

"Castaways of Gull Island" : Exciting Complete Morcove
Tale by Marjorie Stanton

The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN

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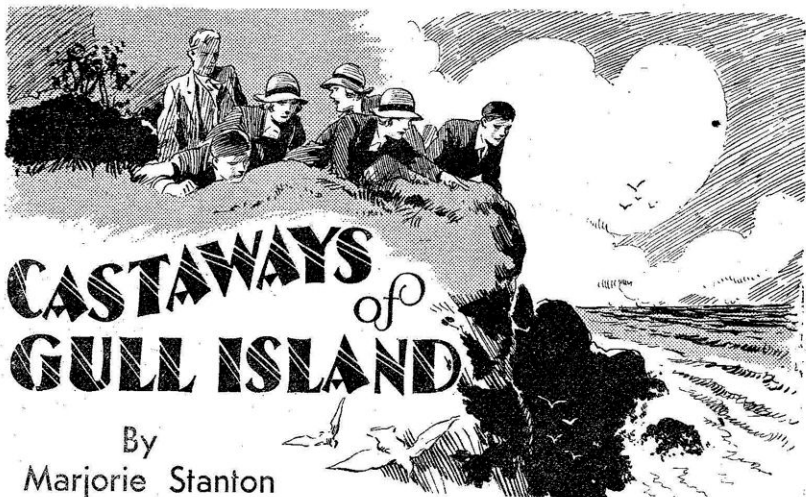
EVERY
TUESDAY

2d



BEATEN—BY ETTA

A tense moment in this
week's fine complete
Morcove School story by
Marjorie Stanton.



CASTAWAYS *of* GULL ISLAND

By
Marjorie Stanton

*Study 12's Famous Chums in a Thrilling, Long
Complete Story*

Nothing Is Known

"ALL Forms—assembly at once."

"What!"

"Hurry up, girls; get along to Big Hall—"

"But it isn't time—"

"Never mind; do as you're told!"

Moreove School was taken by surprise.

Only a couple of minutes since had the girls risen from the breakfast-tables. Normally, there should have been one of those much-treasured half-hours of complete liberty; and instead—

Ding, ling; ding, ling! the bell was ringing, for a special muster.

"What does it mean?"

"I wonder!"

"Must have something to do with the mystery?"

"Yes!"

Every tongue was on the go, whilst the various Forms bewilderedly began their hasty march into Big Hall.

"Perhaps there's good news—at last!"

"I doubt it! Good news travels fast. It couldn't have been kept back for any formal announcement."

This was Etta Hargrove, one of the more level-headed members of the Fourth Form, as she went in step with other juniors.

Soon the different Forms were lined up in Big Hall, and then any stranger must have thought that the Fourth Form was a very small one in comparison with others.

But only ignorance of certain dramatic happenings in the last day or two could have allowed anyone to derive such an erroneous idea.

The Fourth Form, this Term, was up to full strength. If the line of juniors, this morning, looked incomplete, that was simply because nine members of the Form were—missing!

No fewer than nine of them—missing since yesterday afternoon, and nothing known even by now that could mean relief from anxiety!

Or, at any rate, girls this morning had come down from the dormitories to be told that there was still no news.

Whether, in the last hour or so, or even in the last few minutes, some development had come about, remained to be seen.

Sanguine spirits there were, ready to jump to the conclusion that "it was all over, bar shouting!" But there were saner girls, like Etta Hargrove, who found it hard to believe that any good news would have been kept back for the sake of formality.

The headmistress, known to have been up all night along with many other members of her staff, had been too well aware of the girls' anxiety to save up any good news for speech-making.

"Silence, silence! Stop talking, there!"

One or two mistresses and several seniors were here and there in Big Hall, sharply quelling the persistent chatter-chatter.

Now a side door, serving the dais at the upper end of the hall, was opening. It let through the headmistress and one or two of her colleagues. They were all looking anxious, worried.

"Silence!"

And there was silence; such a sudden stillness, you might have heard a pin drop.

Miss Somerfield, having taken her stand beside

AT MORCOVE: Consternation reigns regarding the prolonged absence of Betty Barton & Co. The same question is on every lip: "What has happened to the Study 12 chums?"

ON GULL ISLAND: There is still no hope of an early rescue for the Morcove castaways who, nevertheless, are not downhearted, for there is every chance of their being able to solve the mystery of the Morcove monster.

the small table that was centrally placed on the dais, spoke at once—quietly.

"Girls, we are starting the day with so much anxiety, it will be very hard for you all, I know, to carry on as usual."

"Anxiety! There was, then, NO good news! So keenly do I appreciate the state of mind you must all be in, I have given orders that no really instructional work shall be done in class. But classes must be held, as usual, and I am afraid I must announce that you must all stay in bounds until further notice. It may seem a little hard on you all; an irksome restraint—"

No! Involuntarily scores of her listeners were emitting murmurs that must have assured Miss Somerfield; the Forms were ready to submit cheerfully to anything that she might ordain.

"Thank you, girls," was her gentle comment on that subdued murmuring, testifying eager submission. "Then I need not add, as it seems to be obvious to you all, why it will be best for the school to keep in bounds to-day. A word to the Fourth Form in particular."

And after a moment's pause:

"It is the Fourth that is particularly-stricken, I might say—by this trouble that has befallen us. Not only have we nine girls in all missing from that Form; Ethel Courtway, who was acting mistress of the Fourth Form, is also missing. Ethel Courtway's strange disappearance in the first instance must be regarded as the cause of those nine juniors' subsequent disappearance. Whatever else we may be in doubt about, we cannot be in any doubt about that. So I want to say to the Fourth Form: this morning, a senior will take charge in class. Do your best, girls of the Fourth, not to give trouble—"

There was a dramatic interruption. Only a faint disturbance had caused Miss Somerfield to break off so abruptly; but that disturbance, amidst such attentive silence, had quickened every heartbeat.

Next moment, all who were mustered here were experiencing a big thrill. Mistresses and girls alike realised that the faint commotion was due to the hurrying in of—a policeman!

He evidently was in such haste to speak to Miss Somerfield, it had been impossible for any servant who had first admitted him to the school house to get him to stand upon ceremony.

In their rows in Big Hall, girls were all eyes for the uniformed officer of the law, as he made his way to the dais.

Two or three steps enabled him to mount to the platform, where the headmistress, visibly agitated, had advanced to meet him.

And now—what? What were the words he was so excitedly whispering to Miss Somerfield? News of some sort, bearing upon the great mystery, it must be! But what news—good or bad?

"Sh!" the outbreak of excited whisperings amongst all the marshalled girls was checked.

"Sh!" 'sh! Quiet, all—silence!"

Look! See Miss Somerfield's face now, how deathly pale it had become! Bad news, then—tragic!

The policeman had said all he had come to say. He took out a handkerchief and mopped a bald head. He ran the handkerchief round his neck. He was a big, stout man, and he had been running.

To most of the girls, it seemed as if they could not breathe again until they had been told—the news. There was a great inholding of breath; but after a moment or two there was just as great a sighing sound all over the hall.

The school was not to be told! Miss Somerfield, returning to the middle of the dais, had said quietly:

"Dismiss!"

Then any mistresses and seniors who had authority to exercise were forced to pull themselves together, just the same as the lined-up girls.

"Right turn!"

In the Fourth Form the feeling was one of utter consternation. Juniors could hear the left-right of the Sixth Form, leading off. The school really was to march out, knowing nothing of the news that had just been whispered to Miss Somerfield.

Oh, how trying—unbearable! All the more so, when one thing was self-evident; the news would have been proclaimed instantly, if it had been anything but BAD news.

But the Fourth Form got to know ere another ten minutes had sped. All the school knew. It may be true that good news travels fast; it is just as true that bad news can never be kept back for long.

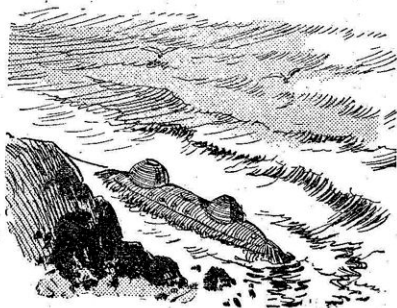
"They've found a boat—an empty boat, washed up on the seashore."

So the first scrap of reliable information spread like wildfire through the Forms. Swiftly, details supplemented the meagre item.

"It's that big motor-boat that belonged to Ethel Courtway's uncle, at Cliff Edge bungalow; the boat he kept in the boat-cave that goes with the bungalow. It must have been lost in the storm—swamped, overturned. Anyhow, it has been found on the shore, smashed to bits by the waves."

"Then were they in it, yesterday—all those who have been missing since yesterday?"

Well, were they? That was what Morcove School was left to wonder now, and to fear,



whilst in one class-room and another the order had to be:

"Stop that talking!"

Castaways All

ON Gull Island, eight miles or more out at sea, there are sixteen souls in all, this morning—waiting to be taken off!

If only Morcove School could know, and so have all its anxiety set at rest!

If only the island could be seen at this moment from the mainland, so that there might suddenly be the wondering, hopeful cry:

"That smoke on Gull Island—what does it mean? A signal of distress?"

