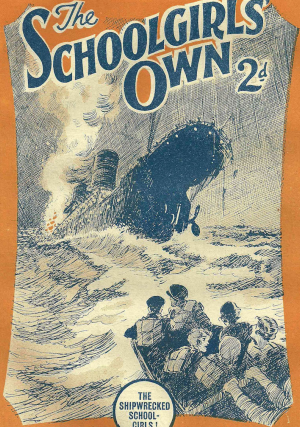


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The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2^d



THE
SHIPWRECKED
SCHOOL-
GIRLS!

*Homeward Bound From the Hols., the Morocco School Chums Run Into Adventure—
With a Capital A!*



By MARJORIE STANTON

All at Sea!

THE ocean liner Taj-Mal was thrashing through a rough sea, homeward bound from the East.

A fine vessel she was; her beautiful, white-painted tiers of decks making her look like a floating palace.

The broad-pinioned gulls skimmed between the giant waves or gaily winged across oily-looking crests; and the Taj-Mal seemed like a thing of life, too, jaying in this boat with a patch of bad weather. But all the hundreds of passengers—they were in different mood!

Promenade decks, although well sheltered, were all but deserted. A calm passage as far as "Gib." had spoiled most of the passengers for anything like boisterous weather. Many of them were keeping to cabins and saloon this morning, fervently hoping that it would not be like this for the rest of the trip, anyway.

There was one passenger who cared nothing for the rough weather, though—Anne Sheridan; young, slim, fair-haired Anne, first-class from Colombo to Southampton. She was on deck, watching the waves and throwing food to the gulls.

It was very seldom that one of the fragments of breakfast-roll she had brought away from the dining-saloon was snatched by a gaping beak.

Wind and waves and the rush of the vessel gave the gulls but a poor chance; and Anne was sorry, being a girl with a kind heart.

"And the people in the steerage—I wonder how they are enjoying it, poor things," Anne's

sympathetic nature made her reflect, whilst she threw the last of the bread to the screaming birds. "I must go and see that girl I've got chummy with. Funny that she should be travelling alone, same as me."

At this instant there came a merry "Burr!" from someone coming round a corner from a more sheltered part of the first-class deck.

"Wow—the wind! But come on, Betty, dear; a blow will do us good!"

"Feel I must get a look at the sea at last, Polly, in the open. Fancy, all day yesterday—cooped up behind glass!"

"I know. Makes one feel ashamed of oneself. Hallo, Tess; so you've crawled out, too!"

"Where's your sketch-book, Tess!" this third girl was jokingly asked in the hearing of lonely Anne Sheridan.

Anne stole a look at all three girls. She recognised them as belonging to a party of five or six who had only joined the boat at Gibraltar. She had seen them come aboard, but had seen nothing of them since.

"Moening!" she called out above the noise of the wind; for they had smiled as they looked at her. "You've found your sea legs, then!"

"Have you? I don't quite know about mine," said the merriest one of the three. "Let's try again!"

What could be more enjoyable than a voyage home on a luxury liner, as a finish-up to the holidays? The Morocco chums thought it would be perfectly splendid but as it turned out, it was the biggest adventure of their young lives!

And she took a few staggering steps that set her nearer Anne. The other two girls also drew closer, looking glad at finding someone like Anne to talk to. She was no older than they—of school age still.

"Your people are all

keeping out of the draught, I suppose!" was the joking comment by one of them on Anne's solitariness.

"I've nobody belonging to me on the boat."

"You haven't!" cried the three.

"I'm sort of labelled: 'Live Animal. With Care!'" smiled Anne. "It's really a wonder that I'm not in a crate! The dear old lawyer-johnny who had the job of seeing me off from Colombo was so fussy."

"Colombo!" said one of the trio. "Let's see—that's India!"

"Ceylon."

"Oh, of course! How many times have I put a little dot on my map of Ceylon! Nice, easy country to draw; like an egg! And printed in Colombo!" Thus the one who answered to the name of Polly. "After Columbus, wasn't it—or was it not? I'm quite the cleverest girl at Morocco School—I don't think! Only geog. is not my strongest subject!"

Anne's eyes sparkled. These were jolly girls!

"Have you been staying in Gibraltar?" she asked. "I saw you come on board there."

The three shook their heads.

"We've been spending the Easter holidays in North Africa," said the one who was Betty Barton, Morocco's Fourth Form captain. "We've a girl at our school—she's on board now—who is the Queen of Nakara, although the show is being sort of run for her by a State Council whilst she is being educated in England, and all that. But we and some other chums of hers made the trip with her to Nakara by air-liner."

"How exciting!" said Anne.

"It was a great shame," said Morocco's madcap, Polly Linton. "We were going home by air-liner, too; but the weather got rather bad for flying. Then Mrs. Hamilton—the lady who had charge of us all—found that berths could be had on the Taj-Mal at Gibraltar, and that meant she need not come any further with us."

"It was rather convenient, as it happened," rejoined Tess Trelawney. "Her husband was in Nakara, so it was best to get back to him. They were the only Brits there, those two."

"Really!" cried Anne. "How thrilling! It must be a strange place, that!"

"Bang in the middle of the desert—and don't we know what that means!" laughed Polly. "Altogether we've had a pretty exciting time. Never mind! One way and another it has meant our being three days late back at Morocco, anyhow."

"Is that your school?" asked Anne wistfully.

"I am to go to school somewhere in England; but I don't know if I shall be in time for this term. It depends upon whether my aunt has made arrangements in advance. At present, all I know is that I am booked through to her, to be met at Southampton. I hope she'll know me when she sees me; I shan't know her!" the speaker added gaily.

"You couldn't do better than get her to send you to Morocco," smiled Betty.

"I'm just thinking," nodded Anne, in a way that amused them; "we're wireless on the liner, of course. I wonder if I might send a Marconigram, presently, to Aunt Emily, saying: 'Enter me Morocco without fail'—or something like that? Perhaps not, as we haven't met yet. She might think it cheek."

The liner took a terrific roll and the Morocco trio staggered.

"My word!" grimaced Polly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yet Madge Minden—she's at the piano in the pain court, I shouldn't wonder!" chuckled the madcap. "A chum of ours, you know, who is mad on music," she explained to Anne.

"There's a concert this evening," responded Anne blithely. "I do hope they'll rope your chum in. I'm rather tired of hearing elderly Anglo-Indians shout through 'Bon Bowling' and other ballads; and there's a fat lady who will sing 'Pale Hands I Loved'—awful!"

"But it's a wonderful boat," declared Betty.

"Such luxury! Naooner—that's her Majesty, Queen Naooner of Nakara—says it is as good as her own palace, in a different way."

