

39-14  
"PAM WILLOUGHBY'S DOWNFALL"

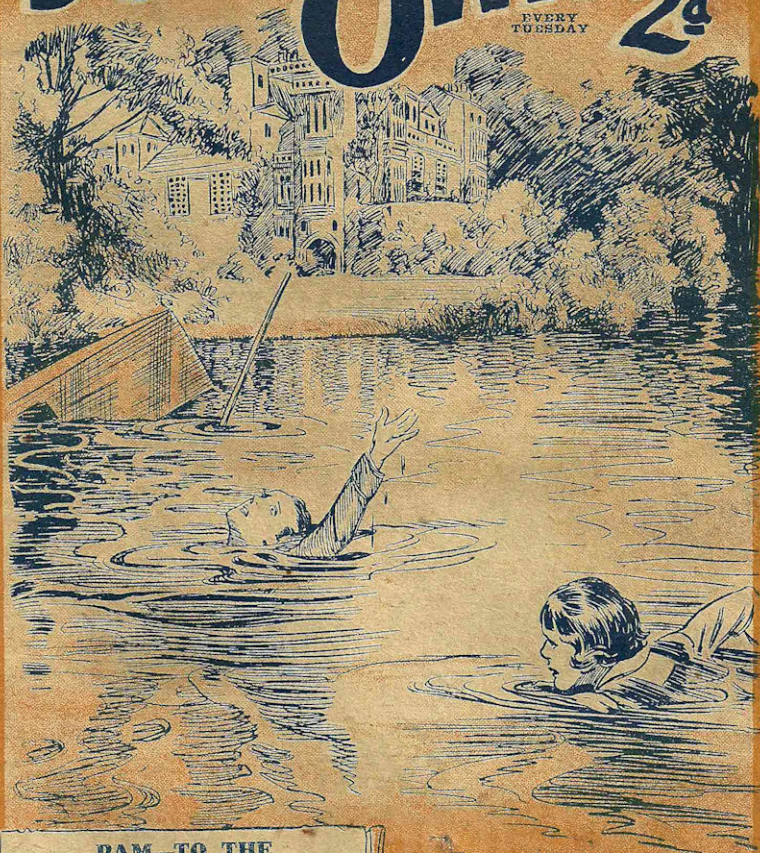
Brilliant Long Complete Morcove School Story Within

# The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

No. 713, Vol. 28,  
Week ending  
October 6th, 1934

EVERY  
TUESDAY

2d



**PAM TO THE  
WASTREL'S RESCUE!**

A stirring incident from this week's  
magnificent story of Morcove School.

Now on Sale: THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN ANNUAL—6/-

The Chums of Morcove in a Brilliant, Long Complete Story

# Pam Willoughby's DOWNFALL



By MARJORIE STANTON

**B**ECAUSE her cousin, Billy Charters, has sunk so low, Pam Willoughby feels that it is up to her to help him; and, although she does her best for him, the cost to herself is appalling, as you will see when you read this splendid story of school life.

## CHAPTER I.

### "My Turn Now!"

**I**T was five to twelve by the class-room clock.

Miss Kitten, the new Form-mistress at Morcove School, was now eagle-eyed. In the desks, girls were racing their pens so as to get finished in time for a prompt dismiss. Inevitably, some girls would be finished before others, hence Miss Kitten's special vigilance.

She did not mean to allow any relaxation by those who found themselves with a minute or two upon their hands; no whispering—not so much as an exchange of smiles even!

More and more during the last few days Miss Kitten had been inclined to feel—as she did not appear to be liked by the Form—she might just as well be all the firmer!

Suddenly she had frowning eyes behind horn-rimmed glasses for Naomer Nakara—that dusky imp who was Morcove's royal scholar from a tiny desert kingdom in North Africa.

"You know I don't allow whispering! I heard you, Naomer!"

"What did I say zen, plis?"

"Silence! How dare you!"

As this reprimand created some tittering here and there in the desks, Miss Kitten had her attention distracted from Naomer, who, accordingly whispered to a left-hand neighbour:

"Good job eef she did hear me, Paula! Bekas she knows what I zink of her!"

"You had bettah wefvain fwom—"

"Paula, Creel!" cried Miss Kitten sharply. "Talking! A hundred lines, to be started when I give the dismiss!"

"Wait ze bit, though, plis, bekas—"

"Naomer, am I to say again? How dare you!"

"But I am being quite perlitte, standing up!" was the dusky one's virtuous protest. "And all I want to say ces, I made Paula talk, much obliged to you for letting me eggspain!"

"You will stay in also, at twelve o'clock, and do a hundred lines! The class—pens down! Those girls who have not finished—hold up their hands!"

Quite a number of right hands were raised.

"I don't know what you have all been doing, not to be finished by now," rapped out the irate Form-mistress. "You cannot go until you have finished, that is all! But now—fold arms, all! Before I dismiss those who have completed the lesson—a word to you all!"

Oh? What, then, was coming now?

Miss Kitten picked up a briefly-written note, which had been kept ready for this moment, on her own desk in front of the class.

"I have received an application from the Form captain for permission to take all of you to her



home at Swanlake, a few days hence, for the opening meet of the hounds. Well, I am sorry—" "Sorry!" some of the girls were thinking. "She looks sorry—oh, yes!"

Miss Kitten, in fact, looked spitefully pleased at treating the class to a bitter disappointment.

"Permission might have been granted," she remarked tantalisingly, "if there had not been too many occurrences lately of a tiresome nature, all resulting from too much liberty being given—too many favours granted. So there can be no going to the meet of the hounds at Swanlake."

Nothing in the mistress's severe mood could prevent many of the girls from giving grumbling murmurs. It was a very real disappointment Miss Kitten had dealt them all. An opening meet of the hounds is always a sight worth going far to see. In this instance, the whole thing was likely to be particularly picturesque and memorable, as it was to take place at stately Swanlake—ancestral home of the Willoughbys, and Pam Willoughby was the Form's own captain at present!

"No," Miss Kitten decreed firmly. "I have discussed the matter in all its bearings with the headmistress, and this time—"

By her special emphasis on "this time," and a hard smile, Miss Kitten was unwittingly acknowledging that at certain other times she had had to give the captain "best." There was a triumphant "at last!" in her manner which a good many girls did not fail to mark.

"This time the headmistress is as convinced as I am; such a concession would be a mistake. The Form has not earned the treat. And I may as well add, Pam Willoughby, you will do no good by going behind my back to Miss Somerfield."

"I don't go behind people's backs," flashed the Form captain from her desk.

"No, bekas—"

"Girl!" Miss Kitten cut Naomer short, and dealt her own desk a loud slap of the hand.

But the class as a whole was suddenly restive, murmurous. A general resentment of that slur on the captain—and perhaps, after all, one should not have said it! If it came to Miss Somerfield's ears—an aspersions upon a girl of Pam Willoughby's stamp.

"Those who have finished—books away! Dismiss!" the new mistress said hastily. "The rest, continue! Paula Creel—Naomer Nakara; those lines, remember!"

For a few moments the minor commotion of desk-clearing prevailed; then those girls who were free to leave began to march out.

Pam Willoughby was one. As she went by the Form-mistress, that young lady's hard smile came again, accompanied by a little nod, as much as to say, "My turn now, my girl!"

Pam took all this with an unruffled air. No sooner was she outside the class-room, with at least half the rest of the Form, than she was suggesting some hockey "praccer" on the field. Which was like Pam.

But most of these other girls were not endowed by nature with that equanimity which was Pam's. As they scurried to equip themselves for a half-hour on the games field, they had some fierce things to say about Miss Kitten.

"I couldn't bring myself to like her when she first turned up," sighed Biddy Loveland. "But I didn't think she could be quite so horrid."

"No!" voiced others disgustedly.

"Beastly shame that we can't have the treat Pam put in for! It would have been such a jolly outing; so nice over there at Swanlake!"

"Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby, I should think, will

be furious," said another girl. "Not to have Pam with them on the day!"

"And Pam is so fond of riding, too," Madge Minden rejoined, very feelingly.

"Bother Miss Kitten, I say!" Tess Trelawney absolutely raged. "If she had liked to do the decent thing by all of us, Miss Somerfield would never have been the one to—"

"Oh, it's all very well, to go on about Miss Kitten," struck in a dissentient voice, and there was some turning about to stare at the speaker.

"Huh! Perhaps you didn't want to go to the meet, anyhow?" snorted one of the disappointed girls.

"I shouldn't have minded going," was Edna Denver's condescending response. "What I say is, the new mistress isn't as bad as some of you make out! She can be nice enough—grant favours, if she thinks they're deserved. See how she let me and my sister Fay go to Sandton last Saturday! Only—"

"Only—what?" demanded half a dozen of the disgruntled girls curtly.

Edna shrugged.

"Isn't it obvious; Miss Kitten doesn't like the captain!"

"Obvious enough," Judy Cardew agreed sadly. "But is that a reason for our disliking Miss Kitten any the less?"

"Oh, if it's to be 'the captain, right or wrong'—"

"I can't talk to you, Edna!" someone exclaimed, and others seemed to feel the same. "What's wrong with the captain, anyhow?"

"Oh, nothing"—sweetly—"except that—as you all admit—the Form-mistress doesn't like her. Pam may not be able to help that! But it's going to make it rotten for the Form—as I see it!"

Which said, Edna sauntered away. She was not going out to the field. Like her excessively pretty sister, Fay, she "loathed" games. When games were to be dodged, the Denver sisters were the ones to dodge them.

Edna went upstairs to the study which, in a long corridor of studies reserved to the Form, she shared with Fay.