But visibility is poor, and in vain have all these people on the island tried, for their part, to glimpse the rugged Morcove coast.

In all directions, looking from the island, sea and sky are smudged together. Where there should be a sharply defined horizon, there is only that greyish murk. Last night was a night of storm, and the weather is still thick.

The wind still bugles across the hillocky island, and under the steep cliffs the waves dash incessantly, sending up a never-ending roar.

The giant waves come rolling in, foam-crested, from the wide Atlantic, and it is boom after boom where the rocks and the cliffs offer resistance, and the water there is whitened in vast patches by the yeasty surge.

Nine girls belonging to the Fourth Form at Morcove School; four boys belonging to Grange-moor School; all safe and sound—so far!

And the same may be said of Ethel Courtway, and of her Uncle Peter and Aunt Janet—safe and well!

But what an experience they have had; what an ordeal to endure, since that moment, yesterday, when they all came together on this tiny island, and knew themselves to be the helpless victims of ruthless schemers!

Storm in the night, and all sixteen of them sheltering as best they could from the raging blast. Morning at last, wild and cheerless, and yet no hope of the smoke, billowing away from a fire kindled for comfort as well as signalling purposes, being seen by folk on Morcove's equally stormy shore.

"WHAT can you see, you two?"

"Hallo, Betty!"

"I've come to tell you brekker is ready, at last! But what was it you were watching?"

"Nothing!" said Polly Linton, that madcap of the Fourth Form at Morcove; and "Nothing!" said her brother Jack glumly.

Brother and sister were answering Betty Barton, who had come running up to them as they stood, blown about by the wind, looking seawards from the top of one of the island's high cliffs.

"Some of the others have been keeping a good look-out," Betty panted, being a bit out of breath after her sharp run. "But the monster-thing seems to have gone under water—"

"And decided to stay there, yep!" Polly nodded, looking more than disappointed—even a bit disgusted.

Then she cheered up wonderfully.

"Anyhow, it has turned up again—the Morcove monster! So that's an end of my being twitted and teased, about imagining things!"

"I take back all I ever said, Polly-wolly," Jack declared heartily. "There IS a monster, right enough—a whacker! And never mind that it isn't a sea-serpent or any joker of that sort."

"I never said it was!"

"You always gave me to understand, Polly-wolly, that it was something alive. And, instead—oh, boy, what a surprise," Jack rattled on breezily. "There was Mr. Courtway, an hour or two ago, telling us that what it was—an invention of his!"

"I know," Betty nodded excitedly. "And when I first heard—you could have kicked me down with a feather! A kind of baby submarine that he's invented—"

"Gee, and mustn't it be an advance on the standard type—not half!" Jack said, with boyish enthusiasm for anything of a mechanical nature. "He mayn't have told us much; but from what we have seen the thing doing this morning, out there in that rough sea—"

"Mr. Courtway has promised to tell us all about it, at brekker, so come along—or brekker may all be gone!"

"Gosh yes,!" gasped Jack in pretended alarm. "Mustn't forget; young Bloot is one of us poor castaways! Beefy Bobby, the champion champer; holder of the world's record for doughnut eating."

"You're not to run Bobby down!" Polly protested. "He has been splendid, I'm sure!"

"Oho, so you're gone on Bobby now, are you?" jested Jack. "Har, har! I'll tell Naomer, and then the fur will fly. Cats, cats!"

Whereupon, Polly pulled off her brother's cap, sent it flying in the wind, and pulled his scarf.

"Wow!"

Betty laughed.

"Well, it's a treat to see you two—just the same, even though we are in this fix!"

"One of these days!" the madcap threatened her brother, whilst he dived to recover his cap.

"One of these days we may all be taken off in a boat," he said, clapping the cap on his ruffled head, all anyhow. "But it will have to be a better day than this. Gee, boys, how it blows!"

"And I suppose," Betty said, glancing over the angry sea, "it is the flying spray that makes a kind of mist, so that you can't see for more than a couple of miles at the most. If only a ship would come by, close in! But then they wouldn't know that we were here."

"There'll be no ship, anyhow," Jack stated flatly. "Weather like this, all shipping keeps well away from the coast. Besides, I'd like to see the boat that could pull in to the island in such a sea."

"How they must be wondering at Morcove!" Polly exclaimed, as she and her brother, with Betty, hastened to rejoin their partners in misfortune. "Oh, it's far worse for all of them at the school. After all, we're getting a thrill out of our being stuck here like this."

"It's a picnic," Jack was chirpy enough to assert. "Why, look at the jolly old camp fire, blazing away in the wind, and I'm sure I can smell rashers frying!"

"I'm sure you can't!" Betty laughed. "Thank goodness, though, we have been all right for food—and still are. You hungry, Polly?"

"Hungry!"

And the madcap galloped the rest of the way over the rough ground, to make up for lost time.

The Story of the Monster

JACK LINTON, feeling challenged to a race, tore after his sister with Redskin yells, so that Betty herself had to give up running because she was laughing so much.

The others were all there, and waiting, where the fire of cut gorse glowed and smoked like a

huge bonfire. But the smoke was no trouble to the hapless band. They had kindled the fire, yesterday, at a spot chosen with regard to the way of the wind.

So, during the night, they had all been able to keep to the shelter and look out to see the bright side of the fire, with the smoke blowing away from them.

It was like Polly and Jack, to descend upon all these others in boisterous fashion. If anyone had been feeling a bit "cheap," the madcap and her fun-loving brother would have been the ones to supply a certain cure.

But a sturdy cheerfulness prevailed. Evon Paula Creel—that comfort-loving member of the Study 12 "chummy"—was beaming.

Paula had been quite sure, overnight, that she would "pewish before the morning, yes, wather!" But the worst that had happened to her was that she had woke up once or twice in the night to find Naomer using her as substitute for a feather bed.

So there was quite a picnic-like jocularity amongst the juniors—Ethel Courtway and her uncle and aunt doing all they could to encourage it.

There were aspects of the situation that must have been terribly hard for "Uncle Peter" to contemplate calmly. He was faced with the fact that he had been robbed, by plotters, of a great invention—one that was to have been the crowning triumph in a lifetime of scientific study.

But neither he nor his devoted wife could think of bemoaning the calamity in the presence of their niece and all these juniors. Uncle Peter and Aunt Janet were not forgetting that Ethel and the boys and girls were innocent victims of the great conspiracy.

"Will you preside at the urn, Aunt Janet?" Ethel blandly inquired, the "urn" being a tin kettle, in which some tea had been brewed.

"Oh, my dear, you take charge!"

"Very well, then." And the recently appointed acting mistress of the Fourth Form jokingly put on an air. "Girls to sit on this side; the boys on that!"

"No-o-o!" the girls revolted.

"An excellent arrangement, I call it," Jack heartily approved the decree. "I mean to say—we men!" And he fingered his school tie. "You can have Bobby though," he generously informed the girls. "And so," he said to Dave Cardew and Jimmy Cherrol, "we shall be a nice select party. Come on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The girls," Ethel sweetly added, "will be helped first—"

"Hooray!" Morrove cheered.

"Eh, what?" cried Jack, looking black as thunder. "Got to wait whilst those nine kids make do with the only two tin mugs? Hey, Bobby! As you were! Sorry, you fellows," to



There was a hush as the officer stepped on to the rostrum and began to speak with Miss Somerfield. Had he brought good news—or bad?

Dave and Jimmy, "I've got an appointment with my sister!"

And he went and sat beside her, on some of the dry grass and heather with which the camping ground had been bedded down.

"Bobby, queek!" yelled Naomer, invitingly patting a vacant place just beside her. "Bekas, zen you can look after me!"

"At that rate," said Pam Willoughby serenely, "Jimmy might just as well sit next to me."

This was quite Jimmy's opinion, too, and so, next moment, as Jack put it, "another hon. member has crossed the floor and joined the opposition." On the other hand, Judy Cardew went and sat with her brother, Dave.

They were all, in fact, suiting their own likings, as Ethel Courtway would have been the last to wish them not to do.

"The menu," she announced, "bread and what's left of the tinned tongue. Tea, when your turn comes with one of the mugs."

"The condensed milk tin is empty—why not use that?" suggested Polly. "It would do for the boys." This, in a tone that meant "They're only boys!"

"There's one thing, we'll never run out of tongue whilst we've got Polly," Jack retaliated. "Wow! She's hitting me, teacher!"

"I'd stand you in the corner if there were one," smiled Ethel.

"If there were a corner, I'd go to it of my own accord," Polly responded sweetly. "To get more shelter."

"Alone, alone on a desert island," Jack said hoarsely. "Water, water everywhere, and only tea to drink! But, courage, mes enfants—"

"Who are you calling infants!" protested Polly. "This is nothing," her brother said airily. "I well remember, when I was out in the Pacific, in the sixties, we went for ninety days on—hooray, my turn?" he broke off as a tin mug came his way. "Ladies and gentlemen, I drink to confusion to our enemies!"

"But don't drink it all," Polly chided him. "Remember Bobby!"

"Ha, my old friend, Bloom!" cried Jack, handing on the mug to that plump schoolchum. "A little thinner since I saw you last? Sad, sad! Still—que voulez-vous? I, too, have suffered!"

