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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BUNNY BROWN AND HIS SISTER SUE AND THEIR SHETLAND PONY ***

**BUNNY BROWN
AND HIS SISTER SUE
AND THEIR SHETLAND PONY**

BY

LAURA LEE HOPE

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THE BUNNY BROWN SERIES, THE BOBBSEY
TWINS SERIES, THE OUTDOOR
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Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony



**TOBY WAS RINGING THE
BELL.**

*Frontispiece. ([Page 135.](#))
Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony.*

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[1]

BUNNY BROWN AND HIS SISTER SUE AND THEIR SHETLAND PONY

CHAPTER I

IN THE ARK

"Oh, Bunny! Here comes Bunker Blue!"

"Where is he? I don't see him!"

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue were playing on the shady side porch of their house one morning, when the little girl, looking up from a cracker box which had been made into a bed—where she was putting her doll to sleep—saw a tall boy walking up the path.

"There's Bunker!" went on Sue to her brother, Bunny, at the same time pointing. "Maybe he's come to take us for a ride in one of daddy's fishing boats!"

"Have you, Bunker?" asked Bunny, standing up and brushing some shavings from his little jacket, for he had been using a dull kitchen knife, trying to whittle out a wooden boat from a piece of curtain stick. "Oh, Bunker, have you?" [2]

"Have I what?" asked the tall boy, who worked on the dock where Mr. Brown, the father of Bunny and Sue, carried on a boat and fish business. "Have I what?" Bunker asked again, and he stood still and gazed at the two small children who were anxiously looking at him.

"Have you come to take us for a ride?" asked Bunny.

"In one of daddy's boats?" added Sue, who generally waited for her brother to speak first, since he was a year older than she.

"Not this time, messmates," answered Bunker Blue with a laugh, calling the children the name one sailor sometimes gives to another. "Not this time messmates. I've come up to get the ark."

"Oh, the ark!" cried Bunny. "Did you hear that, Sue? Bunker has come up to get the ark!"

"Oh! Oh!" and Sue fairly squealed in delight. "Then we'll have a nice ride in that. Wait, Bunker, till I put my doll away, and I'll come with you. Wait for me!"

"And I'll come, too," added Bunny. "I can bring my boat with me. 'Tisn't all done yet," he added, "but I can whittle on it when we ride along, and then I can sail it when we get to the dock." [3]

"Now avast there and belay, messmates!" cried Bunker Blue with a laugh, using some more of the kind of talk he heard among the sailors that came to Mr. Brown's dock with boats of fish. "Wait a minute! I didn't say I had come to give you a ride in the ark. I just came to get it."

"But you will let us ride, won't you, Bunker?" asked Bunny, smiling at the tall boy.

"'Cause we'll sit just as still as anything," added Sue.

"And I won't touch the steering wheel—not once!" promised Bunny.

"I guess you'd better not—not after you once got almost run away with in the big ark," said Bunker. "I should say not!"

"Oh, please let us come with you!" begged Sue. "We want awful much to ride in the ark, Bunker!"

While the two children were talking to the tall boy another little girl had crawled under the fence from the street, and was now standing near Bunny and his sister. She was Sadie West, one of Sue's chums, and when she heard Bunny's sister begging for a ride in the "ark" Sadie said: [4]

"Oh, Sue! is he going to take your Noah's ark away? I wouldn't let him if I were you!"

"It isn't Noah's ark at all," Sue explained. "We call the big automobile, that we had such a long ride in, the ark. It looks a little like a Noah's ark, but it's bigger, and we can all get in it," she added.

"Oh!" exclaimed Sadie. "I thought Bunker meant he was going to take your little ark, and all the wooden animals, away," she added.

"Not this time," said Bunker Blue. "Your father sent me up, Bunny, to get the big auto—the ark, as you call it. It's got to be fixed, and I'm to drive it to the shop over at East Milford. That's why I came up. Where's your mother? I want to tell her I'm taking away the ark, so she won't think some tramps or some gypsies have run off with it."

"I'll call her," Sue said, while Bunny kept on brushing the tiny whittlings from his jacket and short trousers. And there was a queer look on the face of Bunny Brown.

"What are you making, Bunny?" asked Bunker, as he waited for Sue to go into the house and give her mother the message.

"Boat," Bunny answered. [5]

"Pretty small one, isn't it?" inquired Bunker, who knew a lot about boats and fish, from having worked at Mr. Brown's dock a number of years. "Awful small boat."

"It's a lifeboat that I'm going to put on my big sailboat," explained Bunny, for he had a large boat, with a real sail on it that could be raised and lowered. It was not a boat large enough for

him and Sue to ride on, though Sue sometimes gave one of her dolls a trip on it. "I have to have a lifeboat on my sailboat," Bunny went on, "'cause maybe a scumbarine might sink my big ship."

"That's so," agreed Bunker. "Well, Bunny, you go in and tell your mother I'm going to take the ark, will you? I'm in a hurry, and I guess Sue forgot what she went after. You go in and tell your mother."

"Yes, I'll do that," Bunny promised. "But can't we have a ride in the ark with you, Bunker?"

"Not this time, Bunny!"

"Please, Bunker!"

"No, your father didn't say anything about taking you over to the East Milford auto shop with me, and I don't dare do it unless he says so."

"Well, we can ask him," went on Bunny eagerly.

"No, I haven't time to run down to the dock again, and your father is busy there. A big load of fish came in, and he has to see that they get iced, so they won't spoil. Hurry and tell your mother—Oh, here she comes now!" exclaimed Bunker Blue, as Mrs. Brown came to the door. Sue and Sadie West stood behind her. [6]

"Did you want to see me, Bunker?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Yes'm," answered the boy. "Mr. Brown sent me up to get the ark. He wants me to drive it over to Simpson's garage, in East Milford, to have it looked over and fixed. I thought if I went into the barn and took the machine out without telling you, maybe you'd think some gypsies ran away with it."

"Why! are there any gypsies around now, Bunker?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, I heard the other day that a band of them was camping up along the creek. But I guess they won't come bothering around here."

"If they do I'll sic Splash, my dog, on 'em," said Bunny.

"Yes, I guess Splash will scare off the gypsies," agreed Bunker Blue with a laugh. Then he added: "So, now I've told you what I'm going to do, Mrs. Brown, I'll go and get the ark and drive it over." [7]

"All right, Bunker," said Mrs. Brown. "Is my husband very busy?"

"Yes'm. A big boatload of fish just came in, and he's seeing to having 'em iced."

"Oh, then he can't come up. I was just going to telephone that I want the sideboard moved to the other end of the room, and it's too heavy for Uncle Tad to manage alone. I thought Mr. Brown might run up and help, but if he's so busy with the fish—"

"I'll help," offered Bunker. "I'm not in such a hurry as all that. I'll help Uncle Tad move the sideboard, and then I'll get the auto."

"Can't we go with you?" begged Sue. "Can't we have a ride in the ark, Mother?"

"Oh, my, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Bunker can't be bothered with you children."

"I wouldn't mind taking them, ma'am," said the fish boy. "In fact, I'd like to, but their father didn't say anything about it. Besides, I'll have to walk back from East Milford after I leave the ark there to be fixed. It'd be too far for them to walk back." [8]

"Of course it would. Run along now, Bunny and Sue, and have some fun by yourselves. Don't bother Bunker."

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue stood on the side porch looking at one another as Bunker went in the house to help Uncle Tad move the sideboard. Uncle Tad was an old soldier who lived with the Brown family. He was Mr. Brown's uncle, but Bunny and Sue thought they owned just as much of the dear old man as did their father. Sadie West, who had crawled in under the fence instead of going around by the gate, ran home again, leaving Bunny and Sue by themselves.

"Say, Sue," began Bunny in a low voice, looking toward the house to make sure his mother and Bunker Blue had gone inside.

"What, Bunny?" asked the little girl.

"I know what we can do," went on Bunny.

"What?"

This time Bunny whispered.

"We can go out to the barn," he said in a low voice, his lips close to his sister's ear, "an' get in the ark when Bunker doesn't see us. He can't see us 'cause he's in the house helping Uncle Tad move the sideboard. We can easy get in the ark." [9]

"What for?" Sue wanted to know. "Bunker said he wouldn't give us a ride."

"Yes. But if we're in there he'll have to!"

"Why?" asked Sue.

"Cause," whispered Bunny, "he won't know we're in there at all, Sue!"

"Won't he?" asked Sue, her eyes shining.

"Nope! While Bunker's in the house helping Uncle Tad move the sideboard, we'll crawl in the back end of the ark. And we'll keep awful still, and we'll have a nice ride over to East Milford, and Bunker won't know a thing about it!"

"Oh, let's do it!" cried Sue, always ready to take part in the tricks Bunny thought of. "Let's do it! I'll take my doll!"

"And I'll take my little lifeboat. 'Tisn't all made yet, but that won't hurt! Come on!"

Quietly the two children tiptoed down off the side porch. Through the open dining-room windows they could hear Bunker Blue and Uncle Tad moving the sideboard.

Out to the barn went Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue. In the barn was the ark—the big auto—as large as a moving van. In the whole Brown family had made a tour the previous summer. It really was like an ark, for it had rooms in it where the children and grown-ups could sleep, and a place to cook and eat meals. [10]

"Now don't make any noise!" whispered Bunny to his sister. "We'll just crawl inside the ark and cover up with blankets, and Bunker won't know we're here. Then he'll start off and when we get to East Milford we can——"

"Oh, we can jump out and holler 'boo!' at him an' scare him!" laughed Sue, clapping her chubby hands in delight.

"Yes, we can do that. But not now!" whispered Bunny. "Hurry up an' crawl in, an' don't make any noise!"

So the two children entered the ark by the rear door, and found some blankets with which they covered themselves in two of the bunks, built on the sides of the big auto.

What would happen next? [11]

CHAPTER II

THE FRIGHTENED PONY

Bunker Blue came whistling out of the house. He and Uncle Tad had moved the sideboard to the other end of the room, and now Mrs. Brown and the hired girl were putting the place to rights.

"Well, I wonder where Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue have gone?" said Bunker, aloud, as he stopped whistling. "I don't see them," and he looked around. "I'd like to give them a ride in the ark," he went on, "but their father didn't say anything about it, and he might not like it. When the big auto gets fixed then I can take them for a ride."

Then Bunker went out to the barn and took his seat at the steering wheel of the ark.

"Well, here I go!" he said, still talking aloud to himself, as he often did, and he put his foot on the self-starter, which made the engine of the auto go without any one having to get out in front and turn the handle, like the crank of a hand organ. "Here I go, but I do wish I could give Bunny and Sue a ride." [12]

And back in the auto, under some blankets in the bunks, sounded two snickering noises.

"Hello! I wonder what that is?" exclaimed Bunker, as he heard them. "Is that you, Splash?" he called, for sometimes, he knew, the big dog that Bunny and Sue so often played with, crawled into the auto to sleep. "Is that you, Splash?"

No answer came.

"I guess it was just the wind," said Bunker Blue, as he steered the auto out through the big barn doors. "It was only the wind."

And inside the ark Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue had to stuff their chubby fists into their mouths to keep from laughing. Oh, if Bunker Blue should hear them!

As Bunker steered the big auto down the driveway past the house, Mrs. Brown came running to the door, waving her hand.

"Bunker! Bunker Blue!" she cried. "Wait a minute!"

The auto was making such a noise that the fish boy could not hear what Mrs. Brown was

saying, but he could see her.

"Whoa!" he called, just as if the big auto were a horse; and then he put on the brakes and brought it to a stop. [13]

"Bunker," went on Mrs. Brown, "Mr. Brown just telephoned me to tell you to drive down to the dock and stop for him. He's going to East Milford with you. He wants to talk to the garage man about fixing the auto," for the big machine needed some repairs after its long tour.

"All right. I'll stop at the dock and get Mr. Brown," said Bunker. "I guess he must have got the fish iced and put away sooner than he expected. Now if I had Bunny and Sue I could take them with me," he went on.

"Take Bunny and Sue with you? What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Oh, when they heard I was going to East Milford with the ark they wanted to come along. But I said I didn't believe their father would let them, and I didn't have time to go back and ask him. But now, as long as I have to go to the dock to get him, I could take them with me, and ask him now. Maybe he'd let them go."

"Yes, it is too bad," said Mrs. Brown. "But I don't know where the children went. I guess they ran over to Sadie West's house to play. But you haven't time to stop for them if Mr. Brown is in a hurry. They can ride some other time. Drive along, Bunker." [14]

Now if Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue had heard this talk they might, then and there, have called out that they were already in the auto. And, if they had done so, perhaps a whole lot of things that happened afterwards might not have happened.

But you never can tell what is going to take place next in this world. The reason Bunny and Sue didn't hear what their mother and Bunker said was because they had their heads covered with the blankets, so their snickers and laughter wouldn't be heard outside the ark.

And there they stayed, inside the big auto, as Bunker started off once more, driving first to the boat and fish dock to get Mr. Brown, who was going to East Milford with him.

"It's too bad the children aren't here," said Mrs. Brown as she went back into the house. "They could have a nice ride. I wonder where they ran off to?"

If Mrs. Brown could have seen Bunny and his sister then, I think she would have been surprised. But she did not see them, and, for a little while, she gave them no further thought, as she was so busy straightening the room, after Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue had moved the sideboard to its new place. [15]

On rumbled the big auto, and Bunny and Sue lay in the bunks having a nice ride. They did not know just where they were going, and they certainly never thought they were on their way to the boat and fish dock, for they had not heard what their mother said. They kept covered with the blankets for some little time, afraid lest their occasional snickers and laughter might be heard by Bunker Blue.

"Hi, Sue!" called Bunny, after a while, during which the auto had rolled down the road some little way.

"What is it?" Sue asked.

"It's too hot to keep under the covers. If we make only a little noise now Bunker can't hear us."

"All right," Sue agreed. "But we mustn't make too much noise."

"No," said Bunny, and he threw off the covers and sat up in the bunk. His sister did the same thing, and then they went out in the main "room" of the ark. Of course, it was not a very large room, but it was pretty big for being inside an auto. It had a little table and some stools in it, and when the Browns were on their tour they often ate in that room, when it was too rainy to have their meals outside. [16]

After a time the auto stopped, and then, to the surprise of Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue, they heard the voice of their father. He was talking to Bunker Blue.

"So you got my telephone message, did you, Bunker?" asked Mr. Brown.

"Yes, sir. Mrs. Brown told me just as I was coming out with the ark. So I came here before going over to East Milford."

"That's what I wanted you to do. I want to ride over with you. I had the men ice the fish, so they'll be all right. Is every one well up at my house—Bunny and Sue?"

"Yes, they're all right," answered Bunker, as Mr. Brown climbed up to the seat of the big auto. "Bunny and Sue wanted to come with me," Bunker went on, "but I didn't know whether you'd want 'em to, so I didn't let 'em come."

"Well, that's too bad," said Mr. Brown. "If I had known they wanted to come, and that I was going myself, I'd have let you bring them. But it's too late now and——" [17]

"Oh, no, Daddy! It isn't too late!" cried Bunny, who had listened to what his father and Bunker

were saying. "It isn't too late! Please take us with you!"

"Cause we're here now!" added Sue.

And as her brother opened the big, rear doors of the auto, he and Sue stepped out.

"Well, I do declare!" cried Mr. Brown, running around to the back of the big car and seeing his two little children. "Where did you come from?"

"We hid in the auto!" came from Bunny.

"We wanted a ride, and we didn't let Bunker know we got in," added Sue.

"Well, I certainly didn't know you were there!" cried Bunker.

"We got in when you and Uncle Tad were moving the sideboard," explained Bunny.

"That wasn't just the right thing to do," said Mr. Brown, shaking his head. "However, as I would have taken you if I had been there, we'll forgive you this time. Open the little front window, Bunker, and the children can ride in the front part of the auto, where they can look out and where I can talk with them."

In the front part of the ark, just back of the seat, was a window cut in the end of the big car. It opened into a room near the bunks, and chairs could be placed under the window so those who sat in them could look out, just as in a regular auto. [18]

Mr. Brown and Bunker Blue took their places on the front seat, and once more the auto started off, and this time Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue did not have to stuff their fists in their mouths to keep from snickering and giggling. It was all right for them to have a ride in the ark.

Down the road they went, toward East Milford, where the ark was to be left for repairs.

"Will we have to walk back?" asked Bunny, talking through the front window to his father.

"No, I guess we can come back by train. It's too far to walk on a warm day."

"I like to ride in a train," said Sue, as she held her doll in her lap, while Bunny put aside his little wooden boat. The auto was no place to do any whittling, he found.

As the big ark went around a bend in the road the children, looking ahead, suddenly saw something at which they cried:

"Oh, look!"

"What a dandy little pony!" added Bunny.

"And it's afraid!" said Sue.

Coming down the road toward the big ark was a small Shetland pony, hitched to a basket cart, and in the cart sat a little man. He was not as large as Bunker Blue, who wasn't a grown-up man yet. [19]

Something certainly seemed to be the matter with the pony. He reared on his hind legs, and tried to turn around and run back. The man stood up in the cart and shouted something, but the children could not tell what it was.

"Stop the ark, Bunker!" cried Mr. Brown. "The big auto is frightening the little pony! Stop!"

But it was too late, for, a moment later, the Shetland pony broke loose from the cart, turned around and started to run back up the road.

The man, again shouting something, leaped out of the cart and ran back after the pony.

"Come on, Bunker!" cried Mr. Brown. "This was partly our fault! We must help the man catch the pony!"

"And we'll help!" said Bunny and Sue, as they, too, got out of the ark.

So, while this is happening, I'll take just a moment to tell my new readers something about the two children, whose adventures I am to relate to you in this book. This volume is the eighth one in the series. The first, called "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue," introduced you to the two children. In that first book I told you that they lived with their father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Brown in the seaport town of Bellemere, on Sandport Bay. Mr. Brown was in the boat and fish business, and hired a number of men and boys, of whom Bunker was one. [20]

With the family also lived Uncle Tad, of whom I have spoken, and then there was the hired girl, and Splash, the dog. The children loved them both, and they also loved Jed Winkler, an old sailor of the town, but Miss Euphemia Winkler, his sister, they did not love so well, though they liked the funny antics of Wango, a monkey, that Mr. Winkler had brought back from one of his many voyages.

Bunny Brown was about six years old, and Sue was a year younger. She had brown eyes and curly hair, and Bunny's eyes were blue, and his hair had once been curly, but now was getting straighter. Bunny and Sue were always having fun, and if you want to read about some of it just look in the second book, which tells about them on Grandpa's farm. There Bunny Brown and his

Sister Sue played circus and had even better times, as related in that volume. In Aunt Lu's city home they—well, I guess it will be best if you read that book for yourselves, instead of having me telling you partly about it here.

[21]

In Camp-Rest-a-While the two children had more good times, and also when they went to the big woods. And just before the things that I am going to tell you about in this book, Bunny and his sister, with their parents, went on an auto tour in the ark. They traveled, ate, and slept in the big moving van that Mr. Brown had had put on an automobile frame and there were no end of good times.

And now, from the same ark, which was being taken to the shop, Bunny and Sue had seen the Shetland pony so frightened that he ran away.

"Oh, Daddy! do you s'pose he'll be hurt?" asked Bunny, as he and his sister hurried after their father and Bunker Blue.

"Who, the man or the pony?" asked Mr. Brown, for both were now out of sight.

"The pony," answered Sue. "Oh, how I could love him!"

"So could I!" exclaimed Bunny. "He was a dandy!"

[22]

"I didn't think our ark could scare anything as much as it scared the little horse," said Bunker Blue. "I guess he'd never seen a big auto before."

"Perhaps not," replied Mr. Brown. "Well, we must try to help the man catch the pony."

The children, their father and Bunker passed in the road the little basket cart from which the Shetland pony had broken loose. The cart did not seem to be damaged any, but part of the broken harness was fast to it.

"He must be a strong pony to get loose that way," said Bunny.

"Maybe he was only tied with string, and he could easy break that," said Sue.

"Maybe," agreed Bunker Blue.

They went around a turn in the road, and, looking down a straight stretch, they could see that the man had caught the pony near a clump of willow trees.

"There! He's all right!" said Mr. Brown. "But we had better go and ask the man if we can help him any. He may blame us for the running away of the pony."

And as they all walked down the road Bunny whispered something to Sue. Sue looked quickly at her brother and exclaimed:

[23]

"Oh, if he only would!"

Now what did Bunny whisper to Sue?

[24]

CHAPTER III

MR. TALLMAN

Mr. Brown, followed by Bunker Blue and the two children, went down the road toward the little, short man who was standing with the Shetland pony. For, after walking back with him a little way, the man had stopped to let the pony drink from a brook that ran beneath the willow trees.

"I'm afraid we caused you some trouble, my friend," said Mr. Brown, politely.

"Trouble?" repeated the short man. "You say you caused me trouble?"

"Yes. We were riding in the big auto which we have left just around the turn of the road. Was it our auto that frightened your pony and made him run away?" asked Mr. Brown, while Bunny and his Sister Sue looked with eager eyes at the pretty pony, which did not seem frightened now.

"Oh, yes, I guess your big moving van of an auto did scare my pony," answered the man. "I waved my hand, and tried to call to you to stop, so we could drive past, but I guess you didn't hear me."

[25]

"No," said Bunker Blue, "we didn't. The engine made so much noise, I guess."

"And then my pony ran away before I could stop him," went on the little man, who, as Bunny and Sue could now see, was not as tall as Bunker Blue. "You see, he is a trick pony, and used to be in a circus. But the men there did not treat him kindly, so I heard. I guess maybe he thought your big auto was a circus wagon, and when he remembered those wagons he thought of the unkind men and wanted to run away."

"I'm sorry for that," said Mr. Brown. "We surely would not hurt your pony. In fact, my children

would love him. Did he break the harness when he turned to run away?"

"I guess he did," answered the short man. "But it was an old harness, and easily broken. In fact, part of it was tied with bits of string. I knew it was strong enough for Toby unless he should cut up a little, and that's just what he did, and broke some of the straps and strings."

"Is Toby the name of your pony?" asked Sue.

[26]

"Yes, little girl, Toby is his name. And he is a nice little Shetland pony," and he stroked the fluffy mane and rubbed the velvety nose of the little animal, that seemed to be all right now.

"Oh, Daddy! will you?" suddenly exclaimed Bunny.

"Will I what?" asked Mr. Brown, rather surprised and puzzled.

"Will you buy that pony for us?" eagerly begged Sue. "Bunny whispered to me that we could have a lot of fun with him if you would buy him."

So that was what Bunny whispered to his Sister Sue!

"Buy this pony for you?" exclaimed Mr. Brown. "Is that what you mean?"

"Yes, please," said Bunny. "We—we'd love it!"

Bunker Blue went up to the little horse and patted its back. The Shetland pony seemed to like the fish boy.

"Is he tame?" asked Bunny.

"Very tame," answered the short man.

"Could I pat him?" Sue questioned.

"Of course you could!" said the man. "Come right up to him, Toby loves children. It's only big autos, which remind him of circus wagons, that scare him."

[27]

"We had a circus once," went on Bunny, as he and Sue approached the pony. "But we didn't have any little horses in it."

"We had our dog, Splash," added Sue.

"Well, I guess that was nice," the man said.

The children patted Toby, who rubbed his velvety nose against them.

"I'm sorry your harness broke," said Mr. Brown. "You must let me pay for having it fixed, since it was the fault of my big auto that your pony ran away, Mr.——" and the children's father waited for the other man to tell his name. "I am Mr. Brown," went on the fish and boat dealer, after a moment of silence.

"Oh, yes, I have heard of you," replied the other. "Well, I guess you'll laugh when you hear my name."

"Why?" asked Mr. Brown. "Why should we laugh?"

"Because it's so different from what I am. You see, I am very short, do you not?"

"You are certainly not a very tall man," said Mr. Brown, with a smile.

"And yet I am," observed the other.

[28]

"You are *what?*"

"I am Vera Tallman," was the answer. "That really is my name, strange as it may sound," he went on, smiling at Mr. Brown, who was smiling at him. "Vera is the last name of my grandfather, and I am called after him. Tallman is my own last name, and I had to be called that though I am very short. It is quite a joke with my friends. I say to them I am a short Tallman or a short man who is Vera Tallman."

"Oh, I see!" laughed Mr. Brown. "Well, it's a good thing you can be so jolly about it."

"There is no good in finding fault with what can't be helped," said the man with a kind smile, as he patted the pony. "I can't make myself tall by wishing, even though I have a long name. So I let it go at that. And, when any one says to me, 'You are not very tall,' I answer, 'Oh, yes, I am Vera Tallman,' and then I have a joke on them."

"Yes, I should think you would," said Mr. Brown. "But let us get back to the broken harness. How much shall I pay you?"

"Nothing at all," answered Mr. Tallman. "It was my fault for driving Toby in a harness mended with bits of string. I should have known better, but I did not think Toby would meet with a moving van, that would make him think of the circus where he was so badly treated. You need not pay me anything."

[29]

"But perhaps the cart is broken also," said Mr. Brown.

"I hardly think so," returned Mr. Tallman, who was such a short man. "Toby just twisted around and tore himself loose out of the harness. Then he ran back along the road and I ran after him. He did not run far, as soon as he was out of sight of your big auto he stopped."

"I am glad of that," said Mr. Brown. "Now I will tell you what we had better do."

"What?" asked Mr. Tallman, still patting the pony, a thing which Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue were also doing. "What had we better do?"

"One of us had better go back and get the pony cart," went on Mr. Brown. "Bunker Blue can easily haul it here, and you can hitch Toby to it out of sight of our big auto. Then he won't be frightened any more. And perhaps you had better drive him around another road, or wait until we can take the auto another way. I wouldn't want to have Toby break loose again."

"Well, maybe that would be a good plan," agreed Mr. Tallman. "If you will let Bunker, as you call him, bring the pony cart here, I will harness Toby to it. Then I'll drive over the short-cut road and get past your auto without letting my pony see it."

[30]

Bunker ran back, and soon came trotting along the road with the basket cart, pretending he was a pony himself, which made Bunny and Sue laugh. It was found that only the string part of the harness was broken, and as Bunker had some strong fish cords in his pocket, the straps were soon mended.

"It is better than before," said Mr. Tallman, when Toby was once again hitched to the basket cart. "I don't believe Toby could break loose now."

"And won't you let me pay you for the damage?" asked the fish merchant.

"Oh, no, indeed!" cried Mr. Tallman. "You have done more than your share now."

Bunny and Sue were again whispering together. Then Bunny stepped forward and said:

"Daddy, we'll give you all the money in our banks."

"All the money in your banks, Bunny? What do you mean?" asked Mr. Brown.

[31]

"To help you buy the pony for us," went on the little boy. "Please, Daddy, buy Toby for us. Sue and I would like him awful much!"

"Well, he certainly is a nice pony," said Mr. Brown, "and I remember, once I did half promise to get you a Shetland pony. Is Toby for sale?" asked Mr. Brown.

Mr. Tallman shook his head, while Bunny and Sue looked anxiously at him.

"No," said the owner of Toby, "I don't want to sell my trick pony. I am going to take him to the fair, and I think I shall win prizes with him, and get a lot of money when I show what tricks he can do. I wouldn't sell Toby—not for anything!"

"Oh, dear!" sighed Bunny Brown.

