

Read "THE CLOSING of STUDY 12!" — MARJORIE STANTON'S splendid tale, featuring Betty & Co. — inside

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2^d



**"Jack and Dave
Need Our Help!"**

A tense moment from the thrilling long, complete story of Morcove School within.

The Morcove Chums Help to Keep Grangemoor's Flag of Freedom Flying!

THE CLOSING OF



What amazing happenings has Morcove School known! Yet nothing can compare with this latest sensation which is causing more excitement even than the great Bar-out at Grangemoor School. Study 12—that famous rendezvous of Betty Barton and rest of the Fourth Form at Morcove—closed! To this extent do the events at Grangemoor affect Morcove School!

Polly's Mystery Errand.

"**B**ETTY, you and I have come to the parting of the ways!" spoke Polly Linton in her best stage voice.

"You think so, Polly?"

"I do!"

"And why?"

Betty Barton asked that question with a laugh. But Polly was trying to be serious now.

"No, really. I've done you enough harm, Betty."

"Oh, indeed!"

"And I don't want anything more of the same sort to happen."

"You goose," laughed Betty. "Now what harm have you done me?"

"I have, Betty; you know jolly well I have!"

Polly was as serious as ever, while Betty continued to look highly amused.

"So you propose to clear out of Study 12, do you, Polly?"

"Don't see how I can do that. But, what I mean is, Betty, that I must go my way and you must go yours."

"I hope," smiled Betty, "your way won't take you back to your brother's school again—at any rate, while that rebellion's still on. Grangemoor isn't exactly—"

Polly, perched on the table-edge in Study 12, nodded.

"I may have to go over again—"

"No, Polly!"

"Yep! But don't look like that, Betty. I have no intention of going over to-day, although I've got to slip out after tea—and I don't want you to come!"

"Um!" said Betty. "And I—I don't like the sound of that, Polly!"

"Sorry, but there it is, and I can't say any more," was the roguish remark. "Now I want

to find Judy Cardew, and so I wonder if I can find tea laid for once when I come back!"

Polly hopped down from her perch and quitted the room, to go along to the study where she would find Judy Cardew.

Afternoon school had ended ten minutes since, and the next thing for most of Morcove's scholars was tea. Then, refreshed and rested, they would be "off out," some to games and some for rambles or cycle-rides. But where was Polly going, presently, that she refused to say? Betty wondered!

A languid step sounded, and Paula Creel drifted into Study 12, looking her usual spic-and-span self.

"Bai Jove, Betty deah, wather a twial, being in class this afternoon, what?"

"Poor old Paula."

"Yes, wather," sighed Paula, sinking into the best armchair very thankfully. "Most twyng! Theah appeahs to be a wemakable display of stwictness on the pawt of Miss Eweward at pwsent, bai Jove!"

"Your imagination, Paula. I say, Paula, I'm feeling rather concerned about Polly. She's being mysterious!"

"Weally?"

"You don't happen to know what's behind it all, Paula? She want to go off on her own after tea, and you know, that's not like Polly. Oh, and she's been talking a lot of rubbish—but meaning it!—about keeping away from me. Think it will be better for me!"

"Bai Jove, Betty—"

"Of course, it all comes of what happened over last week-end. I am rather in disgrace, we know, because I worked things for Polly and Judy as I did. Still, I do wish Polly wouldn't take it to heart so."

"The geal," said Paula, using pocket-comb and

STUDY 12



By Marjorie Stanton

mirror, "is the sort to do that, Betty deah. Unfortunately, too, she is just the one to go off the deep end, if you will pawdon the vulgah expression, not realising that othahs may be involved. Personally, Betty deah, I also am still grieving greatly that you have been depwilted of the captaincy."

"I know you are, Paula, and you shouldn't! I shall get the captaincy back in a fortnight or so; that's been promised me, you know. So it's a mistake—"

"The mistake, Betty deah—the great mistake was for you, as captain, to work that leave for Polly and Judy to go over to Grangemoor, when you knew that there was gwave disowder theah, yes, wather! Howevah—"

"Paula, how could I do anything else?" protested Betty. "Polly and Judy have each a brother at that school, and they were dying to get in touch with them. Oh, I don't care," shrugged Betty; "if it were to be done again, I'd do it!"

She paused, taking a turn about the study.

"But, Paula! For Polly's own sake, I do hope she is not—not—well, going to get mixed up afresh in that business at Grangemoor. Same with Judy. They were forgiven that first time; but if it occurs again—"

"Pweicisly!"

There was no time for more, and perhaps it did not matter very much that the talk was cut short. Paula Creel, although greatly beloved of Betty and the rest of the Study 12 chums, was hardly the one to contribute much helpful advice at any time.

Nor could Betty have done much good by turning to that dusky imp, Naomer Nakara, who had now whirled in. Naomer, Morcove's royal scholar from some tiny desert kingdom in North Africa, was simply a limb of mischief, her chief interest in life being, it was sometimes thought, to appease a very healthy "appertite."

"Where is Polly? And what ze diggings, no

tea ready!" cried Naomer, in one breath. "I am disgrusted, bekas, after slaying ze whole afternoon in class—"

"Pawdon?" said Paula; and Naomer stood still, to stare at that elegant chum.

"Why, Paula? You say, queek! Bekas—"

"My wecollection is, Naomer deah, that you managed to find time to draw a sketch illustrating one of those distwessing occuences at Gwangemoor School."

"Ooo, zat reminds me!" And Naomer promptly turned to the back end of an exercise-book to tear out a sheet. She held it up for inspection, with great pride.

"Yes, zere you are, Betty, and I am going to hang him up—"

"Take my advice, Naomer—"

"No, bekas—"

"All right, don't take it," laughed Betty. "After all, why should you? I'm not the captain now! What do you call this—a picture?"

"Yes, bekas—look! Zat is ze jolly old water-tower at Grangemoor, and zere all ze boys, with Jack Linton and Dave Cardew, holding ze great Bar-out; and zat is old Dr Trouncer getting his jolly old mortar-board knocked over his eyes—good job! Bekas, we know what a howling old zing he is, yes! And zere is Jack Linton, himself, hoisting ze flag, and you can see some of ze boys-cooking a meal for themselves, too!"

Naomer, in fact, had drawn a kind of sectional sketch of the Bar-out at Grangemoor, with wealth of detail that must have involved a scandalous neglect of her proper work in class.

Finding a pin or two, she now proudly affixed the work of art to the study wall. It was Naomer's fond belief that she was quite as good as artist as Tess Trelawney, although the Form held a very different opinion.

"And now—tea!" she shrilled, bounding across to the corner cupboard.

"Yes, wather, most welcome!"

But Paula did not get up from the armchair to help. It was left to Betty to spread the cloth a little straighter than Naomer would ever have placed it, and to prevent the dusky one from almost throwing out crockery.

Suddenly Naomer spoke whilst foraging in the cupboard.

"Eet rather funny! Bekas, what has become of zat Genoa cake we had? And, what ze diggings, a fresh pot of jam—gone! Hi, queek, somebody has been—"

"Are you sure, Naomer, it wasn't yourself?"

"No, Betty, bekas, have you ever known me to eat a whole cake?"

"Frequently, Naomer."

"I am disgrusted," cried Naomer, coming out of the cupboard. "Bekas, now I am to be falsely accused, I surpose! When zere must have been several of them, I zink, zere is so much gone! Queek, Polly," as the madcap came prancing in, "ees it you?"

"Is it me—I—what?"

Naomer began a most excitable cataloguing of eatables that she knew to be missing from the study larder; but Polly was not at all an attentive listener. She was far too anxious to get tea over and so be able to get away!

"Just some tea for me," she remarked, rattling spoons into saucers.

Next moment she was putting tea out of a caddy into the pot, which latter she ran with up the corridor, to where boiling water could be had. Polly was one who always did things with a rush; but there was a very special dash in her movements, at present, which Betty did not fail to notice. And Betty wondered still more.

She was not to be allowed to find out. Attempts at "pumping" rendered madcap Polly blithely reticent. Blandly she told Betty that it was nothing to do with her!

"I know," said Betty, during tea; "you're going out with Judy, anyhow!"

"I'll have another half-cup, please," was the madcap's smiling evasion. "Then I'll be off."

"So it's something to do with that trouble at Grangemoor?" Betty persisted. "Oh, Polly, you might tell us!"

"Yes, bekas—"

"Sh'rrp!" the madcap bade Naomer very peremptorily. "It's nothing to do with you, either!"

"Zen I am disgusted! Bekas, zere are four of us in zis study, and we have always—"

Polly interrupted by jumping up to be off. She swallowed the last of her tea, standing, and crashed the cup back into its saucer.

"Ta-ta then, girls!"

"But, Polly—"

Slam!

"How wude!" said Paula; but Betty, laughing, whipped open the study door and flew out after the madcap.

"Polly—whoa!"

"Oh, Betty! I tell you—"

"But you don't tell me; that's the trouble!"

protested Betty smiling. I shall come with you!"

Polly came back a step or two in the corridor, to entreat, very earnestly:

"Betty, please, promise you won't come after me! Do, there's a dear!"

This caused a pause—a deadlock. All levity was at an end now.

"If you are going to follow me, to—find out and sort of get mixed up in it, then—then I can't do it," Polly said, in a low tone of acute distress. "And I want to do it, Betty. I must—oh, I must!"

"All right, Polly," was the other's equally grave response. "But I'm afraid—"

"Afraid!" And suddenly the madcap was all loving smiles again. You weren't afraid to do what you did for Judy and me last Saturday, were you? Then it's not likely that I am going to be afraid now! Except over one thing, Betty! It is, that it may make more trouble for you. So I'm off, and you're not to follow, and if you do—I'll never, never speak to you again!"

"Which would be terrible!" laughed Betty. But she was no longer laughing—was unable to show a smile even—as she reluctantly turned back to Study 12, leaving Polly to go off with Judy, upon the errand of mystery!

Who Is "Elsie Jackson" ?

"NOW, Judy, we can make a start."

Polly Linton said it as she and Judy Cardew each finished the tying of a small parcel to the handlebars of her bicycle.

There was no one else at the school cycle-shed, for these two girls had come away just at a time when Morcove in general was in the midst of social teas.

They mounted and went pedalling down to the main gateway, turning to the left beyond bounds to follow the road to Barncombe.

Judy looked serious; but there was nothing like that about Polly, whose eyes held a merry sparkle—as if the business in hand afforded her great delight. Hence, presently, the frivolous remark:

"I'm afraid Naomer would think that my parcel held a Geno-cake, Judy! And a jar of jam, amongst other things! Well, anyhow, I bought the cake, jam as well!"

Judy gave a faint smile, acknowledging that the business in hand was not without its comic element; then she said gravely:

"If only we could have collected twice as much stuff, Polly—ten times as much!"

"I know," agreed Polly. "But I couldn't dare clear the cupboard-shelves. Betty would have guessed at once. One comfort, Judy; we can make up with money. Bit of luck—that I had a remittance from home, only this morning! By the same post that brought me—"

She broke off there, glancing behind, aware of having spoken rather loudly to the schoolmate who was riding with her.

"And you haven't said a word to Betty or any of them about the letter from Jack?" came from Judy softly.

"Not a word! Oh, and it's been just awful, Judy, keeping Betty and all of them in the dark. But we made up our minds, didn't we, not to drag any of them into this fresh business."

"Far better," said Judy, earnestly, "to do everything by ourselves this time. They would only be wanting to share the risk, and—"

"Car, Judy!"

