

Woble
THE STORY-PAPER ALL SCHOOLGIRLS VOTE THE BEST!

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2^d



**FACE TO FACE WITH THE
SISTER HE DESPISED!**

(An exciting moment from
the fascinating long, com-
plete Morcove School story
inside.)

Worries on Her Brother's Account Spoiled the Happiness of Morcove School for Polly Linton, but a Ray of Sunshine Began to Steal Through the Clouds—

When Dave Lawder Took Charge!



An Exciting, Long, Complete Story
of the Chums of Morcove School

By MARJORIE STANTON

A Schoolgirl's Sorrow

DOLLY DELANE, the only day-girl at Morcove School, had stayed to tea with her chums of Study 12.

It was when Dolly's parents gave up farming and retired to a pretty homestead on the Barncombe road, not a mile from Morcove, that she herself ceased to be a boarder in the school.

Living so handy for games, as well as work, the change had not affected Dolly very much. And certainly it had made not the least effect upon her friendship with Betty Barton & Co.!

"Any more tea, anybody!" cried Form-captain Betty, presiding at the crowded table. "Dolly?"

"No, thanks, Betty, I've done splendidly!"

"What ze diggings, you are not feenished?" was the protesting cry of Naomer Nakara, Morcove's royal Fourth-Former from North Africa. "Bekas—"

"Because Naomer hasn't," put in Polly Linton. "And Naomer never would finish, if we let her go on."

"It is a weal mawvel to me, geals, haow Naomer keeps so fit," came Paula Creel's languid remark. "One would have wather expected such gwoos feeding to make her less westless, but it doesn't, no!"

"Shame!" said Helen Craig. "Naomer doesn't eat cream-buns by the gross—yet."

"I am all right," said Naomer.

"Your appetite is, certainly!" chuckled Betty.

"Well, girls, since we are all finished—except Naomer—"

"Yes, wait ze bit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwoedy!" commented dainty Paula, turning her face away. "The goal is simply a—Yowp! Ow, ooch! Naomer, you cuckoo, get off me!"

"Zen don't you be checky, bekas I not stand it from a silly old duffer like you! Old Skinnigalee!" the dusky one derided Paula, pinching a slender arm.

"Wowp! Betty deah, speak to Naomer!"

"I am surprised," said the captain in a pained voice, "that you, Naomer, should let Dolly Delane see you behaving like this!"

Polly Linton pushed back her chair and rose. "What about putting Naomer outside, girls? Hands up those in favour—carried!"

"No, bekas," yelled Naomer, holding up a plump arm to record a dissenting vote, "one against, so see!"

All the other chairs were being pushed back now; but Naomer was in no real danger of being thrust out into that cold, hard world represented by the passage. The sun was shining bravely, and, although this afternoon had found the juniors playing strenuous games after school, they were all for getting out of doors again.

"Got to get along home now, Dolly?" asked Betty regretfully.

"Afraid I must, girls; thanks ever so for

having me! It's going to be an evening for sowing—"

"Hark to the farmer's daughter!" said Tess.

"Dolly you should broadcast!"

"Oh, I believe in sowing in drills—"

There was a peal of laughter.

"Bekas," shrieked Naomer, making an affectionate rush at Dolly, "Tess meant broadcasting on ze wireless, of course; a jolly old lecture for ze children's hour. But we are not children, so blow lectures."

And she began to sing:

"O, we are ze girls of Morcove School,
Of Morcove, Merrie Morcove—"

"Quiet!" thundered Polly. "You'll be sick of that chorus before ever the play comes off, always singing it! Girls, what about walking with Dolly as far as her home?"

"Cheers!" said Helen.

"Yes, wather!"

"So, queek, queek, come on, everybody.

Paula—"

"Ow!"

"Push on, zen!"

Paula, precipitated by the dusky one, went out of the study headlong. Tea-things were left to be cleared away later on—say, about the time for starting "prep."—and in a few minutes the chums were strolling out by the school's main gateway on to the high road.

"Have you heard how Dave Lawder is to-day?" Dolly suddenly inquired.

Those who were boarders at the school shook their heads.

"He must be going on all right," Betty remarked cheerily, "or we would have heard. He's so close to Morcove now, at that bungalow they've taken for his convalescence—almost as close as you are, Dolly."

The day girl nodded.

"I suppose it isn't more than five minutes' walk from my home to the bungalow," she chatted on. "Jolly place, Cliff Edge Bungalow! He ought to do well there, anyhow."

"And he will," predicted Madge Minden in her sober, earnest way. "Sea air, sunshine—a veranda to lie out upon, days like this—"

"And plenties to eat, bekas—"

"Food again," sighed Paula. "Weally, the goal is—Owp, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You better not come near me again!" threatened Naomer, after charging the elegant one sideways into a dry ditch.

"This is not behaving," said the captain with mock sadness. "But, talking of Dave, girls, did you all know his guardian has sent down a couple of servants from London to run the bungalow? One of them is a Scotswoman, if that's the word."

"Say 'Janet,'" suggested Polly. "That's the woman's name, anyhow—a real ripper, from all accounts."

"Not to mention that she knew Dave when he was a tiny tot," was Helen's happy rejoinder. "Girls, I wonder who Dave's parents were! He has always seemed to be such a mystery to me; no father or mother, no brothers and sisters!"

"He is a mystery, in more senses than one," said Pam Willoughby. "Says so little always—"

"And you never know what he is thinking!" laughed Betty. "Well, thank goodness he's so much better now. I only wish that—that—"

But Betty decided not to say the rest. Polly was present, and it could only have distressed her to hear any reference to her brother Jack. "I only wish that Jack's troubles were over, too!" was what Betty had nearly said.

For she knew that Polly's brother, as matters stood at present, was to be expelled from Grangemoor School before another week was out.

He had until Saturday evening in which to make up his mind to hand in a written apology to his headmaster, admitting prejudice and insubordination in connection with a prefect.

Unless that apology was ready to be made public at prayers, on Saturday evening, Grangemoor School would see the last of Jack Linton on the following Monday morning.

And Jack was not going to apologise! Polly and her chums were just as well aware of that as was the whole of Grangemoor School. He had been given until Saturday—but his mind was already made up!

He had no intention of apologising for what he had said in condemnation of the prefect, Gerald Rennard. Jack knew Rennard to be a boy unworthy of the post of prefect, and he had not been afraid to say so, though, unhappily, he was without the means to prove his words.

"This week has flown!" exclaimed one of the chums as they sauntered along to Dolly's home. "To-morrow is Saturday again!"

Next moment the speaker was regretting having made the remark.

"Sorry, Polly! But you've been so bright, dear, you've made me forget what Saturday means for your brother."

"I try to be—the same as usual," shrugged the girl who, in happier times, was Study 12's mad-cap. "If nothing else can do any good, going about with a long face won't be a bit of use."

"If only—oh, if only something could happen!" sighed Betty.

