

69-2
"Befriended by Bunny" Long Complete Morcove
School Story Inside

The SCHOOLGIRLS' 2^D OWN

No. 751, Vol. 29,
Week ending
June 29th, 1935.
EVERY TUESDAY.



**"LET ME OUT!
LET ME OUT!"**

One of many dramatic
incidents in this week's
long complete Morcove
School story.

FIVE MAGNIFICENT STORIES WITHIN

Bunny Trevor and the Chums of Study 12 Feature in This Fine Story, the First of a New Morcove Series



BEFRIENDED BY BUNNY

CHAPTER I.

When You've a Brother—

"ALL the things I have to do, as soon as I get back! And five miles yet— Oh, bother!"

And—thirsty!

Never in her young life had Ann Trevor, of Morcove School, had a greater longing for a cup of tea.

She yearned to be back in Study 12, sinking into an easy-chair, having a cup of the study's own brewing handed to her, nicely sugared.

But there it was; if one did these things—and "Bunny"—as she was known to her chums—always had, and always would, do things! She was one of the "live wires" of her Form at Morcove.

What Bunny had done this afternoon had been to "bike" over to her brother Tom's school, Grangemoor. She had set off alone, which was not quite in accord with the rules of her own great and famous school, and she had not troubled to ask "permish."

Bunny believed, but she was not quite sure, that

**Bunny Trevor's Protégée
Proves a Bit of a
Problem**

By Marjorie Stanton

she had hinted to Form-captain Betty Barton and one or two others that she meant to do this jaunt.

Anyway, if there was a row when she got back, there would be a row, and that was all there was to it. She would know what to say to Miss Merrick, or to the headmistress herself, come to that.

"Goodness, can't I see my brother sometimes!"—without adding that her brother had been in a fight, the day before yesterday, and she had wished to see how he looked after it.

Tom had not looked so bad; a cut lip already nicely healed, and there had been Tom's own assurance that the loosened tooth was not going to come out, after all.

Being terribly proud and fond of her only brother, Bunny had not omitted to congratulate him on a victory that had put a certain bully in his right place. Tom was now serving a "gating," but this had not prevented his coming a good way beyond the gates to see her off.

The school tuck-shop had been put out of bounds to him; but this penalty, again, had not prevented his taking her to it for an orangeade. Which soft drink, so refreshing at the time, seemed to have originated her present raging thirst.

"Hallo, though! This looks promising," Bunny

said to herself, braking up sharply on the lonely country road.

She had come to a solitary little cottage, standing back from the road, in the midst of a half-acre plot which was a gay mixture of hardy annuals, potatoes, and runner beans.

A square of white cardboard, nailed to a post at the wicket-gate, announced in straggly capitals:

MINERALS.

With the final S turned the wrong way.

Bunny slammed her machine against the garden hedge and went in by the wicket-gate.

Reaching a trellised porch she found the front door wide open, so that she could see straight into a dingy, low-ceiled living-room. A large tabby, the only living thing in evidence, got up from a tattered rug at the hearth and came towards Bunny with a friendly mew.

"Where's everybody?" asked Bunny, reaching down to stroke the cat. "I want a mineral, puss."

A rap upon the open door produced no results, so Bunny sauntered round by a brick path to the back of the cottage. "Dead—and working in the garden, of course," was her shrewd inference.

Then she suddenly beheld a sight that roused her to indignation.

Bunny saw a rather ragged-looking, gipsy-like girl and a boy, obviously a brother and sister belonging to the cottage; and the girl was trying to get him to stop some teasing, which included some elbow-twisting and hair-pulling.

"Hi!" Bunny shouted.

She started to rush at them both.

"Let her alone!" said Bunny fiercely.

The boy, releasing his sister, fronted Bunny truculently; at the same time, however, he looked ready to skip backwards if she advanced.

Bunny advanced an inch or two. The boy skipped backwards a yard or more.

"You speaking to me?" he demanded with a smirk. "Who are you?"

"You'll soon know who I am, if you're not careful," Bunny had no hesitation in predicting.

"Bully!"

"Oh, he isn't, miss," came the strange intervention from the sister, causing Bunny to turn to her in a nonplussed way. "He don't mean it. He's my brother Alf."

"So see!" the ragged-looking, shock-headed boy rejoined. "Yah!"

He then took a flying leap over some gooseberry bushes and made off—not because Bunny had shown signs of going for him, after all.

"Showing off to me!" Bunny inferred.

But, all in this one instant, she was inferring far more than that. There went a boy who didn't know what to do with himself. He could jump like that; but he had no school sports for which to enter. He tormented his sister, as a puppy worries a slipper, simply because youthful energy must be worked off.

"Can I," Bunny asked the cottage girl, "have a lemonade, please?"

"Only ginger beer, miss."

"A stone ginger will do, then. Don't either of you go to school now?" she affably inquired, stepping with the cottage girl round to the front porch.

"We've left, miss. I'm fifteen and he's sixteen."

"And he doesn't do anything—on the land, or anywhere?"

"He can't, miss. I could get work, easy, but

he can't. I could go out into service," the cottage girl resumed, reappearing after a moment's absence with a bottle and glass. "But then there'd be no one to look after the home."

Bunny received this in silence, registering a mental "Rotten!" As the cottage girl tilted the uncorked bottle of ginger beer against the tumbler's rim, a bluish bruise was visible at her right wrist.

"Well, thanks," said Bunny, tendering a silver coin in exchange for the foaming glass. "I'm sorry—it's like that for you. Oh, please don't bother to find the change; I'd like you to keep it. But don't you," Bunny warned, "let Alf have it!"

The girl smiled.

"He is a one, and no mistake, miss, for taking things. That was the only bottle of ginger left that dad got in, hoping we could do a little trade that way. Alf's drunk all the others."

Bunny's eyes, over the glass, implied that such a thing was most reprehensible.

"What does his father say about that?" she asked, still quaffing.

"Father doesn't know, miss. I—I managed to have the money to show, just as if I'd sold the gingers. I was able to work it, over the eggs. We keep a few chickens and sell the eggs—some of them. I was able to sell more when the huckster called, without dad knowing. This time of year," said the cottage girl, "I don't mind going without my egg for breakfast."

Bunny set down the unfinished glass. She no longer thirsted—except for further information.

"Mind my asking—your name?"

"Kath, miss; Kath Turner. Father does a bit of cutting peat on the moor."

"He should make Alf help him."

"He can't, miss."

"I would! Er—I say, Kathy, if I'm passing this way again, would you like me to drop you in a—a bundle of—well, a few things to wear?"

"Oh, thank you, miss, if you could, I'd be ever so glad! Even if they didn't come in useful for myself, I could always get a few coppers for them."

"Right, then—I will."

"Anything, at any time, miss—"

"Right-ho!" Bunny responded with a sudden dullness of voice. Then she frowned at herself.

"Supposing YOU had her life?"

She smiled back at the cottage girl, whilst returning to the gate that would let her out on to the road.