"It's all right first-class," said Anne, suddenly serious. "Not much catch storage, though. They do them as well as they can for the money; but, of course, it's a part of the boat that goes all the nose and the heat and the smell. I pity the poor people who have to travel that way."

She saw that the compassionate remarks had made her listeners suddenly serious, so she dropped that painful topic.

"You'll be wanting to find your chums and see what they are doing," she remarked, taking a step away. "See you again."

"Yes, it's nice to have got to know you," the Moroccan chucked as she moved away, not the least discomfited by the roll of the vessel.

With the wind raging at her from behind, she stepped to a draughty companion-way that would take her down to a lower deck.

"Jolly girl!" commented Polly Linton, with enthusiasm. "Wonder who she is! We never asked her name."

"And she never mentioned it," Betty now realised. "Never mind; she can't go far. We shall find her again at lunch, anyhow."

Polly nodded.

"Yep. I shall manage lunch all right to-day. Well, let's come and find the others."

The next few steps meant a change from an exposed position on that wind-swept deck to perfect shelter. The sharp, salty flavour of the blast gave place to a great snugness as the three girls made their way into one of the hives of first-class cabins. Everything here was spick-and-span and afforded the acme of comfort.

Playfully Polly rapped a loud tattoo at a certain cabin door.

"What so diggings! Come een!" a shrill voice responded.

So they went in. The cabin held two girls, one showing a keen appetite for what was apparently a late breakfast, specially brought to her, and the other not yet quite dressed and not at all happy.

"Well!" gasped Polly, standing to stare at Naooner Nakara and her specially-ordered breakfast. "That's cool!"

"As to matter of fact, he is all hot!" retorted the dusky one. "Will anybody have a cup of coffee, beans zero is plenty? Who'll have a refresher, quack? I tell you, they do you well on this ship!"

"They are certainly allowing you to do yourself well, anyhow," commented Betty. "Well, Paula, darling, how goes it?"

"We are going much too fast, girls—yes, wather. Tewwible!" sighed Paula Creel. "I am trying to get dressed; but weally—Ow! There she goes again!"

And Paula sat down to wait for the vessel to right herself after a long, slow dip.

"Eef you don't be quick," spoke Naomer, "I eat your breakfast as well as my own, Paula! Ze voyage is giving me ze appetito for once."

Paula stood up again. She stood in front of a mirror and used a brush and comb.

"Nevah again!" she wailed. "It's a mistake; a great mistake! Evah since we left Morocco it has been nothing but—nothing but— Ow! Tbeah she goes again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Worse than camels!" suggested Betty.

"Yes, wather!" groaned Paula. "Far worse! You can always drop off a camel. But beah—"

"You've just got to stand it!"

"The trouble is, zeah, I—I can't stand! I simply have to sit down—yes, wather!"

"Hurry up and come out," Polly said brangily. "We've just been talking to such a nice girl. You'll like her, Paula."

"I'm sorry," said Paula, "but I don't think I shall be presentable to-day. I am wather inclined to go to bed again—"

"What ze diggings! What you want is something to eat!" cried Naomer, jumping up from the breakfast table. "Here you are: buttered toast and a boiled egg—or will you have a muffin!"

"Nothing, Naomer, thanks, but a cup of coffee—thanks. Bai Jove!" Paula suddenly brightened up, as she sipped a cup. "That's good, that's great! A wound of toast, did you say? Thanks, I will! Geah, most extraordinary, I feel grand all at once!"

"Simply because you've stopped thinking about the waves," chuckled Polly.

"Now, don't sit down again—"

"No, bai Jove, I won't!" said Paula bravely.

But she did. She stood it out until the vessel started to go slowly down again, after slowly going up. Then she collapsed, hurriedly handing the coffee-cup to Tess.

"Well, you are ze duffer," said Naomer; and she resumed her attack upon the breakfast-table.

"Seem Madge!" asked Betty.

"She just looked in to say good-morning!" said Naomer.

"But we were not up then, Bekas I believe in extra bed on ze boat."

"Wait till you get back to Morocco, Naomer," said Polly grimly. "You'll know the difference then. We all will."

"So far as I am concerned," said Paula wearily, "I shall feel a profound relief at being home again. Is it vevy rough outside?"

"Come and see!" chuckled the madcap.

"Er—presently, Polly deah, presently!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed

Polly, going out with Betty and Tess. "Poor old Paula; she always thinks she's miles worse than she really is. But let's find Madge, and then perhaps we shall get hold of that Colombo girl for another talk. I want to know her name and to get her to tell us all about herself."

But between that simple wish and its fulfilment fate itself was to intervene—in a dramatic way of which they little dreamed!

"Steerage 1"

ANNE SHERIDAN, when she left the three Moroccan after that first talk with them, made her way to the stern of the mighty liner.

Many first-class passengers there were to whom the steerage quarters of the Taj-Mal were so much unknown territory. All that was first-class was rendered exclusive in unmistakable manner—and they were people who liked to be exclusive!

But Anne, every day during her long voyage from Colombo, had roamed the liner from end to end. She had been down to the engine-rooms many a time, and had seen the great ship being stoked and had held shouted conversations with



"Burr!" shivered the three Moroccan girls, laughing merrily at the same time, as they rounded a corner of the windswept deck. Anne Sheridan watched them rather wistfully. How nice they seemed, she thought.

the grimed stokers. Officers and sailors were always coming upon her in odd places and saluting her smartly.

The shriek of the wind was no longer in her ears now. Instead, she heard a dull, churning noise of machinery, coming from the depths of the mammoth vessel. Having got a good way aft, she also felt an oven-like heat wafting about her. Now and then a rumble went through the vessel—worst of all sounds for the steerage passengers to endure, that fitful rumble-rumble from the chain-lockers.

"Ah," Anne exclaimed aloud, suddenly confronted with the girl for whom she was looking. "There you are, Monica!"

In the dimness of an iron-walled passage Monica Hope greeted her good-hearted acquaintance with a bright smile. She probably voiced a cheery "Good-morning," for Anne saw her lips move, but the noise was too great for any quiet remark to be heard.

"I'm so sorry it's like this for you all," said Anne, after stepping closer. "Did you get any sleep at all in the night? I thought of you."

"Oh, yes, I dozed now and then," was the answer that revealed a good deal of cheerful fortitude in this other girl. She was tall and slim and fair, just like Anne, but like as a steerage passenger had given her a wan look.

"You're quite exhausted, I do believe," Anne exclaimed. "Oh, it is a shame that one half of the ship has nothing to do with the other! I believe you've been napping that baby again all last night."