The madcap voiced that warning because, just when the pair of them were rounding a bend in the road, a motor had flashed towards them at great speed. It held only the man who was driving, and his driving was careless of anyone else who might be on the road.

Both girls had to draw in very sharply, for the car was well in the middle of the road at that bend, going all out—for Morcove School, they could only suppose.

"Goodness, Judy, did you see who that was?"

"Yes!"

"Dr. Trouncer himself—gee!" gasped Polly, using another of her brother Jack's breezy expressions. "He's come over from Grangemoor—to see Miss Somerfield? That's lively!"

"I wonder," muttered Judy uneasily, "had we better go on? Oh, but we must, Polly!"

"Of course we must! We don't turn back because of him! Time enough to hear all about his visit when we do get back," chuckled Polly.

"I believe he recognised us, Polly!"

"I hope he did! I don't mind if he saw the parcels and guessed," jested the madcap. "But that's only my joke, Judy. Surely he can't know that Jack has been able to get a letter off to me?"

"At any rate, we must remember he's about!" said Judy. "Suppose he came dashing by, just when we were talking to Jack and Dave. That would be a disaster!"

"It's all right," laughed Polly. "He didn't come through Barncombe, and he won't be going back that way. At least, let's hope not! But I'd like to push on a bit faster, Judy, all the same, and get the business done!"

A nod from Judy, and they put on speed. The road was fairly level, but about ten minutes later there came one gentle rise which both girls topped, eagerly on the look-out.

"Don't see any sign of them, Judy, do you?"

"No."

"Bother!" said the madcap, with her usual intolerance of anything like a hitch. "Has something happened then, to upset the whole arrangement? Was that what Dr. Trouncer's being over this way meant? The Bar-out ended at Grangemoor—ugh! Capture of the water-tower by Sergeant Japp, perhaps, and all the boys prisoners—except Jack and Dave, absent at the time! And now Dr. Trouncer is scouring the countryside for Jack and Dave!"

"Let's hope not, Polly. But there's the spot,

right enough, that your brother named in his note. There are the corn-ricks—"

"Or did he mean some other ricks?" muttered Polly. "There is another lot, you know, Judy, between here and the town. Half a sec., to make quite sure!"

So they hopped down from their saddles, and in a moment Polly had out a letter which she and her chum studied again.

SECRET.

H. Q., Fenwick Filibusters,
The Water-Tower,
Grangemoor.

From O.C. Rebels to Polly.

"Have run blockade and managed to post this to you. Rations running out. S.O.S. Smallest contributions in cash or kind thankfully received. Will be at corn-stacks on Barncombe Road about four-thirty to-morrow (Tues.), with Dave.

"Enemy attacked at six this (Mon.) evening. Our casualties nil. Health of troops, good. Determined to hold out, but must have grub."

"I think those must be the stacks, right enough," said Judy, after a half-amused inspection of the note. "After all, aren't the others haystacks, not corn? Oh, and look!" she added, in sudden excitement. "There are the boys!"

"Hip, pip," Polly cheered, under her breath. "Come on, then!"

Just as Jack Linton was the boyish counterpart of madcap Polly, so was Dave Cardew very much like his sister Judy, for saying little and thinking much, and being serious without being depressing.

"Gee, girls, you're the ones!" Polly and Judy wheeled their machines off the road to where he and Dave were in the shelter of the corn stacks.

As the two girls noticed, the boys had each a bicycle placed out of sight from the road. The group of ricks formed, in fact, a splendid rendezvous. Jack and Dave had been able to see the girls before being seen by them, and so it could be in the case of anyone else coming from either direction.

"I see you scrounged something," Jack commented on the parcels. "That's bully!"

"It isn't bully; it's cake and Swiss-roll, and all sorts of creamy stuff," was Polly's bland response. "But if you like, boys, if you like to wait here whilst we slip along into Barncombe, we'll get you some bully beef."

"No need, thanks all the same. Dave and I have already shopped! Haven't we, old lad? Polly, how's things?"

"How are they with you?" "Fine! The jolly old flag of freedom still flying from Fort Filibuster. You saw what I said about old Shudders attacking last evening?"

"Yes." "He had one go at trying to get us out. Fetched Sergeant Japp along and a few prefects; Rennard was one; he was glorying in it, of course, but the others just hadn't any heart for the job. And, anyhow, we beat 'em off!"

"Splendid." "Turned the jolly old hose pipe on them," chuckled Jack. "It's fine in the water tower. We found some flexible piping, and, of course, the water is free. We just about drowned the sergeant."

"Serve him right. There have been things at your school just lately, Jack, that I'll never forget—or forgive. It's a shame this Dr. Trouncer being in charge. I suppose you don't know what's being done about getting him hoofed out?"

Jack shook his head. "Nothing, I expect, Polly. There it is: he's the man our former Head was so eager to see appointed as deputy. All the same, it has been more than any chaps could be expected to stand for."

"So I should think! Anything like that at Morcove, and we would be the same," Polly declared hotly. "But I still can't make out, Jack, why on earth Dr. Halden begged that a man like this Trouncer bully should be put in charge, even temporarily."

"Nobody can make it out." "By the way Jack, Judy and I saw Dr. Trouncer just now."

"You did!" "Yep. Tearing along in a car for Morcove!"

"Oh, heck! Dave, do you hear this?" Dave, breaking off from subdued talk with his sister Judy, nodded.

"Judy's just been telling me," he said tersely. "Going to call at Morcove, I suppose."

"But what about?" clamoured Polly. "That's the question. Is it only about last week-end, when Judy and I were at Grangemoor? If so— who cares! But if it means that he knows that you two boys are at large—"

"Don't see how he can know," argued Jack.



Naomer held up the page from her exercise book. "See zis is ze jolly old water-tower, where ze boys are holding ze great Bar-out, and zis is old Shudders!" she pointed out, much to the amusement of her chums.

"Dave and I certainly slipped away from the water tower without being seen. That was just before dawn this morning."

"Before dawn!" echoed Polly and Judy, as with one voice.

The two boys rodded, Jack with a grin.

"Been out all day, haven't we, old lad? Biked to Barncombe and got in tons of grub. Still, we can do with your little lot as well. Later on we'll get back, and as soon as it's safe after dark we do the trick!"

He added gaily:

"If only Dave and I can get back to our pals in the water tower with all the stuff we've got we can hold out for a week! We've plenty of water remember, for drinking and washing."

"Barring-out in the water tower was a grand idea!" sparkled Polly. "Just the place!"

Her brother screwed a finger against his right temple, to imply brains.

"That's where we chaps have got it—haven't we, Dave? But he's talking to Judy! I do believe, Polly, Dave would never have gone back if Judy hadn't turned up!"

"Wouldn't he!" laughed Polly. "But it's nice to see him like that."

"Isn't it nice to see me?" protested Jack.

"Oh, yes, in a way!"

"I don't believe you really love your brother," jested Jack aggrievedly. "If I'd written to Naomer, she would have fetched along twice as much grub."

"And stopped half-way to eat half of it!"

"You're not so bad, Polly," he now conceded.

"Gee, it was fine of you last Saturday; the way you and Judy managed to get over to us at Grangemoor! The boys are still all talking about you, and what you did for us."

"We were glad to be able to do it, Jack; but—we wish we hadn't—in a way. Because of Betty, you see," grimaced Polly.

"Why, how do you mean?"

Then she told him how Betty had been blamed; how it had cost Betty her captaincy for the time being. Dave was another listener to all this, and he and Jack were both very concerned.

"Gosh, what a rotten shame, Dave!" was Jack's distressed outburst. "Poor Betty! I'll bet she's fed up."

"Oh, you should see her," murmured Polly.

"She's fine—pretending not to mind. But, of course, it hurts terribly. Well, Judy will tell you; we've done our best to-day, anyhow. We wouldn't let Betty or any of them take part in this secret meeting."

"Good kids!" nodded Dave. "And now don't you think you'd better be going?"

"That's right," said Jack briskly. "You don't want to be seen."

"Why should we be seen!" objected Polly indignantly. "Are we such duffers, Jack? We are not going to say good-bye yet awhile—just as if!"

"It isn't that we want to be rid of you," declared Jack. "It's been as good as a beef-steak meal just to see you, Polly! But if we are to talk, we must be jolly careful. I'm not for getting this is the road from Morcove to Barncombe."

"We can keep a look-out. We can easily be quite out of sight to anybody who—"

"Gosh, there's someone coming now," whispered Jack, sidling in closer to the sheltering rick. "A girl on a bike."

Polly and Judy had sense enough not to venture a peep just then. Being already sheltered, they were careful to remain so, along with their

brothers. For a minute there was intense silence; then they heard, very faintly, the going by of the cyclist on the road. She was riding away from the town in the direction of Morcove.

A few moments after this, Polly moved a step or so, to be able to peer out.

She saw the back of the girl cyclist, and at once commented softly:

"No; that's nobody belonging to Morcove, you boys. But—yes, I'm sure it is; I'm positive it's—"

"Who?" questioned Jack bewilderedly.

Polly turned to him and Dave.

"A girl who has rather mystified us," she explained softly. "She's about eighteen or nineteen, staying in lodgings in Barncombe—down for her health. Cora Grandways has got to know her, and that's how we've heard details. But, you boys, there is this about the girl that has puzzled some of us. She was over at Grangemoor yesterday, and a curious thing occurred."

Both boys were eager listeners.

"That girl," Polly spoke on impressively, "paid for something at the village shop with a currency note which the woman of that shop had herself paid, a few days previously, to Dr. Trouncer!"

"What!" gasped Jack.

"We were in the shop when the girl was served," Judy carried on the narrative. "After she had gone out, the shop-woman remarked how strange it was about that note. She recognised it, as it had been slightly torn and then mended with some stamp-paper."

"And so we can't help wondering," resumed Polly, "whether the girl is related to Dr. Trouncer in any way."

"Niece of his, or something like that?" suggested Dave quietly. "Dr. Trouncer isn't married, we were told."

"In that case," said Judy, "wouldn't she have come to see him at Grangemoor School? Surely, if she were in the neighbourhood, and knew that an uncle had been appointed temporary Head of Grangemoor, she would have at least looked him up? Cycled over to see him—"

"But," burst in Polly, "she did cycle over to Grangemoor. Isn't that where we saw her, only yesterday, at midday in the village shop?"

"In the shop, but not in the school," rejoined Jack. "And that again is funny—eh? Gosh, it's a bit mysterious, so it is, boys!" He generally called his companions boys when excited, even if they were girls! "That about the currency note!"

"She must have got it from Dr. Trouncer," insisted Polly. "At least, it looks like it."

"Then what does it mean?" Jack debated eagerly. "It certainly looks as if she knows old Shudders, but for some reason they don't want it known."

"Have you seen her close up?" Dave asked the girls.

"We have, as it happens," nodded Polly. "She was having tea at the creamery when we were at a table close by."

"Then, what did you think of her—by her looks?"

"Oh, she looks all right, in a way!"

"Truthful and all that?"

Polly shrugged.

"Why I ask," said Dave; "did she look the sort who could tell a made-up yarn about being down here for her health?"

"If so," said Jack, "that story may be all bunk, and she may be in Barncombe only because

Dr. Trouncer is at Grangemoor! Gee, boys, I've a hunch! It begins to look as if—"

"Ssh!" gestured Polly. And then, in a warning whisper: "Look out; she's coming back!"

Gated!

ETTA HARGROVE, that Fourth Form girl to whom the captaincy had been given for the time being, on account of the headmistress' annoyance with Betty Barton, was looking rather unhappy.

