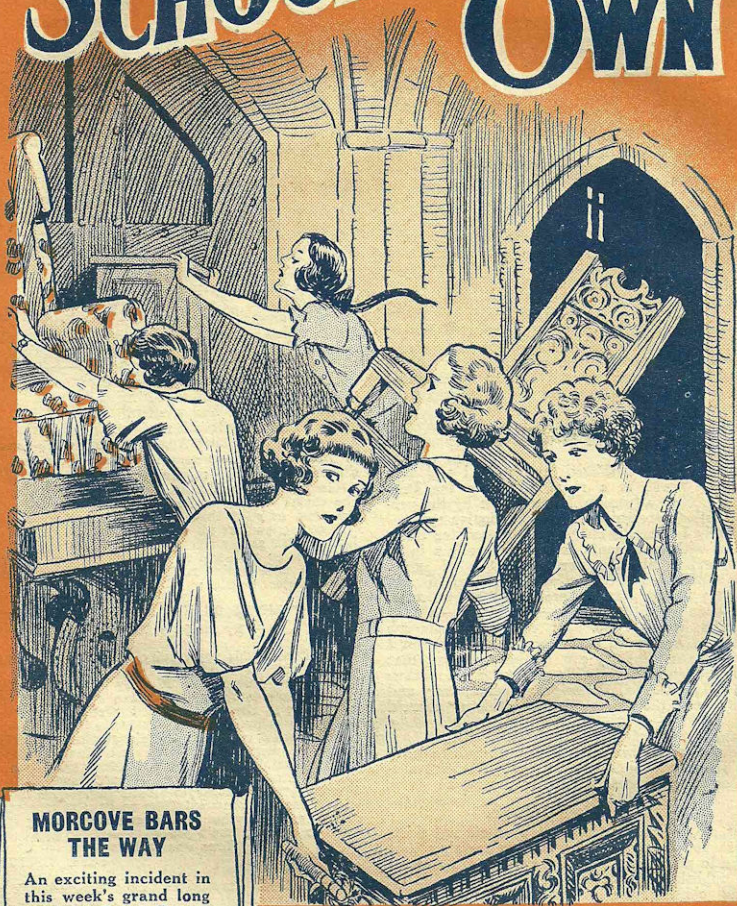


FIRST OF A GRAND NEW MORCOVE HOLIDAY SERIES INSIDE

The SCHOOLGIRLS' 2^D OWN



MORCOVE BARS THE WAY

An exciting incident in
this week's grand long
story of Betty Barton
and Co. on holiday.

No. 760. Vol. 30.
Week Ending
August 31st, 1935.
EVERY TUESDAY.

"MAUREEN and the MYSTERY PRINCESS"—Complete Story

"Now for a Peaceful Holiday," says Morcove, Never Dreaming How Soon They are to Encounter Stirring Adventure



A Hold-up on the Line

"BUT isn't it a change, girls?"
 "This lovely country of Turania, after Africa and the desert? Rather!"
 "Yes, bai Jove, and a wewashing change, too, geals!"
 "Seemly gorjus!"
 "Like those choccs you are dipping into, kid—instead of handing them round!"

And madcap Polly Linton, to the great merriment of all her companions, except Naomer, transferred the box of best assorted from Naomer's lap to her own.

This was a spacious saloon-carriage in which the famous chums of Study 12, of Morcove School, were travelling by the afternoon train to a place called Klosters, in the very loveliest and wildest part of the Eastern-European country of Turania.

Roomy though it was, the holiday-making girls were leaving no waste space in the specially attached saloon, being a jolly party of ten and much inclined to spread themselves.

Dressy Paula Creel, the beloved duffer, was able to lounge as comfortably as if she were in that favourite armchair of hers in Study 12 at Morcove School. And others, whilst the talk flowed on, were never far from the windows through which they were able to watch scenery that was far too good to be missed.

The large windows of the saloon-carriage were affording panoramic samples of marvellous views. Mountain peaks and forest-draped slopes were the glory of Turania.

At times the dense trees came right to the edge of the single track along which the train was

First of a Splendid New Holiday Series

By MARJORIE STANTON

speeding with much precautionary screaming of the engine's whistle.

Then there would be a change to some vast valley, where a river fed by mountain torrents rushed along, as if offering a challenge to the crawling train.

Overhead there was the azure summer sky and a fierce sun. This little State of Turania, remote and seldom heard of, was experiencing its hottest time of the year—no question about that. But to Betty Barton and her chums, Turania meant quite a bracing change of air, after the relaxing heat of the desert—for, for several weeks past, they had been in North Africa.

Presently the train would stop to set them down at the tiny wayside station of Klosters. From there they would go up by a zig-zagging, rough road to a hunting-box, where they were to pass the last weeks of the summer "hols"; a vast old chateau-like edifice, set on a spur of the mountain range—turreted, lattice-windows, strong as a fortress!

"I expect," Bunny Trevor suddenly voiced, "Mrs. Somerfield will be at the station to meet us."

"Loud cheers for Mrs. Somerfield!" cried Polly.

"But dash it all——"

"You are for Klosters, hein?" He must have read the "reserved" label pasted on one of the saloon-windows. "You will be so goodt, then, to jump oudt and talk!"

And then both men, standing clear of the carriage doorway, grandly gestured to the girls to be sharp about it!

Trouble at Klosters

MORCOVE, however, remained at a standstill, so amazed were they.

"Check!" Polly was heard to mutter.

"Yes, look here," Betty said protestingly, "we'd like to know more about this!"

"My young friends, der thing is done, you understand?" the speaker of broken English barked at them. "Der line, I repeadt, is cut. Der train is in der hands of der side for vich I and my gourades stand. Der whole of Turania should be, at dis moment, in our hands!"

"Then I should think," Bunny pertly observed, "you are going to have your hands full. What about it, girls?"

"If the line is cut—no use staying here, that's obvious," Betty grinned. "Come on, then!"

"Hooray!" Bunny flippantly cheered. "Pass right down the car, please!"

"Sing as we go!" Polly chanted, at the same time treating the fierce-looking revolutionaries to a polite smile.

"How about luggage?" Paula dolefully called out. "I twust it will awvive in time fow us to change fow the evening."

"Blow luggage and changing for the evening," laughed Helen. "This changing for Klosters is a big enough bore, anyhow."

Madge and Tess, at the tail end of the line, turned to each other with a gravity not shared by more joyous members of the holiday-party.

"Zora Somerfield can't have expected anything like this to happen, Tess! Or she would never have invited us to Turania."

"It's happened just like a bolt from the blue," Tess surmised. "I wonder what's happened in the capital town, Suva Pesth, at this moment?"

Suva Pesth was the capital of Turania. This train, but for the hold-up, would have gone on to Suva Pesth, having started from the frontier town.

One after another, the girls were now jumping down to lumpy ground beside the line. Madge and Tess, moving on in the queue, found that the man who could speak English had paid attention to their remarks.

"It's a coup, yess! Bud do not be afraidt," he said, with a swagger.

"Oh, we don't see anything to be afraid of," Tess assured him curtly.

"All will be ofer at vons!" the man proudly declared. "We of der Black Sash barty haf der gountry mit us. We set up a new government in Suva Pesth, and all vill be peace again at vons! Yess, tank you," he politely bowed these last two girls out of the saloon. "You may broceed to Klosters, on der feet. Goodt tay!"

"Good-afternoon, and we hope it will be fine for you," Bunny called up from the track. "And now—which way, those of you who know?"

"Along the line," Betty said, pointing the way the train had been journeying.

"Along the line the signal ran!" Polly dramatically parodied. "Morcove expects that every girl this day will—be strictly neutral!"

"Yes, wather, bai Jove," Paula sighed, quite seriously. "Fow goodness' sake, geals, don't let ge get mixed up in any swappaging. And, I say, geals, couldn't something be done about our luggage in the van?"

"Oh, come on——"

"All my fwocks, Betty deah!"

But this further lament of Paula's fell upon deaf ears. The girls carried a certain amount of hand-luggage with them.

As they reached the front part of the train they saw that other passengers, all Turanian nationals, had climbed down from their carriages. A few, however, had been allowed to keep to their compartments, and these showed their scared faces at the windows.

The blue-bloused engine-driver and his mate were lounging in their "cab," looking somewhat amused and philosophically resigned. There had



To the amazement of their captors, Betty & Co. gathered up all the eatables and began to carry them from the room. They did not mean to starve in their new quarters.

been no danger of the train running off the lines where the rails had been cut, for the rebels had used the railway signals gradually to bring the train to a halt.

There were a score or so of Black Sashes standing about. Nobody quite seemed to know what to do next, or what was likely to happen next.

As the line had been cut at a rather sharp bend, round which the girls had to make their way, they were soon "out of range." And then—

Almost they could have believed that the whole thing had never happened! They might have been simply roaming back to holiday quarters after a "hike round." There were surroundings as peaceful as they were romantic; a perfect stillness, except for the splash of the rapid river and their own merry voices as they joked about their plight.