"Bye!"

"Dafternoon, miss!" And then, scarcely with any note of shame or dismay in her voice, but almost with pride in his being so mischievous: "Look out for your bike, miss; there's Alf—"

"Oh, you—you wretch!" Bunny flamed at him, trying to flash out by the wicket-gate in time to catch him.

The bicycle, however, was hastily dropped—crash!—and again he put himself at a safe distance.

"Old iron!" he bawled offensively.

Bunny picked up a bicycle that had been new last term. It was too expensive a make to have suffered damage by his recent treatment of it.

"But I'll never come near the place again," she disgustedly vowed to herself, mounting to ride away. "The girl doesn't seem to think he's anything very terrible; that's the awful thing!"

Then came the second thoughts, resulting in a prompt cancelling of the vow. No, it was not awful at all—only natural! "He's her brother."

Finally, Bunny—who was determined not to

stand any lectures from her Form mistress—had no hesitation about lecturing herself.

"Look here, Bunny, if you're going to be like this!" the lecture began. "So," the lecture ended, "this evening, you'll make up that bundle and run it to the cottage. Never mind what else you may have to do, Bunny—you'll do that!"

Meantime, she pedalled hard for Morcove School, and got indoors, after all, in time to catch certain of her best chums taking tea in Study 12.

CHAPTER 2.

They All Like Bunny

BUNNY TREVOR, enjoying a great popularity, had to be greeted with one loud cheer and then some bantering cries.

"Bekas ze sack for you, Bunny!" shrieked that dusky member of the chum-mery, Naomer Nakara. "Egg-spelled!"

"Slacker—booh!" madcap Polly Linton hooted. "Dodging games!"

"Letting down the Form!" Helen Craig carried on the playful indictment. "Disgraceful!"

"Most wepwehensible—yes, wather!" simpered elegant Paula Creel, giving an eye to her hair in a pocket mirror, where she lounged in the study's best armchair.

Out of that chair, however, Bunny now routed the beloved duffer of the chum-mery.

"Phew!" Bunny panted, implying some recent hard riding.

"Serve you right," said Pam Willoughby with a smile that negated the remark. "And all the tea is gone!"

But Betty Barton who had been asked to preside, was already holding the teapot spout downwards over a cup, obtaining some inky dregs at least.

"Well, and did you see him?" Betty inquired. "How was he, Bunny?"

"Oh, fine! It's done him good—"

"What ze diggings, I don't see how eet can have done him good! Bekas, what we all heard, he got one on ze chin and lost a toof! Eet can't do anybody any good to lose a toof and not be able to eat!"

Morcove's dusky royal scholar said this, whilst forking a cream-bun on to her plate.

"How did the cricket go off, girls?" Bunny asked, as her cup of tea came to hand.

"We won!" Polly yelled exultantly. "No thanks to you—aha!"

"Yes, gorjus! And now we are cellerbrating—hooray!"

"With tea like this?" Bunny grimaced.

"You can't drink such poison," the captain laughingly ruled. "Here, we'll get some more water—"

"Naomer will go," said Polly. "Having finished—"

"Not ze bit of eet! What ze diggings, I have hardly begun yet!"

Judy Cardew jumped up, to scamper away with the hot-water jug. Every afternoon, boiling water was available at a certain "cubby-hole" in the Form quarters, where washing-up could afterwards be done.

"Miss Merrick missed you from the field," Betty now commented solemnly. "She particularly asked after you, Bunny."

"So, of course, we told her everything!" the madcap jested. "We didn't see why we should shield you!"

"And—great pity, but there it is," sighed Helen. "You're for it, Bunny!"

"Right. I don't mind!"

Bunny, of course, knew they were only joking.



"You haven't been—following me about, have you, Pam?" Bunny questioned with sudden anger. She sensed assent in the other's look, and flared out: "What cheek!"—little guessing Pam's good intentions.

The fact that she would have been just as cheerfully resigned to a rowing, had one been actually in store for her, accounted for some of the fond glances which continued to be bestowed upon her.

Judy came back with the hot water—enough to fill up the teapot again. Whereupon, sundry cups were tendered to a chorus of: "I think I will—and I!" But the captain attended to Bunny first.

"Thanks," said Bunny. "I was dying, and then I got a bottle of pop at a cottage. Do any of you know anything about the Turners?"

"There's a Turner who is always poaching," Pam casually remarked. "We've had him at Swanlake, giving trouble. Why?"

"Only that it's pretty awful the way some people have to live," Bunny answered, with a rare touch of seriousness. "'Tisn't right."

Pam, of Swanlake, was one of the first to nod agreeingly.

"The trouble is, Bunny, there are some people it's no use trying to help."

"Oh, I can't believe that, Pam!"

"All right," was the serene response. "But as you appear to mean the Turners I mean, I might just mention dad has done a good bit for the man, although his home is several miles away from Swanlake."

Bunny was quick with a suggestion:

"Your dad, Pam, might at least let the Turner fellow do his bit of poaching?"

"Yes—well," said Pam, as serenely as ever, "as a matter of fact, dad does."

Some of the other girls, by laughing, invited Bunny to consider herself "flooded." If she was, she came up smiling.

"Anyway," she persisted cheerfully, "we owe it to—"

"Yes, and you owe it to ME," chipped in Polly, "to give me half an hour on the hard court—directly after tea, don't forget."

"And me," cried Helen, "ten minutes' bowling at the nets. It was one of those twisters like you send down, Bunny, that got me out this afternoon."

"She owes us all," said Madge Minden, "an apology for going off like that, directly after dinner—doesn't she, Betty?"

"But it did Tom good to see her," smiled the captain. "Poor Tom!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I said the fight did him good," Bunny cried. "In the eyes of other chaps, I mean."

"Anyhow," said Betty, "we may be sure it did that bully good; so cheers for Tom! And now," hitching back her chair to rise, "I must go to my own study for a bit—"

"Oh, NO!" was the objecting chorus.

Betty's chums still disliked as much as ever a certain innovation of a term or two ago, decreeing that she, as captain, should have a study to herself.

Nor, indeed, was Betty at all in favour of the idea; but there were times when her private lair offered peace and quietude for some irksome little captaincy job, whereas Study 12 was not really the Abode of Harmony which it claimed to be.

The rise from tea usually being the signal for a minor riot, Betty, just as usually, effaced herself at this time. Then, by devoting a few minutes to the jotting down of various notes, all her records were kept up-to-date, and she could afterwards rejoin her chums—when the washing-up had been done.

Only Naomer regarded it as a "sweendle" that the captain never helped with the washing-up; and even the dusky one was merely joking when she aired this grievance. It may be added that Naomer herself, for that matter, never exactly made herself useful.

"Bekas, why should I?" she now protested, answering a grim command of Polly's which was barely audible amidst the general babel. "Hi, Paula, come on—down to ze field again, queek!"

And long-suffering Paula, who had thought to rest awhile in her beloved armchair, was hauled to her feet and taken in tow, squealing ineffectual protests.

