

FIVE FINE STORIES IN THIS NUMBER

The SCHOOLGIRLS' 2^D OWN

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EVERY TUESDAY.



THEIR 'STUNT' TO HELP TESS

An incident from this week's
long complete Morcove
School story.

LONG COMPLETE STORY OF MORCOVE SCHOOL INSIDE

Powerful Complete Story of Morcove, Featuring
TESS TRELAWNEY and the Chums of Study 12



STUDY 12 RALLIES ROUND

CHAPTER I.

A Treat For Study 12

"GIRLS, here's a treat!"

"Why, what, Polly?"

"Pam's mother has called, and wants to take some of us for a run in the car!"

"Bai Jove—"

"Bekas, hooray, gorjus! Me, for one!"

"Oh, no," madcap Polly Linton rounded on that excitable imp, Naomer Nakara, who was the "comic strip" of Study 12 at Morcove School. "No room for you!"

"What ze diggings do you mean, Polly!"

"I mean, that this will be a select party!" jested the madcap. "No toffee-scrunchers allowed; no kids with chocolate smears all round their lips—"

"Who's got chocolate smears?"

"You have!"

"Perfectly twue, yes, wather, haw, haw—Ow! Owch!" Paula Creel changed to a sudden howl of discomfiture, as Naomer swooped upon her in the study's best armchair. "Off me, Naomer dear!"

"Zen you be keerful what you say about me!" came with a final rumping of that hair which Paula loved to keep so tidy. "Now, everybody, I am off to get my things on! Bekas, you are not going without me—no jolly fears!"

Polly chuckled after the imp had scampered away.

"Of course, she must go with us. But, look here, girls, the car isn't an expanding one! You,

Betty, and Paula, and myself—and Naomer, that's four. Pam and her mother make six—"

"And we can hardly," smiled Betty, getting up from her seat at the study table, "expect Pam and her mother to drop out, as it is their car! Six—um!"

"Oh, it'll take one or two more, with a bit of squeezing together!" Polly said gaily. "After all, Naomer's only a little 'un!"

"I tell you what," said Betty earnestly. "I think Tess ought to go. I'll stay back, if room can't be found for her otherwise. Poor Tess—"

By Marjorie Stanton

"Yes, bai Jove! At that wate, geals, let me drop out—"

"If it's for Tess, I'm willing to drop out," Polly at once offered. "I'm with you there, Betty; it would be nice for Tess to get the run."

"She's been a bit humpy all day—and no wonder," spoke on Form captain Betty. "That was a blow to her over the week-end—that rysterious business at Barncombe Castle. She was getting on so splendidly with the copying of that ancient manuscript which Lord Lundy gave her to do, and then—for the MS. to vanish as it did, so strangely—"

"I know," Polly threw in with a nod. "And no news, even now, as to how or by whom the

theft was committed. So it looks as if Tess will never be able to finish her job."

"Not to mention that the work she'd done was also stolen—from the school here!" Betty added, in great sympathy for Tess Trelawney. "Queer business, if ever there was!"

"Twuly remawakable, geals, yes, wather!"

"Tess's find Tess at once," Polly briskly suggested. "If we are to go, and she's to go with us, there's not a moment to waste. I expect she's in her study."

It proved to be the case. Betty and Polly, looking in at that study which Tess Trelawney shared with Madge Minden, found the former chum all by herself.

She appeared to be looking over a portfolio of those water-colour sketches which, born artist that she was, her industrious hand turned out so plentifully every term at school—and also in the "hols!"

"Tess dear—"

"Hallo!"

"Come for a run in Mrs. Willoughby's car, with Pam?"

"What! On, no thanks—"

"But, Tess—"

"Got something else to do," Betty and Polly were answered, not grumpily, but in a rather heavy-hearted way. "Don't bother about me. Hope you get a nice run—"

"Tess dear, why don't you come?" Betty pleaded, advancing into the room. "We know how hipped you feel, over that affair at—"

"Oh, it's no use mentioning that, Betty. I—I want to forget that I was ever given the job. The MS. is stolen now, and they're not likely to see it again—"

"And all your copying was all a waste of time. A rotten shame, Tess," was Polly's feeling exclamation. "But come out now with us, for this run—"

"No, can't, and that's all there is to it," Tess again declined. "As a matter of fact, I—I shall be— Oh, don't bother me, please! I don't want to go, so there!"

"Very well, dear," Betty gave in gently. "Is there anything we can do for you, Tess? Where's Madge?"

"Down in the music-room."

"It's rotten for you to be by yourself, Tess—"

"But I want to be. I've got plenty to do, so I wish you wouldn't worry on my account. It's awfully good of you," Tess added, with a slight tremor in her voice. "I know how you've been feeling for me, ever since that rotten upset occurred. But—"

She shrugged, heaving a resigned sigh.

"No use talking about it, girls! As I say, you be off and have a nice time."

Betty and Polly looked at each other. This chum of theirs—always so temperamental—was in obdurate mood. Further persuasions would only irritate her. So, after all, it would be better to leave her alone with her beloved sketches. Quite likely she would go off, presently, with her water colours and sketching block, to give her mind to some consoling bit of work out of doors.

"Right-ho, then, Tess; see you later!"

"That's it," Betty was answered. "It's going to be a grand evening—light up to the last moment."

Tess said that as she glanced to the study window, whilst Betty and Polly passed into the corridor. It was now only five o'clock, and the strong sunshine of late afternoon was still upon that romantic combination of moorland, rugged coast and blue sea, which comprised Morcoove.

Not a cloud was to be seen, and so Tess was right in conjecturing that the day would end beautifully, with a lingering afterglow in the west to make Morcoove feel that the long, light evenings were really here at last. The study window was open to the warm spring-time breeze, and up from the games field came frequently the pleasant sounds of girls at play—the slap of a rubber sole on the hard court, hailing cries.

Not for Tess, any of the delights of the games field or the courts! Alone again, she now began some sorting out of the sketches. Finally, she had some twenty at least, picked out from the accumulated shoals. These selected sketches she returned to the portfolio, all by themselves, tied them up, and then took them with her downstairs.

By that time the car in which she could have obtained such a jolly run with Betty and others had set off. It was just going away down to the gates as she glanced out of a half-landing window on her way downstairs.

And, from the music-room, came such piano playing as could only be Madge Minden's; so that accounted for Tess' own study-mate.

Then, in the open air, she was further relieved to find herself attracting no attention from school-mates on the field.

They were all concentrating much too keenly on their various pastimes to notice her as she hurried round to the cycle sheds, there to get out her own machine.

Half an hour later, by some hard riding, she was in Barncombe—that quaint old Devon town which was the only one within easy distance of the school.

There was a certain shop where an old man in a skull-cap did a very meagre business in offering prints and second-hand pictures for sale, running artists' materials as a side-line.

Tess had often been to this shop, to buy fresh water-colour paints, sketching blocks, camel-hair brushes, and so on. But now—

What a different reason she had, this evening, for passing in at the print-hung glass door of the untidy little shop!