This was because, a minute since, she had been given something to do that represented a disagreeable task for a girl of her nature.

She had to find Betty and tell her things that boded more unpleasantness. And Etta wanted nothing so much as to see Betty at the end of the whole trouble and restored to her again.

So it was with a rather distressed expression that the temporary captain had come out of the schoolhouse to go across to Betty—at present enjoying a game with some of her schoolmates.

"Er—Betty!"

"Oh, want me, Etta?"

"Yes. Spare a moment?"

Up ran the deposed captain, leaving the rest to go on with the game without her. Betty and Etta were always good friends, and Etta had never wanted the captaincy—had only had it thrust upon her!

"I say, Betty, I've just been told by Miss Somerfield, that Dr. Trouncer, from Grangemoor, is here!"

"I know he is," nodded Betty. "Saw him turn up just now. That's his car, isn't it, over there?"

"And now," Etta pursued, "it seems that Miss Somerfield will want you and the rest who were mixed up in last week-end's business presently. As soon as Dr. Trouncer has had tea and the talk is finished. But I don't see Polly," remarked Etta, glancing around. "Or Judy."

"No."

"They're not out to games? Up in the studies, are they?"

"Why, no," said Betty, a little uncomfortably. "They've both gone out."

"By themselves?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"Oh dear!" deplored Etta. "Just as it would happen, of course. Well, they ought to be found, Betty. By the way, Miss Somerfield spoke, I—er—you know how it is! Never do for her to—"

"But they had the perfect right to go out, Etta," Betty smiled.

"Oh, yes! Still, Betty, I think you ought to try and find them! It may save a lot of bother. Will you go off and get hold of them as quickly as possible? You must have some idea where they are to be found. They always tell you everything. So do, for their sakes, Betty."

Etta turned away, after saying this most earnestly, and there was Betty, looking very perplexed.

But her mind worked rapidly. She instantly reached the conclusion that this unexpected development absolved her from the promise not



"I see you've managed to get us some food," Jack Linton greeted the girls. "Splendid!" But the boys little knew what difficulty Polly and Judy had undergone to get the parcels to them!

to go after Polly and Judy. If only for their own sakes as Etta had said, they must be found if possible. But that was not all.

Betty was realising, just as quickly, that Polly and Judy might be doing something in connection with the revolt at Grangemoor, which they never would have undertaken if they had known that Dr. Trouncer would be in this district this evening. There was no knowing for certain; but perhaps it was so, and in that case—

"Girls, I've got to be off!"

That was Betty's sudden, apologising cry to those with whom she had been getting hockey "prancer," as she ran to get her bicycle.

As to which way to go in quest of her two chums, Betty was not in the slightest doubt. Barncombe! Polly and Judy had cycled into the town—of course they had. Bearing in mind that both girls had each a brother now on "siege rations," what more natural than that they were planning to obtain supplies, in the hope of getting them to Jack, Dave, and the rest of the boys by some means or other at the first opportunity!

Betty was not quite correct; but she was very near the mark! She pedalled along the road to Barncombe at top speed, fully expecting to meet her two chums coming back from the town, when she would tell them to hurry up. And if the two bicycles were loaded to a suspiciously great extent then the girls had better dump the stuff somewhere for the time being.

"Otherwise," ran Betty's mind, as she whizzed along on her machine, "they may run bang into Dr. Trouncer, when they have tons of eatables with them—and he'll guess! Of course he will!"

Whenever the road was straight enough for her to see well ahead, Betty was eagerly on the lookout; but she never saw her chums coming.

Whirr, whirr, whirr!

On she raced, and soon there was the last mile between herself and the brown-tiled roofs of quaint old Barncombe. A straight mile it was, and still she could see no Morcovians either coming her way, or even riding ahead of her, for that matter. The road was deserted, except for some young lady on a bicycle—not in Morcove attire, and so she was of no account.

Yes, she was, though! It was Betty's surprise, as they passed each other a couple of minutes later, to recognise this young lady. Elsie Jackson—for so Morcove knew her name to be. Elsie Jackson—the girl of whom Polly and Judy had had strange things to say concerning an incident in Grangemoor village yesterday.

Betty's interest in the girl made her look back after they had skimmed by each other on the road—just near some corn stacks. The girl had passed Betty as a stranger, and yet—she was looking back, too, now. It might mean nothing; on the other hand, Betty felt that a girl might have smiled and nodded in passing. Why shouldn't she? She had visited Morcove School; had been shown all over it by Cora Grandways, with whom she was acquainted.

"And now she is on her way to Morcove again," Betty commented to herself. "Does she know that Dr. Trouncer is there, I wonder? I can't help thinking of what Polly and Judy told me about that currency note in the Grangemoor shop. But I must push on. I want to find those girls."

And those girls, if Betty could only have known, were even then hiding behind the corn ricks which she had just whizzed past!

"That was Betty, boys!"

"Go hon!" Polly said with mock disbelief.

Jack and Polly, with Judy and Dave, were still sheltering among the ricks.

"And that was that Elsie Jackson again," Polly continued. "Tell me what that means, Jack, and you'll be doing some good."

He nodded, beginning to look as serious as any of them.

"Waiting about?" he queried. "Looks rather like it, don't you think?"

"That's the third time she's been by," said Judy softly. "First time she was riding towards Morcove, then she came back, riding towards the town; now she's gone by again, riding towards the school once more."

"Hanging about for someone," said Dave tersely. "Must be."

"Yep," nodded Jack. "And just when Dr. Trouncer happens to be at Morcove School, too. Gee, boys, there's something in it. He's coming back this way in the car—"

He broke off, noticing that Polly was looking deep in thought.

"Well, Polly-wolly?"

"I'm just wondering about Betty," came the slow response. "Surely she hasn't come out in search of us, after all? She promised not to follow Judy and me. But she went by alone, and—somehow she seemed to be in a desperate hurry. But a promise from Betty is—a promise!"

Judy confirmed this by a nod, and then stepped to where her and Polly's bicycles had been standing amidst the shelter of the ricks.

"Shall we get away, Polly?"

"I suppose so!" sighed Polly. "Ugh, but how I wish— But it's no good wishing! Any rate, Jack, you've got our telegraphic address? 'First Aid, Morcove'!"

"And if I send you a tallywag, in cipher,

you'll know the code, won't you?" he grinned back. "Love to auntie" means rush up more supplies. Gosh, how I am enjoying this rebellion. See Dave and me after dark, presently, creeping through the enemy lines, and all the boys in the jolly old tower—"

"I wish we could see you!" Polly sighed again. "Jack, you must have all the money I've got, in case—"

"Nunno," he dissented gaily. "You keep that, Polly, in case we chaps can't do any more shopping, see? You'll get a most urgent message yet, maybe. 'Fist Aid, Morcove, stop, love to auntie, stop'!"

"Or will the next we hear be that you've all surrendered?" Polly teased him. "And are going to be expelled? Caned first, of course, then expelled!"

"Hear that, Dave? But he's saying good-bye to Judy. I tell you, Polly, we don't care a hoot, any of us; it's to be No Surrender for as long as Old Shudders is in charge. So good-bye, Polly-wolly, and wish us luck."

"The very best," she said with smiling earnestness. "And if you do have to send 'love to auntie,' it will mean this same place?"

"That's the idea. All this loose straw lying about—just right for covering up the pork and beans, anything!"

Which said, he drew himself up very stiffly to salute his sister—in virtue of his rank as O.C. Fenwick Filibusters.

"Good-bye, colonel," the madcap answered the very military-like salute. "And don't forget to mention me in dispatches!"

Twenty minutes later both Morcovians were back at school. At least half a dozen other girls at once ran up with cries that could only be considered ominous.

"Polly! Judy! Hurry along to the headmistress!"

"Yes, bekas—"

"You've been wanted, you two, this last quarter of an hour! Didn't Betty find you? Didn't she see you and tell you?"

So that was why Betty had gone speeding by on the Barncombe road! Now Polly and Judy could understand. Nor were they in any doubts as to why they were to attend at the headmistress' room without delay.

They had seen a certain car standing near the porch. Dr. Trouncer's!

"Do I look all right?" Polly asked Judy as they approached Miss Somerfield's sanctum.

The madcap gave a few smoothing touches to her hair, at the same time drawing steady breathing. She and Judy met each other's eyes when they were outside the door, and they couldn't tap for the moment; laughter seized them.

Dr. Trouncer was with Miss Somerfield—they could hear him booming away. And they were recalling vividly the circumstances in which they had last encountered that alleged gentleman.

At last they straightened their faces and gave a tap.

"Come in! Yes, it is—the girls I sent for," Miss Somerfield remarked to Grangemoor's temporary Head, the moment Polly and Judy walked in. "You have been a long time reporting!"

"We've only just had the message, Miss Somerfield," Polly explained most demurely whilst she stood elbow to elbow with Judy.

Dr. Trouncer had already glowered upon them each in turn. Now he gave his terrible throat-clearing cough and began:

"Ha, yes, these are the girls I mean; these are the particular two, Miss Somerfield! And now I can point out the one whose offence was disgracefully heinous. This one!" he cried, reaching a great hand to Polly's shoulder as if he would like to take her into custody. "This is the girl whose punishment I demand!"

"Polly Linton," said Miss Somerfield, very solemnly, "what is this that I have only now heard, in connection with last week-end? Is it right that when you were at Grangemoor School, you stole Dr. Trouncer's canes?"

Polly looked as if she were about to giggle.

"Don't laugh!"

"N-no-o, Miss Somerfield, but—" Polly's hand passed across a twitching mouth. "I—"

"Don't giggle, Polly! It is true!"

"My good woman!" flamed out Dr. Trouncer. "Haven't I said the girl owned up to doing it, in front of my whole school? But I needed to see the culprit again to recognise her. That is the girl—the boy Linton's sister!"

"Words cannot express my regret," sighed Miss Somerfield. "It so happens that this girl's brother—he has always been—"

"An outrageous young monkey, madam; a boy who should be flogged, and flog him I will the moment I lay hands upon him! The ringleader, the instigator—"

"Not that, sir," protested Polly. And he barked at her:

"Wha-a-at!"

"My brother has never been the instigator, for I know what the word means," said Morcove's madcap fearlessly. She turned to Miss Somerfield. "Please let me say! The boys simply had to do something—"

"Polly, I cannot listen to you," she was cut short with quiet firmness. "You know I am the last one to fail to make allowance for youthful-ness. But whilst this strife continues at Grangemoor School, I must form my judgment upon what I am told by Dr. Trouncer."

"One moment, though," Dr. Trouncer said as stormily as ever. "I have another complaint to make about these two girls. They are the pair who bought food in the village with which to supply the young rebels!"

Miss Somerfield's brows went up in shocked surprise.

"I know it!" he insisted sharply. "They went to a certain shop in the village, returned with their purchases, and supplied the boys who had shut themselves up in the water-tower! They may attempt to deny it, but—"

"We don't deny it," said Polly and Judy together.

"Then, girls," exclaimed Miss Somerfield, "I am all the more annoyed. Rest assured, Dr. Trouncer, that will be taken into account as well."

"Right!" he said. "Then I will go now, for I—"

He said no more, but looked at his watch as if he had another engagement.

"Good-bye," said Morcove's headmistress, after she had touched the bell-press to summon a maid.

"And I sincerely hope that you will not altogether disregard any opinions that I have expressed during this interview. After all, Dr. Trouncer, I, too, have had experience—a lifelong experience—"

"Not with boys!" he interjected.

