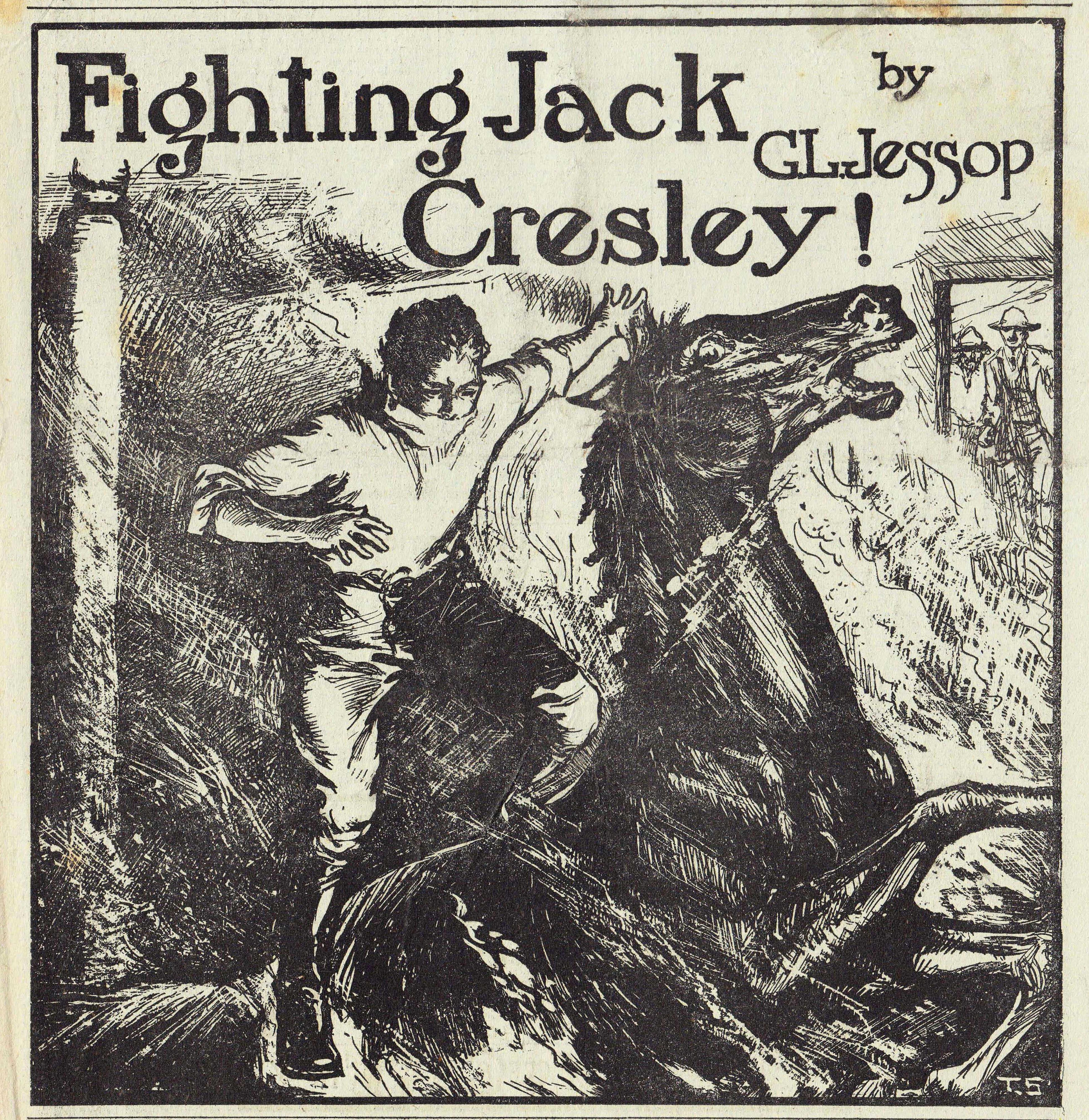


No. 1,054. Vol. XXII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending August 20th, 1921.



FIGHTING JACK CRESLEY TO THE RESCUE!

CRESLEY TO THE RESCUE! Through the thick haze of smoke Jack Cresley discerned the Prince—a pitiable, terror-stricken object, with ears back and the whites of his eyes showing. Poising himself over the partition, he awaited his opportunity, and, as the brute momentarily ceased its frightened plunges, he released his hold and dropped—directly over the animal's back!

A SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL YARN

Published

Every Monday



JIMMY SILVER & CO. HOLIDAY.

The 1st Chapter. The Shadow of Shame!

"Jimmy!"

"Jimmy Silver!"

"Jimmy, you fathead!"

"Jimmy, you ass!"

George Raby and Arthur Newcome of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood were calling out simultaneously.

Apparently they were anxious to get in touch with Jimmy Silver.