"Those fools of girls," Edna said to her sister, who was already in the study; and a slammed door stressed the scorn implied by the remark. "They want Miss Kitten to be different. What they don't see is that, with any other captain Miss Kitten would be different!"

"No mistake, she has got her knife into that Willoughby girl," Fay laughed. "And no going to the Court of Appeal this time! I wonder how the pride of Pam Willoughby likes that!"

Edna walked about the study, frowning.

"How I wish the idea would spread in the Form that we'd all be better off with another captain. I would love to see her—outed!"

"Perhaps this disappointment will—"

"Not it! All it has done is to make them rally round Pam all the more. Anybody can tell! They reckon that Miss Kitten has been hitting at Pam through the Form."

"Rather smart of Miss Kitten," Fay laughed. "That's the way to hit at Pam!"

"But it's all very well, Fay; I wanted to be at the meet—"

"What! Be treated to the hospitality of Swanlake—Pam's own home!"

"Bother Swanlake and its hospitality! I wanted to see Billy Charters, and it would have been a chance. He's living there with Pam's people."

Fay raised her gaze from the study carpet.

"By the way, Edna, talking of Pam's cousin

## CHAPTER 2.

## His Cheek

Billy—I thought he was going to do something to make her lose the captaincy? Just to pay her out!"

"Give him a chance," Edna grimaced. "He meant it, right enough. But it has got to be done—carefully. It's one of the things I wanted to see him about."

"I wonder," Fay murmured, leaning back in her easy-chair, "can he really be relied upon there? We know he has absolutely turned against her; but he may have something in him still that tells him not to do the unfair thing."

It was Edna's turn to laugh.

"Billy has got past caring about fair play and all that," she exulted. "Anyhow"—with a swift change to fury—"if he doesn't bring it off, then I'll have nothing more to do with him! He won't like that!"

"Then why not tell him so?"

"How can I tell him when I can't see him?"

"You could write—"

"About a thing like that? And have the letter intercepted! No, thank you," Edna said tartly. "I'll have to meet him somehow, somewhere. But the question is—"

"Would it be better for me to see him, dear?"

"Oh, don't be funny," Edna snapped, and in her peevishness she turned her back to her sister, drifting to the study window.

Fay, glancing that way whilst still lolling elegantly in the easy-chair, could see her sister's face reflected faintly in the glass of the lower sash. There was a V between the set of the dark eyebrows, and the set of the mouth told how sharply teeth were being clenched.

It all caused Fay rather to pity her sister. They were very fond of each other, and as "thick as thieves," as a rule. Nor was Fay without experience of the exasperation it meant, to want to do something—meet somebody—and yet to be unable, because one was at school, and school had its rules!

Suddenly Edna gave a violent start. After staring excitedly through the window glass, she threw up the sash so as to be able to see out all the better.

"Well?" drawled Fay, smoothing a stocking.

The younger sister flashed round at the window.

"He's here!"

"What? Who is here, Edna?"

"Billy Charters!"

"Oh, well," Fay laughed, "don't get as excited as all that. It must be Pam he has come to see, not you. Pam's his cousin—and cousins, like brothers, in the eyes of Morcove, are different!"

Edna was not in the mood to take such teasing, calmly.

"You're a beast!" she informed her amused sister, and stalked out of the study, closing the door after her—**SLAM!**

"I SAY, Pam, look! Do you see who it is?"

"Where, Polly?"

Both girls were at hockey practice on the field, and until a moment ago they had been doing as much as any of their schoolmates to give the little white ball no rest.

But now Polly Linton, having brought the captain to a standstill by a surprised cry, gave a directional nod towards the main gateway.

"It's your cousin Billy, Pam!"

So it was, as Pam instantly realised. Although he wore the Grangemoor cap, such as she and her chums mostly associated with Polly's brother Jack, or Judy's brother Dave, there was no mistaking the loose-limbed fellow at this moment slamming the bicycle from which he had dismounted against the stem of a tree.

But the game was still going on, and Pam merely said a calm: "Yes, well," intending to resume.

This did not surprise Polly. The captain might be wishing she could instantly run to meet her boy cousin; but it was not like Pam Willoughby to desert her fellow players for the sake of suiting her own convenience.

Ah, how often of late had Pam, as captain, put the Form's claims upon her before all else.

In looks as well as actions—the game's the thing with her! Nothing to show in her severe expression how she must be wondering why her cousin had come to Morcove like this.



Joyously, the Morcove party swarmed round Betty, and Naomer, for one, yelled aloud: "Hooray!" But Betty was wondering: Why hadn't Pam come, too?

Who would have imagined, being in ignorance of all that Pam's best chums knew, that here was a girl whose great anxiety, at present, was to co-operate with her father and mother to save Billy—from himself! Billy, so badly deteriorated that he was now no better than a waster.

Meantime, although he must have picked out the familiar figure of tall Pam amongst the hockey players, Billy was going straight up the carriage-way to the school-house.

He wore a bold, almost impudent air, and he did not step with that briskness so nice to see in a schoolboy, implying fitness and athleticism.

But if the Form captain had been in no haste to meet Master Billy, the same could not be said of the Form-mistress.

Espying him as she took an after-school saunter in the open air, she met him at the top of the drive with a challenging:

"Yes, what is it?"

"Oh, a note, Miss Kitten——"

"For me?"

"Oh, no. This is from Bertie——"

"And who, pray, is Bertie?"

"Bertie Denver," grinned Billy, quite enjoying a brush with a Morcove mistress of whose asperity he had heard a good deal. "At my school, you know; he's sent me with a note for his cousin Fay. He's a pre, you know."

"I would say prefect, boy, not pre! And I don't know that this note-sending has my approval. All very well; but what with cousins and brothers of Morcove girls at your school, hardly a day seems to pass but what——"

"Oh, it's quite an ordinary note," Billy Charters chucklingly assured Miss Kitten. "It's to ask for some field-glasses, I fancy, that were lent by him to his cousins—that's all."

"Go to the waiting-room indoors," said Miss Kitten precisely. "Let one of the maids take your note to Fay Denver, and doubtless she will let you have the glasses to take back. Oh, but here is one of the Denver girls! Er—Edna!"

"Yes, Miss Kitten?"

It was a most demure response from Edna Denver, who now diverted her steps to approach Billy and the Form-mistress. Miss Kitten must have imagined that it was quite by chance the girl had been drifting by just then, so unconcerned had Edna looked!

"A note from your cousin at Grangemoor, about some field-glasses. It's for Fay, so you had better find her."

"Oh, thanks!" Edna said blandly, receiving the note from Billy. "Shall you—er—be waiting?"

"He is to wait in the interviewing-room, if there is anything to go back. By the way, what is your name, boy?" demanded Miss Kitten, as Edna ran off.

"Billy Charters."

"Oh, are you—that boy! Then, I suppose," said the Form-mistress, "your cousin Pam must be allowed to see you—for a minute or two."

"She doesn't seem to want to speak to me, so it doesn't matter; don't trouble," Billy remarked aggrievedly. "She knows I'm here—and if she can't stop play for a moment, I'm not the one to run after her, to beg her."

This so reassured Miss Kitten, she changed her mind about being present at any interview. She hurried across the grass to where the girls were at hockey.

"Pam Willoughby, if you go at once, you may have five minutes' talk with your cousin. I will take on in your stead out here." ("And show you girls," her manner seemed to imply, "what I call—hockey!")

"Thanks," said Pam, handing over her hockey-stick.

Billy was at the porch by now. She saw him go in, and she brisked up her step. Anxiety accounted for the haste. As for any pleasure at seeing him—if only there could have been that pleasure which the relationship warranted!

What was known as the interviewing-room was a dim and plainly furnished retreat, just off the front hall, where a visiting parent or guardian could, if so desired, have a perfectly private chat with a scholar.

Pam went in and found Billy lying back in a great armchair, his manner derisory. He did not rise, and was definitely offensive with his:

"Huh, it's you, is it!"

"Have you come from Grangemoor, or Swanlake?" she asked calmly.

"Grangemoor, of course. What do you think—that I've been playing truant? But I'm off for the rest of the day, anyhow," he laughed gruffly. "Old Challenger told me to pack up, as I complained of feeling queer."

"You're all right, I hope, Billy?"

"Oh, rather! That was all-my-eye about being queer. And then Bertie Denver—you know him?—he asked me if I'd bike over here to Morcove, with a note for Fay. And how," he inquired derisively, "is the captaincy going on? You are a goop, Pam, to stick to that job—a rotten tie, and making you heaps of enemies."

"We won't talk about that, Billy."

"Coming to the meet on Saturday?"

"No. I hope you'll be able to follow the hounds, Billy. You can ride my pony, if you like."

"The old Shetland? No, thanks! I'm not a kid."

"I didn't mean my old pony, Billy, but——"

"Oh, well, never mind; shan't be riding, anyhow," he yawned. "Gosh, I'm tired to-day. Didn't get to bed until after eleven."

"We have only a minute or two, Billy. Last week I sent you some money in secret. I hoped that you would use it to pay back the money you stole from Jimmy Cherril's study at Grangemoor—money that was held by him as treasurer of one of the clubs. But——"

"Oh, shut up, Pam!" he growled, heaving out of the chair. "I've had that before from you, and I'm not standing it again. A dashed insult to a fellow: rotten of you, to have jumped to the conclusion that I'm a thief."

"It has been proved, Billy."

"No, it hasn't been proved, so there!"

"It was proved last Saturday, only——"

"Ah—only!" he caught her up. "So I'm right and you're wrong!"

"How you can say that, Billy, when you know very well now that you would have been shown up last week-end, only Jimmy wanted to go on bearing the blame for the vanished money, and he was able to have his own way."

"Well, that's his look-out!"

