

34-2  
Brilliant New Film Serial Begins Inside

# The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

No. 682, Vol. 27.  
Week ending  
MAY 12th, 1931.

2d

EVERY  
TUESDAY

CREAMERY  
TEA  
ROOMS

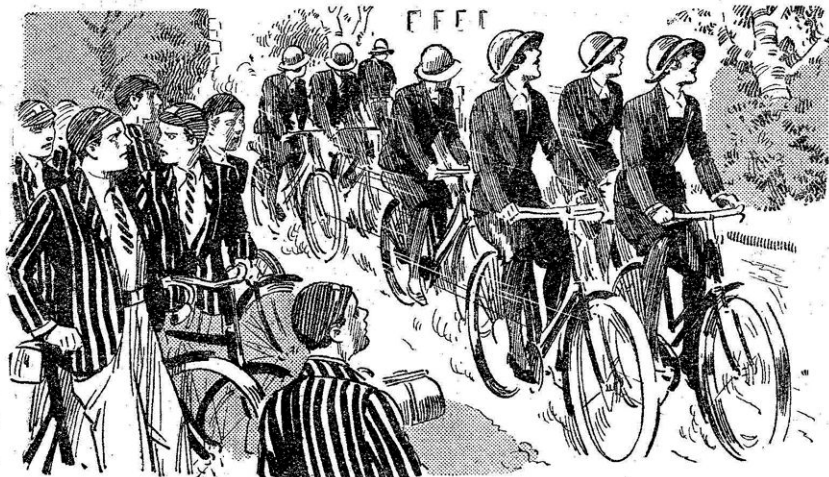


**POLLY — PRISONER  
OF WAR!**

An amusing situation in  
this week's fine complete  
Morcove story.

LONG COMPLETE MORCOVE SCHOOL STORY IN THIS ISSUE

## Enthralling, Long Complete Morcove School Story



# MORCOVE DECLARES WAR!

AS a direct outcome of the despicable trick perpetrated by the Denver sisters a feud has developed between Morcove and Grangemoor, the two schools which have formerly been on such friendly terms. And unhappily the "war" seems likely to strike a killing blow at individual friendships—causing strife between chums.

### CHAPTER 1.

#### As False As They're Fair

"HARK! Are those some of the girls, Edna, going down to the meeting now?"

"I expect so, Fay. They sound as if they mean to put a kick in it, too!"

"Oh, and that's the mood of the Form, right enough, at present," Fay Denver laughed softly. "Edna, I can just imagine some of the speeches that are going to be made; the resolutions—"

"Those in favour—and loud cheers, yes! Morcove for ever, and all that sort of thing. Long live the captain—"

"And war to the knife against Grangemoor. Poor Grangemoor!"

These two girls, sisters; who were newcomers to Morcove School this term, were alone together in the study which had been allotted to them.

Edna, the younger, who was neither so very

By Marjorie Stanton

fair nor so excessively pretty as her sister Fay, glanced at a wrist-watch.

"Just on six, Fay. So we might as well go down now."

"Oh, rather! Sit together, of course—and look here, Edna, darling," rippled the elder girl, "if I rise to say just a few words—ahem!—you will keep a straight face, won't you?"

"I shall be simply one big 'Hear, hear!'—that is, if you set out to convince the meeting that we Denvers, although we are new to Morcove, are as jealous of its reputation—I think that's the phrase, Fay?"

"Oh, Edna, I think you should speak instead of me!"

"Oh, no. Age before ability."

Fay received this with undiminished amusement. She had got up from an easy chair, to



pass from the study with her sister. But she turned back a pace or so, to sit perched upon the table-edge.

"And to think, Edna, that if we had not brought off that lovely jape, the other evening at dusk, all this talk of a break between the two schools would never have come about! Had we better stand up at the meeting and confess?"

"Very definitely, dear, I think we had better not," grinned Edna, who knew that her sister was only joking. "We don't want the girls to go to war with us!"

"But it was fun," Fay smiled on, swinging a slender leg. "Moreover, of course, could never suspect! That any girls in the school could have done such a thing—goodness, no! Much too sporting!"

At this instant there was another flurry of girls, going by in the corridor, chattering excitedly amongst themselves.

"Some of the Study 12 chums, Fay!"

"Yep. The captain with them, perhaps. You know, Edna"—in a still more subdued voice—"I can't believe that Study 12 wants the Form to resolve: 'Nothing to do with Grangemoor!' It is going to hit some of those girls hard, Edna!"

"Polly Linton, with a brother at Grangemoor; and Judy Cardew—she's another who has a brother there."

"Ah, and how about Pam Willoughby?"

"Yes, well!" Edna said, standing very erect. Words and poise were an imitation of Pam Willoughby's habitual serenity, and Fay tittered. The sisters, without acknowledging it to each other, were jealous of Pam.

"She and that Cherrol fellow," Fay said, smiling faintly. "It seems to be regarded as a sort of wonderful example! Friendship on a high plane."

"I'm afraid I don't care much about things on a high plane."

"High is for Pam, of course. Plain—p-l-a-i-n stands for Jimmy Cherrol."

"Oh, but he's a nice boy, Fay!"

"Think so?"

"Yes, I do. Fair is fair," Edna said virtuously. "It is just Jimmy's ordinariness that makes him so likeable."

"But does Pam really regard him as a kind of special chum, Edna?"

"I'm sure I don't know—and I don't care, dear."

"Shouldn't wonder if it sort of suits her pride to have him at her heels in that lost-dog way of his. He does, you know, follow her about as if he'd like never to be sent away. I can imagine her having real dogs and ponies, at Swanlake, which do just the same—and it helps her to feel superior."

Fay hopped down from the table.

"But this isn't going to the meeting, Edna! Oh, listen now!"

Early comes upon the scene downstairs—the class-room, traditional spot for Form meetings—had resorted to singing as a means of working off superabundant spirits. Fay opened the study door, and the singing sounded good and hearty although it came from two floors below. Nor was there any lack of thudding sounds,

as if blackboards were being slammed about and desks put to steeplechasing purposes. The fact that it had been raining all day, so that girls had not found the customary outlet for their energies on the games field, may have had a little to do with all this hubbub.

But there was that other fact, to which the Denver sisters were well alive—the Form had been saving itself up, over a whole week-end, for this meeting.

And at last the hour had come!

## CHAPTER 2

### All Of One Mind

**B**ANG! Crash!

"Oooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, look at Naomer—where she has got to!"

That comic strip of the Form, Naomer Nakara, was being hilariously observed to have arrived, by much agility, at the top of the stationery-cupboard.

"But—hi! Leave me ze chance to come down eef I want to!" she shrielled, from her lofty situation. "Not fair, Polly—taking ze easel away. He is my ladder!"

That latest bang-crash had been due to madcap Polly Linton's roguish removal of the easel, leaving the dusky one marooned.

"You can always jump down, kid."

"Can I! Bekas eet is further than eet looks! Pipooray, though, I stay here to make my speech, yes!" Naomer gaily decided. "Ladies and gentlemen—"

"Boo!"

"Hi, don't throw things! Sweendle!" Naomer protested, now that she was finding out, what philosophers have long known, that to be above the crowd exposes one to teasing attacks.

"Bekas, eef I make ze cupboard fall over, you will know eet!"

"And so will you," said Polly, sopping a sponge preparatory to taking aim with it. "Stand still, kid!"

"Not ze bit of eet! Bekas—"

Whiz! went the squeezed sponge; but Naomer marvellously caught it, so that laughter changed to admiring cheers.

"And now," Naomer said, singling out Polly, "look out for yourself! Bekas—"

Whiz! came the sponge, missing the madcap by a full yard and plopping suddenly against the right ear of harmless Paula Creel.

"Yowch! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Naow look at me!" wailed Paula, who loved to be spick-and-span. "Insuffeable, all this wacket! I won't stay to the meeting!"

"Oh, do not leave us!" Polly entreated, dramatically wringing her hands. "Stay, stay!"

"Good-evening, everybody!" Naomer suddenly broadcast from the top of the cupboard. "Zis is Queen Naomer of Nakara calling for a refresher! Eef somebody will kindly oblige by handing up ze jug of lemonade!"

"Drinks are only served in the desks," Polly decreed, impounding that jug of lemonade which Naomer herself had brought down from Study 12 to provide against speakers' thirsts.

"Sweendle! Hi, I want to get down!"

"Boo, laugh at her!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At this instant, in spite of the great hub-bub, the school chimes made themselves heard. A dozen girls yelled:

"Time to start!" And loud cheers followed. "Yes, six o'clock, so now to go ahead," said Form-captain Betty. A strict observance of the appointed time had seemed necessary, the meeting being a very important one.

Fay and Edna Denver came in—last, but in their own opinion certainly not least. Many of their schoolmates accorded the sisters friendly smiles, for only here and there in the Form had it begun to be suspected that Fay and Edna were not—well, genuine! The captain called out to them, affably:

"Mind shutting the door, you two? Thanks!"

There was a sudden cessation of all boisterousness. Girls were taking to their accustomed seats in the desks for the purpose of the meeting. Betty, as captain, had to stand out in front, at the mistress's desk—"in the Chair."

Even Naomer was settling down quietly on the top of that cupboard, her African origin making it quite easy for her to squat with crossed legs.

She was not without a stick of chocolate, and this may have reconciled her to the inaccessibility of the lemonade-jug.

