you are mistaken. There is no supposition. It is true. Only from charity's sake was he allowed to live in it. Although why any but a silly old man should choose to live in a house that was falling into the sea, I don't know!"

"Because it was all that thieves left us," said Mary through her teeth. "The last link with all the lands that are ours by rights, and not yours, Carla. And if I found the coins there, they are mine and I shall keep them."

She flung back her head with a fine gesture, and looked defiance into those mocking dark blue eyes.

"Indeed," yawned Carla in affected manner, "How interesting. And thank you for informing me where you found them. Your delightful candour comes most refreshing after your usual surliness, my dear Mary."

"Mary could have bitten her tongue through then. Foolish—foolish to have spoken so glibly, yet what did it matter?"

"So you found those coins," said Carla, dropping her mask of casual toleration, "in the old house? That certainly is interesting. Where those were found there may be other things, too. Who knows?"

"Yes, who knows," said Mary. "But it is no business of yours, Carla. And you may take it from me, your mother will not thank you to go grovelling there."

"Which means," suggested Carla cutely, "that my mother has forbidden you to go there again. Very wisely, too. But I shall see that her instructions are carried out. Remember who we are. But for us—"

"Oh, be quiet!"

"But for us," said Carla, her eyes flashing, "you would be in the gutter now. Your father left nothing but a scatter and litter of waste-paper!"

"Waste-paper, indeed! Valuable enough for your mother to take possession of!" Then Mary realised that this was not at all the right line to pursue, bit her lip, and was silent.

"My mother," said Carla sternly. "Don't let me hear you talking in that tone again of my mother, Mary! It will pay you to be on your best behaviour here; your fine pride will not have to go long before a fall, I warn you!"

Mary said nothing, although her round face was very grim indeed. What was the use of saying anything? How could one fight against this? It was true enough that Mrs. Vansittart was paying her fees; true that her father had not left nearly enough for her to be well educated at Morcove or any other good school. But—

It was on the tip of her tongue to tell Carla that she was working hard, that she was spending many hours in the school laboratory trying to discover some formula for a chemical that Carla's mother had set her to discover.

But that was a secret and she held her tongue. Besides, had not Mrs. Vansittart pretended that the task was merely set to give the girl something upon which to work, and had she not said in as many words that it was in no way a return for their charity?

Proud Mary would have to bow her head if she meant to stay at Morcove. And meaning to become a scientist meant staying at Morcove. Only from a good school could she get a scholarship for university, and only there could she lay the foundation stone of a career.

All the while as she sat there fighting down her temper, she knew Carla was watching her closely. Then Carla spoke.

"There are one or two things that want doing in my study," Carla said casually. "The books are in a litter, and the servants never attend to it. Just drop in and do that, will you, and in half an hour's time I shall want a letter posted."

Then, before Mary had a chance to reply, Carla, looking well pleased with herself, went out of the study, leaving the younger girl sitting by the table, her hands clenched hard and a gleam in her eyes.

But she was helpless to rebel, quite unable to cope with this situation as she wanted to. Carla

held all the cards, and she was using them unscrupulously.

Yes, Carla was top dog, a fact, whether she liked it or not, Mary had to admit!

Betty and Polly Make a Discovery.

"Be very careful, dear geals!"
"Yes, of course; and you keep quiet!"
retorted Polly Linton in a deep, thrilling whisper.

Only dimly could Polly Linton see Paula in the dark dormitory, but she could hear her, and she did not want Paula to be heard just then. Paula, in a dressing-gown, was standing by the dormitory door "seeing them off," as she put it, and really they might have been departing for Australia by her manner of giving farewell.

"Be quiet," whispered Betty, and accompanied her words with a smile. "We don't want everyone to see us!"

"Or even anyone," added Polly. "Bye-bye, Paula, and keep awake for us!"

"Yes, wather!"

And then Betty and Polly took a most hurried departure. Their hats and coats were in their study, and first they had to grope their way through the dark corridors to their study, and thence to the place where Morcove girls could, if they wished, break out of school.

With great caution they went out of the school, forcing open a somewhat reluctant window inch by inch, and then lowering themselves on to the springy turf.

But at any moment they might have been detected, for the window from which they escaped was that of an empty Sixth Form study. There was a Sixth-Former next door, and had she been awake, most certainly she would have wondered why the window was being opened in the next room.

Luckily, she was fast asleep, and they crept out in perfect safety.

They left the window wide open, assuming that no one would enter the study or even walk by it on the outside, and confident that the moon was not sufficiently bright to show the opening at a distance, should by chance some mistress look out of her own window.

They were in the quadrangle now, and across it they sped, their shoes making no noise on the lawn.

Cautiously they clambered over the fence that bounded the schoolground. Now they were in the lane, and the great journey was commenced.

A hundred frights they had on their way to the cliffs. First a horse jumped up in a field, then some animal scuttled across the road at Polly's feet.

They managed to reach the cliffs at last and to hear below them the boom of the sea. Right to the cliff edge they walked, and they were glad that the racing clouds let the moonbeams through to the dark waters.

Down below was the sea, reached by a steep cliff path—a path made by hackings in the rock and rough footholds. Down they went at last, with Polly leading in her reckless, madcap way, and Betty Barton not more than a yard or so behind. Slipping, scrambling, stumbling down they went, saving themselves from a fifty-foot fall by now and again a hurried snatch at a spike of rock.

