

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schilling Kralik Bellamy Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschechow
Katharina II. von Rußland Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz
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**The Motor Girls on Waters Blue
Or the Strange Cruise of the Tartar**

Margaret Penrose

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THE MOTOR GIRLS ON WATERS BLUE

Or

The Strange Cruise of The Tartar

By

Margaret Penrose

CHAPTER I

NEWS

With a crunching of the small stones in the gravel drive, the big car swung around to the side entrance of the house, and came to a stop, with a whining, screeching and, generally protesting sound of the brake-bands. A girl, bronzed by the summer sun, let her gloved hands fall from the steering wheel, for she had driven fast, and was tired. The motor ceased its humming, and, with a click, the girl locked the ignition switch as she descended.

"Oh, what a run! What a glorious run, and on a most glorious day!" she breathed in a half whisper, as she paused for a moment on the bottom step, and gazed back over the valley, which the high-setting house commanded, in a magnificent view.

The leaves of the forest trees had been touched, gently as yet, by the withering fingers of coming winter, and the browns, reds, golden ambers, purples and flame colors ran riot under the hazy light of an October sun, slowly sinking to rest.

"It was a shame to go alone, on this simply perfect day," murmured the autoist, as she drew off one glove to tuck back under her motoring cap a rebellious lock of hair. "But I couldn't get a single one of the girls on the wire," she continued. "Oh, I just hate to go in, while there's a moment of daylight left!"

She stood on the porch, against a background of white pillars, facing the golden west, that every moment, under the now rapidly appearing tints of the sunset, seemed like some magically growing painting.

"Well, I can't stand here admiring nature!" exclaimed Cora Kimball, with a sudden descent to the commonplace. "Mother will be

wanting that worsted, and if we are to play bridge tonight, I must help Nancy get the rooms in some kind of shape."

As Cora entered the vestibule, she heard a voice from the hall inside saying:

"Oh, here she is now!"

"Bess Robinson!" murmured Cora. "And she said she couldn't come motoring with me. I wonder how she found time to run over?"

Cora Hung open the door to confront her chum Bess or, to be more correct, Elizabeth Robinson—the brown-haired, "plump", girl—she who was known as the "big" Robinson twin—the said Bess being rather out of breath from her rapid exit from the parlor to the hall.

As might be surmised, it did not take much to put Bess out of breath, or, to be still more exact, to put the breath out of Bess. It was all due to her exceeding—plumpness—to use a "nice" word.

"Oh, Cora!" exclaimed Bess. "I've been waiting so long for you! I thought you'd never come! I—I—"

"There, my dear, don't excite yourself. Accidents will happen in the best of manicured families, and you simply must do something—take more exercise—eat less—did you every try rolling over and over on the floor after each meal? One roll for each course, you know," and Cora smiled tantalizingly as she removed her other glove, and proceeded to complete the restoration of her hair to something approaching the modern style—which task she had essayed while on the porch.

"Well, Cora Kimball, I like your—!"

"No slang, Bess dear. Remember those girls we met this summer, and how we promised never, never to use it—at least as commonly as they did! We never realized how it sounded until we heard them."

"Oh, Cora, do stop. I've such a lot to tell you!" and Bess laid a plump and rosy palm over the smiling lips of her hostess.

"So I gathered, Bess, from your manner. But you must not be in such a hurry. This is evidently going to be a mile run, and not a hundred yard dash, as Jack would say. So come in, sit down, get comfy, wait until you and your breath—are on speaking terms, and I'll listen. But first I want to tell you all that happen to me. Why didn't you come for a spin? It was glorious! Perfectly 'magnificent!'"

"Oh, Cora, I wanted so much to come, you know I did. But I was out when you 'phoned, and mamma is so upset, and the house is in such a state—really I was glad to run out, and come over here. We are going—"

"My turn first, Bess dear. You should have been with me. In the first place, I had a puncture, and you'll never in the world guess who helped me take off the shoe—"

"Your shoe, Cora!"

"No, silly! The tire shoe. But you'd never guess, so I'll tell you. It was Sid Wilcox!"

"That fellow who made so much trouble—"

"Yes, and who do you think was with him?"

"Oh, Ida Giles, of course. That's easy."

"No, it was Angelina Mott!"

"What, sentimental Angie?"

"The same. I can't imagine how in the world she ever took up with Sid enough to go motoring."

"Say, rather, how he took up with her. Sid is much nicer than he used to be, and they say his new six-cylinder is a beautiful car."

"So it is, my dear, but I prefer to select my chauffeur—the car doesn't so much matter. Well, anyhow, Sid was very nice. He offered to put in a new inner tube for me, and of course I wasn't going to refuse. So Angelina and I sat in the shade, while poor Sid labored. And the shoe was gummed on, so he had no easy task. But I will say this for him—he didn't even once hint that there was a garage not far off. Wasn't that nice?"