Up two steps from his dingy parlour at the back stumbled the old dealer, looking as patriarchal as ever, the black skull-cap adorning the crown of his long head, his clothes shiny with wear. Recognising Tess, he gave his forlorn sort of smile, gravely saying:

"Good-evening, young lady!"

"Good-evening, Mr. Venables! I've looked into—I mean, I'm wondering whether—some sketches of mine—whether you'd see if they are—any good."

"Any work of yours, miss, I will be very glad to look at." For he knew all about her, as the promising artist who was still only a scholar at Morcoove. "I remember," he mumbled on, as she untied the portfolio, "the few things you showed at the Arts and Crafts, last autumn."

"One or two of those things are in here," Tess said, opening the portfolio. "The rest are—well, just sketches, you know, of places round about Morcoove. And I—I wondered if you could buy the lot from me, Mr. Venables?"

"Eh, what?"

No crafty dealer's look came into his old eyes; he himself was too much of an artist to be a hard bargain-hunter. He always sold his second-hand prints and any old pictures that he picked up, at a reasonable price.

"The fact is, Mr. Venables, I want to beat up some money!"

"We all want to do that, missy," he smiled gravely. "But you—still at school—"

"I know; but—oh, I can't go into things with

you, Mr. Venables. I can only say, it isn't for myself I want the money. But I badly need—a lump sum."

He looked at some of the sketches critically before remarking:

"Did I hear that you were copying the old manuscript, when it was stolen from Barncombe Castle?"

"That's right, Mr. Venables. Lord Lundy wanted someone to copy it, and his daughter put me forward for the job, thinking I would enjoy the work. And I was to be paid a fee, at the finish," Tess continued, distress creeping into her voice. "But the original manuscript was stolen at the end of last week, as you know—"

"Aye! Strange business, that! Somebody has got away with a thing worth thousands of pounds!"

"And so my work is all stopped, and, of course, I shan't get the fee now. That's why I want to raise money in this way, instead. I was to have ten guineas—"

"Ten guineas! Miss, were you thinking that I, perhaps, could pay you cash down for—"

"It seems awful cheek—conceit," poor Tess faltered. "But there the sketches are—at least twenty of them. And people have, at times, said—"

"Miss, there's not one of these sketches that isn't worth a guinea at least, unframed." He was still going through the batch, as he said it, nodding again and again in approval and admiration. "But people aren't fond of water colours—"

"I only thought, Mr. Venables, the sketches being of places round about the district—visitors might like to buy them, if you showed them in the windows?"

"But, missy, where are the visitors at present? We don't get them in any real numbers, as you know, until August, and this is only the spring!"

"Then could you, Mr. Venables, buy the batch now—as I've often dealt at this shop?"

"I know you have, miss; one of my few regular customers, you've been," he quickly acknowledged in a grateful tone. "But what can I say, no wishing to be unkind!"

"Oh, if you can't buy them, you can't—"

"I wish I could, miss; take them off your hands, to sell later. I believe they would go off during the summer. They're really fine. But I haven't the means, young lady—"

"Then that's that," Tess cut him short, to end his embarrassment; and she took back the sketches, replacing them in the portfolio. "All right, Mr. Venables. I hope you didn't think me—"

"I'm sure you had the best of motives. 'Not for yourself, you said you wanted the money. It does you credit. How about trying to sell the sketches round the school?'"

"Amongst my schoolmates? Oh, impossible!" Tess said, colouring to the roots of her hair. "I've often given girls sketches just as good as these. I never have set any value on my work, not reckoning it had any value. Now, if I started to hawk them round, they'd guess that I must be in desperate need of money."

"Yes, I understand, miss. You would feel humiliated."

"Oh, it's not a question of pride. I'm ready to sink that. But—no, I can't let them know my need for money. They would be sure to find out where—where the need is. And then—"

She said no more, only repressing a sigh as she tied the portfolio and put it under an arm, to go away with all the sketches—unsold!

Unsold, and unsaleable! Not a penny to be

raised, now—not a penny! And she needed—oh, so desperately she needed!—at least ten pounds by a certain date.

"Well, I've tried," she was saying to herself, as she walked away from the shop. "I've tried!"

As no other girl, in her position, could have tried harder—and yet, all in vain!

Poor Tess, with the luck gone all against her, and carrying about with her what a burden of secret sorrow and anxiety, whilst chums of hers were so enjoying these sunny spring-time days, for the simple reason that she had kept her sorrows to herself!

CHAPTER 2.

The Home Must Go

"THERE, what a pity, girls, that Tess didn't come with us, after all!"

"Yes, bekas—"

"See that finger-post, just then, all of you?"

"Yes, Pam! 'To Woodiccombe'—where 'Tess' people live! And we're going that way now!"

It was a sudden excitable outburst, after the roomy Roysler had been an hour on the run round the glorious countryside with Pam Willoughby, her mother, and several of Pam's best chums.

Beautiful Mrs. Willoughby, out to invest the jaunt with every bit of pleasure possible for the girls, smiled avertedly as she heard them talking like that about Woodiccombe.

"Tess' home at Woodiccombe, girls? Shall we find it, when we get to the village?"



"I—I wondered if you could buy all these sketches of mine," Tess faltered. "You see, I'm in need of the money . . ." And the need was desperate, if she was to save just one or two treasures from the home that was being sold up!

"Oh, yes, yes, please, Mrs. Willoughby—"
 "Bekas, hipooray, gorjus!" Naomer clapped.
 "We can call at ze house, and very likely zey
 give us some refreshm—"

"Just like you!" Polly snorted. "No, we're
 not going to burst in on Mrs. Trelawney—there
 are too many of us!"

"It would hardly be fair," Pam murmured.
 "But we might just run past the house, and see
 how the garden looks. They always have such
 a lovely garden."

"Oh, it's a picture—the whole place is, always,"
 Betty chimed in heartily. "I can think of
 sketches that Tess has made of the house and
 garden—"

"Yes, wather; most attractive, bai Jove—in
 fact, chawming, chawming!"

"I say; we ought to fork right, just here,"
 came Betty's interrupting cry, as she gazed ahead.
 "Then we shall run past the Trelawney place
 before we get to the village."

"So that after-the-wards we can stop at ze
 village," piped in Naomer, "and get some
 refreshm—"

"Yeow!" from Paula.

"Sorry," Polly apologised blandly. "Was that
 your ankle I kicked, Paula darling?"

"Yes, wather!"

"I meant it for Naomer, to make her shut up
 about refreshment! Mrs. Willoughby, if you'd
 seen the tea that Naomer ate—"

"Still," smiled Pam's mother serenely, "I hope
 there will be some place where we can all get
 down, for lemonade and cakes."

Thereupon, Naomer gave a loud whoop of ex-
 pectant delight, which drew a glaring look from
 Polly. It was the madcap's belief that Mrs. Wil-
 loughby would decide never to repeat this treat
 for them all, owing to Naomer's having disgraced
 the party!

As a fact, Pam's mother was obviously amused
 at the dusky girl's obsession about refreshments,
 for she, Mrs. Willoughby, was smiling now, whilst
 conveying instructions to the chauffeur about forking
 right at the approaching road junction.