"For the sake of all of us who belong to Swanlake," Pam stressed, "Jimmy is screening you. I think it terrible. Oh, Billy, can't you bring yourself to go to your Housemaster about it all? Or to daddy, at Swanlake?"

"But I don't admit that I ever did take the money!" he blustered.

"Sooner or later, Billy, you'll be found out. Make a clean breast of the whole thing at once, and allowances will be made, I'm sure, for the state you've got into. I'd do all I could to plead for you to be given a fresh chance."

"Rabbits!" he scoffed uncomfortably.

"But listen, Billy. I must be frank—"  
 "That means more insults. But go on; I don't mind. What you think or say doesn't matter to me a scrap, Pam. 'Tisn't as if I care the least bit for you as a cousin now, because I don't! You're not my sort."

She received this in silence, only resuming after a painful pause.

"Those who'd have to deal with you, if you confessed, Billy, are those who know that you came to—well, to be helped to make good. You—you weren't always like this, Billy; we—we've all realised that you must have lapses. The theft, Billy, was a very bad lapse, but it was only a lapse—wasn't it? At a time when you were feeling—being back there at such a fine school, with such fine fellows for chums—that you would like to play the game, as they do?"

"Is this," he jested shamelessly, "how you talk to the other girls, as captain? My hat, some of you and this school of yours! There's that Form-mistress of yours; I'm sure a chap might think the place was a prison! And then you start!"

"I've finished now, anyhow, Billy," she remarked gently. "But that doesn't mean I give you up. You're my cousin, and I never forget that you might have been different if you'd had brothers and sisters. Of course, you've never had a settled life—"

"I don't know that I want one!"

"You were at Grangemoor before, and then you were taken away, to go out East again. Then things went all wrong out there, and you came back once more—to Swanlake. So, Billy, good-bye, and—"

"And any messages for Jimmy?" he grinned. "Don't be afraid to say? I'm not jealous of Jimmy Cherrol. But I tell you what does rattle me—makes me think what a humbug you are, Pam! All this guff about wanting to see me make good, when all the time you know very well you are only thinking about him! Puh!"

He swung towards the door, then faced round.

"And Jimmy's a humbug, too! He is! Pretending to be a martyr for your sake, when he did have the money that vanished—and I didn't!"

The hurt to Pam was visible now, in the deathly pallor of her delicately beautiful face. Her cousin's insulting words in regard to herself—they were to be ignored, as being so much bluster. But the insult to Jimmy—that lad, who had even CHOSEN to go on bearing the ignominy!

"Proof of Billy's guilt would have been produced last week-end; but Jimmy himself had frustrated the production of it. Choosing to go on like that—shunned by half the school!"

Billy wrenched open the waiting-room door, and there, in the hall, was Edna Denver, just come downstairs, carrying a small package. She advanced to meet him jauntily.

"Going? Here you are, then—the field-glasses!"

"Oh, ha!" he grinned. "And is that all?"

"For the present—yes," said Edna, with a meaning smile. "Good-morning!"

"Good-morning—miss!"

Pam was waiting in the room until the pair of them should be gone. She knew that Billy was going out of the schoolhouse, grinning to himself. She was aware of Edna Denver treating her, Pam, to an impudent and mocking smile.

But all this was only vaguely seen and felt by Pam, whilst a mental picture came to her,

with terrible vividness, of Jimmy Cherrol at the other school in his shame-ridden, shunned state.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Pam Won't Say

UPSTAIRS again, Edna Denver went prancing to the study where she had left her sister, five minutes since.

"All I can say is," smiled Fay, "that boy Billy has enough nerve for a dozen!"

"He's a lad, isn't he?" Edna laughed. "The whole thing—under the very eyes of Miss Kitten!"

"And of the captain, too!"

"Oh, I must tell you, Fay; he was talking to Pam when I got downstairs just then."

"That didn't please you!"

"What! As if I mind—pooh! But you should have seen his looks when he came away; and her looks, funnier still. He, he, he! It's a scream, Fay darling!"

"I don't know that I ought to be a party to it all," pouted the elder sister playfully.

"You're having all the luck and all the fun, lately, Edna. Where do I come in?"

"It'll be your turn, dear, some other time."

Edna was in high spirits now, ready to besprinkle her talk with endearments. As for Fay, her shallow nature enabled her to admire, although she pretended to condemn, the recent darning of Billy Charters.

"A piece of impertinence, Edna, I call it; his pretending that the note was for me, from Cousin Bertie."

"Oh, well, he couldn't turn up with a note for me. Somebody might have suspected! Naturally, Bertie would write to you; he always does."

"He doesn't lately, and I'm feeling off with Bertie," stated Fay. "Oh, well, if he can find some other attraction—so can I! Did you really let that Charters fellow have a note to go away with, asking him to look out for you this evening?"

"I did!"

"Disgraceful! I don't know how I am ever to become captain of the Form, Edna, with a sister like you! Why don't you help that Charters fellow to make good?"

"He's got his Cousin Pam to help him do that," said Edna. "Ha, ha, ha!"

PAM heard the laugh as she went by in the corridor. She was going to her own study. There was no purpose now in resorting to the games-field—play must be at the point of ceasing.

Otherwise, she would have mastered all the personal anguish, as she had mastered it so often of late, displaying a calm exterior as she mingled with her schoolmates.

From the Study 12 window, a few moments later, she saw the practice game end. Immediately, the girls came careering for the schoolhouse. Not one of them, as Pam noticed, lingered to return indoors with Miss Kitten.

What a difference, that, from the time when Miss Everard—now a Housemaster's wife at Grangemoor—was the Form-mistress!

The new mistress, if she had possessed the right disposition, should have endeared herself by now to the girls. Such a pity! Pam said to herself.

But then, what a lot there was in life to deplore. And all so evident to one, when one was

still at school! Some people would have refused to believe it possible.

The bursting in of Polly and others roused the sorrow-stricken captain out of her pensive state. Those who had come from the games-field had picked up Paula and Naomer on the way.

"A hundred lines, bai Jove!" sighed Paula, dropping down into the best armchair.

"A hundred measly, sweendling lines!" shrilled Naomer, dashing to the corner cupboard for an apple. "And ze next time—I go on ze strike, I will, you see!"

"She might have made it fifty," said Madge. "She would have," was Polly's opinion, "if they hadn't belonged to this study. Oh, and now Pam is looking like Betty used to look, whenever I said things! 'Be fair, Polly!' But I am fair! It's Miss Kitten who is unfair!"

"Talking of Betty," said Pam cheerfully, "I wonder when we shall see her? Soon now, I hope."

"Yes, wather!"

"Bekas—gorjus! Ze last we heard from her, she was to come down to stay at ze Headland Hotel, to get quite well after ze motor accident."

"This will be almost like her native air to Betty—the Morcove air!" Helen Craig delightedly remarked. "Oh, and it will be jolly for us, as well as for Betty—when she is at the Headland."

"Less than a mile from the school!" Polly nodded.

"And so she can have us all to tea, and we can have her to tea; and zen perhaps we shall be asked zere to dine, and—Hooray, just fancy, dinner at ze Headland! Grape fruit, and horsed-duffers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Naomer never could get the correct pronunciation of hors-d'œuvres.

"And soup, and chicking, and zen roast beef, and ices, and—"

"Honk, honk," Polly snorted. "All you think about—stuff, stuff, stuff! As for whether Betty is ever going to be her old self again—"

"Not ze bit of eet, bekas, zat is just where I come in," the dusky one asserted. "I shall soon get Betty quite well again, when I get her fed-up—"

"You get me fed-up," Polly was interrupting, amidst laughter, when the door flew open in front of someone with a message:

"Pam—the headmistress wants you, at once."

"Right-ho!"

The captain went away quite composedly; but those who remained succumbed to vague apprehension. There was some exchanging of uneasy looks.

"Now, what does that mean?" Polly fumed.

"Something about Grangemoor, perhaps?" Judy anxiously speculated. "To do with Billy Charters?"

"She hasn't said a word about his visit just now," Madge murmured. "It couldn't have been a helpful one, or Pam would soon have told us. The things that try her are the things she is always silent about."

Polly took one of her impatient, stamping turns about the study.

"The news we want is the news that Jimmy has been righted at school. Why, when I saw Billy, swanking upon the scene just now—ugh, I could have gone for him! But imagine what it is like for Jimmy—to be shunned by half the school! Whilst there's Billy, going scot free—"

"I know, and it's too bad—"

"Disgwaceful, yes, wather! Howevah, geals, we hev to wealaise; Jimmy is probably greatly fortified by the reflection that—"

"If you don't stop making speeches!" cried Polly, brandishing a snatched-up ruler. "As if we don't all know that Jimmy is quite content—even happy—over what he is bearing, for the sake of Pam and her people! But is that any reason why WE should be content?"

"On the contrary, Polly deah—if only you would not jump down my throat—"

"I'll jump all over you," the madcap threatened; but she was suddenly softening towards the elegant one. "Oh, Paula darling, you're a trial, but I suppose you can't help it! I say, girls! Perhaps we're to go to the meet after all! Perhaps that's what Miss Somerfield wanted to tell Pam!"

"I wish I could think so," demurred Helen. "But no; from the way Miss Kitten spoke, at Dismiss, there's not the faintest."

"Then there is another row on, I suppose!" Polly gloomed.

"Good job! Bekas, we didn't do it, whatever it was! So, good chance to go on ze strike! Up, ze Form!" Naomer rehearsed the revolutionary cry. "And no giving in until we have got ze sack for Miss Kitten—and an extra halfer to celerbrate!"

"Look out!" whispered Polly, simply to give Naomer a scare.