"Well, it won't! It's impossible now," said Polly. "Jack will be sent home, right enough, by the first train next Monday morning! And the only consolation is that dad and mother will—well, they'll know that the wrong fellow has been turned out of Grangemoor, that's all."

This was followed by such a "Don't-let's-talk-about-it" look; that Polly's chums changed to another topic. But the thought remained, robbing this golden hour of its sunshine—the thought of Jack's impending fate. He was known so well to all of them; he and Dave.

Mrs. Delane was pottering about in the garden when the girls filed in at the little wicket-gate. Dropping trowel and wooden skip, she came forward to welcome her daughter's school chums.

"How are you all, girls? I see the bills are out for the play! In Barncombe—on every hoarding and in all the shop windows!"

"Not a terrible lot of misprints, I hope?" smiled Betty, who had been answerable for the printing. "Mrs. Delane, how lovely your place looks now that spring is here!"

"Come round, my dears. And you must each have a glass of milk before you go."

The Delanes still kept two or three cows. They had found they could not be happy without animals about the place, and the well-kept home-stead was quite a Noah's Ark. A pleasant saunter round the flower and kitchen gardens ended at the dairy doorway.

"Gorjus!" said Naomer as she eyed the great pans in which thick cream was ready to be taken off. "Mrs. Delane, do you ever make ze cream-buns?"

"Sometimes, my dear. Dolly must bring a sample to the school one afternoon. Dolly dear, you know we've been asked to supply Cliff Edge Bungalow, as a favour, with butter and cream and eggs. There's a basket that really ought to go across now. Their cook-housekeeper—such a nice soul!—she wants to make Dave something special for his last meal, this evening."

"Then let me go across with it now, mother!" cried Dolly. "And perhaps you girls would like to come, too?"

"Shall we?" questioned Betty eagerly. "Yes, let's! And so find out how Dave is!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!"

Even Paula, the least energetic of the chums, was quite agreeable to the lengthened walk.

Away they all went, five minutes later, Dolly carrying a muslin-covered basket that held rich milk, a jar of cream, a dozen large brown eggs, and a roll of butter.

Betty chuckled a comment as they neared the bungalow entrance.

"We are rather a drove! Anyhow, old Janet can't imagine that we've asked ourselves to tea!"

"Good job if she does," was Naomer's opinion. "Bekas I don't mind anuzzer tea!"

"I fancy that must be old Janet," murmured Madge, when they were midway along the gravelled drive, "coming round from the veranda."

The person in question, doubtless a little astonished by the sight of so many schoolgirl visitors, now hastened down the drive to meet them. She was a tall, thin, very prim-looking woman, with an air of precision. Although she smiled, it was impossible for Betty & Co. to tell whether the smile was not a Scotch way of frowning.

"Your butter and cream, Janet," explained Dolly, displaying the basket. "And, please, how is Dave Lawder to-day?"

"Ye mun be careful, lass," said old Janet very gravely, for Dolly had rather carelessly handed over the basket. "Eh!" as she turned back the muslin and saw that everything was as it should be. "All right! And here's cream as I ken will be the making of the laddie, with a wee bit over for my ain parritch!"

The girls dared not meet one another's eyes. Old Janet was a scream!

"Aweel, and hoo's the laddie, the noo? He's doing fine, vairy fine, I'm theenking!" beamed the good soul. "Wull ye come round, lassies, an' see Master Davy? Fairstly, though—ye'll have had your tea?"

"We've had one!" said Naomer, shyly fleeing.

"Ah, then," said old Janet, "ye'll no be wanting anither!"

She turned to lead the way to the sunny veranda, and thus Naomer was able to make a long face over old Janet's failure to take the hint about a second tea not being amiss.

All Hope Gone!

WELL wrapped up in an invalid chair on the airy veranda lay Dave Lawder, basking in the sun.

At first sight of him, Betty & Co. felt a shock go through them. He looked greatly changed.

Then, remembering how critically ill he had been, only a fortnight ago, the girls were inclined to think it marvellous that he looked no worse than he did.

"Hallo, girls!" he greeted them simply and quietly; but his voice always had been almost as low as this. Quiet, studious Dave; he had been the very opposite of breezy Jack Linton—and yet they had been such great chums.

"Dave!" the girls greeted him gladly. "You're better, Dave?"

"Oh, heaps, thanks!" he smiled weakly. "Everybody's been so decent, and the weather's so splendid."

"You'll soon be about again now, Dave," said Betty gladly. "This is a fine place for you just now—such a lovely sea view."

He nodded, and began to take delighted notice of almost each girl in turn.

"Well, Polly!" he smiled. "Hallo, Naomer; my distinguished visitor, Queen Naomer! How are you, Pam? I say, it was awfully nice of your people to run over to Grangemoor from Swanlake, when I was so bad. I want to write and thank them."

"There's no need, Dave."

"Madge," turning his eyes upon her next, "finished all the music for the play, Madge? It must be going to be a wonderful show."

"You must get well in time to see the matinee, Dave," declared Madge encouragingly. "When are they going to let you get up?"

"I dressed myself this morning, and old Janet only had to give me a bit of a hand to get out on to the veranda. Bit tottery," he said, gravely smiling; "but next week I should be able to get along and not be so much trouble."

They asked him about his devoted guardian,



"How are you, girls?" Dolly Delane's mother greeted the Morcovians. "I see the bills about the play are out in Barncombe on every hoarding and in all the shop windows." It was exciting news for the chums.

and he said that that gentleman had had to go up to London on urgent business, but was coming down to-morrow to stay till Tuesday.

Old Janet went indoors, after telling the girls they might stay a few minutes.

"She's a dear, isn't she?" suggested Betty softly.

Dave nodded.

"She always has been one of the best," he remarked pensively. "Years ago, when I was a nipper—long before I went to Grangemoor and knew Jack and all you girls. Have you heard from Jack, Polly?" he suddenly questioned, turning his dark eyes upon her.

"I—I had a letter a day or two ago."

There was a pause then, which they felt somehow powerless to end, uncomfortable though it was.

The sun was still shining warmly into the veranda, full upon Dave's wasted face; and yet that face seemed suddenly grey and his eyes looked strangely hollow.

"I'd like to see Jack!" he exclaimed wistfully at last. "He wrote to me; I've got his letter there," nodding towards a book-piled small table, beside the wicker-chair. "But letters are not the same as seeing people."

"What are you reading?" Pam smilingly inquired, feeling that somebody must change the subject, somehow. "Oh, the same sort of stuff!" as she peeped into the book. "Logic."

Dave gave a kind of apologetic smile.

"Fraid you think I've funny tastes; but those johnnies sort of—appeal to me. Not that I can get my mind into them at present, much."

"And, plis, Dave," Naomer now found her tongue, "how is ze appetite? Bekas ze great thing is to get ze strength up!"

There might have come a silencing command from Polly, if only in fun; but at this instant Polly got a shock.