Suppose they slipped! Suppose they went tumbling down to where the sea writhed and frothed! But such things did not bear contem-

plation, and the two brave hearts found themselves at last on the firm shingle below, with water lapping to their feet.

Then out came Betty's torch, flashing along the water's edge.

But the boat was not there! Not until they had gone a dozen yards did they find it; but it was there all right, moored close in to the shore on a firm stake well out of the water's way.

What a noise it made being dragged over the shingle to the water, until at last it floated on the water!

Way over the bay lay the headland, and beyond that headland the house on the rocks. It was a straight journey, and Betty pulled first at the oars, leaving Polly to act as helmswoman, guiding their way.

Polly's task was easy enough, for the headland stood well up in a light piece of the sky with the moon just behind it, and Betty, not worrying, lay hard upon the oars. No fear, either, of rocks in their path, for that bay was quite clear when one got away from the shore.

Rowing, however, was no light work, and in the darkness they changed seats, using the greatest care possible to see that the boat did not roll.

Then creaking rowlocks and splashing oars broke the silence as Polly Linton, with lips grimly set, used all her considerable strength upon the ungainly oars.

"Steady!" whispered Betty.

And Polly eased her oars as the bottom of the boat grated on shingle, and then partially buried itself in sand. But there was water all round them yet, and the two girls exchanged glances of dismay.

They had not been prepared for this!

"Only one thing to do, Polly," Betty said in her business-like way, and off came her shoes and stockings. But not before she braced herself was she able to dip her feet into the chilly water.

Her bare feet touched the soft sand, and, stalking carefully, she dragged the boat a few yards. But Polly's assistance was required before the boat was safely landed, and then they found a stake in the ground where they could moor it out of the sea's way.

"And now," said Polly, "our feet. Oh, Betty, I'm nearly frozen! Thank goodness Paula didn't come! No fun in pulling her as well as the boat!"

"Goodness, no!" breathed Betty. "Here's my hanky—or a scarf!" Polly was already using her scarf, and her feet were dried in no time and the lagging circulation restored to them. After that there remained only to climb the face of the other cliff and to tramp along the soft grass that edged the cliff.

A somewhat risky climb and an even more risky walk, but the two girls were not concerned with risk. Polly, the madcap, might have walked very near the crumbling edge of that cliff, but Betty had a wise head, and Betty saw to it that when they had managed to scramble up to the top, they placed a good twenty yards between themselves and the brink of that dreaded precipice.

On ahead, with the moon high and behind it, was the old house.

Ghostly and sinister it was, and Polly and Betty at the sight of it halted. Neither spoke, and yet in both minds was the same thought. Both stood there as though suspecting that ghostly figures walked the old rooms.

Such a night it was for fancies, and no night

at all for remaining amongst ruins. Yet they were half-way, and could not draw back.

It was not likely that Polly would let Betty think that she was afraid; quite impossible that Betty, the leader, could stand back when her companion was prepared to go forward.

"There it is," said Betty, a faint catch in her voice.

"Yes, just in front," nodded Polly. "It looks queer, Betty."

"Awfully queer."

And they went forward in silence until they stood within ten yards of the place, and its dark outline was clearly visible, with the yellowish light of the moon behind, casting around it a faint colour line of shadow merging into light.

"We'd better hurry," Betty said quickly. "We don't want to be too late back. Was it here she looked, Polly?"

"Yes, Betty, about here. There, where it crumbles away."

"What, so near the edge?" asked Betty. "Oh, gracious, suppose—"

But Polly just strode forward before Betty could make any further exclamation, and there she was down on her knees in a second groping amongst the ruins.

Soft earth there was and broken bricks, stones, chips of metal, and rubbish of many kinds.

To grope without being able to see was little satisfaction, so Betty, commanding her fear that the earth might suddenly crumble under their feet, went to Polly's side and flashed the torch down into the hole.

Someone had been digging there, as they clearly could see, and Betty lay face downwards. It was a safer attitude, she felt, than crouching, and she advised Polly to do the same.

How reckless this night mission was Betty saw now, even if Polly did not, but she wasn't going to draw back. Instead, she wanted to find something—find it quickly, and then go.

"Looks like a box," she exclaimed suddenly. "Yes, it is, Polly—an old iron box. This is the corner of it!"

"And a coin," exclaimed Polly. "It is, Betty—it is, a gold coin!"

Polly, all excitement, dragged out a handful of mould and took from it a gold coin that was mildewed and badly grimed. But Betty was not interested in the coin at all, she was fishing out something from between two sheets of the iron—something rolled and covered with dirt, something round which was wound a thin strip of leather tied neatly in a bow.

"Parchment!" said Betty! "Parchment!"

That was enough for Polly, and she ceased to have interest in her coin, bobbing up to Betty's side, her face pressed close to her chum's, her eyes shining with excitement.

What mattered the nipping breeze on the cliff-head? What mattered the rushing sea on the shore?

"Oh, Betty, it's a plan—it must be!" thrilled Polly. "A map of hidden treasure! Someone hid this stuff years and years ago, and here's the p—"

Betty Barton's nimble fingers slit the rotted leather thing and the parchment was unrolled. But it was almost unmanageable, and some seconds elapsed before they could gratify their curiosity and see what was written on it.