"Well, I had to," said Monica Hope, smiling and shrugging. "The mother's neuralgia was better at last, and I could see she could get a good sleep if only someone took the poor, darling mite. It is a darling, you know!"

"Oh, yes, I know," nodded Anne. She would probably see the baby—another of her cases—before her round of the steerage was over.

"Look here, though, Monica," she burst out next moment; "you ought to be sleeping now, to make up for last night. Yet how you or anybody can get a bit of quiet down here—"

Anne was having to raise her voice even then to make herself heard.

"Listen to me, Monica," she said suddenly. "You come to my cabin and lie down there for a bit—"

"Oh, miss—"

"You must! I insist! I shan't need it until this evening at the earliest. Come along!"

"But—isn't it against orders?" Monica said nervously, as her good friend dragged her away. "Orders be blowed! It's my cabin!" laughed Anne.

Nor did she fail to show a calm front to those ship's officers whom she encountered during the next two minutes. They eyed her steerage companion rather questioningly, and to Monica it seemed as if the notice-boards had grown ten times larger all at once, saying:

**FIRST-CLASS PASSENGERS ONLY
ARE ALLOWED ON THIS PART OF
THE SHIP.**

But Anne cared nothing for officers or notices. "Here we are!" she said, having ushered her companion into a very beautiful single-birth cabin. "Can I get you something to eat? I can ring—"

"Oh, no, please! I had a splendid breakfast."

"Then now you must have a splendid, long

sleep. And if anyone must take that baby, I will," declared Anne. "Get right down to it, there's a dear. Better to take off your frock, put on my dressing-gown, and curl up like that. Here you are."

The lovely dressing-gown, padded with eider-down, was handed to Monica Hope. She stood holding it, bemused, entranced by her grand surroundings, until she caught sight of herself in a mirror. The light in this first-class cabin was strong.

"How awful I look!" was her shocked comment. "A regular gay!"

"No; but you're just about worn out," sympathised Anne. "Well, I'll leave you to it. Mind, you are to do as I say and get right off to sleep!"

She added threateningly, like a governess—and yet she was no older than the poor girl upon whom she had taken pity:

"I shall look in later on, on the quiet. If I find you out of bed you'll be for it! Bye-bye!"

"Well, it is good of you, miss!"

"Rubbish!"

Then the narrow cabin door closed, and Monica Hope was alone.

She was in the midst of a silence that seemed wonderful, delicious. Even the motion of the liner seemed to be smoother in this lovely first-class cabin, with a porthole looking out high over the heaving sea.

She took off her frock and put on the snug dressing-gown, at the same time noticing the cabin's lavish fittings and the beautiful things that were Anne Sheridan's own. On the dressing-table there were silver-backed brushes and combs, and a gold fountain-pen lay upon the pad of the little writing-table. There, also, was an expensive attaché-case, with the initials "A. S."

Lofty girl, this Anne Sheridan, where the good things of life were concerned. Only unfortunate, as Monica knew, in having lost both father and mother—just as I have," was Monica's thought.

But in all else, how different were their lives now and their lives to come! Anne Sheridan, suddenly left an orphan, had had a lawyer of high standing to look after her at once, not to mention a whole host of friends.

There had been such a fuss about getting her sent to England, to be under the wing of a wealthy maiden aunt that it had even been debated whether someone should not be paid to accompany her on the voyage. Anne had mentioned this to Monica as being a great joke.

Everything that money could do was being done for her now. And then, when at last the liner reached Southampton, there would be that wealthy aunt ready to start doting upon her.

"But she's a girl who deserves it all, anyhow," Monica said to herself with emphasis. "I never knew a kinder heart in anyone."

Then Monica's thoughts began to centre round her own affairs. No rich friends to care for when her parents died. Only hard, selfish people out there in Australia, who had made her work for all she got from them.

Until she began the voyage to England she had not known kindness for years. It had been a wonderful revelation to her, the kindness and helpfulness of her fellow-passengers in the steerage.

Not a sound came to mar this restful quietude that was such a boon to her tired brain. She took off her shoes, and was in the very act of lying down, when—

It was like the very end of the world—the appalling shock and attendant crash that shook the vessel without a moment's warning.

Crash!—and a kind of shudder and stagger throughout the ship.

In the cabin everything seemed to go upside down. Monica found that she was sprawling on the floor, giddy and breathless.

A moment, and only a moment she was like that, prone upon the floor, wanting to cry out and unable to do so.

Then a great roaring as of tidal waters was in her ears; her eyes went blind, and Monica Hope knew nothing more.

The Loss of the "Taj-Mal."

WHAT had happened?—A collision on the high seas? Surely not, in broad daylight? An explosion in the engine-room, perhaps?

Monica was conscious again. Her senses had come swirling back to her and she was struggling up, to find herself still alone in the cabin.

It was in utter confusion—a chaos of fittings and luggage, hurled about as by the shock of an earthquake. She wanted her shoes and could not find them. Where were her shoes? Oh, and she was wearing this dressing-gown—at a time like this, when she ought to be rushing out—

"But keep calm," she suddenly addressed herself shakily. "Now then, don't lose your head, whatever it is."

The floor of the cabin was still afloat. Did that mean that the ship was taking water badly already, as the result of some gaping hole in its side? Hark!

Yes, there was a lot of shouting, but it did not sound panic. More like men giving orders—loudly but yet calmly.

"That poor widow—and her baby!" Monica quavered, opening and closing her hands nervously. "Oh, we're going down! Still— And she took a farther grip on herself.

"Women and children first!" She heard the cry bawled above that roaring, surging noise which was such a sinister sound. "All passengers take emergency stations! Hi, hurry along, please!"

That was someone flying by in the corridor. Next beyond her cabin door was tried. The man who had paused to see if it would open all right was gone in the instant that he sent it wide.

"It's all right; take it quietly, ladies and gentlemen, but get out of here!" was another bracing cry that reached her, whilst she was putting on some shoes. They were not her own, but the other girl's—lovely evening shoes, all silver.

The ship's siren shrieked. Engine-room bells clanged. And, as an awful undertone to the call-

ing out and the general clamour, there went on that pulsing, surging noise. The pumps, trying to cope with the sea as fast as it rushed in!

Monica held on to the door-jamb as she tottered out of the cabin. Then she came back. That kind girl—she should have been here, to save anything of special value. The attaché-case—better take that. It might hold something precious to her; portraits of her dead parents, some treasured possession or other.

She snatched it up from the cabin floor and went out again.