"I twust we have not far to walk, deah geals," simpered Paula.

"At least a mile to go, even when we get to the village!" Polly told her.

"And all uphill from there, too," sighed Judy Cardew.

"Howwows!" exclaimed Paula.

"Look here, though," Betty cried; "we needn't go through the village. There's a short cut if we strike aside now and work uphill straight away! We've a good idea of the direction."

"It won't be forest all the way, either," Pam chimed in. "We shall come to open places where we are bound to see Mr. Somerfield's place—it stands out so well."

So they left the railway track and went down to the river, continuing along one of its banks until they came to a fording place.

A mirthful scrambling and jumping from one water-washed stepping-stone to another got them safely across, and then they took to a cart-track going uphill through thousands of giant firs.

In a little while the track zig-zagged to deal with the increasing steepness of the mountain-side, and along it the girls proceeded with much puffing and blowing, and more than a little muttering against Black Sashes and a revolution.

Morcove felt that the revolution might reasonably have been kept for some other time.

But suddenly the girls gave a loud "Hurrah!" They had drawn clear of the dense forest, and could see that they had only a few hundred yards farther to go to reach the hunting-box.

There it was, right before their eyes at last—high above valley and village alike; aloof from any strife which might rage—or so the girls felt; a peaceful dwelling-place, bathed in sunshine, with a wonderful capacity for hospitality!

A last scrambling rush over rough ground out on to the approach-road to the building, and then the girls ran for the front entrance. Their coming was heard indoors, and there at the threshold stood a plump and picturesque serving-woman, at sight of whom some of the chums gave glad, recognising cries.

"It's Marie Preska!"

"Yes—dear old Marie!"

"Bekas remember her cooking, ze last time!" was Naomer's contribution to the delighted outcry. "Gorjus!"

"Afternoon, Marie!" several of them called out, as they all swarmed towards her at the porch. "How are you, Marie?"

They knew that she and her honest husband, Josef Preska, were conversant with the English tongue.

"But, my faith!" buxom Marie could only

answer, being in a state of growing amazement. "You arrive like this! Your baggage—where is that? Where is Josef, my husband, then, who took the cart down to the village to meet you?"

"Oh, is Josef waiting for us down there?" Betty cried. "Shame! All his trouble for nothing."

"But—"

"Marie, we had to leave the train just before it got to Klosters village. The line was cut."

The good woman goggled her eyes in greater amazement than ever.

"Ach! You say—what?"

"Men came on board the train to order us off it. There is a revolution, it appears! Haven't you heard anything about it, up here?"

"Revo-lution!" gasped Marie Preska, clapping both hands to her ample corsage. "Revolution—here in Turania?"

"Black Sashes versus—well, we don't quite know who!"

Now the handsome eyes of Marie Preska flashed indignantly.

"Black Sashes, you say? That party—thinking to have a revolution? Puff!"

"Oh, but they talk as if there's a new government set up in Suva Pesth by now," Pam smiled.

"They talk!" Marie exploded witheringly. "Yes, they talk and talk—"

"Really, though, they have done something besides talk, for once," Bunny sparkled. "They have cut that railway line."

"And zey have made us jolly well come miles and miles on foot—sweendle! So, plis, Marie, eef zere is any tea going—"

"But, yes—pardon, that I keep you here; enter then!" Marie made hasty amends. "But what you tell me about a revolution makes this head of mine to spin! Up here, not a word; of rumours—none! Only the servants have left us suddenly! Was that why? Did they know? And how then—since it is that the railway is cut—how about my dear mistress?"

The chums stopped dead in the act of passing in.

"Why, isn't Mrs. Somerfield here then, Marie?" jerked Betty.

"My mistress went to Suva Pesth by train this morning!" cried Marie agitatedly. "She desires to visit many shops, on account of your visit. She will return, she told me, by the train which comes in at Klosters Station at the same time as yours from the other direction. The trains arrive together always, for the line is single, except at the station."

"Gosh," Polly fumed. "Nice state of things, if Mrs. Somerfield is stranded in Suva Pesth, and all of us here!"

"We'll hold the fort until Mrs. Somerfield can get back!" Bunny gurgled. "If the Black Sashes turn up—"

"My faith, let those Black Sashes show their faces here!" Marie stormed passionately. "I will give them 'revolution'—I! Pardon, I detain you when you would eat! But all is ready—when you have had the wash!"

She offered to take them up to the various rooms which had been allotted to them, but they decided to wait until after tea, hoping that Zora would turn up. Even if all the railway traffic were at a standstill, that lady might be able to get back by hiring a car.

In twos and threes the chums soon came trickling into the panelled dining-room, where the massive oak table was laid for a meat tea. It was one of those meals such as Marie gloried in providing. Nothing gave her greater delight than

to see visitors relishing samples of her wonderful cookery.

But Marie was put out now, disgruntled. She hovered around, alluding to the Black Sash business by fits and starts.

"Only this morning, I make this galantine of my own recipe," she presently exclaimed, standing to carve off slices. "It shall be, I tell myself, a revelation! And, instead, we have only a revolution! How can you all eat, to enjoy your food, when—"

"But my appetite is quite all right, zank you!" shrilled Naomer, setting down her empty cup. "In fact, zat walk up ze made me hungrier zan ever, so eef I could try ze gelatine— Ooo!" as a liberal helping promptly came to hand. "Gorjus!"

"And now—I shall ask you, for you do not speak Turanian, any of you," Marie resumed, "and yet you know all about this—revolution! There was, then, a man who could speak English, who came on to the train?"

"A big man, with bushy eyebrows—"
"Ach! There is a big man with bushy eyebrows named Bruno Corbusci!" came with annihilating contempt. "He keeps the tavern in the next village."

"He looked, to me, exactly like the president of a local dart club," said Bunny. "Six medals on his watchchain."

"Ja! Well, we shall see how many medals he receives for his part in this revolution," Marie grimly rejoined, coming round again with an enormous teapot. "I still do not hear Josef, with the cart. But now—what is that?"

And, thumping down the teapot, she turned about in a startled way, looking towards the open french windows.

"All that noise—what does it mean, then?"

The chums were sharing her curiosity to the full. Chairs were sharply hitched back; up jumped all the girls to flock to the wide windows.

For a brace of seconds there was nothing to be seen outside of an alarming nature; but a hubbub was to be heard, rapidly growing louder.

Then every eager eye beheld a party of men, rushing in by the main gateway. Two of the last men to surge in like this whipped about to clash the gates shut. Some of the others ran this way and that, as if to surround the house. "Black Sashes!" gasped Polly. "All of them!"

She and her chums, with Marie, had been instantly sighted at the french windows, which opened on to a small balcony. Now the chums saw how they were being pointed out by one of the wild-looking invaders.

This man, calling certain of his companions by name to keep with him, came on at a run for the balcony.

Promptly Betty started to close one of the french windows. Another was as hurriedly pushed shut by Pam. Behind the closed windows Morcove stood congregated, watching four men clambering over the balcony rails.

As for Marie, she had rushed away to the front hall, filling the house with her indignant, protesting cries.

The men came erect on the balcony. One was Bruno Corbusci.

"Open!" he shouted.

"No-o-o!" Morcove spiritedly refused.

"And then—crash! went one of the glass windows, smashed to smithereens.

The girls all fell back a step or so, to avoid the scattering glass as it tinkled to the carpet. Bruno Corbusci reached a hand in through the



Dismay filled Judy as she read the telegram. How could she, a hostage in the hands of rebels, obey the urgent summons it contained?

broken window, unfastened the unbroken glass door, and swaggered in.

"You English girls—"

"Bruno Corbusci," Betty cut him short, with such composure that he became drop-jawed, "as you say—we are British! You ordered us out of that train just now. Now we order you out of this house!"

"Ach," he said. "But this is not your house!"
"It is the house of our hosts, and in her absence we order you to—get out!"

"Two Must Be Hostages—"

THE leader of the Black Sashes gave his thick and snaky moustache a magnificent twirl. He drew himself up, and all the medals dangling on his watch-chain shimmered bravely.

"Der house," he announced impressively, "is no longer der house of her Highness Somerfield. We gommander idt, ja!"

"By whose authority?" Betty demanded.
"I need no authority," Bruno Corbusci said truculently. "I lead der local section of der Black Sash Barty. I am to gommand der district ven I receive der reinforcements—jah! Und my headquarters will be—"

"Not here," Betty objected.
"Shoost here," he insisted. "You young ladies—being Pritish, ve not harm you—dat is if

you behave yourselves. If you will shoost oblige by going away to a bart of der house, where—"

He got no further then. Marie Preska was back, founcing across the room in her full skirts, to place herself between him and the row of girls. She began a protesting jabber. Corbusci attempted an appeasing interruption.

Then, to the vast delight of all the girls, Marie smacked his face.

Clapping a hand to the cheek that tingled, the leader turned to his companions who, at a word of command from him, promptly proceeded to deal with Marie.

They pounced upon her, to take her into custody, but Morcove was not going to have that!