The writing was very old and very flourishy, with the capital letters continuing in scrolls that made the reading of them difficult.



DISCOVERED IN THE ACT! Betty and Polly could only stand and stare, for the study seemed to be transformed into a chemistry laboratory. "My goodness!" gasped Polly. "What's this?"

"Last will and testament," exclaimed Betty. "John George—John George—" she repeated as she stared closely at the parchment. But the name was not legible. The years and the elements had served to wash out that name and what was written below. Just the title there was and below it the date—seventeen hundred and twenty-four.

"Seventeen hundred and twenty-four," whispered Polly. "Phew! Years before the forty-five rebellion we're reading of in history. Just after Blenheim, Betty! Oh, fancy, all those years old—and it's a will!"

Betty Barton's hand shook as she held the parchment, and she stared closer and closer at it. "If we could find out whose will it was, you know," she said breathlessly, "it might be important. Perhaps they'd like to have it at Somerset House. All the wills made are there, you know!"

"I know," said Polly. "It must be the will of the person that owned this house years and years ago. We could find out—"

Polly was all eagerness, but Betty, much less the victim of her enthusiasm and excitement, shook her head slowly.

"What's the good if we can't read what it says?" she asked. "It might be a blank form!"

But there was a word half-way down the page, and there was ample evidence that once it had been covered with writing. There were traces of capital flourishes, of full stops, and portions of a word here and there—long, legal words, and once "estates—"

Polly Linton, all excitement, grovelled into the hole, while Betty stood by her with the parchment in her hand.

"Nothing more?" she asked, and sat back on her haunches while Polly peered about. "No gold coins, no—"

Betty's voice trailed away then and she started suddenly to her feet. Next instant she gripped Polly Linton firmly by the shoulder.

"Look, someone's coming—a light!" she whispered. "Put out the torch!"

True enough there was a light. As yet it was some yards from them, swinging fitfully on the ground. But it was drawing steadily nearer, and there was no doubt as to its objective. It was coming straight to the house.

"Ow," gasped Polly as she saw it, "a ghost, Betty! Goodness—"

"A ghost!" chattered Betty, to whom that had not occurred, and she thrust the parchment into her coat and clutched wildly at Polly as she turned to run.

But it was no ghost, as Betty, looking back over her shoulder, realised. The figure that approached them, now running, was clearly human, a tall woman.

"Stop—stop!"

Betty stumbled, but Polly was streaking ahead in the darkness, believing Betty to be just behind her. But Betty could not get to her feet quickly enough, and the rays of the torch were upon the back of her.

"Mary, stop!" said the voice authoritatively.

But Betty Barton, captain of the Fourth Form, was fleet of foot, and she left the rays of the torch behind, and left behind, too, Mrs. Vansittart, Carla's mother, white with rage, realising the futility of the chase.

There she stood at the cliff-head, staring at the darkness that had swallowed up the girls, conscious only that there had been one, and believing that one to be her protégée, Mary Cavendish.

"Very well," she said grimly. "Very well. I shall remember this!"

And Betty Barton and Polly, breathlessly reaching the boat, congratulated themselves upon their own safety, little realising what trouble they had unwittingly laid up for Mary, never suspecting for a moment what an important discovery they had made, or how eager that woman would have been to gain possession of that which now Betty Barton held tightly in her hand—the will of John George Cavendish, the last of the long line of Cavendish, lords of the Manor!

A Trick of Fate.

BETTY BARTON stopped in surprise, and Polly Linton, hurrying along the corridor, bumped to a standstill, and nearly fell backwards into Paula Creel.

"Gwacious, you neatly twod on me!" gasped Paula.

"Betty stopped so suddenly," said Polly. "What's the matter, Betty?"

Betty Barton, for reply, pointed to the door, and then raised her eyebrows.

"Door's locked," she announced.

"Well, who locked it?" demanded Polly. "We didn't. We came down for our things last night, and we certainly didn't lock it. Are you sure? Perhaps it has just stuck."

But Betty turned the handle and shook the door. No mistaking that it was locked then, for even her weight against it couldn't budge it, and even Polly Linton's vigorous effort made no difference at all.

Very strange that was, for at this early hour in the morning the maids had not started work on the studies. Considering that Betty and Polly had

been up late the night before, they had arisen extremely early, and looked very little worse for their night's adventure.

It was Paula who had awakened them early—Paula, anxious to hear just what had happened, for, of course, she had been asleep when at last they had returned to the school, and they wisely had not awakened her.

Only in the study would they be safe from detection in showing their chum the parchment paper they had found by the old ruined house.

But the study was locked!

"Can't possibly be!" frowned Polly.

"But it is."

"Yes, wather! It's locked," said Paula. "Just one more twy, y' know. If at first you don't succeed, twy, twy, twy again."

All the same, and despite her fine advice, Paula stood back, leaving it to Betty and Polly to put their combined weight and force on to the door. This time they shook it so much that it echoed down the corridor.

Bump!

They rebounded from it, and at the same time from inside the room there came a voice, impatient and angry:

"Go away! I don't want to be worried now. You can do the study later."

Had they encountered a ghost they could not have been more surprised. Mary it was inside the study—Mary, with the door locked, at such an early hour. And she obviously thought they were the maids come to clear out the room.