Then she was out on a top deck, amidst a crowd



Naomer was having breakfast when the chums looked in at her cabin, but Paula was not even dressed! Every time the liner dipped Paula had to sit down. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the chums.

of people who, even in their flurry and bewilderment, were trying to do as they were told by officers who looked startlingly smart on the suddenly disordered liner.

There was no other ship. When Monica glanced to the bows of the Taj-Mal she saw only the giant waves and the hull dipping heavily at that forward end. To look aft was to look uphill, as it were, so sharply had the ship dipped.

Smartly the lifeboats were being swung out by their davits, and those towards the stern were high above the waves. Close at hand it was just the opposite case; here the lifeboats seemed

to be already in the water, although it was not quite as bad as that. Waves were bumping up to them as they were being lowered.

"Here, miss!"

A sailor thrust a lifebelt into her hands, one of which was mechanically holding the attaché-case. Then the good fellow nipped away and she saw him join with others in throwing life-rafts clear of the doomed vessel. Splash!—and again, splash!—the rafts were flung right out into the dark, green, glistening sea.

"Take your places in the boats!" a voice magnified. "Women and children first!"

"Go on, miss!" she heard herself being urged.

A cloud of black smoke from the funnels suddenly drove down on the wind, obscuring the after-part of the ship to her searching eyes. She felt madly annoyed by that smoke. It had come just when she was trying to pick out Anne Sheridan—Anne, who had most likely gone back to the steerage, after leaving her—Monica—in the first-class cabin.

"Keep together, anyhow, girls!" she heard a clear, girlish voice say behind her; and then another said:

"Yes, wather! I mayn't be a good sailor, gads, but if it's all up with us, it's all up, that's all, what?"

"No, bekas we can always swim!"

"We'll manage!" cried a third girl.

Monica glanced around. She saw a batch of girls of her own age—first-class passengers who had come aboard at Gibraltar as she instantly remembered, having seen them embark.

Obedient to the commanding gestures of an officer, these girls were joining a group for a boat that was being lowered. A moment Monica watched dazedly, then she suddenly darted away into the smoke that was blowing aft.

It had flashed upon her that she was not entitled to a place in one of the forward boats. She should not have been in that first-class cabin when the disaster occurred. Her place was in the steerage. Besides, she wanted to find Anne Sheridan; and then that mother and the baby—oh, what would become of them!

Her stumbling rush, uphill, to the ship's stern, high out of the water, ended at a passage-way across which a bar had been let down. A young officer was stationed there.

"Back, miss—look sharp! We can take no more women and children this end. Don't you know your boat!"

"But, please, I am—"

"You're first-class!" He said it with a disciplined adherence to his duty, which was to see that the steerage passengers got as fair a chance as the rest.

"Sorry, miss; but you'll be all right. Plenty of boats your end."

He waved her away, and if only to avoid distressing him by starting to plead, she turned back. He had mistaken her for a first-class passenger.

Struggling back whence she had come, Monica still held the heavy lifebelt hooked through an arm and carried the attaché-case.

The wild wind blew the smoke aside for an instant, and she looked up. The captain was at his post, and near by was the wireless-room, close to the navigation bridge. She glimpsed a wireless operator dot-dash-ing, dot-dash-ing as hard as he could go. S O B I

Then she looked out across the heaving sea, whilst still blundering and lurching to where first-

class passengers were being got away from the doomed ship. It looked an appallingly empty ocean. No help in sight; not even a smudge of smoke on the horizon.

"Hi, miss, come along!"

"Yes, sir! I—"

"That's the style!" the same splendid sailor cried at her as she lurched on faster at his beckoning sign. "Good-bye, young lady, and best o' luck! Cheerio!"

Next instant the sailor received a shouted order, and ran to carry it out.

Tears came to Monica's eyes, rendering all that was before her a mere blur. Having come to where some women were huddled together, she saw the heaving sea as through a film, and the boat in which it seemed there might be a place for her.

She noticed a lady, about to board the lifeboat, turn round to give her lifebelt to one of the men passengers.

Monica followed her example.

"You have this!" she entreated the nearest man, "I shan't want it!"

But he shook his head.

"I'd rather you kept it, miss; thanks, all the same."

Hardly had he spoken when she found herself being pushed to the front of the waiting crowd of passengers of her own sex. Then she was picked up like a bale of goods by some stalwart sailor, and the next she knew she was in the lifeboat.

Up and down it was tossing violently, and she doubted whether it stood a chance in the turbulent sea.

Whack! Something struck her on the head. It was an accidental blow from an oar. She was vaguely conscious of a shouted "Sorry!" from the hard-worked sailor who, with a solitary mate, had to handle the fast-crowding lifeboat; then her wits left her.

Completely stunned, she knew nothing more for several minutes. When next her eyes flickered open, the Taj-Mal was no longer to be seen.

Down to the ocean's tremendous depths the great liner had taken her last explosive plunge! And all that remained upon the heaving surface was so much foam, with men clinging on, and the lifeboats, down to their gunwales with the loads they carried, rising and falling on the waves!

Morrove Hears the News.

PAM WILLOUGHBY went past her own study door at Morrove School to throw open one that bore the painted number "12."

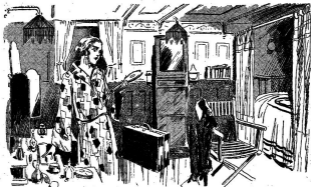
She looked into this neighbouring study with an expression of wistfulness as seeing it deserted. Then she drew the door shut and repaired to her own room.

It was evening—just falling dark out of doors. Pam had been putting in a half-hour at the music-room piano, and must think of prep, now, just the same as girls who had been out to games were all coming upstairs to settle down to work.

"I shall be glad when Betty and the rest get back, Helen! Morrove doesn't seem the same without them."

"The Form doesn't, that's certain," agreed Helen Craig, rubbing knuckles over a text-book, new this term, to make it stay open. "Lucky girls!"

"Yes, well," smiled Pam, "their holidays must have been pretty jolly, if not exciting."



As she donned Anne Sheridan's lovely dressing-gown, Monica Hope was noticing the luxury of her cabin, the beautiful brushes and things that were Anne's. Lucky girl to have all this, she thought.

"And then to have got themselves put on board a liner at Gibraltar, instead of completing the return journey by air," said Helen. "I believe they wangled it, you know!" But she was only joking. "Just to spin out the time."

"Don't blame them if they did."
 "No, of course not," laughed Helen. "Anyhow, they have done themselves well. Out by air-liner to Nakara; a stay at the Royal Palace with Naomer; and then home part of the way by air and part by liner."

