

*No. 221*

EVERY BRITISH SCHOOLGIRL'S FAVOURITE WEEKLY

# The Schoolgirl's Own 2<sup>d</sup>



**THE MESSAGE THAT MEANT SO MUCH!**  
An incident from this week's long complete tale of Betty Barton & Co. in South America.



An Enthralling Long Complete Tale of Betty Barton & Co. in South America.



### Fugitives All!

"OH, I am so hungry, girls!"

"Well, now you mention it, Naomer darling, so am I!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove! Geals, I don't mind being so thowoughly weawy, you know—"

"But when it comes to being half-starved as well as fagged to death—"

"Pweicely, Polly deah! You express my meaning exactly!"

And Paula Creel, for all she was in such a state of utter exhaustion, managed to raise a beaming smile.

The five girls—four of them Morcovians—were halting for a rest in the depths of a gloomy forest that clothed the base of a rugged mountain.

"Thank goodness, we are out of the scorching heat of the sun, anyhow!" exclaimed Polly Linton.

"The sun does know how to blaze away in this tropical country of yours, Carlotta!"

"I knew that you, who are from England, would feel the midday heat," Carlotta Delona answered in her quiet, sober way. "And so I was very glad that we had this forest to seek shelter in, whilst we could still struggle on in the hope of being in time!"

"The welief, bai Jove!" murmured Paula Creel, now that they had all flopped to earth. "Geals, I was weawly pwostrate. As for the sunlight in the open, it was weducing me to a weck!"

There was a chuckle from Polly Linton.

"Why not say you were being changed into a spot of grease, and be done with it, Paula darling! But cheer up, everybody, for this is all right, isn't it?"

"As I pweviously remarked, Polly deah, this is a gweat welief! And if we may now bwreak into our pweicious wotions, I am sure that we shall all wecuwpate wevy wapidly—yes, wather!"

This time Betty Barton chuckled.

"You must have a fine spirit, Paula darling, to be able to make every remark a little speech even at a time like this! Let's see—we got away from the lonely villa where we were Madame Florissa's prisoners just after dark last evening. So we have been in flight—"

"For about seventeen hours!" exclaimed Polly.

"Not so bad! What do you say, Carlotta dear?"

"It is not so much the number of hours we have been at large; it is the way you have kept on and

## THANKS TO THE MORCOVIANS!

By MARJORIE STANTON.

To save a country from revolution—that is the task which the Morcove School-girls set themselves! The perils and trials they undergo will hold your attention to the very last line.

on with me," came in the quiet, tender voice of Carlotta Delona. "That, to me, is wonderful—a thing I shall remember all my life! Ah, what wonderful friends I have found in you! Without you—"

"Wubbish!" protested Paula, beaming. "Bai Jove, what else could we geals do but try and stand by you, thwough thick and thin—what? Howevah, my wecollection is that someone pwo-posed a scwap of something to eat?"

"Ooo, yes—queek, queek!" pleaded little Naomer Nakara, whilst she flopped to earth and then began to undo her tiny package of food. "I feel I could eat up ze whole lot in one gobble!"

"Haw, haw, haw!" Paula's simpering laugh sounded pleasantly on the afternoon silence of the mighty forest. "We weawly haven't a wemarkable suwplus, geals! A few ewusts of bwead, bai Jove—"

"As, for example," grinned Polly, holding up a very stale-looking crust. "Oh, for a few of the tasty snacks we used to keep in our study larders at the school! A few cream buns—"

"Polly deah, don't wemind us!"

"Some of the rich plum cake that we used to buy at the Barncombe Creamery," Polly continued teasingly. "And you remember those delicious éclairs—"

"Yes, wather! However—"

"When you bit into them, the cream simply spouted out—scrumptious!"

"Polly deah—"

"But perhaps the nicest things of all, for tea in study, were those lobster patties! They used to be so fresh and salty—you must remember, Paula?"

The tantalising question left Paula Creel looking ready to faint with the recollection.

"Dwop it!" she pleaded pathetically. "Pwaw realise, Polly, this is not the time or place for fivulovous wemarks of that nature! I will now pwoceed to bwreak this dwy ewust—if I can!"

Then they all laughed softly.

The slender "rations" with which they were provided really had become very stale and brick-like, and for such poor fare the best sauce is always a bit of jesting. Betty & Co. and Carlotta were now making a joke of the hard crusts into which they must set their teeth.

But suddenly Carlotta got to her feet and threw

her chums into a state of happy expectancy by a remark she made.

"You wait here, whilst I go and look round amongst these trees. Perhaps I shall come back with something that will help down the bread."

And she was gone in a moment, treading away between the trees as gracefully and silently as a young deer in an English park.

For the few moments that she was still in view the Morcovians were all eyes for her. She was so extraordinarily beautiful and delicately graceful, this South American girl who was the only daughter of the president of San Fernando.

But not for her looks and high-born dignity alone did Betty & Co. admire the girl.

They had become aware, long before this, of the depth of character she had, and the beautiful disposition that was hers. She had been quiet and sad when they were keeping desperately light-hearted; but the Morcovians knew better than to mistake that sadness for cowardly despair.

It was anything but that.

"Bai Jove, what that geal has suffered in her mind!" murmured Paula, when Carlotta had vanished amidst the trees. "It is pwetty evident, you know, if the Flowissa party does bring off the revolution—"

"Carlotta will not ever smile again, no!" Naomer struck in gently. "She love her father, and she love her country, and so I say I love her, yes!"

"It has been cruel agony for her," Betty agreed compassionately. "Far worse for her than it has been for us. Even if we had remained in the hands of Madame Florissa, we may be sure that no harm would have been done to us. But with Carlotta it was all so different."

"That night when we were all locked up in the mountain villa," Polly said in a subdued tone, "I woke up and saw that Carlotta was walking to and fro, unable to sleep because of the suspense she was in. I am sure she was feeling as if it would drive her crazy in the end, to be a helpless prisoner, knowing all the time that there was this daring plot to overthrow her father's government and bring off a revolution."

"But now eat is hooray!" Naomer commented jubilantly. "Because we have escaped after all, and soon we shall get to the city, where the father of Carlotta can be warned of the danger!"

"Yes, wather! And, bai Jove, geals, how wiping it will be, if we weally are able to pwevent the revolution from taking place!"

"If?" said Polly. "If? There must be no 'if' about it now. We have jolly well got to be in time with the warning! The whole future of this country—it is wonderful, when you realise it—depends upon our getting to the capital, to tell Carlotta's father all that we know!"

Then Betty turned to another aspect of the situation.

"I wonder if there are any of the Florissa gang chasing after us at present? We know that we only had a few minutes' start when we escaped from the villa. But we have managed to dodge any pursuers up till now, anyhow."

At this moment Carlotta came quietly back to the girls, and to their delight they saw that in a few minutes she had loaded her arms with what was obviously a wild plantain, a fruit very much like a banana, peculiar to the country.