"Oh, dear!" sighed his Sister Sue.

And just then, along the road came driving a man in a light carriage. The man had a dark face and a very black beard. He scowled as he looked at Mr. Tallman and the Shetland pony. Then the black-bearded man said:

"Well, I've found you, have I? Now, I want you to give me that pony! Give him to me at once and have no more nonsense about it! I want that pony!"

[32]

CHAPTER IV

LOOKING FOR A PONY

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue hardly knew what to make of the black-bearded man who seemed so angry about something. He jumped from his wagon and went up close to the Shetland pony. The little animal was again harnessed to the basket cart.

"Give him to me!" exclaimed the black-whiskered man.

"No, I will not!" answered Mr. Tallman. "He is not your pony, and you have no right to him."

"Well, if he isn't mine he soon will be!" said the dark man. "You owe me a lot of money, and if you don't pay pretty soon I'll take that pony away from you and sell him. Then I'll get the money in that way."

"Perhaps you will," said the pony's owner. "But before you do that I may be able to pay you what I owe you, and then I can keep my little Toby."

[33]

"Why don't you pay me now?" asked the black-whiskered man, whose name was Mr. Tang.

"Because I haven't the money," answered Mr. Tallman.

"Then give me the pony! Come, now!" went on Mr. Tang, for such was his name. "If you will let me have your trick pony I'll not bother you about the money you owe me. I'll let you have a long while in which to pay me the last part of it. Give me that pony!" and he seemed about to take Toby away.

"No, I'll not give him up!" said Mr. Tallman. "I'll try to get your money in some other way. I never can part with Toby; especially to you."

"Why won't you let me have him?" asked Tang.

"Because I'm afraid you wouldn't be kind to him."

"I'd sell him, that's what I'd do!" said the dark man. "I'd sell him, after you gave him to me, and in that way I'd get back a part of the money you owe me. I'd sell Toby, that's what I'd do!"

"That's what I'd be afraid of," went on Mr. Tallman. "I'd be afraid you'd sell him back to the cruel men in the circus. No, sir! I'll not let you have my pony. I'll get your money in some other way, and pay you back."

[34]

"Well, see that you do!" growled Mr. Tang. "If you don't pay me soon, I'll come and take Toby away from you! That's what I'll do!"

With that he got back in his wagon, and, with a last look at Toby, the Shetland pony, the unpleasant man drove away.

"Oh," said Bunny in a low voice, "I'm glad that man didn't buy the pony."

"So am I," said Sue.

"And I'm glad I didn't give him up," added Mr. Tallman. "I'd never feel happy if I knew he had my pet pony."

"He does not look like a kind man," said Mr. Brown, "and I saw him strike his horse with the whip. Still he might not hurt the pony."

"Well, if he didn't hurt him he might send him back to the circus, where Toby would be beaten," remarked Mr. Tallman. "Of course, I know that in most circuses the ponies and other animals are kindly treated. But Toby was not treated well in the circus where he was, and he'd never like to go back there. That's why I want to keep him."

"If you sold him to me, for my children, we would treat him kindly," said Mr. Brown.

"Yes, I know that," said Mr. Tallman. "But I don't want to sell Toby—least of all to Mr. Tang."

[35]

"Do you owe him money?" asked Mr. Brown.

"Yes. More, I fear, than I can ever pay. And if I don't pay him he may come and take Toby away from me."

"That would be too bad," said Mr. Brown, and Bunny and his sister thought the same thing.

"Yes, it would," agreed Mr. Tallman. "I was on my way, just now, to see a friend, to get him to lend me some money to pay Mr. Tang," went on the pony's owner. "I'll go there now."

"And if he can't help you, perhaps I can," called Mr. Brown to Mr. Tallman, as the latter drove away in the basket cart. "Whatever happens, if you decide to sell Toby, come to me first."

"I will," Mr. Tallman promised, and then he drove along on another road, where the little horse would not see the big auto and be frightened again.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sue, as she and Bunny walked back to the ark. "I did love that pony so!"

"I did, too," added Bunny. "Don't you s'pose we can ever get him, Daddy?"

"Well, I don't know," answered Mr. Brown. "If we can't buy that Toby pony, though, perhaps we can find another."

[36]

"Really?" cried Sue.

"Will you truly buy us another?" asked Bunny.

"If we can find one as nice as Toby," promised Mr. Brown.

Bunny and Sue sighed again.

"What's the matter?" asked their father.

"There won't ever be another pony as nice as Toby," said the little girl.

"Never!" added Bunny.

"But he ran away," said Mr. Brown, not wishing the two children to fall too deeply in love with a pet they could not have. "I might find another pony that wouldn't do such a thing."

"He didn't run away very *much*," stated Bunny. "And that was only 'cause he thought our auto was a circus wagon. We could keep the auto in the barn, and then Toby wouldn't be skeered."

"Yes, we might do that," said Mr. Brown, smiling. "But I'm afraid Toby isn't for sale. We'll have to look for another pony."

"And will you?" asked Sue.

"Yes; I'll ask about one when we get to East Milford," her father promised. "There aren't any Shetland ponies for sale in Bellemere; that I know. Maybe we can find one in East Milford."

[37]

Bunny, his sister, his father and Bunker Blue walked back to the ark. Getting in, once more they set off, and then, without anything much happening, they rode to East Milford. The big auto was left at a garage to be fixed, and then Mr. Brown said:

"Well, now we will go and get something to eat, for it is dinner time, and too far to wait until we get back home."

"And after that shall we go and look for a pony?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, after that I'll see if I can find a Shetland pony for you," his father promised.

They ate their lunch in a restaurant, and before coming out Sue said:

"Ask the man if he knows where we can get a pony, Daddy!"

"What man, Sue?"

"The man in the restaurant. The man that brought us such nice things to eat."

"Oh, you mean the waiter! Well, I will," said Mr. Brown with a smile.

And, as he paid the bill, the fish dealer did ask the waiter if he knew whether any one in the town of East Milford had ponies for sale.

[38]

"Well, there's a livery stable over in the next street," was the answer. "They might have some ponies."

"Oh, let's go and see!" begged Bunny.

"Let's!" said Sue, in a sort of chorus.

As Bunker Blue was needed back on the fish dock, he did not go with Bunny, Sue and their father to the stable. Instead he took a train back to Bellemere, promising to telephone to Mrs. Brown so that she would know Bunny and his sister were with their father, and were all right.

"A Shetland pony, is it?" repeated the livery stable keeper, when Mr. Brown had told what he wanted—a pet for his children. "No, I'm sorry, but I haven't any. In fact, I don't believe you'll find one in town."

"Do you know where I could find one?" asked Mr. Brown.

The livery stable keeper thought for a few seconds, and then he said:

"Well, there's a farmer, living in the country about ten miles from here, who used to own one or two Shetland ponies which his children drove. They are getting too big for ponies now. Maybe that farmer would have some Shetlands for sale."

[39]

"Oh, Daddy! let's go and see!" begged Bunny.

"Very well, we'll try," replied Mr. Brown.

They hired an automobile in the village, and drove out to Cardiff, where the livery man said the farmer, who might have some ponies for sale, lived.

But alas for the hopes of Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue! When they reached the farm the man said:

"Well, now, I'm sorry! but I sold both my ponies last week! If I'd known you wanted them for your children, Mr. Brown, I might have kept them. But they're gone."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Bunny. "I don't believe we'll *ever* get a Shetland pony!"

But you just wait and see what happens.

[40]

CHAPTER V

THE SHORT TALLMAN

Mr. Brown talked with the farmer a little while longer, asking him if he knew any other place where Shetland ponies might be bought.

"Well, I don't know that I do," answered Mr. Bascomb, the farmer. "Not many of us around here keep 'em. But if I hear of any I'll let you know."

"I wish you would," said Mr. Brown. "I didn't know my little boy and girl were so eager for a pony."

"We *always* liked them!" said Bunny.

"But we didn't know how really-truly nice they were until we saw Toby to-day," added Sue. "Please get us a pony, Daddy!"

"I will if I can find one," promised her father.

But, though he inquired at many places in East Milford, Mr. Brown could find no one who had ponies to sell. Finally Bunny and Sue became tired, even with riding about in an auto looking for a possible pet, and Mr. Brown said:

[41]

"Well, we'll go back home now. Your mother will be getting anxious about you. We'll try again to-morrow to find a Shetland pony."

"Maybe we'll meet Mr. Tallman on our way back," remarked Sue.

"What good would that do?" asked Bunny.

"Well, maybe he'd sell us Toby now," went on his sister. "I like Toby awful much!"

"So do I," said Bunny. "But I don't guess we'll get him."

"I'm afraid not," put in Mr. Brown. "Mr. Tallman is too fond of his pet to part with him."

Riding home in the train from East Milford to Bellemere, Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue talked of little but the pony they had seen, and the one they hoped to get. They talked so much about ponies, in fact, that Mr. Brown feared they would dream about one perhaps, so he said:

"To-night we will all go to a moving-picture show. That will take your mind off ponies and basket carts."

"Oh, it'll be fun to go to the movies!" cried Sue, clapping her hands.

"And maybe we'll see a picture of a pony!" added Bunny, eagerly.

Mr. Brown smiled and shook his head.

[42]

"I'll certainly have to get them one," he thought.

Bunny and Sue fairly rushed into the house when they reached home. They saw their mother telling Tressa, the good-natured cook, what to get for supper.

"Oh, Mother!" cried Bunny, "did Bunker Blue tell you about us?"

"Do you mean about you and Sue hiding away in the ark, when I didn't know it, and taking a ride?" asked Mrs. Brown, with a smile at the children, and a funny look at her husband. "Yes, he told me that, Bunny. And please don't do it again. I know you didn't mean to do wrong, but you did."

"Oh, I don't mean about our going away in the ark," said Bunny. "I mean, did Bunker tell you about the pony our auto scared, and how it ran away?"

"The pony ran away, not our auto," explained Sue, for fear her mother might not understand what Bunny was talking about.

"I know," said Mrs. Brown with another smile. "You saw a little pony, did you?"

"Oh, such a sweet little pony!" cried Sue.

"He was a dandy!" said her brother.

[43]

"And daddy is going to get us one!" went on Sue.

Mrs. Brown looked at her husband.

"Bunker Blue didn't tell me anything about that," she said.

"No, he didn't know about it," replied Mr. Brown. "But I think we shall have to get the children a new pet, Mother. Otherwise they'll never be happy."

Then he told about trying to buy a pony in East Milford, but there was none to be had.

"I don't believe there are any in Bellemere, either," said the children's mother. "Where did this Mr. Tallman, who is so short, live?"

"Over in Wayville," answered Mr. Brown, naming the town next to the one where he lived. "But I'm afraid he won't sell. I'll have to find some one else with a Shetland pony."

"What makes 'em call them Shetland ponies, Daddy?" asked Sue, as they sat down to the table for supper. "Are they all named Shetland?"

"They are called that," answered Mr. Brown, "because many of the little horses, for they are really that, come from the island of Shetland, which is near Scotland, many, many miles from here."

[44]

"The island of Shetland is rather cold and rugged, and the little horses that live there are small and rugged like the island. They have thick hair to keep them warm in winter, and, though the Shetland ponies are so small, they are strong. That is why Toby was able to draw Mr. Tallman in the cart, even though the pony was not much larger than a big Newfoundland dog.

"Sometimes Shetland ponies are called Shelties, which means the same thing," went on Mr. Brown.

"Well, we'd like a Shelty," said Sue, with a smile.

"And you shall have one, if I can find him for you," promised her father.

"Do *all* ponies come from Shetland?" asked Bunny.

"Oh, no, not all of them," answered the children's father.

For two or three days after that Mr. Brown made inquiries in and about Bellemere for Shetland ponies. But there seemed to be none for sale. Mr. Brown even wrote Mr. Tallman a letter, asking if the owner of Toby knew any one else who had ponies for sale. But the letter was not answered.

"I guess Mr. Tallman has so much trouble about the money he owes Mr. Tang that he has no time to write letters," said the children's father. [45]

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue often talked about the pony they hoped to have. And one day, about a week after they had seen Toby, Bunny said:

"Come on, Sue. Let's go down and see."

"Go down where?" the little girl wanted to know.

"Down to daddy's wharf."

"What for? To see the boats? I'd rather play with my doll."

"No, not to see the boats," went on Bunny. "Let's go down and see if daddy has found a Shetland pony for us yet."

"Oh, let's!" cried Sue, and, hand in hand, she and her brother went down to their father's dock.

Though the wharf was near the bay, where the water was deep, Bunny and his sister were allowed to go there if they first stopped at the office, on the land-end of the dock, and told their father they had come to see him. In that way Mrs. Brown knew they would not fall into the water, for Mr. Brown would have Bunker Blue, or some of his other helpers, stay with the children until they were ready to go home again. [46]

Bunny and his sister always liked to go to their father's dock. There were many things to see—the boats coming in or going out, sometimes big catches of fish being unloaded, to be afterward packed in barrels with ice, so they would keep fresh to be sent to the big city. Once a boat came in with a big shark that had been caught in the fish nets, and once Bunker Blue was pinched by a big lobster that he thought was asleep on the dock.

So down to their father's office went Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue, but when they looked in the room where Mr. Brown was usually to be found, he was not there. However, Bunker Blue was.

"Hello, messmates!" called the boy in greeting.

"Hello," answered Bunny. "Is my father here?"

"No, he just went home," said Bunker. "Didn't you meet him?"

"No," answered Sue, with a shake of her head. "We didn't see him, and we just came from home."

"Well, maybe he had to stop at a store first," said Bunker. [47]

"Did he have our pony?" asked Bunny eagerly. "Maybe he stopped in a store to get the harness, Sue!"

"Or the cart!" added Bunny's sister.

Bunker Blue smiled and shook his head.

"No," he said slowly. "I'm sorry, but your father didn't get any pony. He had a letter from a man he wrote to about one, but this man didn't have any to sell."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Bunny. "I don't guess we're ever going to have that pony!"

"I don't guess so, too," added the little girl. "What'll we do now, Bunny?"

"Let's go home and ask daddy about it," suggested her brother. "Maybe he's heard *something* about a pony."

"Be sure to go straight home!" warned Bunker Blue. "Else I'll have to go with you."

"We'll go straight home," promised Bunny, as he started off, his sister's hand in his.

When they promised this Bunny and Sue were allowed to go back and forth between their father's office and their home alone. For the street was almost a straight one, and, as they knew the way and many persons living along it knew the children, Mrs. Brown felt no harm would come to them.

[48]

So, after a little look about the dock, and not seeing anything to amuse them, Bunny and his sister started back home again. They had hardly left their father's office, where Bunker Blue stayed to do some work, before the two children heard a voice saying:

"Hello there, little ones! Can you tell me where Mr. Walter Brown lives?"

Bunny and Sue turned quickly around. They saw a small man smiling at them, and they knew they had seen him before.

"Why, it's my two little friends that were in the big auto!" cried the short man in surprise. "You're Mr. Brown's children, aren't you?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Bunny answered.

"And is your father here?" the man went on.

"No, sir," said Bunny. Then he added: "You're Mr. Shortman; aren't you?"

"Ha-ha! Not quite right," was the laughing answer. "Sometimes my friends call me that in fun. But my right name is Tallman."

"Oh, yes, now I 'member!" exclaimed Bunny. "Do you want to see my father?" he asked.

"I'd like to," replied Mr. Tallman.

"He's just gone home," said Sue. "We came down to see him ourselves, but he's gone. We came to see if he had a pony."

[49]

"But he didn't," Bunny said. "So we're going home ourselves to see him. You could come with us if you wanted to see my father," he added.

"Well, I will," returned the man who had been driving Toby the day the big auto frightened the little pony. "I'll go home with you two little tots, and see your father."

Bunny and Sue wanted very much to ask why Mr. Tallman wanted to see Mr. Brown, but they did not think that would be polite, so they did not do it.

Hand in hand Bunny and Sue started off again, Mr. Tallman following. In a little while, so fast did the children go, even with their short legs, all three were at the Brown home.

"Oh, Mother!" cried Bunny, running into the room where Mrs. Brown was sitting, "where's daddy?"

"He's out in the barn, little son," answered Mrs. Brown. "But why are you so excited, and why do you want daddy?"

"'Cause there's a short man to see him!" gasped Bunny.

"No, it's a tall man," added Sue. "I mean his name is Tallman, but he is a little, short man."

[50]

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "What is it all about? I don't understand. Does some one want to see your father?"

"Yes," answered Bunny. "A Tallman."

"And he's such a short man," went on Sue.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said Mr. Tallman himself, following the children into the room. "But I guess they get mixed up about me. You see, I am really short, though I have a tall name. I'm the one who owned the little pony which I guess your children have told you about, and I would like to see Mr. Brown. I came with the children up from the dock. Is your husband at home?"

"He is out in the barn. Won't you have a chair?"

"Thank you, I will," and Mr. Tallman sat down and looked at Bunny and Sue, while Mrs. Brown went to call her husband. At last Bunny could keep still no longer.

"Mr. Tallman," he asked, "did you come to tell daddy about a pony?"

"That's what I did, little man! That's what I did!" was the answer, and the hearts of Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue beat high with hope.

Were they going to get a pony at last?

[51]

CHAPTER VI

BUNNY, SUE AND TOBY

"Well, Mr. Tallman, I see you haven't grown any shorter," said Mr. Brown with a laugh, as he came in and shook hands with the visitor.

"No, I'm thankful to say I haven't shrunk much," was the answer. "I stopped down at your dock, but you weren't there, and your two little children kindly led me here. Piloted me, would be a better word, I suppose, since we are so near the ocean where men pilot the ships."

"Yes, Bunny and Sue are good little pilots between our house and the dock," agreed Mr. Brown. "I wouldn't want them to navigate all alone much farther than that, though. I'm glad to see you, Mr. Tallman!"

Bunny and Sue could keep quiet no longer. They just couldn't wait! They must hear about that pony!

So, as soon as there was a chance, when Mr. Tallman and Mr. Brown stopped speaking for a moment, Bunny burst out with:

[52]

"Oh, Daddy! he's come about the pony!"

"The pony?" asked Mr. Brown, in some surprise, for he thought perhaps Mr. Tallman had called to see about buying some fish, or hiring a boat.

"Yes," added Sue, her eyes shining as did Bunny's. "He's come about the pony—*our* pony, Daddy! Toby! Don't you 'member?"

"Oh, yes; Toby. The little pony that was frightened by our big auto!" said Mr. Brown. "Well, Mr. Tallman, what about Toby?"

"I've come to see if you want to buy him for your children."

"Oh, Daddy!" cried Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue.

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Brown with a smile. "Let me hear what Mr. Tallman has to say. You tell me," he went on, "that you want to sell me your pony, Toby, for my children?"

"Yes. I've got to sell him, and I'd rather sell him to you, who I know will be kind to him, than any one else."

"But I thought you didn't want to part with him."

"I didn't," said Mr. Tallman. "And I wouldn't sell Toby now, only I just have to. You see it's this way, Mr. Brown. I owe a lot of money I can't pay. I owe some to that Mr. Tang we met the other day, and he's a hard man. He wants every penny, and I don't blame him for that. I'd pay if I could, but I can't."

[53]

"I thought everything was going nicely, after I met you, and some friends let me take money to pay some of my debts. Then I had bad luck. That's what I had, bad luck."

"Was it about Toby?" asked Bunny eagerly. "Is he hurt?"

"No, Toby is all right," answered Mr. Tallman. "The only bad luck about him is that I have to sell him. I hope he brings you good luck."

"No, the bad luck I speak of is that I have lost a lot more money. In fact, I have been robbed," said Mr. Tallman.

"Robbed!" cried Mrs. Brown, and she looked at the doors and windows as if to make sure they were fastened, though it was broad daylight, when no burglars would come.

"Yes, burglars, or thieves of some sort, got in my house the other night," went on Mr. Tallman, "and took a box of valuable papers. They were stocks and bonds on which I could have raised money, but which I was saving to the last minute," he said. "Of course, you little tots don't know what stocks and bonds are," he added, speaking to Bunny and Sue, "so I'll just say that the thieves took away a box of papers that I owned. And the papers could have been sold for money."

[54]

"Oh, Mr. Tallman!" burst out Bunny. "I know where there's a lot of paper. It's down at the printing office, where they make the *Journal* daddy reads every night."

"Yes, but the kind of paper the burglars took away from my house isn't that kind," said Mr. Tallman. "Never mind about that. I want to tell you about the pony."

And it was about the pony that Bunny and Sue most wanted to hear.

"To make a long story short," went on Mr. Tallman, "the taking of my box of valuable papers has left me so poor that I've got to sell my house, and nearly everything else I own. And I've got to sell the pony, Toby. I thought you would buy him, Mr. Brown."

"Indeed, I will!" cried the children's father. "I have been trying everywhere to find a Shetland pony for Bunny and Sue." Then Mr. Brown and Mr. Tallman talked about the price to be paid for Toby. "Yes, I'll gladly buy Toby, Mr. Tallman," finished Mr. Brown.

[55]

"I thought you would. That makes me feel easier, for I know Toby will have a good home."

"We'll just love him!" cried Bunny.

"And we'll give him lots of nice things to eat!" added Sue. "And I'll let my dollie ride on his back."

"He'll like that, I'm sure," said Mr. Tallman with a smile. "Well, that's what I came to see you about, and as long as it's all settled I'll be getting back. I must see if the police have caught any of the robbers."

"But when shall we have Toby?" asked Bunny.

"Can't we go with you and get him?" asked Sue.

"What sort of box was it that your papers were in?" asked Mr. Brown. "Excuse us asking so many questions," he went on, "but I'd like to help you, if I can, and, of course, the children are eager to have the pony."

"I don't blame them," said Mr. Tallman. "So I'll answer their question first. I'll bring Toby over to-morrow. I'd do it to-day, but it's getting late now, and I have lots to do. So, little ones, you may expect Toby to-morrow. I'll drive over in the basket cart with him, and after that he's yours." [56]

"For ever?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, for ever."

"Won't you *ever* want him back, even when you're rich again, and catch the burglars that took your things?" asked Sue, wishing to make sure.

"Well, I don't believe I'll ever be rich," said Mr. Tallman with a smile, "even though the police may catch the burglars and get back my papers. But I promise that I'll never take Toby away from you. When your daddy buys the pony he's yours as long as you want to keep him."

"Then we want to keep him for ever and ever!" exclaimed Bunny.

"And the next day after that!" added Sue, as if for ever and ever were not long enough.

"And now to answer your question, Mr. Brown," went on Mr. Tallman, "I'll say that I kept my stocks and bonds—those are the valuable papers," he told the children—"I kept them in a queer old box that used to belong to my grandfather. It was a brass box, but it was painted with red and yellow stripes. Why it was my grandfather had the box painted that way I don't know. He used to tell me, when I was a boy like Bunny here, and went out to his house, that he bought the box from an old gypsy man, and gypsies, you know, like bright colors." [57]

"Anyhow, I kept my papers in that red-and-yellow-painted brass box. And the other day, when no one was at home at our house, some one got in and took the box. So now I'm very poor."

"Didn't a policeman see them take it?" asked Bunny.

"No, I'm sorry to say no one saw them. We don't know who it was," answered Mr. Tallman. "But never mind my troubles. I'll have to get out of them the best way I can. It makes me feel better, though, to know that Toby will have a good home. I'll bring him over in the morning."

"Oh, goodie!" cried Sue, clapping her hands.

"Now, we'll have a real pony and we can go for rides!" laughed Bunny Brown. "Oh, I'm so glad!"

Mr. Brown and Mr. Tallman talked a little longer, and Mr. Brown gave the man who had been robbed of the red-and-yellow box some money—part payment for Toby. Then Mr. Tallman went away, Bunny and Sue waving good-bye to him. [58]

"Oh, I'm so glad we're going to have a Shetland pony, aren't you, Bunny?" asked Sue.

"Terrible glad," he answered. "But I'm sorry Mr. Tallman lost his papers."

"So'm I," said Sue. "Oh, Bunny!" she cried, "wouldn't it be just fine if we could get Mr. Tallman's papers for him?"

"How? What you mean?" asked Bunny, for sometimes he did not think quite as fast as Sue did, even though he was quicker in running about and getting into mischief. "What do you mean, Sue?"

"I mean, maybe when we're ridin' around with Toby, in the basket cart, we could find the robbers that took his red-and-yellow box."

"Oh, yes, that would be nice," agreed Bunny. "And we could ride back home to Mr. Tallman, just like in a fairy story, and tell him we found his box and his—and his—oh, well, whatever there was in it," said Bunny, not able to think of "stocks and bonds."

"It would be dandy!" cried Sue, using a word of which her brother was very fond. "But, Bunny, if we found all the things Mr. Tallman lost he'd be rich again—I mean partly rich."

"Well, wouldn't that be good?" [59]

"Yes, but then he'd have a lot of money and he could buy back Toby from daddy."

Bunny shook his head.

"Nope!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you hear Mr. Tallman say that Toby would belongs to us for ever and for ever, amen."

"He didn't say amen!" declared Sue.

"Well, that goes with it, anyhow," was Bunny's answer. "We always say for ever and for ever, amen. So Toby's going to belongs to us that way."

"All right," agreed Sue. "Then we'll find Mr. Tallman's red-and-yellow box for him and make him rich again. And now let's go and tell Bunker Blue that we're going to have a pony."

The children were so excited about what was going to happen that they hardly knew what they did. They told all their friends about their good luck, and promised every one a ride in the pony cart.

"And you may have as many as ever you want," said Bunny to Bunker Blue. "'Cause you like ponies, don't you?"

"Oh, I just love 'em!" laughed the fish boy.

Bunny and Sue thought the next day would never come! But it did, and they were up bright and early. After breakfast they sat out on the porch, waiting for Mr. Tallman to drive over with Toby. Every now and then they would run to the gate to look down the road. At last Bunny cried:

[60]

"Here he comes, Sue!"

"Oh, has he got Toby?"

"Yep! He's driving him and the cart! Oh! Oh!"

"Oh! Oh!" shouted Sue, and then the two children ran down the street, and when they reached the pony, which Mr. Tallman brought to a stop, Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue threw their arms around Toby's neck and hugged him.

"Oh, we're so glad!" they said. "Now, we're going to ride and look for your red-and-yellow box, Mr. Tallman."

"Well, I hope you find it, but I'm afraid you won't. Anyhow, here's Toby for you, and now——"

Just then there was a sound of carriage wheels, grating in a sudden stop, near the little basket cart, while a harsh voice said:

"Ha! So, I've found you; have I? Now give me that pony and don't make any more fuss about it!"

And who do you suppose it was that said that?

[61]

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST RIDE

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue looked quickly up at hearing the harsh voice. They had been looking at Toby, thinking how nice he was, and how glad they were to have him, but now——

There they saw standing near the little horse Mr. Tang, the cross man who had said Mr. Tallman owed him money.

"I am just in time, I see!" went on Mr. Tang. "I went over to your house to get this pony, Mr. Tallman, but they said you had driven here with him. I see you had."

"Yes, I brought the pony over to Bunny and his sister," stated Mr. Tallman. "I have sold Toby to their father."

"You have?" cried Mr. Tang. "Why, you shouldn't have done that! You should have given that pony to me in part payment of the money you owe me. When are you going to pay me?"