The sun was setting behind the low hills, and already there was a glimmer of the rising moon on the sea. The cliffs of the French coast, stretching away towards Boulogne and Calais, were growing dim.

Raby and Newcome were seeking up and down the garden paths at Le Bosquet for Jimmy Silver and the

rest of the Co.

It was the second day of Jimmy Silver & Co.'s holiday in la belle France. They had spent most of the day at Le Bosquet, a few miles from Boulogne, and now they were going to dine in the big, white salle-amanger in the annexe to the whitewalled Casino; or, rather, they should have been going to dine

"Shut up, you fellows, for good-

ness' sake!" Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Rookwood Fourth, stepped out of the shades of a dusky alley under the trees. Raby and Newcome closed in on him at once. But they did not

shut up. They were hungry and they were wrathy.

"You burbling ass!" said Raby. "We're waiting dinner. Your pater's sitting at the table all on his lonely own. I began to think you'd

had some blessed accident!" "What's the matter?" demanded Newcome. "Are you all here? What the thump is this dashed secret

meeting about?"

The two seekers could discern the rest of the party now, in the shadows. Jimmy Silver and Arthur Edward Lovell had unusually grave faces. Erroll was pale as chalk. And Algy Silver, the fag of Rookwood, was quivering with excitement, and there were stains of passionate tears upon his usually cheeky face. Raby and Newcome blinked at them in astonishment.

They could see that something had happened, though they could not even imagine what it was.

"Dinner-" recommenced New-

come. "Oh, bother dinner!" grunted

Lovell.

"You're generally ready for dinner, old top," said Raby; "and it's long past seven, the time we fixed. Has anything happened?"

"Yes," muttered Jimmy Silver. "What's happened?" demanded Newcome. "Have you fallen in with Mornington again, and been rowing with him?"

"Morny isn't here," said Raby,

glancing round.

Certainly, Valentine Mornington of the Rookwood Fourth was not visible. But it was easy to guess that if there had been trouble, Valentine Mornington had had something to do with it. There had been trouble more than once since the party had met Mornington on the Channel

"We'd better get in to cinner," said Jinmy Silver uneasily. "The pater isn't to know anything about this. It's rotten enough without dragging him into it."

"What about my money?" hooted

Algy Silver.

"You deserve to lose it, you young rascal. I've a jolly good mind to give you a hiding, along with

"Has Algy lost his money?"

"I've been done out of it!" hissed Algy. "Mornington's bagged it!"

"What rot!" "He has, I tell you. He"-Algy of the Third trembled with wrath and chagrin-"he promised to take me into the Casino to play, and took my money to change for me into French-fifteen pounds-and then he disappeared. And-and Erroll and Lovell saw him going into the Casino, without me. He's gone in to gamble with my money!"

"My only hat!"

Kit Erroll stood motionless, but he winced under Algy's words. Mornington was his chum-his best chum. He had striven to stand between the wayward junior and his reckless folly. There was still a mark on his cheek where Mornington had struck him aside the previous day. Yet he was still loyal to his friendship, and his heart ached for the wretched waster who had brought this black shame upon himself.

"Three fivers!" continued Algy Silver, full of his wrongs, and regardless of any other consideration. "He said he'd get them changed into French money for me, because they wouldn't change them for a kid, and -and he left me here, and never came back, and-and now--"

Algy gave a breathless sob. His disappointment and rage were almost too much for him. His prospects of a "flutter" had dwindled down to zero now. Even if he could elude the watchful eyes of his uncle and his cousin, it was useless now, now that his money was gone.

"Mornington's a thief-a thief!" gasped. "He's got my money---" "You'll keep your mouth shut, Algy," continued Jimmy Silver. "As for Mornington, we're done with him. I dare say he'll make the money good somehow, later on. If not, you can lose it, and serve you right! Now, let's get in to dinner, you fellows, or the pater will be coming to look for us himself."

"It's a shame," quavered Algy, "a-a shame! I-I--"

"Oh, shut up!" said Jimmy roughly. "What you want is a thundering good hiding, you young goat; and you'll get it if you're not jolly careful!"

"Come on, Erroll!" called out Lovell, as the juniors began to move off towards the brilliantly lighted

dining-hall. Erroll shook his head.

"I-I can't come in now," he said huskily. "I-I've got to-to-"

"The pater will miss you, Erroll," said Jimmy Silver uneasily.

"Tell him I've gone to look for Morny; you needn't tell him any more. Don't wait dinner; just get on with it, and-and I'll join you later. I-I can't come in now. couldn't stand it."

"Oh, all right!" said Jimmy. It was pretty clear that if Erroll joined the dining-party his pale face and agitation would warn Mr. Silver that something had happened. "All right. Come on, you chaps."