The height of summer and the evenings long! This was a glorious time of year for Morocco girls. Many a morning in class was shortened, so that they might troop down to the beach for surf-bathing. From tea-time, onwards until the bell went in the twilight for "Big Hall," there was freedom. "Prep"—but you left that until the morning.

Bunny, after the cleaning away, put in that half-hour with Polly, on one of the hard courts. Then she bowled for Helen at the batting-nets.

The Form, in the summer term, put cricket a close second to tennis, and Bunny was by way of being a demon bowler.

Now she sent down some of those "teasers" which Helen rightly regarded as an endurance test for their recipient. Stand up to them, and you could hope to stand up to anything.

Helen stood up to the bowling all right; but her wicket didn't. Time after time her stumps were played.

Then suddenly Bunny said: "This is the last!" And sent down a perfectly fiendish one. Before it had dodged a swipe by Helen and laid out the middle stump again, Bunny was scampering for the schoolhouse.

"You're coming back?" various chums called after her.

To which Bunny, without looking round, gave a gay flourish, implying: "Never you mind!"

Indoors, she went aloft three stairs at a time, going first to her dormitory, and then racing down to the floor below, to make for Study 12. No one was there. Bunny, as she made up her parcel for Kath Turner, whistled a tune.

Being a girl who never did things by halves, she raided the corner cupboard for a few extras, so that the parcel promised to be a collection of clean underwear, a cake or so of toilet soap, a tin of pears, a jar of jam, and an almond cake.

The eatables, although they had gone into the common stock of the "chummery," had been bought by Bunny.

Quite unexpectedly Pam suddenly sauntered in. She must have glimpsed the extraordinary nature of the parcel, before the paper had been folded round the varied assortment; but she made no comment. Nor did she give a knowing smile.

"We didn't finish talking about the Turners, at tea," Pam remarked with tactful carelessness.

"What, then, were you thinking, Bunny?"

"The girl must be all right, any rate."

Pam received this in silence, and then Bunny side-glanced her.

"Oh, I know," Bunny exclaimed spiritedly. "The girl's a pretty awful specimen—half-gipsy, of course. But it came over me, suddenly, that it's awful if you can only feel sorry for needy people, when they're attractive and all that. After all, who is politer than the begging-letter writer? So just because that Turner girl isn't particularly pretty or—nice-mannered—I'm going to take a little interest in her."

Pam nodded.

"There's a lot in what you say, Bunny. As a matter of fact I have heard mother say it often. But if I were you, I'd be careful."

"How do you mean?"

"You're still at school, Bunny. That man Turner—"

"I'm not bothering about the father; I'm only thinking about the girl. I can imagine," Bunny smiled, "a district visitor being sort of—what's the word I want? Repelled! And that's how deserving cases get passed over, and the humbugs—the smarmy ones—get more than their whack."

Pam had to laugh.

"Yes—well, Bunny, I know what you mean. Only—"

"It's a pity you came in whilst I'm doing this," Bunny said, wandering about in search of string. "I didn't want it to be known. Pam, don't tell anyone else."

"But should you be going off to that cottage all by yourself, Bunny? I suppose," came the gentle suggestion, "you wouldn't feel like sending that parcel by post?"

"No! For the father to get hold of it, perhaps—or that awful brother of hers? No, thank you! There, I called him awful," Bunny frowned very prettily, whilst tying up the parcel. "He isn't—considering!"

"You aren't going to bike out to the cottage this evening, Bunny?"

"Yes, I am—why not?"

"May I come?"

"Oh," sighed Bunny, "why did you say that, Pam! I tell you, I wish to goodness you hadn't caught me doing this. And is it likely I want anybody with me, over a thing of this sort. But go on"—with a laugh—"rope in all the other girls. Let's make a procession of it! We might even ring up Grangemoor, to get Tom and the other fellows to turn up as a bodyguard. In cadet khaki, they'd look fine!"

Pam, faintly smiling, was turning to pass out. "And isn't there a band to come along as well?" Bunny rippled. "Do let's do the thing properly!"

Pam was gone, and now Bunny laughed to herself. Just a wee bit rattled! It looked like it, and that showed! She, Bunny, had chance to come upon a case of distress, overlooked in a neighbourhood where all needy folk were well cared for.

That was to say, the deserving needy ones were well looked after; the polite and picturesque ones! But the Turners—"hopeless"! Nothing to be done for the Turners!

Well, that might be Pam's opinion, Swanlake's, Barncombe Castle's.

"But it isn't mine!" smiled Bunny. "I know what I'm about!"

And ten minutes later, with the right amount of secrecy, she was off and away upon her bicycle, with the bulky parcel tied to the carrier. Any bit of good that she did, she liked to do by stealth.

CHAPTER 3.

A Shock for Bunny

"WHERE'S Bunny?" was being asked by one chum of hers and another, towards eight o'clock.

Nobody could say.

Then it was found that Pam Willoughby, who sometimes strayed to the music-room about this time, was nowhere about the place.

"Oh, then, I suppose they've gone out for a run," Betty concluded. "Wonder they didn't say something!"

Judy Cardew, who had run to the cycle-sheds, came back with the news that neither Bunny's "bike" nor Pam's was there.

"Then it's certain," the captain nodded. "They're out together."

But they were not! If Bunny had resorted to secrecy in her cycling away from the school, so had Pam, getting out her machine a few minutes after the other girl's stealing away.

The waning evening light presently caused a knocking-off from games, and then girls who

had swarmed the field, and others who had thronged the tennis courts, began to trend towards the schoolhouse.

Bunny came riding in at the school gateway—back in good time. She did not mind being seen now, and a few hailing cries from the open window of Study 12—strictly against the rules!—caused her to wave an upflung arm gaily.

A resultant wobbling of the bicycle would not, however, have alarmed her in the least. She was in that "full of beans" state which often induced her to finish up a ride with some intentional wobbling on the way to the shed. But this evening she very hastily steadied her front wheel.

She had some eggs in a hand-basket; a couple of dozen eggs, "warranted fresh"—by Kathy Turner.

No one else was on hand when Bunny dismounted at the cycle-shed, where she would be putting her "bike" away.

But before there had been time for her to stall her machine for the night, another girl made a quiet arrival. The soft purr of tyres ceased; Pam: Willoughby dismounted and came under cover, wheeling in her bicycle.

Bunny, in the act of removing the basket of eggs from her front carrier, turned round.

"Hallo, Pam! Where have you been, then? Into Barncombe?"

"No, Bunny."

In the gloom, Bunny's eyes suddenly subjected Pam's serene looks to a close scrutiny.

"Where, then, Pam? I mean to say," and now Bunny was bridling a little, "you haven't been—following me about, have you?"

"Well, Bunny, I thought I ought just to keep after you."

"And that," flashed Bunny, "seems to me—cheek!" Then she laughed. "All right, Pam, I know you meant well—but how silly, wasting the best part of an evening! You don't want any eggs, do you?"