"I can pay you something as soon as Mr. Brown gives me the money for Toby," was the answer.

[62]

"Then, I am too late. I can't have Toby, can I?" asked Mr. Tang.

And, oh! how anxiously Bunny and Sue waited for the answer. Suppose, after all, they could not have the pony?

But the next words of Mr. Tallman made them feel better. He said:

"Indeed, you are too late. I have sold Toby, and Bunny and Sue are going to have him after this. I will pay you as soon as I can, but I have been robbed, Mr. Tang. Some burglars took my red-and-yellow box that had in it some valuable papers, and I can't pay you all I owe you until I get that box back."

"But if you'd give me the pony you wouldn't have to pay me so much," went on Mr. Tang.

Mr. Tallman shook his head.

"It is too late," he said. "Toby goes to Bunny and Sue."

The little boy and girl were very glad, but Mr. Tang was angry.

"I've got to have my money!" he exclaimed. "If I can't get it one way I'll get it another. You watch out, Mr. Tallman!" and with that he turned his horse and drove away, giving a last look toward Toby, Bunny and Sue.

[63]

"Oh, he won't take Toby, will he?" asked Bunny.

"No, indeed," answered Mr. Tallman. "The pony is yours now."

Mr. Brown, who had not yet gone down to his fish dock, now came out of the house and paid Mr. Tallman for the Shetland pony. And when Bunny and Sue saw that done they felt sure the pet was their very own.

"For," said Bunny to Sue, as they stood patting Toby, "when you buy anything at the store, and give your pennies for it, the storekeeper can't take it back."

"Yes, I guess that's so," said Sue, as though not quite sure. "But Mr. Tallman isn't a storekeeper."

"Well, Toby's ours now; isn't he, Daddy?" asked the little boy.

"Yes, he surely is," said Mr. Brown.

Mr. Tallman told Bunny and Sue what to feed the little horse, and how to treat him.

"Bunker Blue will look after Toby in the stable," said Mr. Brown. "Bunker knows a lot about horses as well as about boats, and he'll harness the pony for the children until they get big enough to do it themselves. We have a nice little box-stall in the stable where Toby can make himself at home."

[64]

"And we'll put some soft straw in for his bed," added Bunny.

"And we'll pull grass and give it to him to eat," said Sue. "Will he like green grass, Mr. Tallman?"

"Oh, yes, very much. But he likes hay, too, and now and then a bit of apple or a lump of sugar."

"We'll give him them, too!" cried Bunny. "Oh, we'll have lots of fun with our pony, won't we, Sue?"

"Yes," answered the little girl, again patting Toby. "We'll have heaps of fun!"

"Well, good-bye, little horse," said Mr. Tallman finally, when it was time for him to go. "Good-bye! I'm sorry to have to sell you, but I need the money, and I'm sure you'll have a good home with Bunny and Sue. They will be kind to you. Good-bye!"

Toby bowed his head up and down. It may be that he was saying "Good-bye!" also, or perhaps he only happened to do that. But the two children thought it must be that he was bowing because Mr. Tallman was going away.

[65]

Bunny and Sue looked down the road to make sure the cross Mr. Tang was not in sight, and they were glad when they did not see him. For, even though they knew their father had paid for Toby, still they felt that, in some way, the gruff man might come and take him away.

"When may we have a ride, Daddy?" asked Bunny as he saw his father getting ready to go down to the dock. He was going to walk along with Mr. Tallman, who would have to take a train back to his home, since he could no longer ride in the pony cart.

"Oh, so you want to *ride*, do you?" asked Mr. Brown with a smile, and a wink at Mr. Tallman. "Why, I thought you wanted to have Toby just to *look* at."

"Oh, no, we want a ride! Don't we, Sue?" Bunny cried.

"Lots of rides!" exclaimed the little girl. "When may we have one, Daddy?"

"I'll send Bunker Blue up as soon as I get to the dock," promised Mr. Brown. "He can take you for a ride in the pony cart."

"Oh, shall we have to wait *that* long?" Bunny cried. "Couldn't we go for a ride by ourselves?"

"Not at first," Mr. Brown answered. "But after a while, when Bunker has shown you how to drive, then I expect you and your sister will go off on little trips by yourselves—not too far, though. I suppose Toby will be safe for the children to drive?" Mr. Brown asked Mr. Tallman.

[66]

"Oh, yes, of course," said that gentleman. "There is one nice thing about Toby—he is very gentle and kind and he likes children very much. In fact, he's like a big dog."

"But, Mr. Brown, if Bunny and Sue want a ride so much, why not let me drive them down to your dock? I know where it is, for I was there the other day. Then they can take Bunker Blue in with them and he can teach them how to hold the reins, and other things they need to know

about the pony and cart. I'll drive them down."

"Will you?" returned Mr. Brown. "That is kind. Jump in, Bunny and Sue! Get ready for your first pony ride! Tell Bunker Blue I'll soon be there, and then you can all three go off together. Get in!"

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed Bunny and Sue, filled with joy. "Oh! Oh!"

Mr. Tallman helped them into the basket cart, and then got in himself. Toby looked around as if to make sure that the children were safely seated before starting off, and he switched his long tail. [67]

"Isn't his tail beautiful?" exclaimed Sue.

"Awful nice," agreed Bunny. "I guess no flies 'd better get on Toby, or they'll wish they hadn't when he switches 'em off!"

"Get along, Toby!" called Mr. Tallman to the little creature. "You are going to give Bunny and Sue their first ride. We could take you in the pony cart if you'd like it," he said to Mr. Brown. "Toby can easily pull all four of us, as the road is smooth and down hill."

"No," said Mr. Brown. "I have to stop at two or three places on my way to the dock. Besides, it seems too much for one little pony to pull two men and two children."

"Oh, Toby is strong!" replied Mr. Tallman. "He has often pulled heavier loads than that."

"Well, thank you, I'll not get in," again said Mr. Brown. "Ride along, Bunny and Sue, and wait for me at the dock. Then you and Bunker may have a good time."

Off started Toby, drawing Mr. Tallman, Bunny and Sue. The children looked with eager eyes at their new pony, whose little feet went "clap-clap!" on the hard road. And Toby went quite fast, too, trotting so rapidly that his feet seemed to "twinkle," as Sue said. [68]

"Oh, I just love a pony!" said Sue, as she sat beside Bunny. "I just love Toby!"

"So do I!" agreed her brother. "We're going to keep him for ever and ever!"

But neither Bunny nor Sue knew what was shortly going to happen to Toby. [69]

CHAPTER VIII

SUE'S HANDKERCHIEF

"Well, well! What's all this?" cried Bunker Blue, as he saw Bunny and Sue sitting in the pony cart, being driven along the dock by Mr. Tallman. "What's all this?"

"We got a pony!" said Sue.

"And he's all ours! To keep for ever! Daddy bought him from Mr. Tallman," added Bunny.

"And daddy says you're going to show us how to drive him and hitch him up and all like that," went on Sue.

"Oh, I'll like that!" exclaimed Bunker Blue. He had been painting a small boat, but he wiped the paint off his hands and came over to pat Toby.

"Isn't he nice?" asked Bunny.

"Very nice, indeed," answered Bunker Blue. "Well, I think taking you children for a ride on such a fine day as this will be more fun than painting boats. Am I to start off with the children at once?" he asked Mr. Tallman. [70]

"No, I believe Mr. Brown wants you to wait for him," answered the man who had sold the pony. "I'll get out now, as I need to hurry back home. I'll leave the pony with you."

"I'll take good care of him, and Bunny and Sue also," promised Bunker Blue.

"Good-bye!" called Mr. Tallman for the second time, and now he really started away by himself. Once more Toby seemed to bow his head up and down.

"Good-bye!" answered Bunny.

"I hope you find your red-and-yellow box," added Sue.

"And all your money in it," went on her brother.

"Oh, it wasn't exactly money in the box that was taken from me," said Mr. Tallman. "The papers could be sold for money if I had them. But they're gone!"

"If we find them, when we're riding around with Toby, we'll save 'em for you," promised Bunny.

"All right," answered Mr. Tallman with a laugh. "I hope you do find them, but I'm afraid you won't."

While Bunker went to wash himself, in readiness for taking Bunny and Sue for a ride, having first tied the pony's strap to a post on the dock, Bunny and Sue sat in the basket cart, looking at their new pet.

[71]

"Oh, look! There's a fly on him!" suddenly exclaimed Sue. "Shall I shoo it off with my handkerchief, Bunny?"

"Maybe Toby can knock it off himself," replied Bunny.

And, surely enough, while the children watched, Toby gave his tail a flicker and a twist, and the fly, which had been biting him, flew away.

"Isn't he cute?" cried Sue.

"Yes," said Bunny. "And his tail is so long that he can switch flies 'most anywhere on him."

"His tail won't reach up to his front legs," said Sue, leaning over the edge of the cart to look and make sure. "How does he get the flies off his front legs, Bunny, when he can't reach 'em with his tail?"

"I don't know," answered the little boy.

"Let's get out and watch," suggested Sue. "Daddy isn't here yet, and Bunker can't take us for a ride till daddy comes. Let's get out and see how Toby makes the flies get off his front legs."

"Oh, yes, let's!" agreed Bunny.

Out of the basket cart climbed the two children. They walked around where they could stand in front of Toby, and stooped down so they could see his legs better.

[72]

"There's a fly!" suddenly exclaimed Bunny.

"Where?" asked Sue eagerly.

"Right on his—his elbow," Bunny answered, pointing to the middle part of Toby's leg, where it bent. "There's a fly right on his elbow."

"Tisn't his elbow," said Sue. "That isn't!"

"What is it then?"

"It's his—his knee!"

"Well, it would be his elbow if his front legs were arms," insisted Bunny. "And, anyhow, there's a fly!"

Surely enough, there was a fly on Toby's leg, and it was out of reach of his tail, long as that was.

"How'll he get the fly off?" asked Sue.

"Let's watch and see," suggested Bunny.

They did not have long to wait. Pretty soon the fly began to bite, as flies always do when they get on horses or ponies. But the fly did not bite very long, for Toby stretched his leg out a little way in front of him, where he could reach it more easily, and then he leaned down his head and with his nose drove the fly away.

"Oh, look!" cried Bunny. "He's scratching the itchy place with his nose!"

[73]

And that is just what Toby was doing. When he found that his tail would not reach the biting fly he drove the insect off another way.

Then, while Bunny and Sue still watched, a third fly, or perhaps it was the same one, lighted on Toby's front leg in a place where he could neither reach it with his tail nor with his nose.

"What'll he do now?" asked Sue.

"Let's watch and see," said her brother.

Again they did not have long to wait. When Toby found that the fly was biting him, he gave a queer wiggle to his skin, and the fly flew off.

"Oh, he shivered him away!" cried Sue. "He just shivered him away!"

And really it did seem as if Toby had done that very thing. Bunny and Sue were laughing at the queer way their pony had got rid of the fly when they saw their father coming along the dock.

"Well, youngsters!" called Mr. Brown, "you haven't sold Toby yet, I see!"

"And we're not going to!" cried Bunny. "We're never going to sell Toby!"

"All right," said Mr. Brown, laughing. "But where is Bunker?"

"He's washing so he can take us for a ride," answered Sue. "And, Daddy! you ought to see Toby chase flies!"

[74]

"Does he run after them?" asked her father, smiling.

"Oh, Daddy! Of *course* not!" cried Sue. "But when a fly gets on the back part of our pony he switches his tail and knocks him off."

"And when a fly gets on his front leg he scratches it off with his nose."

"What?" cried Mr. Brown. "Does Toby scratch his leg off?"

"No! The *fly*!" said Bunny, laughing at the funny way his father spoke. "He brushes the fly off, and then he scratches the itchy place with his nose."

"My! he's quite a pony!"

"And when a fly gets on the back part of his front leg, how do you s'pose he gets the fly off then, Daddy?" asked Sue.

"Does he ask you to drive the fly off for him?" Mr. Brown wanted to know.

"Oh, Daddy! Course not! Toby can't talk!" Sue said. "But he just shivers his leg and the fly goes right away! What do you think of that?"

"Well, I think your pony is smarter than we knew," said Mr. Brown. "Think of shivering off flies!" [75]

"And sometimes he stamps his feet and shakes them off," added Bunny. "That's another way. How many does that make, Sue? How many ways can Toby drive off the flies?"

Bunny and Sue counted up on their fingers, Bunny saying:

"He can switch 'em off with his tail, he can scratch 'em off with his nose, he can stamp 'em off and he can shiver 'em off!"

"Four ways," said Sue, who was keeping track on her chubby fingers.

"My! Toby is a regular trick pony!" said Mr. Brown. "Well, here comes Bunker, and I guess he's ready to take you for a ride."

The boat and fish boy had cleaned off some of the paint that had splattered on him, and now, with freshly washed hands and face, and with his hair nicely combed, he was ready to take charge of Bunny and Sue.

"Please, could we drive a little?" asked Bunny.

"I want to hold the reins," added Sue.

"I guess it will be all right," said Mr. Brown. "When you get on a quiet road, Bunker, show the children how to drive, and let them take the reins." [76]

"Oh, won't that be fun!" cried Sue.

"Lots of fun!" echoed Bunny.

Bunker had to go to the end of the dock to tell another boy something about a boat that had been taken out by a fishing party, and Bunny and Sue waited for their friend to come back before getting into the pony cart.

"Member how we used to go out in the boats, Bunny?" asked Sue.

"Course I 'member. But I don't want to go out now. I'd rather go for a ride with our Shetland pony."

"Oh, so'd I," went on Sue. "I was just 'memberin'. Maybe some day we could take Toby for a ride on a boat."

"Maybe," agreed Bunny. "He wouldn't have to jiggle any flies off his skin then, if we had him in a boat."

"But maybe he wouldn't like a boat," went on Sue. "He might kick and fall overboard. Then we wouldn't have any pony."

"That's so," Bunny agreed. "Lessen we fished him out."

"We couldn't!" said Sue. "I don't guess we'd better take him out in a boat."

"Maybe not," agreed Bunny. "Course, maybe daddy or Bunker Blue could fish him out, but I guess we won't take him. I wish Bunker would hurry up and come back so we could go for a ride. Let's go and see where he is." [77]

The two children, leaving Toby hitched to the cart and tied by a strap to a post, walked a little way down to look for Bunker. They saw him coming, and the fish and boat boy waved his hand to the children.

"I'll be with you in a minute," he said. "Tommy lost an oar off the dock and I had to get it for him."

As Bunny and Sue turned to walk back toward Toby they saw a funny sight. The little Shetland pony started to come toward them, and in his mouth was a white rag.

"Oh, look what Toby has!" cried Bunny. "It's a piece of paper!"

"No, it's my handkerchief!" exclaimed Sue, "I dropped it out of my pocket," and, on looking, surely enough, her handkerchief was gone.

"And Toby picked it up and he's bringing it to you!" said Bunny. "Oh, Sue! he's just like Splash, isn't he? He brings things back to you!"

The little pony walked as far toward the children as the strap would let him, and there he stood, holding Sue's handkerchief in his teeth. [78]



**TOBY WAS HOLDING
SUE'S HANDKERCHIEF.**

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony. Page 78.

"It's just like he was handing it to me!" cried Sue.

"I wonder if he did it on purpose," said Bunny.

"We can find out," Sue said. "I could drop it again, and we could see if he picked it up. Shall we do it, Bunny?"

"Oh, yes, let's!" said the little boy.

"What is it you're going to do?" Bunker Blue asked, as he came along just then. "I thought you were going for a ride with me."

"So we are," answered Bunny. "But look! Toby picked up Sue's handkerchief that she dropped, and he started to bring it over to her, but he couldn't go any farther on account of the strap. Do you s'pose he did it on purpose, Bunker?"

The fish boy scratched his head.

"I shouldn't wonder but what he did," he answered. "Didn't Mr. Tallman say Toby was once in a circus?"

"Yes," answered Bunny and Sue together.

"That settles it then!" cried Bunker. "Toby is a trick pony, and picking up handkerchiefs is one of his tricks." [79]

"Honest?" asked Bunny.

"I think so," replied Bunker. "But it's easy to tell for sure."

"How?" asked Sue.

"We'll just loosen the strap, and you can drop your handkerchief again, Sue, and see if he picks it up. Here, Toby," went on Bunker, "I'll just take that handkerchief now, thank you, and we'll see if you can do the trick again—if it *is* a trick. I'll loosen your strap."

And as he was doing this Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue were wondering what Toby would do. Would he pick up the handkerchief again? [80]

TOBY'S NEW TRICK

"We didn't know we had a trick pony, did we, Bunny?" asked Sue, as Bunker Blue got ready to see what Toby would do next.

"Maybe we haven't," replied Bunny. "He doesn't *look* like a trick pony."

"But he's terrible nice!" Sue said. "And the way he picked up my handkerchief was nice, too. Maybe he'll do it again."

"Maybe," said Bunny.

By this time Bunker had loosed the strap by which the pony was fastened to the post on the dock. Toby shook his head up and down, as well as sideways, as though showing how glad he was to be free again.

"Now, little pony!" called the fish boy, "let's see if you can really do this trick."

Bunker, who still held Sue's handkerchief, walked back a little way, and dropped the bit of white cloth on the dock. Toby looked at it a moment, as if to make sure what it was, and then he walked over to it, picked it up as he had done before, and then, to the surprise and delight of the children, walked with the handkerchief straight to Bunker Blue. [81]

"Oh, he did it! He did it!" cried Sue, clapping her hands. "He *is* a trick pony, Bunny!"

"Yes, but didn't he ought to bring the handkerchief to *you*, Sue?" asked her brother.

"He saw me drop it," explained Bunker, "so he thought it must be mine. Maybe if you were to drop it, Sue, he would bring it back to you."

"Oh, let me!" she cried.

Bunker gave the little girl her handkerchief, and after Sue had put her arms around Toby, and patted him on the head, at the same time calling him pet names, she backed away and dropped her handkerchief where the Shetland pony could see it on the dock.

For a moment or two Toby did nothing. He stood looking at the white rag and then he shook his head. But he shook it up and down, and not sideways, and, seeing this, Sue cried:

"Oh, he's saying that he'll do it! He says he'll bring me the handkerchief!"

And, whether or not Toby really meant this, or whether it was the way he always did the trick, I don't know, but, anyhow, he stepped out, walked over to the handkerchief, pulling the basket cart after him, and then he picked up the white cloth and walked straight to Sue with it, holding it out to her in his mouth. [82]

"Oh, he did it!" cried the little girl, clapping her hands. "He brought the handkerchief to me, Bunny! Now, isn't he a trick pony?"

"Yes," said Bunny, slowly, "I guess he is. I wonder if he'd bring me my handkerchief?"

"Try him and see," suggested Bunker Blue. "But I thought you wanted to go for a ride."

"So we do," returned Bunny, "but we can ride after we see if Toby does the handkerchief trick for me."

"Yes, I guess we'll have time for that," said Bunker Blue.

So Bunny dropped his handkerchief on the dock, and, surely enough, Toby picked it up and carried it to the little boy.

"Now," said Sue, "we know for sure he's a trick pony. Maybe he did that in a circus, Bunker."

"Maybe he did," agreed the fish boy.

"I wonder if he can do any more tricks," went on Bunny. [83]

"We'll try him after a while," went on Bunker. "If I'm going to take you for a ride, and show you how to drive your little horse, we'd better start, as I don't know when your father may want me back here on the dock. Come on, we'll go out on the road, and, later on, we can try Toby with some more tricks."

So Bunny and Sue climbed into the basket cart, taking seats on either side, and Bunker climbed up after them, to hold the reins. They drove down the wooden dock toward Mr. Brown's office, the feet of Toby, the Shetland pony, going: "Plunk! Plunk! Plunk!" on the boards.

"Well, you've started I see!" called Mr. Brown to Bunny and Sue, as he looked out of the door of his office. "But what kept you so long?"

"Oh, Toby was doing tricks," answered Bunny.

"Doing tricks?" asked Mr. Brown.

"He picked up my handkerchief," added Sue, and she told her father all about it.

"My! he certainly is a trick pony!" said Mr. Brown. "We must ask Mr. Tallman if Toby can do anything else besides the handkerchief trick."

Then, as Mr. Brown watched, Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue and their Shetland pony went off down the road, Bunker Blue driving. [84]

"Doesn't he go nice?" cried Sue to her brother. "And doesn't his tail switch off the flies quick?"

"Terrible quick," agreed Bunny, and he added: "Oh, Bunker Blue! you ought to see how many ways Toby can wiggle the flies off his legs."

"How many?" asked the fish boy.

"Five," answered Bunny. "Course not all five flies off his legs, but some off his back he switches with his tail, and——"

"You talk just like a Dutchman!" laughed Bunker.

"Well, anyhow, he can wiggle flies off lots of ways," Bunny said.

Down the road they drove, and many a person, and not a few children, turned to look after the pony cart in which Bunny and Sue were having such a good time.

As they drove past old Miss Hollyhock's cottage she came to the door and waved to them. A little farther on Bunny saw Charlie Star, with whom he sometimes played.

"Oh, Bunker!" cried Bunny, "couldn't we take Charlie for a ride?"

"Well, yes, but not just now. I want to give you children a little lesson in driving, and we don't want to be crowded. Some other time we'll take Charlie," said the fish boy. [85]

So, as he drove past his chum, Bunny leaned out of the cart and called:

"We'll give you a ride to-morrow, Charlie!"

"All right—thanks!" shouted the little boy in answer.

A little later Sue saw some of her girl playmates—Mary Watson and Sadie West—and to them she said the same thing—that she would take them for a ride the next day.

"Don't promise too much," warned Bunker Blue. "We don't want to make Toby too tired."

But I guess the Shetland pony liked to draw children about, at least as long as the roads were level, and he did not have to haul the cart uphill.

Coming to a quiet part of the road, just outside the village, where automobiles seldom came, Bunker Blue gave the two children their first lesson in driving. He showed Bunny and Sue how to hold the reins, and how to pull gently on the left one when they wanted the pony to turn that way.

"And when you want him to go to the right just pull on the right-hand line," said the fish boy. "But be careful in turning all the way around that you don't turn too quickly, or you may upset the cart and spill out." [86]

"I spilled off my sled once," said Bunny. "And I rolled all the way downhill. But I didn't get hurt, for I rolled into a bank of snow."

"Well, there aren't any snow banks here, now, to fall into," said Bunker, "so be careful about rolling out."

Then the fish boy showed the children how to hold the reins gently, but firmly, when Toby was trotting straight along, and he showed them how to pull in when they wanted the pony to stop.

Then, after a while, Bunker let Bunny take the reins himself, for a little while, and drive Toby. The little boy was delighted to do this. He even guided the pony first to the right and then to the left, and then brought him to a stop.

"Fine!" cried Bunker. "That's the way to do it, Bunny!"

"Can't I do it, too?" asked Sue, for she always liked to do the things her brother did.

"Yes, it's your turn now," said the fish boy, and the little girl took the reins. And Toby was so gentle, and seemed so eager to do everything he could to make it easy for Sue, that she soon learned to drive a little bit. [87]

Then Bunker showed them how to turn around, and how to make Toby back up, in case they got to such a narrow place in the road that there was not room to turn. Bunker knew a lot about horses and ponies, and he was the best teacher Bunny and Sue could have had.

"Now, let's drive back and show mother!" said Bunny after a while. "Let's drive past the house, Bunker."

"All right," agreed the fish boy. "I'll drive until we get there, for I see some automobiles coming, and we don't want them to run into us. But when we get near the house I'll let you take the reins, Bunny."

"Couldn't I take 'em, too?" asked Sue.

"Well, we'll let Bunny do it first," suggested Bunker. "And then, when we drive down to the dock, you can show your daddy how you drive, little girl."

"Oh, I'll love that!" cried Sue, clapping her hands.

And you can imagine how surprised Mrs. Brown was when she saw the pony cart coming up the drive, with Bunny holding the reins, as though he had known for a long while how to make Toby go.

[88]

"Look, Mother! Look!" cried the little boy. "I'm driving Toby!"

"So I see, Bunny," said Mrs. Brown. "Isn't it wonderful?"

"And I can drive, too," added Sue. "I'm going to show daddy down at the dock!"

"Oh, won't that be nice!" laughed her mother. "I'm sure you two children ought to be very happy with such a fine pony and cart!"

And indeed Bunny and Sue were happy. Bunny drove all around the house and out into the road again, and then Bunker took the reins to guide the pony down to the fish and boat dock, for the children had not yet been taught enough about the pony to make it safe for them to drive him on the main street.

"Now, you take hold, Sue," said Bunker, as they turned into the yard that led to the dock. "There's your father at the window of the office, and he can see you drive."

Sue's cheeks glowed rosy in delight as she took the reins; and as she guided the pony past the little house on the end of the dock, where Daddy Brown had his office, the little girl cried:

"See what I can do! See what I can do!"

[89]

"Oh, fine!" exclaimed Mr. Brown. "Well, Toby didn't run away with you, did he?"

"Oh, no! He'll never do that!" said Bunny. "We had a dandy ride!"

The children, with Bunker Blue, took turns telling Mr. Brown about their first ride, and then, not wishing to tire them out, or make Toby too tired, either, Mr. Brown sent them home in the pony cart, with Bunker to drive.

"To-morrow you may go out again," said Bunny's father.

And so, for several days after that, Bunker Blue took the children out for rides in the pony cart. Each day he let them drive alone for longer and longer times, until at last Bunny and Sue were very good at it.

They learned how to keep to the right, out of the way of other wagons or automobiles, and as Toby did not now seem to be afraid of anything he met, one night Mr. Brown said:

"Well, I guess Bunny and Sue are good enough drivers now to go out by themselves without Bunker Blue."

"And drive all alone?" asked Bunny, eagerly.

"Yes," his father said. "But keep on the more quiet streets, and don't go too far."

[90]

The children promised they would be careful, and the next day they went for a ride by themselves. Their mother was a little anxious about them at first, and watched them go up and down the street in front of the house. Splash, the dog, ran along, too, barking and wagging his tail, as though having just as much fun as anybody. Then, after a while, Bunny and Sue went a little farther away from the house.

But they did not go too far at first, and as they were turning around to drive back, it being Bunny's turn to hold the reins, they saw, walking toward them, Mr. Tallman.

"Oh, hello!" cried Bunny. "Don't you want a ride, Mr. Tallman?"

"Why, yes, thank you," he answered. "And so you are out all by yourselves? This is fine! I didn't think you'd learn so soon how to drive Toby."

"Oh, he's easy to drive!" Bunny said.

"And he can do tricks!" added Sue. "He picked up my handkerchief and brought it back to me!"

"Yes, I knew he could do that trick," said Mr. Tallman. "And that's what I came over to tell you about. I forgot it when I was here before, for I was thinking so much about my red-and-yellow box that was stolen."

[91]

"Have you got it back yet?" asked Bunny, as the man who used to own Toby got in the cart with the children.

"No, I'm sorry to say I haven't," was the answer. "I'm afraid I shall never see it again. But how do you like Toby?"

"He's dandy!" declared Bunny.

"And we just love him!" added Sue.

"I'm glad you do," said Mr. Tallman. "But did you know he can do another trick besides the handkerchief one?"

"Oh, can he?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, indeed! I'll tell you about his new trick. It's one I taught him."

"Oh, please show us!" begged Bunny.