She glimpsed a well-grown girl, in the working-dress usually worn by servants only helping in the kitchen, going away from a back door to take some litter to the bonfire heap.

Violet Marlowe! That girl still about the place!

No wonder Polly felt greatly agitated. She had been given to understand that the dress-maker's daughter would be ending her temporary engagement at the bungalow as soon as old Janet came down from London, with another servant, to take charge.

"What's the trouble, Polly?" asked Dave. He had seen her look startled—trust him.

"Oh—er—nothing—at least—I see that Violet Marlowe is still working here," floundered Polly.

"Yes," Dave nodded, without trying to turn in the chair to get a glimpse of the dressmaker's daughter. "But she leaves to-morrow, I understand. Saturday."

Saturday! As certain as she had ever been of anything, Polly was certain that Dave, when he murmured "Saturday," was thinking of Jack.

It was an overwhelming impulse that made Polly, next moment, go away from the veranda to catch Violet Marlowe on her return from the rubbish heap.

She had said that she would never speak to this girl again—never! But that angry resolve had gone by the board all at once. Polly could have only one thought—that there might still be a chance to do something! Still a chance, perhaps—an eleventh-hour chance to save Jack!

They suddenly faced each other—she and Violet

Marlowe—on a garden path at the back of the bungalow. Polly fully expected the other girl to turn pale and look ashamed; and, instead, Violet Marlowe smiled—brightly.

"Well?" exclaimed Polly hotly. She could only regard the smile as a sign of heartlessness. "Is it anything to laugh about?"

She added, in her quick-tempered way:

"I know I said I would never speak to you again. And I suppose it really does amuse you that I am speaking to you now. It's all a joke to you, that I—that without your help I cannot save my brother from expulsion!"

The smile faded from Violet Marlowe's comely face.

"You'll know, before long, why I am not upset at seeing you again," she said steadily.

"Before long!" echoed Polly bitterly. "But before long Jack is to be expelled from his school, as you know perfectly well!"

The other shook her head.

"To-morrow—Saturday—is as good as his last day at Grangemoor," Jack's sister spoke on hotly. "And all because you refused to provide me with the proof I needed to set him right in the eyes of his headmaster. All right, Violet Marlowe; refuse to help me even now! But I shall always think you were—if not cruel, making a big mistake, to allow such an unjust thing to be done at Grangemoor!"

"We must not have a scene," pleaded Violet Marlowe, glancing uneasily towards the kitchen window. "I did not wish to work the few days longer here, but I was asked to do so, for the boy's sake. He has been so very ill, and even now Janet has to be a nurse to him, giving all her time to looking after him."

Polly's gloomy face did not lighten.

"The boy who has been so very ill—he is my brother's best chum," she said huskily. "Has Dave Lawder told you that?"

"I have not spoken with Master David."

"If you did speak with him," said Polly sternly, "you would find that the thing to get him well, more than all else, would be his knowing that my brother is not to be expelled."

Violet Marlowe turned rather paler, but she voiced no response.

"I may as well tell you," Polly spoke on, "if Dave Lawder had not been taken so terribly ill, weeks ago, he would have done what I have had to try to do instead—for Jack. It would have been Dave Lawder trying to get proof that Gerald Rennard, the prefect at Grangemoor School, is all that Jack believes him to be—a cad, and yet—your brother!"

"No more, please!" entreated Violet Marlowe, taking a step towards the back door. "I cannot bear it. I—I have done the only possible thing, miss—"

"From your point of view, yes! You have taken good care not to admit that Gerald Rennard is your brother. That may be very fine loyalty to one who is your own flesh and blood," Polly was forced to admit, nearly crying, "but it comes hard on my brother. You don't think of him!"

Wrought up though she was, Polly was now aware of sounds which meant that her chums had taken their leave of Dave, not wishing to be in the way. They were passing down to the gate.

What with this, and the fact that Violet Marlowe was quietly determined to go on with her housework, it seemed to Polly that she, too, must leave. She gave a stamping "Oh!" and strode away.

Then, feeling that she must say good-bye to Dave, she took a grip on herself, trying to become calmer before going back to the veranda.

"I must catch up with the others, Dave! So, good-bye, and—and get well soon!"

"Oh, good-bye, Polly," he responded, laying aside a book which he must have taken up as soon as the other girls left him. "I shall be about again soon, and then— By the way, when's the play being given at Barncombe Castle?"

"I don't know! I mean, some time or other," she sighed. "That play! How I wish the whole thing— But it's silly to talk like that."

"It's natural," he amended with his usual precision. "Say, Polly, you have just been talking to that Marlowe girl? And it's upset you—"

"You shouldn't notice, Dave. Oh, I'll go!" Polly said, hardly able to keep the tears back. "Good-bye, and I hope it's another sunny day for you to-morrow— I mean—"

"To-morrow!" he caught her up sadly. "Polly, when Jack wrote to you—he didn't say anything about giving in and apologising over the Rennard business?"

"No, Dave."
 "Nor to me," was the quiet rejoinder. "I'm not surprised, knowing Jack. And so, to-morrow—"

He paused, staring out to sea.
 "Polly, I shouldn't be here. I wish I were at Grangemoor with Jack. They say I'll be fit again by next Term, and so I can go back to Grangemoor then. But Jack—he won't be there."

"It can't be helped, Dave. Oh, and don't you worry, Dave," she implored. "Only get well!"

"I shall get well," he said with a queer smile that was intended to stay her trickling tears. "But if only I could do something to save Jack! But how could I hope to do anything? You've not been able to, with all your trying."

"To think that that Marlowe girl is still about here," Polly exclaimed dearly, "and yet nothing can be done, even now, at the last moment!"

Dave reopened the book that was upon his lap.
 "You know, Polly, we mustn't think hardly of the Marlowe girl."

No, of course not. But I've been calling her names!"

"Then you shouldn't have. Just as you feel bound to stick up for your brother, so she must feel bound to stick up for hers."

"Even though her brother is such a—rotter!"

"All the more so, for that reason, I daresay."

"Oh, well!" Polly shrugged. "I must go! Good-bye, then, once again."

"Bye, Polly," he smiled up at her, as she put her hand into his—and oh what a thin hand his was! "You may be passing, some time—you and the others?"

"One day next week, Dave—yes," said Polly, feeling that she could not bear to see him to-morrow.

Dave's serious dark eyes watched her as she hastened away. He saw her wave a farewell to old Janet, just then going round the garden to find a few flowers, and finally Polly waved to him from the gateway.

He resumed his book, but could not get on

"You've had your tea?" asked Janet. "We've had one," said Naomer, trying to make it clear that another would not come amiss. "Oh, then," Janet said, "ye'll no be wanting anither!"



with it. It lay open upon his lap again, whilst he reclined there, gazing out to sea, thinking of his old school and of Jack.

Presently faithful Janet came bustling to his side, to get him to take some meat extract. After he had sat erect to spon the stuff, Janet shook up a cushion behind him.