"Eggs? Oh!" Pam smiled, promptly understanding. "You took them off their hands at the cottage?"

"All fresh this morning," Bunny passed on the guarantee received from Kathy Turner. "I suppose cook, over at the schoolhouse kitchen, can do with them? I don't want to be paid for them, of course. It isn't the time of year, Pam, or we might have had eggs for tea for a few days."

"Bunny—"

"Do you know, Pam, the dealer who takes the Turners' eggs only gives them sevenpence a dozen. I call that daylight robbery! When Kathy told me, I simply had to offer to take a couple of dozen at shop prices. One and three, she said it was, and all new laid."

"Bunny, you've been awfully good to—"

"Oh, none of that, Pam. The Form, of course, would howl if it knew; but I know what I'm about. And I don't care what you say about Kathy Turner—"

"But I'm not saying anything, Bunny."

"No, well—there's your manner!"

"Sorry," Pam pleaded calmly. "I wasn't aware."

A little silence followed this. Bunny was feeling petulant. In a few moments, however, she regained her usual vivacity.

"Stepping in, where angels fear to tread! Isn't that what you're thinking, Pam, about my bothering myself with Kathy Turner? Terrible people, the Turners! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, come on with me and, if you don't mind waiting a jiffy, indoors, we'll go up to the study together. Shan't be a minute dumping the eggs upon cook."

But there was to be no bit of fun for Bunny, such as she was at present envisioning—a plunge by her into the domestic regions of Morocco, and a sight of cook's flabbergasted face when the astonishing gift was bestowed.

Bunny and Pam—and the two dozen eggs—got as far as the front door of the schoolhouse, which was set wide to the delicious evening air. Then, in the falling light, out dashed Naomer.

That dusky imp had run downstairs to get the returned cyclists to hurry up. Naomer, excitedly questing both girls, ran full tilt into one of them, and that one was Bunny—with her eggs.

"Mind, can't you!" yelled Bunny; but even then she knew it to be too late. She herself was only just saving herself from toppling backwards, whilst the basket flew out of her hand.

There was an immediate crash! upon the floor, and such an appalling display of smashed eggs that Naomer fairly shrieked.

"Bekas, what ze diggings! Hi! Ooo—"

"You goop, you!" Bunny panted, breathless after the collision. "Dashing about like that!"

"I very sorry, Bunny! I only came down, bekas I could see from ze window you had brought something in from Barncombe! And I thought I would help you to carry him up to ze study—gorjus! But what ze diggings—eggs!"

"Oh, shut up! Oh, dash it!" Bunny added to herself, and started to walk quickly towards the stairs, being aware of Authority looming upon the scene. But Authority, in the person of Miss Merrick, was next moment crying:

"Stop! What—what—" Miss Merrick could only stammer incredulously as she surveyed the colour scheme upon the hall floor.

"Eggs!" Naomer hastened to state the obvious. "Ooo, hundreds of zem, meellions of—eggs!"

"Yes, Ann Trevor?" For she had turned back, putting on that demure smile with which she so often managed to appease her Form-mistress.

"Are all these eggs yours, Ann?"

"They were," gurgled Bunny. "I don't want them now."

Miss Merrick looked at Pam.

"It was nobody's fault," Pam smiled serenely. "The bad light."

"What ze diggings, bekas ze light is not ze only bad zing about, either!" Naomer now excitedly suggested. "Bekas ze eggs—zey are not azaakly good, are they?"

"They were perfectly fresh," Bunny maintained with dignity. "New laid, I tell you!"

"No," said Miss Merrick. "No!"

"Yes, Miss Merrick—"

"Bunny, what is the use, when—when—well, haven't you a nose to tell you? Stale as could be. Bad!"

"All right, then, they are—rotten," Bunny conceded. "I don't care; there's been a mistake somewhere, that's all! I—someone else can clear up—"

"Ann, come back again! Now, what does all this mean?"

"A sweendle, I should zink, Miss Merrick, bekas—"

"Naomer, you have not been asked! Ann, when I find that you were bringing all these eggs into the schoolhouse—and bad eggs, too—"

"But—"

"Surely, Ann, you were not intending putting these eggs—these BAD eggs—to that use to which bad eggs are sometimes put!"

"Of course not, Miss Merrick!"

"You do understand me, Ann? If I thought—and, really, you have a way of doing most extraordinary things, Ann—"

"May I just say," Pam blandly interposed, "Ann brought them for fresh. It's quite all right, Miss Merrick. And I'll help Ann to clear up the muck—"

"So will I!" yelled Naomer joyously. "Ah, bah, but what a waste, when zey might have been used for cooking, eef zey hadn't got smashed, and eef zey had been laid zis month instead of last! Ooo, look at ze one with a little chicken ready to come out of him!"

"Go away, all of you," Miss Merrick suddenly commanded in her wisdom, for whilst Naomer was speaking a flood of schoolgirl humanity had cataracted downstairs. "Now, girls—less noise—keep away!"

But curiosity, and then uncontrollable merriment, got the better of that obedience which popular Miss Merrick was normally accorded.

The yolk splashes and the broken eggshells were somehow instantly associated with Bunny, and peals of laughter mingled with a chorus of mirthful comment.

"Stop me and buy one!" cried madcap Polly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And did she throw them ALL at you, Naomer?" was Helen Craig's pleasantry.

"Shame!"

"Latest market reports! Eggs fell heavily—"

At this, Miss Merrick had to give way to laughter.

"But, girls—order now! We shall have the headmistress here!"

"She won't stay long, if she does come," chuckled one of the juniors, holding her nose.

"Keep away" is right!"

"Yes, bai Jove! Good gwacious—ow! Tewwible!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunny's own brilliant smile had testified that she considered the girls fully entitled to their laugh. But suddenly she pushed through the throng to escape upstairs.

Outwardly amused, inwardly she was furious. She obtained a couple of minutes to herself, in Study 12, and walked about wildly, saying over and over again, fiercely:

"Stale! And she told me they were fresh! Wait till I see her again, that's all! Just let her wait!"

Then Polly and others flocked in, and the banter started all over again. Some of her chums must have put two and two together, for there was Pam, implying by a serious look and a shake of the head that she had said nothing.

Nor was the twitting and chaffing confined to those who were crowding out Study 12. The corridor at this end was packed with Form-mates of Bunny's, noisily expressing their amusement.

Finally, the empty egg-basket turned up, and was batted about above the heads of the crowd, until a good shot brought it into the study.

"Goal!" dinned the crowd outside. "Hurrah!"

As before, Bunny herself was laughing. "Serves me right!" she was thinking. "I've been done—and they know it!"

And then—she wondered; had she made such an idiot of herself, after all? What about that young rascalion at the cottage—the girl's brother Alf? Had he played some monkey-trick with the stock of eggs, so that Kathy had quite innocently loaded up the basket, this evening, with a stale lot, in mistake for fresh?