As Miss Kitten was rather given to creeping about and appearing round corners when least expected, Polly's playful warning created a moment's stillness in the study. Then they heard a welcome sound—the unmistakable returning step of their captain.

Pam came in, and she looked radiantly happy.

"She's there, girls!"

"What?"

"Betty—at the hotel now."

The captain might say it as calmly as that; but her listeners could not receive the news calmly. They went off their heads completely.

"Bekas—" yelled Naomer, leaping across to pound Paula upon the shoulders. "Hooray, hurrah—"

"Owch! Ow, stabb it, kid!"

"But isn't eet?"

"Ye-es, w-wather—owp! But that's no weason why—"

Naomer seemed to think it was. Nor could Polly intervene, being engaged in waltzing Helen round the table.

"Oh, but how splendid!" the madcap breathlessly rejoiced.

"And Miss Somerfield says we might go to tea with Betty at the hotel, this afternoon!"

"Wh-a-at!"

Betty's mother is down here with her. She rang up Miss Somerfield to ask if we could—"

"And that was that!" Polly blithely rejoined. "Miss Kitten not consulted; how lovely! How perfectly splendid!"

"Bekas, do you hear, Paula?" And Naomer descended upon the long-suffering one again.

"Tea at ze Headland—"

"Yahroch!"

"Cream-buns—"

"Owch!"

"Meringues—"

"Oooch!"

Naomer could think of a few more eatables likely to be in the Headland's tea-table selection, and as she punctuated each item with an ecstatic thump on Paula's shoulders, there was the amus-



ing spectacle of Paula huddling down in the chair more and more.

Yet such was the victim's joy over the latest news about Betty, she made a beaming revival from her battered state.

Then Pam said quietly:

"There's one thing I want to tell you, girls. I shan't be coming."

They stared; they gasped.

"You won't, Pam?"

"No. But whatever you do, don't let it be known in the school. And I know you will give Betty my fondest love, and say I'm awfully eager to see her again. You can give me a full account of how she looks when you get back."

An astounded silence followed this.

"Yes, that's all right," Polly said at last.

"But why aren't you coming with us, Pam?"

"Oh, I'd rather not say."

And with that unhelpful answer Pam's amazed chums had to rest content.

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### Betty Again

**B**ETTY BARTON stood by herself at one of the high windows of the Headland's spacious lounge, watching the road along which her expected chums would be coming from Morcovoe School.

It was tea-time at the Headland Hotel—a delightful hour for all who were here for the winter season. The orchestra was tuning up; and guests were now drifting in from golf or afternoon rambles, to relax in comfortable armchairs.

A waitress came across to Betty with an air of particularly wanting to do everything possible for this schoolgirl—and a Morcovian at that!—who had arrived from London with her mother a little after midday.

"If you please, miss, I've put a couple of tables together in the corner over there, where I thought you and your chums would be nicely to yourselves. So when they turn up, you'll know!"

"Oh, very good of you—"

"Not at all, miss! Perhaps you'd like to see if all looks nice and ready?"

So Betty, walking with a bit of a limp, went across to that corner with the waitress, and was instantly in a rapture of delight.

"This is splendid! Thanks so much! So many cups and saucers," she laughed; "it will be just like pouring out for them all again, in my study at Morcovoe."

She would have drifted back to that window, but now the porter was shaking the curtains together there, as it was a window that did not face the sunset.

The band struck up—a fine string band—and the first item a piece that Betty knew to be one of Madge Minden's favourites.

Madge—she would be here at any minute; they would all be here! Polly and Naomer and Paula; and Pam—the captain now! Tess, too, and Helen, and quiet Judy; oh, but it was thrilling, to be going to see them all again.

And suddenly they were here. The swing doors revolved, waiting them in one after another—just a little shy of their surroundings until they saw Betty, getting to them as fast as the limp would allow. Then:

"Hooray!" Naomer shrielled, and instantly clapped a hand over her mouth, fearing that she had done enough to get herself turned out.

But there was nobody here who could not find keen delight in watching the joyous meeting between Betty and her loving chums.



"You must go back, Edna," Pam said steadily. "Oh, why?" flashed the other furiously. "If not, you'll report me, will you?"

"Mother had to go into Barncombe; but she should be back any minute now," Betty soon remembered to remark. "She wants to see you all; but we're not to wait tea. It's over here, girls"—leading them to the prepared corner.

"You're awfully thin, Betty!"

"Isn't she?"

"Oh, that's nothing, girls! There's nothing to fuss about now! I've got to get rid of this limp, that's all. Is Pam coming on presently, then?"

"Oh, about Pam, Betty dear," said Polly, rather uncomfortably; "she sent her love and is dying to see you—of course she is! But—"

"Mean to say she isn't coming?"

"As a matter of fact, Betty, she did come—part of the way," Polly said, subduing her voice. "Then she left us."

"I say! Why?"

"We don't know, dear. She wouldn't tell us. You know what Pam is; like you, Betty, a good one at saying nowt."

"So long as there is nothing that she doesn't want you girls to be worried about," was Betty's comment on Pam's strange absence. "But it looks rather like that. From your letter, girls, the new mistress isn't as nice as she might be?"

"Eef you ask me, ze new mistress is a proper wash-out," Naomer piped in. "And unless you want to spoil a gorjus tea for me, Betty, plis not mention Miss Kitten any more! Bekas, she and cream-buns and éclairs and all zese gorjus things"—which the dusky one was eyeing hungrily as she spoke—"don't go well together!"



Inevitably, however, after the start of tea, Miss Kitten's name cropped up time after time in all the lively chatter. The effect was by no means depressing, for mostly Betty was regaled with amusing anecdotes about the new mistress, out of whom indeed a good many rises had been taken by the Form.

About the personal animosity towards the present captain as little as possible was said, and it was the same in regard to Pam's anxieties in connection with her Cousin Billy.

Betty's chums would have preferred to be altogether silent about these matters; but it was certain that, being in the district again, even though she was not back at school, she would soon hear things, in any case.

So it seemed best for Betty to have the story from those who had full knowledge of Pam's ordeal.

"How awfully sad, though—about Billy Char- ters," came Betty's distressed comment, presently. "I remember him as being a difficult fellow—when he was at Grangemoor before. But I never imagined that he would go down like that. He must be an utter hardened scamp now, to have done a thing like that at his school—and then to leave poor Jimmy Cherrol to bear the blame."

"Billy is horrid; a lout, and nothing else," Polly declared, carried away by her disgust. "And it is just about breaking Pam's heart to see him—so. Oh, there I go, as usual, blurting out things best left unsaid! But Pam is with us all day, Betty, and—"

"Quite, dear. And, of course, we all know that she is extra sensitive about matters of honour and decency and fair play. What a packet for her—this business with Billy."

"Yes, wather!"

"And she'll never give up the struggle to try and pull him round a bit; you can tell," Madge feelingly murmured.

"She is wonderful, Betty," chimed in Helen. "And never once has she done anything without feeling sure that it was just the thing you would have done, as captain," Polly ardently supplemented.

"I can see," Betty nodded admiringly, "Pam has managed splendidly under very trying conditions. How I wish it could have been a happier time for her! Poor Pam; I long to meet her again, to be able to say things. And that makes me wonder, once more—why she didn't come along this afternoon; where is she now—I wonder!"

WHERE was Pam, at the very moment when there was that revived wonderment as to what had become of her?

Pam was out on that part of the moor which fringed the road running between Morcove School and Barncombe town.

None of the girls whom she had accompanied half-way in the short walk to the hotel could have guessed that she was going to resort to the undulating wastes of gorse and yellowing bracken.

Polly and the rest had seen her turn back, when Pam parted from them, as if to return to the school. They had guessed that she was not really returning to the school; but more than that they could not conjecture.

Nor had anyone else belonging to Morcove seen the Form captain go off the road on to the moor.

Girls in chummy twos and threes had been cycling towards the town, for there was just time for them to do the run into Barncombe and back, before the regulation hour for being finally

indoors. But Pam, with great wariness, had contrived a perfectly secret retirement.

All the fortiveness was hateful to her; but the motive both warranted and necessitated it.

Doubly compelling, the cause of her present actions! As Billy's cousin, she must do this thing for him; as the Form captain, she must do this thing—for the sake of the Form and the good name of Morcove.

So now, this girl, whose nature was "blade straight and steel true," lurked amongst the screening gorse and stunted hollies, hating to have to do such a thing, and yet—she must!

She felt ashamed; but this she knew the greater shame would have been, not to try and intervene!

To have been assailed with such a definite belief that Billy and Edna meant to meet each other, and to have shirked the frustration of such an escapade—that would have been unpardonable in her, Pam, as captain of the Form and also as his cousin.

Nor was her lying in wait like this to be classed with anything like eavesdropping or spying intentions. She hoped not to have to overhear a word; hoped, in fact, to meet them separately, convince them that they could not see each other in such circumstances—against all the rules of both schools—and so compel Edna to return indoors whilst Billy took his bicycle and rode away to Swanlake.

Odious business; but it could not be helped. Billy would be furious; Edna, simply mad! The very waywardness of boy and girl alike guaranteed the fiercest resentment at interference.

But, there; she who had endured Billy's insults at midday, and had borne with all Edna's goading, mocking looks in the last week or so—she should be able to endure now.

The early-setting sun vanished behind a bank of cloud that hung over the western horizon. As Pam waited on, confident that she had stationed herself in the most favourable place, the hush of nightfall seemed to fall upon the moor.

The trill of a robin now and then was all she heard, until suddenly—

A faint rustling of drying bracken fronds warned Pam that someone was moving about, close at hand.