A few seconds more, and the car was speeding
 along the very road beside which, the girls knew,
 the Trelawneys had their home—a cottage-style
 residence, all by itself, about a mile from Wood-
 combe village.

For a little while they still ran between budding
 hedgerows behind which there were only the green
 meadows. Then suddenly they rounded a bend
 and saw a fair-sized dwelling-house upon the left-
 hand side, standing well back from the road.

"That's Tess' home!" Betty cried out. "I
 know, because I've been there—slept a night,
 once."

"Oh, and look at the daffs in the front garden!"
 was Judy's delighted outburst. "Sheets of
 gold!"

"Yes, bai Jove!"

"Hallo, though!" This was an amazed cry
 from Polly as her eyes took notice of something
 down by the gateway. The car, at a signal from
 Mrs. Willoughby, was now being driven very
 slowly. "What's that board, girls?"

"Yes; what does it mean?" jerked others. "A
 big placard—"

"Gosh, not wanting to sell the house, are they?"
 gasped Polly. "Tess hasn't said anything, but
 it looks like an auctioneer's— Oh, stop the car,
 please, Mrs. Willoughby; stop!"

"Yes, do!" clamoured Betty and the rest—
 without need, for Mrs. Willoughby was already
 getting her chauffeur to pull up.

Exactly opposite the private drive-in the
 Roysler stopped, and now the notice-board at the

entrance to the grounds could be scanned at close
 range. It was no mere painted board: "This
 House for Sale." That, to the girls, would have
 been staggering enough. But they saw that there
 was an auctioneer's closely-printed bill, adver-
 tising a forthcoming sale of the household effects.

"My goodness!" Polly gasped again, in rising
 horror, now that they were all out of the car,
 bunched together close under the flaring placard.

"A sale!"

"Yes, bai Jove! Good gwacious, geals—"

"Next week!" Betty said in an appalled tone.
 "What's that at the top of the bill? Something
 about 'under a warrant granted by the Sheriff'?"

Mrs. Willoughby, do you know—"

"Dear, dear, this is very terrible," exclaimed
 Pam's mother. "It means—"

"The brokers are in? Oh, not that!" was
 Polly's cry of dismay. "Don't say it means that,"

Mrs. Willoughby!

"But I'm afraid, my dears, it must mean that."
 Followed a silence such as falls upon a group
 of persons when they have become too astounded,
 too aghast, for speech.

There they all stood, taking in the larger print
 on the big placard. "FOR SALE by AUCTION.
 The Entire CONTENTS OF THE RESIDENCE.
 Including numerous CHOICE PIECES—"

In a dazed manner they found themselves read-
 ing even the smaller print. Finally, the adver-
 tised date for the sale took their eyes again;
 as Betty had said—one day next week!

"But how awful!" she suddenly exclaimed
 lumpily. "Oh, our poor darling Tess! She must
 know—"

"And yet she hasn't said a word!"

"For fear of distressing us," Pam murmured
 emotionally. "Mother, isn't this dreadful?"

"It is, Pam—terrible. I don't know if anything
 can be done. It all reads to me like—well, total
 ruin."

"Wuined, bai Jove—Tess' pawents!"

"Mother—"

"Yes, Pam," that girl was quickly answered;
 "I think we should make some inquiry whilst we
 are here. But we must not all go up to the house.

The greater the trouble in the home, the less
 welcome a crowd must be. Will you come with
 me, Pam, and perhaps you also, Betty dear?"

So, leaving the rest to wait beside the car, on
 the road, Mrs. Willoughby went with her daughter
 and the Form captain up the flower-bordered
 carriage-way, to the front porch.

Pitiable, to see the daffodils and other flowers
 of spring blooming so abundantly in the garden,
 when ruin and want had come to the home itself!
 Betty and Pam were both alike in having to
 blink away tears as they kept in step with Mrs.
 Willoughby. Such an upset it was—this!

Even now they were longing to be back at Mar-
 cove, with Tess, saying how they felt for her in
 the great calamity.

In response to Mrs. Willoughby's ring at the
 porch-bell, a man opened the door; a coarse-
 looking, burly fellow, with a scowl.

"Good-evening!" Pam's mother addressed him
 composedly. "Is Mrs. Trelawney at home?"

"No, Mrs. Trelawney ain't at home, nor is Mr.
 Trelawney," was the surly answer. "They had
 to go to Town to see the loryer, and they won't
 be back till late. Anything you want to know
 about the sale next week, I kin tell you."

"Oh, can you?"

"Yes. I'm the broker's man, you see; put in
 to keep a heye upon everything, so as nothing
 gets took away wot should go by rights into the
 sale."

"I understand," Mrs. Willoughby nodded.

whilst Pam and Betty shuddered at the man's blunted feelings. "But can you tell me—how did this come about?"

"Lorsses, mum, that's all I know. I'm in for the biggest creditor—a matter of a thousand pounds, I unnerstand. And if he thinks he's going to see his money back, out of the sale—well"—with a scornful leer—"he's mistook. Stuff won't fetch much, out here in the country."

"Very well, and thank you," said Mrs. Willoughby, turning away. She saw how Pam and Betty were looking utterly revolted.

"Kim I give any name, mum?" the man bawled.

"No. I shall be calling again."

Down the carriage-way they went, back to the car, treading the same smooth gravel which, one day next week, would be all kicked up by the hordes of people attending the sale. Past the nodding daffodils again, and so out to the sumptuous Roysler which Pam's parents could so easily afford.

"Yes, well," Pam said queerly, as if the sight of that car was not doing her any good. And then, in great anguish: "Mother! You will do something, of course?"

"Yes, dear; yes, girls," was the low-spoken

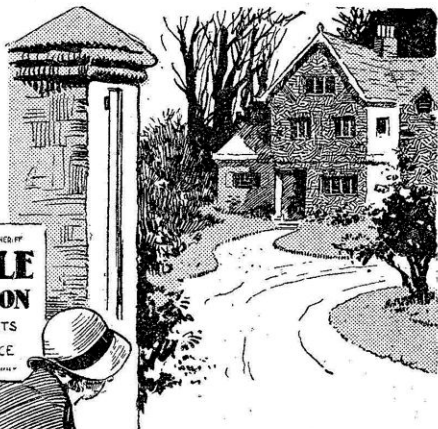
CHAPTER 3.

"We'll Manage!"

"TESS dear—"
"Hallo, you're back, then!"
"Yes, Tess."

Only Betty, Polly and Pam were coming into this study, where Tess was all by herself after her return from Barncombe. As the matter to be discussed was of such a distressing nature, it had been decided that no one else should be on hand.

"If you girls want Madge, she's still in the music-room, I fancy—"



Aghast, the chums read and re-read the fateful bill, unable to believe even now that Tess Trelawney's home was to be sold. "How terrible!" murmured Pam Willoughby. "Whatever can we do to help!"

answer. "And you girls, when you get back to the school, will do your best to comfort poor Tess, won't you?"

"Could we go straight back now, please?" Betty implored.

But before Mrs. Willoughby could do more than nod, Naomer broke in excitedly.