That must be it, surely! And so—

"Well?" she sweetly inquired, during a lull in the banter. Now that that explanation had

occurred to her, she felt entitled to show a little resentment. "Have you all done?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, yes, I know what you're thinking—and you're wrong!"

"Like the eggs?" someone suggested.

More giggling.
Bunny's smile was now that of a girl who would shortly be turning the tables upon her mockers. She pushed her way out of the study and marched up the corridor, tilting her chin. Now, let all the girls wait—until she had been to the cottage again. Tomorrow—directly after the midday dismiss; she would do it then.

And from the class-room, at twelve o'clock next day, she went straight to the cycle-shed. By twenty-past she was dismounting at the Turners' wicket-gate.

Neither the father, whom she had not encountered, nor the brother was in evidence. Kathy, alone in the cottage, heard Bunny advancing to the trellis-porch, and came to the shady threshold to exclaim, with an eager smile:

"Oh, 'morning, miss! You come for some more eggs?"

CHAPTER 4.

Convincing the Captain

"I've come about last evening's lot of eggs,"

Bunny stated a little bleakly. Already Kathy's "seeking" manner was taking disagreeable effect. "They were all stale!"

"Not all of them weren't, miss?"

"Most of them, anyhow. There—there may have been a few fresh ones; but look here, Kathy, you said they were all quite fresh, and so I want an explanation. You can't treat people like that. Did you know some of them were stale eggs, or didn't you?"

"Well, miss, I thought there might be a few that some hen might have been sitting on for a bit," Kathy said, with no downcast look. "You see, Alf got most of those eggs; he brought them in to me and said I must try and get them off."

"Where did he get them from, Kathy?"
"Oh, I never asked him that, miss. It wouldn't do. I expect he found a nest or so where some old hen had laid a whole clutch, and he just took 'em."

"You mean, on your own ground, of course? The hen would be one of your father's, anyhow?"

"Oh, I don't know about that," Kathy said again uncomfortably. "More likely, Alf got 'em from—from somewhere he knows."

"Then he stole those eggs!"

"I don't call it stealing, miss—not for Alf to take the eggs from a nest on waste ground somewhere!" Kathy submitted unshamefully. "They wouldn't be any good to anyone."

"They weren't any good to me!" Bunny said, greatly nettled. "I call the whole thing dis-



Bunny and Naomer came into violent collision, and there was a frightful crash as the basket fell to the floor, shooting the eggs all over the place. "What ze diggings!" shrieked Naomer, and Bunny added fiercely: "Now look what you've done!"

honest! Here am I, trying to do my best for you, because I know it's a hard life, and you turn out to be—to have no idea of—"

Bunny broke off there. Cruel to say the rest, when obviously that was what it meant; the poor girl simply had no idea of common honesty. She had the mind, not of a village girl, but of a gipsy. Very likely, from a cottage home as isolated as this, her attendance at school had been every bit as haphazard as a gipsy girl's.

"You see, miss," Kathy grinned, "the huckster that takes our eggs would ha' seen that some of those weren't as fresh as they have to be for him. There was a few stained. I didn't think it mattered with you—"

"But I was paying top price for them, Kathy!"

"I thought that was only your way of giving me a half-crown."

Well, so it had been! Even so—trying, all this! "Kathy, don't you deceive me again, ever! Do you hear?" Bunny said, more in sorrow than anger, and with a horrid feeling that she was talking like a district visitor. "Or I shan't do anything more for you. And then—will there be anybody else?"

"No, miss," said Kathy, staring at the door-post.

Her chin was cockling, her underlip working. Suddenly she began to cry.

"Oh, all right," Bunny said hastily. "There, there—"

"I—I don't like you being cross with me, miss! People are never nice to me for long," she whimpered, with her hands up to her eyes. "If you see it like that about the eggs, then—then I suppose it was wrong of me. But I didn't look at it like that, I didn't!"

"No more about the eggs, Kathy; that's over, and so—oh, please, stop crying!" Bunny supplicated. "Do you always cry, as soon as ever—"

Again Bunny broke off. Only cruel to go on, when it could only amount to more upbraiding.

"I wasn't hang about, Kathy. I have to get back. But I—I won't give you up—"

"No, miss, and thank you, I'm sure." Having smeared away the last tears, Kathy was suddenly smiling, meeting Bunny's eyes. "And what about the basket, miss?"

"The— Oh, hang, I forgot to bring that with me. It's yours, of course."

"It's father's—yes, miss. And he'll want it."

"Then I'll let you have it as soon as possible. But I can't say for certain when," Bunny said in a bothered tone. "Good-bye for now, anyhow, Kathy—and look here! I know Alf's your brother, and, of course—"

"Yes, miss, that's just it!"

"Still, Kathy— Oh, good-bye," Bunny abruptly ended, and darted back to her bicycle, outside the wicket-gate. What on earth was the use of lecturing the girl about her brother. "Would I," Bunny was grimacing, as she rode away, "let anybody lecture ME—about Tom!"

Half a mile short of the school, she braked up and then dismounted, to sit for a minute or two on a fallen pine, beside the moorland road.

She was feeling very serious now. The inability to convince the Form that she had not been "diddled," after all, by her "protégée"—that didn't matter a scrap! If the girls wanted to go on laughing at her expense, let them!

The sobering fact which she was having to face was this: to have anything to do with Kathy meant many a disheartening experience. There was likely to be nothing to encourage you. What self-revelation there had been in that whimpering cry just now: "People are never nice to me for long!" No, of course not! But then—

Bunny, sitting on her pine in the midday sunshine, suddenly smiled the smile which usually meant mischievous determination. In the present instance, it was implying more of a determination to succeed where others had failed.

Absolutely keep on at the girl, so to speak—continue to stand by her in spite of a thousand disappointments and mortifications—until one HAD made something of her? As nobody else had yet managed to do!

Have a shot at doing all this? Why not? She heard the Morcové chimes ding-donging a quarter to one, and she jumped up to ride on again in a quite jaunty mood.

Bunny Trevor, the live wire of the Form, had found an objective to go for, a purpose in life.

"She needs—ME!" Bunny was thinking, eyes a-sparkle. "And so—"

Her right hand struck a chime from the cycle-bell. She had to bring her hand down upon something, as one does when registering a vow.

"The more the school laughs at me—the better I shall like it!"

At any rate, there was one of her schoolmates in no mood to laugh at Bunny, when she was in bounds again, putting her machine away.

At any moment the gong for dinner would be whanging, and scholars had all gone indoors to

make themselves tidy for table; all but Form-captain Betty Barton, who now came sauntering to the cycle-shed for a chummy word with Bunny. "You're down for Saturday afternoon's match, Bunny, and no wanting to scratch!"

"Quite all right—delighted!"

"And if we don't win; if we DON'T beat Grangemoor at their own favourite game, Bunny—"

"Oh, but we shall!"

"I think we may," Betty more seriously stated the prospects, "if we miss tennis in the meantime and stick at cricket praece. I suppose you simply had to go out this morning, Bunny? Although you're my best bowler."