"A fine day to-morrow, I'm thinking, by the looks o' yon sky."

"Oh, don't talk to me about to-morrow!" he laughed, but queerly, so that she gave him a quizzical look.

"Why, what's amiss, then, Master Davey? Are ye no feeling so well again?"

"I'm fine, thanks. Oh, Janet dear, how you do get the wind up!"

"Ye mun come in now, dear laddie. 'Tis getting vairy fresh from off the sea. There, take hold on your old Janet, Master Davey dear, and be helped away to bed! Like in the auld times awa' in London—eh, my dear, when you were only a wee yin—how I remember, aye!"

"Right ho, and thanks," said Dave, accepting the helping hand. "Bed, is it? Best place, too, I reckon, for a chap as helpless as— Whoa—"

"Davey, Davey, steady!" For he had reeled as he stood up. "Ye'll be a'right before long."

"Before long!" he echoed. "Ah, what's the use of that!"

For he was thinking of—to-morrow.

Face to Face—At Last!

BETTY BARTON, knowing full well what Polly was going through at this time, considerably left her out of the team for the juniors' Saturday afternoon match.

Yet Polly would have followed the others out

to the field, only the headmistress chose to pick upon her to take a note—to the bungalow!

It was like kindly Miss Somerfield to realise that Dave Lawder must be finding it dull, lying over there on the veranda, with no father, mother, brothers, or sisters to sit beside him now and then for a cheery talk.

"Polly, this note has to go across, to await Dave's guardian, so you might take it," was the bland suggestion of Morcove's headmistress. "There's plenty of time, before games, and Dave might like to see you, his best chum's sister."

"I would like to know how he is going on, Miss Somerfield," Polly frankly confessed.

"So would we all! Come back with some good news, Polly! My note is to ask Dave's guardian if he would like the loan of a bath-chair that's kept at our san. I would like to hear that Dave is going on so well, he can soon be got about."

Saturday. The last and fateful day!

The effort it had cost Polly to concentrate on class-room work this morning would never be known. Now her schoolmates, by the score, were out for the afternoon, some to take part in games, others to run into Barncombe or ramble over the moors, whilst she—

Ah, what a day it was proving for this sister of the schoolboy who, in a few hours' time, would be hearing his hard fate pronounced!

All very well to try and bear up. She had borne up! And next week would find her, she was determined, giving every bit of spare time to the play—to the final rehearsals. She must go on with it now, or it would mean letting down the whole Form. But to-day—Saturday—she was feeling simply good for nothing as regards games or a rehearsal, or any of the usual pastimes.

She looked back, on her way to the bungalow with the note, and saw Betty and many other good chums, starting their game. It did not mean that they were callous—far from it, she knew. The ordinary life had to go on, and one must go on with it, no matter how serious things were.

Dave, this afternoon, was sunning himself again upon the veranda, well wrapped around with rugs in his invalid-chair. She did not see him on her way to the front porch, for the veranda was on the seaward side of the bungalow. But brisk Janet, having received the note, told her where to find the lad.

"Ye mun go round, lassie, and hae a wee-bit talk with Master Davey," was the smiling injunction. "He'll no be sorry to hae someone, Ah'm theenking, to gie him a cheer up."

"Thank you, Janet!"

But as for being able to cheer up Dave, that was not a very likely thing! So Polly was saying to herself, as she went round to the sunny veranda:

"Why—why am I here, when I would have done better to keep away to-day?"

"I thought I heard you, Polly," came Dave's weak yet glad exclamation as she got to him. "Just you?"

"Yes, Dave. Miss Somerfield sent me with a note for your guardian about a bath-chair. The others are at games this afternoon."

He nodded.

"Yes—Saturday. Fancy your headmistress thinking of that bath-chair. She is a brick. Er—she doesn't know about Jack?"

"Oh, no, Dave. Only a few of my chums know, at Morcove. Feeling all right to-day?"

"I'm—I'm— Yes, I'm all right, in a way," he said, his lean face working suddenly. "Only

this is Saturday, Polly! And I'm here; I can't get about—can't get to Jack. I'm a case for a bath-chair, just think, and—and there's your brother at the school—"

"Dave, you mustn't—"

"Polly," he said, after gulping. "If only he had at least one chum standing by him now; one chum standing up for him! So much was done for me when I was ill; why can't they all do something for him? Why can't I—instead of being here like this?" he finished breathlessly and miserably.

Polly was going to say something that would cheer Dave from his despondency, but now there came a grating step on the front gravel, and both she and Dave realised that a car had stopped at the gate to set down some visitor. Dave's look asked her to see who it was, and so she went far enough to glimpse the fresh arrival, and then her heart seemed to turn right over.

Gerald Rennard!

"Who is it, Polly? Not—not Jack?" whispered Dave excitedly. "They've let him come over, have they? But, no, they wouldn't do that—now."

She stepped back.

"It's that prefect—"

"What!"

"It's Gerald Rennard, Dave."

"That fellow! Why—why's he here?" Dave questioned tensely, his dark eyes seeming to flash. "But don't go, Polly! Stay around—you must!"

Before she could decide what to do, Rennard had come straight to the veranda.

"Hallo, Dave old son, how goes it? How's the patient?" the prefect said, looking very immaculate and jaunty. "I like the chair, Dave. 'Napoleon—the last phase'! But there's no last phase about you, is there, old sport?"

"What do you want?" questioned Dave steadily.

"Oh, just a run-over in the car—official visit sort of thing on behalf of Lethbury's House! Well, Polly Linton?" he belatedly greeted her. "I expect you feel a bit de-trop for once?"

"She doesn't go," said Dave hoarsely, "until you have answered one question, Rennard. Since you have turned up like this—does it mean that Jack Linton is let off—or something like that?"

"Why, I'm afraid not, Dave," smirked the prefect. "Very sorry, of course, and all that; but there it is! And I do want you to understand, Dave; although you were his great chum, you mustn't think I class you along with him. I wouldn't be here, if I—"

"He is going to be expelled?" Dave asked, leaning forward in his wicket-chair. "Is he still to be expelled?"

"Unless he apologises at assembly, this evening—and I am very much afraid, don't you know, that he won't," deplored Rennard. "I say, I've got some things in the car, Dave; a few books—some grapes and all that—"

"You can keep them," Dave said gruffly.

"Get out of this!"

"H'ssh!" Polly implored. "You mustn't excite yourself—"

"Then let him go away," Dave almost moaned.

"How can he come here, wanting to be friendly, when in a few hours it is to be all over with Jack! No one has come to tell us that Jack is to be let off; that the school knows better, after all, than to kick him out! Only this fellow comes, to tell us—they are going to do it! Going to expel him!"

"But really—" Rennard was resuming, virtuously, when he became suddenly silent and rigid. Both Dave and Polly marked the sudden change in him, but only Polly could instantly see the cause of it.