She raised herself on tiptoe to be able to see over a gorse bush that sheltered her, and then she saw the prickly branch of another bush right itself, after being pressed aside by someone in passing.

Pam at once stepped quickly in that direction, passed round a rather expansive mass of gorse—and was face to face with Edna Denver.

Perhaps Edna, detecting someone else's footsteps, had felt sure they must be Billy's. It was certainly a smile of expectant pleasure that gave place to a look of surprise and fury as the miscreant stood confronted with her own Form captain.

No triumphant smile was Pam's. She was far from feeling exultant at having suspected aright and waited not in vain. A calm, grave look was hers as she said:

"Now, Edna, you must go back."

"Oh—why?" Swiftly enough was Edna summoning insolence to her aid. "If not, you'll report me, will you?"

"Most certainly I shall."

"You would! Sneak, then; tell-tale—spoil-sport!"

"But I also," Pam said steadily, "happen to be the Form captain. It is as your captain—"

"Oh, is it! Not as Billy's cousin, then? The prig who is wanting to help him make good—ha, ha, ha!"

"I wouldn't be too loud, if I were you, Edna. You might be heard. Do understand; if this should become known, you'd be expelled."

"But you're going to tell, in any case!"

"You know very well I'm not! I have done my best to save you from your folly, and I promise you nobody shall ever know—not even my most intimate chums shall be told—"

"On condition, of course, that I make a lot of promises—"

"No; only on condition that you go back now. I must hope that there won't be a chance for anything like it again. At any rate, I have got to be content with preventing this evening's meeting."

"Might I ask how it is that you can be so certain that I have arranged to meet your cousin?"

"It was in your eyes, at midday; in his laugh, when he went away from the school."

"Well, and what does it matter if I am meeting him? It isn't late. It's only a harmless—"

"You'd never get Miss Somerfield to regard this as harmless. At the best, Edna, you are doing a thing that will put an end to the friendship that has existed between our school and Grangemoor. You are spoiling it for others. The end of it will be, we shall never see even a Grangemoor team over here for a match. But it's a mistake to argue. You mustn't remain here. Please go back."

"I shan't, so there!"

"Edna—"

"I can go back, and you can stay out, is that it? Not much!" Edna raged. "That's your idea, all the time; one law for you and another for the rest of us! And I'm not standing for it! I shall go indoors when it is time to be indoors, not before!"

She added fiercely:

"You mean to meet Billy yourself—you know you do!"

"That won't mean any pleasure to me, I can assure you," Pam answered. "As a matter of fact, I don't think I shall wait for him to turn up. I can put off my talk with him about all this, and so be free to—"

"To stay with me?"

"Yes."

Again they fought a duel of looks. Pam's steady eyes looked straight into Edna's. In the gloom, something came and went in this other girl's eyes that resembled forked lightning.

The dead silence was still continuing, when suddenly a hurried and violent trampling sounded, and in a couple of seconds Billy Charters burst upon both girls.

"Hallo!" he jerked out breathlessly. "I thought I heard talk!"

Then, at a standstill, he treated Pam to a glaring look that meant:

"What's this?"

So interpreting the look, Edna said fiercely: "This is your cousin, the captain—butting in again!"

"Hang you, Pam!" His voice was roughened by anger. "To blazes! You think you can come the high-and-mighty over us, do you? What's she been saying, Edna?"

"Ordering me back to school, if you please!"

"Of all the confounded cheek! Well?" He glared again at Pam truculently. "Got any orders for me, too?"

"No, Billy; only advice—"

"Oh, rabbits! We've no time to waste, have we, Edna? Come on—"

"And be reported!" Edna laughed bitterly. "That's the threat."

"What?" he gasped.

"I mustn't even take a stroll with you; if I do, she'll get me expelled."

"You rotten sneak," he grated at Pam. "You hateful swanker—that's what you are; swanker, just because of your tuppenny-ha'penny captaincy!"

"Have you finished?" Pam asked, unshaken by his gust of vituperation. "If so—"

"I've finished with you, but not with Edna—see?" he panted. "Here, come on, Edna; let's not waste time like this. You haven't long, of course. Come on!"

Then Edna moved a step or two, as if determined to walk away with him. At the same time she smiled at Pam more and more, over a shoulder, as if daring the captain to try to detain her.

Billy chuckled. He caught Edna by one hand, to draw her on; and then suddenly she snatched her hand away—stopped dead, panic-stricken.

"No!" her wild eyes and quick shake of the head conveyed to Billy. "I—I must go!"

She was slipping away on the instant; giving a final gesture imploring Billy not to follow. His goggling eyes followed her as she snaked silently between some bushes.

"Don't you understand?" Pam said very quietly. "She has heard or seen someone coming—a mistress, perhaps."

"Oh—oh, is that it?" he stammered, and glanced about nervously. "But I don't care—not if she's slipped off all right. No!" he declared, and laughed gruffly. "I shall know what to say, Pam—and serve you right!"

There was just time for Pam to grasp his despicable meaning, and then this twilight scene had someone else entering upon it with a kind of feline rush.

Lucky Edna, to have sensed the danger in time to be able to slip away; for here was—Miss Kitten!

## CHAPTER 5.

### Not Believed

THE kindling eyes behind Miss Kitten's horn-rimmed glasses held a look which said:

"I thought so; I guessed as much!"

She could not speak at once. Very likely she felt half-suffocated by a joyful swelling of her heart right up to her throat. At last—at last, this!

Pam was tragically calm. Billy, having seen his way to turn the catastrophe to good account, could afford to laugh impudently.

"Evening," he greeted Miss Kitten, doffing his Grangemoor cap. "Nice evening!"

"Have you a bicycle?" she asked in a towering way.

"Oh, yes—not far off."

"Then I have only one question to put, before asking you to go to your machine and ride straight home! Did you ask Pam to meet you like this, or did she ask you?"

"She asked me."

An inner voice seemed to be saying to Pam: "He is doing this to you—a thing that will cost you the captaincy. But it is nothing compared with what he has done to Jimmy."

Either her senses had reeled a little, or else the waning light was playing tricks with her sight.

Both Miss Kitten and Billy had, for a moment, become vague shapes to her; now they came, as it were, into focus again.

"You have heard your cousin's answer; Pam Willoughby. Is it true?"

"I am sorry to say—no."

"Oh, what a lie, Pam!"

"Boy, you must not use that tone," the mistress rebuked him sternly. "And I don't like the word 'lie.' 'Prevarication' is better! You assert then, Pam, that he asked you to meet him?"

"Oh, no, Miss Kitten."

"Then what is the explanation you would like to offer?"—drily.

"Simply that I thought he might be over this way, and waited about."

"Bad enough, Pam Willoughby—and you, the captain! But do you seriously expect me to believe that this was not an arranged thing? You saw this cousin of yours to speak to, at mid-day. I very indulgently granted you leave to have a few minutes' talk. Another example of how kindness is thrown away! Of course, you made an appointment with each other, then."

The mistress turned again to Billy:

"Isn't that so?"

"Yes, that's right, if you must know," he answered sullenly. "But where's the harm? She's my cousin; besides, surely you can trust a Form captain!"

"That, very obviously, is just what one cannot do," Miss Kitten returned bleakly. "At any rate, not this captain! However, I do not think you will remain a captain much longer, Pam Willoughby. Not after this!"

She added slowly, annihilatingly:

"You are a disgrace to the school. If the head-mistress herself does not say the same, I shall be most surprised. Now, come along with me, at once, to be taken to Miss Somerfield."

Billy was grinning.

"Good-night, Pam," he said. "Best of luck! And mind what you say about me! 'Tisn't my fault! Goo'-night, Miss Kitten!"

"That," said the mistress to Pam, as he ran off, "is a most detestable boy. He never even tried to shield you, Pam Willoughby. Not that it would have saved you from the disgrace to come; but if he had any gentlemanly instincts, he would have at least tried to shoulder some of the blame."

"You gave him a good chance to do the other thing, didn't you?" Pam said coldly.

"That will do! Anything you have to say, keep it for the headmistress. Come!"

And they went together, stonily silent towards each other, out to the road that would take them back to Morcove School.

## CHAPTER 6.

### And Billy to Blame

IT was nearly dark when those who had been across to the Headland Hotel, for tea with Betty Barton, came trooping in at the school gateway.

Other girls who had been out of bounds since the close of afternoon school were now safely under Morcove's roof again. It was past the regulation time for getting in, but this did not mean that Polly and her present companions were late.

Miss Somerfield herself had fixed the time of their return, taking into account that they were a party of girls with only a short distance to come.

"Although I expect Miss Kitten will manage to look down her nose at us," Polly chuckled. "Oh, well, she can be hanged!"

"Bekas, we have had ze gorjus time," Naomer's shrill voice came in the darkness. "And didn't Betty enjoy herself!"

"Didn't you!" the madcap retorted. "Stuffing away—"

"Yes, weally, the kid was positively gweedier than I have ever— Owpl!"

"Zen, you be careful what you say about me! What ze diggings, zey charge ze same, however much you eat, don't they? Well zen, fancy letting zem take half ze cakes back!"

"Betty's mother is a dear, isn't she, girls?" Judy exclaimed. "I like the touch of Lancashire in her voice; Betty's lost that, but Mrs. Barton—"

"Ay, she cooms from Lancashire, tha knows," Polly prettily mimicked. "Jolly, that we got her to promise to come to tea with Betty, in Study 12, on Saturday."

"It makes something to look forward to for Saturday," said Helen. "We shan't be going to the meet at Swanlake. Look at all the lights on in the schoolhouse, girls."

"But I don't see a light in Study 12," Polly remarked. "Where's Pam, then? She must be indoors, of course."

"In the music-room, perhaps," Madge suggested.