"Yes, I—"

"The cottage? About that, Bunny—whilst we're alone. Mind you, there isn't a chum of yours, Bunny, who would wish you not to care, when you find how wretchedly off some folk are. But—"

Bunny interrupted, halting to face the captain. "Now, I know exactly what you are going to say, Betty. It's not a case for me to—to do anything about. You think as Pam does—"

"I do, Bunny. None of us want to grow up selfish. But whilst we're still at school—"

"I don't see that that makes the slightest difference!"

"Oh, Bunny, it does. You see, we girls are all a bit handicapped—even when we leave school. We have to leave it to others to handle—"

"I don't see why we should!"

"If there were a war, Bunny, and we all went as nurses; they'd never let us get bang into the middle of the shelling. We'd want to, and they'd say it wasn't fit. What I mean, Bunny—"

"You mean that the Turners are awful, like war, and it's not fit for me to see anything of them! Oh, I don't believe in that at all," Bunny fired up. "No! That's just what makes me feel so determined. There are too many people who can only be nice to needy people who are—nice. So that those who aren't nice get left out in the cold. Yet, the worse they are, the more they need to be helped—surely?"

Betty fetched a big breath. "You've splendid ideas, Bunny. They are dead right—of course they are. But all the same, I don't feel that it's your job to deal with them."

"Leave them to the court missionary—eh, Betty?"

"Oh, Bunny—"

"It's all right, and you haven't offended me a scrap, Betty. The gong has gone, so had we better hang about like this?"

"Anything I've said, Bunny," as they went together towards the schoolhouse, "I felt bound to say, as captain. I can't help remembering that, if there is any bother at any time, it won't help you much that you meant well."

"Pam has been at you, Betty, about it all. I know!"

"There again, Bunny, anything Pam has said to me—it had to be said—"

"I don't see why!"

"Her home being in the district, and her father a J.P. and all that—she happens to know a good deal about the Turners. And it's worrying her that you are running such big risks of being cruelly disappointed—"

"Pam needn't worry," Bunny smiled, stepping jauntily. "You might tell her, I expect to be disappointed. You might also tell her that I expect to—to be pleased, in the long run. And it won't, in the meantime, make any difference to my cricket or schoolwork or anything else, Betty!"

"You're an awful girl to have to handle," Betty laughed.

"Yet you won't give me up as a bad job," was the prompt retort. "So why should I give up—Kathy!"

And Bunny, with a "Got you there!" smile, took her captain by the arm and ran her the rest of the way to the schoolhouse.

CHAPTER 5.

She Knows No Better

BACK in class with the rest of the Form, after "break" on Saturday morning, Bunny Trevor came in for a shock.

She raised her eyes from her work to take a glance out of window, and saw—Kathy Turner!

The cottage girl was approaching the front porch of the schoolhouse on foot.

Five minutes after this, a parlourmaid came to the class-room, and Bunny was called out of her desk by the Form-mistress.

"Something about a basket, Ann Trevor—"

"Oh, I know—"

"The girl should not have called at a time like this, Ann. Still, you must go and attend to her."

Some tittering was starting as Bunny hastened away. Miss Merrick had to come down sharply upon the entire class for being seized with merriment; as for Bunny, for all she cared the other girls were welcome to their subdued chuckle. It would be her turn to laugh, when she had obtained a whole half-hour away from lessons as the result of this interruption.

Kathy had been told to sit down and wait in the front hall. There Bunny found her—looking "pretty awful," but that was to be expected at present. Rome was not built in a day, and it would take time to teach this poacher's daughter, this semi-gipsy as she was, how not to look quite so deplorable.

"Well, Kathy, you want that basket!"

"Yes, please, miss."

"It's upstairs in my study. You had better come up with me. Sorry I haven't had time to run over with it, on the bike. You've walked all the way—and have got to walk back!"

In such worn-out shoes, too. Bunny, having noticed the burst state of their uppers, felt certain that there must be holes in the soles. "I must find her another pair, that's all!"

But, first, in Study 12, she had to invite Kathy to sit down in the best armchair. Bunny then produced a siphon of lemonade and a two-pound Madeira cake, from which she took the first cut—a good lunch-size slice.

"And here, Kath, is the jolly old basket," Bunny smiled, picking it up from the corner where it had been in the good company of tennis-rackets, hockey-sticks, and a cricket-bat. "You needn't hurry to eat that cake. You must be tired. And I'm in no hurry!"

"Fank you, miss," said Kathy, who was looking at the slice of cake ecstatically, after each bite. "I told Alf I was coming to the skule, and he wanted to come wiv we, but I got him not to."

"Then he doesn't always rule it over you, Kathy!"

"No, miss! A-cause I knows how to handle him when I like."

Kathy, having said this with the tumbler held ready for quaffing, took a second good drink. She drained the glass, then eyed the siphon.

"Like a refill, Kath?"

"I would!"

"And how about another slice of cake?"

"Not for me, miss, fanks."

"You had such a long walk, Kath. And now," Bunny resumed, after putting away the cake and the siphon, "I'm going to leave you for a minute or so, Kathy. There's a pair of shoes I can let you have, that ought to fit you."

Returning presently, Bunny was rather startled by finding Kathy sitting, with her own worn shoes removed, ready for "trying on" the pair to be bestowed. Already, Kathy was wearing stockings that had been Bunny's.

"What, too small, are they?" was Bunny's regretful inference, after some struggling and stamping by Kath. "Oh, what a beastly shame!"

"But I can jist manage, I think, miss!" Kathy cried. With a desperation that was pathetic, she took a few hobbling steps about the study. "They'll soon git—"

"Kathy, you can't hobble all the way back in those shoes. But take them with you, and I dare say you can do something with them."

"All right, then, miss, that's what I'll do." So on went the old shoes again, one of them with a bit of string serving as a lace. Bunny brown-papered the gift pair and slammed them into the basket. Then, as she saw Kathy standing up in the worn shoes, she said to herself in regard to the bit of string: "No!"

"Wait a bit, Kathy. I can find you some proper shoelaces, anyhow."

In due course, it afforded Bunny a pleasant little thrill to be able to comment gently:

"There, Kath, isn't that better?"

"Yes, I suppose it is, miss; but the string did jist as well, didn't it?"

A short-lived thrill for Bunny! This Kathy—she didn't place the slightest value on appearance. But there—in time!

Conducting her protégée downstairs, Bunny showed her something of the magnificent interior of the schoolhouse, and finally walked with her down to the gateway.

In wishing the girl "good-bye for now," she would let no note of disappointment creep into her voice. Kathy's apathy about the impressive grandeurs of Morcove School seemed, to Bunny, the worst sign yet of a benighted mentality.

Then, during the return saunter alone, to the schoolhouse, self-confidence came tiding back to her. "By the time I've done with her—there'll be a difference!"