"Well, members of the Form, I see that we're all here, to a girl—"

"Hooray!" the meeting cheered this opening comment by Betty, who continued:

"There is only one item on the agenda; I will read it. To consider what steps, if any, shall be taken in connection with the insult done to Morcove School in general, and this Form in particular, by a member of Grangemoor School, on Friday evening last!"

"Hear, hear-r-r!"

"We want a free statement of opinions," Betty resumed. "In a moment I shall have said all that I have felt I ought to say, at the start. It is simply this, girls. As soon as it became clear that the Form would get no satisfaction out of Grangemoor School, unless strong action were taken, I decided that we must hold this meeting."

Loud applause!

"As captain," Betty went on quietly, "I don't suppose I have ever felt my own opinion being so strongly supported by the Form as a whole, as I have felt in regard to this affair."

"Hear, hear! That is so, Betty!" And more cheering.

"All the same, it seemed best to have a meeting, and not to have the meeting in too great a hurry. So we have waited over the week-end, and now we are all met together, and anything we decide to do won't be done in a hot-headed way!"

Some renewed clapping afforded her a breathing space.

"Shall I just state the facts, briefly?"

"Yes, Betty—yes!"

"At dusk last Friday evening a dummy, dressed up as a Morcove girl, was dumped in the school grounds by a Grangemoor fellow, who was seen by some of us. He made off—"

"Boo!"

"But in getting through the hedge he lost his cap, and that was picked up by one of us. There were no initials inside the cap. At first we felt sure that the fellow could be traced at his own school by his being late in that evening. But

we've been assured that there was an 'All present' at the nine o'clock muster."

"They worked it amongst themselves!" a girl called out disgustedly.

"Just a sec, Eva. On Saturday," Betty continued, "the House captain of Challoner's, at Grangemoor, happened to be over here at Morcove—to see his cousins, Fay and Edna Denver. I thought I might go into the matter with him, as between captain and captain; but I wasn't given the opportunity."

There were murmurs at this, and Fay and Edna nudged each other as they sat close together.

"It appears," said Betty, "that Bertie Denver did not think the matter worth troubling about. On that, I decided to call this meeting, so that



Naomer's aim was, as usual, erratic, and the thrown sponge missed Polly, finally plopping against Paula's head. "Insufferable!" wailed the elegant duffer.

any fresh steps taken by me should convince him that opinion here is—unanimous! As I'm sure it will be."

"Hear-r-r, hear-r-r!"

"Bekas—"

"Quiet, you up there!" Naomer was bidden by at least a dozen girls, with that pretended scorn which always disguised the affection in which she was held.

"Zen hand up ze jug, can't you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sweendle—"

"Order! Turn her out!"

"You will have to get me down first! Hi, Betty! Bekas—"

"Your turn will come, Naomer!" "But eet will be all gone by zen!" shrilled the dusky one, thinking that the promised "turn" related to the lemonade-jug, which was now circulating in the desks. "All right, I shall vote against ze lot of you, so see!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you needn't eggspect me to fight for Morcove, if zere is a war! Bekas—"

"Order!" laughed Betty. "Now, girls—don't all speak at once. But will one of you say a few words?"

A dozen girls started up, and as hurriedly sat down again. There was great laughter, out of which grew an insistent and earnest cry for:

"Etta! Etta Hargrove! Go on, Etta!"

Betty was delighted. She would never have wished one of her own boon companions to be the first to speak. On the other hand, Etta, although not a member of the Study 12 "chummy," was on the best of terms with them all, always.

She was a girl of particularly good sense, and her opinion invariably counted for a good deal.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Put to the Vote

ETTA HARGROVE stood up. "I would like to propose," she said briskly, "that Betty be authorised to send a formal letter to the House captain of Challenor's, at Grangemoor—"

"Hear, hear!" dinned the meeting, clapping vigorously.

"Suggesting," Etta went on, "that this Form would welcome an official assurance that the insult to Morcove School is deplored—"

"Hear, hear! That's the idea; that's what we want!" stormed a number of girls.

"And, failing a satisfactory answer, that this Form has nothing more to do with Grangemoor for the rest of the term, anyhow."

Etta sat down amidst deafening applause. Desks were slapped and banged; cheer followed cheer.

Out in front of the tempestuous muster, Betty nodded complete understanding of Etta's spirited proposal.

"You have heard, girls, and really I don't think Etta's wording of the proposal could be improved upon. Would any of you like to speak against it?"

"Yes, bekas, unless I get my share of lem—"

"Boo! Throw something at her!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am disgusted! Talk about insults to ze Form! What about me? But now zen!" Naomer persisted, standing upright on top of the cupboard. "Silence, plis! Bekas—"

Up roar!

"Order, order!" laughed Betty. "But let her speak, then, girls—for just one minute!"

Accordingly, the meeting derisively invited Naomer to say what she had to say, by according her a mocking cheer.

"Right-ho, zen! On ze strick understanding zat I am given ze jug at once, I shall spik in favour of war with Grangemoor, and I hope eet will be fine for zem! But," shrilled Naomer, "you are not going to get me to fight for you, unless I get my whack!"

"Did you say whacking?" Polly inquired loudly. "We'll give you that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You won't like eet, eef I go over to ze enemy!"

"They wouldn't have you!"

"I'd like to see you win any jolly old war without me, any old how! Bekas—"

"Oh, give her the jug to make her dry up!"

So, amidst great hilarity, Polly walked out to stand on a chair and hand up the jug.

There being only some sugary dregs left in it, Naomer's subsequent tilting of the jug to get at what remained caused one more shriek of laughter. Then order was resumed.

"I was asking," Betty smiled, "if any girl would like to speak against the proposal?"

"No! No, Betty—no!"

Nor, indeed, had any girl betrayed the inclination to say a word in dissent.

"I shall ask, then, for a show of hands," the captain pursued. "Those in favour?"

Up flashed so many slender arms, all over the

room. Plump hands, manicured hands, hands big and small—they signalled enthusiastically.

Crash, Naomer set down the empty jug on top of the cupboard. "Bekas—" And there she was, holding up both hands!

"Carried unan."

"Hurrah!" the meeting applauded its own united front. "The Form for ever! Up, Morcove! Hooray!"

"And what about another resolution," a girl named Kathleen Murray stood up to suggest—"that any girl having dealings with Grangemoor be classed as a traitress to the Form!"

"Oh, I can't imagine any need for a resolution of that sort," Betty demurred. "Still, if the Form thinks—"

"No! No!" was the emphatic chorus from a big majority.

Then Polly Linton stood up.

"May I speak, as one who has a brother at Grangemoor School? All I want to say is—although I don't think it should have been necessary," this with a reproachful, sidelong glance at Kathleen, "the fact that I've a brother there will not affect my loyalty to the Form in the least. He'll understand!"

Then the meeting went wild. It shook the ceiling with its cheers for Polly. The admiring demonstration might have gone on and on, but Betty saw that Judy Cardew was standing up, now that Polly had sat down, and so a hearing for Judy was entreated.

The meeting hushed to quite a thrilling stillness.

"I'm another with a brother at Grangemoor. I say the same as Polly, that's all. Dave, too, will understand."

More wild cheering. Oh, this was splendid! Bravo, Polly and Judy, two girls who could have been excused any wavering—and they were in this out-and-out mood! Hurrah!

"And Pam?" called out Kathleen Murray, looking across to "the little lady of Swanlake."

There was laughter here and there, quite good-natured. Pam for her part smiled—serenely. But she did not rise to speak. It had been a bit of impertinence on the part of Kathleen Murray to drag in her, Pam's, friendship with Jimmy Cherril.

Suddenly it was realised that Fay Denver had risen. There was a sensational silence, quickly ended by Betty's cordial:

"Yes, Fay?"

"I feel I would like to say a few words, and my sister, I know, will wish it to be understood that I'm speaking for her also."

A pause. Dead silence!

"Edna and I happen to be cousins to the House captain of Challenor's—the one to whom you, Betty, are going to write."

Betty nodded encouragingly. In the desks, listeners were strangely still. But Fay was not the least unmoved by what was, obviously, an uneasy silence.

"Polly and Judy have been good enough to declare that they won't let it make any difference—their each having a brother at Grangemoor, in Challenor's House. Well, so far as Edna and I are concerned, we're not going to let it make any difference—I mean, our being cousins to the House captain over there. That's all, except that I think Morcove is doing right to defend—well, defend its honour, so to say!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah-h-h!" the meeting exploded again. Clap, clap, clap! "Bravo, Fay! Bravo!"

"The wight spiwit—yes, wather," Paula beamingly remarked to a near neighbour whilst clapping. "Bwavo!"



"Those in favour of sending a letter of protest to Grangemoor," Betty called, and instantly there was a show of hands. "Hurrah!" the meeting applauded.

Betty was in no hurry to check the ovation. It only gradually died away, and then all tongues seemed to be going.

At last the captain rapped for order.

"That, I think, concludes the—"

"Pawdon, Betty deah!" came the voice of Paula Creel, and there was a general "Oh!" of ecstatic delight that the beloved duffer of the Form had risen. From Naomer, however, still on top of the cupboard, came a scornful:

"Hi, sit down, you Paula! Bekas—"

"Order, order!"

"Follah membahs of the Fowm!" the elegant one beamed round upon the crowded desks. "Before we disperse, may I propose a vote of thanks to the captain, coupling with it our— Yes, wather, I know what I was going to say!"