"Yes, bekas zere is a lot we can do!" she chipped in. "Bekas, what ze diggings, we must have ze whip-round for Tess! And anuzzer thing—bekas, her father and mother are not gettink enough to eat, perhaps! Bekas, you never know! But if we make up a jolly big hamper, and send it to zem—Ooo, come on, queek, back to Morcove, everybody!"

There may have been something amusing in Naomer's quaint outburst. But none of the others showed the least inclination to smile.

And so, in a few moments, the car had been turned round, and they were all aboard again—starting back for Morcove at top speed.

"We know she is, Tess; we heard her still playing," Betty responded, whilst Pam closed the study door. "But it's you we want to have a word with, Tess dear. While we were out in the car, we happened to find ourselves close to Woodcombe."

They saw Tess start violently, paling a little. "Yes, dear," the captain continued, her voice charged with the greatest possible amount of sympathy. "And we ended by taking the road that runs past your home."

Tess' clever face went whiter than ever. "So you all saw—the bills at the gate?" she inquired tensely.

"Yes, dear. And we're ever so sorry for you and your people."

The daughter of ruined parents moved a step, and then spoke whilst keeping her ashen face half-turned away.

"I—I didn't want you to know," she murmured huskily.

"We're so glad we've found out, by chance," Pam said steadily. "It means we can help you, Tess."

"Oh, no—"

"But we shall insist—"

"You can't—I won't let you," was Tess' tight-lipped murmur. "It wouldn't be fair. Besides, the trouble is far too big for anybody to be able to do anything, now. My parents never were well-off. They just had enough to live on quietly. Now they're to be left without a penny."

"Something can be done—by us," Betty insisted cheerfully. "We must just think what's best. Meantime, dear, if it's any comfort to you to know that we know—"

"Oh, it's a comfort in one way, and in another way it isn't!" poor Tess exclaimed shakily. "Now that you know, it wouldn't take much for me to—give you—"

"Can you tell us anything, Tess?" asked Polly gently.

Tess sat down at the table. Her hands gripped the table edge, her eyes stared fixedly at the opposite wall as she spoke huskily.

"Dad is not to blame. He's been let down badly by a man he trusted—one he thought to be a friend. The chief creditor is selling us up, next week—on the Thursday. After that, dad and mother will have to—well, go into rooms, I suppose. As for me, my fees are paid to the end of term. When it finishes—I suppose I'll be able to get something to do."

The door opened very quietly, letting in Madge Minden, with Judy Cardew. The latter had been to the music-room to tell Madge, who had instantly come upstairs to offer her loving consolation.

Not a word did Madge say, at present. Better than anything she could have said, perhaps, was the quick and quiet crossing over to Tess, to kiss her.

Tess looked up into her study-mate's face, her own eyes swimming. Then she put her head between her hands and sobbed.

Standing by the poor sorrow-stricken girl, patting her comfortingly, Madge half-turned to look at the others. Her looks said:

"Don't speak; I know all now, as you do—"

At that instant, and whilst tragic silence reigned in the study, there came the jarring laughter of two girls going by in the corridor. It jarred all the more, because it was such flippant laughter. Polly, for one, looked fierce—as if she were minded to flash from the study and ask those two girls to hold their row!

She and the rest knew who the couple were; Fay and Edna Denver—sisters so shallow-natured, so heartless, they would most likely laugh even when they heard about Tess.

Bang! went the door of the adjoining study, and then Fay and Edna, in the privacy of that room of theirs, could still be heard, enjoying almost hysterical merriment. Doubtless, they had just returned from some escapade. A scream, that they had carried it out, without being caught!

"Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he!" the yells of laughter went on. "Oh, dear—ha, ha, ha!"

"Dash those two!" Polly raged through clenched teeth. "Why the blazes can't they stop their cackling!"

"Ha, ha, ha! What a scream," they could hear Fay Denver bleating at her sister. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Suddenly Polly strode out of the study where sorrow reigned, to go to the one next door. Her

expression, as she burst in upon the sisters, was that of a girl spoiling for a fight.

"Can't you two shut up!" she stormed furiously. Fay and Edna rose from easy chairs, letting insolent looks follow their vanished grins.

"Can't we do as we like in our own study?" was Fay's hostile retort. "Get out, you!"

"There's Tess next door," Polly explained fiercely, "frightfully upset. Her parents are ruined—"

"Oh, really?" smirked Edna.

"They're to be sold up at home—"

"That's interesting," said Fay. "When's the sale to be? We might go to it!"

Polly clenched up her hands.

"That's the best you can say, is it? You beasts!" she stigmatised both shallow girls. "If you can't feel sorry, at least you might have the decency to hold your row in here!"

"Tess is your friend; she never has been a friend of ours," Edna said tartly. "So why should we go out of our way to—"

"She's a schoolmate of yours, isn't she?"

"Oh, yeah," grinned Fay. "She belongs to Morcove, of course, as Edna and I do—worse luck."

"And it would be at Morcove," sneered Edna, "that a girl's parents go bust and have the brokers in. I take it that the brokers are in? Well, Fay," turning to her, "it only shows; we've done right in keeping to ourselves at this school. Such a mixed lot! Up one day, and down another—we know what that means, the class of parents—"

"You hateful creature, you!" Polly fairly shouted, and rushed at Edna, seizing her by the shoulders and shaking her.

"Here, that will do!" Fay cried, advancing to intervene. "Polly Linton, get out—"

"As if I want to stop!" panted Study 12's headstrong scholar.

She treated struggling Edna to a final thrust which sent the girl crashing into her sister.

Then Polly stamped away, not to go back to Tess and Madge's study, but to Study 12 instead.

Polly knew that, in her present roused state, she was not likely to be helpful.

Then, at the threshold of Study 12, she stopped dead, staring in grimly upon Naomer, who appeared to be getting quite a meal for herself at one end of the table. Paula was also in evidence, but only as the prostrate-looking occupant of an easy chair.

"Naomer!"

"Zere is no need, Polly, to go off ze deep end! What ze diggings—"

"Stuffing again!"

"Not ze bit of eet! But, what ze diggings, I suppose I can have something to make me feel better, after ze upset? I was nearly fainting I was!"

"Oh, buzz off—"

"Just like you, to go on ze ramp," Naomer retorted, spreading honey on a slice of cake. "Instead of being practicable! You wait, Polly! As soon as I have had a snack, I am going to find a hamper—an enormous hamper—to send off to Mr and Mrs. Trelawney!"

"You absolute looney; you goop!" Polly said; but a relenting look belied the scorn in her voice. "If hampers could do any good—in only! I don't know what we ARE to do!"

"Dweadful, dweadful," wailed Paula. "Ow, it's awful—"

"Now, don't you start, Paula!"

"I'm sowwy, Polly deah. I—I— Owch, ow! Polly!"

"Then stop it, I tell you," insisted the madcap,

SCHOOLGIRLS
WEEKLY

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administering a final shaking to Paula. "And you!" with a sudden flouncing round upon Naomer. "Isn't it enough, to have to put up with Fay and Edna—"

"What ze diggings, you don't mean to say I am like zem!"