"I think we ought to zink—about how we are going to manage when all ze food is gone!" came shrilly from Morcove's dusky scholar, Naomer Nakara. "Bekas, you never know—we may be here for days and days!"

"To-day's great thought!" said Polly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hi, and what about fishing for lobsters?" was Naomer's extraordinary inspiration. "Bekas, I like lobster—gorjus! I remember when we had a tin of lobster in ze dormitory, after lights out—"

"Oh, did you?" Ethel exclaimed, blandly interested. "I must remember that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Betty put on a frown for Naomer, in fun.

"If you talked less, kid—"

"She'd only eat all the more," said Polly; "so let her talk! And what a sensible idea of hers, that about fishing!"

"Yes, wather!"

"Oh, you think so, Paula, do you?"

"Er—I pwesume so—"

Again there was great laughter.

"It would be splendid to go fishing, if we had fishing tackle, and the weather were right, and we could get down to the sea," Polly rattled on ironically. "Of course, we've got that rope with which we hauled Ethel and her uncle up the cliff from the cave yesterday. We might put a bent pin on the end of it."

"But then," Helen Craig carried on the nonsense talk, "I don't know what we'd do for bait."

"How you'd work it would be this way," Jack was ready to explain. "You'd throw in the rope with the bent pin, and it wouldn't be long before you caught a tiny fish, just a tiddler, who had tried to eat the pin, being young and not knowing any better. Like kids of girls who do silly things at times."

"I won't sit with him!" Polly informed the company in general.

"Then you'd use the tiny fish as bait to catch a bigger one, and you'd use him," Jack reasoned on, "to catch a much bigger one. And you'd use him to catch a real whopper! But you wouldn't stay to cook him—nunno—"

"Bekas, not enough to go round!"

"Certainly not," Jack agreed with Naomer. "Having regard to the presence of my horrible friend on the left, Lord Bobby of Bloom, you'd use the whopping great fish to catch a real monster—"

"THE monster, in fact!" said Pam.

"Oh, Mr. Courtney!" was the chorus now that that word had cropped up in the talk. "You promised to tell us, you know!"

"And so I will, boys and girls!" Uncle Peter responded, still retaining the smile that all their absurd chatter had created. "That is, if you really wish me to."

"Yes, yes!"

"Bekas, what ze diggings, ze Morcove monster has been ze great sensation of ze term. I almost wrote to ze Barncombe Herald about him!"

"In the belief," chuckled Betty, "that it really was a living creature! And, instead, you have told us this morning, Mr. Courtney, that it is an invention of yours!"

Uncle Peter nodded, starting to look very grave.

"Some time last year," he began, "I considered the construction of a kind of baby submarine that would, I hoped, be an improvement on what we may call the standard type. My idea was to make a machine not only far safer for the crew working it, but also much more mobile. It would be useless my going into technical details. I will simply say that my baby submarine did away with the system of flooding to submerge, and of blowing out water tanks to rise again."

"Do you mean, sir," Dave gently put in, "that she sort of submerges under her own power, and stays under by the same means?"

"You've got it, my lad. By a system of propulsion, my machine literally swims about under water, although still buoyant enough to come up like a cork to the surface. The rapidity of action is, of course, much greater than in existing types of submarines, and I have been confident that the advent of my machine would do more than anything else to abolish submarine warfare—"

"And what a blessing that would be!" said Aunt Janet.

"I think I get you this time, anyhow, sir," said Jack. "You mean, that your invention would sort of cancel out the present heavily armed submarine?"

"My invention would quite supersede the existing type. I call it my machine, but I really don't know that I ought to do so now," Uncle Peter said, with a shrug and a grimace. "The only model of it in existence has been stolen—"

"And that's the model—the machine—that we have seen in the sea this morning?" cried Betty.

"The same machine," Polly rejoined excitedly, "that some of us have seen from the Morcove cliffs, just lately! So that is why you took Cliff Edge Bungalow, Mr. Courtney; to be where you could make trials with the—"

"But although I did rent the bungalow with that intention," the scientist exclaimed, "I never spent more than an hour there—no! You are aware of what happened to me, the day I arrived at Cliff Edge. My manservant Dawker had turned traitor—"

"A terrible thing, that!" sighed Aunt Janet. "After all the years he had been with us!"

"Yes!" nodded her husband, drawing his bushy brows together. "One can only suppose that the man always had a bad streak in him, and that the temptation to rob me of such a great invention must have been tremendous, as soon as he saw his way to do that."

"I suppose, sir," said Jimmy, "there'd be heaps of people—foreigners, say—who'd be ready to give anything—"

"And the result has been—a conspiracy," Uncle Peter continued, with another nod. "Dawker has been in it. There has been a man in it who could fairly safely personate me, after I had been spirited away to this island. Jake, the boatman, was in it, of course. But there were others of whom, so far, we have seen nothing!"

"The chaps working the machine?" Jack inquired.

"Exactly! An extraordinary thing is," Uncle Peter went on, "although I was brought to a deep—"

water cave on this island where, on a ledge of rock, there were tools and a lathe, so that I guessed the cave was a kind of workshop where little repairs could be done, they never brought the machine to it. Not whilst I was there, at any rate."

"But it can't have been at sea all the time!" cried Polly. "Oh, I wonder!" And her hands came together with a little clap. "There is another deep-water cave, as we girls all know. We've been out to this island more than once, in fine weather. Perhaps they have used that other cave—"

"As their base?" Uncle Peter caught her up eagerly. "If the water in that cave were deep enough—"

"It must be just as deep as in the other cave," Betty confidently put in.

Uncle Peter slapped a knee. "Then that's about it! Yet even so, a thing I can't make out; why they have kept the machine around here! It is true, they are without the formula for the special fuel that is another invention of mine. But, having got hold of the model machine that I had managed to assemble in secret, you would have thought they would get away with it at once."

"Stumped for the proper fuel, is that it, sir?" Dave asked.

"Oh, they could never do much without my fuel—a kind of gas in a greatly compressed form," Uncle Peter responded. "But the machine could always be taken in tow by a vessel, and the people in this conspiracy must have had the means of hiring a vessel. So—"

He was excitedly interrupted.

"Hi, look—look!"

Jack, after that first wild shout, jumped up so as to be better able to see, beyond the edge of the cliffs, the wide expanse of heaving waters.

He was pointing—having seen the monster again, as the others all supposed.

But, in the instant that they themselves stood up, to gaze in the direction he was giving them, they saw instead—a ship.

"A steamer!" Jimmy Cherrol astoundedly gasped.

"A steamer!" cried many of the girls. "Coming to the island?"

"Impossible!" said Uncle Peter. "And yet—"

"She's steaming this way," Dave muttered.

"Then it's a rescue—must be!" was Polly's impulsive idea. "It's known that we're here! That steamer has been sent to take us off, somehow!"

"It can't be!" her brother dissented strenuously. "Even a lifeboat would have all it could do. For that steamer to come much nearer, it means simply chucking her away on the rocks."

"She's stopping now," said Tess, whose eyes were particularly keen.

"So she is!"

"A mile away," Betty guessed the distance. "Then what it means, I suppose, they are just taking a look at us!"

"Pipooray!" Naomer capered. "Bekas, we shall not be left to starve, any old how! Zat will go away and get some other boat to come—"

"Hallo, though," broke from Dave quietly. "What's that between the island and the steamer? Can't you see—"

"Yes!" was the first answering cry—from Polly. "And that— Oh, that is the monster again!"

"On the surface again—showing herself to the steamer," Jack panted, staring with the rest.

"Then we know what it means now!"

"We do," was Uncle Peter's grim rejoinder.

"They have come to take her away!"

Before Their Eyes

THOSE words, spoken in a suffering way, caused all the juniors to turn and look at Ethel's uncle.

It became a moment for the girls and boys to pity the robbed inventor as they had never pitied him before. Their hearts went out to him in acute sympathy.

Suddenly Jack's feeling for the wronged man found vocal expression—forcibly.

"Gosh, I can't stand it!" he exclaimed. "We've got to do something, boys!"

"We must—oh, we must!" agreed several of the girls, carried away by similar feelings of desperate indignation. "It's a shame—a wicked shame!"

Jimmy was opening and shutting his hands, like



"I'll tell Naomer what you said about Bobby," Jack jested, and then uttered a yell of consternation as his sister grabbed his scarf and nearly pulled him off his feet.

a fellow thirsting for a fight. He spoke with taut lips.

"All this must have been arranged, days ago—weeks, most likely. It's why the machine has hung about in these waters. Very likely the steamer was expected long before, and was held up by the gale."

"She's a tramp," some of the girls heard Dave mutter. "Can't see her flag, but somehow she looks like a foreigner."

Polly stamped passionately.

"But there's one thing—the weather is against them," she said. "Now I wish it were blowing ten times harder—I do! I wish the waves were mountains high. Then perhaps those wretches would be whacked at their wicked game!"

"Even as it is, they'll find it none too easy," Uncle Peter said, with hard-won composure. "Ah! The steamer is having to stand in closer to my machine, instead of the machine's running out to her. That's—interesting."

"Can they signal to each other, sir—without a hatch being opened by those in the machine?" Dave asked eagerly.