Mary was sharing their study for a few days, for, being a new girl who had come before Morcove School had got properly to rights, there had been no study available.

Polly would have given a quick reply to Mary's words, but Betty frowned at her, and she was silent.

There was no reason at all, Betty thought, in getting annoyed with Mary when she obviously was under the impression that they were the maids. And besides, they could not talk as they wanted to when she was there. Better far to go out into the quadrangle, or even to borrow Madge Minden's study for a minute or two.

Mary was the very last person they wished to encounter.

She explained that in a whisper to Polly, but Polly was not tractable.

"But the cheek of locking us out of our own study!" she said. "I don't see why we should be locked out, Betty! Mary's a funny kid! I think—"

Polly's voice was not lowered at all, and at all times it was clear. No wonder, then, that Mary inside the study heard it, and opened the door.

She meant to open the door only a little way, but Paula Creel was leaning on it to fasten a shoelace, and directly the handle was turned, open shot the door, pushing Mary backwards, and tumbling Paula into the room.

"Ow!" gasped Paula.

"Oh!" said Mary, and suddenly she went a deep scarlet as Betty and Polly stared blankly into their study.

They were too surprised at that moment even to help up their fallen chum. They could just stand and stare, for on the study table, which usually held a vase and a litter of paper, there now stood some bottles of chemicals, a Bunsen burner operated from the old gas bracket, and over the Bunsen a retort.

A crucible lay on the table, and the pestle by

its side showed that they had interrupted Mary in the act of grinding up some powder.

"Mum—my goodness!" gasped Polly. "What's this? A chemistry lab.?"

"Must be," laughed Betty.

And Paula Creel, dusting herself, looked on wonderingly, and noted how flushed and anxious Mary looked.

Too late, of course, now to cover up the fact that she was working upon some formula, and the only thing to do was to confess.

"I—I'm experimenting," she said. "The lab's too cold at this time, and I thought you wouldn't really mind, Betty."

"Why, of course not!" said Betty readily.

"What's the experiment?"

"Just something for—something that I've been asked to find out," said Mary awkwardly. For Mrs. Vansittart's name was not to be mentioned; no one was to know that she had any connection at all with Carla.

"I see," said Betty. "Well, good luck! We won't interrupt you, Mary."

"We can go somewhere else," added Polly—"quite easily."

"Yes, wather."

And somewhere else they went—into Madge Minden's study, leaving Mary Cavendish to proceed with her experiments alone, to pore over her notebook, and to frown worriedly as she watched the retort.

"Queer thing that!" said Polly as they closed the door of Madge's study. "What's she working upon?"

Betty, however, didn't think it mattered. There had been girls before in her experience who had



HER LABOUR LOST!

Mary put out her hand to grasp the retort, and the phial fell from her hand, and shattered into fragments. The colourless liquid it contained spilled over the formula. Betty sprang forward to save it.

experimented on perfectly useless things—who had spent hours of time in the laboratory with chemicals of all sorts.

"Pewhaps she's twying to turn lead into gold," said Paula brightly. "I've often wondered whether I should twy myself. I have a gift for chemistwry."

"Ha, ha, ha! A gift for mixing up things and making a horrible mess on the benches with chemicals," laughed Polly. "A gift's right, Paula! I'd like to see you turn lead into gold."

"Weally," murmured Paula, as though deeply offended, "if I twied I don't doubt I could, you know. I should put a little nitwic acid on it, or something—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or pewwaps, on second thoughts, sulphuwic acid."

"Nitric acid on zinc," said Betty seriously. "And then look at the result with a lighted match, Paula. That would go with a big bang, that scheme."

"Or a terrible flare up that would be," agreed Polly, with twinkling eyes. "A stunning idea, Paula. It would stun everyone for miles if you did it on a large scale!"

But Paula, despite her gift for chemistry, had no thought of connecting hydrogen with nitric acid and zinc! It didn't enter her head for a moment.

Still, Mary's chemistry was no concern of theirs, queer though it was, and Betty brought out the parchment sheet and spread it on the table where it received full benefit from the bright morning sun.

There they could examine it, and see if there really were any chances of finding out whose will it was.

To that end, Betty had brought a magnifying-glass, and now, through it in turn, they examined the paper. Much time they spent in examination, but, although they found a letter here and there that they had not noticed before, they gained no useful information.

Whose will it was, and to what it referred, they could not even surmise, and their spirits, which had risen in hope, now fell. After all, perhaps they were to discover nothing helpful. They were merely the possessors of a piece of paper years old, with some writing on it. Actually it was worthless.

No wonder, then, that Polly looked disappointed, or that Paula Creel, shaking her head wisely, decided that the venture had not been a success.

"I wather fancy if I had gone the result would have been diffeent," she murmured thoughtfully.

"You mean that there would have been writing on the paper?" asked Polly with a smile. "Oh, yes, very likely that."

"Gwacious, I did not mean that at all," said Paula. "But the result could have been diffeent. Instead of bywing this useless piece of paper—"

"We'd have been caught by that woman, whoever she was, and been reported to Miss Somerfield," nodded Betty. "Yes, that's more than likely, Paula."

"Probable in fact," agreed Polly.