Behind Dave's chair were French windows, leading out from a sitting-room on to the veranda. The glass doors were open, and there stood Violet Marlowe, craning forward, obviously a listener to what was passing.

Polly was aware of Dave twisting round in his chair to look, and then she saw him return his gaze to Gerald Rennard's face.

It was livid. The prefect's eyes seemed to bulge, and Polly—she could have laughed wildly, if the situation had not been so intensely dramatic. Slowly Violet Marlowe came towards them.

Such a staggering shock had it been to Gerald Rennard, to come face to face unexpectedly with his own despised sister—here at the bungalow, and in the presence of two witnesses!

Dave Gives His Orders.

FAR from looking ashamed at having been observed whilst listening, Violet Marlowe had an air of being quite entitled to join these others. A dramatic pause was ended by her saying, tensely:

"Jack Linton is to be expelled, after all! That is what you have been saying, Gerald?"

"Oh—er—er—" he stammered. "Er—"

"You said it; you took delight in saying it!" Violet Marlowe continued. "And so your letter to me, in answer to what I wrote, was all trickery! Oh, Gerald—Gerald, to think that you should be as bad as that!"

"Confound!" he raged in the greatest confusion. "Look here, I—I don't know why—Or is it a trick, a trap laid by these others, that you are here, Vi?"

She shook her head.

"My being here has nothing to do with Polly Linton. I have to get what work I can, and this place was offered."

"Then you might have told me!" he snarled. "Writing to me from your home address in Barncombe—how was I to know?"

"I wrote from that address, because I expected to leave this place a day or two ago," was the prompt reply. "In any case, you have never cared to know what sort of work I was doing. Gerald, you promised me faithfully, in that letter from Grangemoor School—"

"I—I— Oh—you see—"

"Don't bluster! I have that letter and can show it. You promised me that Jack Linton should not be expelled, after all. You said that you would intercede for him, admitting that you had provoked him. That promise to save him was a load off my mind. I have been happy, feeling sure that it would be all right. When this girl Polly Linton suddenly faced me, yesterday, I was able to smile at her—although I dared not, for your sake, Gerald, tell her what had been secretly arranged."

"Violet!" Polly gasped out. "Oh, you never deserved, then, the hard things I said! You really were determined to save my brother?"

"That was what I wanted to do, without getting Gerald into trouble," was the distracted rejoinder. "But now—now that I know that Gerald only promised, never meaning to keep the promise—"

She paused for a great intake of breath, looking at Gerald, whose face was abject.

"Now the whole truth about you must be made known at Grangemoor School," the sister said tragically. "Mother would agree. There is no time to waste—not a minute! I wanted to spare you, Gerald, as any sister would want to spare a brother, no matter how unkind he has been."

Polly and Dave looked at each other, but kept silent.

"I shall get into touch with Grangemoor School at once," Violet Marlowe said. "I shall tell the headmaster Jack Linton had good excuse for saying you were unfit to be a prefect. I shall uphold Jack Linton, and he will not be expelled! As for you, Gerald," the girl went on unhappily, "even if you are not turned out of the school, very likely the relative who has paid for your schooling, and kept you in such a pampered way, will be done with you. It will be your own fault. He never meant you to despise your own mother and sister—as you have despised us!"

Violet was weeping as she said that. hurriedly she wiped away the tears.

"I am going back to Grangemoor School with you in that car! I must, Gerald. Fair play to Jack Linton demands it."

The hypocritical prefect was all at sea. He tried to speak, but for the moment was utterly speechless.

And now Dave Lawder spoke, as he realised with what intention Violet Marlowe was turning back into the bungalow.



"This is my pal, Janet," Jack said, taking Dave by the hand. "Ah, well, ye'll no be wanting a better!" Janet said fondly, and Polly emphatically agreed.

"Wait a bit, please—"
"I must find Janet and get permission to go— at once!"

"Wait!" insisted Dave firmly. "In any case, here is Janet, come to know what all the fuss is about, no doubt. All right, Janet," he smiled gravely at that faithful soul, as she came forward looking quite scandalised; "this is doing me more good than all the medicine in the world. Do you mind keeping away for a bit?"

"Aweel, aweel!" exclaimed Janet, with an up-throw of both hands. "I canna understand it! Ye'll no be the better for a' this, Master Davey!"
"I shall, Janet! Be a sport and keep away for a bit. I will tell you about it later."

In a fluttering way Janet then retired, still voicing her amazement. Dave made a sudden movement as if to throw aside his rugs and get to his feet, but he instantly realised the futility, not to say the unwisdom, of that effort. Even so, the action, slight as it was, showed his significant intention. He was going to dominate the scene.

"Now, look here, both of you," he said, with all the old, calm capability that Polly knew so well. "You first, Miss Marlowe. You are going to be spared the agony of having to show up this brother of yours. You won't have to go to Grangemoor."

"Oh!"
"Quiet!" he bracingly checked her outburst, and then looked at Gerald.

As long as Polly lived, she would never forget the scene at this moment; Dave, so weak and helpless there in the invalid chair—and yet so strong! Gerald Rennard, so tall and able-bodied—and yet so abjectly cowed!

"This is what will be done now," Dave said slowly to Rennard. "You'll just keep that promise made to your sister, after all! See? You'll go back to Grangemoor School and save Jack from the sentence of expulsion. You'll tell the head that Jack really did have excuse for calling you a cad, that you've had a grudge against him ever since."

Gerald shuffled awkwardly, but was mute.
"Of course, you'll resign the prefecture," Dave went on in a taken-for-granted tone. "They may let you stay on, and so the relative who has paid for your schooling won't quite have wasted his money, after all."

Violet interposed in great agitation.
"May I explain? The relation is one who was hard on father when he was alive—very hard and unjust. Afterwards, he wanted to help mother, but she would not accept aid. She left Gerald and me free to choose whether we would accept help from such a source, and I—I sided with mother. Well, I felt it was only right, knowing the circumstances. But Gerald—"

"There's no need to say all that!" snapped out Gerald at last. "And supposing, Dave Lawder, I refuse to do all that you are cheeky enough to order?"

"You can't refuse. Oh, no," smiled Dave. "Look here, don't be a fool. The position is altogether different from what it was. Up to a few minutes ago, Polly and I were perfectly sure that you and Miss Marlowe were brother and sister, but Miss Marlowe had never admitted it. So we had no proof! But she has admitted it now, in the presence of two witnesses. That's good enough, I fancy? Or shall I send for Janet to make a third?"

"Dash you, you confounded—"

"There, that'll do; push off," Dave said, sitting calmly in the chair. "And remember, unless Jack Linton 'phones to Morcove School by seven o'clock this evening to say that everything is all right with him—you'll be for it. Got that? Get out, then."

Gerald, after blenching again whilst being spoken to like this, suddenly turned his miserable eyes from Dave to Violet.

"I said you'd be the ruin of me at my school—you and mother, coming to live down here like a couple of washerwomen! So it is to be, always, I suppose! I'm to be dragged down—disgraced—"

"Dave!" cried out Polly, for he had flung off the rug and was on his feet, unsteady, but with fists clenched. "Oh, Dave—no!"