Meanwhile, it suited her own cheeky disposition very well to return to the class-room after a most protracted absence. Now, whilst Miss Merrick looked rather annoyed, many of the girls seemed envious of Bunny; and now could Bunny let them see her smiling—demurely.

"Sweendle!" Naomer lost no time in airing her opinion, at the midday dismissal. "Bekas, you dodged at least a half-hour of arith, Bunny!"

"You missed a treat, though," grinned Polly. "A problem you would have liked. It was about somebody buying a whole lot of eggs—fresh, of course—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the renewed laughter which Bunny had to put up with just then, was feeble compared with what came a few minutes later in Study 12.

Naomer's sensational discovery that a two-pound Madeira cake had vanished from the corner-cupboard caused, at first, only a few taken-for-granted smiles by other members of the "chummery."

"You gave it to the Turner girl, of course, Bunny?" was Pam's serene comment.

"Quite wight—yes, wather! The poor geal was— Pawdon?" broke off Paul, at an interrupting yell from Naomer.

"Bekas, what ze diggings, zey drank all ze lemonade, too, between them!"

Then Bunny, who had begun to look hot and bothered, betrayed feelings that she would rather have suppressed. Her half-angry dart to the corner cupboard caused Polly and others to jump to a certain conclusion—and then Study 12 simply shrieked its laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear, Bunny—ha, ha, ha! How very funny!"

"Yes, bai Jove, extwemely wick—haw, haw, haw!"

"You didn't give her the cake—eh, Bunny? She boned it!" Polly laughed on. "That's your Kathy—ha, ha, ha!"

"How much—if any—lemonade did you drink yourself, Bunny?" was Helen's teasing inquiry. "Anything else, girls—missing? Not that it matters. All for a good cause!"

"Swendeel, if ever zero was! What ze diggings, bekas, if zat girl is what you call a deserving case! Eet quite all right to help her to a slice of cake. Two slices—three, if you like! But when it comes to her pinching ze whole blessed cake—"

The rest was such a general shriek of laughter as caused Bunny—whilst smiling feebly—to reach a fierce decision. As soon as a lull in all the teasing merriment came, she announced, quite sweetly:

"All right, you shall have another cake, in time for tea this afternoon. I'll get one. And I shall bring back the one she took—"

"Bunny, don't be silly!" Betty interposed.

"We know what the girl is."

"She has got to know what I am," Bunny said with a touch of passion. "One who doesn't put up with stealing. I shall see her, bring the cake back, too—to let you girls know—"

"But you can't go dashing off to the cottage, after dinner, Bunny," the captain warned her gravely. "There's the big match, remember."

"I shall be back in time for that."

"Bunny, you'll never do it!"

"Won't I? Then it seems," Bunny laughed, "that some of you girls, even, don't quite know me yet."

She left them, simply because she needed to hurry downstairs and ring up the Barncombe Creamery, in time to order a two-pound cake for delivery that afternoon. She was not at all put out with her chums. They must be allowed their point of view. Reformers were always laughed at; and she had undertaken the reformation of Kathy Turner.

Subsequently, Bunny mingled with her chums again as cordially as ever.

But directly after dinner she was off and away on her bicycle, once more riding alone to the Turners' cottage.

Halfway there, she saw Grangemoor School's private bus on one of the other moorland roads. It was romping that team to Morocco which was fixed to play the Form, the great match starting at half-past two. Her wrist-watch told her that she had just under the hour—"And that's heaps of time!"

Certainly she covered the outward journey quite comfortably. No punctures or any hitch of that kind. And there, when she got to the cottage, was Kathy, ready to hand—all by herself, too, which facilitated matters. This was no time for a preliminary skirmish with tiresome Alf or the father.

Kathy gaped at first sight of the schoolgirl, then came towards her, smiling unattractively.

"Ginger-beer, miss?" she inferred.

"No, Kathy."

"Oh, have you jist come to—to see me again, then! I fought you might be on your way somewhere, and wanting a ginger."

"I have only a minute or so, Kathy, then I must bike back at my hardest. I have to be on the cricket field, half an hour from now. Kathy, I simply had to let you know; if you're going to carry on like this, you can never expect to do any good in life."

"Why—wot, miss?"

"That cake, Kathy. I offered you as much as you cared to have, at the time. But when my back was turned you took it out of the study-cupboard—didn't you?"

"I—I know I did, miss," Kathy dully acknowledged, her chin cockling again. "Somehow, I—I didn't like to ask to be give it."

"Kathy! You preferred to steal it?"

"Only for Alf, miss," was the half-whimpered excuse. "How it were, you see; when he knew I was coming to your skule to git the basket, he guessed I'd be treated. So he asked me to remember him, and I promised I would. It were only by promising, that I got him not to come along o' me. Asides, I wanted him to have his treat, too."

Bunny had to soften her looks now. The girl was going to cry again. In any case, how could one fail to make allowance for the excuse pleaded? This girl did not know right from wrong; she only knew that Alf was her brother and her all-in-all.

"You did let me see, miss, I could ha' as much o' the cake as I liked. But I didn't want it for myself; I only wanted Alf to have his share. Asides, I'd promised, and, although I didn't really like taking the cake, I—I had to keep my promise."

Bunny said a silent "Whew!" to herself. What a hotch-potch Kathy's mind was!

"Now I blame myself, Kathy, for not giving you the cake to take back. All right, but, still, you must try to understand," Bunny was gently continuing, when she became startled by a sudden disturbance in the patch of ground behind the cottage.

She and Kathy were standing together on the front-garden path. The noise began as a clumsy, floundering rush by someone up the back garden, after a violent bursting-through the boundary hedge.

"That's Alf, and wot's he been up to now?"

Even as Kathy panted those words, her ill kempt brother rushed in at a back door of the cottage, to come rushing out next moment by the front door.

He was wild-eyed—terrified, like some hunted animal. His sister stepped to confront him, and then, as Bunny realised, he seemed inclined to push her aside and run on, but suddenly hesitated. At a standstill, he heaved for breath.

"Where—where can I go to hide!" he rasped. "I've got some coppers arter me! Kath, wot sh'll I do? Is—is it any use hiding in the cottage? Where can I go!" he said again frantically. "It's the police—after me!"

CHAPTER 6.

From Bad to Worse

BUNNY moved towards them both.

"Hadn't you better stay and face it out?"

"Wot! No! But I know!" the wretched youth suddenly decided, and he pushed both his sister and Bunny aside, to dash on to the wicket-gate.

Next second he was seizing Bunny's bike, where she had left it against the front hedge. He mounted it, and set off. As it was a girl's machine, and much too small for him in any case, he cut a figure that, in any other circumstances, would have sent Bunny into fits of laughter.

His head was low over the handlebars, his shoulders were rounded as he hunched his back to the effort of keeping the bicycle going, never mind how much it wobbled at first. Up and down went his big feet, his trousered legs looking enormously long.

But Bunny was now thinking of the cricket match—wondering how she was to get back to Morcove in time, if he went off with her bicycle. All very well, but—there was a limit; there must be a limit!