So seriously did they speak that Paula blinked at them in some doubt.

"Weally," she protested, "I did not mean that either. I believe you're wotting, Betty!"

"Whattng?" asked Betty.

"Wotting. I mean, of course, that we should have discovered something vewy interesting, perwaps a plan of some sort, you know."

"But how could we, silly," said Polly in exas-

peration, "if it wasn't there? We looked, and there was nothing."

But Paula was not so easily to be convinced about that. True, Polly and Betty had been able to discover nothing, but what did that prove? That they ought to have had a wiser head to guide them.

"Howevah," she said, "it's all ovah now. "Another time I shall wefuse to let you go out alone, y'know. It is 'too late now, of course. Because that woman saw you searching, and will search theah herself, I should have pwevented that."

"How?"

The sudden question took Paula quite off her guard, and Betty and Polly could not help smiling at the surprise on her face. Really it was rather exasperating to have Paula's being wise after the event—and not even wise either!

"How? Bai Jove, I have not worked it out, deah geal! But I should have thought of something vey clevah, no doubt. I should have pwe-tended I was meahly tying up my shoe-lace," she added brightly.

That made Polly collapse into the armchair and give a peal of laughter, while Betty smiled broadly.

"Oh, my goodness!" shrieked Polly. "Just imagine our walking all that way, and swimming the bay in addition, just for Paula to tie her shoe-lace. How convincing, you know—what a brain wave, too!"

"Besides which," Betty pointed out slowly and patiently, "the woman knew something about it before we arrived. She was making for the house before she saw us—she didn't see us until we ran, and then she thought there was only one. She called out some name. Mary, I believe—"

"Mary!" exclaimed Polly.

"Mary Cavendish," nodded Paula. "Go on, Betty, deah girl. Perwaps I shall be able to piece together the evidence, you know. Mary goes theah and finds coins; the woman goes theah also. She knows Mary. Yes."

And Paula looked very much like a detective waiting seriously for Betty to continue. The pity was that Betty couldn't—she knew nothing more than that herself.

But she realised as clearly as they did the connection between Mary Cavendish and the name that the woman had called. Since Mary was connected with that house of mystery—what more natural that the woman should have mistaken Betty for her?

"Not that it matters, though," shrugged Polly. "If she wanted to speak to Mary, she can speak to her at any time, surely? Nothing for us to worry about there. It isn't our business."

There Polly undoubtedly was right. All the same, it was an intriguing business, and one that puzzled them.

"Why is Mary so keen on chemistry that she's experimenting in her study?" mused Betty. "That's what I'd like to know, for one, Polly. And I'm inclined to think it's not unconnected with this other business."

"Rather not," agreed Polly. "What do you think, Paula?"

"I don't know what to think, deah geal, except that it is vewy mystewious, you know. But I shall think it out, and I dare say I shall get the cowwect solution all wight. Perwaps—"

But Paula's sentence was not destined to be finished, for the maids were coming along to do the studies, and Polly put her hand over her elegant chum's mouth. They did not want the servants to hear things and then to start talking.

"How about hookey?" Betty said, changing the subject, and they went back to their own study to get their hookey sticks and a ball.

The door was unfastened and ajar, and Polly kicked it wider and walked in, hardly expecting Mary to be there at all. But Mary was there, and the retort was there and everything that had littered the table.

Up jumped Mary, but not in annoyance. She was smiling happily and displaying in a phial some liquid. How her eyes sparkled, and how she smiled.

"I've found it," she said, "and there's the formula! I've discovered it, just by luck, too!"

Then her joy vanished and she looked confused. It was quite obvious to them how eager she was to share the joy of discovery, and obvious, too, that she had not meant them to be acquainted with the details of it.

In confusion she put the phial back on the table, turning hurriedly to cover up the sheet of carefully written-out formula. So hurriedly did she turn that she jerked the table, and the retort swayed dangerously.

Out went her hand to grab it, and the phial that was in it fell to the table, shattering into fragments, while the liquid spilled.

"Oh!" gasped Polly.

"Gwacious!" said Paula. "All gone, deah geal—"

"All gone!" gasped Mary. "Oh, my goodness—what a fool I am! Quick!" She grabbed up anything to mop the liquid back into a phial that lay near by. All over the formula it was, a colourless liquid, and Betty went to save it.

"As long as you have the formula you can make some more," she murmured. "There's that consolation."

"Of course—yes," nodded Mary. "Can you dry it? Can you—?" She broke off and put down the phial, and dashed in the strangest way towards Betty Barton, so that that girl was quite amazed.

"The formula—quick, before it is too late!" panted Mary. "Dry it—wipe—"

Betty, who had been fanning it, looked at the sheet of paper she held—at the blank side of it, and turned it over.

Both sides were perfectly blank, devoid of any stain whatever.

Transfixed with astonishment Betty stared at it, and Polly and Paula and Mary stared.

"It's the wong piece," Paula broke in. "You've picked up a blank sheet, Betty—"

"But it wasn't! I know it wasn't!"

And Betty, in dismay, looked at Mary, whose face had gone suddenly white,

"It's the right piece," she said in a voice that was little more than a whisper, "and the formula has gone for ever. That liquid—it obliterates ink. Oh, what a fool I am, and now—"

She buried her face in her hands, and Betty and Polly and Paula, after one sympathetic look at her, crept out of the room. There was nothing they could say, except that they were sorry, and she obviously wished to make no confidences.