She drew him back, and he subsided, gasping, into the chair.

"I never can do anything," he sighed ruefully. "But if he says one more word to his sister, I'll have him thrown out, if I have to send for the police."

"Hang the lot of you!" Gerald finally raged, turning to go. "As for you, Vi—"

He strode away, leaving the sister who deserved such a better brother, weeping quietly again. In a few moments, however, she mastered her grief and took faltering steps towards Dave and Polly.

"It—it will really be all right now?"
"It'll be all right," Dave affirmed softly. "So now I'm sorry, but I—I feel—I'd like to be quiet for a bit."

They left him, Polly going apart with Violet, for they were to have much to say to each other. When, presently, Polly came back to the veranda, she found that Dave had even sunk to sleep in the pleasant sunshine.

"Poor boy," she thought, taking care not to disturb him. "Very likely he did not sleep well last night, thinking of Jack. Oh, Dave, you have been good. Wonderful as ever!"

She crept away, slipping into the house for only a minute to have word with old Janet.

Then, in such bounding spirits as she had not known for many a day, Polly Linton went racing home to Morcove School, to make the good news known.

Over the Telephone!

WHAT Study 12 had to put up with from Polly during the next few hours!

In vain, Betty and the rest tried to keep her from pacing about in a state of fuming suspense. In vain they all pointed out to her, time after time, that on her own showing everything was to be all right.

She still remained on the fidget. It still seemed to her to be too good to be true. That at this, the eleventh hour, her brother was to be saved!

"Hark! Was that the 'phone, girls?"

"No, Polly dear, it was not," smiled Betty.

"And do, there's a good girl—"

"Let's keep the door wide open, anyhow," fumed Polly, suiting the action to the word. "You girls need not wait about, you know. If you want to go back to the field—"

"Just as if!" cried Betty, and the rest voiced a similar disclaimer.

"Bokas," shrilled Naomer, "as soon as ze news comes through—what ze diggings, we are going to clobberate!"

"Are we?" said Polly grimly. "I shall have something better to do than make it an excuse for stuffing!"

"Meantime, Polly," pleaded Madge, "you must take things calmly. After all the strain—"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Heah, Polly deah, have this cheah!"

"Oh, I can't sit down! I must keep moving."

"Think of Dave," counselled Betty earnestly. "He isn't making himself ill with excitement. You say he went to sleep after that great scene!"

"Dave's different!" exploded Polly. "You don't expect me to be like Dave? There's no one like Dave! Hark! What's that striking now?"

They listened for the measured strokes of Morcove's hour-bell.

"Six, Polly. Only six o'clock—"

"Still, I ought to have heard by now! That Rennard fellow must have got back to his school ages ago. Or has he hooked it—made off, too ashamed to face it out?"

"Even then, Polly, it would be all right!"

"You don't know, Betty! He's capable of anything! Fancy his tricking his sister as he did. She and her mother were to move away from Barncombe on Monday. They would never have known! He was banking on that—the sneak!"

"I zink eet would be a good thing to have a jolly old rehearsal," suggested Naomer. "Bekas eet would help to make zo time fly."

"You'll fly—out into the passage, if you mention rehearsals again!" threatened Polly. "As for the play, I must get you girls to carry on without me all next week! I shall go to bed for a month, the moment I have had a 'phone message from Jack!"

The chums chuckled.

"You laugh," smiled Polly, "but— Hark! Listen!"

"What zo diggings—"

"Hurrah! That's the 'phone!" Polly shouted, and she dashed out of the study.

The others followed, but none could keep up with her—not even Naomer!

Polly whirled downstairs, with the joyous escort a good way behind. There was a parlourmaid hurrying towards the stairs as the madcap dashed down the last flight.

"Miss, you are wanted—on the 'phone!"

"I know, Ellen! Thanks! Right-ho!"

Helter-skelter, down came the rest of the Study 12 crowd, Naomer doing her best to slide down the banisters. They swarmed towards the telephone-box, to find Polly already there. She sparkled her eyes at her chums whilst attending eagerly to what was coming through on the line.

A minute later she clapped the receiver back to the instrument and came prancing out of the box.

"Hooray!" she cheered, waving wildly. "It's all right, girls; it's all over! Oh!" And she began to sing:

"We are the girls of Morcove School,
Of Morcove, Merrie Morcove!"

"Yes, bekas," shrieked Naomer, offering to join hands with anyone disposed to dance round Polly as if she were a maypole, "hooray, hip, hip; now to celerbrate!"

They surged away to the open air. They seemed to need fresh air—space!

"Great wejocings—yes, wather!" beamed Paula. "Congwats, Polly!"

"Why, what have I done?" cried the madcap. "But it has all taken place just as Dave ordered! Rennard has publicly admitted that Jack had good excuse for what he did and said. Rennard's no

longer a prefect. Did you notice how suddenly my talk with Jack ended? I think half Lethbury's must have come after him, to the 'phone, to chair him round the quad."

"Lovely!" commented Madge.

"But I do wish I could have had the line a little longer!" grimaced Polly. "Never mind! The great thing is—Jack's saved!"

In their excitement and joy, the girls drifted about on the sunny grass, all chatter-chatter.

"Saved!" Polly exclaimed again presently. "To think of Dave managing it all so nicely—from his invalid-chair! The feelings of Violet Marlowe and her mother spared, after all—that's what I think was so fine, so—so— Oh, but there it is; that's just Dave, all over!"

"And so, of course," broke out Betty, "you are going to pop across to the bungalow, Polly, to let Dave know?"

"I am! I don't care who says 'No'! But, of course," laughed Polly, "I am quite free to go. Will you all come, girls?"

"We had better not," demurred Betty. "Old Janet won't like a crowd."

"And she won't offer any refreshments, any-odd-how," grumbled Naomer, remembering yesterday. "She thinks, just bekas you may have had one tea, you can't want another!"

"We'll walk part of the way with you, though," suggested Betty. "As far as Dolly's."

"Yes, do!"

It was now the loveliest time of evening, the sun setting over the sea in a rosy-flecked sky. Ships were passing far out on the deep, and their sails shone in the glowing light. From the beetling cliffs of Morcove came the cry of nesting jackdaws. Up here on the cliff-top the grass had an emerald sheen.

All this Polly noticed as, after a look-in at Dolly's with the other girls, where the latter would be staying on for awhile, she came to the bungalow. No girl was freer from sentiment than Morcove's madcap; but this evening she simply had to feel the beauty of things.

Dave had gone indoors. Old Janet, answering Polly's ring at the bell, gave her a quizzical smile of welcome.

"I ken he's expecting ye, my dear, or some message or another? Losh, lassie, I hae me doots if he'll ever tak' the rest of his medicine! He is that perked up!"