"By flashlight—yes. And I really think the steamer must have been told that she must do the manoeuvring. She would not want to come nearer in."

"Is the machine out of order?" Betty wondered aloud. "Only just floating?"

"But it is only a few minutes ago that they were under water," Tess argued. "The engines must have been all right then!"

"They may be down to their last bit of gas," Uncle Peter reflected.

There was silence amongst the spectators after that.

They watched, rage burning within them that they could do no more than watch.

The dirty-looking steamer, pitching to the motion of the rough sea, was certainly steering with great difficulty closer to that strange craft which wallowed amongst the waves, more often than not showing only its two rounded conning towers.

Suddenly the watchers on the cliff murmured excitedly.

A hatch in the forward conning tower—or dome, to be more accurate—had been opened. They were just able to make out this, and to see a man climb out.

"Gee, he's taking a chance, I should think," Jack exclaimed.

"Bekas, all ze water might run in at ze window," Naomer quaintly expressed herself, "and zen—finish!"

"Oh, no," Ethel's uncle corrected that impression, with a faint smile. "You couldn't swamp her. But now, the steamer has stopped again—as close as she dare venture."

"Near enough," fumed Jack. "They can get a rope across from there."

"Oh," Betty raged, striking her hands together; "they're going to manage, and so they'll get away with it! What a beastly shame!"

"Outwageous, bai Jove!"

"Look, another man has come out of that conning dome," Ethel Courtway remarked. "How many are there to make a crew, I wonder?"

"Two men suffice—"

"Only two, sir!" cried Jack. "Gosh, fancy that! But, of course, your gadgets do away with a lot of the work in an ordinary submarine."

"There goes a rope!" Betty said.

The steamer had steered about, to have her stern towards the monster. It was a light rope that had been skillfully flung by someone at the

ship's rail. They saw it snake through the air—a matter of fifty yards, perhaps—and plash down in to the surging sea.

But one of the men, perched precariously on the rounded back of the baby submarine, close to that forward conning dome, had caught the rope by its end at that first clever throw.

In spite of their fury over all the villainy, Morcove and Grangemoor alike murmured admiringly.

Unscrupulous scoundrels they might be, out there on that strange monster—which was no monster after all, but more deserving to be called a "baby"! They were men, nevertheless, fearless and clever.

Then suddenly every one of the girls gave a horrified: "Oh!" Ethel and her aunt also emitted alarmed cries. As for the boys:

"My hat, they're in the sea!" Jack shouted. "Gosh, chaps—"

"Lost their footing!" Dave jerked out. "One slipped, and pulled the other with him,"

Jimmy commented excitedly. "An accident."

"But they'll be drowned!" some of the girls almost moaned.

"No—look; they're hanging on to the rope!" Jack shouted. "They're being hauled in by chaps on the steamer. Hi, this is fine," he continued, in greater excitement than ever. "They're going to lose the machine!"

"What!"

"There's no one on her now!" Jack fairly roared in sudden vast delight. "She'll drift away—"

"And it will be a marvel if they get the steamer round to pick her up," one of the girls rejoined, quick to grasp Jack's joyous theory. "They've lost her—lost her, I believe!"

"Jolly good job, hooray, hurrah!" Jack cried, throwing up his cap. "Oh, boy! They're going to lose her!"

"If only—oh!" Polly exclaimed frantically,— "if only it could be so! But wait—watch."

And they waited. They watched, and first one and then another was able to declare, presently, that the drifting monster was as good as lost to the steamer.

The area of rough water between the steamer and the weird-looking craft had rapidly increased. Nor was the steamer manoeuvring to get alongside the drifting monster.

The two men had been safely hauled out of the water up to the steamer's deck. But the watchers on the cliff felt certain that the intention to take the baby submarine in tow would have to be abandoned.

"They daren't—they just daren't get after her even in a small boat," Betty rejoiced. "It would mean coming ever so much closer inshore. See how the monster-thing has drifted this way!"

"The tide, bringing her to the island," Dave muttered. "She may pound to bits on the rocks—"

"She won't, m—boy," Mr. Courtway said, with a low laugh. "She'll be ours—mine again, after all!"

"Any rate, they'll have lost her, and serve them right," Polly yelled. "What can they do without her—anything, Mr. Courtway?"

"Nothing, I am convinced, unless—" He paused. "Unless their confederates on shore have managed to get hold of that notebook of mine. If they have done that, then the notes it contains, plus the experience gained by working the machine, may yet prove ruinous to me."

Then the hearts of all the juniors fell heavy within them once more.

In those few words, the scientist had put a

check upon all the relief and joy. He had been bound to do so. The pocket-book! Yes, Morcove and the boys were now remembering; if that had been stolen in the night from Study 12—

But had it?

Hope, after ebbing so suddenly, tided back. There rushed into the minds of all, again, that idea which had fought off complete despair a while ago. There was just a chance that the pocket-book had NOT been stolen. The headmistress and others, very likely up all night at the schoolhouse, and so—the would-be thieves had perhaps been balked!

If there was any talk now, it only went on in subdued voices, charged with feverish uncertainty. After all the rejoicing cries of a minute or two since, it was as if all were watching now in uneasy silence.

The steamer was standing out to sea again. They saw her funnel belching smoke that the wind instantly swirled to nothing, whilst the blunt iron bows took the violent slap of the waves. Soon the island was directly astern of her, and she was receding into the mist created by wind-whipped waters.

The last they saw of her, she was still heading away for the limitless ocean, rolling to the pitch of the waves.

"She's gone!"

"Yes!"

As for the baby submarine, she had drifted much closer to the island. Now and then a nasty wave seemed to lift itself up as it bore upon her, and then burst against her, throwing up fountains of spray. Still she floated, although that hatch in the forward conning-dome was open.

The girls and boys were astonished beyond words; but Uncle Peter seemed to feel that the strange craft was merely enduring a test that he had known it would survive.

But presently, as they still watched, doubt arose as to whether the weird thing would not be drifted past the island—perhaps to be carried by the tide on to the coast of Morcove.

At last they could no longer see her from where they stood: There was a rush to another part of the cliffs that went all round the island.

When they saw the monster again, she was within a stone's throw of the base of the cliffs. Only by standing very close to the edge of a bit of cliff that jutted out could they keep excited eyes upon the derelict.

"She'll strike the rocks there!"

And a few seconds later she did so.

They saw her bump broadside on against a half-submerged mass of rock, against which she lay, heaving as if in torment from the waves that assailed her.

The sea seemed to be infuriated that it could no longer have its longed-for prey to sport with out in the open.

"But it is all right!" Betty spoke at last, mastering her own poignant feelings. "Anything is better than that those scoundrels should have her! It's all right—if only—"

Ah, if only they could know that the pocket-book had not been stolen from Morcove in the night!

Daring Does It

"MORE stuff for the fire, Polly?"

"Yes, Betty. We've got to keep it going."

"Oh, rather! I'll take some."

It was an hour later. The wind had dropped. On the other hand, the sky, if anything, looked

blackier than ever. Clouds that had been hurried along whilst the gale blew were now able to mass together.

"We shall have to do a bit more to the roof of our shelter, too," Betty said, helping to gather up gorse that one of the boys had cut. "Shouldn't wonder if it starts to rain soon."

"But things might be worse, Betty!"

"That they might! It's only the pocket-book now to be anxious about. Not one of us has come to any harm, and—Hallo, what's the excitement this time?"

Betty broke into that wondering cry as she saw Jack, Dave and Jimmy pelting this way.

"Anything happened?" questioned both girls anxiously as the trio came rushing up.

"No; but we want that rope we used yesterday," panted Jack, flying on with his two chums.

"We can get down the cliff to the derelict," Jimmy threw out, by way of enlightenment.

"Oh! Goodness, Betty, did you hear that?" The boys were gone—straking on over the rough ground, to get to the so-called "camp." They had come from that part of the cliff from which it had been possible to see the derelict after she had struck the rocks.

Morcove had soon given up staring down at the strange-looking object, but Grangemoor, boy-like, had remained fascinated.

Now, however, Betty and Polly felt their interest revived. They bundled up their armfuls of gorse and rushed them to the fire, for that had to be kept plentifully supplied. So they met the boys, tearing back with the coiled rope.

Off went Betty and Polly again, picking up Pam and other chums during the lively run to see what the boys were going to do now.

Uncle Peter was with the lads, at the edge of the cliff directly above the wave-beaten derelict. Jack, in tremendous spirits, was coiling down the rope with an exaggerated air of seamanship.

"Whistle a hornpipe, one of you, can't you?" he requested. "Rule, Britannia, boys, Britannia rules the waves, only she doesn't rule them straight. Now, sir, ready—aye, aye!"

Uncle Peter laughed along with the girls.

"Britannia still has youngsters to be proud of," he said. "Well, now, you managed to haul me up one of the cliffs, yesterday, so I'm sure you can manage to lower me down this one."

"Mr. Courtway, you can't—you mustn't think of it!" Betty cried. "You, with your bad ankle!"

"Oh, that's nothing. I'm going down, I tell you—I must!"

"So fall out all quitters," jested Jack. "But, look here, sir, you'll let me go first!"