"Girls will be girls, just the same as boys will be boys. Ellen, show Dr. Trouncer out."

There was formal politeness in this. Polly and Judy could tell that their headmistress had

formed no high opinion of Grangemoor's new Head; but they did not expect this to save them. And it was just as well they didn't.

The protracted silence which ensued, after Dr. Trouncer's departure, gave warning of the line that Miss Somerfield was going to take.

"I cannot excuse you girls," she broke out at last. "My first and last duty is to see that Morcove must not be involved in the trouble prevailing at Grangemoor. When I made allowance for your each having a brother at that school, I did not know that you had played such an active part in the revolt. You must be punished; as a warning to Morcove School. You will be under orders, until further notice, to have tea only at the school tables, and to report to your captain at five o'clock each afternoon. That will ensure your movements being accounted for. There must be no going beyond bounds. The captain will be answerable for your observance of these necessary limitations."

Judy was standing steady and calm-faced; but Polly seemed to be all a-quiver, like a colt ready to get the bit between its teeth. Her lips parted to speak; but there came a silencing gesture from Miss Somerfield.

"No, Polly; I will not allow one word! Both of you—go!"

And so, in silence, they passed out.

"GOODNESS! OH, BLOW and bother! Nice thing, Judy!"

"It is—unfortunate."

"Maddening!" stamped Polly. "Ugh, that brute of a Trouncer-man! I could—I could trounce him! The mean sneak, to come here just to complain—against us. His paltry revenge—despicable!"

"He said he would," murmured Judy in a tone of scorn.

"Phew, I feel I can't breathe!" fumed Polly, and they walked on out of the ground-floor passage, which served Miss Somerfield's private room, and finally reached the open air.

"Gated!" Polly burst out again, then. "Tea at the school-tables—and we know what that means! Oh, hang and dash, I can't stand for it—I won't! Fancy having to report to Etta at five o'clock each afternoon! Just the time when we're likely to want to—to—"

"That's just why it's being done," Judy smiled mirthlessly. "It does come hard, I admit. When, any day now, Dave and Jack may want our help once more."

"Hard? It's beastly hard!" stamped Polly. "And—"

She paused, looking very fierce.

"I don't know about you, Judy; you must do as you think fit. But I— You know what I am; I simply can't be expected to stand for it all! Not when— Oh, I'm fed up!" she finished gloomily.

"Anyhow," said Judy comfortingly, "we have been lucky to see the boys just before it happened. There was nothing more to be done by us for the present, and so—what about a game, Polly? There are the others over there—"

"Don't want a game! Give me a hockey-stick and I shall hit someone," Polly said wildly. "How I wish I could hit that Trouncer outsider. Headmaster of Grangemoor! He isn't fit to clean the boys' boots for them—no, he isn't. And next time I shall tell him so."

"I shall go across and join Pam and the rest at a game," said Judy with tactful composure. "Are you sure you won't come, too, Polly?"

"Oh, all right! But it's a shame, all the same!"

BETTY BARTON was in the heart of Barncombe town, still looking for Polly and Judy!

"I think I shall give up now," she said to herself. "Might just as well! I could never get them back to Morcove in time, even if I did meet them. Dr. Trouncer will have got tired of waiting—and a good job, too, come to that!"

A wearying business it had been, cycling through the maze of by-streets, with an eager glance for every little shop where provisions might be had. Mild, spring-like weather had set in, and some of those back-streets, all so narrow, had seemed very close and airless. So it was a relief to Betty, presently, to ride out on to the open road leading back to Morcove.

Quite a number of her schoolmates did she encounter, just outside the town, although not one of them was an intimate friend. They were scholars who had set out after a leisurely tea, and thus they were all getting to the town about the same time—almost in one big drove.

Then Betty seemed to have the open road to herself, and she could pedal along without her thoughts being interrupted by the need to exchange gay remarks in passing.

Polly and Judy were anxious—worried—about their brothers, Betty was thinking. The great bar-out at Grangemoor had its comic elements, and both girls had enjoyed much laughter on that account. At the same time—

"They're wondering," ran Betty's mind as she slowly pedalled along, "how things are going now over at Grangemoor. Pity their school is so far away from ours! And yet, just as well perhaps!"

If it had been within walking distance—the temptation to Polly and Judy, then! There were all those boys shut up in the water tower, and firmly resolved not to come out until the tyrant's rule was ended! They had burnt their boats, and it would not be Jack Linton & Co. to start wishing they hadn't!

"I know them so well," thought Betty. "Such a splendid lot they are, and best of luck to them, I say. For that Dr. Trouncer is an utter brute; a man who never should have—"

Hallo, though this car standing untended at the roadside—wasn't it the very car in which Dr. Trouncer had arrived at Morcove, an hour or more ago?

It was!
Even so, Betty might not have checked in her return ride to Morcove School, only she saw something else at the roadside, close to the car, and that was a girl's bicycle.

Elsie Jackson's?
Inevitably that idea flashed into Betty's mind. She had seen the girl cycling along this road a little while ago, and some mysterious connection between Grangemoor's new Head and that girl had been established in the last day or two. What more likely, then, that they had met—either by accident or by appointment—and were now in talk.

There was the car and there the bicycle! Nothing gone wrong with either; no sign of any accident involving the two vehicles. Dr. Trouncer had simply drawn into the side of the road to alight and leave the car, and Elsie Jackson—if she it was—had got down from her machine at the same spot.

Betty braked up quietly and, leaving her

saddle, wheeled her machine off the road, to lay it upon the grass. Then she gazed around.

She noticed instantly that land on the other side of the road held a cluster of corn-ricks. They certainly offered ample shelter for persons wishing to avoid being seen talking together. Were they there, then, amongst the closely grouped ricks?

"It's my belief," pondered Betty, still keeping to the opposite side of the road from the ricks, "they have met here by appointment. Dr. Trouncer had two reasons for coming over to Morcove to-day. To see Miss Somerfield—and then to meet this Jackson girl for a talk. Goodness, I wonder if she is sort of playing spy for him in this district—close to our school! If so, that would account for—"

As sharply as that Betty had to end her line of thought, for a sound had reached her—a very disconcerting sound from across the road.

Down to ground she went—on all fours instantly, with a bush for shelter. For she knew that Dr. Trouncer and the girl were sauntering into the open, the semi-secret interview finished. It was the headmaster's voice—too rough to be reduced to a guarded whisper—that had reached Betty, warning her just in time.

Luckily her bicycle, lying in the grass, was well concealed. So she hoped that neither man nor girl would suspect that she herself was here. But where was the hope of finding out more about them both? They had said all that there had been to say to each other; now Dr. Trouncer was returning to his car and the girl to her bicycle.

"Good-bye then, once again, dad."

"Good-bye, Myra."

A door of the car slammed shut. The starter whirred, and next moment Dr. Trouncer was driving off.

He went roaring away, with a great cloud from the exhaust; and then the girl set her bicycle facing for Barncombe, mounted gracefully, and rode off slowly.

"PHEW!" gasped Betty.

For it had been granted her, by a stroke of fortune, to hear at least those remarks at parting: "Good-bye, dad!" and "Good-bye, Myra!"

He was her father; and she—she was no "Elsie Jackson" by rights! That was only an assumed name. He had called her "Myra."

"It's a lick, this," Betty said, out loud to herself, so excited she felt. "Father and daughter, and if she has imposed upon Morcove by calling herself 'Elsie Jackson,' it's certain that he also has imposed upon Grangemoor."

And a few moments later:

"Why, the bounder must be an utter fraud—must be. And Grangemoor hasn't the least suspicion."

She set off for Morcove on her bicycle, knowing that "Elsie Jackson" had gone in the opposite direction. In spite of the sheer agitation and excitement which had come upon Betty, one thing could induce a smile as she sped along. She was picturing the face of Polly Linton, when the moment came for that chum along with others to be told the latest.

The face of Polly Linton, when Betty next beheld it, was a glum one, and worse than glum. The walls of dear old Study 12 were enclosing Polly and others once more; the hour for prep. was at hand, and Polly—well, she was in no madaep mood.

"So we missed each other?" was Betty's opening remark, as she heeled the door shut behind her after whisking in. "I expect you know by now; I was looking for you, Polly. Judy as well. But that needn't make you look like that, Polly."

"That doesn't make me look like this," the madcap scowled. "It's not that, Betty."

"No, bekas—"

"Grrrr!"

Polly rounded upon Naomer for butting in. "What ze diggings; I like zat! Just bekas—"

Bang! Thump!

But that was not Polly's sudden onslaught upon the dusky one. It was only Polly's slamming books about and upsetting a chair as she jumped up from the study table.

"Rotten shame!"

"What is, Polly?"

"I'm gated—Judy, too. Got to account for every single moment out of school, you might say. Ugh! Oh, goodness, I'm—"

"What about a snack, Polly? Bekas—"

"I'm fed up. There are Jack and Dave, as you know, fighting it out over there at Grange-moor, and at any moment they made need our help. Help that we girls could give—at least, that Judy and I could give. But now—"

Again Polly took up a dictionary, only to throw it down again.

"Um!" said Betty sympathetically. "Rough luck, certainly. Jolly hard lines. But now listen to something that should cheer you up. It's thrilling!"

"What is—what?" they all clamoured, for Betty, they now guessed, was going to sink her voice to a most confidential whisper.

"Girls, you know that Jackson girl—Elsie Jackson, as she calls herself? Well, I've heard Dr. Trouncer call her 'Myra'!"

Great sensation in Study 12.

"What's more," Betty spoke on impressively, "I've heard her call him dad."

"You have!" gasped Polly.

"Bai Jove!"

"Bekas, what ze diggings—"

"Father and daughter?" whispered Judy tensely. "And yet Dr. Trouncer calls himself a bachelor. How can he be Dr. Trouncer—"

"My belief," said Betty, "he isn't. And that, girls, explains the whole thing."

"Goodness!" said Polly.

"Phew!"

"And likewise," smiled Betty.

"Bekas—"

"You see?" Betty submitted, still smiling. "The hardest thing in the world has been, hasn't it, to understand how on earth Dr. Halden, when he crooked up at Grange-moor, could plead for a monster like that to be given the job. But if this Dr. Trouncer that we know isn't the real one—"

"Then he's a fraud!" cried Polly.

"Then he's a fraud," nodded Betty. "But don't shout it yet. Remember, girls, that we're going entirely by what I happened to hear

them say to each other. I had no one with me, and so—well, there you are!"

Polly took one of her furious turns about the room.

"You mean we shall want more than that before we can go ahead and show the horrid fraud up?" If only we can do something like that. Oh, she cried, "think what it will mean to Jack and Dave and all those boys! They'll come off, after all, with colours flying. It will be said—"

"Good job zey ead go on ze strike, yes. Bekas, eef he is ze swindler, zen what right has he to talk of caning zem. But," Naomer jabbered on, "how about food to keep ze boys going? Bekas, zey have good appetites, don't forget!"

Polly met Judy's eyes then across the study and suddenly Judy burst out laughing. By contrast Polly merely smiled her grimmest.

"Don't you worry your noddle about food for the troops, Naomer," said the madcap. "They've got all they want."

"How do you know?"

"For the simple reason that Judy and I have seen Jack and Dave since tea and seen the loads of stuff that they have been buying during the day. Enough stuff," Polly added triumphantly, "to keep even an army of Naomers going for a week, I would say!"

"Hooray!" Betty cheered softly. "They'll be able to hold out then."

"For days and days!"

