

"NORMA OF THE 'BLUE DOMINOES'"  
Grand New Serial Begins Inside

# The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 2d

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More Stirring Holiday Adventures for Morcove and Grangemoor

# HOMELESS ON HOLIDAY



By  
MARJORIE STANTON

**P**ACKED with excitement as Morcove's holiday at Cassara Castle has been, now comes the biggest thrill of all. It is a thrill that has its dangerous side, too, but Morcove, splendidly backed up by Grangemoor, is undismayed.

## CHAPTER I

### Though Danger Lurks

**I**N the great kitchen of the ancient Castle of Cassara there was a state of activity presenting some rather comic features.

Strangely in contrast with the old-world character of the kitchen itself was the appearance of all except one of the participants in this bustling about to get breakfast ready.

Old and buxom Henrietta—she looked quite in keeping with her surroundings. But the rest—a few jolly schoolgirls, and a certain tall, graceful girl who was affectionately addressed at times as "Lady Evelyn"; what in the world, a stranger would have asked, were these young folk doing here?

And the answer was that, as members of a big holiday party staying at this great old castle on the Island of Cassara—a few miles off the coast of Corsica—they were simply having to help get the breakfast cooked and served. Or they and their fellow holiday-makers would have to go without.

Old Henrietta was faithful and willing and capable; but she could not be expected to do everything for a house-party numbering some fifteen guests all told!

"Lady Evelyn," cried Betty Barton gaily, "do go away and leave the rest for us girls to do!"

"Oh, am I in the way?" blandly retorted her

youthful and skittish ladyship. "Or is it the smoke from my cigarette?"

She was, in fact, indulging in that shocking but modern practice of smoking before breakfast. Very modern was Lady Evelyn, with a wonderful charm in the modernity. Her dress—or rather, her dressing-gown, for she had come down in that—was brilliant as to colour and "futuristic" in its design. And Lady Evelyn's bedroom slippers—she had come down in those also—were unique.

"But there is so little else to do now!" argued madcap Polly Linton, in support of Betty's entreaty to her decorative ladyship to efface herself. "All ready for taking in—if the others are down by now!"

"If the others are even up by now!" was the consideration that seemed to weigh with Pam Willoughby.

"Sound the gong, shall we?" suggested Betty, running another batch of plates to old Henrietta, who presided at the stove. These Morcove girls had done many useful things in the last half-hour, in preparation for breakfast. One thing they had not been able to do, and that was—help with the actual cooking. Henrietta had said a respectful but none the less firm "NO!" to that.

"Sound the gong, strike the lyte—and out of the way, kid!" Polly wittily addressed that dusky schoolmate of hers, Naomer Nakara.

"Hi, though—Polly!"

And Naomer went rushing out after madcap Polly, having to chase her along a very dim passage before overtaking her in the front hall.

"Bakas, my job to bang ye goin'! What do ye diggin'—let me have so bitter, Polly!"

The "bitter"—a kind of huge drumstick—was already in Polly's hand. So she let Naomer have it in the form of a playful tap on the crown of that imp's glossy, dark head.

"Them—BONG!" Polly smote the gong. Whang-bang, bong!

Despite some prompt answering shouts from above stairs: "Right-ho!" and "Coming!" Polly still went on striking the huge gunmetal gong. Hence, no doubt, her brother's reason for singing, as he came in from out-of-doors:

"The temple bells are ringing—

"Morning, Polly-wolly!"

"Afternoon, Jack!"

"Not at all," he disclaimed proudly. "Down ages before you! Been all round the island—"

"Oh, yeah!" said Polly.

"Been fishing," he romanced on. "My skills—sorry he won't be along with the catch in time for brekker!"

"I'm sorry, too," Polly said sweetly. "Rations are low. I'm sure Bonifacio had only one egg for the omnibite she has made for the fifteen of us!"

"Well, don't say anything to Tubby," pleaded Jack loudly. He was well aware that this school-boy pal, beefy Bobby Blood, was within earshot, having ambled in by the front door, demolishing a luscious peach.

"I don't think," Polly mused aloud, "he is looking any thinner—yet."

"No, but he is not putting on any weight; that's what worries me," Jack said. "Hay, you!" he vociferated at young Blood, who unconcernedly started upon another peach. "Don't you know that the wall fruit is all we'll have to live on soon!"

"Morning, Folly," Tubby said, with that fat, contented smile of his.

"How did you sleep?" she inquired.

"He slept on his back—and snored," Jack interpolated. "Gosh, you should have heard him snoring, Polly!"

"But we did hear—one of you boys!"

"Couldn't have been me—snore," Jack protested. "I was awake ALL night; the faithful sentinel guarding the portals, boys!" He always spoke as if he had an audience of Grandmoor pals around him. "But for me, where would you be this morning? I can tell you. In the hands of Bonifacio the Bandit—yep!"

"How can you be so flip-pant!" sighed Polly, whilst her sparkling eyes evidenced her own refusal to be serious. "He might have been in, in the night—with all those desperate characters from the village."

"Bakas—you never know! Old Bonifacio has got his knife into us now, say 'old how!'"

But Naomer, in spite of this disagreeable conviction, could look cheerful—perhaps because Tubby had now handed her a couple of peaches. There was that about Tubby; he always looked after others as well as he looked after himself—especially Naomer.

At this instant the sitting by of Betty and one or two others, from the kitchen, with things for the breakfast-table in the great dining-room, caused Jack to heel round and pretend to catch sight of the coming meal with an imaginary pair of field glasses.

"Gosh, there is to be some brekker, then, boys!"

"You heard the gong?" Polly suggested.

"Oh, that! I quite thought that was the tootin' to call out the guard. Mass-attack by Bonifacio and Co."

"What! You young people can still make a joke of it all!" smiled a certain lady who had now come downstairs with a chattering escort that included elegant Paula Creel, Helen Craig and Tess Trelawney.

"Morning, Mrs. Cardew!" she was hailed by those who were seeing her for the first time since the rather anxious retirement of the entire holiday party to bed, at a late hour last night. "Sleep well?"

"I am ashamed to say—like a top! Disgraceful," laughed Mrs. Cardew, "when I am really in charge of you all."



"I must ask you to go now," Mrs. Cardew told Bonifacio. The man laughed jeeringly. "It is for you and your young people to go!" he retorted threateningly.

"But nothing had happen in the night, after all," Helen said, in delight, thereby evidencing the fear which had prevailed overnight as to possible thrilling developments.

"No! And it's astonishing."

"All the more so, considering we found that outer door unlocked, at past ten o'clock, when it should have been closed and bolted, like the rest," was Polly's rejoinder. "But, oh, do let's get some breakfast—at last!"

"Where's Madolina?"

"Oh, she'll be down in a moment," the inquiry was answered by Mrs. Cardew. "I left her finishing dressing, in my room. She is quite all right."

"Then that's all right!" Jack said gaily. "Ah, how poor, Lady Evelyn! It has been temp, n'out of gas! Out, out!"

And, with his usual playful gallantry, he did the very effective imitation of a Frenchman, taking Lady Evelyn's small white hand, to kiss it.

"Well!" said Polly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have not forgotten, dear Lady Evelyn," Jack said stately, "how we danced together last night?"

"I have forgotten everything—"

"False one! By my soul," said Jack, grinding his teeth. "It is, then, that I have a rival in Bonifacio!"

"Oh, spare me!" pleaded Lady Evelyn, stubbing out her cigarette. "It was his moustache—I fell for that."

"I think it a great pity," Mrs. Cardew commented, "that we didn't make up a beach concert party for the summer holidays instead of coming out here to Camara, only to be as good as besieged by that dreadful bandit person. But there! It's too late now. How nice the coffee smells!"

"Yes, gorgeous!"

The orchestra will now play— Yes," Jack decided, having whisked to the gramophone to put on the first record that came to hand; "a hot-hot concerto in four movements, with piano-obligato and a scherzo!"

He left the instrument running and came gyrating across the hall floor, to find a not unwilling dance partner in his maid's sister.

From all which it will be inferred that, although the menace of Bonifacio the Bandit had been real enough to cause the owner of the castle, and all but one of his servants, to leave the island, the "paying guests" meant to face the future with heads as light as they were brave.

## CHAPTER 2

### Such a Surprise!

AND here was Madolina, hastening down to breakfast in excellent spirits, even though the flight of her uncle, a day or two since, had made the Bonifacio menace much worse for herself.

She hurried into the huge dining-hall a minute after the holiday-makers had sat down to breakfast, and from all round the table came like responses to her own:

"Good-morning, dear friends!"

Madolina would not say "Bon jour!" She had been taught English, and was proud to be able to speak it.

Now and then she came out with a quaint expression which set Morocco and Co. on the grin; but as compensation Madolina could smile when

Jack Linton, for example, rashly plunged into alleged French.

"I am in disgrace," she laughed; "down we late! And here is breakfast, just the same as if all my uncle's servants were still at work!"

"Oh, that's all right!" Jack said airily. He was going to imply jestingly that he had had a large share in helping with the meal. "Henrietta and I!"

"You!" said his sister. "I like that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter was intended by Betty and others as encouragement to Jack and Polly to keep the nonsense going. Now that Madolina was present, anything like serious talk in regard to the plight they were all in had to be avoided.