"The Taj-Mal—it's a fine boat," nodded Pam, setting her books out. "Dad knows it well. He has come home from India by her more than once. One of these days, Helen, we must all get a holiday out East."

"It would be jolly," mused Helen; and then she turned her eyes towards the door in an expectant way.

Someone bounding down the passage had stopped at this door, turning the outer knob rather violently.

"Pam! Helen—"

"Hallo, Elsie!"

"Have you heard a rumour?" panted Elsie Ashby, as she pushed the door shut behind her, after bursting in. "They say it's true! That boat the girls are on—"

"The Taj-Mal!" interjected Pam. "What about it?"

"She's gone down at sea!"

"Who's at?"

Pam and Helen were on their feet, aghast with horror.

"The rumour is that she ran into a floating wreck—went down in twenty minutes!"

"My goodness!" said Helen. "And—and the people on board, Elsie?"

That girl gave a helpless, hopeless gesture.

"I don't know."

Pam moved a step, calmly.

"Yes, well," she said; "if they had twenty

minutes— They are very smart at sea, you know."

"Oh, I hope they had time to do something!" Elsie said fervently. "But think of it! Are you going to—going to weep, you two—"

"Not likely!" cried Helen, slamming shut her books. "Oh, it's awful to hear this!"

"We heard about it in Barncombe," Elsie spoke on shakily. "Two of the Taj-Mal's crew belonged to the town. I say, will there be any news on the wireless about it? Surely!"

Pam glanced at her wrist-watch.

"About time for the news bulletin," she remarked. "Yes; let's go down and see what comes through."

They found many other girls leaving the studios in the same state of sudden dismay. At the moment when Elsie Ashby had rushed to Pam and Helen, two or three more juniors had been making known the news elsewhere.

Then, downstairs, they came upon a whole host of girls—juniors and seniors alike—standing about in hushed and wondering horror. Hardly a word was being said. Thoughts and feelings were all too deep for words.

Miss Everard, the Fourth Form-mistress, came upon the scene, and only to see her face was to be quite sure that she was dreadfully upset.

"But is it true, Miss Everard—is it?" some of them clamoured, with desperate incredulity. "Oh, surely not! Miss Everard, what have you heard?"

"I have just come away from Miss Somerfield. She has been on the 'phone about it, and there seems to be no doubt," was the sighing answer; "the liner went down."

"But the people—the people?"

"Ah, that is what is so uncertain, girls! There seems to have been no further news since the first report, at midday."

"Would there be time for everybody to get away?" the Form-mistress was asked tremulously.

She did not answer.

The crowd of girls grew larger. At every instant more Morcovians were rushing up, similarly alarmed and just as awe-stricken.

All were thinking of those schoolfellows who were known to have been on the liner when it left Gibraltar. Six of them, all belonging to the Fourth Form, and one of them its own captain.

Six of the best-liked girls in all Morocco! And now—was Morocco nevermore to see them, never to hear their voices again? If so—oh, what a shadow would be cast upon the school!

There was a room on the first floor that was set apart for listening-in on a high-power set. Morocco had been one of the first schools to adopt wireless, providing a loud-speaker set in a room large enough to contain a big audience at any time. Never yet, however, had the room been as crowded as it now became.

Miss Somersfield, the headmistress, came in, to stand near the instrument with her colleagues. Girls stood crowding round, packing the room to its walls. A musical item from the London studio was just then finishing—a piano solo, beautifully played.

"Makes me think of Madge Minden," whispered one member of the Fourth Form to another. "Oh, fancy if Madge and those other girls have—"

"Sh! H'ah!"

The music had stopped. Overhead, Morocco's chimes were ding-donging the hour. Somehow the measured strokes of the hour-bell, when they came, seemed like a knell.

An intense silence, and then:

"London calling," the voice of the announcer rang out from the loud-speaker. "The loss of the *Taj-Mah*. We are officially informed—"

Listeners nudged one another.

"The loss of life is not so great as was at first believed. Vessels which hurried to the scene of the disaster, in response to the S O B have since been in wireless communication with the shore. All lifeboats were picked up. In addition, a great many people clinging to life-rails and wreckage were picked out of the water."

The listeners turned to one another, their eyes dilating, their lips apart but unable to emit a word.

Now there was a pause—most trying for the anxious crowd. It sounded as if the announcer had left his instrument for a moment.

Then:

"I must apologise for the interruption, but a further list of survivors has just come to hand, and I propose to read it. The following first-class passengers are all safe on board the *Star and Garter*, and should reach Southampton on Monday next: Her Majesty Queen Naomer of Nakara—"

"Naomer! Saved!"

"H'ah!" whispered Miss Somersfield.

"Miss Betty Barton, Miss Paula Croel, Miss Madge Minden, Miss Tess Trolowney, Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Munro and daughter—"

But what about Polly? What about Polly Linton? Her name—oh, it was not mentioned with the others! Those five girls seemed to have been saved in a batch, and reported saved in the same way; but Polly—what of her?

Listen. It was the only thing to do.

"Lady Mallinson, Mrs. Murray-Grandison, Miss Polly Linton—"

Polly! Her name, too, at last!

All of them—saved, saved!

"Oh, hurrah!" Morocco cheered wildly. "Hooray, hooray! Hurrah-h-h!"

Many of the girls, in their wild relief and excitement, could stay to hear no more. They stormed away, quite beside themselves.

"Saved, all of them—hurrah!" They kept it up as soon as they were outside the wireless-room. "Betty—our Betty; our Polly—Naomer—Madge Tess—Paula!"

They danced around.

"Saved—hurrah!"

Morocco heard the sounds of jubilation that night right on to bed-time.

In Another Girl's Shoes!

"WELL, Anne, my dear, how would you like to go for a drive this afternoon? A run round in the car—to give you your first real sight of the Old Country!"

She was a charming, middle-aged lady of the maiden-aunt type who had come into this sunny drawing-room where a girl was seated by the open window.

"Or don't you feel quite up to it yet, my dear? Only say," the kindly voice continued. "You poor little Anne; it was a terrible experience for you altogether, and for so many others. The doctor, Anne, seemed to think you would soon be quite all right again when he was here this morning; and that's a blessing!"

The girl received this with a passive nod. She was looking altogether subdued and even a little heavy-hearted; but Miss Emily Anstruther attributed this to the lingering after-effects of that terrible ordeal at sea.

It was but two days since that the lady had gone in her lovely car to Southampton to receive the girl when she was landed along with other survivors.

"You'd like the drive, dear, I'm sure."

"Yes, please—oh, yes! It's—it's a lovely day," was the faltered response.