Polly had to confess that she didn't know what she did mean, and that the sooner Betty and others came in, to say what was to be done, the better!

It was not long before the captain did return to Study 12, bringing with her Pam, Judy and Helen. Madge had remained with Tess.

"We've just realised," Betty remarked feelingly; "that Barncombe Castle business has come all the harder upon poor Tess, on account of the state of things at her home. She was to have had a ten guinea fee when she had finished copying the manuscript for Lord Lundy. Now, of course, she can't finish the task."

"But surely Lord Lundy will want to pay her all the same!" cried Polly. "He's one of the best—"

"I know he is; but Tess— Oh, it's no good saying it is silly of her! She can't bear the idea of accepting the fee, when she hasn't, as it were, delivered the goods."

"It's not her fault that she can't deliver the goods," Helen exclaimed. "And she had done most of the work when the theft took place."

"That is so," Betty agreed. "But she won't see it in that light. She says that Lord Lundy is to be poorer by thousands, in any case, by the loss of the MS., so she can't come upon him as a case for charity."

"Sensitive," Judy murmured. "You can quite understand."

"But look here," Polly burst forth, "Tess has simply got to accept help from us, even if she won't accept it from anyone else! Can't we have a whip round?"

"I would offer to buy some of her sketches," Pam said gently. "But that would really be no better than offering to buy her tennis rackets. In other words, we'd be selling her up, just as her parents are being sold up at home."

"It's not quite the same, but I get your meaning," Betty said ruefully. "So difficult, to do anything without hurting her feelings, poor girl. A whip round—there's the same difficulty again."

"No, that can't be done," Polly ruled out her own suggestion of a few moments ago. "A collection in aid of Tess is simply out of the question. But—"

An interruption was occurring. Madge had left herself into the study very quietly.

"Tess said she would rather be alone. So I came away. I think, perhaps, she will be better, left to herself for a bit."

At this, from Madge, a sudden gulping by Paula—a flinging out of the handkerchief—caused Polly to confer a look which threatened:

"If you start again!"

"Tess is a peculiar girl," Judy said softly. "We shall have to be very careful. I wonder, could we do something, quite unbeknown to her?"

"It's what we will have to do," Betty declared flatly. "But how best to go about—"

"Listen, all," Madge broke in. "There's a thing she has just told me that I feel I ought to pass on. Her heart was set upon saving one thing at least from the sale, next week. It's a family portrait—her granny's. She says she knows quite well that her mother will feel that they have a home still, even if they have to go into two rooms, providing that picture is still with them."

Pam spoke quickly.

"My mother can save that picture for them. She can get somebody to attend the sale and buy it, to be given back to the Trelawneys."

"Gosh, if only one of us could attend the sale," Polly said, drawing a hand over her hair, "and buy things back for Tess! But—"

"Talking of sales— Here, I tell you what!" And Betty, bringing her hands together with a clap, looked radiant. "Gather round, girls—and I'll tell you my idea!"

CHAPTER 4.

Study 12's "Stunt"

ABOUT half-past four, the following afternoon, Polly whisked into Study 12, announcing excitedly:

"Girls, she's gone! It's all right for us—"

"You mean, Tess will be away for a bit?" Betty jerked, bounding up from a chair as if there were much to do now.

"Yep! I met Tess, five minutes ago, going off on her bike—to Barncombe Castle. She told me that Lord Lundy had phoned through to the school, to ask her to call and see him."

"Good! That'll be about the missing MS., of course," said Betty. "I wonder if it means news—the police on the track of the thief! Anyhow—"

"This is the chance we wanted," Polly caught the captain up. "Tess away, so we can go ahead!"

"Gorjus! Bekas, you never know; zis stunt of ours may bring in pounds and pounds!" was Naomer's sanguine cry. "And so Betty can go to ze auction, when ze day comes, and bid for heaps of zings zat ze Trelawneys must have, to live! Zings for cooking, and plates, and knives and forks, and—"

"Never you mind, now, about next week's auction," Polly cut short the imp. "Just think about our own rummage sale. Come on, girls! I'll let the others know! See you in five minutes from now, down at the gym!"

"Right-ho!"

"Bai Jove, Betty deah," beamed Paula, the moment Polly had sped away, "this is wheah I stawt to rejoice, yes, wather! I wekawd our appoaching wummage sale, Betty deah, with considerable optim— Owch! Ow!"

"Zen mind out of my way!" requested Naomer, who was already making up a load of unwanted personal possessions, to take down to the gym.

Less than a minute later, the staircase was alive with members of the Form, descending with armfuls of potential "lots," to be bid for in the rummage sale.

This, then, had been Betty's great idea—one that had caught on the moment it was advanced. At the first opportunity, when Tess would be safely off the scene—a grand jumble sale, in aid of the hapless girl whose parents were facing ruin!

Not a word was to be said to Tess, afterwards, about what had been done in her absence. All the money derived from the school auction was to be placed in Betty's keeping, for her to use it—as she hoped to be able to do—on the day of the auction at the Trelawneys' home.

There was a confident belief that the captain would be given permission to attend the auction.

Miss Somerfield, or some adult person acting for her, would be going—that was known for a certainty. So Betty might very well be allowed to go, in such safe company.

Meantime, here were nearly all the girls in the

Form joyously trooping across to the gymnasium, laden with their best offerings.

Most of the articles were "trunk" and "elobber" such as no girl, in the ordinary course of things, could have hoped to sell to another. But the auction was to be for a good cause, and that would make all the difference!

Very definitely it was understood that buyers must not expect any great bargains. You could say what you liked about the lots; but you must bid up for them!

By ones and twos, into the big building came the girls.

Madcap Polly was the officially appointed auctioneer, and she was to have her rostrum at the upper end of the room. There a dump was formed, load after load being shot down to add to the heap.

Pam, appearing upon the scene as unobtrusively as possible, would have dumped her quota just as carelessly; but Polly shouted a "Whoa! Gosh, Pam; what have you turned up with? A new tennis racket—"

"Yes, well—"

"And a silver photo frame—a ditto cream jug—pair of skates—"

"They're nothing, at this time of year!"

But they were beauties, as Polly could see.

"And you were going to chuck everything in along with the rest."

"I'm in this, along with the rest," Pam smiled serenely. "We're all in it together."

She effaced herself, to be well at the back when the auction should start. Other girls, meantime, were securing vantage points, rightly expecting the auction to provide great fun. The vaulting horse became a perching place for at least three joyous sprits. Other girls adorned the trapezes.

Came a ringing cheer at the mounting of a makeshift rostrum by Polly, who, in that lofty position, made use of a carpenter's hammer, to call attention by a loud:

Whack!

"Ha, ha, ha! Hooray!" the gathering laughed and cheered again. "Good old Polly!"

At this instant, Fay and Edna Denver strolled in. They meant to use the auction as a means of showing off.

"Ladies!" Polly began—and somebody said a surprised:

"Who?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Conditions of sale!" shouted Polly. "All articles sold without reserve and without any guarantee! Owners of articles to be allowed to make one bid, to prevent a knock-out!"