"Wait until we get back to his stable," said Mr. Tallman. "This trick has to be done in the stable where there's a bin of oats. There I can show you what else Toby can do."

And how Bunny and Sue wondered what it was their pony was going to do!

[92]

CHAPTER X

TOBY WALKS AWAY

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue drove Mr. Tallman in the pony cart along the road, and up the driveway that led to the stable back of their house.

"Why, you two children have learned to drive quite well," said the man who used to own Toby.

"Oh, yes, Bunker Blue showed us how," answered Bunny.

Mrs. Brown looked from the window and saw the pony cart.

"Oh, you have brought back company!" she called, as she noticed Mr. Tallman.

"I came over for a little while only," he said. "I forgot to tell the children about a trick Toby can do, and I thought they might like to know of it. They told me that he picked up Sue's handkerchief."

"Yes, I thought that was very smart of him," said Mrs. Brown with a smile. "Is the other trick as nice as that?"

[93]

"I think so," answered Mr. Tallman. "But I need some lumps of sugar to make Toby do it right."

"Yes, I guess all ponies like sugar," said the children's mother, as she brought some out. Then she went to the barn with Mr. Tallman and Bunny and Sue.

Bunny knew something about unharnessing his pet, and did so with the help of Mr. Tallman. Then, as Toby stood loose in the middle of the barn floor, Mr. Tallman gave him a lump of sugar.

"Is that the trick?" asked Bunny.

"No, that is only the start of it. Now show me where your oat bin is and give me a wooden measure with which you dip out the oats you sometimes feed to Toby."

Bunny ran to the box, or bin, where the oats were kept, and from it he took a little round measure, such as grocers, at the store, use for measuring two quarts of potatoes.

"Now," said Mr. Tallman, "I'll just put another lump of sugar in this wooden measure. Then I'll put the measure under this basket," and this he did, letting Toby see all that went on.

"Now," went on the man who used to own the pony, "I'll see if he'll do as I want him to. I want him to go over to the basket, lift it off the measure, and then carry the measure over to the oat bin. Then I want him to open the top of the bin with his nose, and drop the measure inside, as though he wanted to take some oats out to eat."

[94]

"Will he do it?" asked Bunny.

"I think so," answered Mr. Tallman. "He used to do it for me, in his other stable. This one may be a bit strange to him. But we'll see what he does."

The lump of sugar had been put in the measure, and the measure was covered with a bushel basket, turned upside down. Then, stepping back, Mr. Tallman said:

"Now, Toby, go and get your oats! Go and get your oats!"

The little Shetland pony bobbed his head up and down, just as if he were saying that this is just what he would do. Then he took a few steps toward the oat bin, which had a hinged cover like the boxes in the grocery where the coffee is kept.

"No! No! Don't go to the oat bin yet," said Mr. Tallman. "First, get the wooden measure, Toby! I have to have that first, before I can dish you out any oats. Take the measure over to the box."

[95]

Whether Toby knew all that Mr. Tallman said to him, or whether the pony had learned to go for the measure because he knew there was a lump of sugar in it, I can't exactly say. Perhaps it was a little of both. At any rate, he walked over to the bushel basket that covered the wooden measure.

With a quick motion of his head Toby knocked the basket to one side. Then he reached down and took out the lump of sugar, which he chewed.

"Oh, he did it! He did it!" cried Sue, clapping her hands.

"But this isn't all," said Mr. Tallman. "This is only half the trick. Watch and see if he does the rest."

The children and Mrs. Brown waited until Toby had chewed down the lump of sugar. And then, with a little whinny, which seemed as if he tried to talk, Toby picked the two-quart measure up in his mouth.

Over to the oat bin he walked with it, and Bunny and Sue could hardly keep still, they were so excited.

Would Toby open the box, as Mr. Tallman wanted him to?

And that is just what the Shetland pony did. Dropping the wooden measure at one side of the wooden box where his oats were kept, Toby lifted the cover with his nose. Then he picked up the measure again, and dropped it in the box, on top of the oats that filled it nearly to the brim. [96]

"Ha! that's the way to do it!" cried Mr. Tallman. "Now you have done the trick, Toby, and you shall have another lump of sugar!"

And he gave the pony a large one.

"Was that what you wanted him to do?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, that was the trick I taught him in his own stable. I was afraid perhaps he might have forgotten it here, but I see he hasn't."

"Aren't you going to give him some oats now?" asked Bunny.

"Well, I thought maybe you or Sue would like to have him do the trick over again before he had any oats. Usually I didn't let him have any until after I had made him do the trick three or four times. He has the habit of doing it like that. So you children take a turn. Here is more sugar for him."

Bunny took a lump, and put it in the measure. Then he hid it under the bushel basket, and, surely enough, Toby went over to it again, took the measure out from under and dropped it into the oat bin. Then Bunny gave him the second lump of sugar. [97]

Toby did the trick for Sue, as well as for Mrs. Brown, and then the children's mother said:

"Well, now I am sure Toby has earned his oats."

"Yes, now we'll give him some," agreed Mr. Tallman, and the little horse seemed to like them very much.

"Did he do this trick in the circus?" asked Bunny.

"No, I taught him this after that time," answered Mr. Tallman. "In the circus, though, Toby used to stand on his hind legs with a lot of other ponies in a ring, and a monkey used to ride around on his back. We haven't any monkey now, so we can't do that trick."

"Mr. Winkler has a monkey!" exclaimed Bunny. "His name is Wango—the monkey's name is, I mean. Maybe we could get him to ride on Toby's back."

"Not unless the monkey is taught to do it," replied Mr. Tallman. "I guess we hadn't better try that just yet."

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. [98]

"Wango is always getting into mischief, too. I don't want him around."

"But could you make Toby stand on his hind legs?" asked Sue.

"I think so," answered the visitor. And when the pony had finished his oats Mr. Tallman stood in front of him, and, holding out a broom handle, as the ring-master in a circus holds out his whip, called:

"Up, Toby! Up!"

Then, to the surprise and delight of Bunny and Sue, Toby rose on his hind legs, and pranced around the barn floor, almost as well as Splash, the dog, could stand on his hind legs.

"Oh, that's three tricks he can do!" cried Bunny. "Our pony can do three tricks! He can stand on his hind legs, he can open his oat box, and he can bring back a handkerchief."

"And he can let a monkey ride on his back," added Mr. Tallman. "But we won't do that trick now."

Bunny and Sue rather wished they could see Wango riding on Toby's back, but they knew, as well as did their mother, that Mr. Winkler's pet sometimes did mischievous as well as funny tricks. Perhaps it was better not to have him ride Toby. [99]

"Well, I'm glad you like my pony, or, rather, the pony that used to be mine," said Mr. Tallman, as he was leaving. "If you are kind and good to him, as I know you will be, perhaps you can teach him other tricks."

"Oh, yes! That's what I'm going to do!" cried Bunny. "And then we can take him to the circus!"

"No!" cried Sue. "You can't take my pony to the circus! I own half of Toby, don't I, Mother?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so. But I don't believe Bunny would really take him to any circus."

"Oh, no, I only meant a make-believe circus, like we played once before," said the little boy.

"Oh, yes, we can do that," agreed Sue.

Mr. Tallman told Bunny and Sue some other simple tricks they might teach Toby to do, and then he said good-bye to the pony and started back home.

"And we hope you'll find your red-and-yellow box," said Sue, as she waved her hand.

"So do I," added the man who had been robbed, so that he was made poor and had to sell Toby. "I hope so, too!"

"Every time we go out riding in our pony cart we'll look for your box," promised Bunny, and Mr. Tallman said that was very kind of them. [100]

After the visitor had gone Bunny and Sue wanted to hitch Toby up again, and drive down to their father's dock to tell him about the new trick the pony could do. But Mrs. Brown said it would be better to let the pony rest awhile and tell Mr. Brown about him when he came home in the evening.

This Bunny and Sue did, and they took their father out to the barn and showed him how Toby could take the measure out from under the bushel basket, and drop it in the oat box.

"And maybe you can make him stand on his hind legs," added Bunny.

"I'll try," said Mr. Brown. And he did. And, surely enough, when the broomstick was held crosswise in front of him, up rose Toby on his hind legs, just as when Mr. Tallman had told him to.

It was about a week after this, and Bunny and Sue had learned to drive Toby quite well, that their mother called to them:

"Children, will you go to the store for me in your pony cart? I need some sugar for a cake."

"We'll get it, Mother!" answered Bunny, and he and Sue hurried out to the barn. With the help of the hired girl they hitched Toby to the cart, and soon they were driving down the street to the store, Splash, their dog, who was called that because he had once splashed into the water after Sue, who had fallen in, and pulled her out—But there! you can read all about that in the first volume of this series. So to go on: Splash went with them, now running on ahead and again lagging behind, barking and wagging his tail. [101]

Bunny and Sue went in the store together to get the sugar, and, as they did not think they would stay very long, they did not fasten Toby's strap to a hitching post, as their father had told them they must always do. But as there were quite a number of customers in the store it was some little time before Bunny got what he wanted.

Then, as he and Sue started out to ride back home in their pony cart, they heard some one say:

"Where is that Bunny Brown boy?"

"Here I am," he answered, stepping from behind one of the clerks that had asked the question. "What's the matter?" Bunny asked.

"Why, your pony has walked away from in front of the store," the clerk replied. "There he goes down the street!" [102]

CHAPTER XI

OFF TO THE FARM

At first Bunny and Sue were so surprised at what the grocery store clerk told them that they did not know what to do. Bunny almost dropped the bag of sugar he was carrying.

"What about my pony?" asked the little boy.

"I just happened to look out and noticed your pony walking away," went on the clerk. "I knew he was yours, Bunny Brown, for I saw you and Sue drive up in the little cart. It's a good thing he isn't running away. If you hurry you can catch him."

"Come on!" cried Bunny to his sister. "We've got to get Toby 'fore maybe an automobile runs

into him and smashes our cart."

"Oh, yes! Get him!" begged Sue. "Oh, what made Toby walk away?"

"Maybe he got tired of waiting," said the clerk, "or perhaps something frightened him. If you can't get him I'll run after him for you as soon as I wait on Miss Winkler."

[103]

"Land sakes! what's the matter now? Has that monkey got loose again?" asked the woman who was sister to the sailor who owned the tricky monkey.

"No, it isn't your monkey that's loose—it is our pony," said Bunny, as he and Sue hurried out of the door.

They saw going slowly down the street, their Shetland pony. Toby did not appear to be in a hurry. He was just walking.

"I guess he just got tired of waiting—there didn't anything frighten him," announced Bunny.

"But we must get him," said Sue.

"Of course!" said her brother. "Come on!"

They started to run down the street, on which there were not many wagons or automobiles just then, and, as there were only a few persons on the sidewalk, Bunny and Sue could easily keep their pony and cart in sight.

But before they could reach it something queer happened. With a bark and a wag of his tail, their dog Splash came rushing along. Straight down the street he trotted, and up into the pony cart he jumped, for the back door had been left open, when Bunny and Sue got out.

Into the cart jumped Splash and he barked:

[104]

"Bow-wow!"

It was just as if he said:

"Whoa, now!"

I don't know whether or not Toby understood dog talk. But he did understand the next thing that happened. For Splash reached over and took hold of the reins in his teeth, pulling back on the lines.

Toby had been taught to stop whenever he felt a pull on the reins, whether any one said "whoa!" or not. And this time, feeling himself being pulled back, and not knowing it was only Splash who was doing it, Toby stopped.

"Bow-wow!" barked Splash again, sort of down in his throat, for he was still keeping his place in the cart, and holding to the reins. "Bow-wow!"

It was as if he said:

"See what I did now!"

Bunny and Sue, hurrying down the street after their pony that had walked away, saw what their dog had done.

"Oh, he stopped Toby for us!" cried Bunny, and he was so excited that he almost dropped the bag of sugar.

"That's what he did!" exclaimed Sue. "Oh, isn't he a good dog?"

[105]

"He's smart, and so's Toby!" said Bunny. "But next time we'll fasten our pony."

"Yes, that's what you'd better do," said the clerk from the store who had, after waiting on Miss Winkler, run down the street to see if the children needed help. "Even a tame pony had better be tied when he is left to stand in the street," the clerk said. "Are you all right now?"

"Yes, thank you, we're all right," answered Bunny. "Our dog Splash stopped Toby for us."

"Indeed? He's a smart dog!" said the clerk with a laugh, as he patted the shaggy head. "Here's a sweet cracker for him, and one for your pony."

Splash quickly chewed down the treat the clerk gave him, and Bunny let Toby take another cracker off the palm of his hand.

"And here are some for yourselves," went on the clerk, taking some more from his pocket.

"Oh, thank you!" said Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue.

They got into the pony cart, and they let Splash stay in, too, because he had been so smart as to catch Toby, and then the children drove back past the store. Miss Winkler was just coming out.

[106]

"Land sakes!" she cried, "what's goin' to happen next? Have you youngsters a pony cart?"

"And he's a trick pony!" exclaimed Bunny. "He can let a monkey ride on his back."

"Maybe some day we could take Wango, your monkey," added Sue.

"Land sakes, child! Don't call him *my* monkey!" exclaimed Miss Winkler. "I wish I'd never seen the beast! Only this morning he knocked down a jar of my strawberry preserves, and the pantry looks as if I'd spilled red ink all over it! I wish to goodness Jed Winkler would put him on some pony's back and ride him to the Land of Goshen!"

"Is that very far from here?" asked Bunny. "'Cause if it isn't too far maybe we could ride Wango away for you on Toby's back."

"Land sakes, child! No, I wouldn't want that good-for-nothing monkey Wango to have a ride on the back of such a nice pony as yours. I'll make Jed sell him to a hand-organ man—that's what I will!"

Wango was a mischievous little chap, but Jed Winkler used to say this was so because Miss Winkler never treated him kindly. The truth was that Miss Winkler didn't like monkeys. [107]

"Maybe some day Mr. Winkler will let us take Wango to do a circus trick on Toby's back," said Sue to her brother, as they turned Toby around and started for home.

"Maybe," agreed Bunny. "Anyhow, I'm glad Toby didn't walk away very far this time."

"So'm I," added Sue.

"And Splash is an awful good dog, isn't he?" went on Bunny, as he turned down a side street and let Sue take the reins.

"Yes, he caught Toby just as good as a policeman could," Sue said, as she guided the Shetland pony along the road. "We love you, Splash," she went on, and the dog wagged his tail so hard that he brushed all the dust off Bunny's shoes. Then he tried to "kiss" Sue, but she hid her face down in her arms, for she didn't like the wet tongue of the dog on her face, even if he only did it to show how much he liked her.

"Hi, Bunny! Hi! Give me a ride!" called a voice from the yard at the side of a house as the children passed. "Give me a ride."

"It's Charlie Star!" exclaimed Bunny, looking back. "Shall we give him a ride, Sue?"

"Yes, we promised, and we've room if Splash gets out." [108]

"We've room anyhow," Bunny said, as Sue pulled on the reins and called: "Whoa!"

Toby stopped. Splash must have been tired of riding in the cart, for out he jumped, and Charlie got in.

"Our pony walked away, but Splash caught him," Bunny explained, telling what had happened in front of the store.

"He did!" cried Charlie. "Say, your dog's smart all right."

"An' so's our pony!" added Bunny. "You ought to see him do tricks!"

"I'd like to," said Charlie.

"You can, when we have another play circus," went on Bunny.

"And maybe we'll get Mr. Winkler's monkey, Wango, and let him ride on Toby's back—maybe," said Sue, who now let her brother take the reins again.

"Say, that'd be great!" cried Charlie with sparkling eyes.

"But maybe Mr. Winkler won't let us take his monkey," said Bunny, who didn't want Charlie to count too much on seeing that trick. "But if he won't, we can tie one of Sue's dolls on Toby's back, and make believe that's a monkey." [109]

"No, you can't!" exclaimed Sue. "None of my dolls is going to be a monkey!"

"Oh, I mean only make believe," said Bunny.

"Oh, well, if it's just make believe that's different," agreed Sue. "I'll let you take my old rag doll for that."

Bunny and Sue gave Charlie a ride around the block in which his house was, and then he jumped out, after thanking them. Back home they drove with the sugar, Splash running on ahead.

"After this, you must always tie your pony when you let him stand in front of a store," said Mrs. Brown, when the children told her what had happened.

Bunny and Sue had many nice rides behind their Shetland pony. Sometimes Uncle Tad went with them. They learned to manage him quite well, and Mrs. Brown was not afraid to let the children go even on rather long drives. One day she said to them:

"Do you think you could drive Toby to the farm, and bring me back some new butter?"

"Oh, yes, Mother!" cried Bunny. "We'd love to!"

The farm, of which the children's mother spoke, was a place about two miles out of town, where a man sold butter, eggs and chickens. Mrs. Brown often sent there for fresh things for the [110]

table.

"Well, if you're sure it won't be too far for you, you may go," she said to the children. "But be very careful of autos and wagons."

"We will," they promised.

"We'll keep on one side of the road all the way," Bunny added.

He and Sue knew the road to the farm quite well, or they thought they did, and they were quite delighted to start off, not knowing what was going to happen to them.

"I'll put you up a little lunch to eat on the way," said Mrs. Brown, "for it may take you some time to go and come."

"Won't Toby get hungry, too?" asked Sue.

"Yes, but he can eat the grass alongside the road while you are taking your lunch. I won't have to put up any for the pony. But you might have a lump of sugar or a sweet cracker for him."

"That's what we will," said Bunny.

Then he and Sue got ready to start for the farm.

And what do you suppose happened to them before they got home again?

[111]

CHAPTER XII

THE WRONG ROAD

Toby, the Shetland pony, stamped his feet in the soft grass in front of the home of Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue. Then he "shivered" off some flies that were biting his legs, and switched some off his back with his long tail.

"And now we're ready to start!" cried Sue, as she sat on the cushion near her brother, who was to drive the first part of the way.

"And don't drop the butter when you're coming back," said Mrs. Brown, as she saw that the children's lunch was safely put in the cart, together with a few lumps of sugar and some sweet crackers for Toby.

"We won't," promised Bunny. "Gidap, Toby!" he called, and away trotted the pony.

Down the village street went Toby, and Bunny and Sue smiled and waved their hands to some of their boy and girl friends who watched them driving away, wishing they were going.

[112]

"We'll give you a ride when we come back," promised Sue.

She turned to wave her hand to Sadie West, and then Sue saw Splash, the big dog, trotting along behind the pony cart.

"Oh, Bunny!" exclaimed Sue, "do we want to take Splash along?"

"No, I don't guess we do," Bunny answered. "There's a big dog at the farm, and he might fight our dog like he did once before."

This had happened. For once, when Mr. Brown took Bunny and his sister to the place to get some fresh eggs and butter, Splash had trotted along with them. And Splash and the other dog at the farm did not seem to be friends, for they fought and bit one another, and Mr. Brown and Mr. Potter, the man who owned the farm, had hard work to make the animals stop.

"Whoa, Toby!" called Bunny to the pony, and he stopped. "Now you go on back, Splash!" ordered his little master.

But Splash did not want to go back. He sat down on the grass, thumped his tail up and down, and then sort of looked off to one side, as though to see how tall the trees were. He didn't look at Bunny or Sue at all, and when their dog didn't do this the children knew he didn't want to mind them.

[113]

"Go back home, Splash!" ordered Bunny.

"Cause we don't want you fighting with that other dog," added Sue. "Go home like a nice doggie."

But Splash didn't seem to want to be a nice dog. He just sat thumping his tail and looking off at the trees.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Bunny, with a sort of sigh. "What'll we do? I guess I'll have to get out and take him back."

"If you do that," said Sue, "maybe Toby will walk away again."

"You could stay in the cart and hold the lines," said Bunny.

"I don't want to stay here if you're not going to," went on Bunny's sister.

"Then we can both get out and take Splash home," decided the little boy, after a while. "He'll go back if we go back a little way with him. He likes to be with us. And we can tie Toby to something so he can't walk away."

"What could we tie him to?" asked Sue.

Bunny looked all around. There were no hitching posts near by—only some big trees. [114]

"We could tie him to one of them," he said. "Or to a stone."

"Toby could pull a stone right along with him," objected Sue. "You'd better tie him to a tree."

"Maybe he could pull up a tree, too," said Bunny. "Once I saw a picture of an elephant pulling up a tree."

"Toby isn't as strong as an elephant," Sue said. Then she exclaimed: "Oh, Bunny, I know what we can do!"

"What?"

"We can throw a stick for Splash to run after. And when he goes back after the stick we can drive on with Toby and get so far away that Splash can't find us."

"That's so! We can do that!" exclaimed Bunny. "I'll do it. I'll throw a stick for Splash to go after, and you hold the reins," and he passed the pony reins to his sister.

As Bunny got down out of the pony cart Splash jumped up and ran toward his little master, wagging his tail.

"No, I'm not going to play with you!" Bunny said, trying to speak crossly, but finding it hard work, for he loved Splash. "You've got to go on back home! Next time we'll take you with us, but now we're going to the farm, and there's a bad dog there that'll bite you. You've got to go back, Splash!" [115]

Of course, Bunny's dog did not understand all the little boy said. But Splash knew what it meant when Bunny stooped and picked up a stick. Splash was used to running after sticks and stones that the children threw, and he would bring them back, to have them thrown over again.

"Now go and get this, Splash!" ordered Bunny, as he got ready to toss the stick. At the same time the boy looked to make sure he did not have to run too far to get back to the cart and drive off with Sue. "Go get it, Splash!" cried Bunny, as he threw the stick.

"Bow-wow!" barked the dog, and away he ran as the stick sailed through the air. Then Bunny turned and raced back toward the cart, where Sue was waiting for him.

"We must hurry," said the little girl. "Splash is a terrible fast runner."

"Gidap, Toby!" cried Bunny, as he took the reins, and once more away trotted the little pony. Then Sue looked back, and she cried:

"Oh, Bunny! It's no good! Here comes Splash after us!" [116]

And, surely enough, the dog was coming after them. He had found the stick Bunny had thrown, and then, taking it in his mouth, had started back after the pony cart.

"You didn't throw it far enough," said Sue.

"I threw it as far as I could," said Bunny.

"Well, here comes Splash. What are we going to do now?" Sue asked. "I guess we've got to drive back and take him home."

"That'll take a long time," Bunny said, "and we ought to be going after the butter. Oh, Splash! you're a bad dog!" he exclaimed.

Splash sat down on the grass, near where Toby had come to a second stop, and flopped his tail up and down on the grass. That's what Splash did. And he dropped the stick at his feet and looked down at it, every now and then, as if he were saying:

"Well, that was a pretty good throw, Bunny. But throw it again. I like to run after sticks and bring 'em back to you."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Sue. "What are we going to do now?"

"What's the matter?" asked a voice the children knew, and there was Bunker Blue, walking along with an axe over his shoulder. He was going to the woods to cut some stakes for the big fish nets. "What's the matter, Bunny and Sue?" asked the boat boy. [117]

"Oh, Splash is following us, and we're going to the farm, and there's a big dog there that bites him," explained Bunny. "We can't make Splash go back home."

"And Bunny threw a stick and—and everything," added Sue.

"Well, I'll take him with me," offered Bunker Blue. "He always likes to go to the woods. I'll take him with me and then he won't bother you. Here, Splash!" he called.

With a bark and a joyful wag of his tail, Splash sprang up and ran toward Bunker.

"Come on now! Off to the woods!" cried the fish boy.

Splash turned once to look back at Bunny and Sue in the pony cart, and then he glanced at Bunker. It was as if he said:

"Well, I like you both, and I don't know which one to go with."

"Go on with Bunker!" said Bunny to his dog. And, with a final wag of his tail and a good-bye bark, Splash did.

"I'll take care of him. He won't follow you any more," said Bunker, and then he marched off toward the woods, the big dog tagging after. [118]

"Now we can go to the farm," said Bunny, and he and Sue drove on.

They knew the way to the farm, for they had been there many times before, though this was their first visit in the pony cart. Mr. Potter saw them coming up the drive, and called out:

"My! you certainly are coming in style this time. Are you going to buy my place?"

"No, only some butter, if you please," replied Bunny. And while it was being wrapped up he hitched Toby to a post, and then the little boy and girl went into the house, where Mrs. Potter gave them each a glass of sweet milk.

"We have some cookies and things to eat that mother gave us," said Bunny, "but we're going to have a little lunch in the woods going home. We've a lump of sugar for Toby, too."

"My! you're well off!" laughed Mrs. Potter. "Now, there's your butter. Don't spill it on the way home."

"We won't," promised the children, and soon they were driving back again.

"When are we going to eat our lunch?" asked Sue, after a bit. [119]

"We can eat it now," said Bunny. "I was just looking for a shady place."

"There's some shade over there," went on Sue, pointing to a clump of trees a little distance away. "We can drive off on that other road and have a picnic."

"All right," Bunny agreed. And then, forgetting that his mother had told him not to get off the straight road between the farm and home, Bunny turned the pony down a lane and along another highway to the wood. There, finding a place where a little spring of water bubbled out near a green, mossy rock, the children sat down to eat their lunch. But first they tied Toby to a tree and gave him his piece of sugar and the crackers. After that he found some grass to nibble.

Bunny and Sue had a good time playing picnic in the woods. They sat under the trees and made believe they were gypsies traveling around.

"I wonder if there is any gypsies around here?" asked Sue.

"George Watson said there were some camping over near Springdale," answered Bunny.

"Let's don't go there," suggested Sue.

"No, we won't," agreed her brother. "And I guess we'd better start for home now. Mother told us not to be late." [120]

They fed Toby some cookie crumbs left in one of the boxes, and then started to drive out of the wood. But they had not gone very far before they came to a bridge over a noisy, babbling brook.

"Why, Bunny," cried Sue, "this isn't the way we came! We didn't cross over this bridge before!"

"Whoa!" called Bunny. He looked at the bridge and at the brook. Then he said: "That's right, Sue. We didn't. I guess we're on the wrong road."

"Does that mean we—we're lost, Bunny?" asked Sue. [121]

CHAPTER XIII

TOBY FINDS THE WAY

Bunny Brown did not at once answer his Sister Sue. He sat in the pony cart, looking around. It was a pretty spot. Behind them were the woods, and, on either side, green fields. Before them ran the brook. But there were no houses in sight.

"Are we lost, Bunny?" asked Sue again.

That seemed to wake Bunny up from his daydream.

"Lost! No, of course not!" he exclaimed. "How could anybody be lost in the day time?"

"Well, Sadie West was lost once in the day time," said Sue. "She was in a big city, and she couldn't find her mamma nor her house nor anything!"

"Well, this isn't a city," said Bunny. "This is the country and I know how to get home."

"Oh, do you?" asked Sue, much relieved. "How, Bunny?"

"Why—why, all I've got to do is turn around and go back," he said. "We came the wrong way after we drove out of the woods, that's all. Now I'll turn around and go back. Come on, Toby!" he called to the Shetland pony. "Back up and we'll go home."

[122]

But Toby did not seem to want to back up. He pulled the cart and the children in it, on toward the brook. At one side of the bridge was a little slope, leading down to the water. There were marks to show that horses and wagons had crossed there, driving through the stream.

"Whoa, Toby!" cried Bunny. "Where are you going?"

The little pony was headed straight for the brook.