"Zen say eet queek! Bekas—"

"Order! Ha, ha, ha! Go on, Paula! Good old Paula!"

"An assuance, bai Jove, that—er—er—we will all— And, geals, when I say all—"

"You mean all," said Polly.

"Yes, wather! Whether we have bwothers or fwiends, or— or what-not, at Gwangemoor, heah we are, what Yes, wather all united, and—er— fwiends all wound, what? Bai Jove and—I say, don't throw things, geals! Unaccustomed—as I am to public speaking— Ow! Who threw that!"

"I did!" yelled the occupant of the cupboard-top. "Bekas, eef I am not illowed to spik, why should—"

At this point Naomer, if she did not fall off the cupboard, only saved herself from doing so by, as it were parachuting down. She had lost her balance and jumped, willy-nilly, landing with a resounding flump!

There could be no resumption of real order after this. So Betty, more by signs than words, made it clear that she thanked the Form for its attendance and the implied confidence in her, and that the meeting would now disperse.

Which it did to the accompaniment of great cheering and the singing of a verse of the Morcovce School Song, and an indulgence in that special kind of fun known as "clearing up."

After any meeting there will always be a few misguided persons ready to start fresh arguments, to the joy of a knot or two of listeners.

In an evil moment Paula was induced to hang about, feeling that she was now impressing listeners with her eloquence. Whereas those listeners were only waiting to see the adored duffer become involved in a heated argument with Naomer.

This soon happened, and whilst a few girls remained to put the classroom in order, others merely waited for the moment when Naomer would "go" for Paula.

Inevitably this moment came at last, and then did the roguish bystanders, under pretence of trying to separate the two disputants, hustle them even closer together.

Poor Paula! Her rich vocabulary, her acknowledged eloquence, had let her down badly. What she had needed was some of that monkey-like agility with which Naomer, scrambling clear of the "scrum," suddenly made off—"bekas I want a refresher, queek!"

On the classroom floor sat Paula, breathless, dishevelled, dazed! She looked as if she did not know what had happened to her in the last few moments, and very likely she didn't.

But the strange thing was that girls who had playfully engineered this rumpus professed to be quite curious as to why Paula was sitting there, with her hair over her eyes and a shoulder coming out of the neck opening to her frock. There were quite anxious inquiries:

"What's the matter, Paula dear?"

"A weck, a wuin!" she wailed. "Ow, gwacious, geals—and I've lost a shoe, too, ow!"

"Would you like to be helped up, dear?"

"Yes, wather—ooch!"

But the sympathisers did better than this.

They even decided that she must be placed on an improvised stretcher. So a blackboard easel was requisitioned for the purpose, and on it Paula was placed—protesting. For even she realised by now that this was more fun.

The teasers could never have meant to carry her far, the "stretcher" being of such a nature that it was obviously likely to let her through on to the floor again. Paula was, in fact, "sinking fast"—as one of the bearers sadly commented—when the whole thing was let go, on account of a sudden diversion.

Naomer dashed in again, yelling:  
"Queek, queek! Bekas, queek, everybody, eef you want to see Betty post ze ultimatum!"

That this was Naomer's rendering of "ultimatum" none doubted. There was renewed cheering, and Paula was dumped there and then, so that stretcher bearers and attendant sympathisers might scoot away to the Front Hall.

Betty was coming downstairs with Polly and other good chums. The captain held a letter that was ready for the hall-postbox. Anticipating the unanimous resolve of the Form, she had prepared the letter very carefully during the day.

As she now descended the last few stairs to the hall, the crowd swelled to such dimensions, it seemed as if every member of the Form were present. The moment was felt to be a most fateful one.

Ultimatum to Grangemoor School!

Once through the slot of the letter-box, and it would be beyond recall. By the morning it would be in the hands of House Captain Bertie Denver. If it should result in the apology that Morcove's proper pride demanded, well and good. If not—  
WAR!

"Hurrah! Morcove for ever!" the determined girls dinned again. "Stuff to give them, Betty!"

She was advancing now to the postbox. There was none of the excitement about Betty, such as some girls were manifesting who felt that "war" would be rather a lark. As became her, the captain, Betty was all calm determination. She approached the postbox with a resolute step.

Fay and Edna were upon the scene again. Chiefly these two sisters watched Polly, Judy—Pam. Were those three girls looking at all glum? No! A little pale perhaps? No! And the Denver pair felt balked of a secretly cherished desire.

How they would have nudged each other, if they could have seen signs of distress there. But Polly Linton, with a brother at Grangemoor, was looking grimly stubborn. Judy Cardew—in her always serious way—simply quietly resigned to whatever might betide. And Pam—as serene as ever!

Betty came to a standstill in front of the postbox. Her right hand, holding the fateful letter, rose level with the letter-slot.

The crowd gave one tremendous cheer.  
"Flick!" and the letter was gone from sight—into the postbox.

"Shoulder high, girls!" someone shouted then.  
"Hurrah! Yes! The cap—the cap!"  
"Oh, don't be silly," Betty pleaded with a queer laugh.

But this was what it meant to be captain in a crisis of this sort. No use her trying to resist. A populace on the verge of war must have its idol. So with the Form, now that it felt "war" to be certain.

Betty was hoisted up, to be carried shoulder high; and shoulder high they carried her, all round the hall, whilst the cheering must have been audible everywhere in the vast schoolhouse.

Fay Denver now nudged her sister to come

away, and Edna was not slow to respond. It had been great fun to them to see the Form drifting into that very feud with Grangemoor which they, the sisters, had hoped to bring about. But to see the captain being treated to this demonstration of popular regard—that was "not so good!"

"A thing I can't make out, Edna," the elder sister exclaimed, when they were back in their study upstairs, "why the Form-mistress didn't butt in at the meeting! Surely she must have wondered what all the hubbub was about?"

"Perhaps she knew, and kept away on purpose."

This, from shrewder Edna, was nearer the mark, although it did not exactly account for the meeting having gone on without any interruption by the Form-mistress.

Fay and Edna were new to the school, or they would have known that it was a cherished privilege for girls to hold Form meetings under no higher authority than that vested in the Form captains.

So, in any case, Miss Courtway would have kept away from the class-room this evening. She, who had been right through the school as a scholar, was far too good a Morcoveian to want to alter unwritten rules which, after all, had served the school admirably up till now.

Apart from this, however, the Form-mistress had known why the meeting was being called, and to this extent Edna Denver's guess was correct.

Betty had consulted Miss Courtway, who had instantly realised that the matter had much better be left in the captain's hands.

For her, the Form-mistress, to have dealt with it, would have meant that she must communicate with the Housemaster at Grangemoor. And that Housemaster was now the husband of a former Morcove mistress!

Imagine the blow to the happiness of that newly married couple, if a complaint about the insult to Morcove, committed by Grangemoor, had been made to THEM!

So it was between one captain and another that the affair was to be conducted, so long as "diplomatic relations" remained.

Betty's ultimatum was posted. Now the Form must wait for the reply.

"By Wednesday morning at the latest," Betty had politely but firmly requested.

There was a cricket match for the Wednesday afternoon; a visit by a Grangemoor team, arranged at a time when relations between the two schools had been perfectly friendly. But now—no apology, no match!

The ultimatum had said as much, quite fearlessly.

Unless Morcove's honour was satisfied by Wednesday morning, first post—Morcove would have said the last word it had to say to Grangemoor School!

## CHAPTER 4.

### It Is War!

"NO letter, girls!"

"What!"

"We needn't think there will be anything from the Denver fellow, when the letters are given out after brekker. I've seen the post. Nothing from Grangemoor!"

Betty was making this grave announcement to Polly and a few others in Study 12.

It was Wednesday morning—only a little after half-past seven. The Form had been out of bed, to a girl, at the first stroke of the bell for rising. But this merely evidenced excitement over the



arrival of the fateful day. No one had supposed that anything could be known until after breakfast—the regulation time for giving out girls' letters.

"Goodness!" Polly said.  
"I got Ellen, the parlourmaid, to do me the favour," Betty smiled feebly. "It's against regs, of course; but she went through all the letters. Nothing for me from him!"

"Right!" Polly said, quickly getting over her shocked state. "Then it's 'war'!"  
"Deplovable!" wailed Paula, sinking into the best armchair. "Ow, geals—most wegwettable, what? When we were such friends with Gwange-moor—yes, wather! War!"

"I was afraid so," Madge said with quiet earnestness. "We know, the Denver sisters never thought that their cousin would even answer the letter."

"Then they must be proud of him!" Helen Craig exclaimed disdainfully. "Why couldn't he answer? What has Morcove asked, except that it expected an apology such as no fellow in his position over there would hesitate to give—if he had any decency in him!"

"Hallo, Pam!" Betty turned to receive that member of the "chummery." "No match to-day—"

"Oh? But I'm not surprised."  
"How that Denver fellow ever got himself made captain, over there, I can't imagine!" Helen muttered. "A bounder!"

"It's all through their doing things over there in a way that has been proved not to work well," Polly raged. "All-round worth can't count, whilst a fellow can get the captaincy by being merely good—at work! He did some wonderful papers in an exam or something."

"But isn't it one of the things that Mr. Challenger is hoping to get altered?" Betty submitted.

"It takes centuries to alter anything at Grangemoor," Polly gloomed. "Well, Pam! We're at 'war'!"