"And buck up!" added Raby, re-

membering that he was hungry. Jimmy Silver & Co. moved off towards the big white building, leaving Erroll standing where he was. It was with difficulty that they composed their looks, as they came in steadiest and most level-headed fellow and met Mr. Silver's eyes, and the in the Rookwood crowd: Even now dinner-party was not so merry as it | he hesitated, though it was for Morn-"Hang your money!" snapped! might have been. Erroll was look ington's sake that he was acting.

ing for Mornington, with loyal friendship and a troubled heart, but Jimmy Silver & Co. were feeling anything but amiable towards the scapegrace "What the thump-" said Raby. of Rookwood. Indeed, the chief feeling in the party of juniors was a strong desire to be within hitting distance of Valentine Mornington's handsome, reckless face.

The 2nd Chapter. A Faithful Friendship!

Erroll stopped at the wide stone steps that gave admittance to the Casino of Le Bosquet.

The wide vestibule was almost empty. Two or three croupiers, released from the tables, now that the "game" was shut down for the dinner interval, were talking and grinning together in a corner, and a "chasseur" was lounging on one of the velvet-covered seats. There ton as Erroll looked in, and he won- ! a mood of enjoyment.

The Rookwood junior passed down a broad corridor, at the end of which a long, lofty room opened. In the centre of the room was a long, greenbaize table, now covered with cloths, as it was not in use. In one corner of the room was a "caisse," or desk, where money could be changed. This evidently was the gaming-room.

chattering croupiers to inquire.

caisse; the croupiers and the chefs- how!" and rest from their peculiar labours. I you've done." the walls, all of them vacant; but at | cheeks, and burned there. last, coming to the end of the room, "So-so you know?" he asked, Erroll caught sight of a figure in a lafter a long pause. chair. He recognised Valentine Mornington at once, though the upper lip. That was a device of Morny's, lest he should be refused permission to play on account of his youth. Not that there was much danger; the proprietors of the Casino of Le Bosquet were not particular as to the age of the sheep they sheared.

Mornington did not look up. He must have heard the footsteps on the floor, echoing in the deserted room, but probably he thought it was simply some croupier or changeur. Certainly it did not occur to him that his chum was there. The scapegrace of Rookwood sat stretched out in the chair, his hands driven into his pockets, his gaze fixed before him with a gloomy, almost a savage, stare that saw nothing.

Morny was having his fling, but to was no sign of Valentine Morning- judge by appearances he was not in

But his hesitation was brief. He | up at present. Don't wait till they the vestibule, and take the cloths off, Erroll. It would glanced round him there. Several be too painful a sight for you."

Erroll did not heed the bitter doorways opened in various directions-one to a dancing-hall, another mockery in his chum's tone. He to the music-hall—and Erroll, unsure | dropped into a seat beside Morningof his way, approached the group of | ton.

"You're waiting for the game to reopen?" he asked.

"What else?" said Mornington. "Do you think I've come in for the air? Fairly thick, ain't it?"

"Poisonous, pretty nearly, I think! You haven't been playing yet?" "How could I? I lost all my tin

at Calais yesterday!" growled Mornington. "I came along here to spin It was untenanted now, so far as a yazz to Silver's father and get a Erroll could see The crowd had loan out of Lim. But Silver stopped cleared off for dinner; the money- that. Hang him: I shall have a changer was gone from the locked | flutter to-night in spite of him, any-

de-partie had been only too glad to | "Morny, I've just seen young Algy get out of the vitiated atmosphere Silver. He's told us what-what

Erroll walked the length of the room, Mornington's face went a shade his footsteps echoing on the polished | paler, and he dropped his eyes. Then parquet. There were couches round the colour began to steal into his

"I know."