Nothing could be fairer than this, so the gathering gaily clapped.

"Lot number one!" Polly yelled, thoroughly in her element as auctioneer. "Hold it up, Naomer."

Naomer was one of the self-appointed "porters," who had to hold up the various lots for inspection before and during the bidding.

"How much for money-box, with key? How much?"

"Tuppence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come along now," Polly appealed. "Hurry up! This grand tin money-box, with lock and key in full working order! Shall I say five pounds? Shall I say—"

"Fourpence!" another bidder offered.

More loud cheering!

"Fourpence I'm bid—fourpence! What are you about, ladies, to miss an opportunity like this! Will anybody say sixpence?"

"If I say sixpence, I shan't have anything left

to put in the money-box," Biddy Loveland pleaded. "Fivepence, there!"

"Any advance on fivepence? Are you all done at fivepence? Going at fivepence!" Polly shouted, poised the hammer. "Going—for the last time—at fivepence! Gone!"

And the money-box came into Biddy's possession there and then, so that she could put her remaining penny in it.

"Lot two! Now, here's a useful lot," Polly rattled on beguilingly. "A cricket bat, with split, a puncture outfit, a broken wrist-watch, and a box of beads! How much for the lot, please—how much!"

"Ninepence!"

"I must ask you, ladies," said Polly solemnly, "to treat this sale with a little less levity. Remember that this auction is for a good cause. Remember, I give my services free! I get nothing out of this—nothing! These are great bargains, too! Look at that cricket bat—look at it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at the watch—look at it!"

As the watch was a still more laughable exhibit, girls went into convulsions of merriment. But they advanced the bidding, by pennies and tuppences.

Polly, full of cajolery proper to the occasion, worked up the price, finally knocking down the whole lot for one-and-three.

"And now, ladies, I have to offer a very special, rare, and most attractive pair of shoes! As good as new, only offered as they don't fit the owner! Size—I don't know the exact size, but they look a nice roomy pair!"

They did, and so there was much laughter when Pam—who took a small size in shoes—promptly offered five shillings.

"Thank you! Any advance on five shillings?"

"Yes, six!"

Fay had called out the higher bid, obviously to show herself off in competition with Pam.

"Seven," said Pam serenely.

"Eight!" said Fay calmly.

"Nine," said Pam, just as serenely as before.

"Ten!"

Other girls gasped audibly. It was much more than the shoes were worth. This rivalry in the bidding would be good for the cause, but either Pam or Fay was going to be "stung"!

"Eleven," said Pam.

And then—silence. Fay was going to leave it at that, thus catching Pam nicely!

"Any advance on eleven shillings?" Polly sweetly asked Fay.

"Oh, no!"

"At eleven, then—" Whack!

"Thanks," said Pam, serenely accepting the costly lot. "Just what I wanted!"

There was a sniggering laugh from Fay and Edna; but the Form knew; Pam had been glad to have someone bidding against her, with the intention of "running" her.

"Lot four!" shouted Polly. "A useful cake tin, property of a crowned head!"

This allusion to dusky Naomer, as being the owner of the cake tin, drew screams of laughter. "Open the tin," Polly requested. "Anything inside it?"

"No, bekas—"

"There wouldn't be!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How much for the cake tin, one of you?"

"Bekas, he is a good one; he holds—"

"This cake tin," Polly's voice over-rose Naomer's, "has held a cake large enough to last the owner one week! Think of that! And you

needn't use it as a cake tin, you know. You can take it to camp, next summer, as a hip-bath! So—how much?"

"Booh!"

"Threepence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sweendle! Bekas——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, kid, am I conducting this sale, or are you?" Polly inquired, menacing the dusky one with the hammer. "If you don't like the price offered, make a bid yourself!"

"All right, zen, I will! A whole shilling!"

"Hooray! Bravo, Naomer!"

"Bekas——"

"One-and-three!" Betty offered blithely.

"That's better! Any advance on one-and-three? At one-and-three, then! Going—this fine cake tin, only needs soda and water! Going, I say! Whack! "Gone!"

So the famous cake tin would be returning to Study 12, after all!

CHAPTER 5.

"Biter Bit" !

"NEXT," cried Polly, "I have to offer a brand-new tennis racket, generously donated by a lady who desires to be nameless! How much for this really fine racket?"

The bidding was really spirited. In less than a minute, Pam's new tennis racket was knocked down to Helen Craig for eight-and-six.

Then came a comic lot, comprising a knitted jumper (unfinished), several balls of wool, an unopened jar of home-made jam, and a cracked teapot.

"The jumper, ladies, is offered by a lady who is giving up the knitting business! Look at it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was the distorted appearance of the jumper, and the fact that it had only one arm at present, which created such laughter.

"As for the jam," Polly continued gravely; "there were two jars of it originally, from an aunt in the country. The owner ate one jar, and was, I am assured, not much the worse for it! So, as a useful spec—how much?"

"What ze diggings, sixpence!" Naomer herself yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray be serious——"

"I am serious!"

"Sixpence is all I am bid, for a knitted jumper——"

"No, bekas, I don't want ze jumper, I only want ze jam!"

"The articles cannot be separated," was the auctioneer's grim ruling. "And, after all, what goes better with jam than a jumper?"

"Not ze bit of eet, bread-and-butter——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ninепence, zen, for ze jumper and ze jam," Naomer recklessly offered. "Bekas, all for a good cause!"

"A shilling!" someone cried.



The staircase became alive with girls hurrying down to the gym, their arms laden with articles for the great jumble sale. Thus, in secret, the Form was doing its best for Tess.

"One-and-six!"

"Now," said Polly happily, "we are getting on!"

"Sweendle, I call eet! But, go on, zen—two shillings, two-and-six——"

"Three!" called out Edna Denver carelessly.

"Four!" shouted Naomer. "And now, what about eet, you over there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Edna had no further bid to offer. She had played the same trick that Fay had played, a few minutes since. Both sisters could now exult over Study 12's having been "stung" again!

Naomer certainly did make a face when the lot came to her at the price of four shillings.

"Ze most eggspensive jar of jam I have ever bought! As for ze jumper—you can have him, Paula! Catch!"

But Paula failed to catch the unfinished garment, which fell netwise over her pretty hair.

"Owch! Wow——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order, order!" Polly demanded. Whack, whack! "Now, ladies, something very special again! A silver photograph frame, and a ditto cream jug, possibly antique."

"No," said Pam; "they're quite modern."

"Five shillings," Fay called out carelessly.

"Six," said Etta Hargrove.

"Seven," said Fay determinedly. She meant to have this lot! It comprised two articles that belonged to Pam, and to acquire them would mean, Fay was certain to "crow" over Pam.

"Eight," offered Pat Lawrence.

"Nine," said Fay coolly.

She expected to get the lot now. The only girl who could do any fantastic bidding was Pam herself; and she had already been "landed" over the shoes. Besides, Pam, as the offerer of this present lot, could only make one bid. After that, she must drop out.

"At nine shillings!" Polly shouted impressively.

"Any advance on nine?"