"Not yet," smiled Betty. "There's another half-hour to go, officially; and even then—"

"Even then, what?" Polly stared.  
"I think it would be the decent thing—an act of grace—to wait until midday. There's a second post during the morning. A letter might have been delayed?"

"It's running it fine about the match?" Polly hinted.

"Not a bit. If a letter comes in, then the team will be welcome to come over. If there is no letter by the second post, then Grangemoor must blame its captain for a sudden telegram, cancelling the match. It can't be wrong to show a little patience."

Polly nodded.  
"You're right!"

But Betty was to have other impatient spirits to deal with, and by the time she went into morning school there had been a good deal of wear and tear upon her own patience! Her stolid nature stood the strain, however.

She had the whole Form submissive to the delay which wisdom had prescribed, although some of the girls had been furious when they learned, after breakfast, that no letter had come by the first post.

As for Fay and Edna, their private belief was that Betty was going to keep on finding excuses for delay after delay.

"I can't believe that she or any of her chums will ever make the stand against Grangemoor," Fay confided to her sister during the mid-morning break from class. "Just as if they really put the

precious honour of the school before their own feelings!"

"It must be awkward for that Barton girl," grinned Edna. "Outside her own set, there are such a lot of girls who have no personal interest in Grangemoor. So she has got to watch her step!"

"Supposing she does shilly-shally?" Fay suddenly pondered aloud. "She might be accused of secretly studying the wishes of Polly Linton and Judy Cardew—and Pam Willoughby. We know those girls said they were ready to stand by the Form; but they can't have meant it."

What a multiple mistake altogether, in regard to Study 12! Midday provided such a corrective, of these false ideas, Fay and Edna were left almost agnostic.

No sooner was the Form out of class than Betty found out and made known that the mid-morning delivery had brought her—nothing.

Fay and Edna, at their own game of "hunting with the hounds and running with the fox," were mingling with Form-mates when the captain let it be known that the ultimatum had now expired and also the bit of extra time allowed as a matter of grace.

Now it was a case of "war declared"! And if any girls doubted Betty's determination to lead Morcove in a spirited conflict, they had only to notice her looks.

She had little to say. It was to be deeds, not words, now. So the excited crowd saw her go to the green-baize board in the front hall, to pin up a notice:

THE MATCH FIXED FOR THIS AFTER-  
NOON BETWEEN MORCOVE SCHOOL AND  
GRANGEMOOR IS CANCELLED.

(Signed) Betty Barton.  
Captain.

The crowd surging in front of the board started cheering.

It was one more of those moments when Betty, if she had liked the flavour of personal prestige, could easily have obtained a relishing taste of it.

Had she faced the crowd to make a little speech, her every phrase would have been accorded frantic applause.

But she had something more important to do. Five minutes later, Polly Linton was speeding away to the nearest telegraph office—the railway station—with a telegram that Betty had written:

DENVER, GRANGEMOOR SCHOOL.  
MATCH CANCELLED. WARN YOUR TEAM  
NOT TO COME.

Polly's feelings as she handed in that telegram to the telegraph clerk, with a shilling banged upon the slip of paper!

Perfect weather for the afternoon halfer! The match one to which she, as much as any girl, had been looking forward! Her own dear brother Jack, certain to have been in the Grangemoor team of visitors! And instead—this.

War! And Jack must stand by his school, as she must stand by hers. Strange situation. Yet, after all, was it anything more than one of the stern realities of—war! No. You got personal complications on a huge scale, even when two different countries went to war.

She whirred back on her machine to Morcove, and found Study 12 as busy as a Downing Street in a national crisis of the first magnitude. Everybody seemed to be waiting to see Betty—personally.

There was continual going in and out.



Naomer had become so alarmed at the number of interviews that the captain had to give, she had mixed a jug of lemonade.

"Bekas, Betty, you don't want to lose your voice, just when ze jolly old war has started—hooray, good luck to him! We shall win, so boo, Grangemoor!"

"I hope I have done all the talking I need to do," Betty responded cheerfully. "Girls needn't keep on coming in like this, to ask about this afternoon. They know the match is off, and so—"

"Er—Betty!" another inquirer turned up at this very moment.

"Well, Biddy?"

"Is it all right for us to go out this afternoon?" asked Biddy Loveland. "I thought I would ask you—"

"What ze diggings, not afraid of being captured by ze enemy, are you?" shrilled Naomer.

"Bekas—"  
Betty laughed, checking the dusky one with a light gesture.

"I know why you ask, Biddy dear. Well, it is quite all right. No match, leaves everyone free."

"But if there is a row, won't it mean that you'll get the blame?"

"And why shouldn't I?" Betty returned cheerfully. "That's all right, Biddy. To set your mind at rest—there won't be any row."

"Oh—"

"So, next plis!" cried Naomer, in her self-appointed position as orderly in waiting.

For the moment, there was no one else seeking an interview, so Naomer could close the door and then turn back to pour herself out a "refresher."

"Jolly good luck to Morcove in ze war!" she said, raising the glass. "Bekas Morcove is in ze right, and Morcove will jolly well win, hooray!"

"You needn't wejoice," came dolefully from Paula in the armchair. "Personally, I grieve when I think of Polly and Judy, and Pam, too—"

"What ze diggings, what about me?" shrilled the dusky one. "Haven't I a churn at Grangemoor? Zink of Bobby Bloot, how we always sat next to each other at tea— And zat reminds me! I paid for him at ze Creamery, ze other day, bekas he was spent up. Now I shan't get ze money back—sweendle!"

Betty looked up, smiling.

"Private debts, like private feelings, are bound to suffer in a war."

It was at this moment Polly came in, after her run to and from the station.

"They'll get it before one, the ticket clerk said."

"Then Grangemoor will have plenty of time to arrange what to do with its afternoon," was Betty's quiet rejoinder. "We couldn't be fairer than that. What shall we girls do—any suggestion, Polly?"

"Barncombe?"

"Yes, bekas— Ooo, super! Grand celler-bration at ze Creamery to start ze war!"

Polly gave the dusky one the usual withering look, then sampled the lemonade.

Now the door was tapped again.

"Come in!"

"Oh—Betty," Fay Denver began, with bland hesitancy, after entering; "just to make sure! It will be all right for me and Edna to do as we please, this afternoon?"

"Quite all right! Provided," the captain half-jestingly added, "you observe the usual rules in regard to halves. You know them?"

"Oh, yes! My sister and I merely wondered—whether there is anything you'd like us to do?"

"No, thanks. All's quiet on the Morcove Front!"

"But eef I meet one of zose Grangemoor boys in Barncombe, zis afternoon!" Naomer fired up. "It won't be very quiet zen! Bekas, shoot, bang, fire!"

Fay laughed. Then she did her best to look a little troubled in her mind.

"Cousin Bertie should have answered, even if he couldn't see his way to give the apology. But I suppose he regarded the whole thing as too trivial."

"Well, it wasn't!" Polly stamped. "Dash it all, boys are expected to show special courtesy to girls, aren't they? But perhaps he is that sort; just because we are a girls' school—"

"I think," Betty interposed gently, "it will be better if we don't discuss Bertie Denver with you, Fay, and your sister."

"Oh, but Edna and I are not siding with him, you know!" Fay had it in her to fib glibly. "We see the Morcove point of view, and Polly, needn't have jumped down my throat."

"I always jump down people's throats," Polly said with a kind of grim disapproval of her own blunt nature.

"I see!" smiled Fay sweetly, and she went away.

"Ah, deah!" sighed Paula, shaking up a cushion. "Naow you have offended her, Polly, deah."

"Oh, well, if I have—"

"She has her feelings, don't you know; probably being lacerated by this—"

"Rabbits! You'll never get me to believe that those Denvers are feeling the unpleasantness, as—as— Oh, hang, what did you want to bring up private feelings for, Paula?"

Polly moved about the study for a few moments, then suddenly went out. Half-way up the corridor she met Pam.

"Barncombe, this afternoon, Pam?"

"Why, I rather thought of going somewhere on my own," was the candid answer. "Will it seem unfriendly?"

"Just as if! I expect we others will go into town. Perhaps you'll turn up there later?"

"I'd like to, Polly. Something been annoying you?"

The madcap grimaced.

"Paula will keep on moaning about the way all this upset is going to affect girls who have—brothers or friends at Grangemoor. So I came away! Seen Judy, Pam?"

"No. Why?"

"She's all right, isn't she?"

"About Dave? Oh, I think so. After all," said the little lady of Swanlake, "the row is between the two schools, not between individuals. I find it quite easy to be heart and soul on the side of Morcove; it doesn't make me humpy. Yet if I'd had a row with anyone I cared for at Grangemoor—"

Pam broke off, and that smile of hers came again.

"But there, you just don't have rows with anyone you care for," she expressed herself tranquilly.

"Brothers excepted, of course!" Polly grinned. "But you haven't a brother, so you don't know. You've only Jimmy Cherrol."

"He'd like to hear you say that," Pam nodded. "Suit his inferiority complex to hear himself called 'only Jimmy!'"

"You know what I meant," laughed Polly. "He is the—well, the only special friend you have!"

Pam received this in silence. But an extra severity of expression seemed to be as good as a vocal answer, implying that Jimmy, perhaps, was the only special friend she wanted.

The two girls went their several ways, neither of them realising that they had stopped for their chat outside the closed door of the Denver sisters' study.