The faithful soul threw open a sitting-room door, announcing:

"Here's Miss Polly, Master Davey, dear!"

"You're late," he said.

"I'm not," she retorted gaily. "Seven o'clock is only striking now!"

"It's been a long wait," Dave remarked. "All O.K.?"

"Yes, Dave! Jack 'phoned through. I couldn't get as long a talk as I would have liked," Polly continued, whilst old Janet bustled away, "for the boys came after Jack at the 'phone, I fancy. They were just about crazy, by the sounds I heard."

Dave, comfortable in an easy-chair, gazed as at some vision which Polly's words had conjured up. The rosy light flooded into the room and tinged his pale cheeks.

"I'd have liked to be there," he murmured wistfully. Then turning to Polly:

"Rennard leaving?"

"No, Dave. Only, he has resigned as a prefect." "Of course. Well, one thing I hope—that Jack won't have any fight with the fellow until

I'm there to hold his coat. Polly, is there anything remaining for you to worry about?"

"Nothing whatever, Dave!"

"I'm awfully sorry that the worry of it all came upon you, Polly. So was Jack, of course. I should have been the one to handle the matter; but I went down like that."

He paused.

"Violet Marlowe has gone home," came his remark presently. "But she left here, knowing that it would be quite all right. The thing has been managed without her and her mother going through the upset of having to tell all Grangemoor what an utter cad the fellow has really been to them. Rennard gets off lightly; on the other hand, they're spared a lot of misery."

"Yes, Dave. That's what we girls are so thankful about."

"A brick of a girl, that Violet Marlowe," he murmured. "I don't know, but perhaps my guardian can do something for her. I'm going to ask him. Perhaps—"

It was a sudden tell-tale sound from outside the bungalow that made Dave break off there. He and Polly looked at each other eagerly, listening a moment or two longer. Then she ran out from the room to the front door.

"It is—it is!" she called back to Dave next instant. "Oh, it's Jack—turned up in a car! Jack!" she hailed her brother deliriously, and rushed to fling her arms about him.

"It's a thing I don't often do," said Jack, kissing her, "but there are times—eh, Polly?"

"There are," she agreed, returning the kiss with interest. "Oh, but fancy your being here, Jack. Come on in!"

They went in together, and it was one of the greatest moments, one of the greatest joys of her life, so far, for Polly to see Jack's hand going out to Dave's.

"Stuff to give 'em!" commented Dave. "Sit down, Jack! Sit here," and he banged a chair that was set close to his own. "Staying the week-end with me?"

"Well, they said I might—"

"Of course!"

"I'll go," offered Polly. "You two fellows don't want me, and I can see you to-morrow, Jack. Oh dear, I—I feel—I don't know! But it's all so wonderful!"

"It's what it is," said Jack heartily, "to have a sister like you and a pal like Dave here! All very well for all Lethbury's to go mad and make a fuss of me an hour or so ago. But, as I told them— Well, never mind what I told them! Oh, and there was Mike Heriot—I left him pretty sick. He thinks I never will forgive him."

"But you will," said Dave quietly. "Of course."

Janet tapped at the door and came in, bearing a tray holding a tiny glass.

"Ye mun tak your medicine noo, Master Davey, dear."

"Don't want it, Janet. I've had my medicine," said the convalescent. "This is the right physic for me, Janet—to see old Jack again. By the way, Janet, this is Jack Linton, my pal at school."

"And this," laughed Jack, taking Dave by the hand again, "is my pal, Janet!"

"Ah, weel," said that good soul simply, "ye are no wanting a better one, I'm theenking!"

"That I'm sure Jack isn't," chimed in Polly blithely. "And never will, either!"

The Play Performed

SO all was well that had ended well, and Polly Linton could go into school on the following Monday morning, to slog in at the work as cheerfully as the rest of them.

Jack, by that time, had motored back to Grangemoor School, and his sister could think of him as being in high favour once again with the whole of Lethbury's.

Wonderful to think of, indeed, when this might have been the morning for his going home—expelled!

And the play?

Well, in due course the play was presented at Barncombe Castle, before an audience which packed out the great old banqueting hall.

"Merrie Morcove" was quite the chief item in the varied programme which Lady Lundy had got together for her matinee in aid of local charities.

Polly's clever little play came on at the commencement of part two in the programme. When the curtain went up again, it was to the tune of that opening chorus which all Morcove's Fourth Form had been singing for weeks past. Madgo was at the piano, and there on the stage were the juniors, all keeping perfect time, making the walls ring with their hearty singing.

Thereafter, for the space of fifty minutes, it was all singing, and bustling activity, and the reeling off of many witticisms on the stage, whilst the audience watched and listened—enraptured!

Roars of laughter greeted the comic stuff; storms of applause followed the songs.

"Encore! Encore!" clamoured the audience, again and again. "Enco-ore!"

Nor did Morcove's Fifth Form girls, present in force, fail to acknowledge the real merit of the Fourth's great venture into stageland.

It had been rumoured that the Fifth had booked a solid section of seats, so as to be all together for the purpose of creating a "rough house." But that, of course, was only a teasing rumour, which Betty and the rest had treated with calm disdain.

Although the play went with a bang, that is not to say that the musical comedy party was all harmony behind the scenes. Paula Creel created one little panic by declaring that she could not go on to act her own special part. She had forgotten everything!

"My mind, geals," said Paula, passing a hand across her fair forehead, "is a perfect blank!"

"You'll go on!" insisted Polly grimly; and it being even then the moment for Paula to advance to the footlights, she found herself pushed on with such violence that she appeared before the audience voicing a flustered:

"Wow!"

Luckily, this unrehearsed effect went down splendidly. There were such roars of laughter that Paula mercifully had time to get over her stage-fright.

Then there was the trouble over Naomer. Polly was threatening to have nothing to do with Naomer any more, ever!

Naomer, during all the hurry-scurry of dressing, had put on the wrong stage costume. It was one meant for a rather bigger girl. But she would not take it off and get into the right one. She wore the wrong dress right through the play—and so did Dolly Delane, who should have had the larger one.

The two misfits were not, perhaps, noticed when the stage was crowded. But it is certain



Paula caused a scene in the dressing-room just before her turn to go on the stage. "My mind is a perfect blank!" she declared. "I've forgotten my part!" "You'll go on!" insisted Polly grimly.

that something queer about Dolly was noticed when she was not lost in a crowd.

Being on the large size, like the homely, energetic girl that she was, Dolly did not look quite right, to say the least, in a dress too small and tight for her. She herself was painfully conscious of the fact.

Naomer, on the other hand, had a fancy that her dress, an out-size for her, was, if anything, an added charm. Which may have been her reason for keeping to it! Naomer was, however, to find fault with her choice later, when the time came for her to do her own special song and dance.

The song went off all right, but as soon as Naomer began the dance, she felt impeded by her too-big frock. Half-way through she stopped dead, voicing an annoyed:

"What ze diggings!"