Next moment every one of the indignant girls was doing her best to get Marie away from the men. The spacious dining-room of the Klosters hunting-box became a scene of riot.

There were four Black Sashes, including Corbusci, trying to drag Marie out of the room. She herself was struggling furiously, and all the Morcovians were, so to speak, forming a "scrum" to get her away.

From one part of the room to another drifted the scuffling crowd; up one side and down another, whilst chairs went over and the carpet became littered with things swept off the table.

Morcove's blood was up.

There came a moment when the struggle was raging near the doorway, and with a team sense of being, as it were, close to an opponent's goal, the girls put forward a last, combined effort.

Its immediate effect was to send at least two of the men blundering backwards into the hall. Some of the girls gave anticipatory cries of victory, whilst all concentrated upon Corbusci himself and his only remaining companion.

Another moment, and Marie Preska foundered clear of the mix-up, whilst the Black Sash pair went toppling out through the doorway. Morcove cheered their victory madly.

Slam! went the door, fetched round and driven shut by two of the girls with defiant violence. Then, with lightning speed, chairs were rushed across, to be crashed down wedge-wise against the closed door. The key, if there were one, was on the outer side.

At the same instant, Madge and one or two others flashed across to the french windows, which were fitted with that type of slatted wooden shutters known as "jalousies."

As the determined girls stepped out on to the balcony to pull the hinged shutters round, they were aware of several of the other men standing about in the open air, rather nonplussed. But it was no time for taking a good look at them.

Round came the heavy shutters, closing across the entire window. It was crash after crash as the massive wooden jalousies were pulled into position for bolting.

The great room had darkened suddenly, intensifying the drama of the whole wild scene. One after another the bolts were socketed; meanwhile, some of the other girls were busy erecting against the door quite a barricade of furniture.

"So that's that," Betty commented with a little laugh. "And now—we can go on with our tea."

"You will go on with your tea?" gasped Marie, looking very dishevelled and breathless.

"Yes—why not?"

"My faith!" panted Marie. "But you are in great danger! They will return! Ah, why did you come to my aid—rash girls!"

"And you—rash woman!" Bunny gaily

retorted. "Why did you smack that man's face?"

"But what else could I do?"

"You might," jested Polly, "have given him a black eye, just to match his black sash."

An all-round laugh started, and then—

CRASH! came a thudding blow against one of the closed shutters.

Out fell several of the wooden slats, so that more light was suddenly re-admitted. But only for an instant did the staring girls see the jagged opening as a patch of bright light.

First a man's arm came through, the hand levelling a revolver. Then he contrived to let them see his face also, behind the waving weapon.

It was Bruno Corbusci again. The revolver switched round until it covered Marie, who happened to be standing nearest the window.

"Now, shoost oblige," he shouted. "All stand over by der wall! All put up der hands—or I shoot Marie Preska!"

There was a touch of the leader about Betty as, putting up her own hands, she looked to see that all her chums were doing the same.

"Bunny—"

"Oh, but—"

"It's no use. This has got beyond a joke."

"All ze same—swendeel!" cried Naomer, lurching somewhat as she held her dark-skinned arms high. "Bad as extra drill at Morcove!"

Bruno Corbusci smiled and nodded in a most gratified manner as he opened the shutter, and in a few moments he was again in the room, with several of his fellow rebels grouped behind him.

"Ve muss," he said, "come to an arrangement now—ja. Ve vequire der house; you British girls gannod go away until der new Government is established and der last shodt fired. I dink you see I do my besd do grabble mit a defeeluck situation? You may all pudt your hands down now, dank you."

Marie Preska, as she dropped her plump arms, would have begun some more protesting jabber; but Corbusci checked her.

"Silens, please, all of you," he ordered. "You young ladies vill now midtrow to a bardt of der house vere you keep to yourselves. Marie Preska shall be mit you. But I dink, as security for your good behaviour, der must be two of you British girls somevere—"

He stopped, slightly startled by Betty's prompt stepping out to offer herself. As she did this, Polly and Bunny and several others executed a sort of general rush, each wanting to be the one to have to go with the captain.

"Nodt so," Corbusci dissented. "I dink der leader shodt nodt be a hostage. If you vill shoost oblige," he addressed Betty, "and schoose two of your barty? Dank you!"

Bunny tapped her chest.

"Me, Betty—me!" But there were half a dozen of them just as eager to be singled out.

Although Betty smiled, she was doing her best to make a serious choice. Polly? No, too headstrong. The position was looking serious, and provocative incidents had got to be avoided. Bunny? There again—too irresponsible!

"Judy dear—and you, Tess," the wise choice was quietly announced at last; whereupon those two girls looked highly pleased, whilst mumbles and moans came from disappointed ones.

Marie Preska, who had never ceased to look extremely wrathful, now engaged Corbusci in conversation, her share in it being very passionate.

Some of her emphatic stampings shook the floor. Moreove saw Corbusci nodding at times, whilst at other times he spoke with great vehemence, as if far from agreeing with all that Marie had to say.

At last she turned to the girls.

"I have got him to promise that there shall be a young woman to be with those of you who go as hostages. I offer myself, but he will not agree to that. He will not trust me; also, he argues that I must be with all of you who are to be together. He is sending for his daughter to come."

"That's all right," Judy commented.

"But I know that daughter! Elise Corbusci came here once to make a film, and she is in the crowd—only in the crowd, you understand; but it turned her head! But come, then, and at least I will see that you have quarters which are—convenient!"

It left the girls smiling to realise all that Marie had implied by that last word. She was evidently going to see that they came off all right. Meantime, Naomer was seized with the sudden determination not to leave behind that special galantine and other eatables for consumption by the Black Sashes.

"Bekas—you never know!" shrilled the dusky one, darting to raid the disordered tea-table.

"Queek, everybody, take as much as you can!"

"So we will!" cried Bunny merrily.

And so they did, rendering Messrs. Corbusci & Co. quite paralysed with astonishment at the boisterousness with which things were gathered up.

Not only did Moreove "gommandeer" eatables; there was a rightful seizure of crockery, the teapot, cutlery, and even one or two silver epergnes.

A few industrious moments, and the girls presented a most comical spectacle, going out of the room—under the goggling eyes of the revolutionaries—with their arms full to overflowing.

Marie herself, preceding the hilarious chums, hugged a couple of flat loaves under one arm and embraced a huge meat pasty, in its dish, with the other.

"Hurrah!" Moreove cheered, as it trooped away, and there was another and an even louder cheer when they found that Marie had conducted them to her own large kitchen.

She turned back to the door and closed and locked it, whilst the chums dumped their loads.

"I shall tell you why I choose this part of the house," she imparted with an outwitting smile. "Here in this kitchen, I can still cook for you—"

"Gorjus!"

"Also," and Marie directed attention to a door serving a flight of steep stairs, "up there you will all have room to sleep in comfort. True, they are but servants' bed-rooms, but my dear mistress has always seen to it that those who work for her live in comfort."

At that instant, as if to tell Moreove that the revolution was nothing to be laughed at, after all, there came a distant, rumbling BOOM!

"Goodness, what's that!"

"Howwows, yes!" quavered Paula, looking greatly scared. "Ow, geals, is—is that awtillwew?"

"Shelling—where?" several of the startled girls wondered aloud.

Then it occurred to some of them to dart up the stairs, in the hopes that a view of the surrounding countryside could be obtained from the bed-room windows.

They all went pounding up the steep stairs.

reaching a tiny bed-room which had another adjacent to it. Crowding to the window, they got their expected view over miles of wooded country lying between two mountain ranges. But if there had been any puff of smoke, following the explosion, by now it had cleared away.

"Pity we haven't a Union Jack that we could run up!" Helen exclaimed, quite seriously.

"We can make one!" burst in Betty. "Get hold of a sheet from one of these beds, and some washing blue from the kitchen—"

"And red ochre, if Marie has some?" Polly carried on the bright idea.

"I could do a Union Jack," Tess said.

She and Judy were still with the rest of the girls. It appeared that the two "hostages" would be summoned away, presently, when Elise Corbusci had come upon the scene.

Tess, running down to the kitchen to consult Marie, came up again immediately, looking highly pleased. She displayed a couple of half-used tins of household paint, and a brush.

"These were on a scullery shelf. Some blue and some red. Josef had the paint in the spring, to do a job with the cart. Where's a sheet?"

One was being whisked from a bed, even as Tess voiced the demand. She was a temperamental girl who always liked to be left to herself, when doing anything connected with her beloved art. But now she had to put up with company which, to a great extent, was on the joke all the while she worked away at the makeshift flag.

The big white sheet, pinned out against one of the bed-room walls, soon began to assume the familiar and inspiring appearance of a Union Jack. Tess was only going to paint one side, as that was all that was necessary.

There had been admiring comments on the rapidity with which she outlined the sections. The appearance of red sections, in due course, caused some cheering. Finally, the painting-in of the blue portions created a perfect frenzy of patriotic fervour.

"And now—hang it out to dry, that's the idea!" Betty said, whilst Tess turned away, leaving others to take it down from the wall.