She was a fine-minded, tender-hearted girl, and they knew that it distressed her to realize how their holiday had been devastated by the Bonifacio trouble. So the thing was for all of them to make light of the predicament.

"Let Madolina taste some of that omelette," Jack genially suggested, "and see how she likes MY special recipe. And to follow, a portion of synthetic duck."

"Of what!" laughed Madolina. "I not-get you!"

"We've cooked Fanny," said Polly, and then Madolina gave a comprehending nod, looking very amused.

She knew that Fanny was the nickname for a big rubber duck which, duly inflated, had afforded the juniors great sport in the ship's swimming-pool, on the voyage out.

"We found her so expensive to keep," Helen Craig supplemented. "Besides, poor thing, she was moulted badly. At any rate, all the paint was coming off."

"But this omelette is delicious!" Madolina declared. "Henrietta could not have made one better!"

"Not surprising," laughed Betty, "as Henrietta made this one!"

"And I sink we ought to take Henrietta home with us, to Morocco School!" shrieked Naomer, plying a spoon in connection with a large helping of fruit salad. "Beha—"

"Oh, but I have engaged Henrietta, to go back in the boat with us, to become cook at Barncombe Castle," said Lady Evelyn vivaciously. "Her frigandee, are too adorable for words!"

"We always fry ours in dripping," said Jack, and Polly jumped down his throat:

"Fry what?"

"Sausages, of course, in our study at Grange-moor—don't we, chaps?" he appealed to Messrs. Jimmy Chorrol, Dave Cardew and Tubby Bloot. "A pound and a half, every Saturday night, in the winter term—just goes round nicely, allowing five for Tubby."

"Never mind, Tubby!" said Morocco, and he certainly did not appear to mind, stolidly working away at what the present meal offered.

"But this," Pam Willoughby exclaimed, "is a heavenly morning! And we are not going to waste it."

"Think it'll be bright enough for a snap of the holiday party?" Jack mock-gravely inquired. The morning sunlight, just then, was dancing. "I think we ought to get a group taken, for the weekly illustrated when we get home." Reading from left to right, front row, seated—

"I suppose it will all be in the papers!" Betty suddenly realized. "Holiday Party's Strange Adventures—"

"How Morocco Girls—"

"You mean, 'How Grange-  
saw Fellows—' corrected  
Jack, whilst getting up to cut  
meat bread at the sideboard.  
"I mean 'How Marcove  
fish—'"

"Well, anyhow, any more  
doggan, anybody? Tubby!  
Nice crust here! Inset,  
Tubby Biscot, the Hero of the  
Hour! We apologise to our  
readers for not being able to  
get in the whole of Tubby

"Shame!" dinned Marcove.  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What ought I do with  
all these boys and girls, the  
way they behave?" Mrs. Car-  
dew mirthfully inquired of  
Madeline.

"But I am amused!"

Only a moment after Made-  
line had said this, the smile  
faded from her face. Some-  
body at the table—it was  
Dave Cardew—had voiced a  
startled: "Hark!" And  
now there was an end to  
levity; a sudden change to  
grave concern.

Some there were who knew  
why Dave had turned in his  
seat to stare towards the  
dining-room door, whilst he  
asked for silence. They, too,  
fancied there had been a  
sound outside the room, just  
then, requiring explanation.

A stealthy footfall! A  
creeping step when the four  
walls of this dining-room held  
all who were known to be  
under the castle's ancient roof,  
except Bonifacio, and  
the step was not to be associated with her.

A moment longer the attentive silence  
lasted, with many a young heart beating a little faster.  
Then some of the breakfasters hitched back their  
chairs to rise. All four boys, many of the girls,  
Lady Evelyn and Mrs. Cardew—they were seized  
with the impulse to go to the room door and  
look.

But not one step had any of them taken when  
the door came open with a violence that sent it  
wide round. A man advanced by one quick stride  
across the threshold and then stood still; a giant  
of a man, dark-skinned, fierce-eyed.

And they knew him; every eye that dilated  
towards him recognised him instantly.

Bonifacio!

There would have been a hurried chair, a platter  
from the table—anything one or another of the  
boys might have snatched up for the purpose—but  
Bonifacio had a revolver in either hand.

He must have sent the door open before him  
with a kick, for he had entered with the weapons  
at the ready.

A sudden triumphant smile gave a twitch to  
his black moustache.

"Altro!" he said. "You move, I shoot—  
you!"

Those who were on their feet remained so. The  
rest sat perfectly still. Where actual terror of  
the man did not prevail, there existed a state  
of fascination, as if this were the climax in some  
play that they had come to see.

"Haw, how!" chortled  
Paula, as she came up in  
Lady Evelyn's dressing-  
gown. "Wather long for  
me, had Jove!"



Betty and several of her chums had this curious  
sensation of being part of an audience merely,  
and Bonifacio a figure upon the stage. Possibly  
it was the man's native dress—very much like the  
peasant dress in one of the old favourite operas—  
that helped to create this illusion. At any rate,  
it was an illusion that staved off the horror of  
what was so sternly real.

And then, most courageously, Mrs. Cardew  
spoke from her seat at the top end of the break-  
fast-table.

"Remember, Bonifacio!" She spoke in Eng-  
lish, knowing that he had a grasp of that lan-  
guage. "You will not forget the warning I  
gave you yesterday? We are all on British pas-  
ports."

He nodded, without lowering the clumsy-looking  
revolvers.

"The passport is for the travel, eh? Trea bien  
—very well, I advise you to do that. Travel!  
I, Bonifacio, do not want you in my castle!"

"What's that you say? In your castle, Boni-  
facio?"

He was smiling in a swaggering way even  
whilst the question was being put.

"Altro!" And he stamped the floor to con-  
firm his possessive pronoun. "This Castle of  
Castana is no longer the home of M. le Comte.  
He is a pig-dog of a coward who ran away. This  
castle is the castle of Bonifacio!"

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Cardew. "Of course, you  
are armed, and I am sure my boys and girls do  
not need to be ordered by me not to try to—  
to throw you out. We cannot have any violence.

But does a crafty act of trespass, a stealing in some window or other, give you a title to this property?"

He laughed in his throat.

"My vendetta against M. le Comte—that gives me the title, *madam!*"

"I cannot agree—"

"Pardon, but I must correct you in one thing more," he leered. "I do not get in at any window, no. I come in by a door. Last night."

A gasped "Gosh!" came from Jack, whilst others drew breath loudly.

There was not merely amazement at his having been in the castle all night. How, in the name of mystery, had he opened that door, when it had been bolted on the inside? A lock—that might have been worked with a stolen key. But how could the bolts have been slipped back?

Again Mrs. Cardew recovered her composure. "At any rate, I must ask you to go out now by that same door or any other, so long as you go!"

"Oh, I look like going, do I not?" he derided her, waving the weapons menacingly. "No, *madam!* It is for you and all your young people to go—out by that door there, *voilà!*"

And he indicated the glass doors which gave exit on to a stone-paved terrace.

By now some of the boys and girls were longing to use their tongues; but they knew that Mrs. Cardew must be left to parley with this desperado.

"Are you mad?" she retorted indignantly.

"Who knows, perhaps a little!" he shrugged and smiled. "And if I am, who is to blame? Is it not M. le Comte, for the wrong he did me long time since, so that I have lived for my revenge!"

His dark eyes suddenly glittered.

"He would not stay to face me, and perhaps I shall not find him now. Bonifacio has too much pride to go after a coward. M. le Comte has left the island. Very well! He has left the island—to me!"

"But you must understand that we, as mere visitors—holiday-makers—"

"With passports—*oui!* Oh, and I will respect them. You shall have the safe conduct—out of the castle, at once!"

"We are not going," declared Mrs. Cardew, with more defiance than she could have felt entitled to express.

"Pardon!"

"I say, we cannot be turned out like this. It is monstrous!"

"More monstrous things than that have been done on Canara," he leered. "There was, for example, the wrong that M. le Comte did me and mine! I observe that you have finished your meal! Alas, nothing need detain you, then. Oh, and I will be generous with you! *Madellina!* Let you may take her. I do not want her, now that I have taken the castle!"

"Dash it all!" Jack burst out at last. "Isn't that taking things a bit too much for granted, Mr. Bonifacio?"

Lady Evelyn plucked the headstrong lad by the sleeve restrainingly.

"Ah!" laughed Bonifacio, "you think I boast? Permit me, then, a little explanation. After I myself enter the castle last night—by a secret means known to me—"

He passed, enjoying his listeners' violent start of surprise.

"*Oui!*" he nodded impressively. "And I would ask you to remember that in fairness to me, I could have entered the castle at any time, in secret, and plunged a knife into the

heart of M. le Comte. I did not do so; my pride was against it. No, I would meet him, face to face; but he ran away—*pooh!*"

"Very well," Mrs. Cardew said testfully, "We give you credit for that."

"*Merci!*" And he bowed. "But the explanation. It is," he continued, rolling his wide jelly, "that I go to a door, last night, to let in—friends of mine. They are here in the castle now."

"What?"