"Did you hear?" Fay asked her sister in a whisper, turning away from the inner side of the door with a creeping step. "Pam Willoughby—off on her own, after dinner!"

"Yes, Fay. I thought that sounded—interesting."

For a long moment the two girls consulted each other with their eyes.

"I say, Edna, can't you sort of keep watch upon Pam this afternoon?" the elder girl whispered eagerly. "Do! You don't want to come with me and Bertie to Sandton Bay? You can have the treat some other time!"

"Thank you!" But Edna, as usual, was quite good-humoured over her sister's habitual monopoly of Bertie's attentions. "All right, Fay, I don't mind!"

"You know, dear, it looks as if Pam is up to tricks. Would she be giving her Morcove chums a miss, this afternoon, if she weren't hoping to see—"

"Jimmy?"

They both giggled.

"My word," Fay exclaimed suddenly, "it will be a first-rate scandal in the Form if Pam gets having 'dealings with the enemy'! Can't you imagine!"

"When Polly and Judy have bound themselves to have nothing to do with their brothers even!"

A pause.

"Edna, you do that this afternoon," the other again urged in feverish excitement. "Somehow, I feel I would like to catch her tripping—that Pam."

"So would I," nodded Edna.

#### CHAPTER 5.

##### On the Morcove "Front"

**T**WENTY-PAST two, and the Morcove cycle-shed crowded with girls getting their machines out for the afternoon.

Suddenly a girl came whirling upon the scene, in great excitement.

"Bekas—ze enemy in sight!"

"What's the kid saying?" some of Naomer's schoolmates straightened up to inquire, in surprise, whilst tending slack tyres and so on. "Enemy?"

"Ah, bah! Grangemoor, of course!" yelled the dusky one. "What ze diggings, have some of you forgotten that we're at war with them? And here they come!"

Naomer's only reward for bringing those sensational tidings was to find herself hustled aside, so that others might rush clear of the shed and so be able to gaze towards the school gateway.

"What rot! No one there!" the chorus started; and then Naomer fairly yelled:

"I tell you, zey are almost here! Bekas, I looked out of Study 12's window, and I saw! A whole lot of boys, on bicycckles, coming along at a hundred miles an hour!"

With due allowance for exaggeration, this had to be believed. The Grangemoor team had come over, after all!

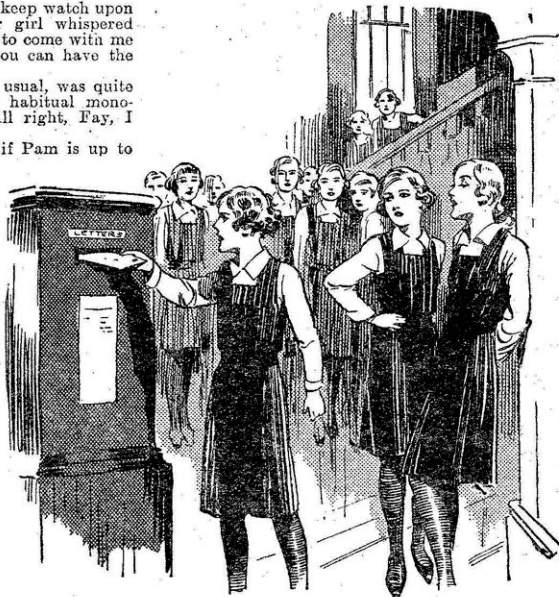
"Goodness!" gasped some of the girls. "But—but they know we won't play them!"

"You telegraphed, didn't you, Betty?"

"I did. If they've come, they must just go back again, that's all. It's not our fault."

"No!"

But there was, for a moment or two, a good deal of consternation.



Watched by an eager crowd, Betty approached the box and a moment later the fateful letter had been posted. Morcove had "declared war" against Grangemoor!

Then Betty was seen to be setting her machine ready for riding away.

That decided the dozen or so girls who had very nearly lost their heads. Carry on! That was the lead they were getting from the captain. Trust her to know what was right. No act of grace this time; no making a truce for this one afternoon—no!

Machines were mounted, and in twos and threes they were pedalled out on to the main carriage-way for the run down to the gates. Half-inflated tyres had to remain in that flabby state, pumps being clipped away with lightning speed.

"Come on, all!"

"For, don't you see," Etta Hargrove muttered, starting to make up with others for unavoidable delay in mounting, "this may simply be the

Denver fellow's attempt to FORCE a match!" "Oh, that never occurred to me!" someone exclaimed.

"It occurred to Betty—pronto, I know," said Polly grimly. "Well, let's get on."

It was like Polly's "bike" to be the most dilapidated of all the hard-worked machines. But she plugged away at the pedals, and with creaks and squeaks from various parts of the framework and the saddle, she was soon riding beside Betty, at the head of the long-drawn-out procession.

A moment after this the gateway, towards which the girls were riding, filled with schoolboys whizzing in on their machines.

How often had the sight of Grangemoor caps given the Form a throb of delight; and now—the colour in those caps had the effect of a red rag to a bull. Morcove's pride, so badly wounded by the Grangemoor insult of a few evenings ago, stiffened.

Not a girl slowed her machine. Instead, the entire covey of Morcove cyclists rode for the gateway—in stony silence.

Some of the boys had come whizzing in off the road with all their usual jollity. But it was not in fun that they almost fell off their machines and dragged them aside, as if to escape being run down.

Those boys were staggered, instantly realising that Morcove refused to know them even. Jack, Dave, Jimmy—they were here.

Out of the corners of her eyes Betty Barton saw Jack staring, agape, at Polly, who gave him a polite nod and that was all! It was the same with Dave, in regard to Judy.

As for Jimmy Cherrol, his eyes seemed to search the party of girl cyclists for Pam; but she was not here.

And now the girls were passing out through the wide gateway. They chimed their bells as a warning to any laggard Grangemoor fellow who might be coming in.

There were two or three schoolboys just turning in off the road, and the warning chime enabled all but one to slew aside in time to avoid collisions.

The solitary exception was Bobby Bloot—that beefy youth who was not only lacking in agility, but, by his great weight, imparted a special momentum to a bicycle.

Bobby, badly blown for breath—for he had found it hard to keep up even with the laggards—was suddenly confronted with a solid bunch of girl cyclists, and he seemed to know instantly that, for all he could do, he was doomed to crash.

If his hair did not rise under his cap, his eyebrows certainly went up in a comical expression of horror.

TR-R-RING, RING! Morcove chimed all its cycle bells imperatively. TR-R-RING! And one girlish voice, at any rate, shouted:

"Hi, look out! Bekas—!"  
Too late! By the irony of fate; by all that makes war the wrecker of individual happiness—Naomer collided with Bobby!

Crash! and these two, who, in amity, had so often discussed the merits of cream-buns and Swiss-roll, were tumbled to ground, with two bicycles looking inextricably mixed up!

"GOSH, boys!" Jack Linton was bursting out loud at that instant. "What's the giddy idea?"

"They won't play us, evidently," Dave said crisply.

"Then why didn't they let us know?" stormed

Jack. "Here we've come all this way, only to find them all going out for the afternoon! Oh, heck—and Polly; did you see her?"

"I saw Judy," said Dave. "I quite understand—"

"Oh, if there's a row on, so can I understand," Jack said grimly. "But is this playing the game—to let us in for this swizz? A wasted halfer!"

Bobby Bloot came in, wheeling a machine and with patches of dust still to be brushed from his flannels.

"My hat!" gasped Jack, who had paid no heed to the recent crash, just outside the gateway.

"What have you been doing?"

"He's been in the war," chuckled Jimmy. "One of the girls barged into me by accident. My fault," said Bobby, puffing for breath. "I'm sure she didn't mean it; it was Naomer!"

"What! Oh, ha, ha, ha!" Jack guffawed. "But, you goop, you! Fathead! Now they'll be able to say that you—"

"She wasn't hurt. I asked her. She didn't answer. Still," Bobby pleaded very ruefully, "I could see she wasn't."

"I'm saying this," Jack exploded afresh: "you're a casualty! It'll be called a first victory for Morcove, this will! Boys, what do we do with a chap who lets a girl come off best like this?"

"Boot him!"  
"The glory of Grangemoor is besmirched," Jack grieved. "Her fame, mes amis, is passing!"

"But look here, what are we going to do?" clamoured several of the disgruntled cricketers. "Just hang about until Denver turns up on his motor-bike?"

"What, and be told to push off back to Grangemoor?" Jack gasped. "No, boys. Besides, who wants to stand here, to have more girls riding by, turning up their noses at us? No match; all right, then, let's get into Barncombe!"

He slewed his machine round for riding away again.

"Come on, boys!"  
"Rotten!" started a chorus of disgust during the general remounting. "Of all the cheek! This is what comes of getting up matches against—girls!"

"Catch me ever coming over to Morcove again!"

"Go on strike first!"  
"Come on, Jimmy!"

He was still standing about, not even handling his bicycle. It was leaning against the stem of a tree, with a square parcel of some size lashed to the handlebars.

"I—I'll see you later," he called out flusteredly.

"Oh, booh!" he was playfully derided. "She won't look at you, Jimmy—ha, ha, ha!"

Then Jimmy's chums were gone, leaving him the only "enemy" in Morcove territory.

Uncertainty what to do about something was obviously his trouble. He made vacillating movements, as if at one moment yielding to the impulse to go and find, or inquire for, somebody, and then, in the next moment, deciding not to do so.