"Oh, I guess he wants a drink of water," said Sue.

"Maybe he does," agreed Bunny, as he saw that the pony was not going to stop. "He pulls terrible hard on the reins," he went on. "I guess he does want a drink, Sue. We'll let him have it, and then we'll turn around and drive back."

Toby walked along until his front feet were in the water. Then, as he did not have on a cruel check-rein, which hurts horses and ponies, Toby could lean his nose right down into the water and take a drink. When horses have a check-rein on they can't lower their heads to drink or eat until the strap is loosened. So if ever you have a horse or pony, don't put a check-rein on him. Toby's neck was free to bend any way he wanted it to, which is as it should be.

[123]

"Oh, Bunny, I know what let's do!" cried Sue, as Toby raised his head, having drunk enough water.

"What'll we do?" asked Bunny.

"Let's drive right on through the water! It won't come up over our cart, and it will wash the wheels nice and clean."

"All right. We'll do it," agreed Bunny.

He remembered that once, when he and Sue were at Grandpa's farm, the old gentleman had driven his horses and the wagon, with the children in it, through a shallow brook, after letting the horses drink. This was at a place called a "ford," and Bunny and Sue were at a ford in this brook.

"Gidap, Toby!" called Bunny, and the pony waded on into the water, pulling the cart after him. He seemed to like it, as the day was warm and there had been a lot of dust in the road.

The water washed and cooled the pony's legs, and also cleaned the wheels of the basket cart. The brook was not deep, not coming up to the hubs of the wheels, and the bottom was a smooth, gravel one, so Toby did not slip.

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"Oh, that was fun!" cried Sue, as Bunny drove out on the other side of the ford. "And now we can cross back over on the bridge and go home, can't we, Bunny?"

"Yep. That's what we'll do," said her brother.

There was plenty of room to turn around on the other side of the stream, and soon Toby was clattering over the bridge, under which the stream ran. Down the road he went, and along a patch of woods, Bunny and Sue talking over what a good time they had had.

But, pretty soon, the little girl said:

"Bunny, I don't see any houses."

Bunny looked around. He didn't see any either.

"Maybe we'll come to some pretty soon," he told his sister.

But, as they drove on, the trees on either side of the road became thicker. They grew more closely together, and were larger, their leafy tops meeting in an arch overhead, making the road quite dusky. The road, too, instead of being hard and smooth as it had been, was now soft sand, in which Toby could not pull the cart along very fast.

[125]

"Bunny," said Sue, and her voice sounded as though she were a little frightened, "are we lost yet?"

Bunny did not answer for a moment or two. He looked all around while the Shetland pony plodded slowly on. Then he called:

"Whoa!"

"What are you stopping for?" asked Sue.

"I guess this is the wrong road again," Bunny answered. "We didn't go right, even after we came back from the brook."

"Oh, Bunny! are we really lost?" cried Sue.

"I guess so," her brother answered. "But we're not lost very much. We can easily find our way back again."

"How?" Sue demanded.

"We can turn around."

"But we turned around once before, Bunny, and we didn't get where we wanted to! I want to go home!"

"Well, I don't guess this way is home," said the little boy. "We never came through so much sand before. Toby can hardly pull us. We've got to go back, out of this."

"But where shall we go after this?" Sue wanted to know. "Oh, dear! I wish we'd let Splash come along!" [126]

"Why?" asked Bunny.

"'Cause then he could show us the way home. Dogs don't ever get lost, Bunny Brown!" and Sue seemed ready to cry.

"Maybe ponies don't, either," said Bunny, feeling he must do something to make his sister feel better. "I guess Toby can find his way home as easy as Splash could."

"Oh, do you really think so?" asked Sue, smiling again, and seeming much happier. "Can Toby find the way home, Bunny?"

"I guess so. Anyhow, I'm going to let him try. But first I'll turn around so we can get out of this sand."

Toby seemed glad enough of this, for it was hard pulling with the soft ground clinging to the wheels. In a little while the cart was back on the hard soil again, though still the trees met overhead in an arch and made the place dark.

"Do you know where we are, Bunny?" asked Sue.

Her brother shook his head.

"Do you know where our home is?" Sue went on. [127]

Once more Bunny shook his head.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sue.

"But I guess Toby knows," said the little boy. "I'm going to let him take us home. Go on home, Toby!" he called, and let the reins lie loosely on the pony's back.

The Shetland looked around at the children in the cart, which he could easily do, having no "blinders" on the sides of his head. Blinders are almost as bad as check-reins for horses and ponies. Never have them on your pets, for a pony needs to see on the sides of him as well as in front.

Toby looked back at the cart and then he gave a little whinny.

"Oh, Bunny!" cried Sue, "what do you suppose he looked at us that way for?"

"I guess he wanted to see if we had fallen out," said Bunny. "But we haven't. We're here, Toby!" he called to the pony. "Now take us home, please!"

Whether Toby understood or not, I cannot say. Probably the little pony was hungry, and he wanted to go on to his stable where the oats and hay were. Crackers and sugar might be all right, he may have thought, but he needed hay and oats for a real meal. [128]

And perhaps he really did know the way home. Lots of horses do, they say, even on a dark night, so why shouldn't a pony in the day time? That's what Bunny and Sue thought.

Bunny never touched the reins. He let them rest loosely on Toby's back, and on the pony went. When he came to a hard, level road Toby began to trot. And pretty soon Sue cried:

"Oh, Bunny! Toby has found the way out! We're not lost any more!"

"How do you know?" asked Bunny.

"'Cause I can see Miss Hollyhock's house, and we both know the road home from there! See it!" and Sue pointed down the road. [129]

CHAPTER XIV

TOBY'S OTHER TRICK

Bunny Brown stood up in the pony cart and looked to where Sue pointed. Across a little green valley he could see another road, at one point was a small cottage, nestled among the trees, and with vines growing about it.

"Yes, that's where Miss Hollyhock lives," he said.

"And then we aren't lost any more, are we?" asked Sue.

"No, I guess not," Bunny said. "But we have to get on that other road."

This the children soon did, taking a highway that cut across the valley. Toby had taken them out of the woods on a new path, but it was just as good as the one they had driven on in going to the farm, though longer.

And in a little while they were going past the cottage where lived the elderly woman, known all around as "Old Miss Hollyhock." This was because so many of those flowers blossomed near her cottage. [130]

"Well, my dears, where have you been?" she asked.

"Oh, we went to the farm to get some butter for mother," answered Bunny, "but we got lost."

"We're found now, though," went on Sue. "Now we know the way home."

"Are you sure?" asked Miss Hollyhock.

"Oh, yes," said Bunny. "We've been on this road lots of times."

"Well, trot along home then," said Miss Hollyhock. "If you've been lost you must have been away from home quite a long while, and your mother may be worried about you. Trot along home, pony!"

And Toby trotted along home with Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue.

Mrs. Brown, standing at the gate, and looking down the road, saw them coming.

"Where have you children been?" she asked, coming out to meet them. "I have been quite worried about you! Where were you?"

"We were lost, Mother!" answered Bunny.

"Lost? Couldn't you find your way to the farm?" [131]

"Oh, yes," he answered. "But coming home we took the wrong road. But Toby found the right one for us."

"He's as good as Splash," added Sue. "Splash wanted to come with us, but Bunker took him to the woods. Oh, we had such a good time!"

"Even with getting lost?" asked Mrs. Brown, with a smile. She felt better, now that the children were safe at home.

"Oh, we weren't lost very long," explained Sue. "It was only a little while, and then Toby brought us home, but it was on a new road," and, taking turns, she and Bunny told what had happened.

"Well, I'll feel better about having you go out for rides, if I know that Toby can always bring you back," said Mrs. Brown. "But don't try too many new roads. Stick to the old paths that you know until you get a little older. Did you bring my butter?"

"Yes, here it is," and Bunny handed it out, nicely wrapped up as Mrs. Potter had given it to him.

"Has Splash come home yet?" Sue asked.

The dog had not. He was off in the woods having a good time with Bunker. At least he looked as though he had had a good time when he did come home, for he was covered with mud and water, and there were a lot of "stickery" briars and brambles on his back and legs. [132]

"He ran into every bush and every puddle of water he could find," said Bunker Blue. "I couldn't stop him."

"Well, he can come with us next time," said Bunny. "It's only when we go to the farm, where the cross dog lives, that we can't take Splash."

The next day Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue were "playing house" in their side yard. They made a sort of tent under the trees with an old carriage cover they found in the barn, and Sue pretended she was the housekeeper.

"And you must come to call on me," she said to Bunny.

"All right, I will," he agreed. "But there isn't any door to knock on, nor any bell to ring when I call. You ought to have a bell to your house, Sue."

"That's so—I ought," she agreed.

"I know how I can make one," went on Bunny, after a while.

"How?" asked Sue.

"Well, there's an old bell that the milkman used to have—the milkman who kept his horse and wagon in our barn," explained the little boy. "The bell is in the barn now." [133]

"Oh, yes, I 'member," Sue said.

About a year before a milkman, whose barn had burned, had asked Mr. Brown for permission to stable his horse and keep his wagon in the barn back of the house where Bunny and Sue lived. And, as they then had no pony and the barn was nearly empty, Mr. Brown had said the milkman might use it.

He did, for a time, and then he gave up the milk business, and sold his horse and wagon. But he left the bell behind—the bell he used to ring in front of people's houses to let them know he was there with milk and cream.

"We can take his bell for your house," went on Bunny.

"You mean set it outside on a box, and ring it when you come to call?" asked Sue.

Bunny thought for a moment.

"Maybe I can make it better than that," he said. "I could fasten the bell up in the tree back of your tent-house, and then tie a string to it—to the bell, I mean. I can let the string hang down outside here, and when I come I can yank on the string, and that will jingle the bell." [134]

"Oh, let's do it!" cried Sue.

So Bunny got the milkman's bell, and fastened it to a low limb in a tree back of the tent-house where Sue pretended she was living.

Then Bunny tied a string to the bell handle and ran the string out in front, letting it hang loose, so that a pull on it would set the bell to swaying and jingling. To make it easier to take hold of the string, Bunny fastened to it a piece of wood. Then he and Sue began the playing-house game.

They had lots of fun at it. The bell rang just like a "truly-really" one, as Sue said, and when Bunny jingled it, and came in to sit down on a box (which was a chair), Sue would give him cookies.

They were sitting like this, wondering what next to play when, all at once, there came a loud jingle on the bell that was hung in a tree back of the tent.

"Are you doing that?" asked Sue of her brother.

"No!" he answered. "How could I? The bell string is outside and I'm in here."

"I thought maybe you had hold of the string in here," went on Sue. Then the bell was rung again.

"Oh, it's some of the boys and girls come to play with us—I mean they've come to call," said Sue, remembering that she was supposed to be a housekeeper. [135]

"I'll let 'em in," said Bunny.

He went to the flap of the tent, which, being down, did not give a view outside. And what Bunny saw made him cry:

"Oh, Sue! It isn't anybody at all!"

"It isn't anybody?" repeated the little girl. "How could *nobody* ring the bell?"

"I mean it isn't George Watson, or Sadie West, or any of the boys or girls," added Bunny. "Oh, Sue, it's—it's—"

"What is it? Who is it?" asked the little girl. "Who is it if it isn't anybody to play with us? Who is it, Bunny?"

"It's Toby!" he answered.

"What, Toby? Our pony?"

"Yes, it's Toby. And, oh, Sue! He's ringing the bell!"

"Oh, how can he?" asked Sue, wonderingly.

Bunny, who was looking out of the tent, answered:

"He's got hold of the stick I tied on the end of the bell string, and he's shakin' his head up and down, and that rings the bell. Oh, come and look, Sue!" [136]

Then Sue went out from under the carriage-cloth, which was the tent-house, to look.

Surely enough, there stood Toby, and in his mouth was the piece of wood that Bunny had tied to the string that was fast to the bell which hung in a tree back of the tent. Every time Toby raised and lowered his head—"bowing" Bunny and Sue called it—he pulled on the string and rang the bell.

"Oh, how do you s'pose he came to do it?" asked Sue.

"I don't know," Bunny answered. "We never told him, and we never showed him. I guess it's a new trick he's learned!"

"But how did he get out of his stable to come to do it?" Sue went on.

That was easy to answer. Bunker Blue, who came up every day from the dock to clean out the stall and brush Toby down, had left the door open, and, as the pony was not tied in his box-stall, he easily walked out. He strolled over to where the children were playing, and rang the bell.

"Just zactly like he was coming to call," Sue said afterward.

[137]

When Toby saw the children come out of the tent he went up to them and rubbed his velvety nose against them. That was his way of asking for sugar or other things that he liked.

"I haven't any sugar," said Bunny, "but I can give you a piece of cookie. Maybe you'll like that."

And Toby seemed to like it very much.

"Maybe he'll do the bell-ringing trick again, if you put a piece of cookie on the stick," said Sue.

"Maybe," agreed Bunny.

He fastened a bit of cookie on the wooden handle, and, surely enough, Toby nibbled it off, ringing the bell as he did so.

"But what made him ring it first, when there wasn't any cookie on?" asked Sue.

Bunny did not know this, but he said:

"We'll ask Mr. Tallman, the next time we see him, if he taught Toby this trick."

"Maybe he did," said Sue. "Anyhow, we love you, Toby!" and she put her arms around the pony's neck.

Bunny and Sue were wondering how Toby learned to ring the bell, and they were just going to make him do it again, when Sadie West came running into the yard.

[138]

"Oh, Sue!" exclaimed the little girl. "There's a great, big, shiny wagon out in the front of your house!"

"A shiny wagon!" exclaimed Bunny. "What do you mean?"

"I mean it's got all looking glasses on it! Come and see!"

The three children, forgetting all about Toby for the moment, hurried around the side path. What were they going to see?

[139]

CHAPTER XV

RED CROSS MONEY

Surely enough, in front of the Brown house was a wagon, painted red and yellow, and, as little Sadie West had said, it had on the sides many bright pieces of looking glass, which glittered in the sun.

"I wonder what it's for?" asked Bunny.

"It makes your eyes hurt," added Sue, shading hers with her hand as she looked at the bright wagon.

"Maybe it's your grandpa or your Aunt Lu come to see you," suggested Sadie, for she had heard Bunny and Sue tell about their relations.

"They wouldn't come in a wagon like *that!*" Bunny exclaimed.

"But who is in it?" asked Sue.

"Maybe it's a circus!" ventured Sadie.

"Nope! 'Tisn't a circus," Bunny said. "'Cause if it was a circus there'd be an elephant or a camel, and you don't see any of them, do you?"

"No," said Sue, "I don't."

[140]

"I don't, either," agreed Sadie.

Just then a tall, dark man, whose face looked like that of Tony, the bootblack down at the cigar store, came from the wagon, the back of which opened with a little door, and from which a flight of three steps could be let down.

"Oh, I know what it is!" cried Bunny.

"What?" asked Sue.

"It's gypsies," Bunny went on, as the tall, dark man, who had a red handkerchief around his neck, walked slowly toward the Brown home. "That's a gypsy wagon!"

"How do you know?" Sadie questioned.

"Cause I see the earrings."

"A wagon hasn't got earrings!" exclaimed Sue.

"I didn't mean the *wagon*, I mean the *man*—that man that looks as dark as Tony the bootblack," said Bunny. "See 'em!"

Then, indeed, the two little girls noticed the shiny rings of gold in the man's ears. And when he smiled, which he did at the children, they saw his white teeth glisten in the sun.

"That wagon's red and yellow," said Sue in a whisper. "It's just like Mr. Tallman's box, isn't it, Bunny?"

"What box?" asked Sadie West.

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"The one he lost with all his money in," explained Sue. "No, it wasn't money, it was—it was—oh, well, he lost something, anyhow," she said, "and he had to sell Toby to us."

"Yes, and I'm glad he did," said Bunny. "Yes, his box was red and yellow, I 'member he said so. Maybe it's some relation to this gypsy wagon."

"Are you sure it's a gypsy cart?" asked Sadie, as the dark man kept on walking from his gaily painted wagon toward the Brown front gate.

"Sure, it's a gypsy wagon," said Bunny. "Charlie Star, or one of the boys, I forget who, told me some gypsies were camping over by the pond at Springdale, and maybe this is some of them."

"I'm not afraid," said Sue.

"Pooh! Course not! Nobody need be skeered of gypsies," said Bunny in a low voice, so the dark man could not hear him. But perhaps it was because he was in his own yard that Bunny was so brave.

The dark man—he really was a gypsy, as Bunny and Sue learned later—came up to the fence, and touched his cap, almost as a soldier might salute. He smiled at the children, showing his white teeth, and asked:

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"Excuse me, but has your father, maybe, some horses he wants to sell?"

"My father doesn't sell horses, he sells fish, and he rents boats," said Bunny.

"Oh, yes, I saw the fish dock," went on the gypsy. "And you must be the Brown children."

"Yes, I'm Bunny, and this is my Sister Sue," said the little boy. "And her name's Sadie West," he added, pointing to their playmate.

"How'd he know your name was Brown?" asked Sadie in a whisper of Sue.

"He saw it painted on my father's boat house," said Bunny. "Everybody knows our name—I mean our last name," and this was true, at least of the folks in Bellemere. They all knew Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue.

"I know your father does not sell horses for a business," went on the gypsy with the gold rings in his ears; "but perhaps, maybe, he has a horse he drives, and would like to get another for it, or sell it. We gypsies, you know, buy and sell horses as your father buys and sells boats and catches fish."

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"Do you ever catch any horses?" asked Sue. "And do you catch them in a net?"

"Well, no, not exactly," and the gypsy smiled at her. "We get them in different ways—we trade for them. Perhaps your father has a horse he wants to trade."

"No, he hasn't any horse, except the one that pulls the fish wagon down to the depot," said Bunny, for Mr. Brown did own a slow, old horse, that took the iced fish to the train. "But I don't guess he'd sell him," Bunny went on.

"All right, I ask next door," said the gypsy, and he was turning away when, back in the yard, sounded the ringing of a bell. The gypsy turned quickly, and looked at the children.

"Oh, that's Toby, and he's ringing for us to come back and play with him!" cried Sue.

"Is Toby your brother?" asked the gypsy.

"No, he isn't our brother," Bunny answered, and he was laughing at the funny idea when Toby, the Shetland pony himself, came walking around the corner of the house.

"This is Toby—he's our pony!" explained Sue, as she put her arms around her pet, who came up to her, rubbing his velvety nose against her sleeve, as though asking for a lump of sugar or a bit of sweet cracker. [144]

"Oh, ho! So that is Toby!" cried the gypsy, and his eyes seemed to grow brighter. "Ah, he is a fine little horse. Perhaps you will want to sell him?"

"Sell Toby? I guess not!" cried Bunny.

"Not for anything!" added Sue.

"He can ring a bell," remarked Sadie, for she felt that she wanted to say something about the pet pony.

"Oh, ho! So he can ring a bell, can he?" asked the gypsy. "Well, that's nice. And did he ring the bell I just heard?"

"That's who it was," said Bunny, a bit proud of his pony. "And he can stand on his hind legs and he can pick up a handkerchief."

"Ah, he is one fine trick pony then," the gypsy said. "Of course, you do not want to sell him then. But, if you ever do, come to me and I will give you good money for him. My name is Jaki Kezar, and I have my tent over at a place called Springdale. Bring me the trick pony there if ever you sell him."

"We will never sell him," declared Bunny.

"Never!" added Sue. [145]

"Well, good-bye!" said the gypsy, and with another touch of his cap, like a soldier saluting, he turned back to his red-and-yellow wagon, and drove off.

"Wasn't he nice?" asked Bunny. "I'd like to be a gypsy and live in a wagon like that."

"He wasn't nice to want our pony," declared Sue.

"It was funny to see a man with rings in his ears," remarked Sadie. "I thought only ladies wore them."

"Gypsies are different," said Bunny. "Anyhow, he can't have our Toby."

"Never!" cried Sue.

They watched the gypsy wagon driving down the street. Mrs. Brown saw the children in the front yard with Toby, and she came to the door of the house.

"Haven't I told you children," she began, "that you mustn't bring Toby around here? He might trample on my flower beds."

"We didn't bring him, Mother," said Bunny. "We ran out to look at the gypsy wagon, and Toby came out himself."

"Was there a gypsy wagon here?" asked Mrs. Brown quickly. [146]

"Yes. And he wanted to buy Toby—I mean the gypsy man did," explained Bunny. "But we wouldn't sell him."

"And he can do a new trick, Mother!" cried Sue. "I mean our pony can. He can ring a bell, and he rang it and the gypsy man heard it, and then Toby came running around to find us."

"Well, better take him around back where there aren't any flower beds," said Mrs. Brown.

By this time the red-and-yellow wagon, which was painted the same colors as was the box Mr. Tallman had lost, had been driven out of sight around the corner of the street. And, having nothing more to look at, Bunny, Sue and Sadie went back to their play-tent with Toby.

That evening, after Daddy Brown had been told about the call of the gypsy, he said to his children:

"Have you two youngsters thought anything about earning any money for the Red Cross?"

"Money for the Red Cross? What do you mean, Daddy?" asked Bunny.

"Well, you know we are going to raise a lot of money here in Bellemere for the Red Cross. It's to help our soldiers, and the men and women in charge want boys and girls, as well as grown-ups, to help. And they want boys and girls to give their own money—not the pennies or dollars they might get from their fathers or mothers." [147]

"But we haven't any money, 'ceptin' what's in our savings banks," said Sue.

"No, they don't want you to take that," said her father with a smile. "The Red Cross wants

some money—it needn't be much—from every boy and girl in Bellemere, and they want the boys and girls to earn that money. Now, can you two think of a way to earn money for the Red Cross?"

Bunny looked at Sue and Sue looked at Bunny. Then the little boy exclaimed:

"Oh, Sue! I know a dandy way to earn Red Cross money!"

"How?" asked his sister.

And what do you suppose Bunny told her?

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CHAPTER XVI

IN THE WOODS

Mr. Brown was quite surprised when he heard his little boy Bunny say he knew how to earn money for the Red Cross.

"How are you going to do it, Bunny?" he asked.

"With Toby," Bunny answered. "And Sue can help me."

"What do you mean, Bunny?" asked the little girl. "I've some money in my bank for the Red Cross, but that's all I have."

"No, you mustn't take that money," her father said. "Let us hear what Bunny has to say. How can you and Sue earn money with your Shetland pony?" he asked.

"We can give rides," answered Bunny. "Don't you 'member once, in a park, we saw a boy giving children rides in his goat wagon, and he charged five cents a ride."

"Yes, I 'member that," Sue said.

"Well, that's how we can make money for the Red Cross," went on Bunny. "Lots of times the boys and girls around here ask us for rides, and once Georgie Watson said he'd give me a penny for a ride."

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"Did you give it to him?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, I did," answered Bunny.

"Did you take the penny?" Mr. Brown inquired, smiling at his little boy.

"No," Bunny said. "I had a penny then, and I didn't need another, 'cause I want only one lollypop at a time. So I gave Georgie a ride for nothing. But if we want to make money for the Red Cross I wouldn't give anybody a ride for nothing. Me and Sue could drive Toby up and down, and let boys and girls get in the cart and make 'em give us five cents apiece!"

"And maybe ten cents!" added Sue.

"Yes, and maybe ten cents if we gave 'em a longer ride," Bunny agreed. "Couldn't we do that, Daddy, and make money for the Red Cross?"

Mr. Brown thought for a moment. Then he said:

"Well, yes, I think maybe you could. I have seen goat wagons in parks, and the children paid five and ten cents to ride in them. There are plenty of children in Bellemere, and I don't see why they wouldn't pay money, too, for pony rides. Are you really going to do it, Bunny?"

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"Yep!" answered the little boy. "Me and Sue—we'll give pony rides to the children and save the money for the Red Cross!"

"I think that's just splendid, Daddy!" said Mother Brown. "It's good of Bunny to think of it, isn't it? But don't you think you had better say 'Sue and I,' Bunny?" and she smiled at the excited little boy.

"Indeed, it is a good idea," said Mr. Brown. "I'll tell the lady who asked me what my children were going to do to raise money, that they're going to give pony rides, and all the boys and girls in Bellemere will hear about it and you'll have lots of patrons."

"When does it start?" asked Mrs. Brown. "I mean—when do the children have to begin earning money for the Red Cross?"

"Oh, they can start to-morrow, if they like," answered Mr. Brown.

"Then we will!" cried Bunny.

"And can I drive part of the time?" asked Sue.

"We'll take turns," promised Bunny, who was hardly ever selfish with his sister.

The next day, when they had had their breakfast, Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue started out

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with Toby, their Shetland pony, to give rides to boys and girls to earn money for the Red Cross.

They had not ridden far down the street, sitting in the cart, the upper part of which was woven like a basket, when they met Georgie Watson. He was on his way to the store, and he called, as he often did:

"Give us a ride, Bunny?"

"Whoa!" said Bunny to the pony, and Toby stopped.

Georgie was just going to get in the pony cart when Bunny asked:

"Have you got five cents, Georgie?"

"Five cents? No, I've got two cents. That's all a yeast cake is—two cents—and I'm going to the store to get my mother a yeast cake."

"Well, you must pay five cents for a ride in our pony cart to-day," said Bunny. "It's five cents a ride."



**"IT'S FIVE CENTS A RIDE.
IT'S FOR THE RED CROSS."**

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony. Page 151.

"Five cents a ride!" cried Georgie in surprise. "Five cents!"

"Yes," said Bunny. "It's for the Red Cross you know. Sue and I are earning money that way."

"Oh, yes! For the Red Cross!" cried Georgie.

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"I see. I'm going to earn some money for that, too. But I'm going to sell peanuts."

"That's a good way," said Bunny.

"We'll ask our mother to buy some peanuts of you," added Sue.

"Will you?" cried Georgie. "Then I'll ask my mother to give me five cents for a ride in your pony cart."

"That's dandy!" cried Bunny. "Say," he went on, "you get in our cart now, Georgie, and we'll take you down to the store to get the yeast cake."

"But I haven't five cents to pay you for the ride," Georgie replied. "I've only two cents for the yeast cake."

"That's all right," said Bunny, as he had heard his father say at the dock, when some man, wanting fish, did not have the money just ready to pay for it. "Get in, Georgie. It's all right. We'll drive you down to the store, and then we'll take you home. And you can ask your mother for five cents to pay for a Red Cross ride."

"I'll do it!" Georgie exclaimed.

Into the pony cart he scrambled, and sat down beside Bunny. They drove toward the store to get a yeast cake, and on the way they met Charlie Star.

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"Hi!" cried Charlie. "Give us a ride, will you, Bunny?"

"Whoa!" said Bunny, and Toby came to a stop, switching his long tail.

"You want a ride?" Bunny asked of Charlie.

"Sure I do," answered Charlie.

"Got five cents?" Bunny went on.

"Five cents? No. What for?"

"To pay for the ride. It's for the Red Cross," went on Bunny.

Charlie shook his head.

"I've only a penny," he said, "and I was going to buy some gum with that."

"Well, give me the penny," said Bunny, "and then you can go up to your house and get four pennies more from your mother. Me and Sue—Sue and I—we're earning Red Cross money with our pony."

"Did Georgie pay you?" Charlie wanted to know.

"He's going to," said Bunny. "But he's only got two cents now for a yeast cake."