"Yes," blurted Pat. "Nine-and-six!"

"Ten," said Fay, with a smile. Now that they had got to sixpences, the bidding was unlikely to go higher.

But it did!

"Ten-and-six!" said Etta rather breathlessly.

Edna nudged Fay to go on again. Anyway, the two silver articles were worth the money, easily!

"Eleven," smiled Fay.

"At eleven! Will any girl say—"

"Twelve, yes!" from Betty.

A jump of a shilling, that time!

"Thirteen," Fay called out grandly. "Fourteen," as she saw Etta nod to the auctioneer. "Fifteen!" as she saw Betty nod. "Sixteen!" as she saw Pat Lawrence nod.

"Thank you," said Polly sweetly. Except for the sensational bidding, there was now a breathless silence. "Any advance on sixteen shillings?"

Dead silence!

"At sixteen shillings!" Polly droned. "They are well worth it, you know! At sixteen shillings—"

"And sixpence," said Betty.

"Seventeen," Fay promptly went on.

"And six!" from Pat.

"Eighteen!" cried Fay.

Then she laughed in a "That's got you!" style. Pat Lawrence was well supplied with pocket-money always. But even she was feeling compelled to drop out now. She was shaking her head.

"Eighteen-and-six," Betty sighed, knowing it would take her every available penny. Still—a good cause!

"Nineteen," said Fay.

She and her sister tittered a little nervously. "Any advance on nineteen shillings?" Polly inquired excitedly. "Come on, now, girls!"

No. The poised hammer was, it seemed, to knock down the two silver articles to Fay. Girls looked at her. She was visibly trembling, her smile a quivering one.

Nobody was in doubt as to why Fay had gone to such a high figure. For one reason, she liked to show off her cash resources; for another reason, she hoped to irritate Pam, by acquiring these things from that girl.

"At nineteen shillings!" Polly said warningly. "Going! Going at nineteen shillings! Are you all done? Very well then—"

"Twenty-five shillings," Pam herself offered quietly, exercising her right to make one bid, as the owner of the goods.

The crowd gasped. Again, many a pair of eyes flew to Fay and Edna.

Would Fay go on again, after such a staggering bid as that? If she didn't, Pam would have to pay twenty-five shillings for the pleasure of receiving back what she had previously owned!

"At twenty-five shillings!" Polly shouted, wildly flourishing the hammer. "At—"

"Twenty-six!" snapped Fay.

"Thank you! And now, at twenty-six shillings! For the last time—going! Going, I say, at twenty-six shillings!"

Polly held the hammer high, ready to bring it down with one tremendous blow upon the nearest bit of woodwork.

"Gone!"

WHACK!

"Ha, ha, ha!" the laughter broke out. "Ha, ha, ha!"

As for Pam, she smiled faintly. This time, it was Fay who had been stung—and badly stung! Yes, well, the girl had only her malice and her vanity to blame for that.

"Just what I wanted," Fay loudly bragged as the silver goods came to hand.

"Just what I wanted, too," said Pam, with a most gratified nod.

And the Form, knowing what she meant by that, mingled clapping with its laughter.

CHAPTER 6.

£1,000 Reward

S LAM! went a study door.

Fay and Edna Denver, too discomfited to feel like staying to the end of the great jumble sale, had come away from the gym to seek the privacy of their study.

As her sister dumped the two silver articles upon the study table, Edna gave a feeble laugh. "Some bargain, Fay!"

"Never mind!" was the fierce retort. "The fact that Pam was ready to pay such a price, rather than let us have the things—it shows!"

"Except that she wanted, of course, to help the fund," Edna rejoined, with a wry face. "Oh, well, we showed them that she is not the only girl with money, anyhow! I suppose they will get a nice bit for Tess."

"Much good will it be! What I am wondering about," Fay changed the topic, with a sudden worried look, "is why Tess has had to go to Barncombe Castle to see Lord Lundy. I hope nothing has cropped up, Edna, pointing to the Borgmans as being the persons who stole the MS."

"Oh, well, if the Borgmans are under suspicion—we needn't get jumpy," shrugged Edna. "It need never be known that we took up with Mrs. Borgman. Besides, we didn't know, anyway, that she and her husband were twisters."

This did not dispel Fay's uneasiness. She always was more "nervy" than her sister.

"The whole thing was so serious, Edna—I mean, the theft. If it's true that Lord Lundy is going to offer a thousand pounds reward for the recovery of the stolen MS.—that shows how valuable it was."

"Oh, we know it was valuable—worth thousands upon thousands! But it's no use being on the fidget. The Borgmans have cleared out by now, you may be sure."

"Still!"

And Fay, by lapsing into a moody silence, showed how fear-ridden she was remaining. Both girls were still occupied with uneasy thoughts when, presently, a joyous hubbub proclaimed the return of all the other girls from the gym.

Up to the Form quarters pounded the girls, in possession of "bargains" about which they could make many a joke.

A huge success! That was the general opinion. Plenty of fun had been got out of the jumble sale, the cash results of which were far better than had been anticipated.

"Most gwatifying, yes, wather, bai Jove!" beamed Paula Creel, promptly subsiding into Study 12's best armchair, whilst Betty, at the table, started to total up the proceeds. "Haow much, pweicely, Betty deah?"

"Give me a chance!" laughed the captain, coping with much small change.

"And the whole thing went off during Tess' absence; that's the great thing!" Polly rejoiced. "She isn't back yet."

"Just look at all ze money!" shrilled Naomer. "Gorjus!"

"You were very rash, Pam!" said Madge, with an affectionate, admiring smile.

"Yes, well! It was only right, to—"

"Four pounds, nine shillings, and fivepence!" Betty suddenly shouted the checked total. "Girls! Just upon four pounds ten!"

"Hooray!" the study cheered. "Splendid!"

"We can't put the total on the notice-board, or Tess will find out," said the captain, gathering up the money. "We must just pass word round that that is the total."

"And everybody satisfied with their bargains," chuckled the madcap. "Except, perhaps—Fay and Edna! Ha, ha, ha! I shall never forget your stinging 'em like that, Pam!"

"They asked for it."

"Oh, rather!"

But now came a dramatic interruption. The door flew open, revealing a pack of girls in a breathless, excited state.

"Betty—all of you—"

"Hal-lo!" the captain responded lightly. "No money back, if that's the idea!"

"Money back—don't be silly," laughed Etta Hargrove, who was to the fore in the small crowd at the doorway. "Do you know what's gone up, on the notice-board downstairs? This last minute—a printed bill—"

"Offering a reward!" some other girl interjected. "One thousand pounds!"

"Wha-at!"

"Bekas—oo—"

"One thousand pounds reward," Etta panted on, "offered by Lord Lundy, for the recovery of the stolen MS.!"

"Gosh! One—thousand—pounds! Here, can't we get hold of that?" the madcap jovially cried.

"Then we COULD do something really big for Tess and her people!"

"Yes, wather—"

"Bekas, what ze diggings—"

"It would save the whole home," Betty murmured. "Oh, but what's the good of thinking in that strain!"

(Concluded on the next page.)