Whereupon the audience, imagining that this comic effect was all part of the turn, laughed and cheered for a minute on end.

Polly's own big part as "comic lead" simply brought down the house. Her fellow players, in spite of having seen her rehearse so often in the last week or two, had never thought that she could be quite as funny as she was at the actual performance.

The madcap would have been the first to admit, however, that she owed a lot to the last-minute help of Jack. For he had been able to figure in the play, after all, and it was some of the almost impromptu comedy stuff carried on by brother and sister that kept the audience in convulsions.

The moment came for the fall of the curtain, every member of the cast helping to crowd the stage again, for the final chorus.

Hard-worked Madge crashed away at the piano with tireless hands; on the stage were the merry juniors, singing out for all they were worth; but what Madge played and what the final chorus was about, the audience had to guess.

The applause had started—hand-clapping, foot-work, thumping of sticks and umbrellas, and roar upon roar of "Bravo!" So the ovation went on.

"Bravo! Bravo, Morcove! Well done, the juniors!" was being vociferated from all parts of the auditorium as the curtain came down.

Of the other items in the successful concert one must be mentioned. The programme included violin solos by—Violet Marlowe!

Polly it was who had mentioned the dress-maker's daughter to Lady Lundy as being an amateur violinist deserving of encouragement. And very striking was the change for the audience, from all the riotous fun and hearty singing of "Merrie Morcove," to those tender melodies which Violet played, standing out alone on the stage, Madge accompanying at the piano.

It was a revelation of Violet's talent, and many were the predictions that a great future awaited her. Later, when Lady Lundy was making a happy little speech about the concert, she mentioned what a great joy it had been to hear an almost self-taught girl play the violin so beautifully. And how the audience cheered then!

Nor was that the only way in which deserving Violet and her hard-working mother were to benefit by their fateful association with Morcove.

Lady Lundy had a word to say in praise of the dresses for "Merrie Morcove." She asked the audience to remember that the programme stated: "Dresses by Mrs. Marlowe." So, when Barncombe wanted a good dressmaker—it would know where to find one! (Loud cheers.)

At this point a slip of paper was passed to her ladyship by one of the members of the concert committee. She nodded happily as she scanned the slip, and then hastened to tell the audience:

"I am just informed that the total sum raised by the concert—after charging no expenses whatever—is sixty-three pounds ten shillings and sixpence!"

Tremendous applause!

"I hope I have suitably expressed appreciation of the debt we owe to all who have taken part in the concert," Lady Lundy was able to resume at last. "And now, in conclusion, I am sure that the older artistes will not be offended when I say that most of all are we indebted to—Morcove School!"

"Hear, hear!" from all parts of the hall.

"If only for the reason that, but for Morcove School there would never have been a concert! It was when I heard that some of Miss Somerfield's juniors were getting up a play that I thought we Barncombers ought to have a chance to see it acted—"

Is Your Answer Here?



"WINIFRED."—I do hope your party was a success. I am pleased to know that you are a keen Guide. Yes, do write me a longer letter next time.

"PECK" (Lewisham).—I have made a note of your suggestion. I think it is a very good one, and I will see what can be done about it. I hope your play is a success.

"EILEEN" (Birmingham).—I'm so pleased to know that you are such an old reader of this paper; long may you continue to be a loyal reader. The answer to your big question is "no."

"SHEILA" (Glasgow).—I think your idea is a very good one and must be a great help when you have nothing at all to do. Yes, you certainly are a very old reader, and I hope you will go on reading "THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN" for a very long time yet.

"JIM" (Warminster).—I hope you are enjoying the present series of circus stories, as you say you like the tales of the circus so very much. Do write to me again and tell me more about yourself.

D. RAYNER (Ablebridge).—Thank you for your good wishes. I'm so glad you enjoyed the party and received such a very nice present. How do you like the new serial?

"STAR" (London).—I'm glad you think so highly of Miss Probyn's stories. Have you ever had "The Schoolgirls' Own Annual" before? I'm so pleased to know how much you liked this year's. Do write again.

"A. B. B." (Melbourne).—Fancy, it's taken two years for you to make up your mind to write to me! I do hope you will write very often in future, and do hope that your nose is quite better now. Write again soon.

PAT WATSON.—I am so pleased to know that you like the serial by Miss Probyn and the circus tales. Please don't be shy about writing to me again. I am always glad to receive letters from readers.

"Hear, hear-r-r!"

"And so, ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you would wish me to ask the girls of Morcove's Fourth Form to come forward. Girls, come along!" gaily insisted her ladyship, turning to the wings. "Polly Linton—all of you—"

"Oh, no!" gasped Polly, turning to flee, whilst Paula said: "Howwows!"

But they had to troop on, and if it was a bit of an ordeal, what a thrilling joy it was, too!

Half the audience had risen, cheering and waving. Polly could even see Dave Lawder on his feet, although he had only been allowed to come on condition that he took things very quietly.

"Bravo! Bravo! Morcove!"

"And don't forget ze pianiste!" shrieked Naomer, suddenly realising that Madge was out of sight at the piano. "Queek, Madge—come on to ze stage, duffer, bekas—"

Madge, however, staidly shook her head, and next second she was striking up the National Anthem, to bring to a fitting close one of the happiest affairs of its kind that all of them had ever known!

Home to school rode all the juniors, an hour later, faces free from grease-paint, their attire Morcove's everyday one.

Two big bus-loads of youthful humanity they made, the bus that held the chums of Study 12 carrying makeweights in the persons of Jack and Dave.

Those two boys were to be dropped at the bungalow, where Jack would sleep that night. Grangemoor School was being a bit indulgent to Jack at present—why, need not be said.

"School in the morning!" remarked Polly, towards the end of the ride. "That's the worst of getting up anything; when you've performed it, there seems to be nothing left but lessons!"

"Easter's at hand, anyhow," was Betty's consoling rejoinder. "Girls, we shall have to start thinking what we are going to do at Easter!"

"Something tame, like we always do," jested Helen.

"For the west of the term, at any rate," Paula gave her opinion languidly, "we might go on wather quietly, what?"

"We might, but I don't imagine that we shall!" said another.

The bus pulled up opposite the bungalow.

"All change!" sang out Jack, rising with Dave.

"Well, cheerio, all! Come on, Dave!"

Dave got down after his pal, and called "Good-bye!" to Polly and the rest.

"Good-bye, Dave!" they responded. "So glad you enjoyed it!"

"And don't forget," yelled Naomer, last of all, "to keep up ze appetite!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And so Betty & Co. went on again, back to their own "Merrie Morcove!"

THE END.

Next week you will read of exciting news which comes to Betty Barton & Co.—concerning the Easter holidays. The chums learn of a wonderful opportunity which they would not have imagined in their wildest dreams. Don't miss next Tuesday's great Morcove story, to learn what it is. Entitled "The 'Luck' of Study 12," it is full of exciting moments. Make sure of reading it by ordering next Tuesday's SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN right away!