"I shall want to find her at once," said Polly. "She wouldn't tell us what was keeping her away from Betty's party; surely she will tell us now?"

They had gone a little farther up the drive, when Madge suddenly emitted a distressful murmur.

"I hope it's all right, girls, but somehow—I feel that something awful is going to happen."

"You do?" two or three of the others questioned. "Why, what makes you, Madge—"

"I don't know; I—I just feel like that."

"Not about Pam?"

"Yes, about Pam."

Unconsciously they all quickened their steps. It was not that Madge's strange presentiment had infected her companions; but it had given an acute turn to all their sympathy for the captain at this time of severe trial.

Finally, Polly broke into a run for the porch. The others scampered after her, but she was there before them, stabbing a finger to the bellpress as they came crowding up to be admitted. It was necessary to ring, as "lock-up" time had gone by half an hour ago.

"Now for Miss Kitten," the madcap grimaced. "Bound to be her!"

And Polly was wrong, after all. Neither Miss Kitten nor anybody else representing Authority answered the ring at the bell.

The door was instantly opened by a scholar, with whom stood two or three other girls. She and they were all members of the chums' Form. "Sh!"

This, and an upflung hand by the one who had opened the door; struck the returned scholars all of a heap.

"Why, what?" they gaped. "What's up, then, Etta?"

"A row on—a terrible row."

The whisper being Etta Hargrove's, it had to be taken as being no exaggeration. She was a level-headed girl, with no fondness for sensation.

"Row?" Polly panted. "What about?"

"The captain."

"Pam?"

Several of them turned to Madge. Her prophetic utterance, only a minute since!

"Come in; come upstairs," Etta entreated softly. "Miss Kitten is out of the way, but at any moment she may show up."

"Pam's not in a row—with the headmistress?" came from Judy.

"Yes, she is. And she has lost the captaincy!"

PAM came away from the headmistress' private room looking pale but perfectly calm.

It was all over.

Even if, in a desperate attempt to clear herself of the charges that had been made, she had informed against Edna Denver—what would that have availed? Nothing!

The effect, indeed, would have been worse than useless; it would have damaged her, Pam, all the more in the eyes of her headmistress.

This was not a case where one's word would have been accepted in preference to a girl certainly known to be a bit tricky. For, in this case, any denial of Edna's would have been supported by Billy's assertion.

Since he had stooped to lying, to save Edna at the expense of her, Pam, no defence was left.

But, of course, she would never have dreamed of dragging Edna into the affair.

So it was all over, and now the Form must find yet another captain. At this very moment the Form was without a leader.

"You lose the captaincy, Pam—now!" In those words had Miss Somerfield voiced her stern decree.

Pam made her way upstairs, calmly passing a few Form-mates who eyed her askance. She knew from this that somehow her disgrace was known. A taste of what poor Jimmy had had to suffer, in that first hour when unmerited disgrace fell upon him, at Grangemoor.

"First Jimmy, then me," she was thinking. "And Billy's doing in both cases. It's strange; Jimmy and I—hit like this."

Voices in Study 12, as she got to its closed door, told her that the girls were back from their visit to Betty at the hotel.

She took a grip on herself and went in, and the sudden cessation of all talk showed that these good chums had been talking about her.

"How was Betty?" she serenely asked. "And did you have a nice time?"

"We had so much to tell you, Pam," Polly spoke at last, finding that nobody else was going to speak. "And now— Oh, what's this about your being in a row?"

"Bekas, eef eet is zat. Miss Kitten's doing, zen I jolly well go on ze strike, I will! I tell you," Naomer shrieked, "I am bursting to go on ze strike! I pack some food, and clear out, and—"

"Kid, sh'rrp!" Polly requested curtly. "It's not the time to be funny."

"Funny! You zink I am not seerious? You wait!"

"Miss Kitten can't be blamed this time," Pam remarked fairly. "She was only doing her duty."

"That may be so," Polly burst out hotly. "But there must be a mistake—one that must be righted!"

"It can't be," said Pam, "and that's all there is to it. No use looking like that, girls. I'm out, and—well, the bat simply goes to another girl now. I hope she'll have a good innings."

"It's sickening!" Polly stamped. "But the Form must appeal—"

"To whom?" smiled Pam. "You can't go to anyone higher than Miss Somerfield. Besides,

anybody else, told what Miss Somerfield has been told, would have to support her."

"Zen, what I say, go on ze strike, bang away! Bekas—"

"If you don't hold your row, kid!" glared Polly. "Look here, Pam, tell us exactly—"

"Oh, no; that wouldn't do the slightest good."

"Pam!" they all supplicated; but she still shook her head.

"And I think," she said steadily, "I had better see about moving back into my own study at once."

"What!"

"I moved into Study 12 simply because that is recognised as being the captain's study. Betty

## Morcover Features

IN

## The Schoolgirls' Own Annual

Now on Sale - - 6/-

● Two brilliant Morcover stories, a Morcover play, and many fascinating articles.



had captaincy books and papers here which I had to take over. Now I'm ready to hand them over to the next captain."

She advanced to that side of the study-table which had been hers, as if to start some clearing up, but Polly wildly interposed.

"Pam! What we've been told—and it was Etta Hargrove who told us, too—is that you were caught meeting your Cousin Billy just now, by Miss Kitten. That's the story flying round the Form. Is it true, or have we the right, anyhow, to tell girls that they are all wrong?"

"It seems," Judy supplemented gently, "that a few remarks were overheard when Miss Kitten was taking you to Miss Somerfield. The headmistress happened to meet both of you in the passage—"

"That is so," Pam nodded.

"Then the Form has got it right?" Polly fumed on. "Except, of course, that the reason why you met Billy has not come out? Oh, Pam, why DID you meet him like that? He's let you down—that's what it means! That cad—Dash, I'm sorry, Pam," and Polly's voice suddenly broke.

"I must remember, he is your cousin, whatever else he may be!"

"That's quite all right, dear."

But Polly seemed to feel that she could not re-



main a moment longer in the study; could not breathe whilst she was here!

"Oh, I'll do something—I must!" she cried, and whipped open the door to rush away.

Her impetuosity infected others. Whilst more level-headed girls like Madge and Judy remained to engage Pam in quiet talk, Naomer and Helen and Tess dashed out after Polly.

She had secured only a moment's start of them, and yet they found her already exploding in front of several girls whom she had come upon in the passage.

"Are you talking about Pam?" Polly was fiercely demanding. "If so, I hope you're going to see that she doesn't deserve this blow! If all the facts were known— Well, what?" reading complete disagreement in these others' looks. "Say it, then!"

"The facts are known—"

"They're not, Eva—not all of them!"

"Oh," shrugged Pat Lawrence scornfully. "Anyhow, sufficient is known to satisfy the headmistress!"

"Miss Kitten has—"

"Never mind about Miss Kitten, Polly; the headmistress can be relied upon to judge fairly!"

Polly clawed a hand over her hair wildly.

"Then you girls, anyhow, reckon that Pam deserved the loss of the captaincy? Are there any others?"

The next moment or two, evidently, would find that question answered one way or another. Girls were coming out of studies all the way up the corridor, feeling inclined to join in this heated argument.

So Polly and her three chums found a gathering crowd, and every face had a look that proclaimed changed opinions about Pam, a lessened faith in her.

"You're all, are you?" it was like Polly to rage out with a passionate stamp of the foot. "Content to see her robbed of the captaincy—"

"Robbed? Who's robbed Pam of the captaincy?" protested Pat indignantly. "Careful what you say, Polly. Has any girl had anything to do with it all?"

"Isn't it rather Pam's own doing?" submitted Ella Elgood bleakly. "Everlastingly running after that cousin of hers!"

"Yes, yes, that's what it amounts to, Polly!"

"You don't understand!"

"Oh, give us credit for a bit of common sense," someone answered Polly, and there were applauding murmurs.

"Listen, Polly—and you other Study 12 girls," pleaded Pat Lawrence. "Get this into your heads! Ever since Pam became captain, it has been the same. You know very well, that afternoon when she was standing the Form a tea—even then she dodged off—"

"Left us, yes—although we were her guests!"

"And look at what she did this afternoon; look at this very latest," the aggrieved talk was carried on by another disgusted girl. "She was supposed to be going with you other Study 12 girls to see Betty at the hotel! She was given leave for that. Wouldn't lots of us have been glad to have the chance to see Betty? But Pam, she made it a chance to go off on her own—"

"Shame, shame on her!" the angry murmurs came. "And that's Pam—of Swanlake!"

"We did think better of her than that, Polly! If any of us did things—"

"Oh, but it's evident," sneered Edna Denver, hovering on the fringe of the crowd with her sister; "the idea has been, one law for the captain and another law for the rest of us!"

Then Polly lost her temper and started to push between some of the girls, to get at Edna. She was pushed back, with cries of:

"Dash so much of it, Polly!"

"Nash you!" she raged at them all. "You can hear a girl like Edna say a thing like that!"

"Well, then, give us a chance to hear Pam say something, for a change!"

This, from Pat Lawrence, was received with loud approval. It was known that Pam was in Study 12. Why didn't she come out?

Above all the hubbub of so many voices, Helen Craig suddenly voiced distressfully:

"If Betty knew what is going on now—"

"Oh, keep Betty's name out of it!"

Then Polly, wildly:

"Betty is Pam's friend! Nothing will ever alter Betty's faith in Pam!"

"Oh, won't it! Speak for yourself, Polly!" came from here and there in the crowd.

Next instant there was some boing. Pam had appeared, just outside the Study 12 doorway.

She calmly beckoned to Polly and the other chums to have done with such noisy argument. But they were too worked up to pay heed, and so she walked forwards, meeting increased boing.