Schooldays Are Busy Days



VERY often your Editor receives letters from readers who wish they could go to a school like Morcove or to some other boarding-school. Very few girls who have never been to a boarding-school have a clear idea of the sort of routine that is followed, and the same applies, of course, to boys' schools.

Naturally, schools, like individuals, vary a good deal, but here is an account of how one well-known boarding-school is run.

The girls rise at seven, and, when the weather permits, go for a run. In bad weather they exercise briskly for ten minutes in the gymnasium. A bath or shower follows, and then, prompt at eight o'clock, breakfast in the big dining-hall or refectory.

After breakfast, which lasts about half an hour to forty minutes, the girls return to their dormitories and make their own beds, and then turn their hands to any such task as cleaning sports gear, tidying studies and Common-rooms, and so on.

DEVELOPING SELF-RELIANCE

There is a dual reason for calling on pupils to undertake these purely domestic duties—it prevents them feeling that they are at school to be waited on hand and foot by the proper domestic staff, as well as making them more self-reliant and useful.

At ten minutes to nine the whole school meets in Great Hall, where, during a short silence, the music mistress plays one or other of the glorious masterpieces. Then a lesson is read, and frequently one of the senior girls is given this duty to carry out.

From nine-fifteen to twelve-thirty the whole school is "in class" with a short "break" just before

eleven o'clock. Lunch is at one, and after lunch, for about twenty minutes, there is a period of complete rest. Girls must neither talk nor read.

In the afternoon, from two to four o'clock, there are more lessons, except on Wednesday, Saturdays, and, of course, Sundays. On the two former afternoons games are played according to the season of the year until tea-time, a very simple meal.

On most evenings there are further lessons or preparation from five until half-past six or seven o'clock.

WHEN CLASSES END

In the evening, between half-past six and seven, according to the ages of the girls, is the last meal of the day, and this could be described as either supper or dinner. In the winter months it is usually a slightly heavier meal than in the summer.

Girls over fourteen are permitted to change out of the regulation school uniform of gym tunic, white blouse, black stockings, etc., into ordinary frocks in the evening, but the wearing of jewellery is frowned upon.

Bed-time is at eight-thirty for the junior girls and nine-thirty for the seniors. These hours are, of course, relaxed slightly on special occasions or in exceptionally fine weather towards the end of the summer term.

There are numerous activities apart from studies carried on in the school in which most of the girls share. These include debating societies, amateur dramatics, school choirs, Girl Guides, and various "specialist" societies for those who are particularly interested in subjects such as foreign languages, stamp-collecting, nature study, and so on.

GAMES ARE IMPORTANT

The sporting side is not neglected; hockey, netball, tennis, cricket, swimming and rowing—all are indulged in and thoroughly enjoyed by the girls.

From time to time lectures are given by mistresses or visiting lecturers on matters outside the school curriculum, so that the girls may gain an idea of what is going on in the world and be better fitted thereby to take their places in it when the time comes.

The older girls are trained in domestic science, including cookery and the care of the sick and also of little children, and all girls are expected to contribute from time to time to various worthy charitable objects and good causes.

"Anyways—must get a look at that bill!" Polly said, and was off and away on the instant.

Others ran with her. Even those who had just come upstairs went dashing down again, to scan the printed bill afresh.

Betty, having remained in Study 12 to put the sale money safely away, got down to the front hall at last, to find a group a-gaze at the notice. It was headed:

"£1,000 REWARD!"

And the very size of the lettering seemed to stress the hugeness of the amount offered.

Many a girl was saying, wistfully, what SHE would do with a thousand pounds, if only she could earn it!

As for Betty and her chums, there was still the one thought: a thousand pounds—it could save the Trelawney home altogether!

"I wonder," Betty murmured, turning away from the tantalising notice, at last, with Polly and the rest; "I wonder if Tess will come in with any news, presently? She may have heard something, at Barncombe Castle."

"Quite likely! And now, the sooner she turns up, the better," Polly, fumed. "We want to know!"

But time crept on, and still Tess was being awaited.

Dusk crept over land and sea, and still she was not back at Morcove. Her loving chums went down to the school gateway and looked along the road by which she would be coming from the town, and they waited and watched—in vain.

It had gone lighting-up time when the Form-

mistress became aware that Tess was not yet in. There was no anxiety even then, for it was inferred that Barncombe Castle might be sending Tess home to school in a car.

But, when another quarter of an hour had passed, and still Tess was absent, Miss Merrick rang up the castle.

By that time, girls had all come indoors for the night—all, excepting Tess, overdue like this.

The Form-mistress had Betty with her during the telephoning, and it was a sensational moment for Study 12 when its captain came rushing in to announce the result of Miss Merrick's inquiry.

"Tess should have been in an hour ago!"

"What!"

"They say at the castle that she left, on her bike, an hour and a half ago. Something has happened," Betty said in an anxious voice, whilst she softly closed the door after entering. "It would never take Tess an hour and a half to bike from Barncombe."

"Even if she got a flat tyre, she could walk it in less than that!" Polly commented. "So—what does it mean?"

What did it mean?

It was a problem to be debated in many a study as the evening wore on and still Tess was missing!

Only Fay and Edna could see a possible explanation, and they took good care to keep it to themselves.

"The Borgmans!" was the shuddering belief which seized Fay Denver, alone with her sister in the study which was theirs. "The Borgmans, Edna!"

"Yes." And now Edna was feeling more than uneasy. A worried frown lined her forehead. "We know, though others don't, that after Mr. Borgman stole the original MS. from the castle, Mrs. Borgman stole Tess' copies from the school. Now it looks as if they have got hold of Tess herself."

"Yet why—why?" panted Fay. "Oh, this is terrible! What motive could they have for—for kidnapping her! And are we to speak out now, or what?"

"No," Edna whispered. "We've got ourselves to think about Fay, and so for the present, anyhow—not a word!"

A little after this, they went from the study to inquire if any news had come in.

None! With only another half-hour to go before the whole school retired for the night, the mystery of Tess Trelawney's disappearance was still as deep as ever.

In Study 12, Betty was at the window, peering out into the dark night, when there came the calling-attention remark from one of her equally anxious chums:

"Bell for prayers, girls."

"Yes," the captain murmured, turning away from the window. "And so we must go down, and afterwards go to bed. As for poor Tess, I can only think of one thing now. The worry, the strain of the last few days—about her father and mother—"

"You mean," Polly jerked, "she's run away?"

"Not that, let's hope," Betty responded. "Tess was always temperamental, but she was never one to lose her head. I'm only thinking—perhaps she has gone home."

"Home!" echoed Madge sadly. "Where the bailiffs are in! Home, to see those placards at the gate which we saw."

"Poor Tess!" Pam said softly. "We shall never know, most likely, how greatly she did suffer—had been suffering, before we found out."

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Tess has vanished—and not even her chums of Morcove know where she is or in what dire peril she may be.

Next Tuesday's fine long complete story, by Marjorie Stanton, brings to a dramatic climax the thrilling adventure in which Tess features. It is entitled:



THE TESTING OF TESS TRELAWNEY