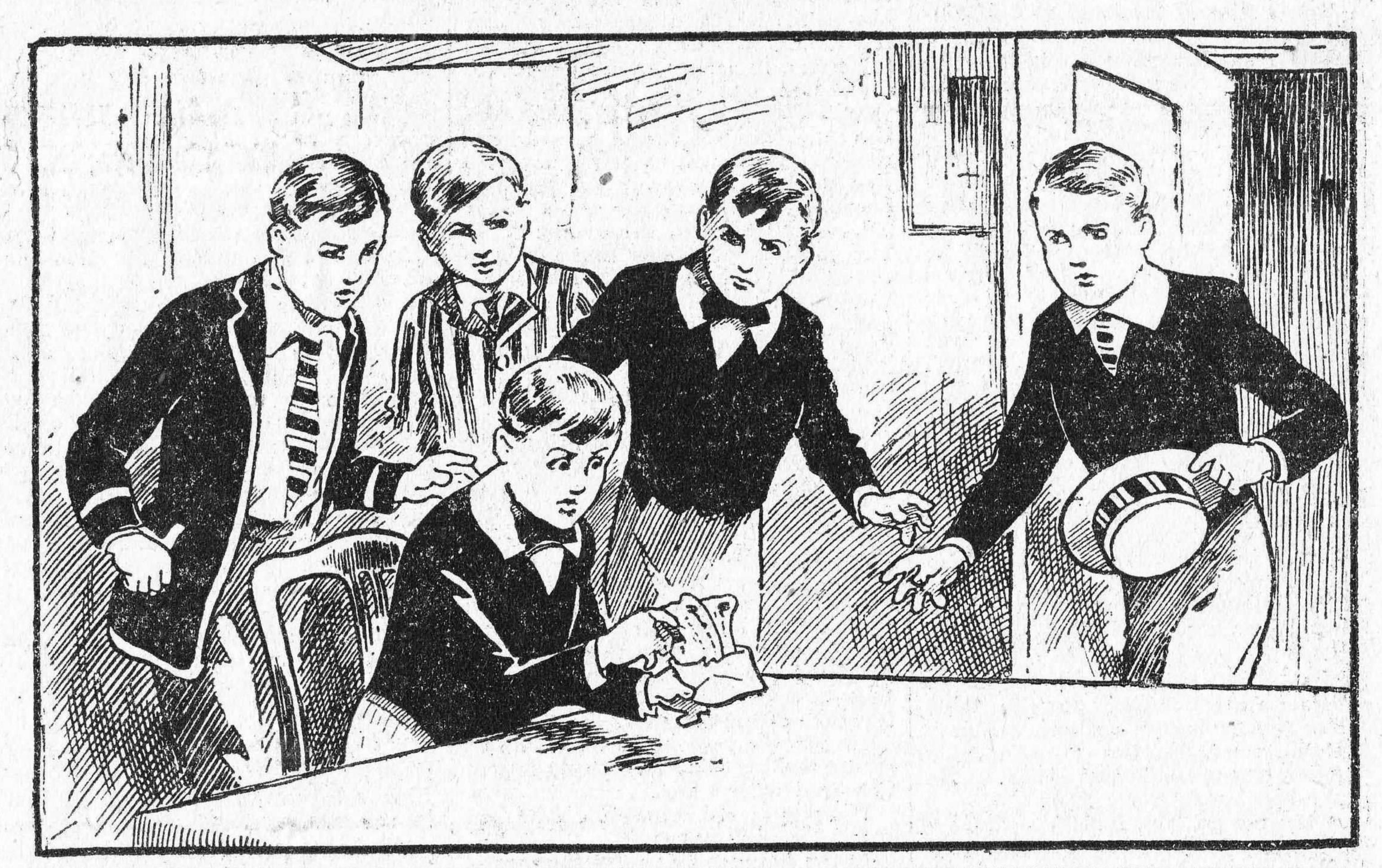
"Can't be helped," said Morningscapegrace of Rookwood had a small, ton in his old tone, shrugging his curly black moustache affixed to his slim shoulders. "I was bound to raise the wind somehow. All the better for that young fool to be kept off the game. I shall send him the money when I get home. I suppose you don't think I'm a thief?" He winced as he uttered that word. Whatever sophistry he might soothe his conscience with. Mornington was very well aware that if he used Algy's money the act was that of a thief, or so alike that the difference was indis-

tinguishable. "You've still got the money, old fellow?" said Erroll in a low tone.

"I've changed it into French." "But still-"

"And spent a few francs on coffee and sandwiches," said Morny. "I'm not joinin' the merry dinner-party. Won't they miss you, Erroll?"

"Never mind that. Morny, you've, I still got the money. Come out with:



Kit Erroll tossed an envelope to the junior. "With A SURPRISE FOR ALGY SILVER! Morny's thanks," he said. Algy Silver tore open the envelope and stared at the three five-pound notes it contained. "Then Morny was only joking," he stammered. "He's not a thief, after all"

dered where the scapegrace was. He | Erroll's face shadowed still more | me now and give it back to young could not be playing, as the tables | as he looked at his hapless chum and | Algy." were closed down; and Erroll knew noted the grim, worn lines in the "Don't be an ass! What do you that they had already been closed for dinner at six, when Mornington had played his miserable trick on the fag. The money Mornington had obtained was still in his pockets, therefore, and he could not recommence his folly until the "jeu" opened at eight o'clock. It wanted ten minutes to eight when Erroll glanced into the gaudily-decorated vestibule.

It went against the grain with Erroll to enter the place. Mr. Silver had brought his young charges to the Casino gardens to listen to the band, to mingle in the gay throng, and to dine in the salle-manger; but it was, of course, on the very strict understanding that no member of the party entered the gambling-rooms. Erroll would not have thought of entering the "salle-de-jeu" on his own account. He was, probably, the

young face. Apart from the false moustache, Valentine Mornington looked years older than he had looked a few weeks earlier at Rookwood School. Feverish excitement and anxiety had told upon him, and left a deep mark.