"Brave and noble Sid!"

"Yes, wasn't he, Bess? But I don't want to exhaust all my eloquence and powers of description on a mere puncture."

"Oh, Cora! Did anything else happen?" and Bess, who had followed her chum into the library of the Kimball home, sank down, almost breathless once more, into the depths of a deep, easy chair.

"There you go again!" laughed Cora, laying aside her cap and veil. "I'll have to pull you out of that, Bess, when you want to get up. Why do you always select that particular chair, of all others?"

"It's so nice and soft, Cora. Besides, I can get up myself, thank you," and, with an assumption of dignity that did not at all accord with her plump and merry countenance and figure, Bess Robinson tried to arise.

But, as Cora had said, she needed help. The chair was of such a depth that one's center of gravity was displaced, if you wish the scientific explanation.

"Now don't you dare lean back again!" warned Cora, as her chum sat on the springy edge of the chair, in a listening attitude. "To resume, as the lecturer in chemistry says, after Sid had so obligingly fixed the puncture, I started off again, for mamma wanted some worsted and I had offered to run into town to get it for her. The next thing that happened to me, Bess dear, I saw the nicest young man, and ran right into —"

"Not into him, Cora! Don't tell me you hurt anyone!" cried Bess, covering her face with her hands or at least, trying to, for her hands were hardly large enough for the completion of the task.

"No, I didn't run into him, Bess, though there was a dog—but that's another story."

"Oh, Cora! I do wish you'd finish one thing at a time. And that reminds me —"

"Wait, Bess, dear. I didn't run into the young man, but he bowed to me, and I turned around to make sure who he was, for at first I thought him a perfect stranger, and I was going to cut him. In my excitement, I ran right into a newly oiled place on the road, and,

before I knew it, I was skidding something awful! Before I could reach the emergency brake, I had run sideways right against the curbing, and it's a mercy I didn't split a rim. And the young man ran over—"

"Oh, Cora Kimball! I'll never get my news in, if I don't interrupt you right here and now!" cried Bess. "Listen, my dear! I simply must tell, you. It's what I ran over for, and I know you can't have had any serious accident, and look as sweet as you do now—it's impossible!"

"Thanks!" murmured Cora, with a mock bow. "After that, I must yield the floor to you. Go on, Bess. What is it? Has some one stolen your car, or have you discovered a new kind of chocolate candy? I wish I had some now; I'm simply starved! You have no idea how bracing and appetizing the air is. What was I telling you about?"

"Never mind, Cora. It's my turn. You can't guess what has happened."

"And I'm not going to try, for I know you're just dying to tell me. Go on. I'm listening," and Cora sat on a stool at the feet of her chum.

"Well, it would take too long to tell it all, but what would you say, if I went on a long sea voyage this winter?"

"What would I say? Why, my dear, I'd say that it was simply perfectly magnificent! It sounds like—like a wedding tour, almost. A sea voyage.

Oh, Bess, do tell me!" and Cora leaned forward eagerly, expectantly. "Are you really going?"

"It seems so, yes. Belle and I shall have to go if papa carries out his plans, and takes mamma to the West Indies. You see it's like this. He has—"

A knock came at the door. Cora turned her head quickly, and called: "Come in!"

A maid entered, bearing on a silver server a note, the manila envelope of which proclaimed it as a telegraph message.

"Oh, a telegram!" gasped Cora, and her fingers trembled, in spite of her, as she opened it.

She gave a hasty glance at the written words, and then cried:

"Oh, it was for mother, but the envelope had 'Miss Kimball' on it. However, it doesn't matter, and I'm glad I opened it first. Oh, dear!"

"Bad news?" asked Bess, softly.

"It's about my brother Jack," said Cora, and there was a sob in her voice. "He has suffered a nervous breakdown, and will have to leave college at once!"

CHAPTER II

MORE NEWS

"Oh, Cora!" murmured Bess, rising from the chair, and it was with no easy effort that she did so, for she had allowed herself to sink back again into its luxurious depths. "Oh, Cora dear! Isn't that perfectly dreadful!"

Cora Kimball did not answer. She was staring at the fateful telegram, reading it over and over again; the words now meaningless to her. But she had grasped their import with the first swift glance. Jack was ill—in trouble.

Bess put her arms around her chum, and slipped one plump hand up on the tresses tangled by the wind on the motor ride.

"Can I do anything to help—your mother is she—"

"Of course!" exclaimed Cora with a sigh. "I must tell mother at once. Yes, she's at home, Bess. Will you—do you mind coming with me?"

"Of course not, my dear. I wouldn't think of letting you go alone to tell her. Is the telegram from Jack himself?"