"Oh, you," he said; "many friends of mine—*voilà!*"

That last word was a "See for yourselves!" as he stepped aside from the doorway, whilst a sudden rush of feet resulted in a number of men and youths packing together, there at the room's threshold.

A few of them murmured menacingly, all looked very threatening. But not one set foot inside the room, and the Britishers, if their staggered minds were still capable of appreciating psychological factors, must have realized: Bonifacio's command over this horde was wonderful.

That he was proud of his prestige, his swaggering smile soon testified.

"*Oui!*" he exclaimed in a gratified way. "Was M. le Comte better served? Let *Madellina* say! But come," he again addressed Mrs. Cardew in particular; "you have had my orders. Obey them!"

Mrs. Cardew drooped back into the chair from which she had risen a minute since. She sat reflective for a few moments, positing her brows with the stress of furious thinking.

Then she stood up again, looking first at Lady Evelyn despairingly, then at one and another of the janitors.

"What are we to do?" she exclaimed. "What else can we do but go!"

"Oh, let's go, and go at once!" Lady Evelyn said in a tone which proved she had not been silent because she lacked the nerve to speak. There was no nervousness about Lady Evelyn!

Not, indeed, were Marcora and Co. frightened. They could see a streak of comedy running through the strange drama that it was proving; the drama of a vendetta of the true Corsican type.

"*Monsieur Bonifacio,*" said Lady Evelyn, in a silver voice, and he smiled most graciously.

"*Oui!*"

"I would like to pack a few things. You will permit us all to run upstairs and get anything we absolutely need!"

"I regret," he said, showing off his authority in front of his horde of followers, every one of whom obviously held him in great admiration; "I regret—no, impossible!"

"But I am in my dressing-gown!"

"It is most becoming," he observed.

"I hope it is," smiled Lady Evelyn. "I paid enough for it. But, dear Mr. Bonifacio, at any rate you will allow some of these girls to go upstairs and—"

"No," he decreed flatly. "It might mean trickery; it might mean—anything. If *madame* there—nodding at Mrs. Cardew—will take my advice, she will see the wisdom to depart, *tout-to-suite!*"

"We must, Evelyn," sighed Mrs. Cardew resignedly. "I cannot allow any provocation to be given. It is a mercy that no one, so far, has suffered harm."

"*Bon!*" the master of the whole situation commented, "Excellent! Allez, then—*allez!*"

grew at the doorway, having been only a shadow—except when he was speaking, and there had been a kind of awed silence—now out laughing. But it was laughter charged with malice and mockery; no good-humour entered it.

And so it was impossible for any of the holiday-makers to form a belief that pity would be shown, after all. It was Bonifacio's hour, and he meant to enjoy it to the full.

"Where!" Polly fumed aloud. "What a holiday!"

"Dreadful," wailed Paula faintly. "To have to sneak out like this—with only what we are standing up in, had Jove!"

Yet Lady Evelyn, who was certainly the worst off in that respect, was taking the situation with philosophic composure. She lighted a cigarette.

"Well," she said calmly, "we must only hope that it doesn't come on to rain!"

## CHAPTER 3.

### No Respite

MRS. CARDEW, dismissing a smile that she had acquired by seeing the juniors starting to look amused, turned again to Bonifacio. Her look showed that she was going to speak to him for the last time.

"You know how we are placed!" she questioned sternly. "The steam yacht that brought us here went away to re-victual and to voyage around for a week or two. It is not due to return to this island for ten days at least. In the meantime—what am I to do with these young people?"

He shrugged.

"That is for madams to decide, at her leisure. We know what I shall do for the ten days. I shall enjoy myself. I! In the Castle of Casara," and he stamped the floor again. "At the expense of M. le Comte—oui!"

The boastful speech pleased him so much, he repeated it in the native to his swarthy followers, who all laughed and nodded.

"Oh, gosh!" Jack exploded. "If we're going—"

"Yes, let's go!" several of the girls said faintly.

If they felt sorry for themselves in such a humiliating position, they felt all the sorer for Mrs. Cardew. They could tell; as the person in charge of them all, she longed to be able to do something. And she could do—nothing.

"Any old how," Naesmer suddenly shrilled, "I am not going without taking a snack with me! Come on, Tubby—sneak. Everybody, help yourselves!"

But although Tubby, at Naesmer's bidding, started to snatch up portable remains from the breakfast-table, he was the only one to join the dumpy one in these lightning activities.

"Haven't you more pride!" Polly flared at Naesmer.

"No, bekas—you never know! Zey will let us starve, before say—"

"Come away, kid!"

"Tubby!" was Jack's calling-to-order cry. "What are you thinking about, man!"

"I'm thinking about our next meal," said Tubby, cheerfully juggling with the remains of a loaf, two jars of "confiture"—a kind of jam—and a ham. "Here, you chaps, shame to leave all this tack!"

But, rightly or wrongly, the shame seemed to others to lie in the grabbing up of eatables in front of Bonifacio and his derisive crew. Already he and they were guffawing at the pawkily haste with which Naesmer and young Bloot were "stocking up."

Another moment, and Mrs. Cardew herself was giving the unavoidable and humiliating signal for a general exodus.

Out by the French windows that opened on to terrace went the holiday-makers.

Holiday-makers! What a mockery the term was now!

"Goodness," Betty said, the thought striking her just as she was passing out with Polly and others. "What about Henrietta?"

"Oh!"

In the excitement of the Bonifacio "coup," they had forgotten the cook, in her kitchen.

Betty darted back to speak to Mrs. Cardew, who was coming out last.

"Mrs. Cardew—old Henrietta!"

"Madeline here has just reminded me of her," Judy's mother answered. "And I have appealed to Bonifacio; but he says we cannot take Henrietta."

"He gives me his word of honour she will not come to any harm, and, really, I don't know what I could do for her if she came with us," was the distressful addition. "What can one do for any of you?"

"Oh, we'll manage!" Betty declared then, stoutly. The old Mercove slogan, once again!

"Anyhow, go along with the others now, Betty dear."

There was little indeed to induce Betty or anyone else to hang back. Bonifacio had now let his followers swarm into the room. It was noisy with all the shouting and jabbering and roasting laughter.

Betty had become, by chance, the last of the Mercove girls to pass out. She took one last look at the wild scene, then ran to catch up with Polly and others.

Perhaps it was the straggling and weird procession which they made, wending their way along the terraces, or it may have been the disgruntled remarks which fell upon Betty's hearing. Be that as it might, suddenly the whole thing struck her as being so very funny, she burst out laughing.

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't see anything to laugh about!" Polly scowled.

"No, had Jove! Good gracious, Betty dear, do you realize!"

"Bekas—"

"But look at us!" Betty bleated. "Look at poor Lady Evelyn. How can she go about for a fortnight in a dressing-gown!"

"I don't know how, but she'll have to," Polly said grimly. "Ugh! Holiday, they call it!"

"Sweetie! After all no money we paid, to have a nice time and good food! And now—what a digging are we going to do; that is what I want to know!"

"It is a lively look-out, and no mistake," Helen sighed. "Bad enough if we had been allowed to collect some things. But this—"

"Shan't be able to do any sketching," Tess muttered fiercely. "No paint-box—gurr!"

"Oh, well, anyhow," Betty chuckled, "we'll be able to get plenty of bathing. No we shan't, though!" she glumly realized. "No costumes!"

"Hang!" Polly raged again. "Live on berries, I suppose! But it's awful, you know! When you come to think—"

"Dreadful!" Paula groaned. "Utter catastrophe, yes, wather! Inaffordable treatment!" And so the rostral chorus went on, whilst the entire party struggled along. Some steps at one end of the terrace were descended, and then there was the courtyard to cross. The great outer gates were closed, and the sight of them in that state caused one of the Morocco girls to exclaim:

"A lot of good it did, our keeping those gates locked and locked!"

"Yes, well," said Pam, who appeared to have recovered her habitual serenity—if she had ever lost it; "we knew, didn't we, that Bonifacio would manage to find a way in if he wanted to."

"Oh, of course," Betty nodded drearily. "we couldn't really hope to keep him and his lot out. We could only halt all the outer gates and doors as a sort of 'Keep out' warning."

"But the way he did get in, after all!" came Polly's furious cry. "By a secret means, he said. And then he crept out, and unlocked to let those others in. They must have been awfully quiet about it, all."

"And where did they hide during the night?" wondered Helen blankly. "We took such a good look-round before we went up to bed!"

"Some secret chamber—underground, perhaps," Betty suggested. "All connected with his secret way in. There may be a tunnel, up through the cliff—"

"Then what we had better do—find it, and take Bonifacio and Co. by surprise, in return," was Polly's desperate suggestion, though she knew that there was no hope, really, of turning the tables upon such a gang as that. "I could knock that Bonifacio's head off!"

"Yes, wather!"  
"Could you, Paula? Then why didn't you?" Polly cried.

Meek and mild Paula was not put to the trouble of explaining that she had spoken absent-mindedly. The hatch to which she belonged had now got to the gateway, where Dave was drawing back some rusty bolts, whilst Jack peered through a foot-square "grille" with which one of the great wooden gates was fitted.

The "grille," of course, dated back to an age when those answering a summoning jangle at the bell were compelled to make sure as to who the visitor was—whether friend or foe—before unbolting.