Erroll came over to him, and not till he was close did Mornington raise his eyes and fix a stare upon him. Then he started and half-rose to his

"You here, Erroll!" "I was looking for you, Morny," said Erroll quietly.

Valentine Mornington broke into a chuckle that had very little merriment in it.

"You haven't come in for the

Erroll shook his head.

grinned Mornington. "But can you neck and lifted the money if there stand the awful sight of the green | had been no other way! Catch on?" tables? Fortunately, they're covered (Continued overleaf.)

think I stole it for?" said Mornington, with bitter mockery.

"If you give it back to him it's not stolen. Morny, for mercy's sake think what you are doing!" said Erroll earnestly. "This rotten gambling is blackguardly enough, butbut what you've done-don't you know what you have done? For your own sake, Morny-"

Morny raised his eyes and fixed them on his friend with a peculiar

expression.

"Have you ever heard what it's like to rob a tigress of her cubs. Erroll?" he asked. "Well, it's like that to come between a fool and his folly-between a gambler and his game. I'm goin' to have my run on the green table. I don't care what happens afterwards. I diddled that fool of a fag. Serve him right! I'd "Of course not, old sobersides!" have taken him by the scruff of the

Erroll shivered a little.

"I hit you yesterday for trying to stop me." said Mornington. "You were fool enough to take it quietly. Now you're playing the fool again. Why the deuce can't you leave me alone?"

"Because I'm your friend."

"I'm not fit to be your chum, or anybody's; and you know it. I'm a bad hat. It's bred in the bone," said Mornington cynically. "When I was rich I used to play the goat all I could; now I'm poor I've got a thirst for it. I'd rather stand at the green table, and go to prison afterwards, than walk out of the Casino with you now, Erroll. I'm goin' to have my chance. I may win." The hapless junior's eyes sparkled for a moment. "Yesterday, at Calais, I had a run of luck; but it changed. I-I'm goin' to be more careful to-night. If I get through, I'll settle up with that confounded fag at once!"

"And if not?" asked Erroll, forbearing to argue with the infatuated boy on the possibilities of his "getting through."

"If not, I'll get the money from my guardian later and send it to him. I'm not a thief—yet."

"And suppose your guardian won't

Mornington muttered a curse. "Sir Rupert Stacpoole stood you a tenner for the holiday," said Erroll. "I fancy he will open his eyes if you ask him for fifteen pounds as soon as you get home."

"I shall find the money somehow!" muttered Mornington sullenly.

There were footsteps in the deserted room now. Two or three uniformed attendants had come in. and were removing the coverings from the gaming-table. Mornington looked up and breathed more quickly. The sight of the green cloth seemed to him like the sight of water to a thirsty horse in a desert. His hands trembled.

Erroll felt an ache at his heart. He could see, only too clearly, that his chum was past reasoning withat least, so long as this mad mood should last. It was not easy to save a fellow like Valentine Mornington

from himself.

The strains of the band were beginning again. There was already a sound of shuffling feet in the dancinghall, next to the gaming-room. Welldressed chatting crowds of idlers began to appear, and in twos and threes they sauntered into the long room. The chef-de-partie, buttoned tight in a black frock-coat, came mineing in, and took up his position in the high chair, from whence he overlooked the jeu. The croupiers began to take their places, uncover their little piles of counters, and pick up their long-handled rakes. The odd-looking arrangement of little wooden horses on wires was disclosed. and the man whose business it was to work it took his stand at the handle of the machine. The petits-chevaux were about to begin. Mornington stirred in his seat, and Erroll dropped a hand on his arm.

From the table came the drone of

the croupier's voice:

"Messieurs, faites vos jeux! Mes-

sieurs, les jeux sont faites!"

The machine was grinding; the nine little horses raced round the bowl. Bone counters rained on the table from the gamesters gathering round. Mornington rose, but Erroll's catch on his arm pulled him back. He gave his chum a fierce look.

"Let me go, you fool!" "Morny-"

The racing chevaux came to a ... standstill.

The drone of the croupier was heard again. "Le neuf!"

Mornington shook himself passion-

"You fool-you fool! I was goin' to begin on nine! Now-" "Morny-" pleaded Erroll.

Valentine Mornington shook his detaining hand savagely away, and strode towards the green table.

The 3rd Chapter. Les Petits-Chevaux!