It was such a commotion as should have brought Miss Kitten hurrying upon the scene, but was it likely that the Form-mistress was going to quell a demonstration directed entirely against Pam?

Very conveniently, Miss Kitten was hearing nothing—unless, indeed, she was hearing everything from a listening point at the stairs end of the corridor and secretly rejoicing!

"Booh! We don't want to see you, Pam Willoughby—booh!"

How they were letting her have it now; a kind of mass hysteria, some girls joining in the scornful outcry simply because there were others around them voicing such convincing reasons for despising Pam now.

"All her fault that we've been given less and less freedom!"

"Yes-s, booh!"

"We lost a match because she wangled a visit to Swanlake, instead of going with the team."

"Yes, so we did—booh!"

ALL this, simply because Billy had played the enemy's game against her! It was the abiding thought in Pam's brain, as she stood facing the hostile throng.

A few hours ago, her supporters; and now— they scorned her.

Even as Jimmy, at Grangemoor, was being shunned by half the school, so now she was being shunned by half the Form, here at Morcove.

"DON'T stay here, Polly. And you others— please," she entreated, still outwardly calm.

The crowd had hushed, abruptly, to catch what she was saying. Pat Lawrence instantly rejoined:

"It can all end at once, Pam Willoughby, if you'll say you're sorry."

"There are several things I'm sorry about," she answered. "And one is, that you ever made me captain."

The words—the tone—the sublime composure of the girl! In this moment, when feeling was running so high, it was forgotten that Pam was only displaying her usual inborn dignity.

Now many of her former admirers could only regard her as having resorted to an impudent defiance. "Hoot me as much as you like!"—and they hooted her.

She turned back to go into her own old study, now that she was no longer the captain; and even when she had closed the door upon them all, the cries of scorn were slow to die away.

At last the angry crowd began to disperse. There was a drifting away in twos and threes, and in all the seething talk there was agreement as to the heinousness of the thing which had cost Pam the captaincy, and that it could now be seen—the Form would have done far better never to elect her.

Fay and Edna went back to their study in great glee. Even in front of such girls as Pat Lawrence and Eva Merrick, they would not have cared to display such delight over Pam Willoughby's

to her. The captaincy—lost! Any hope to which one had clung of being able to save Billy from himself—utterly lost, now.

And with such a cruel reverse as all this meant, there was bound up the hard fate of Jimmy Cherrol—yes, there was that to be thought of, all the time!

It might have been so different—but for Edna Denver. That was how Pam had to see it in this, her dark hour. With a clear field, one might have won Billy back to such a state of decency, he would have felt bound to clear Jimmy.

But there had been Edna, and so to-night there was all this, amounting to bitter defeat all along the line!

## CHAPTER 7.

## Pam and Jimmy

AT bed-time there was that coldness towards her which Pam could only expect to have to endure for the rest of term. Only her unchanged chums said any "Good-



"What's the matter, Etta?" panted one of the returned girls. "There's a row on," replied Etta Hargrove, "and it's about—Pam!"

downfall as they could indulge in now that they were alone together.

"And Billy's doing, too—that's the funny thing!" laughed Edna, fairly prancing. "So you see, Fay darling, he's been as good as his word to us. He has paid her out!"

"By shielding you," nodded Fay, lying back inelegantly in her favourite chair. "You're a very lucky girl, I must say, Edna, to have such a chum in him. I haven't anybody like that!"

"I'm his sort, and he is my sort," Edna exulted. "And Pam Willoughby knows it now, if she didn't know it before! Ha, ha, ha!"

THAT laugh, somehow penetrating to Pam in her temporary solitude, in spite of all the noisy jabber going on in neighbouring studies. That triumphant laugh of Edna, against whom Pam had been pitted in the fight for Billy; even such a thing as this fate was not sparing her, the loser!

A host of friends in the Form suddenly lost



night" to her. Just the same dear and loyal friends, those girls! Polly and Paula; Madge and Tess; Judy, Helen—Naomer!—what a world of sympathy was that for which they could neither find words nor yet an active outlet!

Then there were fair-minded girls, like Etta Hargrove, who had made it clear that they deplored her, Pam's, deprival of the captaincy. These were girls who felt that she had been simply indiscreet. But there remained at least half the Form to manifest annoyance, scorn, contempt.

*Half the Form!* Like Jimmy, at his school, it had become her fate at Morcove to be shunned by half these scholars to whose society the very routine of school-life bound one.

No avoidance of those who had turned against you! If they chose to give the cold shoulder, the frigid look, they could do so all day long.

Pam slept at last. She awoke to the first of

those days that must be lived through—in disgrace.

It was evident that some of the girls regretted the noisy demonstrations of last evening. But there was something as hurtful in the cold shouldering, the stony silence; the being passed by as one in whom there had been misplaced confidence.

Still Pam went about with head erect; and it was really no relief to her when, the following midday, she was told that the Swanlake car was coming to fetch her home.

"Your mother, Pam Willoughby, has begged that you may go home for a single night—to attend the meet next morning, I presume. You can be spared!" said Miss Kitten.

Nasty, the way she had added that. But what Pam hated all the more was the sense of being fetched home because she was under this cloud. She was sure her mother had been communicated with and wished to hear her version.

That, unless one was very careful, might mean a quarrel between mother and the headmistress—and they had always been such friends. There was, too, the likelihood of its being imagined in the Form that she, Pam, had "wangled" the being sent for. "Glad to run away and hide your head in shame, booh!"

Nor were looks wanting when the moment came for her to get in the car, implying that scornful opinion. There was no derisive demonstration, and, at any rate, Polly and other chums were there to wish her a loving good-bye.

But Pam could not help wondering what Barclay, the chauffeur, must be thinking.

So often he had been sent over for her, and always, until to-day, at least half the Form had given her a gay, affectionate send-off.

Under a leaden sky the car romped her along, crossing the moor by its rough road and then working through a few miles of trim country to

enter at last upon that smooth highway which bounded part of her father's vast estate.

Another minute and the car was turning in at the main entrance to the private park, with only the autumn-tinted avenue to traverse and she would be home.

Home, for the first time in her young life, with a sense of having left the school under truly wretched conditions.

Home to Swanlake—in disgrace!

Her father was coming out of doors, gun under arm and a favourite spaniel at heel, as she alighted from the car.

"Hallo, Pam!" he greeted her. "Your mother's indoors. What's all this about you, at the school?"

"It's nothing, daddy." She kissed him, stooped to caress the spaniel, then straightened again. Her father's keen eyes bored into her.

"Do you want to leave, or what?"

"Oh, no—just as if. Just stick it out, daddy."

"Right!" he clipped. "See you at tea. They are going to draw Rookery Wood in the morning."

And mother, just like that, too. Pam went into the drawing-room, and there was no excitable outburst from Mrs. Willoughby; scarcely a pause in some bit of needlework, for a bright glancing up and then the lifting of a face to be kissed.

"Pam darling, is it any good asking you about it all?"

"Afraid not, mumsie. I've done nothing to be ashamed of really, although it looks as if I have. Is that grammar?"

"It's the way a Willoughby might be expected to speak," was her mother's satisfied answer. "Do I finish with Miss Somerfield, then, and do you leave Morocco?"

"Mumsie, no!"

"Very well. Billy, of course, was over there for no good. Have you seen your father?"

The Schoolgirls' Own. No. 713. Vol. 23. Week ending October 6th, 1934. All rights reserved and reproduction without permission strictly forbidden.

all Miss Stanton's characteristic charm and realism, so on no account fail to read

### "THE CRISIS IN THE FORM,"

By Marjorie Stanton.

Next week's fine number will also contain long and exciting instalments of our two popular serials, and another charming, complete story, featuring Delia Tarrant.

As soon as your Editor returns from holiday, he will have an important announcement to make regarding a splendid new series of complete stories, shortly to commence. This new series of ces has been written by a favourite author, and each story features a heroine who lives in one of the Colonies.

Don't you think that sounds intriguing? Watch your Editor's Chat next week for further details of this grand new Empire series.

And don't forget what I said last week, will you? As soon as he returns your Editor will have a big surprise for you. I wonder if you can guess what it is!

And now I am going to devote the last few lines of this very brief Chat to acknowledging some of the charming letters which have been pouring in of late. I'm sorry I cannot reply to each letter individually, but to do so would require columns of space. So I want to thank the following readers for their nice letters—and I do hope they'll all write again:

Kathleen Patter, "Sarah" (Marton, Blackpool), "Admirer of the Grangemoor Chums" (Newport, Mon.), J. E. Gibson, "A Dodo Fan" (Seghill), Mary Philipson (Nr. Kendal), "Sunny" (St. Clair, Dunedin, N.Z.), "A Morocco Lover" (South Wales), Jean Laidman, "Miss Modern" (Nottingham.)

With Best Wishes,  
CUTHBERT.



MY space this week is so limited that I cannot do much more than give you a brief outline of all the good things to be found in next week's issue of your favourite paper.

I should very much like to have told you more of your Editor's adventures (he is now in Ireland, as you know), and I am sure you would have liked to hear how I taught Angela to drive; but alas! these absorbing topics must, in the expressive phrase of my friend the printer, be "held over" until some future date.

If you have enjoyed this week's story of the Morocco chums, you are sure to like Marjorie Stanton's contribution to next Tuesday's issue, for it brings to a most dramatic climax the situation which has developed since Pam took over the captaincy.

Your sympathy for Pam in such a terrible position as she now finds herself will make you long to know how she fares, and whether she is finally able to bring about a change for the better in her cousin Billy. Next Tuesday's vivid, long complete story is told with

"He was going out with his gun."