But to think that she had worked so long for a liquid that would obliterate ink, and that the first thing it should obliterate was the very formula that had enabled her to make it!

It was the irony of Fate, and Fate, which had been so unkind, might not give her the favour that had enabled her to make the discovery. Much she might remember, but not all, and it was the "all" that counted!

Carla Takes a Hand.

MORNING lessons had just finished, and Mary Cavendish, in company with Betty Barton and Polly Linton, was walking back to Study 12, there to deposit her books.

Polly, as usual, was first in; Polly always seemed to be under the delusion that life was a race, and it did not matter whether she was bound, she hurried. She even hurried down to the Form-room, although, naturally, not half so quickly as she hurried away from it.

Somehow it happened that Polly, hurrying into Study No. 12, nearly bumped into the maid, who stood in the doorway.

"Oh!" said Polly. "Hallo!"

The maid smiled amiably at Polly.

"Is Miss Cavendish here, please?" she asked. "There's a visitor to see her."

"A visitor?" said Polly, in surprise. "For Mary? Oh, what splendid luck! Just when we haven't got a penny piece between us!"

Her eyes sparkling, she wheeled upon Mary with the glad news, and thumped her violently upon the back.

"Rich uncle, perhaps," Polly sighed. "Never know your luck, you know!"

"It's a lady, Miss Polly," ventured the maid.

"Oh, well, rich aunt! Aunts can be just as rich as uncles, you know!" Polly pointed out wisely.

"Yes, wather!" chimed in Paula, who had come roaming up in her usual manner. "Wicher, in fact!"

But Mary was not looking half so pleased or half so excited as they. That it was not even an aunt at all, she was quite sure, and she had no hopes of getting money for tea. Not that the others could be expected to guess that, however; for all they knew, Mary's people might be rich. She dressed well enough, at any rate!

"I don't think it's an aunt," demurred Mary, and asked curiously: "What is she like?"

"It's a Mrs. Jackson, Miss Mary," said the maid, "and she says she'll wait for you in the waiting-room."

"The waiting-room? Oh, then I'd better go!" said Mary quickly.

Who this Mrs. Jackson was she could not guess, but that she had to be seen at once was clearly to be understood. And Mary went hurrying down the corridor, just before Polly had time to call out.

"We want enough for two kinds of jam and some doughnuts!" Polly cried, and her voice floated upon the desert air. Mary was downstairs.

The waiting-room at Morcove was a somewhat bleak place, furnished darkly and rather drearily with photographs of men who had been once on the board of governors.

But the furnishing did not matter to Mary. She just pushed open the door, and with great curiosity eyed the visitor.

Mrs. Jackson was dressed all in black, and her height was apparent, even though she remained sitting. A felt hat with turn-down brim concealed her face, while the thick fur collar of her coat sufficed to hide her lower features.

She made no attempt, however, to conceal her identity from Mary, and it would indeed have been of very little use, for Mary reasoned that at once.

"Mrs. Vansittart!" she murmured. "Oh!"

"Yes, Mary, it is," said Mrs. Vansittart. "And I have come to have a very serious talk with you—very serious indeed!"

That she was angry Mary could see, and in dismay she stopped short a few yards from the woman, wondering just what it was that she had done wrongly.

"I want to know, Mary, why you went to your father's house last night?"

Mary stared blankly.

"I—to my father's house! But I didn't! I didn't go out at all last night—really I didn't!"

"Please do not trouble to deny it. I came upon you just as you ran away. It was I who called out. You heard me—you must have heard me—but you didn't trouble to answer!"

Mrs. Vansittart was speaking coldly and without passion, but her anger was clearly apparent, and when she was angry Mary knew that it was full time to be cautious and guarded in one's replies.

For that reason chiefly she halted. What use goading on the woman? What use was it to be defiant and make that anger all the more awful?

But her self-control was ill-timed, as it happened, for the woman made no allowance for the motive.

"I see you do not answer, and I admire you for not being a complete fool. I am not a fool, and when I say I saw you, I merely mean what I say, not being subject to delusions of any sort. What I came here to discover was why you went there?"

"But I didn't! I—"

"Why you went there," reiterated Mrs. Vansittart. "I have come to learn that, and I do not go until I am satisfied that you are telling me nothing but the truth. Did I not forbid you to go to the house?"

"Yes; but—"

"There is no 'but.' You went there against my orders. Why—for what purpose? I imagine for some most important purpose, since you made the journey late at night?"

Mary shook her head.

"I did not go last night," she said, and her lips became set and her eyes shone.

Mrs. Vansittart was not the only one with a show of temper. That much the Vansittarts and the Cavendishes had in common.

"You went before that, of course," Mrs. Vansittart sneered sarcastically. "Even you could not deny. Why did you go the last time?"

"I went to find some—some little belonging of my father's."

"What? Which belonging? He left only rubbish—and formula!"

Mrs. Vansittart uttered the words more slowly, and her eyes narrowed as they rested upon the proud girl before her.

"I see, so that's it," she resumed. "You went there to find some valuable formula of your father's?"

Mary shook her head.