"A yeast cake!" cried Charlie. "You can't eat a yeast cake!"

"It's for my mother," explained Georgie. "I'm going home and get five cents for a Red Cross ride." [154]

"All right. I won't get any gum," decided Charlie. "I'll ride up home and get four cents for a ride myself."

"Get in," said Bunny, and now, as the pony cart had four children in it, and was comfortably filled (though it would hold six) Bunny made Toby trot, and along they went to the store to get a yeast cake, not stopping again, though several other children begged for rides.

"You can ride after us!" said Charlie. "This is for the Red Cross, and it costs five cents."

Some of the other boys and girls said they'd try to get the money later and have a ride in the pony cart.

Toby stopped in front of the store, and Georgie got out and went in after his yeast cake. Then he came back and Bunny and Sue drove Toby, their Shetland pony, on again until they came to the house where Georgie lived.

"Oh, Ma!" he cried, running into the kitchen. "Here's your yeast cake, and I want five cents for a Red Cross ride!"

"A Red Cross ride?" exclaimed Mrs. Watson. "Is that anything like a hot cross bun?" [155]

"Oh, no'm! It's a ride in a pony cart—Bunny Brown's pony Toby. And Charlie Star has a penny and he's got to get four cents more, and please hurry up and give me five cents—it's for the Red Cross!"

Mrs. Watson looked out of the window and saw the pony cart in front, with Bunny and his Sister Sue and Charlie Star in it. Then she began to understand, for she, too, was helping raise money for Red Cross work.

"Here's your five cents," she said to her little boy. "And wait a minute!" she cried, as Georgie was about to rush away.

"Wait? What for?" he asked.

"You can take your sister Mary with you. She's little and won't crowd you any, and that will be five cents more for Bunny's Red Cross. Come on, Mary, have a pony ride!" called Mrs. Watson, and down came a little girl, somewhat younger than Sue.

The time had been when Bunny and George were not such good friends, for George used to play tricks on Bunny and Sue. But he had gotten over that and was now very good, and the children played together and had good times.

Georgie and Mary, each with five cents, ran out to the pony cart. "Is there room for five in it?" asked Mrs. Watson. [156]

"Oh, yes, lots of room," said Bunny.

"I'm glad you came, Mary," said Sue to the other little girl.

"Say, we'll make a lot of money!" went on Bunny, as he took the five cent pieces Georgie and Mary handed him. "When I get your five, cents, Charlie, I'll have fifteen."

"Here's my one cent now," said Charlie. "I'll get four more when I go home."

Then they drove to Mr. Star's house, and Mrs. Star gave her little boy a five-cent piece, so he got his penny back from Bunny, and could buy the gum after all.

"Now, I'll give you a long ride," said Bunny to his passengers, and he did, up and down the village streets. Several other boys and girls saw what was going on, and said they'd get five-cent pieces and have rides, too. And they did, later that day and the next day.

"We'll earn a lot of money for the Red Cross!" cried Bunny.

"It's lots of fun," said Sue.

The two Brown children with their Shetland pony took in almost a dollar during the week, and they gave it to their father to keep for the Red Cross. The boys and girls had two weeks in which to make money to help the soldiers, and they must really earn the money—not beg it from their fathers, mothers, uncles or aunts.

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Some sold cakes of chocolate, and others peanuts, while some of the larger boys ran errands or did other work to earn dimes and nickles.

One day Bunny and Sue got in the pony cart and started off.

"Where are you going?" asked their mother.

"To get more Red Cross money," Bunny answered.

"That will be nice," said Mrs. Brown.

Instead of going along the main street, as he had done before when he gave the children rides for money, Bunny soon turned Toby down a side street, that led to the woods.

"Where are we going?" asked Sue.

"I'll show you," Bunny answered.

"But this is the woods," went on Sue, when, in a little while, she saw trees all about them. "We're in the woods, Bunny."

"Yes, I know we are," he said. "And we're going to get some money here for the Red Cross."

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Sue thought for a moment. Then she exclaimed:

"Oh, Bunny! You're not going to sell Toby to the gypsies, are you, and give that money to the Red Cross?"

"Course not!" exclaimed Bunny. "You just wait and see!"

I wonder what Bunny Brown was going to do?

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CHAPTER XVII

THE DARK MAN

Even though Bunny had said he was not going to sell Toby to the gypsies—who Sue knew were in the woods—the little girl could not be sure but what her brother was going to do something strange. He had a queer look on his face—as though he had been thinking up something to do quite different from anything he had done before, and was going to carry it through. Bunny was sometimes this way.

Sue looked around, up at the trees and down at the green moss, which was on both sides of the woodland path along which Bunny was driving Toby.

"How are you going to get any Red Cross money here, Bunny?" she asked. "There aren't any children to take five-cent rides."

"You just wait and see," said Bunny with a laugh.

Sue did not quite know what to make of it. Bunny was acting very strangely.

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Suddenly, through the quiet forest, where, up to this time had only been heard the chirping of the birds, sounded another noise. It was the shouting and laughter of children.

"What's that, Bunny?" asked Sue in surprise.

"That's a Sunday-school picnic," answered her brother.

"What Sunday school?" Sue wanted to know.

"The Methodist Church," Bunny went on. "They're having their picnic to-day. Our picnic is next Saturday. Harry Bentley told me about this one—he goes to the Methodist Church—and he said if we came here with Toby we could maybe make a lot of money for the Red Cross, giving rides in the woods."

Then Sue knew what Bunny's plan was.

"Oh, that's fine!" she cried. "I guess we can make a lot of money. But is there a smooth place where you can drive Toby? It's kinder rough in the woods, if there's a lot of children in the cart."

"There's a smooth path around the place where you eat the picnic lunch," said Bunny. And then Sue remembered. The woods, in which she and her brother were now riding along in the pony cart, were the ones where all the Sunday-school picnics of Bellemere were held. In the middle of

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the woods was a little lake, and near the shore of it was a large open-sided building where there were tables and benches, and where the people ate the lunches they brought in boxes and baskets.

Around this building ran a smooth path, and it was on this path that Bunny was going to drive Toby, giving rides to the children so he could make Red Cross money.

As Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue drove along under the trees the shouting and laughter of the children sounded more plainly. Then some of them could be seen, running back and forth over the dried leaves and green moss.

Soon the pony cart was near the picnic ground, and some of the laughing, playing boys and girls saw it.

"Oh, look!" they cried.

"Give us a ride!" others shouted.

"Rides are five cents apiece!" said Bunny. "I'd give you all rides for nothing," he added, for Bunny was never stingy, "only I'm making money for the Red Cross, and so is Sue. Five cents apiece for a Red Cross ride!"

Some of the children turned away, on hearing that pony rides cost money, but others ran to find their fathers or mothers, or uncles or aunts, to beg the nickel from them. [162]

"Well, you came, just as I told you to, didn't you, Bunny?" said Harry Bentley.

"Yep, we're here," said Bunny.

"Well, I'll take a ride with you," Harry went on. "I got five cents on purpose to have a pony ride."

He got into the basket cart, and so did another boy and a girl.

"That's all we can take now," said Bunny. "This road isn't as smooth as the one in town."

He did not want to tire his pony, you see.

"I'll get out," offered Sue. "That'll make room for one more, Bunny. I don't want a ride very much, and I see Sadie West. I can go over and play with her."

"All right," agreed Bunny. "You can get out and wait for me, Sue. That'll make room for one more."

And as Sue got out another girl got in, so there were four besides Bunny in the cart, and this meant twenty cents for the Red Cross.

Around the woodland path Bunny drove his Shetland pony, and the boys and girls, who had each paid five cents, had a good time. They laughed and shouted, and that made others inquire what was going on, so that soon quite a number were ready to take their turn riding. [163]

Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue had done well to come to the Sunday-school picnic in the woods to make money. They made more than if they had gone up and down the streets, looking for passengers.

Toby did not seem to mind how many times he went around the pavilion where the picnic lunches were to be eaten. It was cool and shady in the woods, and though the path was not particularly smooth, it was not up hill. And Toby didn't mind anything so much as he did hills.

Bunny did not drive the pony too fast, and several times he let him rest and have a drink of water from the lake. Some of the boys and girls had bits of sweet crackers or cookies which they fed to Toby, and he liked them very much.

When noon-time came Bunny and Sue were going home to dinner, for they had not brought a lunch. But one of the Sunday-school teachers said:

"It will take you quite a while, Bunny, to go home and come back. And it will tire your pony, too. I like to see you and Sue earn money for the Red Cross, so you stay and I'll give you part of my lunch. I have more than I need. My little nephew and niece were coming, but, at the last minute, they had to stay at home." [164]

"Is there enough for Sue to have some lunch?" asked Bunny.

"Oh, of course," answered the Sunday-school teacher. "Tie Toby in a shady place, and come and have lunch with me."

There was grass for the pony to eat, and soon he was enjoying his meal, while Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue were having a nice one with the teacher.

"After dinner you can give our boys and girls more rides," she said, "and earn more money for the soldiers."

Bunny liked this very much. At first he was afraid his mother would be worried because he and Sue did not come back home. But the man who brought the ice-cream to the picnic said he would stop when he went back, and tell Mrs. Brown where her children were, and that Miss Seaman,

the teacher, was looking out for them and seeing that they were well fed. So Mrs. Brown did not worry, knowing where they were.

The lunch was almost over, and Bunny was thinking about putting the bridle back on Toby and starting his riding business again, when some boys and girls, who had gone over to a little spring in the woods, came running back, very much excited. [165]

"Oh! Oh!" one of the girls cried. "We saw him! We saw him!"

"Whom did you see?" asked a teacher. "Be quiet and tell us what it was."

"Was it a snake?" asked one excited little girl.

"No, it wasn't a snake," said a boy somewhat older than Bunny. "It was a great big man—awful dark-looking—and he had a red handkerchief on his neck, and gold rings in his ears, and he was asleep by the spring."

I wonder who the man was? [166]

CHAPTER XVIII

TOBY IS GONE

Three or four of the Sunday-school teachers gathered around the boys and girls who had come back from the spring and were so excited about having seen a dark man asleep under a bush.

"What did he look like?" asked one teacher.

"Oh, he—he was *terrible!*" said one little girl.

"He looked like an organ grinder only he was—was—sort of nicer," observed a little boy.

"And he had gold rings in his ears," added another.

"Maybe he was an organ grinder," suggested Miss Mason, who was the superintendent in charge of the infant class of the Sunday school.

"But he didn't have an organ or a monkey," objected a little girl.

"Maybe the monkey was up in a tree," said Bunny Brown. "That's where monkeys like to go. Mr. Winkler's monkey, named Wango, goes up in trees. Let's look and see if this monkey is climbing around while the man's asleep." [167]

"Oh, yes, let's!" exclaimed Sue, always ready to do what her brother suggested.

"Oh, let's!" cried all the other boys and girls, who thought it a fine idea.

Miss Mason smiled at the other teachers, but, as Bunny, Sue and some of the boys and girls started toward the spring, they were called back by the superintendent.

"Better not go unless some of us are with you," she said. "You can't tell what sort of man that might be. Wait a minute, children."

The children turned back, and Bunny said:

"I guess I know who that man is."

"What makes you think so?" asked Miss Mason.

"I can't tell until I see him," went on Toby's little master.

"Well, we'll go and look," Miss Mason said. "But I think I'll call one of the men teachers. It might be better to have a man with us."

Some of the men who taught the Sunday-school classes came up at this moment, wanting to know what was going on, and Miss Mason told them:

"Some of the children saw a dark-complexioned man, with gold rings in his ears, asleep by the spring. We thought perhaps we had better see who it is. Bunny Brown, who has been giving pony rides for the Red Cross, thinks he might know who he is." [168]

"Oh, ho!" cried Mr. Baker, a very jolly teacher, "so it's a dark man, with gold rings in his ears, is it?"

"And a red handkerchief around his neck," said a little boy who had seen the sleeping person.

"Oh, ho! once again then I say!" cried the jolly teacher. "This man must be a pirate; don't you think so, Bunny Brown? Pirates always have gold rings in their ears and red handkerchiefs on their necks, or on their heads, don't they? Do you think you know this pirate, Bunny?"

"No, sir," answered the little boy, shaking his head. "But I don't guess he's a pirate, 'cause pirates are always on ships. Anyhow, in all the pictures I ever saw of them they were always on

ships."

"I believe Bunny is right," said another man. "Pirates are only on ships. And though there may be some land-pirates, they are not regular ones, and can't be counted. And surely there can't be a ship in these woods."

"There are boats on the lake," said a little girl.

"Yes, my dear, but they're not regular pirate-boats," went on Mr. Baker. "No, I don't believe we can count this sleeping man as a regular pirate. But we'll go and see who it is." [169]

"I wish you would," said Miss Mason. "You men are laughing, I know, but we don't want the children frightened by a tramp, and probably that's what this man is."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Baker. "Well, we will go and have a look at him. Come, gentlemen, we'll go and capture the man with the gold rings in his ears."

The men Sunday-school teachers walked on ahead, and after them came the women. Then marched Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue, and a number of other boys and girls. Toby, the Shetland pony was left tied to a tree.

In a little while the party came to the spring. Mr. Baker pushed aside the bushes and looked in. At first he could see nothing, but soon the sun came out from behind a cloud, making the little glen light, and then the Sunday-school teacher could see a big man, his face very dark, as though tanned by years of living at the seashore. In his ears were gold rings, and around his neck was a red handkerchief.

"Hello, there!" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Baker. [170]

And, just as suddenly, the man awakened and sat up. For a moment he stared at the circle of men, women and children standing about him, and then, as he caught sight of Bunny and Sue, he smiled at them, showing his white teeth.

"Hello, pony-children!" he called to them, "Have you come to sell me your little horse?"

"We're never going to sell Toby! Are we, Bunny," asked Sue.

"No;" said Bunny, "we never are."

"Oh, then you children know this—this——" and Mr. Baker did not seem to know just what to call the dark man.

"He's a gypsy," said Bunny. "But I don't know him very well. His wagon stopped in front of our house one day, and he wanted to buy our pony. He's a gypsy."

"Ah, that's what makes him look so much like a pirate," said Mr. Baker in a low voice to one of his friends.

"Yes, I am a gypsy," said the man, as he shook the leaves out of his clothes and stood up. "My name is Jaki Kezar, and my camp is over near Springdale. We have permission to camp there, and have done so for a number of years. I was walking about the country, looking for horses to buy, as that is our business, and when I reached here I felt tired. So I took a drink from the spring, sat down and must have fallen asleep before I knew it." [171]

"Yes, you—you were asleep an'—an' you *snored*," said one little girl, who felt quite brave, now that so many Sunday-school teachers were near her.

"Oh, I snored, did I?" asked Jaki Kezar with a smile, and some of the men smiled, too. This gypsy did not seem at all cross or ugly, and his face was pleasant when he smiled.

"I hope I didn't scare any of the little ones," the gypsy went on. "I wouldn't have done that for anything. I thought this was a quiet place to rest."

"Oh, you didn't scare them very much," said Mr. Baker. "They just saw you asleep and we didn't know who you might be. This part of the woods is not the picnic ground, and you have a perfect right here."

"But I must be walking on," said Jaki Kezar. "I must try to find some horses to buy. You are sure you will not sell me your pony?" he asked Bunny again. [172]

"We will never sell Toby!" exclaimed the little boy.

"Never!" added Sue. "He is a trick pony."

"And he was in a circus," added Bunny, "but he is never going there again because they did not treat him nice, Mr. Tallman said."

"Well, if you won't sell me your pony I must go and see if I can find another to buy," said Jaki Kezar, the gypsy. "Good-bye, boys and girls, and ladies and gentlemen," he added, as he walked away. "I hope I didn't frighten any of you. And if ever you come to our camp at Springdale we will tell your fortunes."

Then, taking off his hat and making a bow to Miss Mason and the others, the gypsy walked off through the woods.

"There! I'm glad he's gone!" exclaimed one of the older children. "He made me nervous!"

"But he was a polite gypsy," said Mr. Baker. "I think he would have made a nice pirate, too. Don't you, Bunny?"

"I guess so," agreed the little boy. "But he can't have my pony."

"I should say *not!*" cried Mr. Baker. "You want that pony for yourself, and to make money for the Red Cross."

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This reminded Bunny that he ought to start in again giving rides to the picnic children. Toby had had his dinner and a good rest, and was once more ready to trot along the shady paths of the picnic lake.

Not so many took rides in the afternoon as did in the morning, for some of the children went home. But Bunny, who did most of the driving, though Sue did some also, took in a little over a dollar after lunch. And this, with the dollar and eighty-five cents which he had taken in during the morning, made almost three dollars for Red Cross.

"My, you did well," cried Miss Mason, when Bunny and Sue told her they were going, and showed her their money.

"I should say they did!" said Mr. Baker. "No wonder that gypsy wanted their pony. He could start in business for himself. Be careful you don't lose that money, Bunny."

"I will," promised the little boy.

Calling good-byes to their friends, the Sunday-school teachers and the children, Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue started off through the woods on their way home. They were a little tired, but happy.

"Did you think we'd make so much money for the Red Cross, Bunny?" asked Sue, as they drove along.

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"No," said Bunny, "I didn't. But I knew this Sunday-school picnic was in the woods. And it was a good place for us, wasn't it?"

"Fine," agreed Sue.

And when they got home they found their father and mother waiting for them, as it was late in the afternoon.

"And you made three dollars! That's fine!" said Daddy Brown.

During the rest of the week Bunny and Sue made another dollar by giving children rides in the pony cart. And they drove on an errand for Uncle Tad who gave them a quarter, so they had a nice sum to turn over to the Red Cross Society when the time was up.

It was about a week after the picnic, when one morning, Bunny, who was up first, ran out to the barn to see Toby, as he often did before breakfast. But, to the surprise of the little boy, the pony was not in his stall, though the barn door was locked, Bunny having to open it with a key before he could get in.

Greatly excited, when he did not see his pet in the box-stall, Bunny ran back to the house.

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"Oh, Mother! Mother!" he cried. "Toby's gone!"

"What?"

"Toby's gone!" cried Bunny again. "He isn't in his stable! Oh, come out and look!"

And I wonder where the Shetland pony was?

[176]

CHAPTER XIX

THE SEARCH

Mrs. Brown hurried out of the house after Bunny, who ran back to the stable. Sue, looking out of the window of her room upstairs, saw her brother and called:

"What's the matter, Bunny?"

"Oh, Sue," he answered, not stopping even to look back, "Toby is gone! Our nice pony isn't in his stable!"

"Oh! Oh!" cried Sue, and she could think of nothing else to say just then. But you can guess that she very quickly finished dressing in order to go down and look for herself to see what had happened to Toby.

Meanwhile Mrs. Brown and Bunny reached the stable.

"Are you sure Toby isn't here?" asked Bunny's mother.

"I—I looked everywhere for him," answered the little boy, who was slightly out of breath from running. "I looked all over and I can't see him anywhere."

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Mrs. Brown looked, but no Toby was to be seen. The barn was not a large one, and there were not many places where a horse, or even a small pony, could be hidden. Bunny and his mother looked in all the places they could think of—in the harness room and wagon room, and they even went upstairs to the haymow.

"For Toby is a trick pony, and he might have walked upstairs," said Bunny. "I didn't look there."

"I hardly think he would climb up where the hay is, but still he might," said Mrs. Brown. But no Toby was to be seen. And, really, being a trick pony, he *might* have walked up the stairs, which were strong, and broad, and not very steep. I have seen a big horse, in a circus, go up a flight of steps, so why couldn't a pony go upstairs?

But, anyhow, Toby was not in the haymow.

"Was the barn door locked when you first came out to see Toby?" asked Mrs. Brown of Bunny.

"Yes, Mother, it was," he answered. "I took the key from off the nail in the kitchen, and I opened the lock and the door. But Toby wasn't there!"

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"Are you sure you locked him in the stable last night?" went on Mrs. Brown.

"Oh, yes, of course, Mother!" said Bunny. "Don't you 'member Bunker Blue was up here and looked at Toby, and said he'd have to take him to the blacksmith shop to-day to have new shoes put on—I mean new shoes on Toby."

"Oh, yes, I do remember that!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "And that is just what has happened, I think."

"What has happened, Mother?"

"Why, Bunker Blue came up here early, and took Toby out of the stable and down to the blacksmith shop to have the new shoes nailed on. That must be it," said Mrs. Brown. "I'll telephone down to your father's office, and ask him if he didn't send Bunker up to get Toby. Daddy went down before breakfast this morning in order to get some letters off on the early mail."

"Oh, I hope Bunker has our pony!" exclaimed Bunny with a sigh, and, though he very much wanted to believe that this was what had happened, still he could hardly think that it was so. Bunker Blue, thought Bunny, would have said something before taking Toby away, even if it was early.

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"Did you find Toby?" asked Sue, as she ran out, tying her hair ribbon on the way. She was in such a hurry that she had not waited to do that in her room.

"No, he isn't in the stable," answered Bunny.

"But Bunker must have taken him to the blacksmith's shop," said Mrs. Brown. "I'm going to telephone to find out."

And just what Bunny feared would happen did happen. Mr. Brown said Bunker had not been up to the house, and he had not taken Toby away.

"And is Toby really gone?" asked Mr. Brown over the telephone wire.

"He can't be found," answered Mrs. Brown.

"I'll come right up and see what I can do," said Bunny's father. And then the only thing to do was to wait.

Bunny and Sue, with tears in their eyes, looked again in the barn and all around the house.

"But where can Toby be?" asked Sue, over and over again.

"Maybe he ran away," said Tressa, the maid.

"He couldn't run away, 'cause the barn was locked," declared Bunny.

"Well, maybe he could open the lock, being a trick pony," went on Tressa, who wanted to say something so the children would not feel so bad.

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"No, he couldn't do that," said Bunny. "Toby could do lots of tricks, but there wasn't any hole in the barn door so he could reach out and open the lock. Besides, the key was hanging in your kitchen all night, Tressa."

"Yes, that's so. Well, maybe he jumped out of a window," went on the kind-hearted maid. "I see one of the barn windows is open, and it is near Toby's stall."

"Oh, maybe he did get out that way, and he's off playing in the woods!" exclaimed Sue, who felt very sad about the pet pony's being gone.

"Oh, but he couldn't," said Bunny, after thinking it over a bit. "There's a mosquito wire screen over the window, and if Toby had jumped out the screen would be broken."

"Yes, that's so," admitted Tressa. "Well, I guess you'll find him somewhere. Maybe he'll come home, wagging his tail behind him, as Bo-Peep's sheep did."

Bunny shook his head.

"I guess somebody took our pony," he said.

"But how could they when the door was locked?" asked Sue. [181]

Bunny did not know how to answer.

Mr. Brown came up from the fish and boat dock, and with him was Bunker Blue.

"Did you find him?" asked Mr. Brown, meaning Toby, of course.

"No, he isn't to be found around here," answered Mrs. Brown. "We have looked everywhere, but there is no Toby!"

"Oh, Daddy! do you think you can find him?" asked Sue, and there were tears in her eyes.

"Of course I'll find him!" said Daddy Brown, and, somehow, it did the children good just to hear their father say that. "Now, we'll begin at the beginning," went on the fish merchant, "and have a look at the barn door. You know there's an old saying not to lock the stable door after the horse is stolen, but this time the door was locked before Toby was taken away. We are sure of that. Now, I'll have a look at the lock and key."

Mr. Brown looked carefully at these and also at the door of the stable. There was nothing to show that any one had gotten in, and yet the lock must have been opened or the door could not have been swung back to let Toby out. And Toby was surely gone.

"He couldn't have gotten out, or been taken out, any way but through the door," said Mr. Brown, as he walked around the stable. "The window is too small, even if there wasn't any wire screen over it to keep out the flies and mosquitoes." [182]

"What do you think happened?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"Well," answered her husband, "I think some one, with another key, must have opened the lock and have taken the pony away in the night."

"But who could it be?"

"Oh, some thief. Perhaps a tramp, though I don't believe tramps would do anything like that. They are generally too lazy to go to so much work. And whoever took Toby did it very quietly. They took him out of his stable without waking any of us up, and then they carefully locked the door again."

"I never heard a sound all night," declared Mrs. Brown.

"Nor did I," added her husband. "It's funny, though, that Splash didn't bark. He sometimes sleeps in the shed near the stable, and if strange men had come around one would think the dog would be sure to make a fuss."

"Unless it was some one he knew," added Mrs. Brown, "or some one that knew how to be friendly with a dog." [183]

"Yes, some horse thieves might be like that," admitted Mr. Brown. "They could make friends with our dog, and he wouldn't bite them or growl at them to make a noise. Then they could walk off with Toby."

"I haven't seen Splash around this morning," said Tressa. "Generally he comes early to get his breakfast, but I haven't seen him this morning."

"Oh, Daddy!" cried Bunny, "do you s'pose they stole Splash, too?" [184]

CHAPTER XX

IN A STORM

Mr. Brown hardly knew what to say. It was certainly strange that the dog should be missing as well as the pet pony. Certainly something out of the ordinary had been going on during the night.

"Maybe Splash has just run away for a little while, to play with some other dogs," said Mrs. Brown. "Bunny and Sue, take a look around and see. Call him, and perhaps he'll come."

So Bunny and Sue did this, walking up and down the road and calling for Splash. They went a little way into the meadow, and over toward a clump of trees where, sometimes, the dog played with others.

But there was no sign of Splash or Toby.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sue. "I wonder where they can be?"

And then, suddenly, Bunny gave a loud cry.

"Oh, do you see him?" eagerly asked Sue. "Do you see Toby and Splash?"

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"No," answered Bunny, his eyes shining with eagerness, "but I think I know who took him. Come on, we'll go and tell daddy!"

Sue did not quite understand what Bunny meant, but she trotted after him as fast as her little legs would take her. The children found their father and mother, with Bunker Blue, still looking in and around the stable, for any signs of the person who must have taken Toby away.

"Did you find Splash?" asked Mr. Brown.

"No, Daddy, we didn't," Bunny answered. "We couldn't find our dog anywhere. But I came to tell you I know where Toby is!"

"You do!" cried Mr. Brown, greatly excited. "Did you see Toby under the trees?"

"Oh, I didn't exactly *see* him," Bunny explained, "but I think I know who took him. I just thought of it."

"Who took him?" asked the little boy's father.

"That gypsy man!" exclaimed Bunny. "Don't you 'member—the one with the funny name? He liked Toby terrible much, and I guess maybe he took him."

"Say!" cried Mr. Brown, "I shouldn't be surprised but what you are right, Bunny. Maybe that gypsy man did come and take Toby, when he found we wouldn't sell him the pony. Gypsies are great for horses and ponies! I must see about this right away."

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"What are you going to do?" asked Mrs. Brown.

"I am going over to the gypsy camp, and see if they have Toby," answered Mr. Brown. "That would be just the very place where I'd expect to find him. I'm glad you thought of it, Bunny. How did you do it?"

"It—it just sort of came to me," explained the little boy. "I saw a red flower and a yellow one in the woods when we went to look for Splash, and then I thought red and yellow was the color of the gypsy wagon. And then I thought of the man with the funny name."

"Jaki Kezar was the name," said Mrs. Brown. "I remember, now, hearing the children speak of it. Well, it's too bad if he took the pony, but I'd be glad to find Toby even at the gypsy camp. There's one thing sure, if he did take the pony that man would treat him kindly, for gypsies are good to their horses."