"You, boy? Certainly not!"

Jack saluted.

"Aye, aye, sir! Anyhow, you'll be down there when I follow, so what's the odds? Belay there! Fall in the fatigue party! Pipe all hands, bo'sun!"

This was his nonsense whilst starting to help Uncle Peter make one end of the staunch line secure about him.

"Don't go down the mine, daddy!" Jack sang, with great pathos. "Now, you kids, don't stand grinning! You can find something better to do than that! Petty-officer Cardew, at the word of command—lower away! Jimmy Cherril, do you call yourself an able-bodied seaman? Lively, then—lively, my hearties all!"

"How about knotting our end of the rope to the stump of that gorse-bush?" Dave quietly suggested. "Makes it all the safer?"

"Splendid!" his self-appointed officer approved the suggestion, and so it was carried out.

Then, with all the juniors who were there holding the line one behind another, Uncle Peter fearlessly let himself slide over the edge, to be lowered down.

"Lower away, boys!" vociferated Jack, meaning girls as well—as usual.

For a minute after that he was the outermost of all those who were paying out the taut line steadily. Thus it was Jack who peered over the edge, now and then, to make sure that all was going well.

Then suddenly he gave a signalling flourish of one hand.

"O.K., boys! And now, with your kind permission, mes enfants, I will bid you farewell. Fare—well, fare—well!" he sang, deep-throatedly, whilst backing over the edge, his hands tightly gripping the rope. "The anchor's weighed!"

And he vanished.
"Cheek!" Polly unhesitatingly termed it, as she and the others continued to take the strain on the rope. "What does he think he is going to do down there!"

"Get the monster going, perhaps," grinned Jimmy.

"What!" gasped the girls.
"We don't know," Dave said, with his habitual gravity. "But Mr. Courtway is just wondering whether the contraption can't be got to take him across to the coast."

"You mean," Betty jerked out, "so as to get to the school and find out—"

"About the pocket-book, yes," nodded Dave.
"Well, it can't be done!" Polly asserted.

"How can it!"
"On the other hand, it can be tried, anyhow," said Jimmy. "And—er—I think I'll go down, too, now."

He went over the edge with similar agility to Jack's, and it was for the girls to picture him sliding down, just as safely.

"You girls," Dave now said, taking significant strides to the edge of the cliff, "won't be put to any trouble or strain. The rope up here is tied to that gorse-stump, and I've been noticing—it's stood the test. So—"

And then he, too, was gone!

POLLY spoke at last.

"Well, I like that!"
"Yes, well," Pam smiled, "you know what they are!"

"Come and see how they are getting on," Betty proposed. "This is great!"

A short run, and they were grouped on that projecting cliff from which the entire party had witnessed the drifting ashore of the baby submarine.

Looking down from this vantage point, they could see the three boys and Uncle Peter clambering about on rocks that were just clear of the waves.

The novel vessel was low in the choppy waters, but she was afloat. Moreover could tell, by the way in which the long, torpedo-shaped hull swung and lifted up and down with the motion of the sea. Both conning-domes were well out of the water, although they came in for frequent splashes.

A veritable mammoth the "baby" looked when the sea sobbed away from her for a moment, exposing her shining steel skin.

"Weird thing," Madge murmured. "No wonder she got mistaken for a monster!"
"We ought to be down there, with them," Polly fumed. "But we'd only be in the way!"

"Yes," Betty nodded. "They can hardly find standing room on the rocks. Look at Jack, ankle deep in water!"

"If one of them falls in!" Judy murmured. "But there, we'd take a chance, if we could. Oh, look at Mr. Courtway, now!"

He was farthest out on a line of rocks against which the vessel was grinding as the drive of the waves kept her alongside. Any ordinary boat, even of her size, would have been pounded to bits by now. But she seemed to be as safe and tight as a steel drum.

Uncle Peter must have been forgetting that ankle of his in his desperate determination. Suddenly he gave a leap that left him hanging on to the forward conning-dome, whilst his feet slithered about, seeking a hold.

"Bravo! Well done for an old 'un!" was Polly's comment—saucy, but none the less admiring. "Oh, now I see! He's going to climb inside that dome place!"

"Yes!"
"It's amazing," Tess exclaimed. "The sea has been washing in and out there, at the open hatch, yet the hull itself can't have taken any water."

"If it had taken any at all, it would have taken a lot," Betty shrewdly reasoned. "I know! Anybody inside, wanting to come out when the thing's at sea, closes one water-tight door behind him before opening the outside hatch."

"Look!"
The inventor, huddling down, had crawled in through the open hatch—a metal-framed, circular window, like the front of a diver's helmet, only much larger and stronger.

Then they saw Uncle Peter's right arm come out, reaching to close the hatch.

At that instant, Jack Linton took a leap and landed safely on the conning-dome. His gay shoutings came up to the girls on the cliff.

"Oh, he's mad!" Polly sighed. But her eyes were sparkling with pride in him, her own only brother. "Mr. Courtway will be furious with him!"

The next few moments provided clear evidence that Jack was having to make his peace with the scientist, who was inside the dome. Whether or no Uncle Peter became appeased, he must have had to make room for Jack, for suddenly that daring lad crawled in.

Then the hatch was pulled round, to be closed and made fast.

"Hard luck, Jimmy!" Pam called down.
He had been going to make his leap from the rocks on to the back of the vessel; but the closing of the hatch had forced him to remain with Dave. The latter seemed to feel that he and Jimmy could yet be of great use. Scrambling to another part of the rocks, Dave stood reflective for a little while. Then he beckoned Jimmy, and the girls could see them holding a debate.

"That brainy brother of yours, Judy," said Polly; "he's got a hunch about something. Hallo, it's some idea to do with the boat and the rope."

Jimmy, standing nearer than Dave to the rope that dangled down the face of the cliff, had suddenly floundered back to it.

Then Dave shouted up to the girls.

"You want to help?"
"Yes-s-s!" they dimmed.
"Untie her from the gorse-stump, but keep hold of her! We may want you to help pull from up there!"

"What do they mean? That we are to pull the whole caboodle up the cliff?" Polly jested.

The others laughed, at the same time running

eagerly with her to do as bidden with the rope. A chance to help. They were overjoyed.

Untying the rope from the gorse-stump meant that there would be more to spare by several yards. Moreover was soon realising what a boon this was to be. Shoutings from Dave and Jimmy gave the girls to understand; the idea was to tie the lower end of the rope to a ring-bolt in the casing of the vessel, when it would be possible to do some useful pulling should Uncle Peter manage to get the whole thing under way.

Although the girls would be tugging hard from high up on the cliff, their efforts would help the vessel to draw away from the rocks. A certain amount of towage would be transmitted, the girls not being directly overhead.

Betty leaving the others to keep a tight hold, peered down to see what was going on below. Jimmy had got on to the vessel's rounded back, close to the after conning-dome. Dave threw him their end of the rope and he caught it and, passing it through a ring-bolt, held on to it.

Suddenly there was an agitation of the waters that had nothing to do with the roughness of the sea.

Betty's heart gave a leap. She knew instantly; a propeller had been set whirling. And after a moment or two the vessel seemed to be responding. But she needed to be helped away from the rocks, and that help the tow rope was to give her. Then Dave, framing his mouth with his hands, shouted up to Betty, whom he could see as she peered over.

"Haul away!"

She waved her understanding and gave the signal to her chums.

Once more they had to put all their strength into a steady dragging at the rope. Heels were dug in the spongy top soil of the cliff. As if they were one side in a tug-o'-war, Polly and the rest leaned backwards as they pulled—and still pulled.

Betty wanted to lend a hand, but she thought she had better stay at the very edge of the cliff to pass on any signals.

She saw—and those tugging at the rope could tell—that it was coming in slowly. As they could not be hauling anything upwards, they knew that the vessel must be easing outwards, away from the rocks against which it had been chafing.

But now the monster was moving forwards under its own power, and Dave shouted to Jimmy to let go.

As Betty understood, Jimmy was to do that and then jump back to the rocks. The released rope would slip free of the ring-bolt, and Polly and her chums were likely to tumble backwards; but they would have done their bit!

Jimmy let the rope go free; but although there was a comic tumbling backwards by the girls, Betty did not witness it.

She could not withdraw her eyes from the thrilling scene below. Those eyes were wide with

sudden horror as they watched Jimmy, still on the vessel—unable to jump.

It was too late for him to do so.

There he was, with the vessel now gliding away from the wave-beaten rocks, and he an involuntary passenger.

He had the after conning-dome to cling to, but as for foothold, there was none for him that did not come in for the violent wash of the waves.

Such was his desperate situation—poor Jimmy!—whilst Polly and the other girls were scrambling up from the turf of the cliff-top after being all asprawl.



Before Jimmy could leap ashore the vessel glided out into deep water, and there was nothing for him to do but to cling on as best he could.

They saw Betty staring down to the turbulent waters as if fascinated, and they ran to her.

"How's things now, Betty?" panted the mad-cap. "Great goodness!"

"Oh!" one of the others groaned aloud. "Look—look at Jimmy! Can they take him inside with them? Is there room?"