As for Jack's reason for taking a peep through the crossed bars, he made it known when, a moment later, he turned round to speak.

"Thought the rest of the village might be waiting to give us a cheer—just to show there's no ill-feeling," he grinned. "But it's O.K., boys."

"Is it?" said Polly.  
"Cheer up, Polly-wolly—"

"Ugh!"  
"Look at Lady Evelyn—"  
"I wish you wouldn't all keep looking at me," pleaded her ladyship. "I am not meant to be looked at—like this. Now I am afraid that I shall be mistaken for someone who has started a new sect."

"Oo, revising an ancient one," Pam smiled. "I am sure Tess is missing her paint-box badly, when you do look so—so Grecian, Lady Evelyn."

"What will the rest of us look like?" tilted Helen, "by the end of a week, say? Ladders in stockings; shoes gone to bits—"

"Gosh, chaps, and have you realised?" Jack gasped. "We'll not be able to share! Oh, my hat, we men'll have grown beards by the time the yacht turns up!"

"You might if you were men!" said Polly sweetly.

Even Dave was looking amused, at the same time pulling open one of the unfastened gates.

"Stalls and first circle only," Jack declared, in allusion to the queue that had formed. "Women and children first," changed from a theatre attendant to a ship's officer. "Have all passengers ready, please!"

Finally he became a Customs officer, detaining Naomer and Tubby as suspected smugglers.

"Anything to declare?"  
"Not to-day, thank you," said Naomer, entering into the joke. "Bekas, no is all my personal property. What sa diggins—hi!" as Jack impounded a pot of jam. "Sweets!"

"Contraband," Jack declared; and then to Tubby: "Now, sir—you! Anything to declare?"  
"One ham-bone," the body one specified, his nature being as open as the day; "a jar of honey, half a loaf—"

"Where's the other half? And what have you got inside your waistcoat?"

"Only myself," said Tubby, with an appeasing smile; but Jack scowled suspiciously.

"You look very thick round the middle! Stand aside!"

Then Lady Evelyn floated by.

"Anything to declare, madam?"

"One silk dressing-gown, six papers, and that's about all," said her adorable ladyship.

"Silk is dutiable! You must pay fifty thousand francs on that dressing-gown, madam!"

"But I wain't! I haven't a penny on me!" Jack warned the point.

"Cigarettes—I must seize those!"  
"You may have just one," said Lady Evelyn sweetly.

But Jack, although the silver case was fastened open and most tentatively offered, forbore with a chivalrous sigh.

"After lunch," said he; "if there is to be any lunch."

So young Lady Evelyn passed on in her Arcadian attire, and, overtaking some of the Morocco girls, remarked to one of them admiringly:

"That brother of yours, Polly!"

"Isn't he an ape?"

"No, I honestly don't think so!"

"Neither do I, really," the madcap whispered in strict confidence. "But it would never, never do to let him know!"

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### (Morocco Adrift)

FOR half an hour the dispossessed "holiday makers" continued in a straggling procession away from the Castle of Casars.

No route had been discussed. What choice of routes, indeed, would an island of this size have offered?

All they could do was to drift along, with a vague idea that they had better end up somewhere on the shore at last, there to fend for themselves like so many castaways upon a desert isle.

They knew that the zigzag round down which they were wandering need not involve their showing themselves in the village. Half-way down, a path turned off sharply to the left, making its own erratic course to the shore, away from the brown-tiled, whitewashed dwellings that



were on the water-front, where the old stone jetty jutted out.

This path they followed, going in single file because it was so narrow and so hemmed in by stunted bushes, with here and there a monstrous cactus.

The heat of the morning was terrific, and they were thankful to be going down hill—to the sea! How cool it looked, although the sun was blazing down upon that smooth surface. And perhaps they would come out upon some part of the shore where the sand would not be too burning-hot; one of the many tiny bays of the island, with palm trees growing almost to the water's edge.

There was so fortunate a discovery, presently, of just such a place as they had craved, drooping spirits revived. At a time when Morcott's luck had seemed to be "dead out," this was something to be thankful for—a little sandy bay, with plenty of palms, and even a spring of water trickling from a cleft in the rocks!



Nammer, overtaking the adventurous group, thrust the French bread into Polly's hand. "For ze voyage," she cried. "Bekas, you never know!"

"How about this, Mrs. Cardew?" some of the girls cried out together, quite joyfully.

"Yes—for the present, at any rate!"

"Spell-O!" said Betty, promptly stepping down in the sand for a rest.

"Spell-O, it is," Polly agreed, following her example. "But what a jolly place, really—if only we had things for camping, and—and— Oh, bother that poisonous Bonifacio! But I am not," she announced eagerly with the next breath, "going to lose my temper any more!"

"No, bekas—what so diggings, sis it goes!" Nammer yelled. "Bekas, we can get a fire going, any old box, for cooking, and we can catch lobsters, and crabs, and s'crimps, and pick plenty of wild fruit!"

"A nice mixture," Betty chuckled. "With the bay, and the jam—oh, we'll manage!"

"Palm Bay," Lady Evelyn christened the rock-walled strip of seashore. "Without the bathing machines!"

"Yes, well, we can always paddle," said Pam. "That's how we are to catch Nammer's lobster and crabs."

"Bal Jove!"

"Quite simple," Polly agreed. "You just wade about, and when you feel a sharp nip on a big toe—that's a lob."

"Thanks! I would wather wotain!"

"Can no lobster mayonnaise for you! But now, as we are all taking a rest, what about a snack? Bekas, we may as well eat what we have got whilst we have got it! Bekas you never know!"

On a show of hands, however, Nammer could only get one vote besides her own in support of the proposal. That vote was Tilly's. Whereupon, he was relieved of the heat by Jack, so as to be saved from temptation.

Presently Pam had a recollection that caused her to look round for Jimmy. She was not sitting by herself; Pam was always companionable.

But she had become pensive, and so had dropped out of the conversation.

"I say, Jimmy."

He came over and dropped down on to the sand beside her in a patch of shade.

"This business begins to look like our desert island that we talked about once. You remember?"

"Rather. Term before last."

"And in a way it's rather thrilling, isn't it?" she submitted. "To know that we have simply got to fend for ourselves, or go under. Well, we shan't do the latter, Jimmy."

"I wish," he frowned, "I could think of heaps of ideas that would help to—save you and the others from all the hardship there's going to be. It's dashed hard on you girls, and Mrs. Cardew, and Lady Evelyn, and Madeline."

Pam glanced across to Madeline, sitting with Helen and Jade and Lady Evelyn, but not taking part in the talk.

"Now Madeline is feeling very sad again, Jimmy. We can guess why. She thinks it such a shame that we've come in for all this, on our hole."

"I know what we chaps could do," Jack muttered, wearing a hard-thinking look; "cut palm leaves and other stuff, and rig up a sort of thatched shelter for you girls, for the night. I suppose we'll stay here."

"It's as good as anywhere else, I imagine," Pam quietly responded.

"I say, though!" Jimmy, for once, seemed to have been seized with a really brilliant idea. He looked astonished at having such a brain wave.

"Well!" Pam, he said eagerly, in a lowered voice, "you always know whether a thing is right or wrong to do—"

"Do I?"

"Course you do! Isn't that one of the best things about you?"

"Oh, Jimmy," she laughed. "But go on, anyhow, and I'll try to answer right. But why consult me, when—"

Jimmy smiled.

"I'd like your opinion," he said. "Would it be right for Jack, with Dave and perhaps Tubby, and, of course, myself, to get hold of one of the village boats—"

"Steal it, do you mean?" He reddened.

"It would amount to that, Pam. We'd have to take it without permission. There are one or two boats, you know, quite small, drawn up on the shore, opposite the cottages."

"Yes, I know. But—but of course"—Pam suddenly smiled radiantly—"it would be quite a fair thing to do."

"But would it, Pam? That's just the point. If you think so—"

"You, well, I do! Look at it this way, Jimmy. We were entitled to the use of the castle. We paid for a fortnight's run of the place, keep and all. And who has robbed us of the place? Bonifacio!"

"With villagers backing him up, Pam!"

"Exactly! And so—I say, all!" Pam voiced the calling-attention cry. "Jimmy's got an idea!"

"Never!"

"Gosh, Jimmy, son," said Jack, "the holiday must be doing you some good!"

"It's the change of air," was another playful suggestion, whilst a gather-round to hear Jimmy quickly took place. "From the castle on the hill, to 'Palm Bay'!"

"Jimmy's idea is this," Pam announced quite proudly. "As Bonifacio and his gang have robbed us of the use of the castle, we are entitled to collar one of the boats—"

"What, and all get away in it!" exclaimed Mrs. Cardew. "But there is no boat big enough to take us all!"

"Jimmy means, two or three or four of us get away in the boat and make for Corica, and so obtain help."

"Cheers for Jimmy!" Betty heartily proposed, and there was some really genuine applause.

"Baker-pipe-cray!" Naaman clapped. "As soon as you know, you can rush food across to us—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And a packet of twenty, it is to be hoped," said Lady Evelyn, dipping into her cigarette-case once more. "Only four left now. Oh, well, a short life and a gay one!"