"There, my dear friends," she said prettily, tossing her samples of the fruit first to this chum and then to that other, "I hoped I would be able to

find some, and I was lucky. You will find it delicious, and also it is very good food."

"Bai Jove—"

"We pay twopence each for bananas in Barncombe," said Polly, starting in to peel the one she had joyfully received. "And here they grow wild!"

Carlotta shook her head.

"This is not the same banana that you buy in England," she explained. "There are so many different kinds. In this country, we have perhaps twenty different varieties—yes!"

"Weally? Bai Jove!"

"He is a good one, all ze same, zis wild banana," Naomer said, with great gusto, after biting off a good inch. "Why, we could be for days in the open and live on him!"

Carlotta was going to chat to them all about the wonders of this native land of hers, but suddenly she reared her head—to listen, as her chums imagined. They were mistaken, however.

It was no sound from far off in the forest, giving warning of danger, that made the president's daughter appear so uneasy all at once. Betty & Co., as they gazed at her in surprise, became aware of her delicate nostrils quivering, as if she was scenting something in the air.

"You friends of mine—can you not smell fire?" she suddenly asked them, with an agitation that increased their amazement.

Barely had she made the uneasy remark when the Morcovians detected, for the first time, the pungent reek of burning timber. They would not have taken alarm, only Carlotta herself was looking so greatly concerned.

They got to their feet, and hurriedly collected such things as they would want to take along with them. By the time they were ready to tramp on again, they realised that the air was becoming quite hazy with smoke.

"Bai Jove, someone has a big bonfire some-where!" Paula commented. "But why look so distressed about it, Carlotta? No great calamity in that!"

"Ah, this is not a bonfire, as you call it," that girl exclaimed, looking this way and that in greater alarm than ever. "We are in a forest where it is forbidden to light a fire. If there is a fire, it is one that has started by accident. And we must be careful—we must hurry to get away! Such fires in the forest are very dangerous, very terrible!"

No wonder Carlotta's listeners turned rather pale.

"Bai Jove," palpitated Paula, "if that's the case, geals—"

"My word, we certainly had better hurry on," said Polly.

"And get out of this sharp!" agreed Betty.

"Ooo, yes—queek, queek; I do not like to see ze smoke getting thick like this!"

For the smoke certainly was becoming denser, with a rapidity that justified all Carlotta's timely alarm, and in a few moments the girls realised what a terrible peril was this that had suddenly come upon them.

The forest was on fire!

#### For Dear Life Itself!

WITH this appalling fact suddenly brought home to them, it was little comfort to the girls to think that maybe the fire was still a good way off.

The actual conflagration might never come with-

in a half-mile of them, and yet—the smoke! There was the sudden grave peril with which they had to reckon. And supposing the fire itself got right round them?

They went on together in great haste, conscious of the pungent smoke all the time coming after them—growing denser still, so that the tropical forest was now doubly gloomy.

Carlotta led the way, and Betty & Co. had implicit faith in her conducting them to safety without a moment's loss of time. She had lived her life in San Fernando, and had a sort of instinctive sense of direction. It had been so during the flight across the mountains, and it was the same now, in the heart of this mountain forest.

Had the Morcove girls been without Carlotta they would often have gone plunging along some track or other that looked quite inviting. But she had her own good reason for doing differently.

"No, this way—not that way," she besought them at one moment, when they could not help looking amazed at another broad track that she was avoiding. "That only leads to a clearing in the forest. This is the best way!"

And so they chased on behind her, generally in single file, the path to which she persisted in keeping being such a very narrow one.

"Phew," Polly panted out at last, "this smoke is awful!"

"Yes, wather! My gwacious, geals, it is too twying! I can hardly bweathe, bai Jove!"

Naomer suddenly stopped. She simply had to, for she was seized with a fit of coughing. The others halted with her, of course. If one could not go on, then the rest must not!

"I am very sorry," poor little Naomer choked out, when at last she had overcome the paroxysm of coughing. "Eet make me choke, ze smoke do!"

Polly put her hand into the dusky one's as they all ran on again.

"Never mind, Naomer darling. We shall soon be out of this, let's hope!"

But at the end of half an hour they were still rushing on breathlessly, and now it was certain that the fire itself was coming after them—perhaps even overtaking them!

Thicker still the smoke was rolling about them amidst the dense forest trees, and it gave the girls throbs of alarm to hear the crackle and roar of the flames and the blistering snap of green wood as it felt the raging heat.

Fairly exhausted, the girls began to exchange glances of sheer dismay. They felt hunted—hunted by the fire!

By making a big call on their fortitude they kept calm; but it was the very desperate calmness of souls face to face with death itself perhaps.

They were rushing on and on like this, and yet there came no end to the forest. Their throats were dry, their tongues like leather, their nostrils were stung with the pungent reek.

How much longer before they would get clear of all the timber that was surely doomed by the spreading fire?

More than once they glimpsed some wild creature of the thickets dashing past for dear life in terror of the fire. Above their heads the wild birds screeched wildly, in the same state of panic.

And then suddenly matters changed from bad to worse.

Carlotta stopped dead all at once and made gestures that could only mean:

"Back—turn back!"

The girls halted abruptly, too parched and

breathless to speak at once. Their dilating eyes gave the South American girl questioning looks, and she gasped out her answer:

"The fire is in front of us, as well as behind! Hark!"

And they all heard it—the crackle of burning wood and the hissing of the flames, directly ahead of them.

"My gwacious!" panted Paula. "Geals, is it all wound us, then, the fire?"

They looked this way and that, as if they knew themselves to be entrapped—doomed!

"Oh, I do not want to be stopped like this!" lamented Naomer, in between her gasps for breath. "It mean that they will never know about the conspiracy. We not able to warn them now!"

"Yes, that's the worst of it," said Betty. "We shall have failed to give the warning!"



**THE FOREST FIRE!** On and on rushed the girls, and yet there came no end to the forest. Their throats were dry, their tongues like leather, and their nostrils stung by the pungent reek. Would they get clear of the burning forest?

"I say," burst out Polly, with a sort of passionate indignation, "do you think that the forest has been set on fire because they knew?"

"My gwacious! You mean—"

"Perhaps the Florissa wretches knew we were in the forest!"

Carlotta spoke huskily:

"Come! At least, we will not be caught standing still! We will go on this way—this way!"

And she sped off again, at right angles to the course they had been following so far.

Desperately, frantically at last, they went rushing on, and with the smoke now as thick as the densest fog. They were vaguely aware of feathery ashes raining down, some holding a spark of fire. Once Polly found a smouldering twig upon her frock, burning a hole in it.



On and on! Still on and on they rushed, until Naomer for one could go on no further, unaided. Betty and Polly put themselves on either side of the poor exhausted girl, and held her elbows supportingly. Carlotta still led, looking back frequently through the blinding drifts of smoke, to see if they were still keeping together.