"Well, Bunny," went on Mr. Brown, "we'll see how nearly you have guessed it. I'll go to the gypsy camp."

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"May I come?" asked Bunny.

"And I want to come, too," begged Sue.

"Oh, no, I'm afraid you're too little," said the little girl's father. "I'll take Bunny and Bunker Blue. We'll go in the motor boat across the bay, as it's shorter than going around by land."

"We can't bring Toby home in the boat, though, can we?" asked Bunny.

"Well, hardly," answered his father with a smile. "I'm afraid he'd kick overboard. But don't count too much on finding Toby at the gypsy camp, Bunny. He may not be there at all."

"You mean they'll take him away to some other place?" asked the little boy.

"Well, maybe not that so much, as it is that we're not sure this Mr. Jaki Kezar really has taken your pet," answered Mr. Brown. "We'll just *hope* Toby is at the camp, Bunny, but we mustn't be too sure about it."

"No," said Bunny, "I s'pose not."

"Though perhaps if the pony isn't exactly with the gypsies they may know where he is," said Mrs. Brown. "Will you have that dark man arrested, Daddy, for taking the children's pony?"

"I don't know just what I will do, yet," answered Mr. Brown with a smile. "First I want to find out where Toby is."

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"And I'm coming with you in the boat!" cried Bunny.

Sue wanted, very much, to go with her father and brother, but her mother told the little girl there might be a long walk to take in the woods to get to the gypsy camp, and that she would get tired.

"I wouldn't be tired if I could see Toby," she said, tears still in her eyes. "And, anyhow, if I did get tired I could ride on Toby's back."

"That is if they find him," remarked Mrs. Brown. "No, Sue, dear, I think you'd better stay with me. How will you get the pony back if you go in the boat?" she asked her husband.

"Oh, Bunker can walk him back, and Bunny can ride. I'll come back in the boat," said Mr. Brown. "They didn't take the pony cart, did they?"

"No, that's in the barn all right. It will be all ready for Toby when he comes back," said Bunny.

There was nothing more that could be done at the Brown home toward finding the lost or stolen pony, so Mr. Brown, with Bunker Blue and Bunny, after eating a very hasty breakfast, got ready to take a motor boat trip across the bay to Springdale. [189]

This was a town, somewhat smaller than Bellemere, and it could be reached by going around a road that led along the shores of Sandport Bay. But a shorter journey was by water across the bay itself. And it was in this way that Mr. Brown had decided to go this time.

The fish merchant owned a number of boats, some of which had sails, others oars, and some were moved with gasolene engines.

"We'll go in the *Spray*," said Bunny's father, that being the name of the boat.

"We could go faster in the *Wave*," said Bunker Blue, naming a smaller boat.

"Yes, but it wouldn't be quite so safe," said Mr. Brown, who was always very careful about the water, especially if any of the children were with him. "There is quite a sea on, and the wind is blowing hard."

"It looks a little like a storm," observed Bunker Blue.

"Yes, it does," agreed Mr. Brown. "And that's another reason we ought to take the *Spray*."

Bunny Brown did not care much in which boat they went as long as he had a ride and was on the way to find Toby. He was almost sure the Shetland pony would be at the gypsy camp, and he had no doubt but that his father could easily take the little horse away from the bad men who had stolen him. [190]

As they went down to the dock, leaving Sue at home with her mother, Bunny said:

"As soon as I saw the red and yellow flowers, which was just the color of the gypsy wagon, I thought the dark man might have taken Toby."

"And, very likely he did," said Mr. Brown. "Only we must not be too sure."

"Red and yellow are nice colors," said Bunker Blue. "Didn't you tell me, Bunny, that the box of papers Mr. Tallman lost was painted that way?"

"Yes, it was," said the little boy. "It had red and yellow stripes on it. But Mr. Tallman isn't a gypsy."

"Oh, I know that," replied Bunker Blue.

When they reached the dock and were getting ready to go aboard the *Spray*, Mr. Brown looked across the bay, and, noting the rather high waters and the way the wind blew, said: [191]

"I wonder if, after all, we hadn't better go by land?"

"Oh, no, Daddy!" cried Bunny. "Let's go in the boat! It's nicer, and we'll get to the gypsy camp quicker to find Toby."

"Yes, we'll get there more quickly," said Mr. Brown. "But that isn't saying we'll find the pony, though I hope we shall. Anyhow, I guess we can go and come before the storm breaks. Get aboard, Bunny. Have we plenty of gasolene, Bunker?"

"The tank is full," answered the fish and boat boy.

"Well, then I guess we'll be all right. Ready, Bunny?"

"Yes, Daddy!" and the little boy looked eagerly across the bay toward Springdale, where, in the gypsy camp, he hoped to find Toby.

"All aboard, then!" announced Mr. Brown, and one of his men pushed the *Spray* away from the dock. Bunker Blue started the gasolene motor, and the boat went out into the bay, with Mr. Brown at the steering wheel.

"Oh, I do hope we'll find Toby! I do hope we will!" said Bunny over and over again to himself. [192]

As the motor boat went out beyond the dock the full force of the wind and waves was felt. The *Spray* bobbed up and down, but Mr. Brown was a good sailor, and Bunker Blue had lived most of his life on and about salt-water, so he did not mind it. Nor did Bunny, for he, too, had often been on fishing trips with his father, and he did not get seasick even in rough weather.

"Like it, Bunny?" asked his father, as the little boy stood beside him in the cabin, while Mr. Brown turned the steering wheel this way and that.

"Lots, Daddy!" was the answer. "Shall we get there pretty soon?"

"Yes, if the storm doesn't hold us back."

But that is just what the storm seemed going to do. The wind began to blow harder and harder, and the waves, even in the sheltered bay, were quite high. But the *Spray* was a fairly large boat, and stout; able to meet any weather except the very worst out on the open ocean.

On and on she chugged across the bay toward Springdale, and as they got farther and farther out in the middle, the storm grew much worse.

"I don't know about this, Bunker!" called Mr. Brown to the fish boy, who was looking after the motor. "I don't know whether we can get across or whether we hadn't better turn back for our dock." [193]

"Oh, Daddy! don't go back! You're not going back before you get Toby, are you?" Bunny asked. [194]

CHAPTER XXI

THE GYPSY CAMP

Anxiously Bunny Brown waited for his father's answer. The little boy looked out of the cabin windows at the storm which was roughing-up the waters of Sandport Bay. But Bunny was very much concerned about losing Toby, or not going on to find the pony.

"Well, I guess as long as we have come this far," said Mr. Brown, "we might as well keep on. You're not afraid, are you, Bunny?"

"Not a bit, Daddy! I like it!"

"You're a regular old sea-dog!" cried the fish merchant.

"And maybe we'll find our dog, Splash, at the gypsy camp, too," Bunny added.

"Maybe," agreed Mr. Brown. Then he asked Bunker Blue:

"What do you think of it?"

"Oh, I've seen it blow worse and rain harder," answered the boy who was attending to the motor. "I guess we can keep on." [195]

It was raining very hard now, and the big drops, mixed with the salty spray blown up from the water of the bay, were being driven against the glass windows of the cabin.

"It's a good thing we brought the big boat," said Bunker Blue, as he put some oil on the motor.

"Yes," said Mr. Brown. "I'm glad we didn't try to come in the small one. We surely would have had to turn back."

Bunny Brown did not say anything for quite a while. He stood looking out of the cabin windows.

"What are you thinking of, Bunny?" asked his father, as he steered the *Spray* to one side to get out of the way of a fishing boat and was coming in, to get away from the storm.

"Oh, I was thinking of Toby," answered the little boy. "I hope he isn't out in the rain."

"Well, it won't hurt him very much," returned Mr. Brown. "The rain is warm, and Toby has a good thick coat of hair. All ponies have. But I guess the gypsies have some sort of barn for their horses—the ones they own and the ones they take from other people."

"I don't believe they have a barn," said Bunker. "They travel around so much they don't have time to build barns. All I ever saw 'em have was some wagons that looked as if they had come from a circus and a few tents." [196]

"Oh, well, maybe if they have Toby they'd let him stay in one of the tents," said Mr. Brown, for he did not want Bunny to feel bad about Toby being out in the storm.

"Yes, they could do that," agreed Bunny. "Toby isn't much bigger than a great big dog, and he could get in a tent. Anyhow, I hope the gypsies will be nice to him."

"I guess they will be," said Bunny's father. "Well, we'll soon know, for we'll be there shortly."

Though the storm was a hard one, the motor boat kept on making her way over, or through, the waves toward the landing on the other side of the bay, where Mr. Brown, Bunny, and Bunker were to get out and walk to the place where the gypsies were camped.

"Did you bring any umbrellas?" asked Bunny of his father.

"Yes, there are some in one of the lockers. Also rain coats and rubbers. I put them in when I saw that it was likely to rain."

Mr. Brown kept everything needed in stormy weather at his office on the dock, for often Mrs. [197]

Brown, or Bunny and Sue would go for a ride in one of the boats, and a storm would come up while they were out on the bay. Mr. Brown was always ready for all sorts of weather.

At last, after some hard work on the part of the gasolene motor, the *Spray* got close to the other side of the bay. Here she was somewhat sheltered from the wind, and it was easier to get along.

Mr. Brown headed for a public dock, and, a little later, the boat was made fast and the fish merchant, Bunker, and Bunny got out, ready to go to the gypsy camp. It was well that umbrellas, coats and rubbers were in the boat, or the little party would have soon been wet through. As it was, the wind blew so hard that one umbrella was turned inside out.

"I guess we'd better leave them in the boat," said Mr. Brown. "I think if we wear our coats and sou'westers we'll be dry enough."

A southwester, which is usually pronounced and sometimes spelled "sou'wester," is a hat made from yellow oilskin, waterproof, and it can be tied on under the chin so it won't blow off.

And so, with yellow caps on their heads, with yellow coats which came almost to their feet, and with rubber boots, Bunny Brown, his father and Bunker Blue set off through the rain to find the camp of the gypsies, and, if possible, to get Toby. Bunny had a special set of "oilskins," as they are called, for himself. Sue had a set also, but, of course, she was not along this time. [198]

"And I'm glad we left her at home," said Mr. Brown. "She is a stout little girl, but this storm would have been too much for her. I'm afraid it is almost too much for you, Bunny."

"Oh, no, it isn't," said Sue's brother. "I like it!"

And I really believe he did.

The *Spray* was left tied to the dock, and a watchman there said he would look after her until Mr. Brown and the others came back. The boat was dry inside, though the outside, like everything else around her, was dripping wet, for the rain still came down hard.

"Hello!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, as he looked at his watch when they were walking up the dock. "It took us longer to come across the bay than I thought it would. It is almost noon. We had better stop in town and have some dinner. I don't believe the gypsies will feel like feeding us if we take Toby away from them." [199]

"Do the gypsies eat in the rain?" asked Bunny.

"Of course," his father answered. "They have to eat then the same as a sailor does. And I suppose they know how to keep dry in their tents and wagons as well as we do in our boats. But we won't depend on them for our meal. We'll get it in the restaurant."

There was a small one on the shore, at the end of the dock, where fishermen and boatmen, many of whom Mr. Brown knew, took their meals.

There Bunny, his father and Bunker Blue had some hot clam chowder, with big crackers called "pilot biscuit," to eat with it. After they had eaten the chowder and the other good things the keeper of the restaurant set before them, they were ready to start out in the rain again.

"The gypsy camp; eh?" remarked a farmer of whom they asked how to get to the place. "Well, you go along this road about a mile, and then turn into the woods at your right. You can't miss it, for you'll see their tents and wagons. But take my advice, mister, and don't buy any horses of the gypsies. You can't trust 'em."

"I'm not going to buy any horses," said Mr. Brown with a smile. "We're only going to try to get back this little boy's pony which we think the gypsies may have taken." [200]

"Oh, that's different. Well, I wish you luck!"

"Did you see my pony?" asked Bunny. "He was awful nice, and he could do tricks!"

"No, little man, I'm sorry to say I haven't seen your pony," answered the farmer of whom Mr. Brown inquired the way. "I haven't been to the gypsy camp, but a friend of mine bought a horse and it was no good. I don't like gypsies."

"Well, perhaps some of them are good," suggested Mr. Brown. "Did you happen to see, among them, one tall, dark man, who wears a red handkerchief around his neck, has gold rings in his ears and when he smiles he shows his white teeth."

"A lot of the men are like that, and some of the women," said the farmer.

"Is that so?" asked Mr. Brown. "I hoped you might know this particular man. He called himself Jaki Kezar, and he wanted to buy our pony."

"Only I wouldn't sell Toby to him," put in Bunny.

"And so," went on Mr. Brown, "we think this man may have come to our stable in the night and taken away the children's pet."

"Well, that's too bad," said the farmer. "I hope you get the pony back. Just go on for about a mile, and then turn into the woods. You can't miss the place, but you'll find it terribly muddy and [201]

wet."

"Well, we're ready for that sort of thing," said Mr. Brown with a smile from under his yellow hat.

Bunny's father took hold of his little boy's hand on one side, and Bunker Blue on the other, and together the three plodded along through the storm, the mud, and the rain.

It was rather hard walking for little Bunny Brown, but he was a brave, sturdy chap, and he was not going to complain or find fault, especially after he had begged to be taken. But his legs did get tired, for the rubber boots were heavy, and, at last, with a sigh, he said:

"I'm glad we didn't bring Sue along."

"Why?" asked Mr. Brown, with a smile at Bunker Blue.

"Because she'd get awful tired, and she'd have to be carried," said Bunny. "I guess you or Bunker would have to carry Sue, if she was with us, Daddy."

"Maybe we would," said Mr. Brown with another smile. "Maybe you would like to be carried yourself, Bunny?"

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"Me? Oh, no. I'm a *boy!*" said Bunny quickly.

But, all the same, his father noticed that the little fellow's legs were moving more and more slowly, and finally Mr. Brown said:

"I'll carry you a little way, Bunny boy! It will rest you!"

And how glad Bunny Brown was to hear his father say that! Though he never, never would have *asked* to be carried. But, of course, if daddy offered to do it that was different; wasn't it?

Picking his little boy up in his arms, Mr. Brown carried him along the road, perhaps for five minutes, and then Bunker Blue, peering through the mist, exclaimed:

"I see some tents and wagons over in a field near some woods!"

He pointed, and Mr. Brown said:

"I guess that's the gypsy camp all right! Yes, that's what it is!"

"Then please let me walk," said Bunny quickly. "I'm not tired now."

He did not want the gypsies to see him in his father's arms.

Mr. Brown, Bunker and Bunny turned into a field, and walked toward the tents. They could be seen more plainly now, with some wagons drawn up among them. As the three walked along they saw a tall man come from one of the tents toward them.

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"That's the gypsy!" exclaimed Bunny in a whisper. "That's the man that wanted to buy our pony!"

It was, indeed, Jaki Kezar, and he smiled his pleasant smile.

"Ah, ha!" he said, as he caught sight of Bunny. "It is the little boy who owns the trick pony! Have you come to sell him to me?" he asked.

Bunny Brown did not know what to say. Was Toby in the gypsy camp?

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CHAPTER XXII

"THERE'S TOBY!"

Standing in the storm, at the edge of the gypsy camp, Bunny Brown, his father and Bunker Blue looked at the dark man with the gold rings in his ears. This man—a gypsy with white teeth—did not seem to mind the rain, though he had on no yellow coat, "sou'wester," cap or rubber boots. But then, perhaps, he had just come out of the tent.

"Did you come to tell me you would sell me the little trick pony?" he asked again. "If you did I am glad, for I would like to have him. But I am sorry you came in such a storm."

Bunny did not know what answer to make, and so turned to his father. Mr. Brown did not smile as did the gypsy man. Maybe Bunny's father felt a bit angry.

"Is your name Kezar?" asked Mr. Brown of the gypsy man.

"It is, yes, sir, Mr. Brown. My name is Jaki Kezar, and I am the chief of these gypsies. Sometimes they call me the gypsy king, but we have no kings. I am just a leader, that is all."

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"You are, then, the man I am looking for," went on Mr. Brown. "We have come all the way through the storm to find my little boy's pony. Its name is Toby and it has been stolen from the

stable—it was taken some time in the night, and a dog, named Splash, seems to be gone also. I don't say you, or any of your gypsies, took the dog and pony, but I would like to know if you know anything about them.

"You were once at my house, asking to be allowed to buy the trick pony," went on Bunny's father, "and we have come a long way to ask if you have seen it."

Jaki Kezar seemed quite surprised. He looked first at Mr. Brown and then at Bunny and Bunker.

"Your pony stolen?" he exclaimed.

"He's gone," Bunny answered. "And I guess he was stolen. For he was locked in the barn, but when I went out to look at him, as I always do, he wasn't there."

"That's too bad!" exclaimed the gypsy. "I am sorry. And let me tell you, Mr. Brown," he went on, "that I did not steal Toby, and nobody in my camp did. I know that some gypsies are not honest, and they may take things that do not belong to them. But *we* do not. Come, you shall look all through our camp and see for yourself that Toby is not here, nor the dog, Splash, either. We do not steal things! Come and look for yourselves. You shall see that Toby is not here!"

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"Then where is he?" asked Bunny, whose heart seemed to sink away down in his rubber boots when he heard the gypsy say this.

"I don't know where he is, little man," the gypsy replied. "But he is not here. I wish he was. That is, I wish you had sold him to me, but I would never take your pony from you if you did not want me to have him. Come and see that he is not here."

The gypsy turned to lead the way up along the path toward the wagons and tents, and, as he did so, the barking of dogs was heard.

"Maybe one of them is Splash," said Bunker Blue.

"No," answered the gypsy, "those are all our dogs. There is not a strange one among them. If there was, our dogs would fight him—at least they would until they made friends. No, neither your pony nor dog is here, I'm sorry to say, though I would like to own that pony for myself. But come and see!"

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So Bunny, his father and Bunker Blue went up to the gypsy camp. They saw the tents and wagons, in which lived the dark-skinned men, women and children who traveled about from place to place, buying and selling horses, baskets and other things, and telling fortunes; which last, of course, they don't really do, it being only make-believe.

The wagons, gay in the red, golden and yellow paint, seemed bright and fresh in the rain, and the backs of some of them were open, showing little bunks, like those in a boat, where the people slept. Some wagons were like little houses—almost like the ark—only not as large, and in them the gypsies could eat and sleep.

But most of the dark-skinned travelers lived in tents which were put up among the trees, alongside the wagons. Some of the tent flaps were folded back, and in one or two of the white, canvas houses oil stoves were burning, for the day was chilly. There were chairs, tables and beds in the tents, and all seemed clean and neat.

"We keep all our horses at the back of the camp," said Jaki Kezar as he led the way. "You shall see them all, and be sure that your pony is not with them."

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As he walked on, followed by Bunny, Mr. Brown and Bunker Blue, gypsy men, women and children came to the entrance of the tents, or to the back doors of the wagons, and looked out. They stared at the visitors, in the shiny, yellow oilskins, but said nothing.

A little way back in the woods were a number of horses tied to the trees. They were under a sort of shed, made by cut, leafy branches of trees put over a frame-work of poles, and this kept off some of the rain. The horses seemed to like the cool and wet, for it kept the flies from biting them.

Eagerly Bunny looked for a sight of Toby, but the pony was not there. Neither was Splash among the dogs, some of which barked at the visitors until Jaki Kezar told them to be quiet. Then the dogs sneaked off into the woods.

Mr. Brown and Bunny looked carefully among the horses, thinking, perhaps, that Toby might be hidden between two of the larger steeds. But the pony was not there.

"I tell you true," said the gypsy man, earnestly, "we have not your pony!"

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"But where is he?" asked Bunny, almost ready to cry.

"That I do not know, little man," answered the gypsy. "If I did I would tell you. But he is not here."

And it was evident that he was not. There was no sign of the trick pony at the gypsy camp, and, after looking about a little more, Mr. Brown and Bunny, followed by Bunker Blue, turned away.

"Perhaps there are more gypsies camped around here," said Mr. Brown to Jaki Kezar.

"Perhaps," admitted the man with the gold rings in his ears. "But I do not know of any. If I hear I will tell you. I am sorry about your little boy's pony."

"Yes, he and his Sister Sue feel bad about losing their pet," said Mr. Brown.

Then he and Bunny and Bunker tramped back through the mud and rain to the motor boat. Bunny felt so bad he did not know what to do, but his father said:

"Never mind. If we don't find Toby I'll get you another pony."

"No other would be as nice as Toby," said Bunny, half sobbing.

"Oh, yes, I think we could find one," said his father. "But we will not give up yet. I'll write to the police in several of the towns and villages around us, and ask them if any gypsies are camped near them. If there are we'll go and see if any of them have Toby." [210]

Bunny felt better after hearing this, though he was still sad, and did not talk much on the way home across the bay. The storm was not so bad now, and, as the wind blew toward Bellemere, the *Spray* went home faster than she had gone away.

"Did you get Toby?" cried Sue, running to the door as she heard the steps of Bunny and her father on the porch, late that afternoon.

Mr. Brown shook his head to say "No."

"He—he wasn't there!" said Bunny, hardly able to keep back his tears. And Sue didn't keep hers back at all. She just let them splash right down on the floor, until her mother had to pick the little girl up in her arms—perhaps to keep her feet from getting wet.

"Never mind, Sue," said Mrs. Brown. "We'll get you another pony."

"I want Toby!" sobbed Sue.

"Maybe we can find him," said Bunny, who felt that he must be brave, when he saw how sorry his little sister felt. "Maybe there are more gypsy camps, and we'll look in some of them; won't we, Daddy?" [211]

"That's what we will, Son! We'll find Toby yet."

It rained during the night, and all that Bunny and Sue could think of, until they fell asleep, was that Toby and Splash might be out in it, cold, wet, and hungry. They even put something in their prayers about wanting to find the lost dog and pony.

The next day, down at his office, Mr. Brown wrote a number of letters to the police in neighboring cities, asking if there were any camps of gypsies in their neighborhood, and, if there were, to let him know.

"Then we'll go there and see if we can find Toby," he said to the children.

Bunny and Sue did not know what to do. There was no school, so they took walks in the woods and fields. Without Splash and Toby they were very lonesome.

Uncle Tad said, one day, that perhaps Mr. Tang, the very cross man to whom Mr. Tallman owed money, might have taken Toby. But when asked about it Mr. Tang said:

"Indeed, I'd like to have that trick pony very much, but I'd never steal him. And, much as I wanted him from Mr. Tallman, I wouldn't take him from Bunny and Sue." [212]

So Toby was not found in Mr. Tang's stable.

It was about three days after the pony had been taken away that, as Bunny and Sue were walking on a hill, about a mile from their house, they saw a boy coming toward them. The boy seemed to know them, but, at first, Bunny and his sister did not know him.

"Hello!" said the boy. "Where's your pony?"

"Pony?" repeated Bunny. "Do you know anything about him?"

"Know anything about him?" asked the boy in turn. "Why, I saw you giving rides with him at the Sunday-school picnic to make Red Cross money. My little brother had a ride. Don't you remember? He was red-headed, and he wanted to hold the lines himself."

"Oh, yes, I 'member him!" said Sue.

"So do I," added Bunny.

"But where's your pony now?" asked the boy. "Why aren't you riding in the cart with your pony to pull you along."

"Because he's been stolen!" exclaimed Bunny Brown. [213]

"What! Your pony stolen?"

"Yep! And our dog Splash, too!" added Sue.

"Whew!" whistled the boy. "How'd it happen?"

Then Bunny and Sue told about what had taken place.

"We went to one gypsy camp looking for Toby," said Bunny, "but he wasn't there. Now daddy is trying to find more gypsy camps."

"Does he know about the one over near Pickerel Pond?" asked the boy, naming a place about three miles from Bellemere.

"Is there a gypsy camp at Pickerel Pond?" Bunny asked.

"Sure there is—a big one, too. Maybe that's where your pony is, Bunny. Why don't you look there?"

"I—I guess I will," declared the little boy. "Come on, Sue. We'll go to Pickerel Pond."

"But we don't know the way," objected Sue.

"I can show you," offered the boy. "I'm going that way myself. Not all the way, but pretty near. I can show you the camp from the top of the hill, and all you'll have to do will be to go down to it and ask if they have your pony."

"Oh, come on, Bunny! Let's go!" cried Sue. [214]

"All right," agreed her brother. "We'll get Toby back, maybe."

"I don't know if he's there," went on the boy, "'cause I didn't see him. But I know there are gypsies there."

Then he started off, leading the way, and Bunny and Sue followed, never, for one instant, thinking they were doing wrong to go off and try to find the lost Toby pony by themselves.

It was rather a long way from the hill near their house to the one from which the boy had said the gypsy camp could be seen, but Bunny and Sue never thought of getting tired. On and on they went and, after a bit, the boy stopped and said:

"This is as far as I'm going. But you can see the gypsy tents and wagons down there in the hollow. You go down and see if Toby is there. I'll stop on my way back and help you drive him home if you find him. I have to go on an errand for my mother, but I'll stop at the camp on my way back. I'm not afraid of the gypsies."

"I'm not, either," said Bunny.

Then, as the boy turned away, Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue, hand in hand, darted down toward this other gypsy camp. And, as they came closer to the tents and wagons, Sue gave a sudden cry. [215]

"Look, Bunny!" she exclaimed. "There's Toby!" and she pointed to a little pony that was eating grass under a clump of trees where some other horses were tied.

Was it their missing pet? [216]

CHAPTER XXIII

PRISONERS

Their eyes shining bright in anticipation and hope, Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue walked down the grassy hillside to the little glen, in which was the gypsy camp. The nearer they came to where they saw the pony grazing the more sure were they that it was Toby himself.

"Oh, we've found him! We've found him!" cried Sue.

"Yes, it *is* him!" added Bunny. "Won't daddy be s'prised when he sees us coming home with Toby?"

"And maybe Splash, too," went on Sue. "Do you see him anywhere, Bunny?"

"No," answered her brother, "I don't."

Bunny did not look around very carefully for Splash. He loved the dog, of course, but, just then, he was more interested in Toby.

At first the children did not see any of the gypsies themselves—the men, women or boys and girls. But there were the groups of horses, and with them a pony—their pony, they hoped. [217]

And, when they were within a short distance of the little horse, Bunny gave a cry of delight.

"Oh, Sue!" he exclaimed. "It *is* Toby! It *is*! I can see his one white foot!"

"And I can see the white spot on his head," added the little girl. "It is our Toby!"

And then they ran up to the Shetland pony and threw their arms around its neck, and Sue even

kissed Toby, while Bunny patted his glossy neck.

"Oh, Toby! we've found you! We've found you!" said Bunny in delight.

"And we're never going to let you be taken away again!" added Sue.

As for Toby—and it really was the children's pet—he seemed as glad to see them as they were to see him. He rubbed his velvety nose first on Bunny and then against Sue's dress, and whinnied in delight.