"Gorjus!" capered Naomer. "Stuff to give 'em! Hip, hip! Bekas, eef they can do that, and eef we can only do ze rest, what ze diggings, we shall have old Shudders beaten to ze frazzle. Ooo, if only we can win!"

"No 'if' about it," said Polly flatly. "We shall win all along the line. I say it, even though I am gated, and so is Judy, and Betty



"Do you know where Polly and Judy are?" asked Etta Hargrove, the new Form captain. Betty Barton shook her head. She had promised her chums not to follow them, and yet she must—for they were wanted by the headmistress herself!

has to be careful or she'll never get back the captaincy."

"As if I bother about that," said Betty blithely. "But I suppose you know the time, girls, and so what about a spot of work?"

"Ze snack first, no!" Naomer changed her mind to the great astonishment of her chums. "Bekas, you never know. I zink we had better keep everyzink zere is in ze cupboard, in case zey do run short at Grangemoor. I don't mind eef I have to stave for ze sake of ze side we are on."

"Naomer," said Polly. "You can be sweet sometimes, you know."

And nobody was better pleased to hear that said than was that lovable imp herself.

Defying Orders!

"**W**HAT about it, Dave? Do you think we might?"

No answer from Dave Cardew.

Never the one, he, to say a word unless he was sure.

Dark night was upon this wide valley between ranges of rocky hills, where Grangemoor School reared its stately buildings.

The two boys had dismounted from their bicycles a few hundred yards back from where they now stood shoulder to shoulder, very alert in the darkness.

Their machines they had left back there in between some bushes; but all the provender acquired during the day was with the boys at this moment.

"Can't make out why our signal has not been answered," breathed Jack Linton. "His something happened to the fellows, Dave?"

"One of us go on to find out; the other stay," came Dave's wise suggestion. "Not good enough for both of us to go any further with the stuff."

Jack nodded.

"Not on your life it isn't," he agreed softly. "We can't tell who's about in this darkness. Still, I'll try just once again with the signal."

"Bit risky, Jack, trying too often. Still, just once more."

So Jack framed his lips with both hands and enlivened the night silence with the cry of an owl, an almost perfect imitation of the cry.

Then the two boys, shoulder to shoulder amongst some trees skirting the road, peered harder than ever at the water-tower, whose lofty walls loomed blackly in the darkness.

Jack and Dave were watching for a glimmer of light to wink at them, twice, from an upper window of the tower. It had been arranged that such a gleam should be the answering signal, if all was well for the two boys to come on, so far as those in the tower could tell.

But no double glimmer of light came.

And yet surely all the fellow rebels of Jack and Dave who had been in the tower this time last night were still there.

"Gosh," said Jack under his breath, "this is rotten. Looks as if there's danger, old lad. They don't want us to come on."

They turned to each other, Jack's eyes asking in the darkness: "What about it?" And again Dave preferred to take time before speaking.

"I've a hunch that old Shudders has posted the serj and a few others at points all round the tower," muttered Jack. "We banked on his leaving us alone to get so fed-up that we'd have to give in."

"We can't stay here all night," said Dave

softly. "Got to know; got to do something. I'll go."

"No, I'll go, Dave."

"It's up to me, I guess. The chaps will miss you more than they'll miss me. And it's quite likely the one who goes is bound to be caught."

A trap.

"Yep."

"But my being caught, Jack, may make it all right for you afterwards."

"Gosh, I get you! Old Shudders and any others will likely think there was only one chap to catch. Look here, though, Dave, I don't like the idea. But best o' luck then, lad. If the worst happens give 'em gyp!"

Dave did not answer, and his boyish figure disappeared into the darkness, and in a few moments he had the nightbound road to cross. That complete exposure of himself to possible enemy "scouts" he performed quite calmly. If he was to be caught, he was to be caught, and that was all there was to it. Something had to be done, and his own personal fate did not matter, not matter.

Nothing happened. He reached the boundary-hedge and quickly found a weak spot where, by going on all fours, he could crawl through.

In spite of extreme caution he had to make a little noise, and that left him listening intently.

Not a sound of danger could his straining ears detect, however, nor could his peering eyes see danger.

Strange. Far different from what he had expected, this. He was in bounds now, with open grassland to right and left and in front of him, and yet he was being allowed to go forward.

Was there no one, then, after all, who had been waiting to swoop? That seemed too good to be true.

He walked on quickly, looking about at every step, to right and left and behind, as well as straight ahead to the water-tower. No, there really was not a sign of danger yet. Now anybody could come rushing at him; but he seemed to have the field to himself. And the tower was not fifty paces from him.

One possible danger remained, it seemed to him, to be reckoned with. Somebody hiding behind the tower itself.

He had to chance that, however. He was going on until he reached the tower and either fell into enemy hands or was able to get word with some of his fellow rebels.

That was Dave's resolute, fearless intention; but suddenly he got a shock. He was within a few paces of the tower's door—and it was wide open.

Wide open!

Now indeed a cold thrill as of horror went through him. His brain almost reeled as the dismaying fact crashed upon it. The tower was empty.

Stackstill he stood, staring at the open doorway.

All the fellow rebels whom he and Jack had left there in the tower at break of day—they were gone.

Gone whither? Gone why?

It was but a moment before shocked surprise had given way in Dave's mind to the tragic conviction. The boys were simply back in their own schoolhouse. The rebellion, so far as they were concerned, was at an end.

For some reason or other the whole thing had either fizzled out or come to grief whilst he and Dave were away getting in stores.

Anxiety fell upon serious Dave. He had approved the great bar-out. So now Dave could only grieve that Fairplay had lost the day, after all.

At last he went to the black-dark doorway of the tower. He went a few paces beyond the threshold. Deserted. A whisper into the darkness: "Anyone here?" brought no response.

Gone, all of them.

He returned to the open air; walked back by the way he had come, still unchallenged. More and more evident it was becoming; Dr. Trouncer had his methods. They were methods that must have succeeded with the main body of rebels. Those boys were all back in the schoolhouse to-night, and if he liked to flog them unmercifully he would do so.

What was that? Sounds of a sudden, alarming sounds, not close at hand, but coming from the other side of the road.

Dave's heart was leaping during the moment that he stood to listen. Then he rushed for the boundary-hedge, knowing what he had to do, for he knew full well what was happening. His chum Jack was the one upon whom the enemy had swooped.

All the noise was coming from there, just across the road, where Jack had agreed to lie low in charge of the rations. Bushes were rustling and dry sticks were cracking underfoot, and there were voices, deep-throated utterances such as come during a scuffle.

Dave, dashing to his chum's aid, had a vision of what was taking place there on the fringe of the roadside woodland. Jack, surrounded, putting up a single-handed fight, although he knew he was overwhelmed.

Crash through the hedge went Dave. Bursting clear of the scratching twigs he darted across the road. As he did so somebody came rushing out at him from the fringe of the same wood where the melee had started. Dave thought it must be somebody whom he would have to tackle, and his hands clenched themselves. Then he realised that it was Jack himself.

"Gosh, come on, Dave!" panted Jack, all wild-looking and breathless. "This way!"

They instantly spouted together along the dark roads, whilst shots of anger and confusion came from the woodland. "The bikes," jerked out Jack. "We must get away—anywhere; No use—the tower."

"No," said Dave. "Chaps all gone."

"I know! Oh, heck, it's a stumer! Still, you and I—"

"That's it."

They ran on tip-toe; ran as swift as hunted hinds for a few hundred yards down the road, encountering no one. Dave was never out of the breath; but Jack was at his last gasp at the finish. He had been more than half-exhausted by a most desperate tussle before this lightning retreat began.

"Anyhow—that's that," was his panted com-



Dr. Trouncer pointed at headstrong Polly. "This is the girl whose behaviour was particularly heinous!" he cried. "And I demand that she shall be punished—heavily!"

ment on their successful flight, when at last they pulled up.

No one was coming after them, or they must have known. The road here had open land on either side, and both boys were keeping a sharp look-out in the darkness.

What they did hear, whilst pausing to listen, was a lot of laughter from the woodland. The galling meaning of it was not lost upon Jack and Dave. Their eyes met in bitter disappointment.

"Rennard and a few of his sort," Jack panted fiercely. "Oh, it's a great joke to them, now they've got all that grub. Just bark at them. But they're welcome to it, since it's all U.P. over there at the tower."

Dave had nothing to say. The hubbub in the wood was continuing. Jokes were being made that caused roars of laughter, and apparently there was some larking about with the captured rations.

"I gave one or two of them something to go on with anyhow," said Jack grimly. He sucked a knuckle. "Believe it was Rennard's teeth cut me there—hope so, anyway!"

"Our bikes?" said Dave.

"That's the idea, old lad. They're all right still, and nice and handy. Say, Dave, you know how it happened?"

"They were lying up in the wood when we got there? They let me get away before they made a move?"

They did just that," Jack nodded disgustedly. "Oh, a fine lot to have to own as schoolmates, they are. But this isn't the end of it yet, old son. You found the tower empty?"

"The chaps had all gone, yes."

"Well, I'm dashed! But I'm never going to believe that they chucked it in, Dave. Those ratters were telling me that the rebellion was all over, so I had better go quietly; but I just hit out—Gosh, how I did lam into some of them."

And Jack suddenly smiled over a rejoicing recollection. "And so I got away. Gee, and I'm glad you came back, Dave. Two's better than one."

"All the time."

"Here, let's get the bikes and push off," said Jack, a moment later. "No good to be done here, Dave. We must get away; never mind where, for the present. We shan't be able to help our fellows by staying. We've got the whole night before us."

As they went the few steps farther along the dark road, to where they could recover the bicycles, they still heard exultant sounds from the woodland. But there was nothing to cause uneasiness.

On the contrary, it seemed to Jack and Dave that Prefect Rennard and his kindred spirits were now moving off from the wood, to return to the school—doubtless to give great account of themselves. Even if they could not claim to have "rounded up" the last of the rebels, at least they had captured all those rations.

"Yes," Jack muttered, as if he were thinking of all this whilst he drew his bicycle clear of screening bushes; "and they'll be saying, what can you and I do, Dave, without any grub, and our money all gone? Well, I could tell 'em!"

Dave gave a nod.

"Come on, boys," Jack said, just as if he had a dozen or twenty companions instead of only one. "For I'll be shot before I turn back and surrender. Surrender be dashed! We'll just wheel our bikes a bit farther, before lighting the lamps, and then—Dave, look out!" he broke off. "Who's here!"

For two dark shapes had risen suddenly, as if from the bottom of a dry ditch.

"A couple more of them," muttered Dave; and he ran his bicycle to the roadside, laying it by in expectation of a fresh "scrap." Nor would another moment have found Jack unprepared for a further scrimmage; but already he was exclaiming excitedly:

"No, it isn't, Dave! Gee, boys, it's all right!"

He had no sooner said it than the shadowy shapes in front were proving what boyish voices they owned.

"Jack? Dave? It's us!" they said together. "Bob Halliday! And Calligan!" burst from Jack joyfully. "Say, this is better! You two chaps, what—"

"St!" warned Dave; and then, looking back over a shoulder:

"Mount!" he urged crisply. "It's someone coming; it may be several."

"Oh, heck!"

Jack set his bicycle straight, whilst Dave rushed to pick up his. Then these two, each with a machine, had two fellow-rebels to think of who had only their legs to carry them.

"What—you coming, you two?" jerked out the Honourable Bob Halliday and "Comrade" Calligan made signs eloquent of a cheerful determination to remain unaptured.