Meantime, rather strangely, from the interior of the brown-papered parcel at the handlebars of his machine, came a faint tweet, tweet! as of a small bird hopping about in a roomy cage.

At last he returned to his bicycle, turned it towards the gateway, mounted, and rode off. But he did not turn to the left outside the gates, the way his chums had gone.

Jimmy turned to the right and rode away

briskly in that quite opposite direction—perhaps because he had heard the faint tut-tut-but of a motor-cycle coming along from Barncombe.

A minute later, Bertie Denver turned in at the Morcove gateway on that smart motor-cycle which he, as a House captain, was permitted to own, being old enough for a driving licence.

He throttled off the engine, dismounted, and kicked down the back-stand, to leave the machine stationed beside the carriage way.

Then, with goggles pushed up to his forehead, he looked towards the schoolhouse. He seemed to be maliciously amused. The Morcove playing field was by no means deserted; but nobody came across to speak to him. He could tell, girls who were in evidence did not belong to the Form that had declared "war" against Grangemoor.

Suddenly, however, a girl came running out of the schoolhouse, to give attracting waves of a hand as she continued her run down the drive.

It was Edna Denver.

"Hallo, Bertie!" she breathlessly greeted him. "I'm not supposed to speak to you, but if I'm rude enough, perhaps that's as good as not speaking! So they've all gone out," she informed him, with pretended insensibility. "And you can just make all the formal complaints you like; WE don't care!"

"Good!" he grinned. "Fay?"

"She's in Barncombe, waiting for you near the bus station."

"Right-ho! But how about you, Edna?" he asked as she walked with him to his stalled machine. "Coming with me pillion, then?"

"Oh, no; it wouldn't be allowed; too unlady-like!" she purred. "Besides, I'm not going to Sandton Bay with you and Fay. Got something better to do!"

Astride the saddle, he kicked off, then lighted a cigarette before letting in the clutch.

"I'm going to see what's become of my team," he winked. "I'll give the slackers something—giving me the slip like this! Well, so long, Edna!"

"Cheerio! Hope you have a nice time."

"Here!"

So she came closer.

"If Fay gets back a bit later, Edna—what happens?"

"I let her in on the quiet, I suppose!"

"Can you?"

Edna nodded.

"The outside stairway—the fire escape," she whispered. "Fay knows."

"Saucebox!" he chuckled. "Ta-ta, then!"

And, letting in the clutch, he roared away.

## CHAPTER 6.

### In Secret

THIS was the very prettiest of old-fashioned cottages that lay snugly behind a nicely-trimmed hawthorn hedge, beside one of the lonely roads that traversed the wide moorland.

Pam had been here before; even so, she admired the picturesque scene it made as she now pedalled the last hundred yards to the wicket-gate, after a half-hour's ride from Morcove.

Such a low-built dwelling could only show its weather-toned thatch and the chimney of mellow brick to passers-by on the road, because of the front hedge. But Pam knew that that was the picture anybody like Tess Trelawney—the artist of the Form—would wish to secure.

Perhaps, some day, Tess could be brought to the cottage to do a water-colour sketch of it—to be

presented to the humble folk who lived here? One must see what one could do about that.

Meantime, Pam had come along with a little gift of her own—a collection of oddments of coloured wools that she knew the cripple girl who lived here would value greatly.

It was a sad, sad case of a young girl having to lie upon a couch most of the day; but she was a brave soul, and they were wonderful things that she fashioned with her knitting needles.

Raw materials was her great need; keep her well supplied with those, and, as her mother had once told Pam with great pride:

"'Tis click, click, click, hour after hour, and never a murmur—the dear lamb!"

Pam hopped down from her saddle, worked the gate open by imparting a thrust from the front wheel of the bicycle, and then wheeled the machine up a flower-bordered brick path to the trellis porch.

There was just time for her to untie the soft parcel of wools from the handlebars, and then the cottage door came open, revealing a homely, tidy young woman whose comely face held a delighted look.

"Miss!" she curtseyed; and then, in quick delight she spoke behind to someone in the living-room. "It is, Rachel! It's the young lady from the school!"

"How are you, Mrs. Carter?" Pam asked, as she accepted the "Do come in!" gesture. "Well, Rachel! Did you think I'd forgotten you?"

"Oh, no, miss! Besides, it's only ten days ago that you were here, for I've counted them! And fancy you finding time on a Saturday afternoon, too!"

"Don't struggle to sit up, Rachel, or else mother will wish me farther," Pam smiled tenderly.

Over by the sunny window in this well-kept living-room, with its tidy hearth, Rachel Carter was lying on an old sofa. A chair stood within reach of her, and on the chair was a needlework basket.

"Some more wools, Rachel——"

"Oh! There, now, mother darling—just when I've come to the end of all I had!"

"You deserve to be greatly blessed, miss, for such kindness," the fond mother murmured. "Ah, and the way you come like this, unbeknown to others! I desay; as my husband would say, doing good by stealth! Oh, Rachel darling, what heaps of different colours this time!"

"Aren't they, mother—just lovely! And such a lot, put together," the stricken girl sparkled ecstatically. "Oh, now I shall be able to make just what I wanted—a shawl for granny, over to Barnstaple! Would you like to see the tea-cosy I made?" she asked shyly.

"I'd love to!"

So Rachel, in a few moments, was studying Pam's face for signs of approval or otherwise as the tea-cosy came under inspection.

It was necessarily a crazy pattern, being worked in oddments; but the knitting was perfect.

"And you have kept the shape so well; that always seems to me so difficult, Rachel."

"Then you don't think it so bad, miss?"

"I think it perfectly wonderful, dear."

"Would you—would you like to have it, miss?" Rachel suddenly asked, after a doubt as to whether the gift was worthy.

"I would, indeed, Rachel! I should keep it at school, and use it at tea-time often. But, look here, dear, I wish you would let me— Now, you won't be offended, will you, Rachel? But you might let me pay for it, or else I shall feel



"I'm only bringing you wools for you to work for me!" Pam argued lightly. "I shall treasure it just the same!"

"You must have it as a gift, please, miss," Rachel pleaded. "I would love to sell something that I have made—but not to you."

"Very well, then! And thank you ever so much."

"Fancy you valuing the silly old cosy," the invalid girl laughed. "And you come from such a grand home, I know!"

"It's the young lady's kind heart, Rachel darling."

"Yes, mother! People ARE kind!"

"Why, so they should be to you," Pam smiled very tenderly. "But you're going to get well and strong some day, dear, and then you'll be able to do like other girls!"

"Yes," said Rachel; "then I shall be able to help mother about the home!"

Pam remained for a few minutes longer, in cheery talk with the cottage girl. The mother was out of the room most of the time, and this in itself was a sign of her pleasure at Pam's visit.

Doubtless the hard-working woman could think of many little things to do whilst her poor ailing daughter had company. So often Mrs. Carter would feel tied to the living-room, for fear of Rachel's spirits drooping in secret.

"Do you remember, Rachel, the time before last that I was here?" Pam said gently, when she was taking her leave. "You said how you'd like a canary, to hang in a cage in this window. I'm still on the look-out for one. I—someone said to me, best not to go to a bird-shop, but wait to get one from a private breeder."

"But, miss," Rachel said, her eyes a-shine, "you mustn't do so much for me!"

"No one can do too much for you, dear," Pam said. "Good-bye once again."

"You—you're such a dear," Rachel said, reaching her arms about Pam's shoulders as there was a bending over to confer a parting kiss. "I should think they just love you at your school. I know I do! Good-bye, good-bye!"

"And I'll come again soon, dear."

"I would ha' offered you a cup o' tea, miss," Mrs. Carter whispered, conducting Pam to the door porch, "but the truth is I'm out of tea until my Will comes in at ha'-past five. I couldn't get to the village this morning."

"Life must be hard—difficult for you all," Pam softly commented. "And yet you are so cheerful! Has the doctor been lately?"—in a subdued voice, inaudible to Rachel.

"He was here yesterday, miss," the mother answered, unlatching the outer door to let Pam pass out. "'Tis a main pity, but he seemed to feel that our poor lamb has gone back just a little o' late. I dunno, I'm sure, but—Hallo!" she broke, surprise banishing all the emotion from her voice. "Who's here, then?"

It was a schoolboy, just down from a bicycle which he had left outside the wicket gate, and now coming along the brick path.

Jimmy Cherrol!

Pam's heart seemed to turn right over. She had not wanted to encounter him to-day—at least, she had known that any meeting would be best avoided. She, Morcove, and he—Grange-moor.

But here he was, and it was too late for any evasion of him. Nor would she have been the one to dodge back into the sitting-room, even if that could have enabled her to evade him. Pam hated dodging tactics at all times.

Only for a moment was she slightly unnerved; then, with all her usual composure, Pam simply stepped clear of the porch, serene as ever, outwardly, at any rate!

"Afternoon, Jimmy," she acknowledged him. Morcove might be "at war" with Grangemoor, but at least one could remain polite. No disloyalty in that. Besides, one must consider the presence of Mrs. Carter.

"Oh—er—hallo, Pam!" he stammered. "Er—I say."

"Sorry, Jimmy, but I must—hurry."

"Oh—sorry!"

Beetroot-red, his face, in a moment, of course! Poor Jimmy! She knew for certain he was thinking what a silly ass he was! Whereas, he was just a plain, straightforward fellow, at all times so easily abashed.