"No, not that. You wouldn't understand if I explained, so what's the use? I want some little keepsake, that is all, and by accident I found those coins. Then I went again because—I found I wanted to find more."

"You went last night for that purpose?"

"I did not go last night!"

Mrs. Vansittart waved her hand in a gesture that might have been intended to express distaste or even defeat.

"You claim that you go there to find coins. Very well! You found nothing else?"

"Nothing at all."

"No papers of any sort?"

"No," said Mary simply. "The coins were

very old. It isn't likely that anything of my father's would have been hidden in the wall there. I—I used to go there often just to look out on the view and to imagine daddy was alive," she said huskily. "But you have forbidden me to go again, and I do not go now."

Mrs. Vansittart regarded her searchingly and nodded her head.

"We will leave it at that, Mary, but I would like you clearly to understand that I am mistress of this situation; not you. It is as well that we understand each other clearly."

"Yes."

"It is well that you understand that I am sending you to Morcov, and that you are not an independent person able to do as you choose. Treat me fairly and I shall not be unkind."

The woman was speaking much more softly now, but it was a tone that Mary liked even less than that of the voice raised in anger.

"Yes."

"Then perhaps in future we may have a somewhat clearer understanding. Perhaps we can even be friends."

"Yes."

Her replies would have discouraged anyone, but Mrs. Vansittart managed to smile. She rose from her chair still smiling, and patted the girl's cheek.

Unable to prevent the instinctive action, Mary withdrew her head in defiance. Even then, however, the woman seemed to be not at all perturbed.

"There is just one thing more," she mused, and turned back from the door towards which she had walked. "One little thing. How is the experimenting going?"

"I had the formula. It was all complete, and then"—Mary shrugged her shoulders—"then," she added more softly, "it was ruined. The formula is lost."

"Lost?"

"Yes; but I can start again. It will be something for me to do."

Mrs. Vansittart nodded her head absently, as though she had not heard what was said, or else had not completely understood its purport.

"I wonder," she said, "if there were such a formula amongst some of the papers that your father left. Do you think it likely?"

Mary nodded her head eagerly. Oh, for a chance of searching through those papers of her father's!

"He was working on some chemical to do with inks. I don't know quite what it was. He was busy with so many things; though."

Then it was that Mrs. Vansittart brought from her bag a notebook—a notebook so full that there were loose papers stuck in under the elastic. How Mary's eyes shone as she looked at that. That was the notebook that held the secrets of her father's work. It was his most valued possession, and, therefore, hers. And here it was in this woman's possession.

Really, it seemed to be too good to be true.

She would have snatched at it, but there remained just enough self-control to prevent her.

"Oh, may I look, please?" she pleaded.

"You may certainly look. Indeed, you may search, for I understand nothing of these weird formulas. I cannot even read the writing or make out the abbreviations."

Mary gave the woman a quick look. The thought that passed instantly through her head was a question. Why had Mrs. Vansittart

bothered to try? Behind all this there was something that she did not quite understand.

She was looking at the notebook now, however, and her face, always apt to show what was passing in her mind, was from the woman's observation.

"A few experiments, making use of what is written there, and you may save yourself a great deal of trouble. I always was under the impression that your father was busy on a fluid to make legible writing that had faded with age."

"He was."

"Well, there might be a market for that. He left a great many debts for me to settle, and if there is anything he has discovered which is saleable, so much the better."

Mary said nothing at all to that. Her father never sold any inventions. He never seemed to think of it—he just went on experimenting and discovering for the sheer joy of it.

door to after her so that Mary was shut in by herself, looking at the pound-note in her hand, wondering at the cause of the generosity, and wishing she had refused it.

She did not even trouble to glance at the door as it closed, however, but opened her notebook and placed it on the table. There she was still when a movement sounded close behind her, and, wheeling, she found herself looking into the eyes of Carla Vansittart.

"Oh, you!" she gasped.

"Yes, I. Surprised?"

"I didn't hear you come in."

"Oh, who was your visitor?"

Burning curiosity there was written upon Carla's face, and Mary eyed her contemptuously.

"Someone—a woman. What has it to do with you?"

"A great deal. I want to know what you are up to. What's that?"



THE WRONG GIRL! Betty stumbled and could not get to her feet quickly enough. The rays of the torch were now behind her. "Mary stop!" cried an authoritative voice. But Betty was fleet of foot, and she ran on.

"There may be the formula here," agreed Mary. "I hope there is, because—because it would be splendid, wouldn't it?"

"It would be excellent," agreed Mrs. Vansittart. "I have an old paper which I would like revived. Still, perhaps I am, hoping too much, Mary."

"Perhaps," smiled Mary. "But one never knows. Goodness, how I shall love going through these formulas." And she pressed the book to her heart. "I shall love working now."

"A queer taste, but inherited," was Mrs. Vansittart's reply to that. "Good-bye, my child, and remember that it is not wise to cross my path. I try to make a good friendship; but I always succeed in making a most unpleasant enemy. Not a word of all this to Carla at your peril."

Her expression softened then, and from her bag she brought a folded one-pound note, which she handed to Mary, who, surprised by the generosity, took it.

Then she went out of the room, swinging the

Carla reached forward, and a long, slim arm took the notebook out of Mary's reach.

"Give that to me!" said Mary dangerously.

"Carla, give it to me!"