Carefully they carried the painted sheet to the window and passed it gently over the sill. There was little wind, and the coat of wet paint provided a certain stiffness that was, if anything, welcome.

Bunny chanted:

"Three cheers for the red—white—and blue!"

"Hurrah!" they all shouted, now that the flag was draping down from the window-sill. "Hip, hip, hip—hooray!"

"Oh, and just in time, too—for look!" Polly cried, head and shoulders out of window as she pointed. "That must be the Corbusci girl—coming on duty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even if there had been no sounds to proclaim Moreove's unflagging spirits, the girl who had at this moment come in by the main gateway must have had her attention drawn to the window. It was such a showy Union Jack which hung there!

She stood still, sending towards that upper window a haughty look. In the laughter, Elise Corbusci seemed to have scented an insult to herself. For a few moments she retained the poise of offended dignity, and so the chums were able to get a good look at her.

She was certainly a handsome girl, every drop of blood in her veins being of that Southern richness which makes for a hot temper.

Her clothes were almost as colourful as Morcove's Union Jack, and a good deal of gold jewellery, in the form of earrings and bangles, ornamented her. In violent contrast with so much finery of a peasant-girl type, she had adopted the official Black Sash of her father's "barty."

"There, Tess," gurgled Bunny. "There will be something for the Autumn Art Show, in Barncombe."

Some fresh laughter from the girls caused Elise Corbusci to give a proud toss of the head. She strode on, passing out of sight to the girls as she got closer to the housefront, and they might all have drawn their heads in then, but suddenly—

"Hark!"

This time, it was the loud creaking of a heavy-laden cart, at present screened by the garden wall and some trees.

"Josef Preska, Marie's husband," Betty said, as they still watched from the window.

"Josef it is!" Polly shouted, when next moment he appeared in the gateway, leading the aged horse which drew the creaking cart. "With our luggage, girls—oh, hurrah!"

And Morcove's united cheer, at sight of all its own travelling trunks, bags, and hatboxes, was quite the best yet!

Judy's Alarming Telegram

HALF an hour later there was a loud knocking upon the locked door of the kitchen.

"Der hostages, please!" demanded Bruno Corbusci.

He followed this with some shouted remarks to Marie, who mournfully and agitatedly unlocked the door and stood it ajar.

Elise was just outside with her father. Like him, she was full of self-importance. Unlike him, she was not troubled with any misgivings as to how the revolution might be going—whether altogether in favour of the "barty" or not. Betty and others, whilst exchanging a last word or two with Tess and Judy, noticed that Bruno looked worried.

All the baggage had been brought to the kitchen door, but there was no sign of Josef. Without waiting to be told, the girls set about fetching in their belongings, and, whilst this portage went on, Betty wound up her own earnest little talk with those two chums who were to be segregated.

"You must be going now, so best of luck, you two," came with a very loving look from Betty. "For your sakes, we won't be doing anything desperate. If we observe the conditions, then I suppose these people can be trusted to stick to their part of the bargain. Only I don't like the look of Elise."

"We shan't take any notice of her," Judy said, with that calm smile which was so like her brother Dave's. "I don't know if Tess and I will be allowed to communicate with you others. It may be possible. If not—"

"I think it will!" Tess exclaimed. "We are not going miles away. We are going to be in the same building, even! And, anyhow, perhaps this revolution business won't last very long."

"There was no time for more. All the baggage, except that belonging to Tess and Judy, had now been lugged in from the passage, and the two girls were being beckoned away.

Josef Preska had been told at Kloster Station that the line had been cut, and had been allowed to proceed along the line to the stationary train to collect the luggage.

Tess' and Judy's chums gave them a cheer as they passed out. Once again Morcove sent up one of its games-field "Hurrahs!" and there were other samples of that British joviality in a tight corner which is always so bewildering to foreigners. Elise, although she tried to appear proudly indifferent, was obviously angered by the last jocular remarks from Polly and Bunny and other joyous spirits, and the smiling composure with which Judy and Tess now offered to go away with her.

Laughingly—and needlessly—she signed to them to take up their luggage.

"Or do you think I shall carry it for you?" she sneered, speaking English even better than her father. Morcove found out afterwards that it was the inn-keeping life which accounted for this. The Corbuscis had often supplied board and lodging to artists and tourists from Great Britain.

In all, the two girls had just about as much as they could carry. So, having followed Elise out of the passage into the lounge-hall, they thought they might set down their burdens for a moment's "breather," before climbing the stairs.

Then it was that Judy, for one, came in for a shock.

She saw what looked to be an unopened telegram lying upon a salver, and with a sharp thrill she read her own surname on the envelope. There it was, written large in pencil, with the flourishing style which foreigners favour.

The Turanian equivalent of "Care of" came next, and then the name "Somerfield," followed by the address.

"Now, come on!" Elise flashed about to command, from three stairs up. "Or shall I use one of—those?"

Only Tess saw the speaker point to a dog-whip, hanging by a nail close to the hall-door. As for Judy, she was pouncing to take the telegram from the salver.

"For me, Tess—just fancy!" Judy excitably exclaimed, setting a finger to rip open the envelope. "And how long has it been there, I wonder! Poor Marie—all this upset must have made her forget that a telegram had come for one of us."

"Anything—serious?" Tess jerked, for now she saw how her chum's eyes were enlarging with horror at what the message said.

"It's from home," Judy answered hoarsely. "From the housekeeper at Priors' Wold. It says: 'COME HOME AT ONCE; YOUR MOTHER DANGEROUSLY ILL.'"

"Oh, Judy—oh, how awful!" her chum gasped, and went close to offer a steadying hand. "What ever will you do, dear?"

"Do? I must get away, of course—as it says, go home at once!"

"But—"

"Come on!" Elise stamped.

They paid no heed. She rushed down the few stairs into the hall, crossing over furiously to take the whip from the nail. And still Judy and Tess were as if the girl did not exist to them, just then.

"Get away from here, Judy—how can you?" Tess panted. "And yet—oh, how awful it is for you, dear; to know that your mother is like that, and—needs you!"

"We'll talk about it presently," Judy whispered, becoming wonderfully steady after the terrible shock. "I shall do it—I must, somehow. But now—let's go on up."

"Yes, you better!" laughed Elise, coming towards them with the whip.

Judy Disappears

IT was night at the hunting-box.

There had been a good deal of coming and going in the last few hours. But now there was complete silence, both in and around the building.

Judy and Tess were occupying Mrs. Somerfield's own boudoir-like sleeping apartment, on the first floor. They were here, as they knew, simply because nothing less than the best would suit the Turanian girl who had custody of them.

She, Elise, was occupying Mrs. Somerfield's dressing-room, using a couch for bed, whilst the two Morcovians were in the bed-room itself.

Between the one room and the other there was a communicating door, which Elise had wedged ajar for the night. She had ordered them to go

explosions could be heard—perhaps due to bombing, or gunfire, or perhaps only the blowing up of bridges.

So, although all was quiet on the Klosters "front," Morcove could not imagine the local revolutionaries to be enjoying a good night's rest.

Judy and Tess had found that they would be unable to get any sight of their chums by going out on to the usual balcony on to which Zora's sumptuous bedchamber opened. The other girls, being "interned" in the domestic regions, had windows which could not be seen from here, owing to a projection in the building.

Up till an hour ago, however, there had been plenty for the ears of Judy and Tess to hear, coming from that batch of "internees" for



The knotted sheets tied to the balcony and swinging into space caught the quick eye of the Turanian girl. "Ah, your friend has gone—she has run away!" she shrielled angrily, glaring at Tess accusingly.

to sleep; she had been orders, orders all along!

But if pride in her "little bit of brief authority" had been making her a most detestable custodian for the two girls to have to put up with, at least that same pride had caused her to withdraw, very grandly, to that adjoining room for the night. It was something to be very thankful about, that—a real boon.

Lying awake together, Judy and Tess were both hoping that presently there would be the assurance that Elise had dropped off to sleep. Then they could start whispering together.

They were refraining from even the most guarded talk at present, because that door was ajar, and Elise was certainly still awake. Was there anybody, indeed, yet asleep in the whole strangely crowded dwelling?

That seemed very doubtful. The hush that was now upon the place was most likely only the hush of great suspense. Turania, to-night, was in a state of wild confusion.

There were sounds from afar off, suggesting that the so-called revolution had been neither nipped in the bud nor swiftly successful. Distant

whose good behaviour they stood as "security." Betty and her companions were, literally, keeping the flag flying! Judging by the happy babel they had created, throughout the evening, they still claimed the right to treat their position as a "scream."

Now, however, their part of the building was as quiet as Morcove School was wont to be, after lights-out.

To Tess, who alone of all Judy's holiday-companions knew what a terrible blow had befallen her chum, the next chance for a talk with her was to mean resumed dissuasions.

She knew that poor Judy was even now meditating a flight during the night. It was Judy's desperate intention to get away by means of the balcony and make for Suva Pesth on foot.