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs!" More and more loungers were crowding in, and the seats round the gaming-table filled fast. Behind the their stakes over the shoulders of those seated, whence arose, occasionally, a dispute as to whom a stake belonged, in case of a win. Mornington had succeeded in getting a seat; Erroll, following him more slowly, stood behind his chair, with a heavy heart, watching. Morny had turned out his money on the table. and fifteen pounds in English money made quite a respectable sum when

haste and hurry, Morny threw a fiftyfranc note on pair-even numbers, and the "changeur" immediately appeared, grabbed it off, and put bone counters in its place. The money that used to glimmer on the casino tables before the war had given place to bone counters, which had to be changed into paper money at the "caisse" after the game, if a player was lucky enough to leave the table a winner. There were red counters to represent louis, or twenty-franc pieces; yellow counters for five-franc pieces, and little metal counters for single francs.

Seven was the winning number, so as Morny was on even numbers his stake was lost. There was a yelp from the "chef-de-partie:

"Changeur!"

Published

Every Monday

He indicated Mornington, and the fat little "changeur" edged up to the youth. Mornington quickly made the exchange of his banknotes into bone counters.

He piled them up before him, one heap of red and one of yellow. The single franc counters he disdained.

Like most reckless punters, upon whom the fever of the game has seized, Mornington began with louis. One of the commonest sights at a casino is that of the punter who begins with red counters, proceeds with yellow, and finally comes down to single francs, as his resources diminish.

Mornington tossed a red counter-a louis-on the number he fancied, and by chance it came up a winner.

Seven louis were handed over to

His eyes glittered.

He remembered Erroll, and looked round. He smiled up at Erroll's clouded face, a smile that was almost infantile, and that went straight to Erroll's heart.

"A few more like that, what?" smiled Mornington.

Erroll did not speak. It was useless to speak. He could only watch in silence, waiting for the inevitable.

A little man, with a grey beard and a grey face, bottled up in a tight freck-coat, was grinding at the petitschevaux machine. He looked like some hideous gnome performing a mysterious rite. His little, narrow black eyes twinkled incessantly along the tables, though why he should be interested in seeing where the stakes were laid was a mystery to those who did not suspect the inwardness of the proceedings. Erroll, whose head was clear and cool, utterly untouched by the prevailing fever of greed, was not slow in divining the cause of the gnome's interest in the stakes. He had no doubt whatever that the little rogue in black was able to control the machine whose handle he turned. and that the numbers came up winners or losers just as the gnome desired.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs." "Rien ne va plus."

Mornington had another win with a louis, and his face brightened, though if he had been in a mood to calculate, he would have observed that he had lost, in several spins, more than his win of seven pieces. excited mind, not his losses. He spread four louis over four numbers for the next spin, and they all went. He tried the same again, and again they disappeared under the remorseless rake of the croupier.

He set his lips, and came back to single stakes. But he was no longer favoured with a win.

His pile of red counters diminished rapidly, and disappeared.

In ten minutes he was at the second stage. He was playing with yellow counters, representing five francs

looked round suddenly, as though conscious of Erroll, though his chum had not spoken. There was

bitterness in his face, almost hatred. . "What are you stayin' for?" he said, in a shrill whisper. "You're not playin'! What do you want? You're bringin' me bad luck with

Erroll stepped back.

your confounded long face."

Mornington hated him at that moment. He hated everybody and everything, including himself.

Erroll walked away to the end of the room, and sat down. He would not trouble his chum, since he could not help him. He waited patiently till Morny should leave the table. At seated punters others stood, tossing his present rate of progress, it was not likely to be long.

Mornington forgot his existence the next minute

His stake was on the board. His eyes were on the whizzing, whirling wooden horses.

A blaze came into his face as his number came up a winner. Seven five-franc counters were spun across to him.

translated into francs. In his hot luck's changed! Now--"

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs." The petits-chevaux were spinning again.

"Rien ne va plus." "Le sept!"

It was seven, and Mornington was on five. In the next spin he dropped his stake on seven, and there came the announcement:

"Le cinq!" It was five this time.

Mornington had all his pieces in one hand now. There was plenty of room for them.

In ones and twos they went, till the last five-franc counter remained alone in his palm.

He gazed at it something like a fellow in a dream.

Finally he tossed it across to the croupier opposite him, who was watching him with a covert grin.

"La monnaie, si'l vous plait." metal counters—single francs. Mornington had reached his third stage.

ton played. He was favoured with a win at the first spin, and he cursed having risked the five-franc piece whole. Then one by one the counters went. When the last was on the board he watched it with mesmerised eyes. It won, and again he had seven pieces thrown over to him, and, mindful of his former error, he put them | all on a single number-five.

board again, and Morny's eyes money was gone-to the centimewatched them with eager fascination. | his own money, and that which was

winning line, but it jerked on and l foreign country, without even a roof passed. Number eight was next, and to shelter him for the night, unless it stopped just at the line. "Le huit!"

croupier's drone.

shakily. His last piece was gone, and | done-after what they knew! He already another punter, tired of made a fierce gesture of disdain at standing, was edging for his chair. | the mere thought of it. He was a There was no need for a "lame thief in their eyes; not to save his duck" to sit watching the game. The scapegrace of Rookwood

moved away from the table. He caught sight of Erroll coming towards him, and was about to turn away to avoid him. Then, struck by

another thought, he hurried to his tered.