"And supposing the vessel submerges!" Helen almost shrieked. "It's moving off into open water—"

"But those inside must know he is there," Pam said tensely. "The conning-domes have all those windows. Either Jack or Mr. Courtney must be aware. Jimmy—Jimmy will just cling on and be all right. . . . Oh, surely he will be all right, unless—"

"Unless," Betty said hoarsely, "they have to submerge whether they want to or not!"

Dawker's Last Chance

ON the cliffs of Morcove, hiding amongst some patches of gorse, two men were in anxious talk.

Their subdued voices were hoarse.

"What are we to do, then—just throw up the whole thing and keep out of the way of the cops now?"

"Looks as if it has come to that, Jake."

This reply was followed by a grumbling murmur from the man who had spoken. Like his companion, he looked as if he were the worse for ceaseless activity and exposure in the last four-and-twenty hours. But a sudden fit of rage left him with the remnant of his energies so remustered that he looked, all in a moment, capable of great violence.

He shook a clenched fist at the open sea beyond the gorse-clad cliffs.

"That's what's done us; beaten the lot of us!" he seethed. "The foul weather we've had; that rough sea. It made the steamer late, and it made them lose the prize—confound it!"

The other man, Jake, cleared his throat.

"Well, if it's all we've got to do now—better do it, eh, Dawker? Wonder what's become of—"

"Don't breathe that quitter's name to me!" raged Dawker. "I only hope he does get taken up, and get a few years in gaol. He had the least to do of any of us; just pretend to be Peter Courtway for a time. But his nerve was never equal to that, even."

"Huh! Well, you can't say I've let you down."

"Jake, I don't say it. If you and I haven't done more than our share, then let the others show what they've done. The steamer late; and even those two chaps of ours in the Diver—"

"They've been showing enough pluck, Dawker."

"Made a mull of it in the end, anyhow," was the snarled answer. "Or would we be seeing what we can see now out yonder? They're not on board the Diver—is it likely, when there she is, coming in now? And on the surface, too."

"Aye, well; we don't know what's been happening, so we can't judge," Jake said gruffly. "All I know is, it took some doing for them chaps to work the contraption, when the whole thing must have been packed full of new gadgets. The sea's the sea, Dawker."

"But it makes me crazy," that man raged on, "to think that it's all up with the whole business now—must be."

Kneeling up, he dragged a screening branch of gorse aside, and could then see out to the rolling waters. He swore again to himself, then muttered:

"Look at her! Coming in, mind you, under her own power, Jake."

"Aye!"

"That's no drifting in, with our chaps inside her, trying to get over a breakdown. She's being steered for this shore."

"Steered for the Morcove jetty, if you ask me," said Jake, as he, too, gazed at the novel craft which had been Morcove's much-talked-about monster.

"So Courtway and his lot must have got hold of her on the island," Dawker pondered furiously. "I'd like to know how. We've lost her, and that means we have lost all."

"'Twouldn't ha' been so bad if only we'd got that pocket-book in the night, Dawker."

"Oh, so you're going to begin about that, are you? Didn't I do my best there?"

"I'm not saying you didn't. I'm only saying it was unlucky—"

"Unlucky! The luck's gone dead against us at the finish," Dawker said savagely. "You know very well, Jake, as regards the pocket-book; if I tried once in the night, I tried a dozen times."

"I know you did."

"But what chance was there? The very night I should have been able to break into the schoolhouse easy, they must all go and stay up all night. Anyhow, the whole staff, from the headmistress downwards—"

"That's why I say unlucky."

"Lights on everywhere," Dawker continued his savage excuses for failure in the night. "Fifty times I must have had to dodge back. And police hanging about outside, too."

"Still hanging about to-day," Jake rejoined uneasily. "So I reckon, Dawker, we had best be off now. Lie low until nightfall, somewhere miles away from here, and then see if we can't pick up a goods train—hide in a railway truck." He added gruffly: "I don't know about you, but I've done that all right, many a time, in the States."

"Hark!"

Crouching there, they looked excitedly at each other as a very faint hulloaloo came to them on the falling wind from a good distance away.

"The Diver's been seen, Jake."

"That's about it. Mebbe some of the scholars at the school have—"

"The school! Jake, listen to me," Dawker whispered tensely. "This gives me an idea, Jake. A last throw, and chance it. About that pocket-book; hasn't the whole difficulty been such a lot of them about the place, over yonder at the school? But there's going to be a rush to see the monster, as the kids have been calling it. Hark, now!"

"Aye, there's no mistaking what all that row means!"

"For a cert, Jake, they'll all be rushing out to the cliffs in front of the school—or down to the shore if the tide's not too high. Nothing will keep them in when there's that thing coming to land."

Dawker pounded the turf with a clenched fist in his sudden access of reckless determination. "So I'm going to have another shot for it, Jake. I am! To blazes with its being broad daylight! Give me a schoolhouse with hardly a soul left in the place, and I'll get in—somehow."

Jake looked eager, and Dawker said the next words as to a confederate who was really trustworthy.

"Jake, we could always sell the pocket-book for a few thousand—we know where."

"They might give us even more, as they've lost the model of the machine."

"There's something in that, too," Dawker nodded. "Then it's to be you and me, Jake; just the pair of us, now. You come along with me and stand by, and—"

"Fifty-fifty, Dawker?"

"Fifty-fifty. I've got the biggest risk to take now. But you're a better hand at managing a getaway, and I shall look to you there, Jake."

"Listen agen, Dawker."

They both listened. And, hearing the distant outcry growing louder and louder, they ended by smiling and nodding in a gratified way as they met each other's eyes.

Etta All Alone

"ETTA HARGROVE, will you tell all those girls to—"

"But, Miss Massingham—"

"I don't care; they are not to go out of bounds."

"Oh, please, Miss Massingham—"

"Etta, is this proving yourself a fit deputy-captain?"

"But if Betty were here she—she'd feel just as I do, I'm sure. Miss Massingham, can't you allow for the girls' excitement over what has just been seen in the sea?"

"No, I can understand their being excited, of course, but I cannot allow that excitement to put them out of control. Run after them—"

"It's that mysterious monster-thing been seen again."

"Now, Etta, you yourself will go indoors—at once! I will attend to those unruly girls myself. Go in—"

"But—"

"Etta, go-up-to—your study!"

This was Miss Massingham, never a very amiable mistress, in her most implacable mood.

The time was fifteen minutes after the mid-day dismissal from those morning classes which Morcove had been attending, in spite of the prevailing anxiety.

Girls had spent only the first ten minutes out of doors, when suddenly such a sensation had come about as would not be forgotten for many a day.

Few were the girls who had started games, even as a matter of self-discipline. Everywhere in the school grounds batches of girls had been drifting about, discussing the great mystery of their vanished friends with undiminished gravity. But all in a moment a startled silence had fallen upon all.

By the dozen and the score girls were transfixed, looking as if they doubted whether they could have heard aright. An excitable yell—something about somebody having seen the Monster again, out at sea.

Then, the insistent cry being traced to a certain junior who had just come out by the main porch of the schoolhouse, there had been a rush to find out what she meant by it all.

Morcove, in general, was feeling indignant. Fancy a girl starting that sort of talk again, a day like this! Fancy her reviving such stupid nonsense when the school had its missing friends to think about!

But it was only five minutes after this that all angry scepticism was at an end. That junior had been right. There was a strange object out at sea: only it was not the living Monster that Morcove, days ago, had been asked to believe in. It was—well, what was it?

None could say.

Now there was a general rushing out of doors, again with an idea that the school could never be expected to stay in bounds after a thing like this. The school gates were being kept closed to-day—a most unusual thing. But who were the girls incapable of a swarm over the boundary walls or of a bursting through weak places in boundary hedges?

It was a tremendous hubbub—one that Miss Massingham, so far as her charges were concerned, was determined to stop. And Etta, a minute since, had even come looking for that mistress, hoping to get permission of the Fourth Form to go along to the cliffs. What a mistake to have expected any such concession. Miss Massingham was not that sort.

One consolation Etta had, and that was that the grumpy mistress would now have to tackle the runaway Form herself. And really it was just as well, perhaps. It could be doubted whether even Betty Barton, with all her presence as captain, could have turned the juniors back.

It seemed to Etta Hargrove that she was the

only girl still under the schoolhouse roof as she climbed the first flight of stairs. Incidentally, it was like her to feel bound to obey Miss Massingham's command of a few moments ago.

She, Etta, was a girl with a strong sense of discipline. That was why, when the great excitement started, she had remembered the gating order. Realising that girls were likely to be off and away en masse, she had thought it was up to her, as acting captain, to get permission and so have the whole thing put in order.

To Etta, a gating order was a gating order until it was officially called off. Similarly, for her to have been ordered, however undeservedly, to go up to her study, meant that she must go.

From one of the landing windows, on her way upstairs, she had a good view of what was happening out of doors. She saw girls of all ages and sizes swarming over walls, breaking through hedges—getting out somehow. Seniors who should have set a better example were doing just as badly—and what wonder? The school, as Etta knew, was convinced that the Monster was coming close inshore.

She saw, too, Miss Massingham at the end of what must have been a most dignified and trying run, getting to one of those far walls just too late to use her authority to any purpose.