In vain had Tess, whilst realising how great was her chum's desire to act on the recalling message, pleaded with her to wait at least until the morning. Judy had met all well-meant arguments against immediate flight by a calm insistence upon being able to "win through."

The desperate girl was sure she could find her

way to Suva Pesth. She had stayed at Klosters before and knew that road. A long road it would be for her—many a mile—but she meant to do the journey before things got worse. Once at Suva Pesth, she was sure the British Consul would be able to get her away to England at once.

"There must be somebody I can find there who will give me a 'safe-conduct.' Out here in the wilds—oh, it's all so different from what it will be there in the capital," she had shrewdly argued. "Even if the city is all upside down—I will be able to do some good."

"Well, if you go, I shall go with you, Judy," Tess had flatly declared. "Of course, we are

perfectly free to slip away, if we want to. We are the 'hostages,' and it is only the other girls who are bound to stay where they are. But don't you think, dear, it may easily be a case of more haste, less speed?"

"No, Tess. My belief is that delay will be fatal. At a time like this, every hour makes communications more difficult. You know what happens, even if there is no fighting; they blow up bridges, wreck more railway-line, mine the roads."

"Then I shall come with you, dear."

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes," Tess had calmly insisted, feeling that it was no use—only cruel—to go on trying to argue against the desperate venture. In Judy, one had a chum who, like her brother, was so shrewd, so capable and self-reliant.

Another girl might have been dissuaded by having risks pointed out to her which she herself had not appreciated. But Judy, with her own realisation of all the risks, had calmly calculated how to overcome them.

Now, however, Tess was feeling again that she should still oppose the venture.

The very fact that Mrs. Somerfield had failed not only to get back to Klosters from Suva Pesth, but had been unable to get even a message through—that pointed to the sudden state of chaos into which the country was plunged.

Judy was lying quite still in bed; but there was the certainty that she was only waiting until Elise, in the adjoining room, had dropped off, and then—

What was to come, rehearsed itself in Tess' wakeful mind. She had a vision, as it were, of Judy suddenly and silently rising up to dress; of her being speedily ready to be off, and taking a couple of sheets from the bed to knot them together, so that they might serve as a make-shift rope, letting her down from the balcony.

"Well, I must try for the last time to dissuade her, but I'm afraid it won't be a bit of use," ran Tess' thoughts. "And really, if I were in her place, I'd feel just as she does, I'm sure. Poor Judy. What a terrible trial it is for her."

Another half-hour of this fateful night dragged by, and, whilst there were fitful and ominous sounds from miles away, Klosters' hunting-box, aloft on its lonely mountain-side, remained perfectly tranquil.

Then suddenly Tess heard significant sounds from the adjoining dressing-room: Elise, stealthily rising!

That girl was not asleep even now, but was rising up.

Yet to Tess, in a moment, it seemed just as well. Judy, too, must have heard, and so she must be realising that there could be no attempt at the flight for some time yet. Such a postponement might induce poor Judy, after all, to resign herself to waiting for daylight.

But now it became Tess' exciting belief that Judy had actually dropped off to sleep! She, Tess, was sitting up in bed, yet Judy was lying quite motionless upon her side, and her breathing was the measured breathing of a sleeping girl.

"Thank goodness!" Tess thought to herself fervently.

This dear chum of hers, forgetting all the terrible anxiety for a little while, at least, in sleep!

Elise did not come into the bed-room; but she did come to the half-open doorway to peer in upon her charges.

Tess was lying down again then, for she had



When Schooldays Are Over

IN a recent Chat your Editor mentioned the fact that a good many of his readers would shortly be leaving school, as the school year was drawing to a close.

It is always a difficult time, the sudden change from schooldays to the world of affairs, and perhaps a few helpful hints may not be amiss.

Take, for example, the girl who goes into an office as a junior clerk or shorthand typist—though the remarks which follow apply to almost any job.

Whatever the task, in fact, the very first thing the newcomer must do is to develop a sense of responsibility. In school, if you are inattentive or make foolish mistakes, you are the one to suffer, but in business, errors may cause serious trouble for many people beside yourself, and also monetary loss to your employer.

Whether the firm you are working for is big or small, you are now "part of the concern," and your efforts, though they seem relatively unimportant at the outset, are going to help towards success or failure.

In business, the wise person realises there is always something to be learnt. Particularly is this so in the first years of business life. During that time, as far as acquiring knowledge is concerned, you can regard yourself as still being at school.

The only difference is that, instead of having examinations to face so often, your progress will be judged by the way you "take to" the work you are given to do.

One of the most valuable assets in business life is a cheerful, willing manner. Some of the tasks juniors are asked to carry out are not very interesting—such jobs, for example, as folding letters and putting them in envelopes; but they are very important, and must be done correctly. And—they should be done cheerfully.

If you are asked to tackle a job which means you will have to stay on after the proper closing-time, avoid showing by your manner that you resent this. Business matters often call for prompt action that cannot be "put off until to-morrow."

If you are asked to give your opinion about anything, let it be a frank and honest opinion. Any other kind is not worth voicing.

Nowadays there are splendid continuation classes for most trades and professions, and the keen junior should be prepared to devote a portion of her leisure time to increasing her knowledge and usefulness. She will benefit herself, as well as her employers, in the long run, by so doing.

Finally, keep your eyes wide open for opportunity, and be courageous, and remember that advancement honestly gained is the only sort that will ever bring genuine happiness in its train.

suddenly realised that the Turanian girl was acting as if she wished to assure herself that they were both asleep, before doing—what?

Shamming sleep, Tess knew when Elise had withdrawn from the doorway as stealthily as she had come to it. A match scraped and a candle was lighted in the dressing-room.

Then Tess became greatly puzzled by sounds which came to her from the dressing-room. It seemed to her that Elise, over by Mrs. Somerfield's beautiful dressing-table, was meddling with Mrs. Somerfield's belongings.

Without a sound, Tess slid from her bed. She tiptoed across to the doorway and peeped into the candle-lit room.

Elise, at the dressing-table, was trying to force open a jewel-case with a pair of scissors.

So that was the girl she was! A thief—seizing the opportunity afforded by the revolution to lay hands on what she could! The revolution, to her, was just a fine chance for looting!

To the fierce disgust which swept through Tess was added the impulse to rush in and denounce the wretched, unprincipled girl.

But that impulse Tess had to overcome, for the sake of Judy—who was asleep and must not be awakened! Asleep, the poor girl was free from her anguished state of mind for a little while; awake, she would be in mental torment again—frantic to carry out her desperate purpose.

Tess tiptoed away from the half-open door, back to the bed. She had never been more certain of anything than she was certain of this: that Zora, if she knew how matters stood, would a thousand times rather be the loser of those jewels, than have them saved by a scene resulting in the awakening of Judy.

Besides, the jewels were not to be saved by merely letting Elise know that she had been seen in the act. There could only be a scornful denunciation; a violent scene, and that would be all.

Maddening, but there it was; if Elise chose to loot the place, she could! Anything like a state of war always did mean a golden chance for looters.

At last the candle was extinguished in the adjoining room, and Tess knew that the Turanian girl had returned to bed. There had been sounds suggesting that she had managed to force open the jewel-case. Now that she had feasted her eyes upon its dazzling contents, she was lying down again—very likely with the jewels under her pillow.

As for Judy, she lay there as if the sleep of utter exhaustion had come upon her. Tess did not find her chum making the slightest movement, and always her breathing was deep and steady.

Once a considerable booming sounded, with attendant flashes upon the night sky; but Judy never stirred. And so at last Tess herself dozed, became awake again and thought about fifty different things for a few minutes, and then went right off.

She awoke with a start to find the dawnlight in the room and Judy—gone!

Wild-eyed with dismay, Tess sat up in bed with that word "Gone!" beating an insistent rhythm in her brain.

She saw some sheeting twisted into a rope and its upper end knotted to the balcony-rails. Bounding from her bed, she slipped on a dressing-gown and was going to rush out to the balcony when she saw a pencilled message that had been left for her.

The few lines of writing, had been scribbled

upon a scrap of paper which lay, unfolded, upon a bedside table.

"I hope it will be daylight when you find this"—she read. "If it is, then you will know I have been gone several hours, so—no use trying to follow.

"Tess dear, I had to pretend to be asleep, for I knew that you would never fall asleep, believing I was still awake.

"Until we all meet again—at Morcove, let's hope—

"Your loving
"JUDY."

(Concluded on the next page.)

"In Reply to Yours—"

Your Editor welcomes
letters and answers
them as soon as possible



Elsie Madden (Tonge Park, Bolton).—Welcome, new reader! Your cheery letter was, I hope, the first of many. Yes, Naomer is very quaint, isn't she? I shall look forward to hearing from you again.

Betty Scott (Formby, nr. Liverpool).—Be sure to let me know how you enjoyed the motor tour in Devon, won't you? I will bear your suggestions in mind, and also see what can be done regarding the return of the characters you liked so much. Dodo will be "up to her larks" for a few weeks longer yet, you'll be glad to know. Have your friends Una and Elsie written to me yet?