How much longer? Where—where was safety to be found? Where, indeed, when the appalling fire seemed to have encircled them completely?

At last Carlotta gave a moaning exclamation of great anguish.

"Ah, if we perish, as I fear we must now, it will be my fault!"

"Carlotta, don't say such things!" Polly protested earnestly. "Why should you feel you are to blame?"

"Because I so wanted to be in time to warn my dear father about the revolution," sobbed back the breathless Carlotta. "But for that, you would have been content to remain in the hands of the Florissas!"

"No! In any case, Carlotta," Betty said earnestly, "it was right for us to back you up! We have all admired your pluck; we have been so sorry for you!"

"You have indeed been good, true friends to me—ah, yes!" the girl exclaimed emotionally.

"Well, let us go on again whilst we can!"

"Yes, wather! Nevah say die, geals!"

"Moreove for ever—hurrah!" Polly cried out in a cracked voice, with desperate cheerfulness. "Up Moreove!"

And they would never forget, as long as they lived, that it was only a minute or two after this that they found—safety!

At a moment when they were absolutely at their last gasp, and were in utter despair of ever saving themselves from this deadly fire that was sweeping right through the forest, they suddenly found themselves blundering along amidst a thinner growth of trees.

Another hundred yards, and then they were in the open, and although the smoke still drifted around them, they knew that the fire itself could never reach them now.

Saved!

A little farther they staggered on, away from the fringe of the burning forest. Then they simply flopped to earth and lay prone, panting loudly to get back their breath.

Polly rolled over upon her back at last, and gave a mock groan that showed how she, for one, was ready to turn the whole thing into a joke now that the peril was past.

"Oh, dear—oh, help!" groaned Polly, lying flat upon her back, with arms flung wide. "Talk about the hundred yards on sports' day!"

"Yes, wather, my gwacious! Geals, look at me! Was there evah such a week!" wailed Paula, sitting up wearily. "I'm sure that dweadful fire has singed my hair off!"

"Then you won't want it shingled now," said Polly.

At that Naomer went off into hysterical laughter, as she was quite ready to do. Betty also laughed in a queer way, chiefly because she saw Carlotta looked so astounded at this sudden treatment of the recent crisis as a joke.

"Carlotta is shocked at your levity, Polly," said Betty, still grinning. "You mustn't make a joke of such things!"

"But why? We are all right now," said Polly, quite serenely.

This, of course, only left Carlotta more than ever impressed—not shocked, but impressed. For her the escape from a most terrible peril was a very solemn thing.

Suddenly they all started to their feet, hearing a sound that made them stand and gaze expectantly at that bit of the forest's edge where they had emerged into the open.

It was a noise rather like two or three people stampeding for safety in the open air. And, even though the girls had the sudden thought that it might be some of the enemy, they felt bound to cry out:

"This way—yes, come on! This way!"

To their sudden intense amazement, it was a solitary horse that came dashing towards them a few seconds later through the smoke.

The poor creature was wild-eyed, frightened to death by the peril through which it had come. Betty and the rest might have let it go panting past them, but they all saw that it was saddled for a rider whom it had lost. As for Carlotta, she found some special reason of her own for pointing excitedly at the terrified steed, whilst she hoarsely shouted an arresting word to it in Spanish.

The riderless horse clattered to a standstill on the rough track, quivering nervously and panting for breath. And now Carlotta, whilst she held out her hands towards the exhausted animal, whispered to her chums:

"Do you see that leather wallet that it attached to the saddle? I am very excited, very curious to know what is in it! For perhaps the rider was in the service of—"

"Bai Jove—"

"In the service of Madame Florissa? My word!" exclaimed Betty and Polly together.

"Then there may be letters, some dispatches!"

"We will soon see," Carlotta said softly. "I must be very gentle, though, the horse is so terrified."

She was so quiet and soothing in her way of approaching the animal. However, it seemed to welcome her. Poor thing, it had perhaps come through an ordeal even worse than the one the girls had experienced.

In a few moments Carlotta was petting the trembling runaway, and it brought its head round to her as she stroked its neck. Betty and the others wisely held off, for they realised not only that the animal was in an overstrung state, but that it was a very spirited horse at the best of times. Its dilated nostrils were still all a-quivér, even when Carlotta had spent a full minute calming it down.

Then, very gently, she put out one hand to the leather wallet, unstrapped it, and felt inside, her other hand all the while continuing the soothing caresses.

"Papers!" Polly commented in a tone of suppressed excitement, as she and her chums saw what Carlotta had drawn forth. "Oh, I say—"

"Yes, wather! Geals—"

"Queek, queek!" Naomer breathed excitedly, hardly able to refrain from capering about. "Perhaps they are papers that deal with the revolution!"

#### The Worst of All Their Foes!

CARLOTTA came away from the horse, and suddenly it dashed off a few yards.

"Now, let us see!" Carlotta herself exclaimed tensely, as her chums gathered round. "This paper looks important!"

"You will have to read it and then tell us, for it is in Spanish, of course," Betty remarked. "Supposing it is some document that a messenger from Madame Florissa was riding with to the city!"

The talk died away. Carlotta, after giving a little start of excitement when she saw how the folded document was inscribed, hastily opened it out.

In acute suspense the other girls stood by, feeling sure by the look that came into her lovely face that she was perusing something of vital consequence—something that had a direct bearing upon the revolutionaries' plans.

But what was it then?

At last she finished reading and turned to her eager chums.

"I do not know whether to be glad or sorry at what has come into our hands," she said, with hard-won composure. "The paper names a lot of the people who are in the plot, and if only my father could have this paper at once—oh, it would be such a help! But—"

"But what, Carlotta?" they clamoured.

She heaved a great sigh.

"The paper also gives the date on which the blow is to be struck. And it is to-morrow! Just think—to-morrow!"

"Bai Jove, geals—"

"That's pretty awful, and no mistake!" Polly said glumly. "Now that this forest fire has occurred, and we are placed like this—"

"For we not know where we are now!" chimed in Naomer blankly. "You, Carlotta, even you are lost, ees it not so, in all zis smoke?"

"That is true, alas," sighed Carlotta dejectedly. "We have run this way, that way—how can we know? And still there is so much smoke, so that even now I cannot see the mountains and take them for a guide."

"Half a sec, though!" exclaimed Betty. "It is possible to tell where the sun is, even if we cannot see it clearly through the smoke. We have the time, too. Carlotta, dear, if we find the points of the compass—"

"Bwavo, Betty!" applauded Paula. "Bai Jove, that's a gwand idea! Carlotta—"

"Yes, if I can only know which is north or south or east or west," said the president's daughter, "then I can still guide you."

