

READ G. L. JESSOP'S GRAND NEW SPORTING STORY IN THIS ISSUE!

The BOYS' FRIEND ^{1d}/₂

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

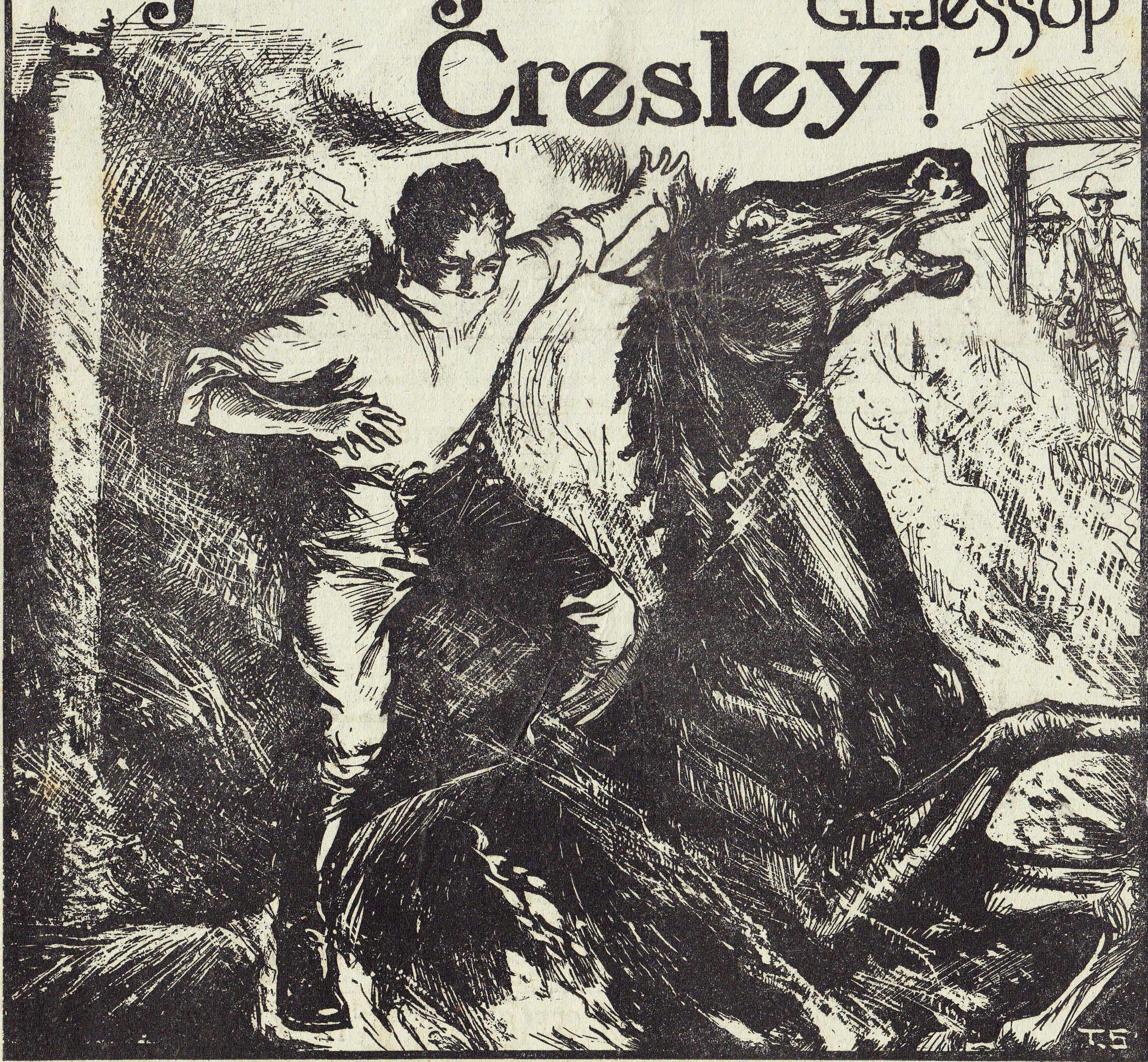
No. 1,054. Vol. XXII. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending August 20th, 1921.

Fighting Jack Cresley!

by G. L. Jessop



FIGHTING JACK 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. momentarily ceased its frightened plunges, he released his hold and dropped—directly over the animal's back!

A SPLendid LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL YARN by OWEN CONQUEST!



A Fine Tale of JIMMY SILVER & CO. ON 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-a-manger in the annexe to the white-walled Casino; or, rather, they should have been going to dine there.

"Shut up, you fellows, for goodness' 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 wrathful.

"You burbling ass!" said Raby. "We're waiting dinner. Your pater's sitting at the table all on his lonesome. 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 Newcome.

"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 boat.

"We'd better get in to dinner," said Jimmy 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.

"Hang your money!" snapped

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

"What the thump—" said Raby.

"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!"

gaped. "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. I 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, remembering 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 and met Mr. Silver's eyes, and the dinner-party was not so merry as it might have been. Erroll was look-

ing for Mornington, with loyal friendship and a troubled heart, but Jimmy Silver & Co. were feeling anything but amiable towards the scapegrace 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.