She ran out by the wicket, to give chase, and then Kathy, catching her up, began to pant pleadingly, whilst running with her:

"Let him have it, miss—oh, do, please! Let him get away, miss—do! It's the police—something he's been and done—"



"I must keep after him," Bunny declared desperately. "I must have back the machine—when he's gone far enough. I don't want the police to take him, but—Dash it all, I know what I'm about, Kathy! Leave me to tell him—he'd do better to get off and take to the moor."

"But he's getting along so beautifully now, miss!"

Kathy meant, of course, "so successfully," as, indeed, her wastrel brother was, after his wobbling start, managing to proceed.

Bunny tore along the narrow moorland roadway, barely keeping up with him, but by no means unhelpful of recovering her machine within the next few minutes.

He might decide at any moment to dismount, abandon the bicycle, and take to the hundreds of acres of gorse and bracken which lay around him. If not, he would soon come to a rise in the road, and then he would be "whacked." All these moorland roads were nothing but undulations, compelling cyclists to walk up short hills.

On and on ran Bunny, with Kathy panting along beside her. They lost sight of Alf as he went round a bend; then, at the bend themselves, they had him in view again, and now—ah, there was a steep little hill for him to tackle, and he was having to dismount.

Bunny, a good deal out of breath, yet managed to put on a spurt. She reckoned to overtake him before he got to the top of the rise, or, at any rate, at the top. Meantime, as she kept up the desperate pursuit, she was aware of Kathy weeping and moaning whilst still running with her:



Pam's was a fine hit, but Tom Trevor, springing a yard high, held the ball with one hand—and Pam was "out"! And now, wondered Morcove, where was Bunny? Why hadn't she turned up to take her place in the team?

"Leave him, miss—let him—"

"I wish you'd trust me," Bunny could not help panting in return, during this final dash to catch up with Alf. "As if I want the police to get him! I tell you—"

But she did not tell Kathy, after all, preferring to save what little breath remained for a last, uphill effort. It succeeded, and she could make a deterring grab at the saddle of the machine which he was wheeling by its handlebars.

"Stop, can't you!" she entreated gaspingly. "You idiot, what's the use of the bike now? Get away into the gorse, instead of keeping to the road!"

"Not yet," he panted, at the same time trying to wrench the machine away from her. "I can go on miles an' miles yet, I can!"

"You can't!" she dissented furiously. "They'll see you, on a girl's bike—"

"No, they won't—"

"Miss, please—oh, please, let him—"

"Kathy, what I'm advising him to do is best—"

"Best for yourself—yes, we know!" Alf rasped, breathless. "You kin on'y think of your bike, that's all you can do!"

Bunny, as positive as ever that it was going to be six for him, even if it might be half a dozen for herself, still held on to the bicycle, to get it away from him.

He looked at her menacingly, and then, finding that she would not let go, suddenly he dropped his own hands away from the machine, to take a couple of fierce strides and seize her by the shoulders.

"Oh, Alf!" whimpered Kathy. "Alfy, no hurting her!"

"Whose going to hurt 'er? But I can see a shed over there, and—'Ere, come on you!" he commanded, and altogether overpowered Bunny. "Get along now—over there, to that there shed—yes, I tell you!"

She had already struggled; she struggled again, and could not get free. He was hustling her to the wooden shed, and Kathy was doing nothing to dissuade him from his purpose.

"'Ere, I shall want you, Kathy," her brother suddenly muttered, finding his sister inclined to hang back. "So come on now!"

Bunny broke out, passionately:

"You had better be careful—"

"I'm going to be careful—to shut you up in that there shed, and see that you stay there until there's bin time for me to get furrer away, see? That's all, so don't you be afraid!"

Afraid was not the word for Bunny's state of mind now. She was exasperated, furious, but afraid—no!

With less roughness than he might have used, considering his own wild-minded state, the loutish fellow next minute pushed her into the shed, and then banged the door upon her.

It was one of those wooden sheds which were found here and there on the moor, in association with the numerous quarries. These latter were only worked at rare intervals, when stone was wanted for mending the roads.

"An' now I'm off," Bunny heard him saying to his sister, whilst he made fast the door by skewering the hasp over the staple with a bit of wood. "Kathy, you stay here—d'you git me?"

"Yes, Alf."

"Don't you go a-letting of her out for a couple o' hours yet. If you do, you'll know it next time I git hold of you! And mind, if the police turn

up again when you're back at the cottage, no telling 'em I've got that gel's bike. Now I can git away, miles and miles, I can!"

Bunny heard him say no more; only heard his retiring step die away quickly. After a minute, she rapped upon the fastened door with her knuckles.

"Kathy, you must let me out!"

"Oh, I can't miss—I dursn't! You heard what Alf told me!"

Dash the pair of them! This was a nice fix to be in.

She banged upon the door again.

"Kathy!"

"Oh, miss, I know, but I can't! I must do as my brother wanted me to!"

Think of it! After all one had done for the girl! And yet, to think of it was to realise—nothing more natural than for the girl to put her brother's wishes first.

Bunny did not pound the door with her clenched hands any more. Not again was she going to appeal to Kathy. The only thing now: effect one's own escape unaided—if one could! But how?

There was no window to the shed, which simply served at certain times as a dinner-hour shelter for quarrymen and an implement store. Worse luck, there were no implements stored here at present. A pick, a crowbar—anything!—how useful it would have been.

Her eyes, accustomed by now to the deep gloom, made out the time by her watch. Then she heaved a loud sigh. At Morcove, the two teams must be going out to the field at this very moment.

Her chums and other schoolmates, captained by Betty, and the team of boys from Grangemoor—amongst them, her own brother Tom—looking so nice in his flannels.

As in a vision she saw both sides mobbed together for a few moments, near the shade trees, for the "toss" for innings. Morcove to bat first? Then they would be wanting her to go in second wicket down. Or was Grangemoor to go in first? In that case—far worse! She would be wanted urgently for the bowling.

Hang and dash!

"But now," she said to herself, with an effort at calmness, "let me see. I've got to get out of here—I've got to. Any chance of busting away a bit of the roof?"

No! Walls and roof alike proved, during the next ten minutes, to be more than a match for all her efforts. She took a breathing space and tried again.

No good!

At that moment, on the sunny cricket field at Morcove, with the home team batting, the second wicket fell.

What! Pam out for a miserable couple—Pam? Yes, a fine hit—but Tom Trevor, springing a yard high, had held it with one hand. And now—where was Bunny?

Betty, waiting to receive returning Pam with a condoling smile, heard half a dozen girls impatiently, even angrily, demanding:

"Where's Bunny? Hasn't she turned up yet? Where's that Bunny!"

And Bunny, just then, was saying to herself in the shed:

"Here I am—and here I've got to stay!"

Packed with excitement is the long complete Morcove School story which appears next Tuesday, entitled:—



THE MORCOVE SECRET SOCIETY
By MARJORIE STANTON