"Up with you then—sharp, sharp!" urged Jack. "Gosh, our lamps are not lighted. Can't be helped."

He was pushing off, with the Honourable Bob ready at the back to find a perch on the step of the back-wheel. Similarly, Comrade Calligan was going to spring up behind Dave, to be taken along by that schoolmate.

"Come on, boys," said Jack, from sheer force of habit. And away they went, four of them to the two machines, along the night-bound road, without a light to guide them!

They had only just got going when they knew

that at least two persons who must have been trying to creep up unheard had changed to a hard run. Footsteps rang heavily upon the well-metalled road.

But Jack and Dave forged along, plugging away at the pedals; the riders behind knew how to hold on steadily; and soon they were all four beyond immediate capture, still whirring on in the darkness, whilst their pursuers gave up the chase and turned to pant their way back to Grangemoor School.

"Whoa, chaps; a spell-o for a bit."

The boys had come a good five miles from Grangemoor, their lamps alight, taking turns at the riding; and so now they were on high moorland country.

"Cheerful spot," said Jack. "Never mind. We'll just get a breather and push on again. And, look here, you chaps," to the Honourable Bob and The Comrade, "now you can tell us all about it, without running into several columns. What happened?"

"What happened was this," said the Honourable Bob, with his inimitable accent. "Some blighter gev the signal, don't you know, and we fell for it."

"Hoot of an owl?" exclaimed Jack savagely. "You mean to say all the chaps mistook it for Dave and me, and showed the glimmer twice—and ended by opening the door, was that it? Oh, heck."

"Know who?" asked Dave.

"Yes, Heldway," growled The Comrade. "Ginger Heldway gave our signal—that's to say, your signal. How he got it, we don't know."

"Jest a guess, most likely," reasoned the Honourable Bob. He was brushing his shoulders with his hands as if a little dust mattered, even at this time of night, and out here on the moor. "The door open, don't you know, it was all over; they jest swammed in, don't you know. In wevs!" That was his way of saying "waves."

Jack stopped biting a thumb.

"How I wish now we'd left the tower-door alone when the key was turned upon us on the outside, last Saturday. But they left the key in the lock, and we fetched it in and locked it on the inside. Should have been useful, but wasn't—rotten luck. And wait till I get hold of Ginger Heldway. Just let him wait, boys!"

"How about you two chaps?" Dave asked.

"Oh, quiet simple!" was the bland response. "When it was quiet clear that we were wheeled, don't you know, Calli and I jest hed tamed to drop out of a window."

"Splendid!" said Jack. "You two chaps, anyhow, are the goods. You didn't break your necks, either!"

"Think it a pety?" returned the Honourable Bob suavely. "Beastly bore it mest be to you and Dev, of course, heving us with you now, and all that, don't you know: But it's awfully daicent—"

"Sez you!" Jack cut short the charming apologetic voice. "Boys, it's all right; we four, anyhow, will see it through. May old Shudders choke over his next meal. Talking of which—one of you like an apple?"

He produced several apples from his coat pockets.

"All that's left of the siege rations," he commented glumly. "After spending all that money in Barncombe, and fagging the stuff miles, not to mention cakes and things that Polly and Judy scrounged for us. Um! It's a life, boys!"

"Oh, well," said Comrade Calligan gruffly; "under a new social system, with adequate—"

"I know, old son, but this is hardly the time for that guff," demurred Jack, pleasantly. "We've got to get on. Gosh," as he returned the apples to his pocket, "my coat has got a tear in it, not half. Must get Polly to mend that."

And he added gaily:

"Come on, boys, another ten miles and we'll be at Morcove, where Dave and I know of caves, all complete with running water, don't we, Dave old lad? It's us for the Primitive Cave Man stunt now, boys. I've a hunch that we'll not lose flesh on it, either. How d'you fancy becoming a Gave Dweller, Calli? Chance for you at last to institute the new social order—with safeguards! Apples for brekker in the morning, and after that—just what fortune is pleased to provide."

"Or the girls," amended Dave.

Jack chuckled along with the others.

"Well," he said, "I've called my sister Polly and her chums some names in my time, but never again!"

For Her Brother's Sake!

POLLY LINTON stood just clear of the porch of Morcove's schoolhouse, screwing up her eyes to the sunshine.

"Lovely morning, Polly!"

She turned round.

"Rather," she said to Betty Barton, who had just whisked into the open. "And school in half an hour."

"But a halfer this afternoon, dear child."

"Ooom! All right for those who are not gated, and can have tea in study, and—and—Ugh, I'm going—"

"Whoa! Not going to run away, I hope, Polly?"

"Not yet," the madcap mock-seriously answered her chum's joking remark. "Must work off this mod though!"

Betty put herself in step with the disgruntled one, and they sauntered along the outskirts of the games field, where a good many girls were at play.

"We might have brought out our hockey-sticks, Polly, just to keep our hand in."

"Enough hockey in store for me," grimaced gated Polly. "Ugh, I do feel— And can you wonder!"

"What I wonder," responded Betty, more seriously, "is how things are with the Grangemoor rebels this morning? Flag still flying, let's hope."

"They're all right," said the madcap, with confidence. "Boys always do come off all right. They'll have enjoyed a crashing brekker by now. They'll spend the morning singing and cheering; they'll have all the fun in the world—trust them! While we—I, at least!"

"You shouldn't have 'participated,' as Miss Somerfield calls it!"

"Then I shouldn't be Jack's sister, that's all. Let's be logical. But it doesn't matter about me a scrap," Polly added grimly. "It's you, Betty—you should never have done what you did, to get Judy and me leave to go over to Grangemoor that day."

"Then," grinned Betty, "I shouldn't have been your chum. As you say, let's be logical! Where are we going, Polly?"

"I don't know—anywhere!"

"Why not turn back and find the others—"

"No! I'm not in the mood for Naomer and Paula or any of them!"

Betty could tell, the sunshine of her happy nature would burst at any moment.

Flick!

"What what that, Polly?" exclaimed Betty, stopping dead. "Did you see? Something sort of flashed across— Oh!" as Polly excitedly pounced to pick the "something" up. "A folded paper? Polly—"

"Sa!"

The madcap's first action was to hold the picked-up note out of sight in a clenched hand, whilst she glanced in all directions very warily. This made Betty glance about anxiously; but it was all right. They were quite by themselves on the shady, winding walk that ran close, just here, to the boundary-hedge.

What is it, Polly? Came over the hedge, did it?"

"Must have done," whispered back the madcap excitedly.

She took her first proper look at the folded note. It was not inscribed to anyone on the outside.

"You and I were talking," she said to Betty, "so the person who threw it over must have meant it for one of us. Or I'd be inclined to think it was a note—the Jackson girl, you know—"

"Getting a note to Cora? They're friendly," Betty nodded. "But—have a look—"

"I'm going to."

And Polly's fingers, twitching with excitement, opened out the note. She and Betty became almost heads together as they gave their eyes to what was written—in pencil, in a round, boyish hand:

S.O.S.!

LOVE TO AUNTIE AT THE CAVES.

That was all, and a more incomprehensible message Betty, at any rate, had never seen. But Polly—she was not completely mystified. It was a message that she could at once understand, in part at least.

"Goodness," she gasped. "It's from Jack again!"

"Jack? But—but—?"

"Love to Auntie"—that's the code for 'Rush up Rations.' They're short of food again. But how can they be, after all that Jack and Dave took back yesterday!"

"Jack must be here at Morcove!" whispered Betty, in greater excitement than ever. "Let's see, Polly!"

Instantly they were both getting the best possible view, beyond bounds, that the hedge permitted; but they could obtain no glimpse of Jack or anybody else.

"No," Betty murmured, "he's gone. I suppose he felt it was the most he dare do—just flick over the note to one of us, if the chance occurred. But the rest of the message, Polly?"

"I believe I know," breathed Polly. "'At the caves' is not code. It means simply what it says. Jack is at the caves on the shore!"

"It would account for his being able to slip up here—"

"Oh," Polly gasped, "perhaps he and Dave are both down here at the caves, which means that they were unable to get back to their chums in the tower at Grangemoor School last night! Has everything gone wrong then?"

"All that food which you said they were taking back—"

"Yes, what's happened to that?" wondered Polly frantically. Was it captured by the enemy? Did Jack and Dave only just manage to get away, and so there they are—absolutely on the rocks!"

"Literally," said Betty, remembering the rocks along the shore. "Certainly looks like it, Polly."

"It must be! And here am I—and school in a few minutes—dash!" stamped the headstrong one.

"But I don't care, I'm off—"

"Polly, no!" her chum implored, and held her restrainingly. "Now, now—"

"Betty, I must—I must! If you had a brother—and he and the rest have been in the right, you know. They have! Even if we were not certain that Dr. Trouncer is a fraud, the way he has treated the boys—"

"Yes, I quite agree. Even Miss Somerfield would feel the same if she knew all. But—"

"Let me go to Jack, Betty—do!" Polly entreated desperately. "I can slip out of bounds just here where we are—"

"Polly, listen to me! Don't—don't go and do something that will spoil it all. Very easy do do that, you know," was Betty's impressive advice. "We won't let them down. We'll manage, Polly—all of us together. After school—"

"But then I'm gated! So is Judy!"

"I'm not, Polly, and neither are any of the others."

"Betty, you can't be mixed up in this!"

"I can, and I mean to be. I'm not captain now, and just as well," smiled Betty. "My advice, Polly—and you know I do want to suggest the best thing for all concerned—"

"Oh, you're splendid, Betty; but—"

"Listen, Polly. After school I'll go down with Paula and Naomer. I think those two will be the best—"

"Bekas," broke in a familiar voice, at a little distance away, and then another familiar voice chorried:

"Yes, wather, Naomer; pwecisely!"

"Here they are," whispered Betty to Polly.

"Oom! Ugh, I could— Oh dear! Dash!" the madcap stamped. "But you do as you suggest, Betty, and as for me, I'll—"

She said no more, for Naomer and Paula were approaching, the dusky one in her usual state of capers.

Nothing was disclosed to these two chums at this stage. But Polly sped away to find Judy Cardew and let her know.

It was at "break" that Study 12 held a consultation. In spite of Naomer's irrepressible excitement over the latest development, causing her to make far too many interruptions, useful plans were laid.

Betty, Paula and Naomer were to do a run down to the seashore after morning school, taking with them as much provender as could be managed without attention being attracted. Pam, Helen and Tess were to cycle into Barncombe to buy in further supplies. That left Madge to resort to the music-room, as usual, to create an impression of "nothing doing," and Judy and Polly, in obedience to the gating order, could play games.

The tide was up when the girls got to the foot of the cliff's zig-zag path and they had to go along the shore keeping close to the rocky wall that rose two hundred feet high above their heads.

With relief they saw that no strangers were about. Very seldom, indeed, were there visitors to this section of the rugged, romantic coast; Morcove School quite looked upon it as being part of its own remote world. Gulls screamed along the tumbling waves, jackdaws flapped and cawed about the face of the giant cliffs; but other signs of life there were none.

Until, suddenly, a boyish figure in black jacket and grey-flannel trousers bobbed into view, and the girls knew it to be Jack Linton.

Betty and Paula tried to restrain Naomer, but her gleeful excitement was beyond control. She let out a shrill yell of delight, and then went bounding along the boulder-bestrewn shore with a reckless jollity that her chums could only regard as sheer lunacy.

They started to run to meet Jack; but Naomer reached him and was jabbering away several seconds before they came up.

"Hooray, gorjus, bekas, he has been eggsplain-ing!" Naomer turned to say to Betty and Paula.