"We'll do it, chaps," Jack cried, taking Mrs. Cardew's consent for granted. "And why not look-present! Altro—present! Ohi, out!"

"You're talking," said Polly loudly, "as if you boys were going to be the only ones to bring off this venture! But I am sure Mrs. Cardew is remembering, Mercove School has more to do with the sea than Grandpapa does!"

"Hear, hear!" from some of the other Monroevians. "Mrs. Cardew—"

"Oh, I shall have to think—"

"Then do think of me," pleaded Lady Evelyn.

"I can sail anything up to a twenty tonner."

"In a dressing-gown!" smiled Judy's mother.

"Why not? If anything happens, so much easier to take to the water."

"New I've an idea!" Polly fairly shouted.

"Let Lady Evelyn—as we know she really is a first-class sailor—let her put on somebody else's frock! It might be Paula's—"

"Er—had Jove—"

"And Paula wear Lady Evelyn's dressing-gown—yes!" was the mischievous chorus. "Ha, ha, ha!"

But although so playfully proposed, it became a suggestion to be carried out.

Less than fifteen minutes later, her youthful ladyship reappeared with Paula, after the pair had gone into retirement to effect the change.

Then the others did not know which of the two to applaud and laugh at the more: Lady Evelyn, in a frock slightly too small for her as regards length, certainly presented a striking appearance, and yet there was a charm about her still.

As for Paula—

"Haw, haw, haw!" chuckled that amiable duffer as she came up wearing the dressing-gown in place of the frock. "Waiver long for me, hai Jove!"

"But that's fashionable," blurted Helen. "Ha, ha, ha! Oh, girls, what does she look like!"

"Owh!"

For Paula, taking another step, found one foot entangling itself in the floppy hem of the dressing-gown.

"You'd better sit down, and stay put," Betty suggested.

"It is what I propose to do, you, waither—Oop! Thank I go again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then, in a manner typical of the serio-comic situation, there was a change from merriment to great gravity.

Mrs. Cardew had made up her mind as to who should go upon the daring adventure. All things considered, she was positive that she had made the most fitting choice, and that the really desperate plight of the whole party warranted the attempt.

Betty, Polly and Pam had been selected on account of their known abilities in regard to boating on the sea. They were to go with Lady Evelyn, Jack and Jimmy.

A smaller party than this did not seem advisable. On the other hand, Mrs. Cardew had ruled that more than two of the boys could not be spared. Possible reprisals had to be borne in mind, in which case the presence of Dave and Tubby amongst the party still on shore might make a big difference.

The earnestness of the final talk was due to a serious appreciation of the risk.

Would there be only girls and women at the village? Or were there a few of the menfolk who had failed to league themselves with Bonifacio? If there were some men and youths still

about, then it could be taken for granted that they would not be passive onlookers."

"Marcove" was commanding a boat! And even if you do get about safely in one of these," Mrs. Cardew gravely remarked to Evelyn, "they may give chase in another."

"Better for all concerned if they do that," was Mrs. Cardew's reply, "than for you who are still on board to have them coming to attack you. Anyway, Jack and Jimmy are a splendid pair, and the girls—glancing at Betty, Polly and Pam—will give good account of themselves."

"I'm sure of it," Judy's mother agreed. "Just as I am sure that we, who are remaining here, can rely on Dave and Bobby. And so—you are going to get away now!"

"The sooner the better. So good-bye, dear Mrs. Cardew, and you know I will do my best. Once aboard the lugger," Lady Evelyn finally added, "and we'll get to Corsica somehow!"

"Good-bye, and bless you all, my dears," came the fervent murmur from Mrs. Cardew, whilst many an exchange of loving farewells took place between those girls who were going after the boat and those who were remaining.

"Bye, Paula, and mind you keep warm!" Betty gurgled. "Sitting about like that, with hardly anything on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And don't forget, all of you," Naosmer shriiled; "a boat that comes to our rescue must bring plenty of parvies!"

"Of company—ohus!" said Jack. "All correct, your ladyship!"

"Splendid," she said, acknowledging the fun-loving salute. "Then off we go."

"Of company! By the r-right, quick MARCH!"

And Jack himself became the regimental band, striking up with a very effective imitation of drums, cymbals, and all:

"Ta, boom-ta, boom-ta, boom! Pom, pom, boom!"

"Bye, Betty—Polly—Pam!" the parting cries were resumed gaily. "Best of luck, all of you!"

"Bye, all!"

At this last moment, Tubby fortively handed Naosmer something, bidding her run after the boat and hand it to one of the girls.

And a few moments after that Naosmer, overlooking the adventuring six, thrust into Polly's hands—the larger half of a French loaf.

"For so voyage!" Naosmer whispered. "Bakas, you never know!"

"Oh! But, look here, kid, you'll all want—"

But "the kid" was already scampering back, and all Polly could do was to put the bread under one arm, whilst remarking appreciatively:

"Fancy that, you girls!"

## CHAPTER 5. All Aboard.

SUCH a short distance had they to go to reach the seashore village, as soon as they were out of sight of the friends they had left behind them, it became necessary to proceed secretly.

Also, the six had to repress that steved levity with which the average Britisher likes to go, as it were, into action.

For the plan was, to let it be imagined in the village that they were very forlornly drifting about, at their wits' end to know what to do.

Women and children were certain to mock at them, being well aware of Bonifacio's great coup. But any taunting yells and screeches, and even

some stone-throwing by urchins, must be taken with apparent meekness.

That had been agreed upon, so that the last thing the villagers might suspect should be—a sudden swooping upon a boat.

"And, for the love of Mike, remember," Jack earnestly whispered the girls, "you're to get aboard as soon as the boat is run into the water. Leave it to me and Jimmy to do any final shoving off."

"If there are oars or heathooks," Betty responded in a guarded voice, "we girls will get busy with them the moment we are on board. Use them to help push her out."

"That's the idea. Hullo, though—careful!" Jack warned under his breath.

They were emerging upon the steep road running between the seashore village and the castle on the cliff. Two young women of the island, gipsy-like in looks and dress, were at standstill on the road, and it was obvious that they had stopped like this because they had heard the Marcove party approaching from the narrow path.

Putting on dejected expressions, the six suffered themselves to be openly laughed at by the two women, who, next moment, resumed a dawdling down to the village. Most likely they were returning from a visit to the castle to see how the day was going with Bonifacio and his following.

All the rest of the way down that hillside road to the village, Betty and the rest had the two women behind them, discussing them decisively.

The jeering remarks were in the native patois; but the tone adopted was enough to make Polly, as one of the objects of derision, rage inwardly.

So they got down to sea-level, with the row of hotel-like dwellings upon their right, and the shore upon their left.

Breezily cries from the two women following on the dusty road brought other women and all the children of the place flocking to enjoy the pleasing spectacle. Some of the "foreigners," feeling pretty small after the brave Bonifacio's out-of-hand way of dealing with them all!

That was the exultant belief which our six encouraged in the minds of these jabbering women and shouting girls and boys, by appearing very downcast.

But more than one pair of eyes had already side-glanced the sandy shore, sloping steeply towards the placid sea. The bank of sand was deepest where two small fishing boats were drawn clear of the water.

"Make it the first we come to when we turn back," Jack suggested, with scarce a movement of his lips. "She looks the better of the two."

"Can't say I think much of it, either," grumbled Polly. "Not like the fisherman's boats round our coasts at home."

"Log-sail!" Pam questioned softly. "I wonder?"

"The one Jack said has a mast, anyhow," Jimmy muttered. "Ours on board as well—let's hope."

Lady Evelyn walked her young companions right past the line of cottages, then came to a standstill in a hesitant manner. She shook her head—hopelessly. No use going any farther that way, she was implying. They must turn back.

The small mob of women and children, observing these signs of despair, exchanged amused comments among themselves. There was a lining-out on the side of the dusty road, to accord Bonifacio's victims a volley of mocking remarks as they reposed.

Suddenly the dash was made for that boat. Lady Evelyn and the Morocco three were as lightning-like as Jack and Jimmy in their actions.

At one moment all six were rushing over the loose sand, and in the next they were at the boat.

Before the villagers had got over the surprise of such a swift and combined rush, Jack and Jimmy were pushing with all their might, whilst the girls and Lady Evelyn also contrived to help run the boat down to the water whilst making ready to scramble in over the sides.

Scarcely the broad-beamed fishing boat went sliding over the last yard or two of dry sand.

"Now, boys!" Jack roared. "In with her!"

"Goodness, they're coming," Betty panted. "But now—again!"

And a second time they contrived a combined push that left the boat with only her nose still on the sand. She was almost afloat.

"Get in!" Jack and Jimmy yelled together.

Morocco and Lady Evelyn promptly obeyed.

The boat did quite free, rocking out to deeper water, stern-first.

Then, and only then, did the boys scramble aboard—one on either side, thus preserving the boat's balance.

They toppled and tumbled in, all anyhow.

"Hurrah!" Polly started some jubilant cheering which was taken up by all. "Done it!"

But there was the second boat, and even as the girls sent a glance back to the beach, they saw some of the infuriated women rushing that other boat down to the water, obviously to give chase.

At the water's edge boys and girls poked up stones and hurled them, but no one in the scalded boat was hit.