Aunt Emily gave the subdued girl a closer scrutiny. "She doesn't look—quite herself, yet! It's no good saying she does. Poor girl! I do hope the doctor is right, and that there really is no cause for anxiety. But she got that nasty blow on the head."

After a moment the lady resumed aloud:

"Anne!"

"Yes—'suntie!"

"Ah, that's better! I like to hear the 'suntie'! You have said it so seldom, dear that at times I've had a horrid fear that you still felt a bit dazed and didn't quite know me, or what to make of your surroundings. I shall have the car brought round to the front, Anne dear, and perhaps you'll be ready in a few minutes. Anything you want?"

"No, thank you—'suntie. How kind you are!" The lady burst out laughing on her way to the door.

"Does it surprise you, Anne? How could I be too kind to my orphan niece, especially when she has only been saved to me by a miracle almost? And I shall not have much chance to do my best to spoil you—worse luck," deplored the speaker. "By the way, Anne, a letter came at lunch-time from the headmistress of Morocco."

The girl, having risen by now, stood still, a nervous question in her looks.

"Miss Somersfield wrote so nicely again. She says that of course she does not want to hurry matters, but if you can get to the school by the end of this week it would be very satisfactory.

Arrive Saturday, have Sunday for settling down, and then go into school with the rest on Monday morning."

"Er—yes—"

"I don't believe you half like being packed off to that big boarding-school, my dear."

"Oh, yes, I—I am quite looking forward to it, really!"

"Well, dear, I can only say it is one of the finest girls' schools in the kingdom. As soon as I was advised that you were on the way to England from Colombo, I enquired you at Morocco. Vacancies are few, Anne, and I considered myself fortunate—and so must you."

"Oh, I—I do! I feel—this life—it's far too good for me altogether."

"And that's nonsense, Anne dear. Well—in ten minutes."

The lady quitted the room, all smiles. "A dear girl, and no mistake."

Yet there was a mistake—a big one. The girl was not Anne Sheridan from Colombo, although she was enjoying Anne's position. She was Monica Hope, the steerage passenger from Australia.

Alone again, she passed on her way across the grand drawing-room to pass a hand across her forehead, feeling distraught.

What had she done—or, rather, what was this that she had allowed to come to pass in connection with her poor, lonesome self?

Instead of being in this country now, claimed by people who did not really want her, and immersed in surroundings that were squalid and hateful—as she had known for certain the case would be—she was living in the lap of luxury.

In another girl's shoes!

Strange how liberally that phrase fitted the case! She was remembering now that, at the time of the liner's disastrous crash, she had put on the other girl's shoes.

She had left that cabin wearing Anne Sheridan's lovely dressing-gown, with its tab-label bearing the owner's name. Anne's shoes so well, and—that attaché-case, mechanically clasped as being something that must not be lost during the exciting escape from the sinking boat.

It was not her fault that she had been identified as Anne Sheridan, and that that name had figured in one of the lists of survivors wirelessly to land. At that time she—Monica Hope—was lying too exhausted for speech. The real Anne Sheridan, so far as she could tell, had been lost at sea. Why, then, should Monica Hope not still wear her shoes and cheer the heart of this kind aunt who would be heartbroken if she learned of her niece's fate?

This beautiful home in the depths of glorious country; and the other life would have meant only the slums of London! That kind lady to lavish care upon her; and the other life would have meant nagging, bullying people who would care nothing for her.

What other girl would not have done as she had done in similar circumstances—allowed the mistake to go on, uncorrected? It was not as though she were depriving any other girl, since Anne—poor Anne, who had been so kind to her—must have gone down with the ship.

And then—that school. She was to be sent to that famous school in the West of England, there to make her life with ever so many girls of her own age, and friends in them, receive a good education.

Morocco School. She felt she could imagine it

all in its spaciousness and its happiness; the nice mistresses, the girls—

Her memory flew back to the terrible time when that ship was going down. In the midst of all the excitement and alarm she had heard some girls—schoolgirls, they must have been, by their age—talking so calmly with one another as they were marshalled for the lifeboats. Girls like that were the sort she would find at Morocco!

And yet—

She heaved a deep sigh.

What was she about, to be allowing the deception to go on? Was she a crafty, dishonest, unprincipled girl? She knew that she was not. At least, she never had been so, up to now. Once, in Australia, she had picked up a wallet full of banknotes, and she had at once restored it to the loser. Dishonest, unscrupulous? She shook her head.

"No, I have not been like that—I know I have not. Then why—why, now, this?"

She was answered by a sudden rush of thoughts, so anguished that she burst into tears.

The very honesty of the girl was compelling her to admit, now, that she had succumbed to a temptation that was too great for her.

If it had been sudden temptation, and if only she had been her full self when it first came, she would promptly have risen superior to it. But the mistake in her identity had occurred whilst she was, so to speak, more dead than alive.

She had been still so weak and incapable when she began, dully, to realize what had happened. Then, when she was really fit to grapple with the situation, she was already tasting this life luxurious; and after that—well, she was only human!

Pulling herself together, she went from the drawing-room and passed upstairs to one that was all homely charm.

Casement windows were wide open to the sunshine and the breeze of spring. The furnishings were all in keeping with the rest of the grand country house. After a minute at one of the windows, from which she could look out on to gorgeous gardens and undulating country beyond, she turned to her dressing-table to make herself tidy for the motor-car before putting on outdoor things.

Then she saw one or two things that had come out of Anne Sheridan's attaché-case. One was a silver-framed photograph of Anne's father and mother, taken some years ago. Monica took it up and gazed at it.

Gentle, kind-looking people.

"If I thought that Anne were still alive—oh, I couldn't go on like this for another hour!" she thought distressfully. "She was so kind to me on the ship. But she was lost, lost, poor Anne! She met with the fate that should have been mine, in the steerage; whilst I—I came off like that!"

She set the photograph down, but suddenly took it up again. It was a moment for her to feel more compunction than ever—a still greater agony of mind.

"No, I can't go on; I can't, no matter how safe it may be!" she said to herself wildly.

Breaking off, she took a few distraught turns about the bed-room. She felt herself reaching a final, resigned state of mind. Never mind that she was cheating no one out of this enviable style of life; she must speak out!

"I owe it," she whispered tragically, "to Anne!"

A tap at the door made her start violently.

"Here, Anne darling, you must wear this in the car; it may turn rather cold if the sun goes in. And you are not yet acclimatised, you know. Colombo knows how to be hot!"

"Oh, thank you—awfully!"

A three-quarter length fur coat had been handed to Monica.