"Come on, then," urged Polly, just as if she and the rest of them had not been reduced to a state of utter exhaustion a few minutes since. "Let's get farther away from the forest. This smoke—"

"Ah, bah, eet is a nuisance! Queek, queek, let us run, then!"

And away they went again. Happily, it was all open ground that they now had to cover; but it was very rough going, and ten minutes of flogging along made them feel just as dead beat as before.

"This is better, though!" panted Polly cheerily. "Much less smoke here, so now let's get our bearings!"

Those who had watches consulted them. They reckoned that at that hour the sun would be a little past the meridian. They could not get a shadow, still so dense was the drifting smoke; but they had only to lift their eyes to the obscured sky to know at once the sun's whereabouts.

It was a joy to the Morcovians, a minute later, to see Carlotta looking so greatly heartened again. Her teeth flashed as she exclaimed:

"Good—good! Now I shall know the way to lead you!"

"Hurrah, one to us again!" Polly said elatedly. "I tell you, girls, we will do it yet!"

On again they toiled, working gradually downhill, and keeping more or less to open country all the time. Around them the pungent smoke still drifted, and they could quite believe that its presence would be felt for many a mile. Vast tracks of the forest were involved, and possibly the timber would remain ablaze for days.

Another hour, however, found them far enough from the forest to feel little discomfort from the smoke. They could now see around them clearly, and there were ample signs that they had worked back to the habitable part of all this upland country that lay around the capital of San Fernando.

To slake their thirsts they had recourse to the little streamlets that were to be met with here and there, whilst some more of the country's wild fruits staved off the pangs of hunger.

As Carlotta said, they could wander on and on without being in dread of meeting people, only—supposing the first person they fell in with chanced to belong to the party that was hatching the revolution!

Don Florissa, the millionaire, had been making such free use of his money in secret that there was no knowing where bribery had had its own wicked way.

So it was a great relief to the girls not to encounter anyone as they dragged on. They were keeping a sharp look-out all the time. It would be different when they were close to the city; but so long as they were in this wild and lonely mountainous country they had got to avoid being seen.

On they went, but at last Naomer and Paula were forced to confess that not one more step could they go until they had known a thorough rest.

Their spirit was willing, but they were worn out physically—ready to drop.

"I very sorry," Naomer lamented, in her pretty way. "You will be angry with me, Carlotta, because I hinder you."

"Angry!" And suddenly Carlotta flung her arms lovingly about the quaint little thing who was Morocco's royal scholar, and it was a very tender, emotional moment whilst those two wept and clung together.

They rested, all five of them, in a spot that was as solitary as any to which they had come during their desperate wanderings, although it was Carlotta's belief that they were not far from one of the main roads to the capital.

With still another ten miles to go, they were agreed that the only way was to get a thorough rest. The sun was now down behind the mountains, and they resolved to go on again after dark, but before the moon had risen.

"Then the road will be quite dark, and so we shall be able to steal along in greater safety," Carlotta reasoned, as they settled down for their long-overdue rest.

The spot they had selected was an old quarry, accessible only by the rough road which the bullock teams traversed, when stone was being fetched away to repair the mountain tracks.

Amongst some of the mounds of stone that had been blasted from the steep walls of the quarry the weary girls huddled down to rest. Their blankets they had long since lost, but this did





### HOT-FOOT WITH THE NEWS!

The guards stood back, and a way was opened for the president's daughter and the Morocove girls. Up the steps they ran to the portico of the great building. They must give the president the news without delay.

not matter. The place was sheltered and snug. Even when night had come the granite would still be radiating a lot of stored heat.

Forlornly the girls smiled at one another in the twilight, such dusty, travel-worn objects they looked. But there was no inclination to talk. They were just too tired for speech. One by one they sank back in relaxed attitudes, sighing with relief, and soon their measured breathing seemed to tell that all were fast asleep.

But it was not so.

In a few minutes one girl's eyes were wide open to the darkening world that lay around.

It was Carlotta who had kept awake—by how great an effort there is no need to say.

Tired—ah, how tired she was, just as worn out as any of them; and yet she had told herself that this time, whilst the others slept, she must keep watch.

For she had thoughts and fears that she had generously refrained from confiding to her stalwart chums.

She felt that the need for someone to keep guard was very great this evening. They were nearer to the city—thank heaven! But whilst it was a blessing to be able to think of the city as being only a few miles away now, it was also an extra anxiety.

So whilst she had encouraged the others to believe that it was quite safe for all of them to snatch a bit of sleep in this lonely mountain-side quarry, she had made up her mind to remain awake herself.

If nothing happened her dear friends would never know, and if danger did arise—why, then what a good job it would be that she had remained on watch!

She sat up to keep herself awake, with her back resting against a smooth block of stone. Overhead the stars were already shining with tropical brilliance in the cloudless sky.

Every minute seemed an age to this one girl who was awake and watching; yet she knew that if in an hour's time she roused the girls, they would feel they had slept but a moment.

Intense silence prevailed. Except for the deep breathing of the sleeping girls, and the occasional rattle of a pebble down the face of the quarry, not a sound broke the stillness.

At first it made her jump every time some tiny stone went cascading down the cliff, but after a while she would not allow herself to get so alarmed. She rightly conjectured that stones were always flaking away from the quarry walls like that.

Suddenly, however, there came a sound that she was certain meant danger.

It was only the rattle of a stone again, but this time it was from just outside the quarry—on the road that gave access to it.

Not a movement did Carlotta make, but as she sat there she was sending her keen gaze in all directions.

Was someone lurking around? If so, who could it be? Friend or enemy—which?

She would have known what an enemy it was—the very worst she had, poor girl!—had she seen the head that was presently hanging over the edge of the quarry's low cliff, so that the owner's eyes might peer down inquisitively.

Dolores Florissa!

She it was who had come prowling along the dusty quarry track, after being out for hours and hours trying to hunt down the fugitives.

For a very good reason had Dolores suddenly suspected that the girls might be hiding here in the quarry. And now, having stretched herself prone upon the ground at the edge of the cliff, she was looking over into the pit, and the starlight showed her who was there.

It was all she could do to suppress a gasp of wild exultation. One—two—three—four—five! There were all five girls, directly below her, in the quarry!

"And they are asleep, all of them!" was her joyful conviction. "So, then, they have not reached the city yet to give their fatal warning! They have been forced to rest like this—and it is only twenty minutes' run from here to where my mother is!"

The excited girl wriggled away from the edge of the cliff, then rose softly to her feet.

Another moment, and she was speeding off in the darkness, to tell her mother where the girls were resting, and how easily they could be captured.

She could judge by her own feelings how immensely relieved her mother would be.

Throughout the day the suspense at that noble country house which was the headquarters of the revolutionary party had been almost insupportable.

On this, the very eve of the great coup that was to place Dolores' millionaire father in power, five girls were at large who knew all about the plot, and they had only to reach the city to give warning in time!