"Zey are to be here for ever!"

"Howwows!" said Paula. "Bai Jove—"

"In ze caves—"

"It isn't splendid," dissented Jack himself, lugubriously. "But it's the only thing, boys; I mean, girls, sorry! It's that or surrender, and surrender be blowed!"

"So I should hope," said Betty, her amusement tintured with gravity. "If you and your chums knew what we know now about Dr. Trouncer! We're only waiting for proof! But, goodness, Jack, what on earth has happened?"

"I suppose," he said inquiringly, "you girls haven't got a mouthful of something to eat?"

"Yes!" Naomer fairly yelled. "Bekas—queek, look, here you are!"

"Gosh!" as at least three packages were thrust upon him all at once. "Gee, boys, this is better! And, say, do you mind if I let the other chaps know first. They're keeping to cover in the cave."

"How many?" Betty asked, rather anxiously.

"All of them?"

"Wish there were," grimaced Jack. "But a bit of black treachery has done for all but four of us. Come along, boys—girls, I should say! But where's Polly? Judy—she's not turned up either!"

"No, well!" said Betty, and she let it go at that for the present.

It was going to be a distressing moment when Jack and Dave learned that their respective sisters were—gated.

Jack's anxious look-out for the girls had induced him to come a hundred yards or so along the rocky shore. He now led the three girls towards a cave. It was one that they knew to be the very largest of several caverns which were hereabouts.

"Four of you?" questioned Betty. Dave's one of course?"

"Yes, he's here," grinned Jack. "And I wonder what he'll say when he finds that Judy hasn't turned up. Very likely he'll say nothing. He generally does. I suppose Polly and Judy are coming along later, is that it? Hallo, though—there they are!"

And, to the utter consternation of Betty and her two chums, as they faced about to look, there were Polly and Judy, coming full pelt after them!

For the Boys' Sakes!

"HOWWOWS!" said Paula Creel. But this, and the looks of dismay which she exchanged with Betty, went unnoticed by Jack. It was a time when much was happening. Whilst Polly and Judy were running up at top speed, Dave Cardew was appearing from the dark mouth of the cavern, along with the Honourable Bob Halliday and the Comrade. "Jack!" cried Polly breathlessly, as she reached

him. "Oh, you poor boy! And there are others with you!"

"There are," he said cheerily. "Three of the best. Let me see, any introductions? No—yes! Betty, may I introduce the Hon. Bob Halliday, complete with monocle. And Comrade Calligan, author of that great work: 'The Reaction of World Conflicts Upon Scholastic Life.' He's going to get his hair cut when he gets into Parliament. Boys, this is Betty Barton, the Fourth Form captain."

Betty, the only one needing to be introduced, made a serene correction.

"Ex-captain at present, please. Oh, never mind why, any of you! Er—"

"Ze food, to begin with," was Naomer's practical reminder. "Bekas, you must be starving!"

"An apple each for brekker, gals—"

"They say an apple a day keeps the doctor away," put in Polly gaily.

"Then I jolly well hope that the apples we ate keep Dr. Trouncer away," grimaced Jack.

"But they don't keep hunger away, I can tell you. Never mind! Saved, saved! As for old Shudders—stuff and poof to him!"

Whilst this was being said, Betty had not failed to catch a glance first from Polly and then from Judy. The pair had simply broken bounds—flouted the gating order—and the one looked as unconcerned for herself as the other.

"Is this your cave?" Polly asked promptly.

"Then, Naomer, whilst we others get a talk, you go back a little way and keep watch."

"No, bekas—"

"Here, kid, have this, to keep you company," said Jack, offering a Banbury cake out of one of the packages.

It did the trick. Naomer scampered away then, to act as sentry, and then Paula beamingly suggested that she should take her stand where she could look-out in the opposite direction.

These precautions left Betty, Polly and Judy quite at ease, listening to a full account of all that had led up to the present predicament.

For a very awkward predicament it was, although youthful natures enabled it to be discussed with more or less amusement.

"It's just a question what old Shudders will decide to do about us," Jack summed up at last. "As there are only the four of us still holding out, he may decide to make it known all over the place. I don't think he will myself, but—"

"The risk is there," broke in Polly. "And so don't any of you dream of going into Barncombe, or anywhere else, for food."

"We'll manage that for you," declared Betty. "Pam and others are out now, buying in loads of stuff."

"You hear this, boys?"

The Honourable Bob had paid attention, likewise the Comrade.

"Quiet sperting of you, goals," said the Honourable Bob, pulling down his cuffs. Then he lifted a foot to brush sand from a striped sock. "Hed no idea, don't you know, thet—er—well, and all that, don't you know!"

"What he means to say is," translated Jack, "that when he and Calli bumped into Dave and me last night, they were expecting to have to rough it."

"You don't call this roughing it?" smiled Betty.

"Not a little bit! Gee, it's the life!" declared Jack joyously. "Palm Beach isn't in it. Is it, Calli? But he's watching Paula!"

Comrade Calligan turned round. He certainly had been regarding elegant Paula Creel from a distance.

"What I say is this," said he now, "all that has happened at Grangemoor is another example of the breakdown of existing formulæ. In the ideal state towards which the world is treading, if you understand me, there will be only—"

"Only cave-men like us," nodded Jack; and the Honourable Bob, brushing sand off the other trouser-leg, said:

"Quiet so!"
"I don't know," said Comrade Calligan to the girls, "if you have read Professor Schlossnikel's great book—"

"I'm afraid I haven't," said Polly demurely.

"Or Heinrich Zimmerkumpf—"

"There again," said Polly, "I'm sorry."

"Ah," said Calligan. "Pity. If you had, you'd understand. That friend of yours," he quite surprisingly changed the subject, meaning Paula;

"something about her—her style—"

"You don't approve?"

"Yes, I do."

"Oh!" and they all laughed.

"But," said Polly, "is there anything you boys want apart from food? If so—"

"That's jolly sporting of you!"

"Yes! you goals are mevellous!"

"Oh, quite!" Polly replied modestly. "But let's get on with the business."



"Anyone there!" Dave Cardew called into the blackness of the tower. There was no response. The place was empty; the "rebels" had gone!

were back in the schoolhouse together. With a few minutes to go before dinner they were debating the situation in Study 12 with more or less amusement when in walked Miss-Somerfield!

They'll Not Believe It!

SOMETHING in Miss Somerfield's looks—a very definite sternness—caused each of the girls to give a wondering murmur to herself.

In any case, it had to be a matter out of the ordinary that brought Morcove's headmistress to any of the studies. But here was Miss Somerfield, and she was looking as ominous as all this!

"Girls," she began sternly, "what games have you played to-day?"

"Er—"

"Have you played any at all? My information is that only two of you were on the field after school. You, Polly, and you, Judy; but you did not stay more than a few minutes, I think!"



"I must," said Miss Somerfield sternly. "Betty Barton, for in future it will be closed!"

"No, Miss Somerfield," candour compelled them to say as with one voice.

"Were you in bounds all the time?"

Silence, and a helpless reddening of Polly and Judy's cheeks gave the answer.

Then, it seemed to all the girls, the headmistress looked more inclined to pity than condemn. But her next words did not bear out this fancy.

"I must, it appears, enforce even stricter measures. Very well, until further notice, this study will be closed."

The hearts of the girls fell. Although Study 12 did not own, as its rightful tenants, even a half of that band of chums which the term "Betty & Co." represented, it was the hub of all their activities. And there could be no misunderstanding the headmistress' deeper meaning.

"I must," she said, regretfully. "Even if you two girls under an existing gating order had not as good as owned to having broken bounds, I would still be compelled to enforce the very

strictest measures. After dinner, Betty Barton, you and those who belong to this study will vacate it. I will have a lock put on the door, and you will work downstairs, that is to say, you will do your prep in the class-room."

Horrors.

"Tea you will partake of at the school tables each afternoon until further notice. Polly and Judy, you will report to your Form captain at half-past twelve, midday, and once every hour during each evening."

Terrible!

"That does not condemn you to an unhappy life at all," added Miss Somerfield, turning away to the door. "You have all your school-mates to mingle with still, and you have the music-room. Besides, the weather is fine and you can be out in the grounds."

She went out and the door closed behind her. Polly, for one, at once flopped down into a chair.

"Goodness!" she gasped, and could say no more for the moment.

"Yes, bekas—"

"Disastwous!" groaned Paula. "Uttahh and awwetwiewably disastwous, yes, wather! Oh geals, geals, what will those poor boys do now?"

"Bekas zey will starve. What be diggings, any food we took zem zis morning—ett was a mere snack. You could put it in ze eye and see none ze worse for eet."

"They really will starve," said Judy huskily, "unless we can manage for them. They feel themselves to be in the right. And—"

"They're not the sort to chuck it in just because things are going against them," murmured Betty. "They didn't throw up the sponge last night when they found—"

"Ugh!" emitted Polly, coming out of the chair with a bound. "Ugh, I could—I could—"

"But don't," advised Betty soothingly.

Just then the door opened, letting in Pam, Helen and Tess. Their entry upon the scene would have meant nothing either surprising or dismaying; but they came in empty-handed. And their looks—

"Well?" clamoured Polly frantically.

"What?"

"Yes, bekas— What ze diggings! Where is all ze food that you were to buy in Barncombe? Queek, bekas—"

"Miss Somerfield has it."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Gosh!" gasped Polly, staring wildly. "You couldn't do a simple thing like that! Ugh!"

"We did exactly as you would have done," submitted Pam serenely. "And would any of you girls have expected to find the headmistress herself lying in wait for you? After all, how often do girls cycle in Barncombe to get things for afternoon tea? Whoever thinks anything of a girl coming in from the cycle sheds carrying a few Creamery parcels?"

"So you were doing that when Miss Somerfield swooped?" exclaimed Betty, still aghast.

There were nods from Pam, Helen and Tess. "Miss Somerfeld simply walked straight up to us and said, 'Let me look at those parcels.'"

After this from Helen there was a gloomy silence.

"Girls," said Betty at last heavily, "Miss Somerfeld knows something. That's what it means. She knows. Old Shudders has been on the 'phcné with her."

"Here we are," said Jack, and he handed her a list enumerating:

" Soap.
Toothbrushes (4).
Towels.
Comb (for Hon. Bob's hair).
Rake (for Comrade Calli's hair)
and / or horseclipper.
Greek primers (for Dave).
A good thriller (for J. L.)."

also:

" 1 kettle.
1 spirit stove with spirit.
Knives, forks, spoons, china mugs,
plates.
Rugs, groundsheets, and, if poss.,
feather beds (4)."

"You don't say anything about a car," was Polly's comment on this rather formidable list. "Well, we'll see what can be done! We mustn't hang about now."

"That we mustn't," agreed Betty, thinking most of all of the bounds-breakers. "We'll say good-bye at once, boys, and some of us will be down again after tea."

"You can count upon that for certain," was Polly's rash assurance. "I don't know about the feather beds; but all the rest should be possible."

"Gosh, I forgot!" said Jack. "Will you remember a fountain-pen for Calli, so he can go on with his forthcoming work: 'The Repercussions of National Insolvency Upon Parents' Remittances.' He should have a typewriter, but—"

"You're treating the whole thing as a joke," Polly reproved her brother, with mock solemnity. "And it's most serious really! It isn't as if you were girls, able to look after yourselves. Look at your coat, Jack! I'll have to bring a needle and cotton, to mend it on you."

"I know, you're a wonderful sister," said Jack emotionally. "Haven't I always said so, Polly? So don't cast me off now."