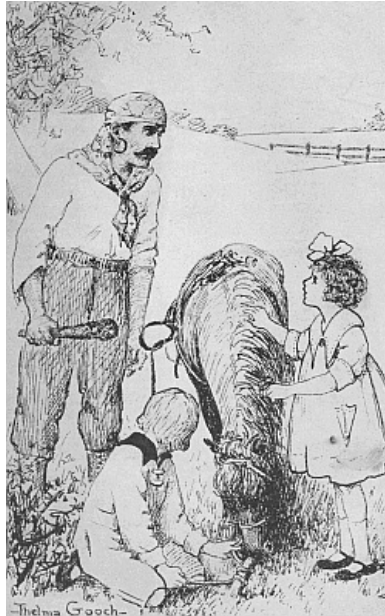
"Now, we'll take you right home!" declared Bunny.

"But we'll find Splash first," added his sister.

"Oh, yes, we want our dog, too," said Bunny.

He was trying to loosen the knot in the rope by which Toby was tied to a stake in the ground, and Sue was helping, when a shadow on the grass told the children that some one was walking toward them. They looked up quickly, to see a ragged gypsy man, with a straggly black moustache, scowling at them. In his hand he held a knotted stick.

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**A RAGGED GYPSY MAN
WAS SCOWLING AT THEM.**

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue and Their Shetland Pony.

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"Here! What you young'uns doin' with that pony?" he fairly growled.

"If you please," answered Bunny politely, "he's our pony, and we're taking him home. His name is Toby and he was in our stable, but some one took him away. Now we've found him, and we're going to take him home again."

"Oh, you are, are you?" asked the man, and his voice was not very pleasant. "Well, you just let that pony alone; do you hear?"

"But he's *ours!*" said Sue, not understanding why they could not take their own pet.

"He's my pony—that's whose he is!" growled the gypsy man, who was not at all nice like Jaki Kezar. "Let him alone, I tell you!" and he spoke in such a fierce voice that Bunny and Sue shrank back in fright.

Just then the barking of some dogs was heard, and Bunny took heart. Perhaps Splash was coming, and might drive away the bad gypsy man as he once had driven off a tramp.

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"This is our pony," said Bunny again, "and we want to take him. He isn't yours. Our father bought him from Mr. Tallman for us. Mr. Tallman's red-and-yellow box was stolen and he got poor so he had to sell the pony."

"What was stolen?" asked the gypsy quickly.

"Mr. Tallman's red-and-yellow box," repeated Bunny. "It didn't have money in it, but it had papers, like money. And it made Mr. Tallman poor. But this is our pony. His name is Toby and he can do tricks."

"And we're a dog named Splash," added Sue. "Is he here?"

"I don't know anything about your dog," growled the man. "And I don't know anything about a red-and-yellow box, either," and as he said this he looked around, as though in fear lest some one would hear what he was saying.

"But this is our Toby pony," insisted Bunny. "We want him."

"What makes you think he's your pony?" growled the gypsy, and as he turned to look back toward the tents and wagons Bunny and Sue saw a gypsy woman coming toward them.

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"I know he's our pony, 'cause he's got a white spot on his head," answered Sue.

"And he's got one white foot," added Bunny. "And he can do tricks. If I had a handkerchief I'd show you how he can pick it up."

"Here's my handkerchief!" offered Sue.

Bunny took it and dropped it on the grass near Toby. At once the little Shetland pony picked it up and held it out to Bunny, as he had been taught to do.

"And here's a lump of sugar for you!" cried Bunny, as he gave Toby a piece, for the little boy had lately always carried some in his pocket, hoping Toby might be found.

"See!" went on Bunny. "He *is* our pony, and he can do more tricks than this. He can ring a bell."

By this time the gypsy woman had come up. She did not smile as she asked the man:

"What's the matter here?"

"Oh, these children think this is their pony," he said, and he laughed, but it was not a nice laugh.

"Their pony! Why, the very idea!" cried the woman. "This is *my* pony, and I'm going to keep him."

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"But he's our Toby!" exclaimed Sue. "Our daddy bought him from Mr. Tallman."

The man and woman talked in a low voice. What they said Bunny and Sue could not hear, but soon the woman remarked:

"Perhaps this may look like your pony, my dears, but he can't be, because he's mine. Lots of ponies look alike, even with white feet and white marks on their heads. This one isn't yours. Now you run along home. Maybe your pony will be in your stable when you get there."

"No, this is our pony!" said Bunny in a brave voice, "and we're going to take him with us. A boy showed us where your camp was, and he's going to stop for us on his way back and help us take Toby home. This is our pony and we're going to have him."

"And we want Splash, our dog," added Bunny's Sister Sue. "And if you don't let us take Toby maybe Splash will bite you!"

Nothing could have made Bunny and Sue braver than to think they were not going to have their pony after they had found him. They did not feel at all afraid of the scowling gypsies.

And the gypsies were scowling now, and seemed angry. Again they talked together in low voices. Bunny walked close to Toby once more, and took hold of the rope that tied him.

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"Here! what are you doing?" cried the gypsy.

"I'm going to take our pony," said the little boy. "He's ours, and you can't have him! Did you take him out of our stable? If you did my daddy will send the police after you. He wrote to some policemen to find our pony, but we've found him ourselves and we want him!"

Suddenly the gypsy woman smiled at the children. She said something quickly to the man—what it was Bunny and Sue could not hear—and then she spoke to the little boy and girl.

"Well, perhaps this is your pony," she said. "But, of course, you may be wrong. We have some other ponies back of the tents. Will you come and look at them? Maybe one of them is yours."

"No, I'm sure this is our Toby," said Bunny.

"Oh, well, come and look at the other ponies," said the woman, and her voice seemed much kinder in tone now. "This pony may look like yours, and you may find another that looks more like your Toby. Come and see," she invited.

And, though Bunny and Sue were sure this pony was theirs, still the gypsy woman spoke so nicely, and seemed so kind, they did not know just what to do.

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"Come on," she invited, holding out her hands to Bunny and Sue. "I'll show you the other ponies, and the dogs, too. Maybe you can find your dog."

"Oh, I hope we can!" cried Sue. "Come on, Bunny!"

"But I'm sure this is Toby," said the little boy. "We'll go and look at the other ponies," he agreed, "but we'll come back to this one, for he's Toby."

"All right—you can come back," said the woman, and she made a sign with her head at the gypsy man, who turned away.

"Come," urged the woman, and Bunny and Sue walked with her.

"We'll come back to you, Toby!" promised Bunny.

The pony looked after them as the children walked away, as though wondering why they left him. Through the woods, under the trees of which were tents and wagons, the gypsy woman led the children. Other gypsies came out to look at them, and none seemed very friendly.

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"Where are the other ponies?" asked Bunny. "I don't see any."

"Oh, just over here," answered the woman. "Here, come through this tent with me. They're just beyond here!"

Before Bunny and Sue knew what was happening they had followed the dark-faced woman inside a tent. It was like the ones at Jaki Kezar's camp.

"There! Sit down!" said the woman, and she suddenly pushed Bunny and Sue into some chairs. "Sit down here awhile!"

"Where are the ponies?" asked Bunny. "We don't want to sit down. We want to see the other ponies, but I'm sure the first one was Toby."

"Never mind about the other ponies!" growled the woman, and her voice suddenly changed and was ugly and harsh again. "You'll just stay here for a while!"

Bunny and Sue did not know what to make of it. They had felt so sure they could take Toby and go home with their pony. And now to be all alone in a tent with a gypsy woman! It was too bad!

"I—I don't want to stay here!" said Sue, almost ready to cry.

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"Well, you've got to stay whether you want to or not!" snapped the gypsy woman. "We can't let you go to bring the police after us. You'll have to stay here! We'll just keep you prisoners awhile until we can pack up and move! Now don't be afraid, for I won't hurt you! You'll just have to stay until we can get away, that's all!"

What was going to happen to Bunny and his Sister Sue?

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CHAPTER XXIV

THE RED-AND-YELLOW BOX

The gypsy woman sat down in a chair in front of the two children and looked at them. And Bunny and Sue, their hearts beating fast, and not knowing what was going to happen to them, looked at the woman. They did not like her at all. She did not smile as Jaki Kezar had done, and her teeth, instead of being white and shining, were black.

"If you don't cry nothing will happen to you," she said.

"We—we're not going to cry!" said Bunny, as bravely as he could. "We—we're not afraid and we want our pony!"

To tell the truth, Bunny had been on the point of crying, and there were tears in Sue's eyes. But when the little girl heard her brother say that, she just squeezed the tears back again where they belonged—that is all except two, and they "leaked out," as she said afterward.

As for Bunny, the gypsy woman had hurt him a little when she shoved him down into the chair, and he had been going to cry a bit for that, but, when she told him not to, he just made up his mind that he would not.

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"We—we want to go home and take our pony," said Sue, and she gave a twist as though she was going to get up. "And we want our dog, too," she added.

"Now, you just sit still where you are!" exclaimed the woman. "If you're good maybe you can have your dog—that is, if I can find him."

"And our pony, too? Can we have Toby?" asked Bunny eagerly.

"I don't know anything about your pony," said the woman, in a sort of growling voice. "That wasn't your pony you saw—he belongs to me and my husband. We bought him!"

"But he is our pony!" said Bunny. "He knows us and we know him, and he's got white spots on, just like Toby."

"Lots of ponies have white spots," answered the gypsy woman. "That one isn't yours, I tell you."

"But he knows us," went on Bunny, "and he did the handkerchief trick. We want our pony and we want to go home!" and, for just a moment, Bunny felt very much like crying.

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"You can go home after a bit," said the woman, as she looked out of the tent. "Now be good and don't make a fuss. If you're good you can have a dog. And then I'll let you look at some other ponies, and you can tell which is yours—maybe. Just keep still!"

There was nothing else for Bunny and Sue to do. The gypsy woman looked so big and tall and so fierce that they were afraid of her. And she sat in front of them so they could not run past her

to get out of the tent.

Something strange seemed to be going on in the gypsy camp. There was the sound of men's voices shouting, and the rattle of wagons and carts could be heard. There was also the sound of pans and dishes being packed up, for all the world, as Bunny said afterward, as though the camp was moving—and it really was.

For perhaps an hour the woman sat in front of the children in the tent, and then she got up and looked out.

"I'm going to leave you here awhile," she said. "If you'll promise to be good, and not make a fuss, I won't tie you to your chairs. But if you act bad, I'll tie you up. Now will you be good?"

Bunny and Sue were nearly always good, and it did not take this threat to make them promise now. They just nodded their heads at the woman. She started out of the tent, but turned to shake her finger at them and say:

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"Now, I'm going to tie the tent flaps shut, and don't you try to come out. If you do I'll see you, or some of us gypsies will, and if we don't the dogs will. So you'd better stay right here. You needn't be afraid, nobody is going to hurt you, and we're only going to keep you here until we can get away. We don't want the police after us. We haven't done anything, but we don't like the police. So don't you dare to run out of this tent. Remember, I'll be watching, and so will the dogs!"

With that she slipped out, and Bunny and Sue could see her shadow in front. She was tying the flaps as they had often seen their father or mother tie the tent at night in Camp-Rest-a-While.

Then Bunny and Sue were left to themselves. They looked at one another for a moment and then Bunny said:

"That *is* our pony Toby!"

"I know it is!" exclaimed Sue. "Oh, Bunny, how are we going to take him home?"

"I—I'll think of a way—maybe," said Bunny. The little boy felt that he must be brave and not let Sue know he was afraid. Really he was not as much afraid as some other boys of his age might have been, because he was thinking so much about Toby. He was so anxious to get his pony and take the pet home that he did not think about himself.

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"Can we get out of here without her seeing us—or the dogs?" asked Sue, after a while.

"I don't know," answered Bunny, and he whispered, as his sister had done. "I—I'll take a look," he went on.

Slipping softly from his chair he peeped out through a little crack between the tent flaps.

"Is she there?" Sue asked.

"No, but that man is—the one that wouldn't let us take Toby. He's lying on the grass right in front of the tent."

"Can you see Toby?" asked Sue.

Bunny peered out a little longer.

"No, I can't see the pony," he answered. "You come and look, Sue. The crack's big enough for both of us."

Sue stood beside her brother. She, too, saw the gypsy man stretched on the grass, and near him were some dogs.

"Splash isn't there," she said.

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"No, maybe he's tied up in the woods," said Bunny. "I wish we could find him. Oh, I wish daddy knew we were here. He'd make the gypsies let us go, and he'd take Toby for us."

"Maybe he'll come and get us," suggested Sue, hopefully.

"Maybe," agreed her brother. "Oh, I wish we could see Toby!"

The children looked out as well as they could between the tent flaps. They dared not make the crack any wider for fear the man in front might see them. They saw gypsy men, women and children hurrying to and fro, and loading wagons. Some tents were being taken down.

"I guess they're moving," said Sue.

"They're afraid we'll tell the police on them—that's what the woman said," remarked Bunny. "I guess they did steal our pony, and they're afraid they'll be arrested. Yes, they are moving the camp, Sue."

And this was just what the gypsies were doing. They were going away in a hurry, too. Every one, except the man on the grass in front of the tent where the children were held prisoners, seemed to be busy.

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"Do you think they'll take us with them when they go?" asked Sue, after a bit.

"No, they wouldn't take us along," said Bunny.

"But gypsies do take children," went on Sue. "Don't you 'member that story about the little boy and girl that were taken by the gypsies and had to live with them a long while, until they looked just like gypsies themselves?"

"That was in a book!" said Bunny. "They won't take us away. But I'd like to get out of this tent."

"Maybe we could, without the man seeing us," suggested Sue.

"If he didn't the dogs might," Bunny answered. "Oh, I wish we were in our pony cart now! We could ride away from the gypsies."

"I wish so, too!" said Sue, with a sigh.

Bunny looked out of the crack again.

"There's a dog with the man now," said the little boy. "But it isn't our Splash. We wouldn't dast go out the front of the tent, Sue. But I could untie the flap ropes; I know I could."

"Oh, maybe we could go out the *back* of the tent!" suddenly cried Sue. "There's nobody out there to watch us, maybe, and we could get out that way. Come on, Bunny! Let's do it!"

[233]

"Say! That's right!" Bunny quickly cried. "Come on, we'll try the back of the tent!"

As in Camp-Rest-a-While, there was a board floor in the gypsy tent, and the canvas sides, as well as the back and front, were fast to nails driven in the edges of the board floor. It was not very hard work for Bunny and Sue to slip off some of the rope loops from the nails. Then the cloth back of the tent could be raised and they could slip out.

"Come on, Sue!" whispered Bunny, when he had made a place big enough for him and his sister to get through. "Now we can get out and they won't see us!"

He went first, and Sue followed. But, to the surprise of the children, instead of finding themselves outside the tent, they saw that they were in a little wooden room which was built right against the tent. In fact, it was part of the tent, there being no wooden side against the back of the cloth house. Bunny and Sue had slipped underneath the tent and were in a little slab-sided room which had a door, and through the chinks and cracks of it the sunlight streamed.

"Why, we didn't get out at all!" said Sue in surprise.

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"No," said Bunny. "We didn't. But maybe we can get out of this cabin."

"Look out of the door and see if there is a man there, or any dogs," suggested Sue in a whisper.

Bunny looked through one of the cracks.

"It's right near the woods," he said. "I guess we can get out if we can open the door."

He pushed on it, and so did Sue, but, to their disappointment, they found it was locked on the outside.

"There's a window," Sue said, pointing to one rather high up, on one side of the cabin. "Maybe we can open that and crawl out, Bunny."

"Yes, we could, if we had something to stand on," said the little boy. "Let's look for something."

He went over to a pile of blankets in one corner of the cabin and lifted one. As he did so he gave a cry of surprise.

For there, in plain view, was a small red-and-yellow-striped box, and, at the sight of it, Sue exclaimed:

"Oh, is that the one Mr. Tallman had? Oh, Bunny, maybe it is!"

"Maybe!" cried the little boy. "Maybe it is!"

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As he and his sister leaned over it they heard some one at the door of the cabin. There was a rattle of a key in a lock, and a voice said:

"I'll bring the box out, and then we can hurry away!"

Who was coming into the place where Bunny and Sue were?

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CHAPTER XXV

TO THE RESCUE

Suddenly the door of the cabin opened, and in came the same gypsy man who had stopped Bunny from loosening the rope by which Toby was fastened to the stake.

"Hello!" cried the man, in great surprise. "What are you young'uns doing here? Trying to run

off, eh? Well, we'll soon stop that! Here, Sal!" he called, and the woman come running up.

"Ha! So they crawled out of the tent, did they?" she exclaimed. "I didn't think they'd be smart enough for that."

"And look what they uncovered!" added the man, as he pointed to the red-and-yellow box.

"That—that's Mr. Tallman's box!" said Bunny boldly. "He was looking all over for it. That's what made him poor and he had to sell his pony—'cause some one took his red-and-yellow box. Now we can tell him where it is."

"Oh, you can, can you?" asked the woman. "Well, maybe you can if we let you, but I guess you won't! We'll have to take 'em with us now," she said to the man. "Otherwise they'll have the police right after us." [237]

"Yes, take 'em along, though it's going to be a bother!" growled the man. "Come on, you!" he cried to some one outside the tent. "Get this place cleared out and pack the stuff on a wagon! Then take down the last tent. Leave the shack stand."

"Here Sal, you take the young'uns!" he added. "We'll have to keep 'em out of sight for a while!"

"Now you come with me!" ordered the woman, and she roughly caught Bunny and Sue by the hands. "I told you we'd let you go if you kept still, but you didn't," she said, "and now you'll have to be kept a while longer."

"We're not going with you!" suddenly cried Bunny, pulling his hand away from the woman's. "We're not going with you! We want our Toby pony and we want to go home!"

"And we want our dog Splash!" sobbed Sue, for she was crying in earnest now. "We're not going with you!" and she, also, pulled away from the gypsy woman.

"Say, they're plucky little tykes!" said the man. "Don't be too rough with 'em, Sal. But keep 'em quiet until we can get away. Put 'em in a wagon and shut the door! Lively now!" [238]

"Here! you carry one and I'll carry the other!" said the woman who was called "Sal."

Then she lifted Sue up in her arms, in spite of her screams, kicks and struggles, and ran with her out of the shack. The gypsy man caught Bunny up in the same way, though the little fellow tried to strike with his fists, and carried him out.

Then, as the two children were carried toward one of the gaily painted wagons, Bunny caught sight of a man running out of the wooden cabin with the red-and-yellow box under his arm.

"There! I guess you won't get out of that place in a hurry!" snapped the woman, as she thrust Sue into the wagon. Bunny was shoved in after his sister, and the door slammed shut. It was not altogether dark inside the wagon, which was fitted up something like the ark, and Bunny and Sue could dimly see chairs, tables, sleeping bunks and a little stove.

The next moment the wagon started off, and they could hear the thud-thud of the feet of the horses that were drawing it.

"Oh, Bunny!" sobbed Sue, "the gypsies are taking us away and we'll never see daddy, or mother, or Toby again! Oh, dear!" [239]

Bunny wanted to sob as Sue was doing, but he felt that he must not. He must be brave and see if he could not get out and help his sister to get out also.

So he held back his tears, and pounded on the doors of the gypsy wagon.

"Let us get out! Let us get out of here!" he cried.

But no one answered, the doors were locked, and the wagon rumbled on faster than before.

"What are we going to do?" asked Sue.

"I don't know," answered Bunny Brown.

On and on rumbled and swayed the wagon, with the two children inside. They found some chairs to sit on, and kept close to one another. Bunny made his way to a window in the side, and tried to look out. But the window was of frosted glass, and he could not see through it. Nor could he push it back or open it. He could hear the horses' feet plainer now, and they seemed to be on a road, and not on the soft grass of the fields or the leafy mould of a forest.

"Where are they taking us?" asked Sue.

"I don't know," answered Bunny Brown again. [240]

After what seemed like many hours to the children, they suddenly heard loud shouts and calls. Who made them they could not tell. Then Bunny, creeping close to the front of the wagon heard the driver snapping his whip, as though trying to make the horses go faster. And then, all at once, Bunny heard a voice say:

"Hold on there! Stop now! Don't try to get away, we've got you!"

A thrill of hope came to Bunny's heart.

"Oh, Sue!" he said, "maybe it's somebody arresting the gypsies!"

"Is it daddy, do you think?" asked the little girl, whose face was streaked with dirt from the tears she had shed and tried to wipe away.

"Maybe," said Bunny hopefully. "Anyhow, this wagon is stopping!"

And so it was. They could feel and hear the horses going more and more slowly, until the gypsy van at last came to a stop. Then some one pounded on the doors and cried:

"Here now, I'll break these doors open if you don't unlock 'em. I guess the children are in here!"

There was a sort of growling answer, and then the doors flew open, letting in the light of the setting sun. A kindly-faced man—not a gypsy—looked in at Bunny and Sue, and cheerfully cried: [241]

"Are you the Brown children?"

"Yes—that's who we are," said the little boy. "I'm Bunny Brown and this is my Sister Sue."

"Then you're the ones we've come to rescue!" was the man's reply. "Hold those gypsies, boys. Don't let any of 'em get away! You are all right now," he told Bunny and Sue. "Come on out of the wagon. You're with friends, and these gypsies will soon be in jail!"

"Is—is our daddy here?" asked Sue, ready to cry again, but this time from joy.

"Well, he isn't here just this minute," said the kind-faced man, "but he'll be here pretty soon. He's on his way. He telephoned us to stop this gypsy caravan and see if you weren't in one of the wagons and, sure enough, you were!"

"And have you got our pony Toby, and our dog Splash?" asked Bunny, who was smiling now.

"Well, we've captured a lot of dogs, ponies and horses, as well as gypsies," said another man, "and I guess if any of yours are with 'em you can have 'em back. Land sakes! to think that these gypsies tried to kidnap the children!"

"No, no! We would not have taken them away far!" exclaimed a voice, and Bunny and Sue saw the woman called "Sal." [242]

"What were you going to do with 'em?" asked one of the rescuers.

"Just going to keep them with us until we could get away."

"Well, you didn't get away, and it will be some time before you do, after this," said the kind-faced man. "You gypsies will all go to jail."

Bunny and Sue got out of the wagon and looked about them. They were on the edge of a little village, and quite a crowd had gathered. There were a number of gypsy wagons, and the dark-faced men, women and children, who had been in them, seemed to be in charge of the village police.

"Oh, there's Toby!" cried Bunny, as he saw the pet trick pony tied behind one of the wagons. "There's Toby, Sue!" and he rushed up to the Shetland pony and threw his arms around its neck.

"And here's Splash!" cried Sue, laughing now, as a dog scrambled out of another wagon and fairly leaped on her and Bunny. "We got our dog and pony back!"

And so they had.

"Take these gypsies to the jail," said the man who had first looked in on Sue and Bunny when the locked doors were opened. "Take 'em to jail—every one of 'em—and we'll store their wagons, horses and stuff until we see who it belongs to." [243]

"There's a red-and-yellow box!" cried Bunny, from where he stood beside Toby. "It's Mr. Tallman's and he won't be poor if he gets it back. It's in one of the wagons. Mr. Tallman wants it!"

"Well, then we'll see that he gets it back," said the constable. "Search the wagons, boys, for a red-and-yellow box," he ordered, "and hold on to it for this Mr. Tallman, whoever he is. Then lock up the gypsies. And bring the children to my house. They can stay there until their father comes for them."

"And can we take Toby and Splash?" asked Bunny.

"Sure, you can!" cried Mr. Roscoe, the constable. "They're yours to do what you like with, now that we've got them away from the gypsies for you."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Sue.

"So am I," said Bunny Brown.

And, as the gypsy band was led away to jail, and when Bunny and Sue were leading Toby toward Mr. Roscoe's house, with Splash following, along came an automobile, in a cloud of dust, and, before it had quite stopped, out jumped Mr. Brown. [244]

"Did you get my children?" he cried.

"Here we are, Daddy!" answered Bunny and Sue for themselves. "Here we are and we got back Toby and Splash!"

And then a woman's voice cried:

"Oh, I'm so glad!"

And Mrs. Brown quickly followed her husband, clasping Bunny and Sue in her arms.

"What happened to you, Bunny?" asked his mother. "Where were you? What did you do and where did you go?"

"We went to find Toby," answered the little boy. "A boy told us where the gypsy camp was, and we went there, and we found Toby. But the man and woman wouldn't let us come away,—and we saw Mr. Tallman's red-and-yellow box and——"

"Good gracious, Bunny Brown!" cried his father. "If you tell any more you won't have breath enough left to eat your supper!"

"But how did you find us, Daddy?" asked Sue. "How did you and mother know where to come for us and take us away from the gypsies?"

"The little boy who showed you the gypsy camp told us about you," said Mr. Brown. "After he showed you where the camp was, and went on the errand for his mother, he stopped back where the gypsies were camped to see if you had found your pony and were all right. [245]

"But instead of finding you he saw the last of the gypsy wagons hurrying away, and then he thought maybe something was wrong. So he hurried and told me and I went to the gypsy camp. Then I met a farmer who said he had seen two little children walking up to the gypsy tents, but he hadn't seen them come away before the gypsies left. Then I guessed they must have taken you with them, though I didn't know they had Toby and Splash.

"I found out which way the gypsies were going, and I telephoned on ahead of them to have the constable arrest them. He did; and here you are, and mother and I came on as fast as we could in an automobile to get you. And now you're all right!"

"And so is Toby!" said Bunny, laughing now.

"And so is Splash!" added Sue, her tears also changed to laughter.

"But what's this about a red-and-yellow box?" asked Mr. Roscoe, the constable. "We did find it in one of the gypsy wagons," he added, "and it seems to have a lot of papers in it—stocks and bonds." [246]

"They're Mr. Tallman's," said Bunny to his father. "Don't you 'member he lost 'em, and he got poor and had to sell Toby? We found the box in the cabin when we crawled through the gypsy tent," and Bunny told all about it.

And, surely enough, when the box was opened it did have in it the papers stolen from Mr. Tallman, so he did not lose all his money after all, and could pay all he owed Mr. Tang and others. Some of the gypsies had taken the box from his house and meant to keep it. But Bunny and Sue found it just in time.

And the same gypsy band, one night, had opened the Brown stable and taken Toby, afterward locking the door. One of the gypsy men had made friends with Splash, the dog, and had taken him away also, so that's why Splash didn't bark and give the alarm.

So Bunny and Sue found their pet pony just in time, for, as some of the gypsies said afterward, they were going to move away that day, to a distant part of the country, and only that the little boy happened to tell the two children about the camp, Toby and Splash might have been taken far away and never found. [247]

But everything came out all right you see. Bunny and Sue soon got over their fright, and went home with their father and mother in the automobile, a man driving Toby over to their house the next day. Splash rode in the auto, there being room for him.

As for the gypsies, they were punished for taking Mr. Tallman's red-and-yellow box, as well as for taking Toby and Splash. And Bunny and Sue had a great, happy time, for many days afterward, telling their playmates about having been held prisoners by the dark-faced people.

"Weren't you awful scared?" asked Sadie West.

"Oh, not so very much," said Bunny. "I kept thinking it was an adventure, like mother reads to us about from books."

"I was scared," said Sue. "But I'm glad I got Toby back."

"So'm I," said Bunny. "And we're going to teach him a lot of new tricks."

And so, while Bunny and Sue are doing this we will say good-bye to them.

THE END

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Transcriber's Notes

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

The remaining corrections made are indicated by dotted lines under the corrections. Scroll the mouse over the word and the original text will appear.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BUNNY BROWN AND HIS SISTER SUE AND THEIR SHETLAND PONY ***

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