Some of the stones fell harmlessly in the boat, the rest fell short, plopping into the water.

But although Betty and Pam could ignore this fusillade, the intended chase by women manning the second boat was regarded with excusable alarm.

No one doubted that those women could handle a boat just as skilfully as their menfolk.

The scalded boat came strangely, of course, to the Britishers. Oars were not lying where they were expected to be found, and when the handling of them did start, after a few moments of serious delay, they proved to be unwieldy.

The girls and Lady Evelyn being first on board, had positioned themselves for rowing quickly enough. There were four oars, and that meant one apiece. Betty and Pam plashed their oars in the self-same instant and could start pulling together with all their might. But Polly had a faulty rowlock to deal with, and Lady Evelyn's oar, when she first snatched it up, had some rope entangling it.

"Oh, dash!" Polly raged, still in difficulties with the rowlock. "And look at that other boat—dash!"

"Oh, the stupid bit of rope!" Lady Evelyn was complaining, when Jimmy reached a hand briskly and disentangled the oar.

Next second it was being put to good use; but Polly, getting her oar out at last, found she could not pull effectively with it. The faulty rowlock was going to be a permanent handicap.

"Ora, two!" Jack called, by no means jokingly, to help the rowers keep time together.

He and Jimmy dare not offer to take over a share of the rowing at such critical moments. Common sense dictated that they should refrain from interfering, as a lot of floundering about to change seats would only mean loss of speed.

"In—out! In—out!" Morocco was shouting how it could pull now, and Lady Evelyn was just as

energetic and as smooth in plying an oar. In—out!

But, even as the four rowers pulled so furiously and rhythmically, they could not past Jack and Jimmy over the stern and across the few yards of water which intervened between pursuers and pursued.

How that second boat was coming on, too! It held muscular women who must have helped their menfolk many a time with the fishing, caring such clumsy boats as these were to and fro—often in a rough sea even, and with nets trawling.

In—out! In—OUT!

"Splendid," Jack cheered on the women. "I say, though, I wish Jimmy and I could take a hand."

"You had better still stay where you are," Lady Evelyn counselled. "They are not gaining, are they?"

"I think they are," Pam said calmly.

In—out!

Polly's faulty rowlock had her in a fury. "Beastly thing!" she raged aloud.

Then, at a moment when things were looking none too good for Morocco, there was an inspired shout from Jack:

"Here, Jimmy—mate!"

Jimmy needed no more than that cry, and an expressive gesture, to make him understand.

Instantly he was helping Jack to drag at a heap of brown fishing-net which lay on the floor of the boat, towards the stern.

Between them the two lads heaved up the entire mass of brown net, to cast it overboard, much as fishermen pay out net for trawling—not simply to get rid of it, as Morocco and Lady Evelyn fancied.

There was more in Jack's idea than that.

Although he and Jimmy heaved the mass of net so quickly over the boat's stern, causing a terrific FLOOSH! They had not let go of it altogether.

And now, with the net in the water, just keeping to the surface, Jimmy astutely agreed to the rowers to manoeuvre the boat slightly.

At the same time, Jack, leaning over at the stern, still leaning himself with the leading mass of net.

"That's right!" he yelled, in approval of the turn the boat had taken. "Carry on, boys!"

The net was drawing out in the water, leader weights sinking parts of it, cork floats keeping other parts at the surface.

There were hundreds of yards of it, but it was in such a muddled state that it only made a hundred yards or so when at last Jack caused it to part company with the boat.

In the instant that he did that, he turned round and made his own urgent signs to the rowers to head the boat for the open sea again.

Round they brought her briskly, and pulled as hard as ever, whilst they could still find breath enough for some joyful comments and some cheering.

For the pursuing boat, before the strung-out net could be avoided, had run right into it.

The rowers in that boat were now completely baffled. Some of the oars were entangled, and, in any case, the net was dragging all round the blunt bows.

"Bye—ee!" Jack shouted, waving a mocking farewell.

The yelling and screaming merely confirmed what Morocco and Co. already knew—that the chase must now be abandoned.

"Well, Jack, I don't know," Polly panted at first, a few moments later. "You're not such a loud one, after all! But this blessed oar of mine—ah!" as it jumped again in the rowlock.

"Let me, Polly-wolly; you come on, now!" Jack insisted gaily; and he crept about carefully, to take her place without getting in others' way.

Then Jimmy stooped towards Pam, to relieve her.

"I'm quite all right, Jimmy," he was serenely assured. "Enjoying it!"

However, Lady Evelyn decided to relinquish her oar, so that he might make himself useful.

"Take mine, Jimmy!"

"Oh, thanks!"

"And so," said her ladyship, as soon as the change over had been effected, "I can enjoy a breather—and a gasper."

"How many left now?" asked Betty laughingly.

"Two, is it—or three? Anyhow, even if it's the best, I'm going to have it. Get a fill up," her ladyship blithely predicted, "when we get to Corica."

"When?" said Polly. "At present—I suppose you all know!—we seem to be rowing exactly for Marseilles, and that's hundreds of miles away, isn't it?"

But the chase was over, and this was broad daylight with the sun to go by, and so they could afford to laugh, they felt.

"Oh, we'll manage yet!" Betty gaily declared.

"An awful pity, though—a mast, but no sail!"

"So I noticed, before we'd been half a minute in the boat," Pam rejoined. "But how far is it, at the most? A couple of

miles, say, to get round from this outer side of the island; then four miles across to Corica!"

"And what's six miles," said Lady Evelyn, whiffing enjoyably at one of her last Virginia's. "Nothing!"

"To port, boys!" Jack shouted, in the right nautical voice. "Aft, stand by! And hoase up the mainsail!"

"I wish we could," sighed Polly. "But we haven't one."

"Yes, we have," her brother cried, as peculiarly as ever. "My jacket!"

And five minutes later it was serving as a make-shift sail, the entire ship's company cheering loudly whenever the breeze, by catching in the right way, helped the rowers to labour the boat over the idle sea.

#### CHAPTER 6.

##### Anxious Waiting

"PENNY, Dave!"

"Hallo, Judy. I was only thinking—all that shouting and yelling we heard has quite died away now."

"Yes, Dave. And, oh, I do hope it means that our side-managed!"

"We'll soon know. If they have got away in one of the boats, I reckon they'll have

to row or sail past, right opposite this little bay."

Judy lingered, now that she had slipped across to speak with her brother, having noticed him in an extra thoughtful state.

"We're really on the wrong side of the island, for Corica, aren't we—and so is the village, Dave?"

Her brother nodded.

"That's just it, Judy. So our party will have to go round the island, either north about, or south. Only, they may find the current more in favour of the northern way. We're to the south, of course."

But now Madelina was drawing near, looking as if her nerves were sorely tried, and so the brother and sister quickly put on brighter expressions.

"Comment?" Madelina asked tensely. "You fear, perhaps—a disaster to your friends, along there at the village?"

"Oh, no!" Judy stoically smiled. "My brother even thinks we may see them in a boat, any minute now. There is a good chance of their going by on the sea—working round, you know, to—Madelina—"

"Owl!"

"You've never told us why Bonifacio swore that vendetta against your uncle the coast?"

"And it is that you wish to know? Then I will tell you," Madelina tremulously answered. "It was many years ago, when my uncle first inherited the castle and I am only an infant. The Bonifacio, mother and son, were in the employ of my uncle. One day, he suspect them of robbing



Following a strange yell from one of them, the crowd suddenly went surging away, leaving Dave and Bobby Elcot as quickly as they had set upon them.

him. He is quick of temper in those days. Also, he is positive that the Bonifacios have robbed him. And so, he dismisses them—with anger, with violence. And afterwards, he find it was a mistake—

"An injustice, you mean? They were innocent, after all!"

"Oui!"

"What a pity!" Judy deplored, whilst her brother, also a listener, nodded to the same effect. "But couldn't your uncle—apologise?"

"Oh, he do much, much, to obtain the Bonifacio's forgiveness," Madelina rushed on vehemently. "Bonifacio, if she were here, would tell you how my uncle do everything possible. But the Bonifacios—they are like that! No; they have sworn to be revenged. For several years Bonifacio is away from the island; but his mother is always here, always in that little home of theirs in the village. And always, whilst I am growing up—if I see her, I see in her eyes what she is thinking! About her son, about my uncle—how the day will come at last. And my uncle—he is not a coward, no; but you understand, after so long time such a thing commence to be upon the nerves. A vow has been taken; a vendetta has been sworn—"

The tensely whispered narrative was suddenly interrupted by an excitable cry from Naomer.

"Bekas—oo, look, look! A boat—a boat!"

"What?" peated Judy, whilst Madelina voiced a fervent:

"Bonheur—oh, bonheur! Joy—joy!"

"Yes, there they are," said Dave, with a calm smile.

A blunt-nosed fishing boat had come into view on the flashing sea.

It was less than half a mile out, coursing southwards; a boat with something hanging at the mast much more comically than effectively.

"But they're having to row!" Helen shouted, whilst gazing with all the rest who were still at "Palm Bay."

"Yes," Judy resolutely agreed. "That's no sail on the mast."