Marjorie Lomas (Rainow, nr. Macclesfield).—Your letter was most interesting, Marjorie, and I really didn't notice many mistakes in it! Glad you are so pleased about the Grangemoor serial. I think anyone would be amused by the adventures of Dodo, don't you?

Mabel A. Lomas (Rainow).—Your sister's letter is answered above, you will see, Mabel. It was very nice of you both to trouble to write to me, and I much appreciate it. Well, the exams are all over now, and I hope you did well, even in "Arith." Did you?

"Another Admirer of Pamela" (Dore, nr. Sheffield).—Letter-writing not your strong point, dear reader? In that case I would very much like to know what is for I thought it extremely well put together. You seem to like Miss Holden's stories very much, and I hope you are enjoying "Anne of Phantom Manor" as much as the others she has contributed. I should like to hear from you again. The staff and I thank you very much for your good wishes.

Isobel Mason (Camelon, Falkirk).—Glad to hear your school sports were so successful, Isobel. And many happy returns of your birthday, if it isn't too late. Your school holidays in Scotland come much earlier than in England for August is the great holiday month here, of course. You are lucky to have such nice pets, and I expect you have some good friends, too, to make up for the lack of brothers and sisters.

Joyce Grayland (Felpham, Bognor).—I was very interested to hear about your "Schoolgirls' Own" Club. "Study 12" makes quite a good password, doesn't it? You're having a very long holiday, and I hope you'll enjoy every moment of it. If you take things steadily at first, then pleasure won't become "hard work"—as it so easily can, you know! Thank you for the complimentary things you say about SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, Joyce. Don't forget to write while on holiday.

Elise's Accusation

SUCH the message—hastily scribbled in the dark as it must have been, and witnessing to Judy's resolve to involve no chum of hers in the dangerous enterprise!

Tess raised her eyes from the paper, then ran to the balcony to gaze anew at the rope of knotted sheets. Next moment she became aware of Elise Corbusci standing just inside the doorway.

The young woman was fully dressed; but this did not mean that she was not just out of bed. She had, Tess knew, retained all her day clothes during the night.

"What is this, then?" came the young woman's first, furious cry, now that she saw only one scholar here. "Your friend—Ah!" as the angry glance went to the balcony beyond the open window. "She has gone—she has run away!"

"Yes. She has been gone several hours, too," Tess hastened to say. "So it will be no use trying to find her, to fetch her back. Besides, why should your people trouble—?"

"Why? You ask me why? You think that I—I, Elise Corbusci!—should simply shrug, so!—and say 'No matter!' You mistake!" the infuriated spitfire rushed on. "We will get her back, and then— You will see what we will do! She has broken her word; she is without honour—"

"Nothing of the sort," Tess dissented hotly. "I won't allow you to say that! Both of us had a perfect right to slip away, if we wished. It is only the other girls who, for our sakes, were bound not to do anything during the night."

"No matter! That friend of yours—"

A Desperate Dash Through a Strange Countryside Full of Hidden Dangers!

But Judy Cardew means to get to her ailing mother—somehow.

Be sure to read what happens to her in next Tuesday's splendid Morcove holiday story—

JUDY'S ORDEAL ON HOLIDAY



By Marjorie Stanton

"She has only gone, because she was desperate. Her mother at home is dangerously ill—may be dying. That's the girl Judy Cardew is—the girl you'd like to slang," Tess flared on. "You, a fine one to talk about honour!"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean that you're a low-down thief! I saw you in the night, looting the jewel-case belonging to the lady whose house this is! That's all this revolution means to you—a chance to loot! But I saw you, and when the right time comes—"

"Jewel-case?" echoed Elise, coming at Tess with a stamping step. "I do not know anything about a jewel-case! Now, what lies are these that you are saying about me? But I—I will not listen! I will go and look, and then—"

She changed into self-mutterings in her own native language as she rushed back to the dressing-room.

Then there came a scream of rage from her, and Tess, who had followed to the adjoining room, found herself being stormed at afresh.

"It is that friend of yours who steals the jewels! They are not here; they are gone—see, the jewel-case is empty!—and she is gone also! It is a plot, a lie you arrange with her to tell; a lie against me—"

"You know very well it isn't—"

"I know nothing—nothing about the jewels, except that they are gone! She has taken them, being without money! What, you think I am such a fool as not to see? She will get money for them—money to help her to get out of this country! Desperate you say just then! Oh, I see now how she was—desperate! And you—your accuse me! You stay behind to tell lies—"

"I have called you a thief to your face, because you started slanging my chum—one of the best girls in the world!"

"I will call my father!"

"Right—ho—call him, then!"

"You mean by that—you will tell him?"

"If you fetch him here, you must put up with the consequences."

"As if he will believe you!" Elise retorted with a savage smile. "But he will believe me when I tell him—that that girl has done! And he will send after her—"

"No!"

"Yes, if only because I ask it—I, his daughter! Ah, now you wish you had not accused me, do you? Too late!" the impassioned creature raged on. "Too late! That friend of yours shall be fetched back! We will get her, we will search her, and we shall find the jewels upon her! And then—"

"Elise Corbusci!" Tess cried out imploringly. "Stop! Oh, how can you be so wicked—so cruel! I tell you that chum of mine must be left to get away—home to England, if she can—"

"And I—I say she must be fetched back, and so she shall be!"

Elise flashed across to a bellpress and held a finger against it. Somewhere below stairs a bell rang—tr-ring, ring, ring!—for several seconds.

"That is to call my father. He will come," she smiled exultantly. "You will say what you like about me, and then I—I— You will soon see! I, his daughter, will get him to do—just as I please!"

Tess was tragically silent now. She could hear a man's step pounding on the stairs; and she felt her heart sinking for poor Judy in this dreadful crisis which had come about so unexpectedly.

The Grangemoor Chums Stage a Clever Scheme—But Sometimes Even the Cleverest Plans go Wrong



Grangemoor to Guard Her

Dave Cardew's "Double"!

DAVE CARDEW made his usual quiet entry into his study in Challenor's House at Grangemoor School.

He closed the door, then looked at those four schoolmates who were his best pals.

There they were, Jack Linton, Jimmy Cherrol, Tom Trevor, and Bobby Bloot, obviously concerned about him and all that he was "up against."

"You fellows," said Dave, "you've got to make me a solemn promise now."

"Oh, have we!" Jack Linton responded. "What is it?"

"The promise I want is, that you let me do as I like for a bit, and not get into further trouble yourselves by lending a hand."

"Now look here," Jack flared up. "Either we are your pals, Dave, or we are not. Nobody's asking you to make explanations that you are not free to make about all this business of Hetty Morland and her papers and the fact that you're helping her. You can go on keeping things to yourself, or you can tell us at last, if you like, and trust us not to—"

"Silly ass!" Dave laughed. "As if I don't know you fellows can be trusted not to blab about anything I tell you in confidence. What I can't trust you to do is not get mixed up—"

"No, I am afraid you can't trust us there," Jack agreed heartily. "And if that was to be the promise—"

"As I guessed," put in Jimmy.

"Nothing doing, Dave," Jack stated flatly.

"And it's no use looking like that, either."

"But look here—"

"How about saying 'Listen here' instead?"

Tom suggested. "You've been having a talk with Cad Gayner. Well?"

By Marjorie Stanton

"I don't mind telling you," Dave answered gravely. "He's so fed up with trying to get hold of those papers, and not being able, that his latest dodge is to try to get them out of me by threats. Just now he said that if I didn't hand him the papers straight away he'd go down to Joab's and tell Hetty Morland something that would just about break her heart to know."

"He did! The rotter!" Jack raged. "He told you what he would be telling her, I suppose. Are we to know, Dave?"

"Yes, although, mind you, I'm certain it's only a foul lie. Ralph Gayner claims to know that Hetty's father, who went out of her life when she was a mere kiddy, was a convict."

"What!"

"But I tell you fellows it's a lie!"

"Whether it's a lie or not, isn't Gayner the foulest cad for threatening to tell that poor girl? Isn't he?" Jack seethed, stamping about the study. "Even if it were true, fancy his being ready to tell her!"

"Against a girl," Jimmy breathed fiercely. "I'd like to twist his neck," Tom said.

"This is where you fellows come in," Dave said crisply, "or rather, where you don't come in, because I won't let you. I've got to do two urgent things. I've simply got to see Hetty Morland this evening. The other thing, which can stand over until to-morrow—I've got to get in touch with Ralph Gayner's guardian, Mr. Gordon."

All this left Dave's four listeners staring at him.

"You can't be forgetting, Dave," Jack

muttered, "we are on the Head's black list properly now. Public caning promised, and if we go a yard outside the school gates until further notice—"

"I know, but I'm going. You chaps aren't, but I am," Dave insisted quietly. "If I wrote to Hetty it'd be a thousand to one that her rascally Uncle Joab would intercept the letter. Yet there are things I must let her know about at once, before another night is out. So I shall slip out of bounds—"

"But how are you going to do it, Dave?" was Jimmy's eager question.