" Morny-" "Will you lend me some money?" hissed Mornington.

"Not for that! Old fellow, what's the use--"

"Hang you, then!" Mornington swung away, and as Erroll's hand touched his arm he shook it savagely off.

He strode away, and went blindly down the wide corridor, where idle promenaders were lounging and listening to the band. Erroll followed him more slowly. He was determined not to lose sight of his chum, at least. There was a look on Morny's face that scared him.

Heedless of him, Mornington hurried out into the brilliantly-lighted shadowed gravel walk. He hurried | boy. But it was his winnings that filled his on towards the high bronze gates that gave on the street.

He was striding on towards the "plage," where the silver sea glistened under the moonlight, when Erroll came out of the gates. "Hallo, old scout!"

It was Lovell's voice. A bunch of cheery juniors came along, and Arthur Edward Lovell caught Erroll by the arm.

"Going for a stroll by the giddy sea-what?" said Lovell cheerily. "You'll miss the fireworks. There's a merry jeu d'artifice in the gardens to-night. It will remind you of Bonfire Day at home. Don't miss

Erroll jerked himself away without even an answer, and hurried towards the plage.

Lovell stared after him blankly. "What the dickens is the matter with Erroll, Jimmy?" he demanded. Jimmy Silver gave a shrug.

"Let him alone," he said. "He's looking after Morny, I suppose." Lovell. "I'm fed up with Morny! He's spoiled everything since he turned up."

"I say, come and see the fireworks, you chaps!" called out Algy. That sportive youth seemed to have recovered his spirits somewhat since dinner. "You'll miss them."

The "eju d'artifice" was beginning already in the moonlit gardens, and Jimmy Silver & Co., who had had a walk along the sea since dinner, turned in at the gates again. The "It's changed!" he breathed. "The | whole scene was one of careless gaiety | had! Leave me to myself, Erroll; | and holiday merriment. Across the leave me alone, I tell you!"

dark-blue heavens streamed red and golden sparks. At the little tables under the foliage corks were popping and glasses tinkling. But in the gay | are open to-morrow, I can manage throng there was probably more than one heart as heavy as that of the wretched scapegrace hurrying down mouth.

The 4th Chapter. Loyal to the Last!

overlooking the lapping waters, lean- like a bad dream." ing on the cold stone, looking downwards. Twenty feet below him the water lapped and murmured, glimmering in the moonlight, reflecting the brilliant lamps of the esplanade. The croupier spun across five Faintly from the distance came the strains of music, and the echo of gay laughter from the crowded gardens With his five last francs Morning- of the Casino. Mornington heard | "Come on! We're going to get some nothing-not even a light step on the | supper." promenade behind him. He saw waters below.

What was he thinking of, as he hoarsely. leaned there, his face as white as the white stone upon which his elbows rested?

What terrible thoughts were passing through the fevered brain, now cooling into the sickness of reaction?

Number five nearly stopped at the | not his. He was alone, stranded in a he humbled his pride to ask it of Jimmy Silver's father. Without a With iron indifference came the friend, he had spurned away his last and most loyal chum. To seek the Mornington rose from the table Rookwood party, after what he had life would he have brooked their scornful looks and taken a favour at their hands. He felt tired, hopeless, almost sick; the fever had passed, and the sense of his folly and of his guilt was closing in on him, overwhelming him.

"What's the good?" He muttered "Lend me some money!" he mut- | the words aloud, huskily. "What's | the good? I'm sick of it-sick of everything. But there's a way out!" The cold, glimmering waters seemed to fascinate him with their gleam. He made a movement.

A strong grasp closed on his arm, and he turned with a start. It was Erroll's face that looked at him in the moonlight; Erroll's grasp that had held him from-what?

For a moment or two the juniors looked at one another in silence. Then Erroll drew Mornington's hand within his arm, and drew him away, and they walked together along the esplanade. Mornington went without resistance. His resistance was gone now; he was feeling old. strangely old, and sick. It was as if an elder brother, almost a father, had vestibule, and down the steps into the | taken charge of the wilful, wayward

Erroll drew him at last, to one of the seats on the promenade. He sat | questions. They preferred not to down heavily.

"Morny, old fellow, what madness was in your mind? Thank Heaven I followed you!" said Erroll, in a suspected that Erroll's gold watch had husky voice.

"Better if you had not. What's the good? The game's up!" muttered Valentine Mornington. "It's all over with me! What did you follow me for? A blackguard-a gambler-a-a thief--' He choked. Erroll drew a deep breath.