"No, it's from Walter Pennington. Walter says a letter follows—special delivery."

"Oh, then you'll get it soon! Perhaps it isn't so bad as you think. Dear Walter is so good!"

"Isn't he?" agreed Cora, murmuringly. "I sha'n't worry so much about Jack, now that I know Wally is with him. Oh, but if he has to leave college—"

Cora did not finish. Together she and Bess left the library, seeking Mrs. Kimball, to impart to her the sudden and unwelcome news. And so, when there is a moment or two, during which nothing of

chronicling interest is taking place, my dear readers may be glad of a little explanation regarding Cora Kimball and her chums, and also a word or two concerning the previous books of this series.

Cora Kimball was the real leader of the motor girls. She was, by nature, destined for such a position, and the fact that she, of all her chums, was the first to possess an automobile, added to her prestige. In the first volume of this series, entitled "The Motor Girls," I had the pleasure of telling how, amid many other adventures, Cora, and her chums, Bess and Belle Robinson, helped to solve the mystery of a twenty thousand dollar loss.

Cora, Bess and Belle were real girl chums, but they never knew all the delights of chumship until they "went in" for motoring. Living in the New England town of Chelton, on the Chelton River, life had been rather hum-drum, until the advent of the "gasoline gigs" as Jack, Cora's brother, slangily dubbed them. Jack, with whose fortunes we shall concern ourselves at more length presently, had a car of his own—one strictly limited to two—a low-slung red and yellow racing car, "giddy and gaudy," Cora called it.

Later on, the Robinson twins also became possessed of an automobile, and then followed many delightful trips.

"The Motor Girls on a Tour," the second volume of the series, tells in detail of many surprising happenings, which were added to, and augmented, at "Lookout Beach."

Through New England the girls went, after their rather strenuous times at the seaside, and you may be sure Cora Kimball was in the forefront of all the happenings on that rather remarkable run.

Perhaps the most romantic of all the occurrences that befell the girls were the series at Cedar Lake. There, indeed, were Cora and her chums put to a supreme test, and that they emerged, tried and true, will not be surprising news to those of you who really know the motor maids.

As another summer followed the green spring, so adventures followed our friends, and those on the coast were in no whit tamer than previous happenings. Once again did Cora prove that she could "do things," if such proof were needed.

"The Motor Girls on Crystal Bay, Or The Secret of the Red Oar," is the title of the book immediately preceding this one.

It would hardly be fair to tell you, bold-facedly, what the "secret" was. I would not like a book spoiled for me that way, and I am sure you will agree with me.

But when Cora and her friends made the acquaintance of sad little Freda Lewis, and later on of Denny Shane, the picturesque old fisherman, they had the beginnings of the mysterious secret. And in solving it, they bested the land-sharpers, and came upon the real knowledge of the value of the red oar.

Those incidents had taken place during the summer. Autumn had come, with its shorter days, its longer nights, the chill of approaching frosts and winter, and the turning of leaves, and the girls I had bidden farewell to the sad, salty sea waves, and had returned to cheerful Chelton.

Cheerful Chelton—I believe I never thus alliteratively referred to it before, but the sound falls well upon my ear. Cheerful Chelton—indeed it was so, and though Cora and her chums had enjoyed themselves to the utmost at Crystal Bay and in so enjoying had done it noble service still they were glad to get back.

And now—

I beg your pardon! I really am forgetting, the boys, and as they always have, and seem always destined to play an important part in the lives of the girls, perhaps I had better introduce them in due form.

To begin with, though not to end with, there was Cora's brother Jack. Like all other girls' brothers was Jack—a tease at times, but of sterling worth in hours of distress and trouble.

Jack was a junior at Exmouth College, but, bless you! that is not nearly as important as it sounds, and none of my new readers need be on their dignity; or assume false society manners with Jack. For I warn them, if they do, the thin veneer will very soon be scratched off. A true boy was Jack!

So was his chum, Walter Pennington—"Wally," the girls often called him, though it was not at all an effeminate term of endear-

ment. Walter gave exactly the opposite impression from that. Besides, he was too athletic (which you could tell the moment you looked at him) to further such associations.

Other young men there were, Ed Foster, in particular, who often went motoring with the girls, to make the third male member which caused the little parties to "come out even."

Occasionally Paul Hastings, and his sister Hazel, would be included, but, of late, Paul had been too busy setting up an automobile business of his own, to ride with his friends.

So much for the boys—though there were more of them, but we need not concern ourselves with them at present.

Bess and Belle Robinson were the daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Perry Robinson—the "rich" Mr. Robinson, as he was called, to distinguish him from another, and more humble, though none the less worthy, citizen of Chelton. Bess and Belle had nearly everything they wanted—which list was not a small one. But mostly they wanted Cora Kimball, and they looked up to her, deferred to her and loved her, with a devotion that comes only from sweet association since early childhood.