Dolores herself had been wandering around for hours, partly because she was in this fever of suspense, and partly because she was in disgrace with her parents for having allowed the girls to escape from the mountain villa.

Altogether, therefore, at this moment the plotters' daughter was feeling a swift transition from utter dejection to wild joy.

On she raced, soon reaching the outskirts of the spacious grounds that surrounded the great house. It was a sign of the cautious, nervous watch that was being kept when a man darted from behind some trees to peer at the girl as she came running in through the gateway.

Not a word passed. Dark though the night was, he knew Dolores at once for who she was, and he bowed as she went hurrying by. Ay, and how they would bow to her everywhere, she was thinking, when at last the great coup had been brought off, and she—she, Dolores Florissa, was the proud daughter of San Fernando's president!

There were more sentry-like individuals to be encountered at the entrance to the house. Indoors, she asked a servant where her mother could be found, and he answered gravely that her father and mother were holding a meeting of all who were the leading spirits in the plot, and the order was that there were to be no interruptions.

"But I must speak with my mother at once!" Dolores insisted haughtily. "Take word in to her that I have very important news. She will understand!"

Then the girl strode in her dignified way into a large and lofty side chamber, where she had time to calm down a little before Madame Florissa came in to her.

The room was dimly lit, and such light as there was had a bluish tinge in it, causing a sort of moonlight effect—one that enhanced the beauty of the millionaire's wife, in her rich evening raiment, whilst it seemed to bring out the villainy in her thin, clear-cut features.

"Dolores—yes, what?" she exclaimed in a whisper of intense eagerness, as she came slinking into the room. "We are discussing the last details for to-morrow's coup in that council-room, but word was brought to me that you—"

"Mother, it is wonderful—wonderful!" the daughter broke out excitedly. "The five girls are lying asleep in the quarry, not far from this house! My electric torch showed me some small footprints on the dusty road that leads to the quarry!"

"What? Good gracious!" the woman ejaculated, bringing her white hands together with a sharp clap. "Then we have only to send some of the servants—"

"Pass word to them now, this minute, and I will lead them to the place!" Dolores rushed on, with an imploring gesture. "I know you have felt angry with me, my mother, because those girls escaped. But now—"

"Now, as you say, my Dolores, my anger must change to delight! What a day it has been!" Madame Florissa sighed, passing a hand across her forehead. "The forest fire has made it all so much more difficult for us, so uncertain. Sometimes we have wondered if the girls were caught in the fire—"

"Better if they had been!" Dolores said, with the ferocity of a tigress. "That would have been the last of them, then!"

"No matter—since another hour will see them brought in here, prisoners again!" the mother

said, gliding away to the door. "You say you will act as a guide for those whom I send to capture the girls?"

"Yes, yes!" Dolores nodded vehemently. "Oh, I shall love it; I long to see those girls in our hands again!"

"Come then, my daughter!"

And two minutes later stealthy figures went slinking forth into the darkness, with Dolores to guide them on their way.

**Whilst Carlotta Watched!**

"**S**TRANGE! It could not have been anyone after all; and yet—"

And yet Carlotta knew herself to be in as great a state of nervous alarm as she had been fully half an hour ago.

Within a few moments of her hearing that scaring sound outside the quarry—a sound that might have been caused by someone kicking a loose stone in the darkness—she had silently risen up and started to investigate.

Leaving the Morcovians still fast asleep amongst the great boulders that strewed the floor of the quarry, cautiously she had worked her way out of the vast pit.

This way and that had she prowled and peered, without once discerning anything to justify her nervous apprehension. Now it was for the twentieth time she was saying to herself: "No one—no one, after all!"

And yet there she stood, on the quarry's own rough and dust-laden track, unable to return to her chums, but still all on the alert.

Why should that stone have rattled on level



**HEROINES OF THE OCCASION!**

During their walk through the city, escorted by the president himself, the Morcove girls were cheered and cheered again. In the eyes of the people the girls from England were the saviours of the country.



ground, half an hour ago, unless there had been someone here to stumble upon it in the darkness?

Carlotta suddenly gave a sigh that changed into a silent yawn. She rubbed eyes that were weary for lack of sleep. Into her tired brain crept the tempting thought: Was this vigilance really necessary, after all? Surely now she could end this self-imposed watch, go back to where the other girls were sleeping, and—

Hark, though!

Surely there was someone coming now! More than one person—an entire party of prowlers, trying to approach the lonely quarry without making any noise!

If she had not been up here in the open, and listening so intently, she never would have heard the alarming sounds, so faint they were.

With a thudding heart Carlotta darted away. Nimble as a mountain goat, she zig-zagged down into the quarry, where her chums were resting.

"Sh! Sh! Wake up! Come quickly without a sound! 'Sh!'"

Thus she whispered to them, whilst she gave first one and then another a sharp, rousing touch. Paula was inclined to give a complaining murmur before she quite had her wits about her, and Dolores whispered again:

"Hush! Oh, be quick! There are people coming—coming to make us prisoners once more!"

It was perhaps the most thrilling moment that those four Morcovians had ever known.

Up they rose in a flash, but what next to do they simply did not know.

With Carlotta gesturing at them excitedly in the darkness: "Not that way—impossible!" they felt they were caught in a trap. With sinking hearts they realised that perhaps there was no other way out of the quarry except by the rough slope by which the searchers were approaching.

What were they to do, then?

What could they do, when the quarry's high walls were all around them hemming them in?

Carlotta whispered again.

"Someone must have come here and seen us and then gone to fetch assistance. Can we perhaps climb up the face of the cliffs somewhere? If not, we are done for!"

Then Betty spoke guardedly, tensely.

"We girls have often climbed about the cliffs at Morcove. If you are game to try, Carlotta—and we know you are—"

"I am ready to do anything—anything, rather than be captured. But you are different; I must think of you!"

Impatient shrugs answered this generous remark of the fine-spirited girl. There was no more talk; there could be none, when every moment was so precious.

Once again the five fugitives fled away, doing their best not to make any noise as they dashed across the spacious floor of the quarry to that side which was farthest from the one way in.

The moon had risen by now, and some of its brilliant incandescent light was flooding into the vast pit. Mercifully for the girls, however, the rocky wall they had to climb—if they could!—was in deep shadow.

As they got to the base of the steep cliff, the Morcovians felt how greatly it resembled the giant cliffs of Morcove. It was quite true that they had often clambered about those cliffs, but never in darkness. Altogether, it needed every bit of their old do-or-die spirit to embark upon this desperate climb, especially as they now heard the

party of searchers advancing down the steep road on the other side of the quarry!

There was a moment of terrible suspense whilst the girls were simply darting this way and that in search of a starting-point. Polly thought she had found a lucky place, but it proved a bitter disappointment, and she had to jump back. They were all getting rather confused and panicky, when Carlotta suddenly whispered back to them, as she began a hazardous scramble over some jagged rocks:

"This is all right, perhaps! I think I see the way!"