What would have happened if she had cut him dead—on account of the "war"—she did not like to imagine. Even her mere politeness had been to him as a brickbat would have been to some fellows.

She went out by the wicket gate on to the road, and then realised that she had come away without her bicycle. Bother!

But she could go back to get it without a further encounter, for Mrs. Carter had invited Jimmy inside, and the outer door was closed.

As Pam took hold of her machine, at the porch, she could not help hearing Jimmy's voice from inside the cottage:

"Er—sorry if I've done wrong, but—er—I heard that your daughter wanted a canary."

Oh!

Pam's heart served her fresh tricks. She remembered mentioning the case of Rachel Carter to Jimmy, and how she, Pam, meant to be on the look-out to get the poor girl a canary.

Pam wheeled her machine out to the road, and then she heard—"tweet, tweet, sweet-ee!" coming from a bird hopping about in a brown-papered cage, suspended from the handlebars of Jimmy's machine.

There were ventilation holes in the brown paper. Pam stooped close and peered. Oh, what a beauty! One of this year's birds, and such a glorious colour!

She was warned, by hearing the clack of the cottage door, that he was coming out—to off-load the cage and take it in. She tried to be away in a flash upon her machine, but the very hastiness balked her.

The front wheel executed one of those violent turns that front wheels are prone to do, and there was a resultant flopping about of the entire machine that prevented her remounting.

Then, after his dart along the garden path, he was outside the gateway. He checked in surprise at finding her still there. Then he doffed his cap to her again; but that was all, except that he coloured up—again.

This time he was not venturing to address even a single word to her. He must have been longing to explain one or two things; but he understood. The "war"!

Pam mounted and rode away with at least some of her habitual dignity. But she was very miserable. Suddenly she felt furious.

The inward rage was not directed against the Form, for having gone to "war" with Grangemoor. She had approved Morcove's spirited action and was determined to "do her bit." All this burning anger was because there were people in the world who must revel in stirring up trouble. Some person or persons unknown had set the two schools by the ears like this. What a hateful

nature it must argue! And it was pretty evident, that the House captain of Challenor's, if he had not been concerned in the insult, had certainly not wanted to see the affair settled in an honourable, peaceful way—as it could have been, easily. So he was as bad!

Without much wanting to do so, she rode for Barncombe, to find her chums in time for tea at the Creamery. It was no unsociable mood that was upon her; simply an irritability that she did not wish any of the other girls to observe in her.

It was four o'clock by the time she got into the quaint old High Street, and, as a great parking of cycles in the bake-house yard evidenced, girls had already sought the tea tables, at the back of the shop.

Pam went in, and instantly she realised that a little comedy of the "war" was being played here in the tea-room. For, whilst Betty and numbers of other members of the Form were seated at tables to one side of the room—Grangemoor was in strong force on the other side.

Her first inclination was to burst out laughing. Then she sighed inwardly. No! Even the boys, carrying on these tactics with every sign of delight, were probably wishing they could mingle with the girls in the old chummy way.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Enemy in Touch

"HALLO, Pam; here you are—a seat, Pam."  
"And just in time; our order has only this moment come," Betty remarked, pouring out at that particular table. "Only just got into town?"

"Yes." Pam was laconic, because she did not care to describe what had been a purely charitable errand.

In a loud whisper, at this moment, Jack Linton hoarsely commented on Pam's rejoicing her chums, as he sat with Dave, Bobby, and one or two more.

"She's been to blow up the bridges, boys. I don't like the look of it! If our retreat's out off we are lost!"

"Wow!" howled Grangemoor fellows at other tables on their side, having heard this.

Morcove, on its side of the tea-room, pretended not to be taking any notice.

"Bekas, ze waitresses have given us ze best pastries, any old how!" Naomer shrilled, forking at an éclair. "Zey know which side is going to win!"

Polly glared.

"Sh'rrp, kid!"

"What ze diggings, why shouldn't I spik eef I want to? Eet isn't as if I am spikking to any of ze enemy! I wouldn't be seen spikking to zem, not for—not for all ze cream buns in ze shop! So you needn't zink it!" she impulsively shrilled across to Bobby Bloot, at that instant smashing a spoon into a cream bun.

"Sit round!" hissed Polly.

Flick!

Paper serviettes were supplied at the tea-rooms. It was one of these—it was Jack's—rolled up into a tight little ball, that suddenly clipped past Polly's nose.

"Direct hit, boys," Jack claimed in that stage whisper of his. "Hooray, more rations for the front line!"—as the waitress reached his table with a second tray.

Polly put on an air of proud scorn.

"I hope, Pam, this doesn't strike you as being rather painful?" Betty, smiled feebly. "We'll go as soon as we can."



Seeing Jimmy, Pam stopped dead. What a pity, she was thinking, that he and she should meet like this, while such a feud existed between their two schools!

"Not ze bit of eet!" dissented Naomer. "Bekas, let's stick it as long as we can, and ze side that stays ze longest wins!"

"Rather a costly business?" Helen demurred.

"War," Pam said, "is always that."

"Hooray!" came a sudden general cheer from the Grangemoor side of the room. "Good old Jimmy!"

"Oh, there's Jimmy, just turned up," Polly whispered at her table. "Where's he been, then—without the others?"

Grangemoor, through the medium of Jack Linton, was to prove ready to supply Morcove with detailed information of a fanciful nature.

"Give this man all he wants!" Jack was heard to say in a major-general's voice, in regard to Jimmy. "He has mined the Morcove road! Reports that all Morcove guns are duds—and they're awfully short of rations, too. Down to their last leg of mutton for Sunday! Captain Cardew, just put in orders to-night; Jimmy Cherrol to be promoted to lance-corporal—unpaid!"

A little after this Jack stood up. He appeared to be going to withdraw, but with the dignity becoming to a "brass hat" he took sudden violent exception to one of "the men." It was Bobby Bloot.

"Captain Cardew! Who's this fellow?"

"He's attached for rations, sir!"

"Put it in orders to-night; Private Bloot to be put on half rations! Let the brigade fall in in the market square," the general was adding,

with due self-importance, as he strode away, when some of the others wanted to know:

"Hi! Who's paying for this tea, Jack?"

"Oh, give a chit!"

However the Barncombe Creamery could not be expected to take the war as realistically as all that.

Morcove ultimately had the delight of hearing the enemy "arguing the toss" about the number of pastries eaten by various units. When, at last, Grangemoor trooped away, irrepressible Jack fired a parting shot at Polly.

It took the form of a carton of chocolates, so nicely tossed that, after describing the high trajectory proper to a big shell, it fell plop! in Polly's lap.

But Polly was taking the "war" seriously. She ran out to the pavement, intending to shy the carton back to Jack—and was immediately taken prisoner!

This resulted in some hasty, not to say panicky, finishing of teas by Morcove.

The last seen of Polly, she was being hilariously marched away, with Jack the very grimmest of her captors!

She could not be left to her fate; on the other hand, Morcove did not see how it could very well fight a battle in the High Street.

"But I know what we might do," Betty said, during the hurried settling up for the tea and cakes. "Their bikes are parked in the bake-house yard, like ours. We'll not let them have their bikes till they've set Polly free!"

"Gorjus!" Naomer's opinion chimed in with others of similar enthusiasm. "Bekas, it doesn't matter what happens in ze jolly old yard. Zey know us here!"

Which indeed was true enough.

Out went the girls, accordingly, manifesting a growing confidence in their intended manoeuvre. The bake-house yard was up an archway, so Grangemoor, if it attacked, would have to do so in a very narrow place. For defenders, nothing could be better.

"Bekas, you bowl zem over one at ze time," rejoiced Naomer, who evidently had visions of covering herself with glory.

"Hallo, though! Just look at my bike!" came the cry from Helen Craig, a moment or two later. "Oh, just look at all our bikes!"

Morcove did so.

"Howwows!"

"Bekas—what ze diggings!" yelled the dusky one. "Punctures!"

"Oh!" went up in fury from many of the girls.

"How mean! That IS—"

"A low-down trick, yes!" Betty frowned disgustfully. "Why, this is as bad as that insulting joke which first offended us! Every blessed tyre—"

"My tyres are all right," Pam announced in some astonishment.

"They are? Then yours are the only ones that haven't been let down."

"By punctures, too—not simply letting out the air at the valves," Helen disgustfully commented. "So this is the way Grangemoor makes war, is it?"

"Disgwaceful, yes, wather!"

"Let's serve their bikes the same way!" someone angrily suggested.

"No," Betty decreed flatly. "We went to war with them for not playing the game. Two wrongs don't make a right. But, no peace with Grangemoor until they've apologised for—everything!"

"Hallo!" the cry arose. "Here's Polly—must have escaped!"

## CHAPTER 8.

### "Under Both Flags"

**B**UT although Polly Linton came romping in at the archway entrance to the bake-house yard looking quite jubilant, that had nothing to do with any triumphant escape from enemy hands.

Nor was she looking as pleased as all this because she had been allowed to go free.

Polly regarded that as being, if anything, a humiliation. She had hoped to go on treating her captors—Jack especially—to looks of scornful defiance for at least a half hour.

But during the few minutes that she had been a prisoner of war, Polly had found out something that put the enemy in a rather better light than they had been of late. Hence her sparkling state as she came rushing to rejoin her chums.