"It's much too big for you, of course, dear; but it doesn't matter. I shall have to spend a busy day in town, fitting you out, my dear. You'd look silly, going to Morocco with only what you brought away from the ship!" teased Aunt Emily. "The *attache*, with just a few knick-knacks!"

The speaker's eyes went, then, to the silver-framed photograph, as being one of the saved knick-knacks.

"I am so glad you saved this photograph, Anne dear. I hope you will always keep it before you at school—in the study. This was taken in Colombo, long after I had said good-bye to your dear mother, my only sister—never to see her again. We were fond of each other, very."

There was a pause. The lady was musing as she still gazed tenderly at the photograph. Monica, standing near by, was drawing a deep breath, intending it to be the very breath with which she would say, straight out: "Miss Anstruther, there is a mistake; I am not your niece!"

"Yes," exclaimed the good woman, before there was time for Monica to speak, "and you will be your mother's daughter to the life, I'm sure, as you grow up. Ah, Anne darling, how thankful I am that you have come to me! Had enough that I was fated never to see your dear mother again. If you had been lost at sea the other day—that would have been enough, I think, to kill me!"

"But——"

"I mean it, dear. I was frantic when I heard the first news about the disaster. I was nearly out of my mind until word came that Anne Sheridan's name was in one of the lists of survivors. Come, kiss me, dear, and tell me; as long as your foolish old Aunt Emily lives—she will always have you!"

Then Monica Hope lifted her face and set her lips to the offered cheek. She did not speak. No, no. Too late! After what "Aunt Emily" had said, it seemed right to be silent—only right, for her sake. Her only comfort—that was what she, Monica, was to this lonely lady.

"Tall and fair and slim, Anne—just like your dear mother, as I remember her!" murmured Aunt Emily fondly.

"I—I will try—awfully!" faltered the girl huskily. "I will try to be—to be a happiness to you, and—and not turn out a girl who'll disappoint you—"

Back Again!

IT was like old times in Study 12 at Morocco School.

Places had been found, this afternoon, for a few extra at the tea-table. With Betty Barton, the Form captain, to pour out, and with dusky Naomer taking great care that everybody showed a good "appetite," it had been chatter, chatter all the time.

And now that tea was over room was being found for various callers.

Chairs were yielded up in a clumsy way, and made to do for two. Madcap Polly Linton moved aside some teacups and turned back the white cloth, to perch herself upon the table-edge.

Naomer was gaily seated upon the lap of Paula Creel—although Paula would have preferred any arrangement but that, only she had no voice in the matter.

"You needn't go, any of you!" cried Betty, jumping up at last. "But I want to pop down and see if I can get the address of that new girl who is turning up on Saturday. I feel I'd like to drop her a line in advance."

"So you should, Betty," said Polly. "It's quite certain she must be that girl with whom we spoke, only a few minutes before the *Taj-Mal* went down, and she may be glad when she learns that we are all O.K.!"

"All alive and kicking, yes!" shrieked Naomer, suiting the action to the word. "Although I don't think we ought to have to do lessons for a bit!"

"Ow, sit still!" protested long-suffering Paula. "Wearily, Naomer! You didn't wiggle about like this when I had you on my lap in the lifeboat!"

"No, because that was different. I had no wind up then!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" rippled the chams; but several of the girls who had not been passengers on the liner took care to add, admiringly:

"You say that, Naomer, but you know you were as brave as the rest."

"I know I was jolly hungry before we finish, any old how! Because it was ages before our lifeboat was picked up—ages and ages!"

"Three solid hours, in fact," Polly rejoined, whilst Betty fidgeted away upon the little errand. "But one thing I will say for Naomer—I don't think any of us have told you others! She said we could always swim for it!"

"I do think it strange," came from Madge quietly, after some further chuckling against the dusky one, "that girl Anne Sheridan was on the boat as well—and now she is coming to Morocco!"

"Of course," Polly carried on the talk lightly, "she must know there were some Morocco girls who came on board at Gibraltar. It was one of the few things we had the chance to mention—that we went to school at Morocco. But she didn't get our names—"

"And we, for that matter, didn't get hers," Tess put in.

Polly, swinging her legs as she still perched on the table, shrugged carelessly.

"Never mind; it must be the same girl. We've been told by Miss Everard that the one who is coming on Saturday was a survivor from the wreck. And you remember how the girl on the *Taj-Mal* spoke as if——"

"Quite!" nodded Tess. "Oh, it's the same girl right enough. She was going to be met by an aunt at Southampton, and put to school in England."

"And you say she seemed a nice girl?" asked Pam, holding upon an arm-rest of the easy-chair that held both Paula and Naomer.

"A ripper!" said Polly. "Just our sect! We had made up our minds to become very friendly with her during the rest of the voyage. She seemed so glad to find us on board. And then—well, you all know what happened!"

"An experience, but Jove, that one would like to rub 'twice one's memory, yes, wether!" shivered Paula. "Ah, well, as I have said before; never again! No more twigs abroad for me!"

"Cowardly!" shrieked Naomer, starting to rumpie Paula. "Just because you were stranded in a desert, and because we had to do as bunk on camels, and because we liner had so smash!"

"I will not have you call Paula a coward!" cried Polly, getting off the table threateningly. "She was wonderful! The fact being that it did her good—didn't it, Paula? You dear old—"

"Owp! That's enough, Polly dear! Ow!" "Now then, you know you like it!" the mad-cap grinned, giving Paula an affectionate rump-ling; and then Naomer joined in:

"Yes, because so good old Skinnigalee, taking up such a little room in so lifeboat, were was room for one more!"

"This Anne Sheridan, Polly," inquired Elsie Ashby; "is she—"

"Pretty? Oh, rather! Tall and fair. But what I liked about her was her jollity, her—oh, you know!"

There was a general nodding.

"Yes, well," said Pam, getting up to drift away now that half-past five was dining out, "I quit; look forward to Saturday and getting to know Anne Sheridan!"

Then Betty came whizzing back into the study, to find the company on the point of dispersing.

"What, going?"

"They feel they must," said Polly. "Before Naomer starts telling the story of the loss of the Taj-Mal all over again, for the 'nth time!"

"Jealous!" Naomer retorted. "Just because I can tell it so well!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The visitors scattered away. Madge and Pam went down to the music-room. Tea doubtless slipped away to the art-room, where the light would be good. The rest had each something to do—in preference to doing "peep"! That mighty affliction was generally put off for as long as possible—sometimes, until next morning.

"As for me, I must get that note off to Anne Sheridan," said Betty, as she and Polly hurried to clear the table. "I've got the address. Just to let her know how glad we are that she is coming to our school!"

And by that evening's post the letter went upon its way, reaching its cross-country destination the following midday.