The words brought joy to Betty & Co. One thing was certain—if Carlotta's attempt failed, then they were doomed to capture!

It would need but another minute for the baffled search-party to come scouring through the quarry, to find them held up by the cliffs!

Carlotta climbed higher and higher, however, and after her the girls scrambled desperately. Polly was second, then came Paula and Naomer, whilst Betty followed last of all.

It was a sort of instinctive agreement between the two chums of dear old Study 12 at Morcove to keep Paula and Naomer between them. It seemed like doing something to protect them.

Up and still upwards! Oh, how the girls' muscles ached! Never mind, they were still mounting higher—higher!

And then suddenly the first girl emitted a joyful gasp, the meaning of which was understood by the others a moment later.

Carlotta had found herself scrambling out on to a broad ledge, forming one of the terraces in which the quarry was cut, to facilitate the working. She had only to heave herself over the edge, and then she could scramble to her feet and give a helping hand to Polly.

Breathlessly, with furious haste, all five girls gained the ledge. And yet they were not a moment too soon.

Even as they started to rush along the narrow terrace, they heard a burst of exciting talk come from the searchers in the quarry.

The enemy had drawn blank, and so for the moment they were baffled and enraged.

Stooping as they ran, the girls darted on, thrilling with hope as they realised that the ground rose before them at every step.

Then suddenly the terrace ended, and they halted by another wall of rock.

"My gwacious," panted Paula, "are we twapped again?"

"No; this way!"

That was Polly, as she espied some roughly-hewn steps to the right of that wall of rock which had suddenly confronted them. They rushed up them breathlessly, and emerged upon another terrace.

"Come on!"

Somehow Polly had taken the lead now. She dashed along, and after her sped the others, feeling that another minute would see them clear of the quarry. The visible area of the night sky was widening, ever widening, as they came nearer to the surface.

But now—hark!

So far there had been nothing but the faintest sounds caused by so much stealthy creeping and rushing along. But now a yell of savage delight came to the girls' ears—a yell that echoed and re-echoed amongst the rocks.

Someone was calling out to others in Spanish, and it was Dolores!

"Ah, she has seen us!" was Carlotta's agitated comment, spoken through clenched teeth. "And we are not yet out of the quarry!"

"Keep on, all the same!" urged Betty.

"Yes, wather!"

And on they dashed, as if their very lives depended upon the escape.

In any case, it was going to mean the difference between life and death for others.

If recapture was to be the fate of these plucky girls in the course of the next few minutes, then one thing was certain—revolution and all its consequent terrors would be the fate that San Fernando would know before another day was out!

### The Hour Has Come!

THE night had passed. All the city of San Fernando had come to life again, now that the brilliant sunshine was flooding its quaint streets once more.

A newcomer from some other land would have felt the place and its people to be intensely picturesque.

Dazzling white were the houses and the handsome public buildings under the vivid blue sky. And most of the native folk who were going about their business in the streets wore colours that were startlingly bright. The broad-brimmed hats of the men were a quaint feature at which any Britisher would have smiled. Girls on their way to school wore sashes of brilliant hue, not always in tone with the rest of their dress.

In fact, colour in great variety seemed to be the fashion of San Fernando, with the result that even on an ordinary day of this sort there was a sort of carnival note about everything and everybody.

Dazzlingly white in the sunshine was that grand building which was San Fernando's special pride—the capitol; the seat of the republican government; it stood in the centre of a grand square, with an approach consisting of wide marble steps. Guards in grand uniforms were dotted here and there, all of them taking their duty very seriously.

With a tinkle of harness bells, slow teams of oxen were drawing their lumbering wagons along the granite-paved streets. Trams gave their warning clang, clang, clang; for San Fernando was a strange mixture of the ancient and modern. The same streets that saw oxen yoked to country carts also saw electric trams grinding by.

It was ten o'clock in the morning. With a great deal of ceremony the civic guards had just saluted important government officials as they arrived at the capitol, some by motor-car and some on horseback. In fact, there had been quite a stir just a few minutes ago when the president himself drove up.

Now, however, the sunny square had calmed down again, and the native police could strut about with little else to do but twirl their big moustaches.

It was at this moment that a fresh stir began, however, in one of the side streets leading into the grand square.

People, whether they were lazily sauntering in the sunshine, or hurrying to keep some business appointment, stood still abruptly.

What was happening up that side street? A sudden quarrel, perhaps. Such things were not unknown in San Fernando.

But nothing so very ordinary—for San Fernando—happened.

Instead, to the amazement of all who were standing still in wonderment, a party of five girls suddenly emerged upon the square, running fast, and with quite a crowd running after them.

San Fernando was staggered. It held its breath, stared in round-eyed amazement.

Darting between some bullock wagons, and then slipping behind an electric trolley, across the broad street rushed the girls, four of them dressed in a manner almost unknown to San Fernando.

One girl, it was true, looked as if she belonged to this country. But the rest—who were they?

Headless of the curiosity they were exciting, all five girls now dashed on breathlessly towards the marble steps leading up to the capitol.

A guard ran forward in great excitement, with an arm levelled challengingly.

"Stop!" he commanded loudly, in Spanish. "What is your business? This is the capitol, do you know that?"

And then he received an answer from one of the girls in Spanish that simply took his breath away.

"I know where I am, thank you, sir!" Carlotta Delona panted, with a hand at her side as if she were suffering from a bad stitch. "The president is in that building, is he not? Well, then, I am his daughter!"

"Yes, wather!" Paula Creel simply had to gasp, even though she was as breathless as any of them.

"Bai Jove—"

"Let's get on!" urged Polly, fanning her heated face with a handkerchief. "Carlotta—"

"Ooo, yes—queek, queek!" clamoured Naomer. "We will do eet, after all!"

The man in uniform still barred the way. Two or three others had hurried up, and by now people from all parts of the square were rushing to the spot. The very wildness of the girls' appearance looked like frustrating their frantic desire to get word with the president himself at once.

"You cannot go on," the first official said, recovering his dignity. "You must explain—"

"Not to you—we cannot! Impossible!"

Carlotta cried out, stamping a foot. "Ah, you must—you must let us go in to my father! Does no one here in the crowd know me for who I am—the president's daughter?"

"That is so, Santos!" someone shouted at the official from the back of the crowd. "It is Carlotta Delona, the president's own daughter!"

The president's daughter!

Every lip was echoing the phrase next instant. The guards stood back, and a way was opened for Carlotta and her chums, and they hastened on again, running up the last few steps to the great portico of the building.

There other officials tried to challenge them, but Carlotta and the Morcovians simply swept on together, taking everybody by surprise.

