

**CORINNE OF
CORRALL'S BLUFF**

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Corinne of Corral's Bluff by Marion Miller Knowles

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MARION MILLER KNOWLES

**CORINNE OF
CORRALL'S BLUFF**



Yours faithfully,
MARIAN KUON

CORINNE OF CORRALL'S BLUFF

BY
MARION MILLER KNOWLES

Author of

*"Songs from the Hills" (two editions), "Fronde from the Blacks'
Spur," "Barbara Halliday," etc.*



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Corinne of Corral's Bluff

CHAPTER I.

A DAUGHTER OF NEPTUNE.

"Her only music was the voice of waves,
Her playthings were the shells she found in rocky caves;
Imagination on a seagull's wing
Flew with her yearning thoughts, and taught her every-
thing!"

Knowing nothing of any country save Australia, but born in a lighthouse, and reared on the rocks with the seagulls, with ancestry behind her whose lives had been precariously spent as fishermen in wave-lashed islands off the coast of France, Corinne Courboules looked a typical sailor's daughter, with her bright, boyish face, wide-opened, frank blue eyes, and lithe, erect figure, of an easy swinging grace, that suggested strength of muscle as of character.

Sebastien Courboules, it is true, had spent most of his reckless existence on the goldfields, not on

the sea, but when more ill-luck than good had followed on his footsteps, and the energy of youth had deserted his big frame, the memories of boyhood, ever restless, ever surging over his heart, had sent him coastwards, craving for a touch of salt spray on his face and the familiar voice of the sea in his world-weary ears.

As a lighthouse-keeper he lived contentedly enough for some years; then his wife died and an only son, Antoine, followed her. Then Sebastien's heart began to wither within him, and he grew tired of the lonely days within the lighthouse; so, having saved a little money, he "bought out" the owner of the refreshment rooms further up the coast, where, during the summer season, tourists came from all parts for weeks, and even months, at a time, and anyone with business capacities could manage to make a good livelihood out of them.

The refreshment rooms were situated on the most sheltered part of Corral's Bluff, and had been strongly, if not very picturesquely, built. On the seaward side the rocks were high, rough and jagged, and, in wild weather, the waves dashed furiously against their bulwarks and flung their spray in glistening fountains within touch of the house itself. In mild weather the hollows inside these rocks were the haunts of admiring families, who did their best to destroy their natural beauty by probing the opalescent pools to drag forth seaweed and shells and unfortunate shellfish, as well as

other trophies of their restless energies. Most of these tourists went in for a regular course of sea-bathing, and on the ravenous appetites thus engendered, the Courboules depended for their means of living. They supplied every sort of meal required, and at all hours. As Sebastien grew older and feebler, the bulk of the work fell almost entirely on Corinne. The only coffee palace was over a mile away, and it was the general thing for visitors accommodated there to spend the whole day out on the beach, and patronise "Old Sebastien's" for luncheon, afternoon tea, and "soft" drinks.

So Corinne saw plenty of company of a kind, and, as she was a girl of quick intelligence and very adaptable, she soon picked up a fair amount of education. Her father had not troubled himself much about her "schooling," as she was "only a girl," but he had taught her his own language well enough to enable her to speak it correctly, and with the proper accent, whenever occasion required; and he had taught her how to read better than any ordinary teacher could have done, and also how to distinguish good literature from bad. She always welcomed the proffered loan of a book from a seaside visitor with eagerness, though her time for reading was necessarily limited; and when she had an hour or two at her disposal, she would take it with her, seek out one of her favourite rocky haunts, and devour its contents. Returning, she would breast the wind with wild exhilaration in her