"Leave that out, Morny, old fellow. There's the future to think

"The future?" Mornington gave a hard laugh, that almost ended in a sob. "Oh, don't talk to me, Erroll! Leave me alone! What are you stickin' to me for? What's the good?"

"Because I'm your pal, old chap," said Erroll quietly. "Because I'm going to help you see this through."

"You can't! I tell you, my guardian will see me in Tophet before "Oh, bother Morny!" snorted he hands out the money for Algy Silver! I-I thought-I mean. I lied to myself. I can't pay him! I knew I couldn't when I did it. If I could, I should be a thief all the same." He shuddered. "But I can't! Andand they all know I'm a thief and a gambler! I can't face Rookwood again! You'd better drop me while you've got the chance. Erroll. I

struck you yesterday---' "Never mind that-"

"Oh, you're a fool-a fool!" said Mornington. "Why didn't you mop !

Erroll waited quietly.

"It will be all right about the money," he said. "When the shops that, and Algy will be squared."

"You can't—you sha'n't——" "I can, and shall," said Erroll to the dark sea-who had had his gently. "Leave that out! What's "flutter," and who felt the forbidden | mine is yours, old fellow. But you'll fruit turning, like the fruit of the go back to England, Morny-you Dead Sea of old, into ashes in his must-and I'm coming with you-"

Mornington shook his head. "We'll stick together for the rest of the vac, old scout!" said Erroll cheerfully - much more cheerfully than he felt. "In the long run, He stood by the stone balustrade | you'll forget all this; it will be only

> "I tell you, it's no good!" muttered Mornington. "Haven't we been through it before? Haven't I promised, and then- I tell you it's no good. Leave me to what I've earned for myself!"

Erroll rose from the seat. "Now that's settled," he said.

"I-I can't face them; I won't! himself under his breath for not nothing but the cold gleam of the I'd rather pitch into the sea and finish it all," said Mornington

> "No need. They'll be late to-night, and you can be in bed before they come in at the hotel, and gone before they turn out in the morning," said Erroll. "Come along, old fellow!"

Mornington resisted a moment The petits-chevaux raced round the | The wastrel had had his fling. His | longer, and then he moved away with his chum.

> Jimmy Silver & Co. had a surprise on the following day.

> When they came down to breakfast at the Hotel Royal du Bosquet, they found that Mornington had passed the night there, and had breakfasted, and Erroll with him. The chums had finished a rather late breakfast when Kit Erroll came in alone. He had an envelope in his hand, which he tossed on the table before the surprised Algy.

"With Morny's thanks!" he said. "Eh, what?" ejaculated Algy.

He opened the envelope. Three five-pound notes were inside.

"Mum-mum-my banknotes!" he stuttered. "My sainted aunt! Then Morny was only pulling my leg, the beast!"

"So you've got your money back, Algy!" said Jimmy Silver grimly. "Now, as soon as the pater comes along you'll hand it to him, and ask him to mind it for you."

"Will I?" said Algy rebelliously. "Yes, or else I shall tell him enough to make him send you back to home at once," said Jimmy, "I mean that; so chew on it, and make up your mind!"

And the sportive Algy, having "chewed" on it, made up his mind; and a little later his banknotes were in the safe possession of Mr. Silver. there to remain until the end of the holiday. And the vision of a "flutter" at the green tables faded away from Algy like a beautiful dream. Which was certainly all the better for him.

Jimmy Silver & Co. asked Erroll no know exactly what had occurred; the money had been returned, and that was all they cared to know. If they vanished, they did not comment upon it, even to one another.

The Co. were left to their own devices that morning while Mr. Silver made a run down to Boulogne, to see Mornington through the difficulties of getting across the Channel without a passport. Erroll went with him, and Mr. Silver returned to Le Bosquet alone. And though the Rookwood holiday party missed Erroll, they felt that he had done right to go home, with his wayward chum.

On the Channel boat that sunny. day, two juniors stood and watched the white cliffs of England rise out of the sea. They stood long in silence; but at last Mornington turned to his chum. Perhaps it was the spray that made his eyelashes wet.

"Old fellow," he muttered, "it's no good talking. You've pulled me. through once more. I'm not worth the trouble, but you've done it. I--I'm going to try-try hard-as hard as I jolly well can. But for you--" He paused, with a break in his voice. . "After this, Erroll, I'm goin' to play the game straight. I really mean it:

this time. Honour!" And Erroll pressed his arm by way of reply.

THE END.

("Caravanning with Bunter!" is crash of the orchestra, the buzz of up the ground with me? Why don't the title of the long, complete Rooktalk and laughter, mingled with the you now? I could cut off my hand | wood School tale in next Monday's detonations of the fireworks; the for it. The best chum a fellow ever | Boys' Friend. Remember thut; Jimmy Silver & Co. appear also in the "Popular" cach Friday!)