"Bekas, what so daggings, sat is one of so boy's jackets, I know!"

"Oh, dear," murmured Mrs. Cardew. "The sails, I suppose, were not to be found—probably they'd been taken out of the boat for repair."

"But I wouldn't worry, mother," Dave counselled. "With the sea as calm as this—they should manage with the oars. A stiff job, and I wish I were there; but—"

"I dare say you do, Dave dear," his mother tenderly responded. "It would never have done, however, for me to let you and Bobby go. You two boys may yet have to—"

And there she broke off, watching the distant boat with still greater interest. A sudden change in its course puzzled her.

She wondered—they were all wondering, having noticed the same thing—why the fishing boat had been cored round, all in an instant, so that it was now stern to the shore.

"They—they are not having trouble, are they?" Mrs. Cardew exclaimed anxiously. "Some strong current, perhaps? A sort of whirlpool?"

"Oh, it could hardly veer them about like that," Dave had no hesitation in saying. "It isn't as if they were off the mouth of a river. Looks as if they are standing more out to sea—I can't imagine why!"

"Nor can I," murmured one and another of the latent watchers. "Surely they don't need to

keep any farther out, to work round for the straight run across to Caribia!" Tom added.

"Or are they turning back?" was Madge's sudden fancy. "We shall know in a few moments."

"Hark!"

It was an unintelligible halloving, coming across the intervening water from the boat.

"Don't know what they mean," Helen omitted, rather frantically. "Oh, this is rather trying!"

"Yes, wather, bai Dave!"

"I think say are yelling to us to look out for ourselves," came Naomer's uneasy query: "Bekas—you never know!"

"But they are—they really are, pulling farther out to sea!" Judy cried. "Doubting back a bit, as it were, but going farther out all the time."

"This bay so shut us in, we can't get a wide view," Helen fumed. "Bother! They'll soon be out of sight again, and we shan't have the faintest idea why they have acted like that!"

There had been only the one burst of halloving cries from the boat; but, in case some further shouting should come, the watchers lapsed into silence.

So a full minute crept by, not one pair of eyes being withdrawn from the boat for an instant even. It would not be in sight when another minute had sped, for they could see that the rowers were pulling harder than ever upon their oars—sending the clumsy boat on faster—in such a direction that it would be obscured by part of the cliff walling in the bay.

Suddenly the anxious silence was ended by another sharp: "Hark!" from several of the watchers.

But this time it was not from over the smalt water that a sound had come, intensifying the excitement.

A murmur of angry voices was now in the air, its origin unmistakable.

The villagers!

"They're coming," one of the girls said under her breath. "They're on the path that we came by."

"Yes, look out, Tubby," muttered Dave. "You and I—we must keep them back somehow."

## CHAPTER 7.

### At Bay

EXCEPT by a hazardous scramble down the face of the low cliffs, there was only the one means of going to and from the tiny bay.

A jagged gap in the rocks, forming a kind of gully, the floor of which was a narrow path descending to the sands—this was the way by which the Britishers had reached the bay.

Along this defile, as that threatening babel had given warning, women and children of the village were now advancing.

In vain Dave and Tubby made entreating signs to their companions to keep back whilst they themselves went towards the gully. Mrs. Cardew and the few girls, including Madelina, would not think of leaving these two lads to encounter the mob unsupported.

"Girls, things are looking very, very ugly for us now," Judy's mother said. "Even if we are not outnumbered—even if we manage to drive them back—they'll only fetch some of the men from the castle. They may even fetch Bonifacio."

"It's the loss of the boat," Helen said quietly. "To be expected, I suppose—a nice old row."

"Yes!"

"Zeg better not come for me, any old how," Naomer shrilled excitedly. "Bekas, I shall jolly

well use my fist! Now, Paula, no getting so wind up!"

"Er—no, but Jova, wather not!" palpitated the lover of peace.

"Bekas, oof you run away, you can only run jolo so sea!"

"I certainly shall not fail to give you others my support—morally, anyhow, but Jova!"

There was just time for some of those others to exchange amused looks, and then the villagers could be seen, surging along the gully-path. By their louder shouts and fiercer yells they proclaimed a savage satisfaction at having located these refugees from the castle.

The girls saw Dave and Tubby raise their right hands in a checking way. Mrs. Cardew put herself close to the fearless lads and not only gave her own commanding gesture but called out a few words in French.

The first response was a general uproar, louder than ever. Then—for the mob had at least stayed its onrush—two or three fierce-eyed women stepped out from the excited mass of humanity, to torrent angry words, whilst flinging hands about with all the expressiveness of their race.

Was Mrs. Cardew able to follow all this jabber-jabber, in the native patois? Half a dozen tongues there were all going at once! The Marcote girls were wondering, when some stones came over, thrown from the back of the crowd.

No one, fortunately, was hit; but it proved how ugly indeed the situation had become. The Britainers were greatly outnumbered, and this overwhelming mob was made up of islanders whose natures were crude and savage.

More stones came over, and one of the girls was hit—so painfully that she could not keep back a wince!

"Oh!"

Then Dave gave a "Come on!" sign to Tubby, and instantly, to the others' mingled admiration and dismay, both boys dashed at the vehement hordes.

Not one of the women in front did either of the boys touch, unless it was to push some virago or other aside. As the girls were aware, Dave and Tubby simply pushed past those foremost women to get at the stone-throwers at the back.

It was pandemonium then, in the gully. Mrs. Cardew and the girls had expected to be rushed at in return. Instead, nearly all the women whipped about to set upon Dave and Tubby. Evidently, the intention of those lads to "go" for the stone-throwers was being particularly resented.

But this was to mean that Dave and Tubby would have the entire mob to contend with. Could Mrs. Cardew and the girls allow that?

"Oh, come on, all!" Judy cried out wildly.

"Mother, we can't let those two boys—"

"No, no!" the rest of the girls appealed, causing Mrs. Cardew to look more distraught than ever. If they wanted to rush in and make a fight for it, side by side with Dave and Tubby, how she longed to do that—she, Dave's own mother, and answerable, too, for Tubby's safety! But she was also answerable for the safety of the girls. Poor Mrs. Cardew; what a moment of mental torment for her!

But that anguish of mind endured only for that moment or so—no longer. Then came a sudden strange yell from one of the islanders, the effect of which upon the whole mob was electrical.

The uproar died down. Fists no longer waved menacingly, but dropped out of sight. For an

(Continued on the next page.)

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**P**HEW! Should this brief that read in a rather disconnected way, please forgive your Editor. At the moment of writing the temperature is somewhere in the region of ninety in the shade, and, as if that were not enough, a small army of locusts is at work in the road just outside my office window with a sound of pneumatic drills.

Most of you, I expect, have heard these marvels of nature in operation, but have you ever heard six of them going at once? If you have, I know you will understand my difficulty in thinking soberly.

Anyway, my lot is pleasant compared with that of the valiant workmen, so I won't grumble. Another thing—and what a delightful thought it is—I shall soon be going away for a holiday.

As soon as Cuthbert returns I depart—and speaking of Cuthbert reminds me that a letter came from him this morning. As I suspected, he has ended up by going to the East Coast resort I mentioned, having landed at the eleventh hour, to his enormous astonishment, that Angela and her parents had arranged to go there. Well, well! Fancy that now! If only he

had known earlier, what a lot of thought and indecision would have been avoided.

"I think this is quite the best holiday I've ever spent, gu'ner," he writes. "This place is really top-hole, and we're able to get about so easily in the old bus"—(he means his recently acquired two-wheeler, I presume). "You won't know me when I come back. Oh, before I forget to mention it, I actually found I'd booked up to stay at the same boarding-house as my friend Angela and her father and mother. It made me think of what you often say, that truth's stranger than fiction. I'll be sorry when the holiday ends, but I reckon you've missed me, too, gu'ner, and I'll look after things O.K. while you're away."

He's a good sort is Cuthbert, and I'm glad he's having such a great time. I wonder, though, if Angela's parents are able to squeeze into the "old bus" on those excursions. I wonder—

Next Tuesday sees the beginning of a brilliant new Marcorer series. Betty & Co., with, of course, their Gramscrook cousins, are still holiday-making. From Cuznara they go on to Spain at the invitation of Isabel Alvarez and her mother, whom they aided, you will remember, in the dramatic discovery of buried treasure in the school grounds.

The first of the new series is entitled:

### "THE FUGITIVE OF SIERRA JUEZ,"

and once again Miss Stanion has written a story that will undoubtedly increase her already high reputation. As usual, there will be a full supporting programme next week.

Finally, let me thank the large number of readers who have written congratulating me on the fact that their favourite paper recently attained its seven hundredth number. One reader tells me that she has introduced the paper to no fewer than twenty new readers. Isn't that splendid?

With best wishes,  
Your sincere friend,

YOUR EDITOR.

instant it was a panicky standstill where a sheer noise had been raging; then there was an equally panicky flight by the islanders.

They went surging away, leaving Dave and Tubby standing there looking very dishevelled. And still Mrs. Cardew and the girls could not understand the reason for such a dramatic cessation of the desperate scene, until one of them chanced to look round, and to see now, about a mile away on the flashing sea—a ship!