"I'm going to bed early, after seeing the matron. At assembly it will be reported that I am up in the dormi."

"Instead of which—" Jack inferred. "Gosh! But it's a cute dodge, Dave—yep! It won't surprise matron; I see all that. You are reckoned to be feeling a bit run-down after the state you were brought back to school in—"

"But supposing you're ordered to the san, Dave?"

"Yes, you won't be able to slip out of the san," Tom followed Jimmy's remark.

"That's up to me—the way I put it to matron," was the calm response. "Anyway, I am having a shot for it. Do you chaps quite understand; any trying to keep me company when I slip out may do far more harm than good?"

Jack turned to the three others.

"Looks as if he must play a lone hand this time, chaps: All right, son"—to Dave. "But at the most assembly only lasts thirty minutes. How are you going to get to Joab's and back in that time?"

"Oh, I shall be off before assembly," Dave smiled. "You know how it is always; nobody looks in at the dormitory the last half-hour before assembly. That really gives me an hour."

"They don't as a rule," Jack frowned. "But just because Dave Cardew has turned in early—they may this evening. Gosh, though!" he suddenly rejoiced. "I've got it!"

"What?" clamoured the others.

"Jimmy," Jack rattled on, extremely happy now that he saw a way of helping Dave after all, "half an hour before assembly this evening you must get into Dave's bed in the dormitory. Then at assembly you must be in your place in the line. Get me?"

"Right!"

Dave did not demur. He had realised it was no longer a case of merely leaving Hetty Morland in suspense about certain things connected with the papers he had looked into on her account. The need for an interview had become a hundred times more urgent, owing to Gayner's recent threat.

So about eight o'clock that evening Dave dragged off to the dormitory after an interview with matron which had left him fully entitled to go to bed early.

As a precaution against his being visited by "Old Tony," or that Housemaster's sympathetic wife, Dave partly undressed and went to bed.

For half an hour he lay there, rather wishing that somebody more or less in authority would look in; but no one did so. Then when the school chimes were ding-donging half-past eight he got up and donned his day things again.

Suddenly Jimmy came in on tip-toe.

"Best of luck, old man!" whispered the other, putting kicked-off shoes under Dave's bed. "Anybody been to see you?"

"No."

"Huh!"

"And that only makes it all the more likely

that someone will look in between now and assembly."

"That's why I'm here!" Jimmy said, and he got into Dave's bed with the jacket part of Dave's pyjamas pulled on over coat, waistcoat, collar and all.

Snore!

Jimmy had his face mostly buried in the white pillow now.

Dave, drawing off to the door, looked back over a shoulder at his "personator."

And although there was something in this business that was bound to raise a faint smile at least, at heart Dave felt greatly stirred by all the loyalty that it meant.

"Gone to Bed!"

"HARK!" We know who this is, don't we, chaps?"

There was just time for Jack Linton to offer that comment to Tom Trevor and Tubby Bloor, and then their study door was thrown wide open, revealing Prefect Gayner.

"Where's Dave Cardew, then?"

"Er, Dave Cardew?"

"That's what I said!" snapped the prefect. As soon as he saw that Dave was not there a look had come into his face which meant: "As I expected."

"We chaps haven't seen Dave since he went to matron," said Jack coolly, "let me see, half an hour ago, you fellows?"

"About that," Tom nodded.

"Matron?" Gayner echoed. "What did Cardew want to go to matron for?"

"He talked of wanting to go to bed early, and so he went to ask permish—get properly excused."

"So he's up in the dormitory now, is he?"

"You might find him there."

"Think so, do you?" Gayner retorted, with a wide grin. "Right! I'll go up and see—just to make sure."

Slam went the door, and then to Jack, Tom and Tubby as they sat back in their study chairs looking inclined to chuckle, there came the ding-dong of the chimes again.

"Quarter-to," Jack said softly. "Gosh, chaps, I suppose Dave's on the way there by now."

Three stairs at a time Prefect Gayner mounted to that higher floor reserved for night-time quarters. His thin face retained the foxy grin which had been his when he gave warning a few moments since that he was going to make sure about Dave Cardew.

He, Gayner, knew what to expect now that he had satisfied himself that Dave was not with the others in the study. It was all "bunk"—of course, it was—that about Dave having turned in early. Quite likely the fellow had given out that he would be getting permission to go up early; but as for his having actually gone to bed—Hallo, though!

And Gayner, at the dormitory doorway, stopped dead.

He stared in astonishment towards one bed where a head showed against the white pillow. That bed, he knew, was Dave's, and so the chap had turned in early after all.

After a moment the prefect advanced a little way into the dormitory.

"What's the matter with you then, Cardew?" The recumbent figure, its face buried in the pillow, stirred feebly. A sigh was heard.

"Wha'?" Gayner was sleepily asked.

"You doing this with permission?"

"Yeh. Ma'ron said I mi'," the voice mumbled.

Then the prefect turned back to the door. Best to leave the fellow alone. So long as he had not sneaked out of bounds to get word with Hetty Morland it was all right. Gone to bed with a nasty head, had he? Not surprising. There had been enough lately to leave him quite knocked up.

"And it would be a thundering good job for me," Gayner thought to himself viciously, as he stalked out of the dormitory, "if the chap went sick enough to have to go into the san. There's no rest for me whilst he's about."

Going downstairs again the prefect met three juniors coming up softly.

"Did you see him?" Jack Linton anxiously asked with well-acted concern. "How is Dave feeling now, did he say?"

"Oh, out of my way!" snarled Gayner, pushing past the three. "You'd better not worry him."

"Oh, we are not going to worry him." Jack gave the assurance in quite a sick-room whisper. "Poor old Dave! But we must just go up."

They did so, nipping into the dormitory to find Jimmy still supine in Dave's bed, using only one merry eye to peep with over the edge of the drawn-up coverings.

Tom remained near the doorway to keep a look-out in case Gayner should come back.

"As bad as that, old son?" Jack loudly sympathised, reaching the bedside. "Never mind, better in the morning."

Presently Tom Trevor came across from the doorway.

"O.K.; the bounder went off right enough. How's the patient now?"

Then Jimmy sat up.

"The patient is much better," he said.

"Think he might get up now?"

"I think so, yes," said Jack, adopting the manner and voice of a medical man. "Oh, yes, let him return to school life now. No reason at all why he shouldn't attend Assembly, provided, ahem, he is careful! I'd better just see your tongue, boy."

So Jimmy hung out his tongue.

"Um! But I can give a prescription for that," Jack said, with the right professional air. "Half a glass of stone ginger before Assembly—if you others will see that he has it?"

"Would you stay, doctor, and have one with me?" the patient asked.

"Thank you, I will."

And so at a moment when the bell for Assembly was starting to ring the four were together in the study again, charging two tumblers, a cup, and a cracked mug.

"You have the mug, Tubby," said Jack, taking one of the tumblers. "And now, gentlemen, I will ask you to be upstanding and drink success to Dave Cardew."

"Hear, hear!" said Tubby, in haste to start quaffing. "One of the best!"

"May he win through to-night," Tom added fervently.

"For if he doesn't," said Jimmy, last of all, "it means the end of everything."

At Last!

ALONE in the dusk at her uncle's cottage by the river Hetty Morland suddenly started up from a chair, paying eager heed to an approaching footsteps.

It might, she realised, be only some late

stroller going to call for a glass of lemonade or a packet of cigarettes. But there had been one terrible upset for her earlier in the evening, and now vaguely she associated this significant sound with something personal to herself.

In any case, she had to make a sudden effort to appear composed. Only a few moments ago tears had trickled down her cheeks; not the tears of a weakling unable to face adversity, but the tears of a girl able to bear anything but a sense of disgrace and shame.

Hastily she removed the traces of grief from her white, set face. That footfall was of someone who, advancing rapidly, soon reached the porch.

The caller knocked upon the closed door. Crossing over, she lifted the latch and saw him—Dave, yes. And because she knew what dreadful risks he must have run to do this thing—all for her sake—she gave a gasp of dismay.

"You're not to worry about me, Hetty. Listen. I want to say a few things and then cut back to the school. Your uncle is off on his usual evening stroll, I know. I saw him."

"He didn't see you?" she gasped.

"Oh, no. Hetty, has Ralph Gayner been here this evening?"

She nodded.

"And, Dave, oh, it has given me such a shock. He made himself out to be on my side at first, and was all for saying that I had only done myself harm by getting you to handle those papers. Then he turned nasty, for he was running you down, and I wouldn't have that. He ended by saying that I would have done better not to try to find out about my parentage, because my father was a convict."

"It's not true, Hetty."

"Ralph Gayner declared that he could prove it. He said my father had to go to penal servitude for life, and died in prison. So I need never hope to see him—my own father, whom I have been thinking about all these years, imagining him to be someone to be proud of—"

A sob choked her voice, and in the dusk her eyes glistened again.

"You know who has brought me up from early childhood, Dave; this uncle of mine who is so shifty and heartless. I have stayed with him because I felt certain that one day everything would be so different."