The last girls, just there, were on top of the wall, and even then dropping down on the other side of it. In vain Miss Massingham ran to and fro, her repeated cries adding to all the din. And Etta laughed.

"I'd like to see her get over the wall herself." Miss Massingham did not do that. But she did finally run to another sector of the boundary, where there was only a privet hedge.

There again she was too late; all the girls were gone. The hedge, however, could offer new-made game, one of which the irate mistress was quick to seize. And again Etta laughed.

The sight of a Form mistress of Miss Massingham's age, stature and cherished dignity struggling through that hedge was one that appealed to Etta's sense of humour.

Only, less could be seen of the sea from this staircase window than could be seen from some of the study windows in the Fourth Form quarters. Etta therefore hastened the rest of her way upstairs, finding neither servant nor school-fellow with whom to exchange a word.

She was convinced, as soon as she got to the Fourth Form corridor, that not a soul was to be found.

Hastening into her own study, she darted across to the window.

There was much to be seen. Away at the edge of the cliffs a watchful throng was lined out, some of the midget figures making restless movements, yet always keeping with the crowd.

On the grass between the road and the edge of the cliffs numbers of girls were still running to join the crowd. Last of all, a noticeable figure because she was so isolated—and so slow in the general race—could be seen Miss Massingham.

But Etta's eager gaze sought the sea. Where was the so-called Monster now? This was such a gloomy day, and the waves were so rough it was extremely difficult to make out anything very clearly. Yet she had glimpsed the strange object, as had all the other girls, a few minutes ago. Now she scanned the angry waters futilely.

Had it dived, as it appeared to be capable of doing? If it had turned about and worked away from the coast, still keeping to the surface, then she should have been able to pick it out with her straining eyes. Visibility was poor, but the Third

would have had to make off at terrific speed to be lost in the thin mist already.

Suddenly she was aware of significant movements on the part of those who were already watching from the edge of the cliffs. A rush seemed to have set in for that zigzag path which led down to the beach.

Then Etta could feel certain; the Monster was still close inshore. It might even be coming ashore. She still called it the Monster in her mind, although she realised that it was some man-made thing of the nature of a tiny submarine. What had been called the two "humps" on the back of the supposed sea mammoth were really dome-shaped conning-towers.

Hallo! There it was, in sight to her again. And, sure enough, it was much nearer in now, not more than half a mile out, at most. It could hardly be less than half a mile from the shore, she reckoned, or she would not have been able to see it from the study window. Why she had missed it when she first looked was because a bit of the cliff had obscured that patch of sea in which it was—cruising about, should she say?

"Anyway, there it is again, and it seems to be sort of steering towards the shore. How extraordinary, mysterious!" she exclaimed aloud to herself. "Whatever it is, and what brings it here a day like this?"

She could imagine the roughness of the waves along the shore. Had not that motor-boat belonging to Mr. Peter Courtway been washed up, utterly smashed? Yet here was this strange vessel—if you could call it a vessel—apparently steering for the shore. Its movements were much too rapid to be due to mere drifting.

"If only I had some glasses," she muttered.

Field-glasses—now she was recollecting; the Study 12 girls had a pair, and perhaps, if she slipped along to that study, she would find them there?

Five seconds later she was in Study 12, confident that it was not taking an unwarrantable liberty to be trying to lay hands on the field-glasses. If she found them she could use them from this study window, which had the same view of the sea. But were the glasses to be found, after all?

They were not in any of the most likely places. Every other moment, whilst she hunted around, she was glancing out of the window to make sure that the mystery object was still in her field of vision. All too rapidly it seemed to be moving through the foaming waves in such a direction that it would soon be out of sight again.

So at last she took her stand at the window to watch with her unaided eyes. She had not found the glasses and was too excited to be able to go on hunting for them. The crowd on the cliffs had melted away. There must have been a wholesale rushing down the zigzag path to the storm-beaten shore.

Why?

Scarcely had she gazed afresh than a sound from behind made her turn round.

To her amazement and alarm, she saw a tall man in the study doorway. He looked taken aback at finding somebody in the room.

For a moment neither he nor she moved or spoke. Etta's lips were parted in round "O" fashion. She felt her heart starting to thump violently.

Who was this man? What was he doing here? Then she recognised him. Once, at least, she had seen him before, when he had come with a message to the school.

Dawker! The manservant at Cliff Edge bungalow who was in the service of the Courtways!

Dawker Tries Again

AT last he spoke, ending that dramatic stillness.

"It's all right. I—I only want to get something."

Etta's brows went higher still.

"What do you mean? From this study?"

"Er—yes, miss."

"Has anybody given you permission to come here? Who showed you in downstairs?"

"That's all right, miss. You just keep quiet—"

"It can't be all right. I know who you are. You're Dawker, Mr. Courtway's manservant. And you've been missing from—"

She broke off. Check of the man! He was advancing into the study—stepping to the table as if to find what he wanted there.

"You had better be careful," she warned him spiritedly. "You've turned up like this just when— Oh!"

Her startled exclamation came as she saw that he, pulling open a table drawer on that side where Betty Barton always sat, was taking out a small package.

She recognised that package instantly.

"Here," she cried out indignantly, "leave that alone! That belongs to Ethel Courtway—I know it does! She gave it to me to take care of a little while before she disappeared, and I gave it our Form captain to mind. I—"

But it was useless her saying more or protesting further. The man had whipped about and was bolting out of the study.

She rushed after him. As she had to cross the room to get to the door, he was able to bang it shut in her face after his own rapid exit. There was no key, however. Studies were not allowed locks. Instantly Etta reopened the door and flew in pursuit again.

"Stop him!" she called out, for what it was worth. "Help!"

He ran up the long corridor to the main staircase, but had the wit not to go rushing down those stairs. Instead, he darted to some push-bar doors on the landing, serving the outside fire-escape.

The latter was a broad iron stairway, leading down to the ground in short, straight flights. She could not gain on him, so swiftly was he clattering down the iron stairs.

Then, in his wild haste, on the bottom flight he missed his step and went sprawling head-long.

Now! Without a thought for her own safety Etta dashed down, to swoop upon him before he should recover from the fall, and so wrest the package from him. He was a desperate man, and likely to be infuriated now; but she had to chance all that.

A thief! And yet, most mysteriously, he was the Courtways' manservant, wanting to get away with something that was Ethel's.

He was floundering up by the time she got to him. With a kind of jump that she hoped would give her slight figure added weight, she simply crashed against him, and he went upon his knees. Somehow she quite toppled him over again. He struck out at her wildly, and the blow took her left shoulder. But she made a grab for the package—and got it.

Agasp after the pursuit and the sharp tussle, she fled, with the package clasped close. She wanted to shout for help, but had not the breath to spare. He was coming after her.

Run! How she ran, with him the pursuer now



Etta raced down to the water's edge. "It's all right, Jack!" she panted. "The diary's safe! I've got it here!"

and she pursued. In those first few moments she had no idea as to which way she was going. She only knew that no one was appearing, to help her. The school grounds were as deserted as the schoolhouse had been.

Etta cast a glance behind as she ran, and was doubly gladdened. He was not overtaking her, and she could tell that he was limping as he ran. He had hurt a knee or ankle when he sprawled just now.

Then she was at one of the boundary hedges, and suddenly her mind was made up; she must burst through and run on until she got to some of her schoolmates—with the package. The seashore—that was the thing to do now—make for the shore. All Morcove was there, she was certain.

No sooner had she burst through the hedge than she was aware of his coming through it, still in pursuit. And she was as out of breath as all this.

Nobody in sight, even now! Policemen had been patrolling the neighbourhood, but now—just when one was wanted—oh, no! But that meant no reflection on their zeal; it simply meant that the coming to land of the mysterious monster had attracted everybody to the beach.

On and on she ran, knowing that Dawker was being encouraged to keep up the pursuit because there was no one to intervene. He and she—they seemed to be utterly and fatally alone.

On and on! Thank goodness, she was nearly at the top of the zig-zag which was Morcove's only way down to the shore. There was smooth turf for her to traverse now, and it helped. Only it was similarly helping him.

One last backward look she cast as she got to the top of the rock steps. He was coming on no longer.

That, she realised, was not because he was at his last gasp. He dare not chase her down those steps, knowing that all Morcove was on the shore below—police as well, most likely!

Pouf! She was labouring for breath, but she would not stop to recover until she was half-way down the zig-zag.

Then, where a level, gravelly place formed a kind of landing between one flight of steps and another, she stopped for a "breather."

The pause enabled her to use her eyes eagerly, and then she saw crowds of people either mustered already on the old stone jetty, or running to get to it. And there, in the comparatively smooth water provided by the jetty, was that strange, submarine-like vessel.

There was little in this that surprised Etta. She had almost expected it. What did hold her transfixed was to see a kind of round window in one of the vessel's conning-domes fly open and a head pop forth.

She took it for a man's head at first sight, but in a few moments an entire figure had wriggled out, to rise unsteadily upon the shining back of the monster, and whilst the crowd mingled wild cheering with rejoicing cries, even at this distance Etta herself recognised—one of the missing boys!

She would have continued her rush down the zig-zag, but now she saw a second figure writhing out. Another boy!