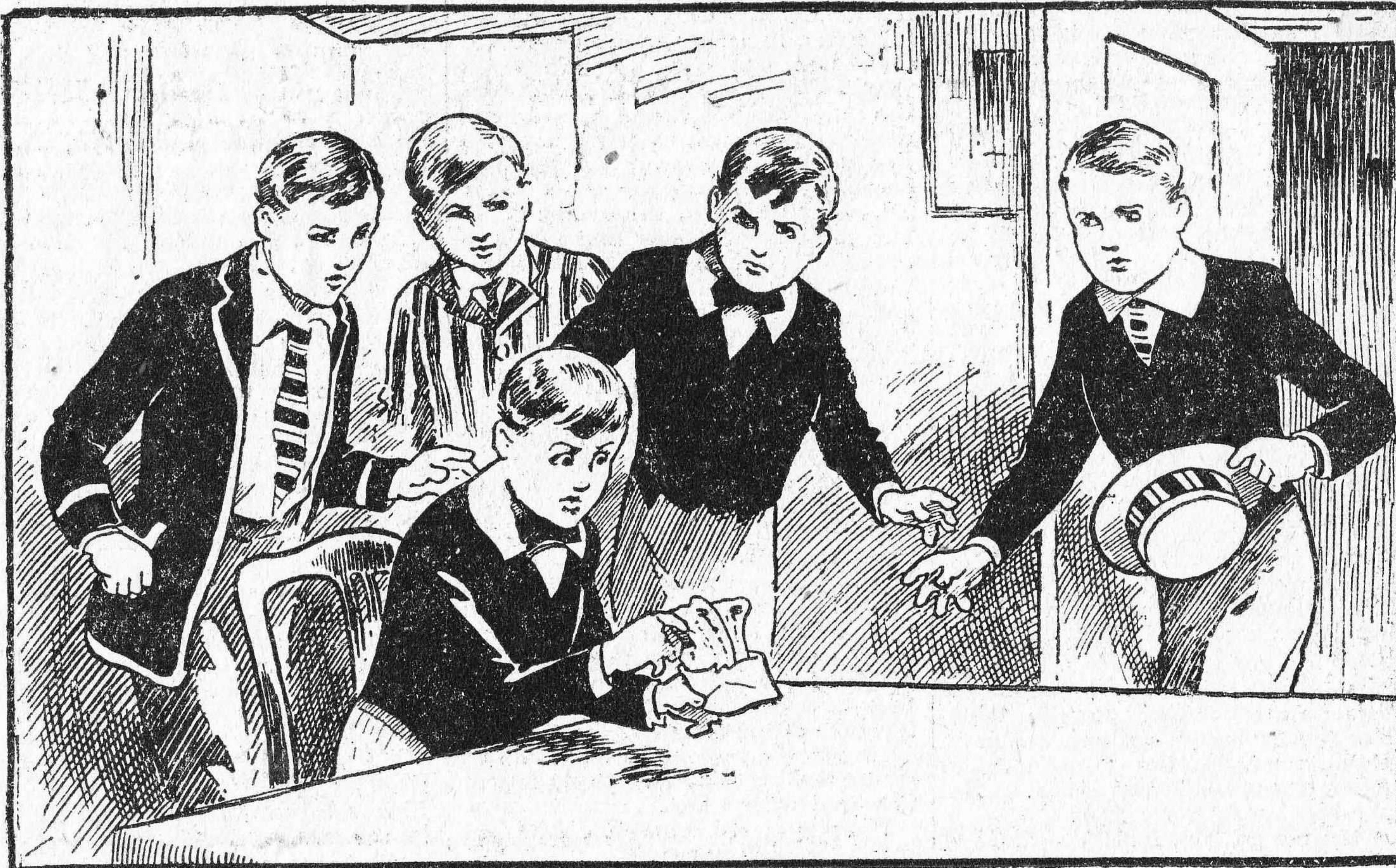
The wide vestibule was almost empty. Two or three croupiers, released from the tables, now that the "game" was shut down for the dinner interval, were talking and grinning together in a corner, and a "chasseur" was lounging on one of the velvet-covered seats. There was no sign of Valentine Mornington as Erroll looked in, and he won-

dered where the scapegrace was. He could not be playing, as the tables were closed down; and Erroll knew 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 was untenanted now, so far as Erroll could see. The crowd had cleared off for dinner; the money-changer was gone from the locked caisse; the croupiers and the chefs-de-partie had been only too glad to get out of the vitiated atmosphere and rest from their peculiar labours. Erroll walked the length of the room, his footsteps echoing on the polished parquet. There were couches round the walls, all of them vacant; but at last, coming to the end of the room, Erroll caught sight of a figure in a chair. He recognised Valentine Mornington at once, though the scapegrace of Rookwood had a small, curly black moustache affixed to his 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 judge by appearances he was not in a mood of enjoyment.



A SURPRISE FOR ALGY SILVER!

Kit Erroll tossed an envelope to the junior. "With 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!"

Erroll's face shadowed still more as he looked at his hapless chum and noted the grim, worn lines in 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 feet.

"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 game?"

Erroll shook his head.

"Of course not, old sobersides!" grinned Mornington. "But can you stand the awful sight of the green tables? Fortunately, they're covered

up at present. Don't wait till they take the cloths off, Erroll. It would be too painful a sight for you."

Erroll did not heed the bitter mockery in his chum's tone. He dropped into a seat beside Mornington.

"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 a yarn to Silver's father and get a loan out of him. But Silver stopped that. Hang him! I shall have a flutter to-night in spite of him, anyhow!"

"Morny, I've just seen young Algy Silver. He's told us what—what you've done."

Mornington's face went a shade paler, and he dropped his eyes. Then the colour began to steal into his cheeks, and burned there.

"So—so you know?" he asked, after a long pause.

"I know."

"Can't be helped," said Mornington in his old tone, shrugging 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 indistinguishable.

"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 still got the money. Come out with-

me now and give it back to young Algy."

"Don't be an ass! What do you 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, but—but 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 have taken him by the scruff of the neck and lifted the money if there had been no other way! Catch on?"

(Continued overleaf.)