"So it will be, Hetty. There is nothing in those papers that you gave me to look at and take care of that squares with what Gayner told you. He has told you a lie," Dave rushed on in a whisper, "because he is beginning to feel that there is nothing left for him to do but lie to everybody now."

"But why—why is he so concerned about me, Dave? In any case, what does it matter to him—anything that has to do with me, whether it's good or bad?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

Dave looked away from her for a moment.

"About those papers, Hetty, for you've been longing to know what I thought of them, and there's been simply no chance to tell you up till now. One, you remember, was a French newspaper dated some years ago. I expect you thought that there must be some item of news in it which, somehow or other, related to your parents?"

"Yes, Dave," she eagerly assented. "Although I don't see how my parents can have been

French. But there. Perhaps if I was brought to this country as an infant."

"Your parents weren't French, Hetty. But I reckon they were married in France. You know," he smiled, "I worked through every item of news in that old newspaper, and I just couldn't see anything that could possibly relate to your infancy. All the news related to French people, and—well, I didn't see how on earth you could have had French parents. Then when I was feeling whacked, I turned to the ad. columns. They had a 'Births, Marriages, and Deaths' column, or half a one. There I found the notice of a marriage, the parties to it—British."

"Ah!"

"Yes," he smiled, "and that's how a French provincial newspaper of all those years ago happens to concern you, Hetty. Just a half-inch announcement of a marriage at the local mayor's parlour, followed by a service in the church."

"And the name?" she clamoured. "The name?"

"Brown. As British as that, Hetty."

"Not Joab?" was her panted response. "So Uncle Ezra at any rate was not my father's brother? But he may have been my mother's brother—must have been, in fact."

"I doubt it, Hetty."

"What! You mean he isn't my uncle at all, then?"

"He might be a distant relative who got you to call him uncle. About the rest of those papers, though—"

"Oh, Dave, but don't stay to tell me now," she entreated. "Do run back to the school at once. Even the little you have told me has helped me to—"

"What you have to do, Hetty, is to put what Gayner said right out of your mind. You'd been crying when I turned up. It shows it's a good job I came along. Now don't lie awake to-night, grieving."

"I won't, Dave, oh, not after what you have told me. You say there is nothing—nothing in the papers to bear out what that spiteful fellow said? Before you turned up I was wondering if what was in that newspaper was something about my father being sentenced."

"No. And the rest of the papers, I'm sure they suggest, anyhow, that—"

"St! Oh!" she breathed, after clapping a hand to Dave's shoulder to check him. "That's uncle coming back. I know his step."

"I'm off then," the lad calmly whispered. "Night, Hetty. Sleep well. Just a moment—we must arrange how to get notes to each other. The post is no use. Gayner watches it. At the school—you know there's a boundary wall between the games field and the main road?"



Bewildered, the prefect paused. He had been so sure he would find Dave Cardew's bed empty. Even now, he never for a moment suspected the trick being played on him.

"Yes—yes!" Her eyes were looking all the while in the direction from which her uncle's shambling step was audible.

"Midway between the gates and the corner—a coping stone loose," Dave lingered in the porch to whisper. "I may hide a note under it. Be awfully careful, though, when you come to look—any time after dark."

"Oh, I will be very careful for your sake," she promised. "You've been such a splendid friend to me. Now go—please, please!"

"I shall be letting you know something about Mr. Gordon. You remember?" Dave still whispered rapidly. "That gentleman who is Ralph Gayner's guardian."

"Yes, I know; but, oh, you'll be seen!"

"Not I. 'Night again, Hetty."

And suddenly he was gone. There had been no time for her even to complete her fervent whisper in response when she found herself alone in the darkening porch, silently backing, to be able to close the door as silently.

Dave had dodged away in the gloom, putting the cottage between himself and Ezra Joab. The venturesome lad heard the ruffian's clumsy step taking him to the porch, and he smiled.

Dave heard also at that moment the far-off, faint ding-dong of Grangemoor's familiar chimes. And he knew full well that only a few minutes were his in which to get back to the school and aloft to the dormitory, unseen, before all the rest of his House went upstairs to bed.

He must hurry if he were to be in time.

Bad Luck—For Dave!

IN Big Hall to-night all Grangemoor was sensing something very inimical in the mood of the "Old Man."

He had come to his high place in front of the assembled school, giving last angry tuggings to his gown—and fellows knew what that meant.

He had been impatient when complete stillness had failed to follow the first command for "Silence!" His eyes had roamed the sea of faces before him fiercely.

As for his voice— During his first and formal use of it there had been a growling note in it awakening loud echoes in high corners above the great crossing beams. Some boy or other had sneezed once, and then the Head had paused, the eagle eye searching out the innocent offender as if minded to say: "Do that again, and—"

But the fear of incurring displeasure did not exist for Jack Linton and his three nearest neighbours on his right in one of the several lines formed by "Challenger's."

Bobby Blood had fumbled out one more chocolate from all those carried loose in his pocket; his jaws were being suddenly called upon to deal with a dismayingly granite-like centre, when the Head went off into a thunderous:

"And now! Come out, John Linton, James Cherrol, Thomas Trevor, Robert Blood, and David Cardew.

"These five boys," the Head boomed on, taking it for granted that they were leaving their line and making for the dais; "I have called them out, having decided to deal with them to-night."

Those listeners who, carried away by excitement, squinted aside to where the angry-sounding summons had created a stir in the ranks, saw that only four boys were making for the dais. But even now the Head was unaware of this.

"I shall want my cane," he remarked grimly. You—to the first prefect his eye happened to light upon—"fetch it, please. From the top of the bookcase in my study."

And now two hundred boys and more were all repressing gasps of amazement, were exchanging excited side-glances, nudges. A public caning?

"It may surprise you to know that recent happenings, in which these particular boys were involved, merit neither praise nor sympathy, but only severest punishment."

So the Head spoke on, waiting there for Jack and the others to reach the dais.

"It has been supposed—I know that I myself at first shared the belief—that on the one hand David Cardew was the victim of a villainous attack, causing him to be missing for several days, and that on the other hand four schoolmates of his did a most creditable thing in rescuing him. But no—no. Quite the contrary is the case. These five boys—eh, what!" The irate Head broke off, finding only four to glare at. "Where is Cardew then? Cardew, the major culprit, where is he?"

Mr. Challenger called softly across the great hall from where he stood with his marshalled charges.

"Cardew has gone to bed, sir. He obtained permission from the matron to go up early. He felt a bit out of sorts."

"Yes, that I can understand; but—H'm!" The Head gave his pondering cough. "H'm, ha! Is anybody with him? Has anybody seen him? What I am driving at is this," the much louder

voice specified. "Is it known for certain that that boy is where he is supposed to be at this particular moment? How am I to know; how are any of us to know if that boy is not even now out of bounds!"

More than ever amazed, the mustered scholars stood agape in their several rows, watching the great man in his fluttering gown walking about the dais with a stamping step.

The senior who had been sent away to fetch the cane returned with it. The Head took it and slashed it down upon his desk.

"Attention!" he rapped out, for an excitable rustling had commenced. "Not a sound whilst we wait; whilst somebody goes to see. You, Denver, go at once to the dormitory where Cardew is supposed to be, and if he is there—"

"Bring him along, sir?"

"What! Certainly not!" oily-headed Percy Denver was thundered at. "If Cardew really is in bed resting I shall have nothing more to say to-night. But I want to know—for certain."

"Very good, sir," said Percy Denver smoothly, and he hurried away.

Such a silence reigned in the thronged hall, his retiring step could still be heard even when he had made his hasty exit. The Head himself was now grimly motionless on the dais, where Dave's four chums were in lines.

Now and then—whilst a clock on the wall marked off these critical moments with its loud tick-tock—there came a dilating glance at these four juniors.

It was as if the Head were wanting to catch them showing signs of agitation.

But Jack, for one, although in terrible suspense on account of Dave, was outwardly calm, even capable of a bland expression which invited the "Old Man" to keep calm; there was nothing in the suspicion.

Jimmy and Tom, stiffly at attention, were at the worst only looking ill at ease.

As for Tubby, he thought it a good idea to keep his eyes upon the cane so that any betrayal of acute anxiety might be taken to be connected with the cane, whether it was to be used after all or not.

At last Percy Denver's returning step was heard. Even as he entered by a doorway at some distance from the dais he came in for a questioning cry from the Head:

"Well, Denver?"

"Er—not there, sir."

"What!"

"Cardew was not in the dormitory, sir."

The silence now, here in this vast hall where the whole school was assembled—every scholar accounted for, excepting Dave.

"Were his clothes there, Denver?"

"No, sir."

Another heavy pause. Again that great stillness, amounting to a deathlike hush, whilst one tragic thought inevitably ran in the minds of all four chums.

"Then he hasn't got back!" they realised.

PUZZLED and dismayed, Jack Linton and Co. can be certain of only one thing—there's trouble ahead for Dave, when he does eventually return! Further enthralling chapters of this magnificent story of life at a boys' school appear in next Tuesday's **SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN**, which you should order in advance.