"I won't," she promised. "Come along, girls! And we'll work it!"

"But in case we can't," Betty was saying, when Polly interrupted.

"Can't? But we shall—we must! Ta-ta, all!" she added, with a roguish smile for all four boys, and then she turned away in the direction of the zig-zag.

Paula Creel took this as a signal that she could abandon her look-out post, and she would have hastened to overtake Polly and Judy, who were now with Naomer, although Betty had lingered behind for a last word with Jack.

But Paula found Comrade Calligan looking at her as she went by as if he longed to say something, so she said:

"Pawdon?"

"Er—weather's all right, anyhow, isn't it?"

"Chavning!" beamed Paula. "And I do trust you boys survive the hawships all right, yes, wather. So hewio of you, bai Jove; sacrificing yourselves for a principle, yes, wather!"

"Come on, Paula!" called back Polly; but the Comrade had found his tongue.

"I would like one of these days, to have a good talk about things with you," he was saying to Paula. "The state of the world to-day, you know, and all that. I don't know if you've ever read Frouster's 'Chaos'—"

"Er—weather's all right, anyhow, isn't it?"

"Get it," advised the Comrade, glowing with enthusiasm.

"Wight-ho, I will!" said Paula, walking on. Yet she must have been favourably impressed, for she said, on the way back to the zig-zag with her Morcove chums:

"Wemawkable youth, yes, wather! Bai Jove, I must cewtainly wead that book he wecommended, although I have fowgotten the name of it already. Something to do with chaos."

"You don't want to read about chaos," chuckled Polly. "There's enough of it going on around us."

Then she saw Betty looking at her in a half admiring way, and she laughed.

"Yes, Betty, and we shall do it again—shan't we, Judy!"

"You mayn't get the chance, you two," was Betty's rejoinder. "If you get caught going back now the fat will be in the fire."

"Mustn't let ourselves get caught, that's all!"



"I am forced to take the very strictest meas-
you and others will vacate this

shrugged Polly. "Oh, and would you have stayed back in bounds, Betty, if you had been Judy or me? It's all very well, but how could we play games when we knew we had only to slip across to the far side of the field, where there's that shrubby path running near the boundary hedge—"

"And that's what you did!"

"That's what we did," nodded Morcove's madcap. "And now, what we are going to do—Judy and I—is to leave you others. We don't belong to you—we mustn't! So you must please go on without us!"

So their three chums went ahead of the culprits, keeping a careful look-out for any signs of danger of which it might be possible to warn the pair by slipping back to them. It was an anxiety gladly endured for friendship's sake, and Betty was feeling very glad that she was not captain at present!

All went well, however, and by ten-to one they

"She didn't say a word to us about Jack and Dave and the two other boys being at large," remarked Polly tensely.

"She wouldn't. Don't you see," reasoned Judy gently, "that's Miss Somerfield all over? Oh, dear, isn't everything terrible!"

At this moment the gong for dinner went. "Anyhow," said Polly, "they've got enough to last them throughout the day. As for tomorrow and the day after and the day after that—"

"We'll manage," Betty said.

Then Polly on her way to the door flashed round and gazed at the chum who was no longer captain of the Form.

"You mean it, Betty, still?"

"Of course I do."

Morcove's madcap drew a long breath, still gazing ardently at her best of chums.

"Betty, you're a chum," she said.

And that was all.

AFTER DINNER the chums, going away from the dining-hall in a bunch, had Etta Hargrove sauntering up to them.

"I don't know why, and I don't want to be told—no business of mine," said Etta, handling an awkward matter very tactfully. "But I've got to see you Study 12 girls fetch away everything you are likely to want."

She referred to a list of names.

"The following girls to be without studies until further notice." Nine of you in all."

"Can we go up now and get it over?" suggested Betty.

They went up with Etta, and although she tried to make it as nice as possible for them,

"Guide Captain"

says—

"Obey

Cheerfully!"



THERE are some girls, I know, who won't join the Guides because they don't like the idea of submitting to the discipline. Not that discipline is very irksome in the Guide movement, rather are Guides and Guiders one big, jolly sisterhood.

None the less, there must be order in anything that is to be carried on successfully, and those with the most aptitude and the most experience must inevitably direct those with less. That is what happens throughout the whole of life, nor need the fact cause anyone the slightest unhappiness.

As a matter of fact, the habits of cheerful obedience—all the more cheerful because it is, in a way, quite voluntary—that are learned in the Guide movement usually prove a tremendous asset later in life.

Great leaders have all been great "obeyers" in their time, carrying out the commands of those set over them with readiness, willingness and—using their brains in the process!

it proved a humiliation that Betty & Co. were never likely to forget.

The Form realised what was taking place, and lots of girls mobbed in the corridor, making great game of it all. The reason for the drastic "closing order," involving the banishment of the ex-captain and her boon companions to the classroom for evening prep., had not been made known, and so the unlucky chums missed all the sympathy which would otherwise have been accorded them.

What a moving out it was.

To Betty & Co. it seemed as if there was no end to the things that they must have by them. There were offers of help, but only of a facetious nature.

Downstairs they went at last, staggering under the weight of so many belongings. They had thought it best to make one load each and so get the wretched business over; but it would have been better if they had taken some of the things and come back for the rest.

Midway down a flight of stairs Paula came to grief, dropping everything, and then Naomer sprawled, too, and her belongings went cascading to the bottom of the stairs, to the huge delight of eye-witnesses.

But tea-time that afternoon meant something even worse than all this in the way of humiliation.

Nine of them, forced to trail into the school's dining-hall, there to partake of Morcove's tea—one that no girl ever thought of sampling if she could manage to give it a miss.

Up to the studies had gone all other girls to throw out their own dainty tea-cloths and rattle out dainty china.

While you obey you learn, if you are wise, so that when the opportunity comes you can step forward and command. As I have mentioned before in these talks, it is the team spirit that counts, and the team spirit, comes from readiness to take orders from the "captain," doesn't it?

The Guide Who Gets On.

A good Guide should always get on, whatever walk of life she takes up, for she has long since learnt to carry out orders, to smile in the face of difficulties and to use her initiative to enhance the value of what she does.

She also learns not to be easily beaten in any task she undertakes; temporary failure only makes her all the more determined to achieve ultimate success.

Have you ever noticed that sometimes you plod away at a job—it may be learning shorthand, typing, cooking, lighting a fire even—and you never seem to get any further. Then, quite suddenly—hey, presto!—the thing is easy. It doesn't mean, of course, that some miracle has suddenly happened. Your moments or even hours of failure has not been wasted. You have been laying the groundwork of your success, and reward comes, if only you persevere long enough.

Talking of fires, did you go camping this Easter? Was it a happy, comfortable experience, or was it uncomfortable? If the latter, then you have still something to learn. Perhaps you didn't erect the tent properly or choose the best possible site. Did the camp fire go well? And was your cooking a success?

I'd like to hear of your experiences, Guides, so don't forget to write to me.

GUIDE CAPTAIN.

They came, in an otherwise deserted dining-hall, to the Fourth-Form table.

"Goodness, what do they call this—tea?" grimaced Polly. "But I couldn't eat anything,

"You must, Polly."

"Yes, bekas—"

"Sh'rrp! I'm not in the mood."

"What ze diggings, eet no good blaming me just bekas everything has gone wrong!" Naomer very fairly protested. "Eet is your brother, Polly, and yours, Judy, who—"

"We have never asked you," Polly said softly and fiercely, "to make any sacrifices for our brothers. We don't want you to now, Naomer. You can go ahead and eat and eat—"

"No, bekas— Ooo, I have ze sudden idea!" Naomer exclaimed in great excitement. "Queek, bekas— Why not go without, all of us, and so get some more food for ze boys, see?"

"Bai Jove! Geals!"

"Naomer," said Polly. "That's a splendid idea. You're a dear."

"How to get it to them, though?" questioned Betty. "I can't have any of you— Oh, but I can!" she suddenly decided quite happily.

"For I'm not captain now."

"Sh!" cautioned Polly.

They had left the large door of the dining-hall ajar when they came in. Now, on tip-toe, she went across to it and closed it.

Remaining on guard there she made signs to the others, and instantly they set to work. Tea, of course, had been laid for more than nine of them in case other girls should drop in. So there were ample quantities of fare—plain, substantial.

"Good siege rations, in fact," chuckled Betty, as she, like others, hastened to get bread-and-butter put together sandwich fashion for wrapping up in paper.

That paper was forthcoming from the bottom of one of the room's several cupboards. Sheets of newspaper were torn apart to serve the purpose quite well.

"And the boys will have their reading matter after all," commented Judy drily. "I see an article here, on ancient Greece that should just appeal to Dave."

"Goodness, Naomer," said Helen in alarm at the way the dusky one was adding rock buns and plain cake ad lib to her parcel. "We must leave something on the plates!"

"No, bekas, zey can always zink I ate eet all. Zey know what I am," said Naomer proudly. "I don't care ze hoot, any old how. We are not going to let ze boys starve."

Suddenly Polly came away from the door whispering:

"Sh, look out, girls!"

"Someone coming? Goodness!" breathed

several as Polly nodded; and then they all rushed their half-made parcels out of sight.

"Yes," Polly said loudly to Madge, "and so I told the porter—"

"Mother always fries hers in batter!" cried Tess, as if interrupting Pam over some cookery talk. "She finds—"

"More ten, anybody?" inquired Betty gaily. At this instant the door opened and Cora Grandways stood revealed.

"Oh, you poor things!" she mocked. "But serve you right. Aha! Didn't come off, did it? Would you like me to sing that pathetic ballad: 'Where is My Wandering Boy To-night?'

He, he, he! It is a scream to see you all."

She came a little way past the threshold with her swaggering, offensive air.

"But it's a shame to tease you," she grinned. "I'm just going out for a run. If I see Jack and Dave and the other two shall I give them any message?"

Polly would have jumped up, but she knew that if she moved a parcel would fall off her lap, to give the whole business away.

"But I shouldn't wonder," jeered Cora, "if they are in custody by now. I suppose Dr. Trouncer at Grangemoor School has put it in the hands of the police. It was all right about the other boys no doubt; just their bit of a flare-up. But when it comes to stealing money to keep a 'rebellion' going—"

"What!" the chums almost yelled; but even now they were forced to sit still at the tea-table.

"Oh, don't pretend you don't know! Or is it possible that you really haven't heard?" added Cora with false sweetness. "If so, it pains me deeply."

And she sighed. "That boys like Jack and Dave should go stealing money out of the headmaster's study as they did last night—"

"Cora, that's a lie!" shouted Polly. "Oh—"

"Is it? All right, wait and see. Carry on, girls; make a good tea," laughed Cora, backing away to the door. "He, he, he!"

Slam!

She was gone, and now all the chums could rise up, wild-eyed, aghast at what had been said by her.

"Money stolen last night from Dr. Trouncer's study?" panted Polly. "Never! Oh, if that's the latest—"

"If that's what Miss Somerfield has heard!" broke out Judy hoarsely. "And perhaps it is."

"Disgwaceful, bai Jove!"

"Yes, bekas, even if zey were starving—"

"What are we to do?" Polly raged, striding this way and that between the table. "What are we to do now?"

And then Betty said:

"Why—carry on, of course!"

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)



Morcove's Fight for Fair Play!

THIS IS THE TITLE OF

Marjorie Stanton's

splendid long, complete story featuring Betty Barton & Co. and their boy chums, Jack Linton & Co. which appears next Tuesday in the

SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN—2D.