By the same delivery there was another letter from Morocco. It was Miss Somerfield's reply to certain questions which Miss Anstruther had asked through the post.

Both letters lay unclaimed on a hall-table for the rest of that day, and then, late in the evening, Miss Anstruther got back from London with her "niece."

They had been up for the day, shopping. Parcels containing lovely things, bought for the orphan girl, were being brought in from the car whilst the lady stood reading that letter from Miss Somerfield.

"Anne darling!"

"Yes auntie!"

"A letter for you as well, my dear."

"For me?"

Monica felt herself starting guiltily; felt that a note of dread had betrayed itself in her voice. For the fraction of a second she had thought it must be somebody writing to her in her real name—Monica Hope. Stupid of her! This kind lady, over by the hall-table, would not have been smiling as she made the remark. It was, of course, a letter for Anne Sheridan. But from whom?

"Catch, Anne!" And the letter came spinning at her. "From one of the girls at Morocco, I fancy—the Fourth Form captain. I've just had one from Miss Somerfield," added Miss Anstruther. "She mentions that the captain would be dropping you a line."

"Oh, I see?"

"By the way, Anne, there is something, dear, that I have not mentioned so far in connection with Morocco School. It has to do with that disaster at sea, and I have felt it best not to touch upon the awful affair whilst it was still so fresh in your memory. The last few days, though—you really have got over the shock and all that, Anne!"



"Have you heard?" panted Elsie Ashby agitatedly. "They say the boat the girls were on—"

"What?" jerked Pam.

"What about it?" "It's gone down at sea!" said Elsie heavily. "And they don't know if anyone has been saved."

"Yes, auntie. Why? What about Morocco, then?"

"I knew a week ago, my dear, there were Morocco scholars on the Taj-Mal—"

"Oh!" Monica cried out. "Oh, no—"

"Yes, dear; but don't look like that. It's all right; they were saved. Ah, I'm afraid it does still upset you, to have the disaster mentioned," Miss Anstruther murmured feelingly. "But those Morocco girls were all saved. It's a wonder they were not in your lifeboat. They were first-class passengers. You must remember them?"

"I—I— They were some girls who—who only came on board at Gibraltar?"

"That's right, Anne. And so, perhaps, you had not time to get to know them? I expect they felt rather unwell the first day out; didn't show themselves at all, perhaps. But what I wanted to say, Anne darling, was—when you got to Morocco, on Saturday, don't get drawn into too much talk about the wreck. You want to forget it—and so do those other girls."

"Yes, auntie. All right, I—I understand."

"Dear child," purred the fond lady, kissing Monica. "Run away, then, and read your letter. It should make you very happy."

Shall She—Shall She Not?

HAPPY!

Had anyone, Monica wondered, ever opened a letter with greater misgivings?

Alone in her room, standing by an open window that let in the last of the sunset-glow and the song of thrushes in the budding trees, she read the letter.

Study 12.

Morocco School.

Dear Anne Sheridan,—The moment we heard that a girl who was on the Taj-Mal would be coming to Morocco, some of us felt sure that it must be the very girl who was talking to us on deck, just before the accident.

So I am sending you this little note feeling that we are friends already. You must remember speaking for a few minutes with three girls, that morning at sea, and their mentioning Morocco School? I was one of them.

Little did we dream what was to happen before there was a chance for another talk with you.

We did not notice you, when the ship was going down, but, of course, it was such a mix-up, getting away in time. We looked about for you, though, and wondered if you were all right.

Wasn't it a mercy that we were saved after all? I do think the officers and crew were splendid, don't you? Some of us at Morocco think of getting up a concert that will bring in a little to help the dependents of those who were not rescued. You'll want to take part, I'm sure.

Well, on Saturday, you will be with us, so no more now. The whole Form is looking forward to giving you a hearty welcome!

Unless you are very different from the girl we took you to be, the school will be proud to have you.

With best wishes for the future,

Your sincere friend,
BETTY BARTON.
(Captain, IV Fm.)

The future.

Ah, what mockery there seemed to be in the earnest words!

Monica Hope folded up the friendly note and laid it aside. Then she turned to the window, thankful to have the cool fresh air wafting in upon her face. She felt faint—trembling.

"Now what am I to do?" was her distraught murmur. "Oh, what am I to do now? The moment I enter Morocco School; the moment that girl and the others see me—they'll know that I'm an impostor! They had got to know Anne Sheridan herself on the liner! How, then, can they fail to— But wait!" she checked her agitated whispering, and snatched up the Form captain's note to scan it again.

From one paragraph and another her dilating eyes picked out certain words and put them together.

Just before the accident—speaking for a few minutes—

She tossed down the note once more and stood reflective, breathing hard and fast.

Only for a few minutes had the real Anne Sheridan spoken with them, and it had been just before the accident. Didn't that, then, reduce the risk of detection tremendously? It did!

Their recollection of Anne Sheridan could be but a vague one, at the best; all the vaguer because of the subsequent disaster and the Barry that it had meant.

What, then, was one to do? The question still remained. Should she take her chance? Risk it? Or speak out now?

Would there be happiness for her in carrying on the deception, if only she got the chance to do so? Anything but happiness!

At any moment in the last few days she would have been glad to own up to her true identity. Every kindness from "Aunt Emily"; every loving word—it had only meant so much secret torment.

But there was that one thing which, it seemed to Monica, she must ignore. When it meant bliss for Miss Anstruther to be left in ignorance, how could she venture to shatter such happiness by owning up!

Monica had been thinking of that all the time. And now—no use; she had to think of it still!

"If she knew that I'm really nothing to her—and that her niece was lost at sea—it would break her heart! She said so, and meant it! I have seen for myself—"

"Anne darling," came a loving call at this very instant, "are you coming down, dear, to sit with me?"

Monica went to her bed-room door and opened it just wide enough to answer:

"Yes, auntie, in a moment!"

The lady softly laughed a remark, from the staircase landing.

"Almost our last night together, Anne dear, before you go off to school! How I shall miss you, Anne! But I mustn't grumble. You might never have come into my lonely life, to make me so happy."

There it was again. The joy of having her—Monica closed the door and stood very erect, her face white and tense; but she was tragically calm inwardly.

"I must take the risk—I must!" she said to herself sternly. "I must go to Morocco, and—if only I can—I must go on with the deception, much as I hate it all!"

(END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.)

"THAT STRANGE NEW GIRL!" is the title of next week's exciting complete Morocco story, which deals with Monica's arrival at Morocco, and tells of the dramatic things which result. Be sure you order next Tuesday's SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN in advance, so that you do not miss reading it.