"Cheerful Chelton!" Somehow I cannot seem to forego the temptation of using that expression again. It was a typical New England village, the nearness of it to New York not having spoiled it.

Of late, the invasion of many automobiles had threatened to turn it into a "popular" resort. There was already one garage, and another in building, and to the trained and experienced motorist, no more need be said.

It was to Chelton that Cora Kimball and her chums had returned, following their summer at Crystal Bay. Cora, after trying in vain to get some of her chums, by telephone, to come for a little motor run with her, had gone alone, coming back to find Best at her home, when the events narrated in the initial chapter took place.

Now the two girls were on their way upstairs to impart the news contained in the telegram, to Mrs. Kimball.

"Do you—do you think she'll faint?" asked Bess.

"No—of course not! Mother isn't of the fainting sort," replied Cora, for Mrs. Kimball, a widow since her boy and girl were little children, was used to meeting emergencies bravely and calmly.

"I wonder what could have happened to Jack?" mused Bess, as they reached the upper hall. "Do you suppose he could have been hurt playing football, Cora?"

"I don't see how. The season hasn't really opened yet, and they play only light games at first. Besides, Jack has played before, and knows how to take care of himself. I can't imagine what it is—a nervous breakdown."

"Probably Wally's letter will tell."

"I hope so. Oh, but, Bess, I didn't hear your news. You must tell me all about it, my dear."

"I will—when this excitement is over."

Mrs. Kimball received the news calmly—that is, calmly after a first sharp in-taking of breath and a spasmodic motion toward her heart. For Jack was very dear to her.

"Well, my dears, we must hope for the best," she said, cheerfully, to the girls. "Fortunately, his room is in order, which is more than can be said for it when he went away. Cora, can look up trains, or, better still, ask the station agent when one might get in from Exmouth. Probably Walter will bring Jack home as soon as he can.

"It can't be so very serious, or Walter would have so specified in his telegram. I am anxious to get his letter, however. You might call up the post-office, Cora, and find out when the next mail gets in. Then you could go down in your car and get the special. That will be quicker than waiting for the boy to come up on his bicycle with it. Often he has half a dozen letters to deliver, and he might be delayed coming to us."

"I'll do that, Mother. You seem to think of everything!" and Cora threw her arms about the neck of the gray-haired lady, in whose eyes there was a troubled look, though neither in voice nor manner did she betray it.

"I can't imagine Jack ill," murmured Bess.

"Nor I," said Cora. "He has always been so strong and healthful. If only it isn't some accident —"

"Don't suggest it!" begged Bess. "Shall I come with you to the station, Cora?"

"I'd like to have you, dear, if you can spare the time."

"As if I wouldn't make time for such a thing as this. Come, do your telephoning, and we'll go."

Cora learned that no train which Jack could possibly get would arrive until very late that afternoon, but at the post-office it was said a mail would be in within the hour, and there was a chance that the special delivery letter would be on it.

"We'll go and see," decided Cora, now again a girl of action.

"And on your way, Cora dear," requested her mother, "stop at Dr. Blake's office, and ask him to meet the train Jack comes on. While I anticipate nothing serious, it is best to be on the safe side, and Jack may be in a state of collapse after his trip. You had better explain to Dr. Blake, rather than telephone."

"Yes, mother. Now are you sure you'll be all right?"

"Oh, certainly. I am not alone, with the servants here. Besides, John is just outside, trimming the lawn paths. You won't be long."

"No longer than we can help. Come on, Bess. Oh! and now you'll have a chance to tell me what you started to."

"Oh! It isn't so much, Cora. In fact, I don't like to mention my pleasure, after hearing of your trouble."

"Then it's pleasure?"

"Yes, Belle seems to think so."

"Did you mention the West Indies?"

"Yes, father has to go to Porto Rico on business, and we are going to make a winter cruise of it. Mamma and we girls are going, and what I came over to ask you —"

The voice of Bess was rather lost in the throb of the motor as Cora thrust over the lever of the self-starter. As the two girls settled themselves in the seat, Bess resumed:

"I came over to ask if you couldn't go with us, Cora? Can't you come on a winter's cruise to where there is no snow or ice, and where the waters are blue—so blue?"

"Come with you?" gasped Cora.

"Yes. Papa and mamma specially asked me to come and invite you. Oh, Cora, do say you'll go! It will be such fun!"

"I'd love to, Bess," said Cora, after a moment's thought. "But there's poor Jack, you know. I shall probably have to stay home and nurse him. I can't leave mother all alone."

"Oh, Cora!" murmured Bess, in disappointed tones.