But Carla dodged aside and opened the notebook, a slip of paper fell on the floor, and she reached down for it; as she did so, Mary frantically grabbed back the book and held it tightly.

"That paper, too, Carla, you thief!"

"Thief! You dare call me that, you charity brat? You whom we are feeding and clothing! What is yours is mine!" cried Carla. "And I'll trouble you for that book. How am I to know what you are up to, eh? It was rumoured, I may tell you, that your father was up to no good with his experimenting. That he was making explosives. Oh, it's true, likely enough, when you have these mysterious visitors!"

"Oh, don't talk such arrant nonsense!" said Mary in her father's best manner. "Give me that paper, or I will take it!"

Deliberately, then, Carla folded the paper and put it into her pocket.

"I shall get this formula manufactured for me," she said quietly, "and then—then, indeed, we shall see the kind of game that you have been playing, Mary."

Mary would have flown at her then, would have snatched the paper away, but Carla represented might; Carla was stronger, and a rough-and-tumble in the visitor's room would mean trouble.

Already Carla was at the door with the hapdile in her hand.

"I'm keeping an eye upon you, Mary," she said. "And at the first opportunity you're going away from Morocco. We don't want you here."

Mary did not trouble to reply. She put the elastic round the notebook and walked towards the door. There was some quality and purpose in her eyes apparently, for Carla went hurriedly out of the room, and when Mary reached the door the corridor, she found, was empty.

There for a moment she stood, and while she stood there the big clock struck the hour of one.

Dinner-time, and after dinner afternoon lessons—then experimenting in the laboratory! A formula Carla had, but what was one against so many?

But that one might prove of remarkable importance—of far greater importance than Mary was then able to imagine. For in Carla's heart there was hatred.

It might have been the very formula that Mary most wanted, the formula that would bring back the one she had lost that morning. She wanted that very badly; but not half so badly as Mrs. Vansittart, or even Betty Barton & Co., who even now were poring over that queer last will!

Very queer indeed that will would be if brought up into legibility again. To Mary Cavendish that last will and testament of her ancestor might mean riches, and for Mrs. Vansittart poverty. But as yet the formula had not been found; and as yet the will was not in the hands of those to whom it mattered.

What mental agony would there have been, though, had those to whom it mattered known that Betty Barton was just then debating whether or not the will were worth keeping. So near it went to the warm blazing fire, but it never reached it. Paula Creel snatched it away from the flames, and, doing so, snatched Mary Cavendish's future fortune back to the realms of possibility.

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

If only the wonderful formula had not been lost! If only it could be discovered again—what revelations might not be discovered from the mystery parchment? Will Mary discover the secret which means so much to her? Do not fail to read next week's splendid, long complete tale, which is entitled: "Unable to Speak Out!"



A Strange Beetle Catcher.

If you have any beetles in your house, and you wish to get rid of them, put a hedgehog in the kitchen. This spiky little animal is a great beetle gorgier, and in a day or two there will be no more beetles in your house, and you can keep the hedgehog as a pet.

It is not so difficult to find a hedgehog if you look in the right place. In the summer they like marshy places by ponds and streams amidst wooded country. They sleep all the winter through in their curious little roofed nests, which they build in old willows, or in the boles of any old tree.

A good time to catch a hedgehog is at dusk or in the moonlight. They come out about this time to hunt for food, which may consist of anything from a baby rabbit, mice, and insects to grass-snakes. These last mentioned, it is interesting to note, are swallowed tail first. They also eat the eggs of larks and other birds which lay their eggs on the ground.

You can easily tame a hedgehog, although, of course, it is covered with spines, which can be very dangerous when it rolls itself into a ball.

If you fancy to tame one, feed it on bread soaked in milk or water, cooked vegetables, or the remains of porridge or puddings.

The hedgehog is a peculiar little creature to look at. It has a short neck, short legs, and each foot has five toes with strong claws. Its back is covered with short spines, and underneath there is a coat of fur. Along the skin on each side of

the animal runs a muscle, which is capable of contracting, so that the one-inch spines stick out all round like a ball.

How to Make a Rope Ladder.

In the case of a fire, a rope ladder can be of great value, and may be the means of saving life. If the stairs of a house are burnt away, and the fire-escape not yet arrived, the inmates may be in great danger. All Guides should know how to construct a rope ladder hastily for such an emergency.

If possible, use your rope double in constructing the ladder. For the rungs or steps, such things as fire-irons, walking-sticks, stair-rods, and legs of chairs will serve the purpose well.

The best way is to double the rope in the middle, and put the first step about one and a half to two yards from the double, and then put the others about nine inches apart, making a clove-hitch on each rope, and placing the two ropes at opposite ends of the rungs.

It has to bear a person's weight, remember, so make it strong.

Toads.

WHEN taking country walks Guides often discover frogs and toads, and sometimes do not know which is which.

Toads differ from frogs by crawling and not leaping. Though they are very much like frogs at first glance, you will see, on closer examination of the two, that they are quite different. Toads are much shorter in the leg than frogs, and they have coarse, clumsily-made bodies. You will also find that the clammy skin gives out a slimy substance, which is sticky to the touch.

They never make their homes in sunny places. They live and feed on slugs and insects, and crawl amongst decaying and dank undergrowth near ponds and streams, in search of food.