"I say, girls, what do you think?" she panted. "Their House captain didn't tell them about that telegram!"

"What!"

"They wouldn't have come over if they had known that notice had been given, in good time, about the match being cancelled. So, no wonder the boys have felt—well, a bit fed-up. That even if we are at war with them, we might at least play the game!"

"But look at our bikes," Betty grimaced.

"Oh!" And any revived respect for Grangemoor died away in Polly instantly. "They did that?"

"Of course they did!" was the disgusted chorus.

"Bekas—"

"We were already in the teashop when they got here. They must have punctured our tyres," Betty reasoned bitterly, "when they were here in the yard, parking their own machines."

"The wretches!" Polly stamped. "Oh, if I had known, when they had me prisoner just now! I could talk to them then; that wasn't treason to our side. I'd have said a few things! And, instead, I began to feel— Oh, hang; never mind. I don't feel like that now, anyhow!"

"The strange thing is—Pam's machine," Helen commented. "Untouched!"

"Never! Well!" gasped Polly.

"What I zink," shrilled Naomer excitedly; "I zink Jimmy must have been given ze job to do, bekas, he came into ze shop after all ze other boys, you know! And we know what he is, for Pam!"

"Ah, yes!" For once, Naomer was considered to have shown great wisdom. Some girls in Pam's position would have become very confused, if not angry. But she quite calmly shook her head.

"Oh, no, not Jimmy," she said.

"Why not Jimmy?" Polly demanded rather hotly.

"For the simple reason—I know he wouldn't!"

"I might say that about Jack," the Morcove hothead at once argued. "Or Judy, about Dave. Is Jimmy the only fellow amongst all of them to— Oh, hang! Where's my bike? I'm going!"

They were all going—as soon as they could get the tyres up. But, as had been so disgustfully realised, these were definite punctures, not deflations at the valves.

For half an hour—for nearly an hour, Morcove

laboured at all its machines. One of the girls had to run round to a bicycle shop for more puncture outfits. On her return, she reported that High Street, at any rate, was deserted by Grangemoor.

"I don't believe we shall see anything of them, when we go."

"We had better not!" Polly said fiercely.

At last they set off, and not a Grangemoor boy was glimpsed during the run along High Street. The Morcove "army" pedalled along in a state of undiminished exasperation. Tempers had suffered badly during all that wrestling with the tedious, tiring, sticky job of puncture-mending. There was nothing any of them hated more than having to mend a puncture. So it was generally considered that Grangemoor could not have served them a more despicable treat.

"I am afraid, however," Paula sighed mournfully, "all is fair in love and war."

"It isn't!" Polly snapped. "Rabbits to that! There are certain things that are not done!"

"Well, they have only made it all the worse for themselves," was Betty's remark. "What will we be fit for when we get back to Morcove!"

They certainly were not fit for tennis or any other outdoor games, such as might have made the sunshiny evening pass pleasantly. Many an arm still ached after exertions over tyre-replacements and pumping up.

Some of the girls became onlookers at games being played on court and field by members of other Forms. The rest went up to the studies, to write or talk, whilst the evening sunshine and the warm breeze came in at open windows.

By-and-by, Miss Courtway was in evidence, first out of doors, and then upstairs in the Form quarters. Dusk was gathering now, and she, who carried on the old Morcove tradition of not being fussily interfering, was now exercising all necessary supervision.

She looked in at Study 12 and stayed for nigh ten minutes, sensing a good deal more than she was being told about the "state of hostilities." It must have been her strengthened belief that the girls and boys had better be left to wage this conflict without interference by high authority, for she had very little to say.

Study 12 noticed, however, that it was hinted afresh: if the whole thing could be kept from Mr. and Mrs. Challenor, over at Grangemoor, it would be a great relief.

A little after this, the Form-mistress looked in at the study tenanted by the Denver sisters.

"You all alone, Edna? Where's your sister, then?"

"Oh, Fay was here a minute ago, Miss Courtway. She's about somewhere."

"You're sure? It is lock-up time now. I know all the others are in bounds, if not indoors. But I haven't seen your sister."

"Well, she is in," Edna fibbed glibly. "I can vouch for that."

Miss Courtway nodded and went away, amply satisfied.

She was a mistress now, but it was not so long ago that she had been a Morcove scholar. Head girl at the start of last term; then a sudden call to act in an emergency capacity; since then, she had qualified, obtaining her papers during the Easter "hols."

So there had been no time to forget—if she ever would forget—her personal experiences as a scholar, one of which was that Morcove girls could be trusted not to lie.

Left alone again in the study, Edna waited a

few minutes in a wary attitude. Then, being sure that all was right for her purpose, she drew from between the sheets of her blotter—an envelope, gummed up as if it contained a note, yet it was not addressed to anyone.

Holding it concealed, in case she should encounter anyone unexpectedly, she went from this study very quietly, going down the corridor almost to its far end.

She stopped when she was outside the study

## WRITE TO-DAY

**Y**OUR Editor is looking forward to a letter from you. His address is "THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. If you would like him to reply to you personally, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope.



shared by Pam Willoughby and Helen Craig—next door to Study 12.

Of all the many voices audible from the captain's study, Edna Denver soon distinguished two that were respectively Pam's and Helen's.

This confirmed her belief that now was the safe moment.

She silently opened the door of this deserted study, went in quickly on tiptoe, cast the unaddressed envelope upon Pam's blotter—and as quickly retired.

**D**ING, dong! the chimes began to beat the three-quarters.

Edna, back in her own study, had something else to do now, just as secretly.

It was almost dark out of doors, and every girl now was indoors—or believed to be. But Fay Denver—Fay was not in yet, and so she was dependent upon the outside iron stairway as a means of getting in unbeknown to anyone except her sister.

Downstairs, the formal locking-up had been seen to by authority. A few minutes, and the bell would clang for Big Hall.

Edna crept away from her study again, and this time she turned to the right to go along to the stairs. She ran up one flight to the half-landing that came before the dormitory floor. Here there were push-bar doors, opening on to that spacious outside stairway which offered escape for girls in any emergency like fire.

Stealthily Edna pushed the strong, brass bar, so that the fastener slid back.

Then she flashed away, although if anyone had met her, a few minutes later, she would have looked all leisurely innocence, dawdling to her study.

She went into that room once more and waited. Suspense was beginning to tell upon her, when suddenly Fay whisked in—smiling!

"Five to nine—shocking!" Fay tittered, after closing the door. "But thanks, Fay, for managing it so nicely! You're a sport!"

"Oh, it was nothing. Had a nice time?"

"Just lovely! I say, Edna, Sandton Bay's the place to go to for a spree. How's the war going on?"



"Oh, it's been a regular scream for me," was the giggled answer. "Just fancy, Fay; when the girls came out of that teashop in Barncombe, to get their bikes, they found all the tyres punctured!"

"Were you with them, then, in Barncombe?"

"Oh, no—not with them! I won't say I was not there—to you," Edna winked. "But you don't see the joke of it yet. They think Grangemoor served the machines that trick, and—Oh, I shall die of laughing! It was I, Fay—it was I!"

"What a perfectly lovely jape! But I hoped you would have something to tell me about Pam Willoughby?"

"Oh, and so I have!" Edna tittered on. "I know where she went, this afternoon, and I know who turned up whilst she was there."

"Jimmy Cherrol?"

Edna nodded, laughing gleefully.

Fay sat down. She relaxed.

"Oh, I'm tired, Edna! We found a dance-hall, and Bertie simply wouldn't come away, so in the end we had to run for that late 'bus. I was nearly dead when we caught it."

"Miss Courtney was asking about you. But I made it all right. I say, Fay, if I should want you to do as much for me, some time—you will, won't you?"

"But of course, dear! Have you promised to meet him, then—some time? Although there is a feud on! Oh, Edna!"

"I didn't even speak to—him."

"Meaning—Jimmy Cherrol?"

"I'm not answering any questions, Fay, so there!"

"But I believe," the elder sister smiled, lazily studying Edna's saucy face, "it is Jimmy. You saw him, anyhow! Oh, and look here, what are we going to do about Pam Willoughby's 'treachery' in having dealings with the enemy? We ought to do something!"

"That's all right," laughed Edna. "I've done something already, for a start!"

PAM WILLOUGHBY came out of Study 12 in advance of chums who, during the last half hour, had been holding quite a council of war.

Nothing more had been said about hers being the only bicycle that had not had its tyres punctured. In case there were those who might feel deterred from bringing up this matter in her presence, she had gracefully slipped away.

Pam sauntered into her own study, next door. Night had fallen, so she had to click on a light.

Then, to her surprise, she saw an unaddressed envelope lying like a note intended for her upon her blotter.

She advanced to the table and picked up the envelope. Its flap was properly stuck down.

Pam ripped open the envelope, drew out a half-sheet of notepaper, and found that it bore only one word, in a disguised hand.

And that one word was:

"TRAITOR."

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

## PAM FACES A CRISIS

Determined to stir up more trouble in the Form, the Denver sisters pursue their secret scheming; and all their efforts are directed towards killing that great friendship which exists between Pam Willoughby and the other members of the Form.

Next Tuesday's vivid long complete school story reveals the dramatic situation which arises, involving Pam in the most tense crisis of her school career. It will hold your interest from the first chapter to the last.

"NO TRUCE WITH GRANGEMOOR"



BY MARJORIE STANTON

Complete in "The Schoolgirls' Own" next Tuesday