"I hope he won't shoot Billy!"

"No," Pam agreed; "Billy must come by a better end than that—in the end. Besides, Billy's at school, isn't he?"

"He should be. Pam darling, you didn't sleep much last night. Come for a blow in the touter?"

"I think I'd rather take a wander round, mumsie, thanks all the same."

"We'll go together," Mrs. Willoughby decided, bundling aside the needlework.

It seemed to Pam about as good an antidote, for the enduring pain in mind and heart alike, as she could have hoped for—to take that saunter round with "mumsie." They looked in at the stables, and Pam fondled the thoroughbred she would be riding to-morrow.

But there were soon some afternoon callers for Mrs. Willoughby, and Pam, wanting to see more of the place in all its autumn glory, stayed out.

She roamed across the great old park; closely inspected a herd of such fierce-looking bullocks that some girls, rather than go near them, would have made for the nearest fence; and finally met her father again, dawdling back.

"Like to take these along to old Mrs. Morgan?" he inquired, offering a couple of rabbits and a hare. "And I'm having her roof seen to, Pam, next week."

"Right-ho, daddy!"

Old Mrs. Morgan, the widow of a one-time estate carpenter, with a couple of sturdy sons employed on the home farm; lived in a little cottage beside the quiet highway.

She was alone when Pam got there, to confer the very acceptable things for the pot and to have a chair specially wiped for her, so that she might sit down for a talk.

All this proved not so good, in the way of an antidote; Pam, being new in such disgrace at Morcove, felt that half the Form would yell if it knew that she was here, receiving all the old respectful remarks and curtsies from Mrs. Morgan.

But she stayed a good ten minutes, and then, clacking to a wicket-gate behind her, she got a warning t-r-r-r! from a cyclist passing on the road.

And it was Jimmy Cherrol, riding alone.

RECOGNITION of her threw him into such confusion that he swerved on his machine. He doffed his cap, flashed a smile, but seemed to think he ought not to stop. Then, fifty yards farther on, he pulled up and dismounted.

"Hallo, Jimmy!"

"Er—are you at home for to-morrow's meet, then?"

"Yes. Were you going—up to the house, Jimmy?"

"Oh, no. I just came out for a spin, after school."

And all alone. She could guess why. Her own recent experiences at Morcove gave Pam a perfect understanding of the desire that must be Jimmy's, to slip away from devoted chums now and then—simply because they were so devoted.

When you are in disgrace, the few who still stand by you may suffer for that loyalty, unless you are very careful.

"How's things over at Morcove, Pam?"

"Oh—Betty's at the Headland, recuperating."

"Good! Any idea when she'll be back in school?"

"Towards the end of this term, we hope; just to get into her stride again for the term after."

"But you'll be captain right on through this term, of course?"

"Oh, no, Jimmy. There's been a decision about me. Does Billy come this way home from school? If so, we might walk on past the gateway."

"I fancy he has found a short way—the bridle-path."

"Oh, all right."

They sauntered on together, Jimmy wheeling

---

## RESULT OF "FAVOURITE STORIES" COMPETITION

Our recent "Favourite Stories" Competition, in which readers were asked to choose the eight most popular types of stories, proved highly attractive, and the TEN GRAND PRIZES have been awarded to the readers whose efforts were correct or nearest in accordance with the popular vote. The winners—who thus have choice of one of the following prizes: Hockey Stick, Netball, Tennis Racket, Roller Skates, Manicure Set, Camera, Lacrosse Stick, and Ice Skates—are:—

ANNK BARKER, Portland Road, Blackpool; HELEN DUGUID, Greenhill, by Bonnybridge; JEAN GODDARD, Hazel Crescent, Shiffield Road, Reading; AUDREY MOORE, Kirkway, Wallasey; KATHLEEN TOLLADY, Antrim Road, Blackpool, N.S.; JOAN COFFIN, Heathwood Road, Gabalfa, Cardiff; HILDA BENTLEY, Woodstock Drive, Smithills, Bolton; JOYCE FLETCHER, Ratcliffe Street, Burton Lane, York; JOAN FACEY, Kings Hill, Kempsey, nr. Worcester; MARGARET WAKEFORD, Hutcheon Street W., Aberdeen.

To all of the above I tender my heartiest congratulations on their success.

YOUR EDITOR.

---

the bicycle. Now and then, in an embarrassed way, he shined up the bell with the palm of his hand.

"Jimmy," she asked, ending a prolonged silence, "is it still as bad as ever for you at the school?"

"But it doesn't really matter, Pam—"

"Oh, I know what you think; all that does matter is that Billy should never be shown up. I was very angry with you, Jimmy—no, I wasn't," she instantly amended. "But I provided the proofs that would have cleared you, and you wouldn't let them be used."

"No; well, I didn't quite see my way. Are you riding that thoroughbred to-morrow?"

"Yes, why?"

"Don't you go and break your neck, Pam."

"Oh, you'd like to have me on a string—or a rope, say, like that time in the hols, when you helped me around the mountain."

She suddenly decided to indulge his great-hearted wish to avoid all talk about present trials. Here they were, the two of them, brought together for a few minutes that must not be spoiled by painful discussion.

If he had known about her loss of the captaincy—but he didn't know—she would have dreaded his beginning about it. Similarly, he dreaded any sympathetic utterances on her part in regard to his ordeal. This must be a brief, a very brief interlude for both of them; a moment of rest away from the battle-fronts.



"You remember the hols we all had together, Jimmy?"

"Rather, Pam! We chaps often talk about them, in the study."

"That island off Corsica, and then the week or two in Spain—at the farm," she mused aloud. "It was all so jolly."

"It was. Often wonder if we'll ever get a time like that again."

"Oh, we shall, Jimmy."

What was it, during the silence that fell again between them, that made certain words of a famous air float through her mind?

Was it simply her recollection of the romantic setting of those last summer holidays, and of peasants singing at twilight to the music of their thrummed mandolines? Or was there, also, something arising out of all the present smash-up of happiness at school, that she seemed to hear a voice within her singing:

*"We shall be happy,  
Then and for ever—"*

"Jimmy, I must be going."

"Yes, Pam. Well, it's been good to see you, although if I'd known you were over at home, I'd have gone the other way."

"I know, Jimmy. You're the right stuff. Good-bye once again, then."

"Ta-ta, Pam, and good hunting, to-morrow. We shan't see anything of the run; be in school." A pause. "Bye!" he said.

"And, Jimmy—"

"Yes, Pam?"

"It's not long to Christmas—"

She had felt compelled to say that, his disgraced state at the school making it certain that he must be longing for the end of term.

Afterwards, she turned cold at the dismaying thought: Had something of her own misery crept into her eyes, as she spoke of Christmas being on the way? Had he guessed that life at school was no joke for her, either, at present? Shunned by half their schoolmates, both of them!

Next Tuesday's grand long complete  
Morcove story, is entitled:

## THE CRISIS in the FORM



By MARJORIE STANTON

It brings to a dramatic conclusion, the present fine series, so make quite sure of reading it.

Safest to ORDER your  
**SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN**

He was gone, without having pestered her to stay out a little longer. If he had known she was at home, he would never have come this way. Artlessly he had blurted his assurances about that. Shy, self-sacrificing Jimmy; she had been seeing Billy again and again, since she saw Jimmy last, and—ah!—what a finer fellow than ever Jimmy seemed!

Briskly she made her way up the winding avenue, intending to get indoors at once and be with her father and mother for tea. The callers had now driven away, she knew.

But, half-way up the carriage-way, she was halted by a faint cry that drew her eyes to the lake, lying away upon the left, that ten acres of beautiful water from which the estate derived its name.

To her horror, then, she saw a capsized punt in the middle of the lake, and someone floundering wildly in the water. *Billy!*

It was he—the young fool!—tipped out of a punt that he knew not how to handle properly. He was in the water, without even the pole to help support him, for that was sticking up beside the capsized craft, the bottom end obviously fast in the mud.

Pam had an "Oh, my goodness!" thought, although she did not let it become vocal. In the first few moments of her rush to the lake's edge, she was all for saving her breath for what she knew herself to be called upon to do.

But, towards the end of her furious run, she sent out one encouraging cry, thus answering all the gurgling yells from Billy as he wallowed and floundered there—*drowning!*

He was unable to save himself; had gone down once already, coming up again to keep his head above water only with the greatest difficulty.

As for striking out for the bank—that was absolutely beyond him, she could tell. No doubt he could swim; but he had lost his head, and also he was weighted down by boots and clothes.

Pam's own shoes came off in a flash as she got to the water's edge. She discarded hat, scarf and coat, all in a single moment, and then plashed out through the shallow water.

The muddy floor of the lake suddenly shelved away from under her stocking feet, and she became afloat, striking out with all her strength.

After that it seemed as if she had an ocean to swim, to get to him—in time. But she did get to him—in time. There was the moment, at last, when it seemed to her that it was quite all right; she had grabbed him just as he was going under again, and it only meant the commencement of a greater struggle than ever, to get him, in his half-insensible state, to the bank.

The Morcove training helped her—for every girl in the school received instruction about rescues from drowning—and she kept her head.

Somehow or other, she even retained sufficient strength for that final struggle in the waters, landing him at last, in a half-dead condition, prone upon the grass in his sopping clothes.

"Yes, well!" Pam said to herself, starting to slip on her shoes after she had seen that he was pulling round. Again, certain instructions given at the school had enabled her to deal with him very effectually.

"Pam!" he rasped at last, floundering up to goggle his eyes at her. "You—you saved me!"

Then she smiled.

"I don't call that saving you, Billy. It will take more than that to save you!"

And, leaving him to consider this, she calmly walked away.

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]