Etta's brain swirled. Was it all a dream? First the nightmare encounter with Dawker, all so inexplicable, and now—this!

Those two boys, safe and sound after all! And if that was the case with them—were the others just as safe? Were the girls, were Ethel and her uncle and aunt, also on board that mystery-craft? But surely not!

It was a state of bewilderment from which she had to free herself with a great effort. In the next minute or so she was first completing her rush down the rock-like steps and then panting on again, over wet shingle with the waves tumbling close at hand.

A fresh surprise was the fact that some of the girls who had been crowding on the jetty

were now coming this way, full-pelt. It was as if they had been seized with the impulse to rush back to Morcove, with sensational news.

She and they met midway between the jetty and the zig-zag, and it was for her to make the best of a minor babel of excitable cries.

"Etta, what do you think—"

"Jack and Jimmy—"

"Safe, safe, Etta! And so are the others—all of them!"

"Yes, Etta—safe!"

"But—" she panted.

"But we can't stop now," one of her schoolmates pleaded. "Run and see for yourself, Etta! We have to rush to the school—"

"With the news? But there's no one there, scarcely!"

"No!" Etta was answered wildly, "and that's what makes it all the more urgent! The boys' first words, just now—if we don't look out, something valuable will be stolen from the school—"

"A package, Etta! In Study 12—"

"A package? Oh, but wait—wait!" Etta cried.

"You mean—this?"

She held out the package, and they gaped at it.

"I've just saved it from a man who took it from a drawer in Study 12. It was that Dawker fellow—the Courtways' manservant. I wouldn't let him get away with it. I guessed he had no right. It's the package that belongs to Ethel Courtway—"

"That's the one we mean! Oh, Etta, run and let them know—it's saved, it's saved!"

"But you can come?" she suggested, eagerly.

"There's no need to go back to the school now!"

"Yes, there is," she was answered. "We've got to get an urgent message off. For the Sand-ton Bay lifeboat to go out to Gull Island. The girls are there! All the others who were missing are there—"

"On Gull Island?" gasped Etta. "Goodness! But—but what are they doing there? How did they get there? And—and that strange boat-thing—"

"Etta dear, we can't explain, for we just don't know, ourselves, anything more than that," one of her schoolmates answered. "But it's all right! The pocket-book is saved. As for the girls—and Ethel Courtway—and Ethel's aunt—"

"And Dave Cardew and that other boy, Bobby. Bloot?"

"Yes, yes! They're none the worse for it all, so far," Etta was joyfully assured. "And it shouldn't be more than a few hours before the lifeboat brings them back to Morcove! And now go and tell the boys, Etta!"

From a Study Window

ABOVE the tree-tops peep the hills
Which stand between us and the sea.
Where long years since, a night of thrills!—
The beacon told an enemy

That England did not deem it vain
To face the might and pomp of Spain.

And see the oak tree near the pool;
Before Queen Anne its branches dipped,
The day she came to see the school
And gave us grants for scholarship.
Two hundred Summers past and fled—
Two hundred Autumns' gorgeous red!

There in the quad, the legends show,
A smuggler sought for hiding place
A century or so ago,
To hold his contraband of lace.
The ivy rustled on that night—
It had not grown its present height.

The shadows gather, twilight falls,
I see faint ghosts of yesteryear,
Bonnets and sashes, dainty shawls—
Then coaches brought the schoolgirls here.
A breathless whisper: "Is it true
That we have won at Waterloo?"

The playing grounds, now velvety,
Were fields with poppies all aflame.
'Twas not their fate to live and see
A schoolgirl gain athletic fame.
Victoria then was on the throne,
And Hockey, Tennis, hardly known.

A bell rings out, its echo clears
And fades away into the past.
Its music mingles down the years,
A cadence that will ever last.
Good-night, the lights dim one by one,
Another happy schoolday gone.

IRIS HOLT

IT took Etta but a moment to make the final dash down to the rocky shore, where she could see two boys—Jack and Jimmy—floundering through shallow water after leaving the monster.

"Jack—Jimmy! Coo-ee!" Etta called, wildly waving the package. "It's all right! Saved!"

Before they could answer she was down on the shore, leaping across the rocks towards them. She reached the water's edge and held out the packet to Jack.

"It's all right, Jack—I've told the others; they've gone on to the school!" Etta panted. "I came down to tell you—the diary's safe. I— managed to stop Dawker from getting hold of it!"

"Bravo, Etta!" Jack exclaimed, and Jimmy added, fervently:
"You're a brick!"

Polly on the 'Phone

AND now commenced the last act in that exciting drama which really began with the mystery of the Monster.

Now, indeed, it was "all over bar shouting."

What shouting there was, too, when the Fourth Form's missing girls and its acting mistress and Aunt Janet and Dave and Bobby, all turned up about four o'clock that afternoon. As Naomer said:

"Just in time for tea!"

To say that none of the victims of the great conspiracy looked any the worse for the recent ordeal was to ignore the very bedraggled, unkempt appearance of all of them.

But hot baths and changes of clothing soon took good effect, and then it could be seen that all were as fit as fiddles.

Betty and some of her co-adventurers felt so splendid, they thought it all rot, their being packed off to the "san," to spend the rest of the day between blankets. Morcove was celebrating—and why couldn't they join in? But Authority decreed otherwise, and Authority had to be obeyed.

Nor did banishment to the "san" fail to provide compensations.

It was rather jolly, their being all in the same big, airy ward, and to be waited on hand and foot. Paula's sigh, after being served with tea to drink from something better than a tin mug, was a blissful one. Naomer's comment on the trays that came round was a most emphatic:

"Gorjus!"

Polly, however, if only for fun, would have her grumble.

"We can't see the boys, dash it! They've bundled them all back to Grangemoor, when we might all just as well be finishing that hockey-match which was cut short the other day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, well," was Pam's serenely smiled rejoinder, from her bed, "we shall see them again—next Saturday, I expect."

"Saturday! What's the good of that!"

Then Morcove's own trained nurse came across to Polly, to appease that rebellious "patient."

"If you're good, Polly—"

"I'm never that, nurse!"

"If you try to be good, Polly—"

"I don't feel I can try," sighed Polly, looking angelic.

"Then it's no use my promising to let you speak on the extension 'phone with your brother, from this ward, presently."

Morcove's madcap must have been phenomenally good after that, for nurse had great pleasure, round about eight o'clock, in letting Polly get into a dressing-gown and slippers to pad across to the extension telephone.

"Three minutes! That's all," nurse whispered.

"You're a darling!" Polly said, and then found that she had said it into the telephone. For she heard Jack saying, in an awfully pleased way:

"Am I, Polly?"

"You? No!" said she, with all the old make-believe contempt. "You're a looney, Jack! Why I rang up, Naomer wants to know how the Blood boy is feeling?"

"Bekas, tell him," Naomer yelled from her bed, "we are having a gorjus time now! Hot soup, just going to be brought round!"

"Jack says that Bobby Blood has already put on fresh weight," Polly announced, after some listening in at the receiver. "Dave's reading Greek, Judy, in bed—fancy! And about Jimmy, Pam dear—"

"Yes, how is Jimmy?"

"Jimmy's asleep, Jack says. I don't believe it myself. Jack says that Jimmy is smiling in his sleep, as if he were dreaming of you, Pam."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, well, tell Jack not to wake him," said Pam serenely.

"Bravo, Pam!" Betty laughed on.

"Now, my dear," whispered much-amused nurse; "three minutes!"

"Oh, be blowed! Jack—hi, before we ring off!" the madcap spoke into the receiver. "You know they've caught Dawker, anyhow? Fact, yes. An hour ago. Oh, and another thing; you boys are not to imagine that even if you hadn't got across in the monster, the pocket-book would still have been saved. If you hadn't done that, we would have been there on island now, most likely! And Dawker, to-night, would have—"

"Polly, Polly!" nurse interposed. "You must end now!"

"Hallo, hallo—Jack?" she persisted. "Got to

ring off now! So cheerio, and do remember me to Bobby Blood!"

"Hi, not so much of eet, Polly," came from the dusky one. "Bekas—"

If Naomer said the rest, however, it was lost amidst a peal of laughter. At the same time, Polly heard the line buzzing.

"Come over on Saturday, Jack—with the team! And we'll finish that match. And have Ethel's Uncle Peter to tea, and Aunt Janet—rather! I say, can you hear me? They reckon that Dawker will get five years, and serve him right!"

"Polly, Polly, Miss Somerfield is on the way up!" nurse warned. "You'll get me the sack!"

"Oh, all right! There, Jack? And another thing; the next time your sister says she has seen a monster in the sea, you might believe her! Good-night, Jack darling!"

And Polly, abandoning the telephone, flew back to her bed, being just in time to get between the sheets before Morcove's headmistress entered, intending to inquire after all the "patients" and to tell them, once again, how proud she was of the parts that all of them had played.

[THE END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

STUDY 12 ON HOLIDAY

Next Tuesday you will meet all your favourites of Morcove and Grangemoor in the first of a novel series of long complete Easter holiday stories. Next week's powerful tale is a happy blend of rollicking holiday fun and gripping mystery, and is entitled:—



The Morcove Paying Guests

By Marjorie Stanton