They were now in a vast, marbled entrance hall, with great doors of polished mahogany giving admittance to this stately room and that other. One door was inscribed in Spanish "Strictly Private." Carlotta ran forward, and boldly let herself into the room, and after her surged Betty & Co.

"Father!" the Morcovians heard their chum cry out, as a grave-faced man looked up sharply from his writing at a large table. "Father—oh, at last—at last, my father!"

"Carlotta! You, my daughter—here?"



The president of San Fernando was taking no notice whatever of the other girls. He had eyes only for his own dear daughter as he pushed back his chair and started to his feet.

"Carlotta!"  
"Father!"

And next moment they were clinging to each other, the girl sobbing with hysterical joy, the father muttering incoherently.

"Bai Jove," exclaimed Paula, in between her gasps for breath, "this is bettah, geals, what? Hooway!"

"Yes, yes!" burst out Naomer, doing a caper. "Heep, heep, hoorah! We have done it—we have done it—hurrah!"

"And now let the Florissa gang look out for themselves!" was Polly's grim comment.

"Half-past ten!" panted Betty, looking at the clock on the mantelshelf. "It is the day for the blow to be struck. But surely—oh, surely we are in time, after all?"

Then they lapsed into silence, watching the father and daughter as those two conversed quickly in Spanish.

They saw the president turning very pale and trembling most agitatedly. Suddenly he put a hand to his head, as if what he was being told was leaving him utterly dazed.

Then Carlotta whisked out the document that had been taken from the satchel of the runaway horse. This paper he scanned quickly, and in a few moments was addressing some decisive remark to Carlotta.

She left him to come across to her chums.

"In a moment I will introduce you to my dear father," she said breathlessly. "He is taking steps at once to have all the conspirators arrested at their headquarters."

"Hurrah!" Polly cheered softly.

"Yes, wather! Haw, haw, haw, geals; this is all wight, what?"

President Delona, in spite of the excitement of these critical moments, had a kindly smile for the girls as he went past them to quit the room. He was but a half-minute gone, and then Carlotta had the joy of seeing him return, with a good deal of the anxiety gone from his handsome countenance.

She stood back a step to give a dramatic gesture as she said:

"Father, these are the girls who have been so kind and brave—the girls who have done far more than share the risk with me! Without their help all along I would not be here to-day!"

"Oh, rubbish!" laughed Betty, but Carlotta insisted, with passionate earnestness:

"It is true, father. If the country is saved, it will be thanks to these girls! Betty Barton, Polly Linton, Paula Creel—"

"Haw, haw!" simpered Paula, as she found herself being bowed to by President Delona in the extravagant way that foreigners have. "Charmed to meet you, Mr. President!"

"And here is Naomer Nakara—her Serene Highness, Naomer Nakara, queen of the ancient kingdom of Nakara, in North Africa," Carlotta spoke on. "Your majesty will permit me to introduce, the president of San Fernando—my father!"

"Eet is jolly—wunnerful!" was Naomer's elated cry, as the president vowed very low to her. "But never mind that I am a queen! Queek, queek, and let us catch that nasty Dolores and her mother!"

"We sha'l catch them, your majesty," said

Carlotta's father, in perfect English. "Soldiers are already being dispatched in motor-cars, to take the ringleaders by surprise at their headquarters."

"They will surround the house?" exclaimed Polly joyfully. "Oh, I say, can't we be there to see?"

"Bai Jove—"

"Queek, queek! Yes, please—please!"

The president and his daughter looked at each other, and then they burst out laughing.

"You girls have not had enough excitement even now?" he said amazedly. "And you are not too tired, after all the exertions to which you have been put?"

"President Delona," said Betty, "it is a bit queer, but we girls have been mixed up in this business from the very start, and so we would just love to be in at the finish!"

"Yes, wather, Bai Jove! Most gwatifying, what, to see our friend Dolores—"

"Friend! Ah, bah, she sees a wretch—as cruel as her mother!" Naomer said fiercely. "And I hope you take all the Florissa man's money from him, because he only do bad with it!"

"Hear, hear!" laughed Polly. "Seriously, though—"

And there she broke off, for some uniformed official had just entered, bringing in a sealed envelope on a salver.

President Delona took the missive, opened it, and then raised his brows as he read.

"Amazing!" he exclaimed all at once, lifting his eyes from the telegram. "This is a relayed wireless message from a Britisher destroyer in the Atlantic. It warns me of the intended revolution! The telegram says that a bottle with a message in it was picked up at sea—"

"Our bottle!" Polly fairly shouted, in huge delight. "Well—"

"Bai Jove, geals! Haw, haw, haw!"

"Fancy that!" grinned Betty. "So, even if we had failed to get here this morning—"

"You would still have succeeded in being the means of frustrating this wicked plot to upset the country," President Delona took Betty up, with a look of intense gratitude. "This message alone would have been sufficient!"

Carlotta exclaimed softly:

"One way or another, father, I think these girls would always succeed! They haven't got it in them to fail! And how we are ever going to repay them, I don't know!"

"Ah, bah, you talk like that!" burst out Naomer, making a sudden rush at the president's daughter and hugging her. "We did it because we love you!"

"And because," rejoined Betty quietly, "we knew how you loved your own dear country, Carlotta, and longed so much to save it!"

There was another interruption. An officer in the grand uniform of the San Fernando army suddenly appeared in the doorway and saluted. He and the president exchanged a few words in Spanish, and then Carlotta's father turned again to the girls, whilst the officer withdrew.

"They are off at once to the Florissa party's headquarters. I am not going to allow you girls to get mixed up in any danger. But if you would like to come and see the finish—"

"Yes, yes!" clamoured Betty and Polly eagerly, whilst Paula beamed. "Wather, bai Jove! Geals—"

"Eet will be such a iape!" chuckled Naomer,

clapping her brown hands together and capering. "Heep, heep, hurrah!"

"It will be the last time, I hope," was Carlotta's serious rejoinder, "that I shall ever set eyes upon Dolores Florissa!"

And as Carlotta said it her beautiful eyes shone with a fervent gratitude to that kind providence which had given her such staunch friends as Betty & Co. to stand by her in her need!

**Morovee's Great Moment!**

**H**ALF an hour later the four Morcovians were in a large motor-car with Carlotta and her father, speeding away from the city to where the conspirators were being taken by surprise.

Before leaving the capitol lengthy telegrams had been dispatched by the jubilant girls to all their different people at home. It had not been good enough, in Betty & Co.'s estimation, simply to

what?" beamed Paula, noticing how the car was racing on to the scene of the great "round up."

And after that the talk lapsed. It was a time for the girls to feel much too excited for conversation. With the beautiful city left behind, now that the car was going up the steep and winding road that led away to the mountains, they pictured the dramatic scene which was to take place before their very eyes in the course of the next few minutes.

Nor did expectation exceed reality.