Naomeer it was who had looked round like that, and Naomeer's was the joyful yell that went up:

"Bekas—ooo, look, look, everybody! Ze steamer! Ze yacht!"

"The what?" gasped some of Naomeer's companions, flashing round to stare in the direction her outstretched arm was giving them. "Steamer? Yacht?"

"Yes, bekas—look!"

"Good questions! Oh, goals, goals—"

"It is!" several of them yelled together joyfully. "Our yacht—"

"The Sea Nymph—yes!" Tess chimed in, gazing intently. "What's more—she's picked up the fishing-boat party. There's the boat, in tow now!"

"But Jove! Oh, goals, the wicket, the—the—  
Ow, I feel I shall—"

"So shall I!" Naomeer capered, clapping her hands. "Bekas—piporay, gorjus! Now we are saved! Now we can all go on board and cellar-brate! Hi, Tubby—quack!"

"He's hurt—"

"Tubby is! Ooo, what so diggings!"

Gene, for the moment, was all Naomeer's joy in having sighted the steam yacht; gone, as quickly as that same joy had come. She streaked, as only the Imp of Sturdy If at Morocco School could streak, to where Dave and Tubby both were rather dazedly finding Mrs. Cardew and others close at hand.

"Tubby!" Naomeer yelled. "Bekas, what's so matter, quack!"

"I—I'm all right," gasped the beefy one, looking half-torn to bits.

"No, you are not! Bekas, look at your forehead—so out in him!"

"Oh, nothing; a bit of sticking plaster will soon make that all right," Tubby puffed manfully. "But how about Dave? Bit lively whilst it lasted, wasn't it, Dave?"

"A bit!" came Dave's nodded response, followed by a breathless little laugh. He, like Tubby, certainly showed signs of having been "in the wars"; but with reassuring brokenness came the entreaty:

"Oh, mother—Judy—all of you; don't fuss! Anyhow, that crowd has suddenly cleared off. And why, I'd like to know!"

"Eeek! Lundy's yacht, you boys," Mrs. Cardew rapidly enlightened them. "The villagers caught sight of it—anchoring off the island. It must have steamed for Casarsa on account of news about us—or a rumour at least."

"The Sea Nymph!" jerked out Dave, struggling up to stand and stare at the magnificent vessel, now anchored a mile out. "So it is! And that, then, is why our chums in the borrowed boat suddenly rowed a different way. They were rowing to meet—the yacht!"

"It is, I think, that my uncle got to Genoa in time to find miler Lundy, on the yacht," Madeline put in animatingly. "And so, they return at once—to the island!"

"That's about it, for a cert," Helen cried. "Anyhow, the yacht has turned up—just in time. Oh, and see now—a boat coming off to the island!"

"Hooway, great wicket, wicket!" Paula chirruped. "Goals, goals—"

"Corjus!" And Naomeer started another Davish dance. "Bekas, we soon get so castle look now!"

"If we want it," smiled Madge meaningly.

"I want my colour-box and things, anyhow," said Tam.

"There are some of those who left us, in the boat that's pulling for the bay," Mrs. Cardew remarked. "They're all men—some of the sailors, and Lord Lundy himself, no doubt, and some of the other men."

"Lady Evelyn and Betty and the rest—they have been persuaded to stay on board, of course," Judy murmured.

"Sweetie!" Naomeer exclaimed. "Bekas, say are probably having a gorjus lunch already! But how do you feel now, Tubby?" she inquired with great solicitation. "Do you sink you would like a little of zat ham?"

"No, thanks," said the beefy one cheerfully. "I can hold out for a bit!"

"And by the look of things now," was Dave's smiling rejoinder, "you won't have to hold out for long!"

## CHAPTER 2.

### Farewell to the Island

**A**NOTHER hour, and many a shrewd conjecture had proved to be correct.

There was, for instance, that guess of Dave's about the little white Tubby and all of them would have to wait before the amenities of the lovely ocean-going yachts were theirs to enjoy again.

Less than the hour had it taken to get the Rain Bay party safely on board, where the many réjouissances were of a particularly joyous nature.

Then there was Madeline's conjecture that her uncle had been instrumental in causing the Sea Nymph to run for Casarsa at full speed, because of the Bonifacio message.

Count Josef had, indeed, got to Genoa in the small sailing boat in which he had discreetly fled the island a few days ago, to find the Sea Nymph at anchor there, re-victualling.

Nor had Naomeer erred when she pictured certain friends of hers enjoying a nice luncheon on board the Sea Nymph, even whilst Earl Lundy and the count, with various Morocco fathers, were being rowed to the island in one of the ship's lifeboats.

Bonifacio's proud hour had ended when that party came ashore, for it included sufficient representatives of law and order to guarantee safe and peaceful conditions.

All the same, it was decided that the Island of Casarsa was NOT the best place for holiday-making schoolgirls and schoolboys to seek enjoyment.

Morocco and Co felt very sorry at having to say good-bye to Madeline, but the "All aboard!" decree had gone forth, and they could only lessen the sadness of farewell by promising to see her again some day—though not, perhaps, on the island.

That farewell took place at the ship's ladder, later in the day.

Madeline had been able to spend a few last hours aboard with her friends, for the yacht could not steam away until everything belonging to the holiday-makers had been fetched away from the castle.

Even Fanny the duck came aboard again, to be promptly inflated and set afloat once more in the ship's bathing pool!



But at last the Sea Nymph's siren blew a warning wail—comp! and at the rail were Betty and Co and all the boys, shouting their final farewells and waving to Madeline as she and her uncle put off for the shore.

The throbs of the engines went through the ship.

"Oh, we're off—we're off! Hurrah!"

And again, after that jubilant comment, the Morcovs girls resumed their parting cries to Madeline.

"Good-bye, good-bye! We'll write, remember!"

"Hi! And don't forget, you are coming to England to see us all, some day! Coming to see our school at Morcovs!"

Pam found Jimmy at her elbow, in this crowd that had now rustled aft to see the white wakes that the vessel's screw was churning in the blue waters.

"A good girl, Madeline, Jimmy!"

"She was—one of the best. Not a thought for self or the danger she was in, at any time; only thinking of us—how the part of our holiday had been spoiled."

"But was it spoiled, Jimmy?"

"Well, if you don't think so, I don't! Any holiday is all right for me, so long as I am with—all of you."

Pam fluttered a handkerchief to distant Madeline.

"Poor Madeline. There'll be no more trouble with Bonifacio after this, according to what appears to have been arranged. But, at best, what sort of a life is it for a girl. I must get her to come to Swanlake some day and give her a happy time."

"One thing I shall always regret," Tess Tra-launey was heard to mutter. "That I didn't get a chance to paint Bonifacio's portrait. Fine chap!"

"Handsome is as handsome does, Tess," objected Helen.

"Yes, but Jove—the wretch!"

"Oh, but was he such an awful specimen, after all?" Polly demurred. "I don't think so. He had the whip hand, of course; but he also had a sort of code."

"The whole trouble with Bonifacio," Betty put it shrewdly, "he was a hundred per cent pride. He was riding for a fall—and he's come in for it now."

"I sent him my kind regards, my old boy," piped in Naemer. "Hoping never to see him again; bekoos, say what you like, cot was jolly unrecognizable, turning us out of our castle in so middle of brekker!"

"Not in the middle," Polly corrected. "Be fair. We had finished."

"I hadn't," said Naemer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have one of mine, Lady Evelyn?"

"Oh, thanks, Jack; I do so adore your father's garters!"

For here was her youthful ladyship, rejoicing the juniors on deck now that she had found and put on the only one of many frocks she considered really suitable for the occasion.

Lady Evelyn was having her revenge for those few hours during which she had been deprived of her travelling trunks. This was the second change since she came up the Sea Nymph ladder, out of the commandeered fishing boat.

"Lady Evelyn—I must say it," Madge exclaimed. "You do look sweet!"

"I'm comf', anyhow. What a speck Madeline's boat is now," murmured her youthful ladyship.

"And how fast the island seems to be going away from us."

"Yes!"

There was some more gazing in silence, and they heard the sea washing past with a louder surge, marking the vessel's gathered speed.

Jack, turning away from a group that had become far too pensive for him, found Tubby lounging away also.

"Where are you off to, then, Tubby?"

"Where are you?"

"I'm going to start the gramophone for a good old livener-up. A spot of dancing out here on deck."

"I'm going to see if I can find some chocs to pass round," said Tubby, smiling fatly. "And some orangeade."

"Good man!"

Those who still watched the island, growing hazier in the distance and seeming to sink into the flashing sea, were silent for a few moments longer. Then Helen exclaimed laughingly:

"Well, I wonder where we shall land next!"

"I can tell you," answered madcap Polly promptly. "On our feet—like Morcovs always does!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, pride, Polly!" cried Betty, laughing with the rest. "Remember Bonifacio!"

"Are we ever likely to forget him?" questioned the madcap.

And in a chorus came the answer:

"NO!"

[END OF THIS WEEK'S STORY.]

## And Now—Spain!

Even more thrilling adventures await the Morcovs-Grangemoor party, when they at last reach Spain.

Do not miss next Tuesday's vivid, long complete story, which is the first of a new holiday series.

It is entitled:



By Marjorie Stanton