The president's own car, with its unique batch of schoolgirl passengers, drew nigh to the plotters' headquarters very slowly and warily in the end, to stop short at a safe distance from the house itself, around which a circle of soldiers had been flung only five minutes previously.

At one moment there was a great uproar inside the house, and the girls wondered if hand-to-hand fighting had broken out between the would-be revolutionaries and the troops. But word came



**THE GIRL WHO HAD PLOTTED!** Dolores turned to where Betty and the others were standing and shook her fist at them, shouting out something in Spanish as she did so. But she knew that resistance was useless, and her parents' well laid plot had failed.

cable their parents and to the headmistress of Morcove. Oh, no!

As the car raced them along they could think of messages to chums at the school that were now being wirelessly all across the thousands of miles of ocean.

"Yes, wather, bai Jove!" was Paula's gratified chuckle, as she sat wedged between Polly and Naomer in the car. "Haw, haw, haw, geals; what great wejoicings there will be, too!"

"What a tale to tell Madge and the rest when we get back to dear old Morcove!" Polly was thinking. "And won't they be just green with envy!"

"I hope I not get in a row," Naomer remarked quaintly, causing a general laugh. "But eet was not the sort of thing a queen should do, was it?"

"It was not the sort of thing any of us would ever have wanted to do, Naomer darling," smiled Betty. "But we were given no choice! Never mind."

"Wather not, bai Jove. Geals, this is all wight,

instantly to the president that the surprise had been sudden and complete, and that already Don Florissa and all his fellow conspirators were in custody.

The shouting and general commotion that Betty & Co. heard—it only meant that some of the arrested plotters were as savage as wild beasts at the way disaster had fallen upon them.

This was to have been the very day—the very hour—for the blow to be struck. And instead—it was their intended victim, President Delona, who had achieved a great coup, thanks to his own devoted daughter and her chums of Morcove School!

In a little while Carlotta's father gave her and the other girls permission to alight from the car, for he had received assurances that all was quite safe. So out they hopped, and stood grouped together to watch batch after batch of prisoners—many in handcuffs—being brought out of the great house.

Suddenly Naomer began one of her excitable

capers, whilst she clutched Polly with one hand and pointed with the other.

"Ooo, look—look! Do you see? Look!"

"Ah!" was Polly's comment, given with a grim smile, as she saw Madame Florissa and Dolores Florissa being brought out in close custody. "Serve them right!"

"Bai Jove, wather! They won't receive a scowp of sympathy fvwom me, geals!"

"They don't deserve any sympathy, that's a fact," declared Betty, in a tight-lipped manner. "What could be worse than this wicked business they have been up to, with Don Florissa's million of money at the back of all the plotting? To try and upset a peaceful country, simply for the sake of— Oh, dear, Dolores is in a passion!"

She was. Those who had brought her forth from the house, along with her mother, had been holding her only carelessly, treating her as a mere harmless girl. But now suddenly Dolores tore herself free and made a dash as if to fly at Carlotta and her chums.

At the same instant she yelled some bit of savage abuse in Spanish.

In a flash she was seized again, to be held fast this time. Eventually, realising that resistance was useless, she calmed down, but she turned to where the girls were standing and shook her fist at them.

As for Madame Florissa, she was led by with that handsome face of hers as white as death. Although not a word passed her clenched teeth, her eyes were agleam.

"What was Dolores shrieking at us, Carlotta?" asked Polly, when at last the mother and daughter had been hustled out of sight.

Carlotta shrugged in an unperturbed manner.

"The girl was only threatening to have her revenge some day, that was all."

"What hopes she has of getting it!" chuckled Polly. "We Morcove girls will be thousands of miles away in England, so she is never likely to cross our path again. And you, Carlotta—"

"Haw, haw, haw—yes, wather! You will be all wight now, won't you, Carlotta, eh, what?"

"Ees it all over already?" came suddenly from Naomer.

"All over!" nodded Betty, laughing. "And surely you have had enough excitement for the present, Naomer dear? Quite a quiet time for all of us now until the day comes for us to sail for England!"

But even before this very day was out, one other experience of a never-to-be-forgotten nature was to fall to the lot of the five adventurous girls.

That was when all San Fernando knew the full story of the intended revolution and how the nefarious scheme had been nipped in the bud.

It proved the signal for wild demonstrations of joy in the city. President Delona was one of those men who go on in their own quiet way "doing their job," without demanding applause from the public. But on this great day he was left in no doubt as to the enhanced esteem which the populace had for him.

Nor were the girls overlooked amidst all the great rejoicings over the averted calamity.

When they were walking through the city later in the day, on a sightseeing round of the place, they and their guide—the president himself—were cheered and cheered again. Hats were waved, coloured handkerchiefs fluttered in the sunshine, little children were held up to see Carlotta and her chums of Morcove as they went along the streets, with civil guards clearing a way for them.

In the eyes of San Fernando those five girls were the very saviours of the country.

That was the phrase on every lip, that was the gist of the leading articles in the local papers.

And perhaps what pleased Betty & Co. more than all else was the fact that their own modest achievements had done something for the British flag in that part of the world. They saw it flying from every mast above the housetops—the grand old Union Jack, floating serenely in the breeze along with the flag of San Fernando.

"Our countries will always be great friends after this, Carlotta!" Betty said in a light-hearted manner, at the close of that memorable day.

And Carlotta answered in her own serious fashion:

"Friends—yes! How could it ever be otherwise, when I, the president's own daughter, am friends for life with you!"

For a week Betty & Co. stayed on in San Fernando, as the guests of President Delona and his daughter—and what a week it was!

The Morcove girls were fêted in fifty different ways. They could not go out of doors without getting a crowd around them. Reporters clamoured for interviews; press photographers were snapshotting the heroines of the hour over and over again, and hardly once did the girls get back from some jaunt without finding complimentary copies of the newspapers awaiting them, with more pretty photographs, and more columns of flattering things—in Spanish!

Betty and Polly thought this a great joke, and Naomer did many a merry caper when she was shown some leading journal, with a portrait group in which she was to the fore. But as for Paula—

Well, every girl has her little weakness! If Paula rather liked to see herself "coming out in print," was there anything very dreadful in that?

So amongst Paula's belongings, when the day came for the Morcovians to set sail for England, there was a certain article about which she did not like to talk, fearing the teasing comments of her chums. It was a very big scrap-book, with dozens of newspaper cuttings pasted in it!

And that scrap-book came, in the end, to be placed along with other books in Paula's own study at Morcove School.

It is there to this very day, and there is a time now and then when the book is taken down and fetched along to Study 12 for all the girls to see.

And how happy are Betty and her loving chums when they recall the daring part that they were able to play, knowing just how terrible the consequences would have been to that far-off country of Carlotta Delona's if they had failed!

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

"Parted From Her Parents," is the title of next week's long complete tale. It is the first of a splendid new series of Morcove School stories, and you must not miss it.

**ANSWERS**  
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2: