

**THE DOWNWARD PATH!** In spite of the lessons he has received, Val Mornington is still held in the grip of the gambling fever, and he finds himself rapidly descending the downward path—not even the influence of his greatest chum can save him from ruin!



# A Fool And His Folly!

A Dramatic and Stirring Long Complete Story dealing with the Holiday Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood.

By  
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(Author of the famous tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Boys' Friend" every week.)

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Left Behind!

**T**HAT'S the Dover boat?" Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, made that remark as he pointed seaward with his teaspoon.

Jimmy Silver & Co. glanced from the hotel balcony, where they were discussing coffee and petits gateaux in the cool of the summer evening.

The chums of the Fourth were far enough from Rookwood School now.

This was the first day of their trip abroad during the vacation; and the Fistical Four, at least, were enjoying themselves.

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome sat in a row in the cane chairs, a little tired after the day's excursion, but very cheery and bright.

Near them Algy Silver, of the Rookwood Third, was negotiating a lemon-squash with a straw, and he looked neither cheery nor bright. He looked, in fact, rather sulky. A little in the shadow Kit Erroll sat, with a thoughtful shade on his brow, his hand occasionally rubbing over his cheek, where a bruise showed on the skin.

Erroll had been silent for a long time, but his silence was hardly noticed.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did enough talking for the whole party.

Mr. Silver, who was in official charge of the Rookwooders, was not present. He had fallen in with an old acquaintance in Calais, and he was now in the smoke-room with him, discussing cigars and politics.

"That's the boat we came over by," said Raby. "Lucky us! The giddy day-trippers are going back in it."

"Yes, Morny's gone home in that boat," said Lovell, after a pause, jerking his teaspoon again towards the lights that were fading out in the distance on the starlit sea. "If he's been playing the giddy goat at the Casino, it's all the better for him that he had only a day-ticket."

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Algy grinned sourly.

"I'll bet he never went in the boat if he had any money left!" he answered.

"He had to, ass! His ticket was only for the day from Dover."

"He wouldn't care a rap about that if he was deep in his game!"

Jimmy Silver wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

"I hope Mornington hasn't played the ox to that extent," he said. "The day-trippers came over without passports, but if they miss the boat home they land in trouble. You have to have a passport here. They won't let him on tomorrow's boat without it."

"He'll have to go to the British Consul and worry him, and get sat on," grinned Lovell. "Serve him right!"

Erroll listened to the talk of the chums of the Fourth, with a deep line in his brow. He, too, was thinking of Mornington, and wondering whether the reckless fellow was in the departing boat, as he ought to have been, or whether he had missed it.

Only too well he knew what Valentine Mornington was like when he was in one of his reckless moods. The wayward junior would think little or nothing of being stranded in a foreign country without a passport, and without money in his pocket.

Whatever happened to Mornington, it would find him cool and utterly indifferent. Erroll, with a clouded brow, watched the throngs that passed and re-passed between the hotel balcony and the sea.

A figure detached itself from the crowd and came towards the balcony steps, looking up, and Erroll started.

"Morny!"

Arthur Edward Lovell sighted Mornington at the same moment, and leaned over the balcony.

"Hallo, Morny! Cheerio, old bean! Come up and have a squash!"

Valentine Mornington ran lightly up the steps and joined the cheery party of schoolboys on the balcony.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### An Addition to the Party!

**V**ALENTINE MORNINGTON looked a little pale, and there were worn lines on his handsome face as he stood in the bright light. But his manner was as cool and indifferent as ever. He nodded to the Rookwood juniors, who were eyeing him rather curiously.

"Looking for us?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes; I thought you were here," said Mornington, dropping into a chair. "Hallo, you there, Erroll?"

"Yes," said Erroll, in a low voice from the shadow of a palm-tub. He did not approach his chum.

At their last meeting Mornington's clenched fist had struck Erroll down to get rid of his detaining hand. But from Morny's manner they might have parted last on the best of terms.

The meeting was an awkward one, though the cool and self-possessed Mornington did not seem to find it awkward.

Jimmy Silver & Co. felt a little uncomfortable. They were quite willing to receive Morny into their select circle; but Jimmy, at least, was keen enough to see that Morny must have had some personal object in joining them.

On the boat from Dover he had deliberately avoided the party, and he had carefully kept out of their way so far in Calais.

Without being unduly suspicious, Jimmy could not help wondering whether Morny had lost all his money at the casino, and was nourishing a hope of "raising the wind" by coming along to the Rookwooders' hotel.

If Morny was down on his luck Jimmy was quite prepared to help him through; but for the green tables Jimmy would not have lent him a single sou. He would have replied to a request with exceedingly plain English, instead of a loan.

"Garcon!" called out Lovell. A waiter was passing along the balcony

with a tray, and Lovell summoned up his best French. "Ici, s'il vous plait. Donnez moi encore un lemon-squash." "Yessir," answered the waiter, in a tired voice. "Lemon-squash, sir—just a minute, sir!"

He faded away, and Lovell looked rather sheepishly at his grinning comrades.

"He's English!" he remarked. "Sounds like it!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "And apparently he guessed you were English—by your French!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Lovell pushed the lemon-squash across the little table to Mornington when it arrived. Morny sucked idly at the straw, and his glance rested once or twice in a rather amused way on Erroll. Erroll had drawn farther back into the shadow of the palm.

"So you've missed your boat, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver, at last.

"Yes, it seems so. Rather rough luck on a poor beggar with a day-trip ticket—what?"

"You'll have to take the day boat or—"

"Can't," said Mornington coolly. "I've lost my money."

"Lost it?"

"Yes; riches take unto themselves wings, you know, and fly away," said Mornington imperturbably.

"Do you mean you've had your pocket picked?" asked Raby, with a very doubtful glance at Mornington.

"Yes; it amounts to that, I suppose," answered Mornington. "You fellows were good enough to ask me to join you on the boat. Being poor and proud, I refused. I felt that it wasn't the thing for a cheap tripper to intrude."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" grunted Lovell.

"Now, bein' broke to the wide, I'm goin' to sponge on you—if you'll let me," continued Mornington deliberately. "I'm goin' to throw myself on the compassion of your father, Silver." "The pater will see you through," said Jimmy.

"I'm sure of it," said Mornington blandly. "Ah, here he comes! Good-evenin', Mr. Silver!"

Jimmy's father came out on the balcony, and he seemed rather surprised to see Valentine Mornington there. But his manner was quite kind as he shook hands with the Rookwooder.

"Were you not returning by the boat?" he asked.

"I'm sorry to say I've missed it, sir."

"Dear me! That is very unfortunate," said Mr. Silver. "You have no passport, of course?"

Mornington shook his head.

"Then you did right to come here," said Mr. Silver. "I am glad you did so, Mornington. You would not be admitted to the boat to-morrow without a passport, and it will be necessary to see the British Consul about it. I had better go with you to-morrow, I think."

"You're very kind, sir," said Mornington. "The worst of it is that I've had my money bagged, and—"

"Bless my soul!"

"A sort of pickpocket, sir," said Mornington. "He cleared me out of everything but my return ticket, which is no good."

Jimmy Silver's brows contracted. He realised very clearly that Mornington had lost his money gambling at the Casino. No doubt it was correct, in a way, to describe it as having had his pocket picked; but he was giving Mr. Silver a very false impression. And Jimmy naturally was angry at seeing his father deceived.

"This is serious," said Mr. Silver,

without a suspicion. "There are plenty of pickpockets about here, my boys, and you must be careful. Did you see the man who robbed you, Mornington?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"What was he like?" "Well, he had a rake in his hand," said Mornington audaciously. "That was the chief thing I noticed."

"Some sort of a gardener, I suppose," said Mr. Silver, rather puzzled.

The juniors were silent, and Jimmy Silver set his lips. Not content with deceiving the kind old gentleman, Morny was deliberately pulling his leg. It was, of course, the croupier's rake that Morny was alluding to, though Mr. Silver had no suspicion of that fact.

Jimmy did not care to enlighten him, but he made up his mind to have something to say to Valentine Mornington later.

"I think it would be best to go to the police about this," said Mr. Silver, after a pause. "It is late now, but we—"

"Oh, no, sir," said Morny, rather regretting that he had indulged his impish humour at the old gentleman's expense. "I don't want to make a fuss—"

"But if you have lost all your money—"

"It wasn't much, sir," said Mornington. "All I had—but, as you know, sir, I'm poor. And I couldn't really give a description of the man. If you'd be so kind, sir, as to put me up for the night, my guardian will see that my expenses are paid—"

"We shall not trouble about that," said Mr. Silver, with a smile. "I am very pleased to see one of my son's schoolfellows. You have, of course, no baggage with you, but your friends will be able to lend you what you need. You will see to that, Jimmy?"

"Certainly," said Jimmy.

"Indeed," continued Mr. Silver, "I should be glad, Mornington, if you would join our little party to-morrow on an excursion we are making—unless you are expected at home?"

"Not at all, sir," said Mornington, his eyes lighting for a moment. "I'm not stayin' with my guardian at present, and my time's quite my own. If you'll really let me sponge on you for a day—"

"Come, come! All your friends here will be as pleased as myself!" said Mr. Silver cordially.

Mornington's friends remained rather silent. Jimmy had to exercise his self-control to keep his thoughts unuttered. He could read Morny's expression plainly enough. The dandy of the Fourth had intended to eat humble pie to any extent in order to attach himself to the party, and that was so utterly unlike Mornington's proud and disdainful nature that it was clear he had a secret motive.

He would never have asked a favour for the sake of a night's lodging or a meal—Jimmy knew that. He would have been more likely to refuse with angry scorn any offer, however kind.

If he had curbed his pride to this extent it was because he had a powerful motive—a motive too powerful for even his touchy pride to resist—because, in short, he was in the grip of the gambling fever, and he hoped to try to raise funds to continue to try his "luck" at the green tables.

Mr. Silver's kindness saved him from humbling himself; but he would have humbled himself to the dust in order to secure his object, bitterly as he would have despised himself afterwards when the fit had passed.

Jimmy's face set grimly as he thought of it.

He would not give Mornington away, but he was determined that the young rascal should not deceive Mr. Silver to the extent he evidently intended.

Mr. Silver looked at his watch. "Very near bed-time," he said. "I will give instructions at once about a room for you, Mornington."

Mr. Silver went back into the hotel; and Mornington cast a glance round at the juniors, who were grimly silent. Algy was grinning, but the rest of the party were very grave. Mornington's lips curled, and he shrugged his shoulders slightly. Jimmy broke the silence.

"Just a word, Mornington—" he began.

Morny interrupted him. "Leave it till the morning, old fellow! I'm goin' to sponge on your pater for some supper! Ta-ta!"

He walked airily into the hotel after Mr. Silver, and Jimmy's jaw set very squarely.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Straight from the Shoulder!

JIMMY SILVER did not have an early opportunity of speaking to Mornington. That youth went to bed immediately after supper; and he did not come down in the morning until the whole party were at breakfast. At breakfast Morny was very cheery and chatty, and looked as if he had not a care in the world; but both Jimmy and Erroll noted a feverish excitement under his careless manner. It was after breakfast, while Mr. Silver was making the arrangements for the automobile, that Jimmy found his chance at last of speaking quietly to Mornington. The latter, taking advantage of the old gentleman's absence, was smoking a cigarette on the balcony, when Jimmy joined him.

He met the captain of the Rookwood Fourth with an ironical grin.

"Lovely day for a motor trip," he remarked. "Your pater's awfully good to ask me. I hope I'm welcome to the rest of the party."

"You're welcome enough, if you play the game," said Jimmy abruptly. "We asked you to join us on the boat. But you've got to play the game, Morny."

"Got to?" queried Mornington.

"Yes. I'm going to see that you do. Last evening you were pulling my father's leg." Jimmy's eyes glinted.

"He doesn't suspect you of blagging at the Casino—"

"Unsuspecting old gentleman!" agreed Mornington blandly. "That's what I like about him."

Jimmy controlled his temper with difficulty.

"My father hasn't had much experience of blackguards," he said, "so it's fairly easy to take him in."

"Naturally, with a model son, and his son's model friends, around him," said Mornington. "I'm the only black sheep in the fold, exceptin', perhaps, the merry Algy. Are you goin' to tell your respected parent that he's backin' a wrong 'un, Silver?"

"No, not if you play the game. But if you don't—" Jimmy drew a deep breath. "My father's too decent a man for you to understand even, Mornington. You're not going to pull his leg, or make fun of his unsuspectingness. I believe I'm a patient chap; but I'm not going to stand that."

"Really! And what are you goin' to do?" sneered Mornington.

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## "A FOOL AND HIS FOLLY!"

(Continued from page 13.)

Morny was evidently in one of his most provoking moods.

"Let me catch you at it again," said Jimmy between his teeth, "and I'll knock you down on the spot, that's all."

"By gad! That would be a surprise for the merry old gentleman," said Mornington coolly. "I can see his jaw droppin'."

"You're not to speak of my father like that, Mornington."

"I'll speak how I like."

"You won't, you cad!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, his anger blazing out. "Another word that isn't respectful, and I won't keep my hands off you."

"Do you think I'm afraid of your hands?" said Mornington disdainfully. "I knocked Erroll down last night, and he's my best chum. I'd knock you flyin' as soon as look at you."

"Erroll may be fool enough to stand your rot," said Jimmy. "You won't find me so. Stick to the party, if you like, and we'll make you welcome if you play the game. But you're not going to gamble so long as you're with us, and you're going to keep your impudence in check, Mornington."

The dandy of the Fourth yawned.

"Not goin' to gamble?" he repeated. "Dear man, do you know why I've attached myself to this jolly outfit?"

"I suspect that it's to raise fresh funds for the Casino, as you've lost all your own money!" snapped Jimmy.

"You're a thought-reader! Surely the kind and unsuspecting Mr. Silver will spring a tenner for a stranded tripper—what?"

"I thought so," said Jimmy. "Well, he won't, and I'll see that he doesn't. You won't have a shilling from my father to gamble with."

"You cheeky rotter!" muttered Mornington. "If your father lends me any money it will be repaid by my guardian."

"That may be; though I fancy Sir Rupert Stacpoole would think twice about paying gambling debts for you," said Jimmy. "It's not the money, and you know it. You know what my father would say if he knew you wanted money for gambling."

"He would faint, probably," sneered Mornington. "At least, he'd give me a sermon instead of the tenner I want. But, dash it all, I'm earnin' the tenner, by lettin' him bore you, and lettin' your fellows bore me. Wild horses wouldn't have dragged me here if I hadn't been stony broke."

"I can guess that," said Jimmy scornfully. "Well, I shall keep an eye on you, and if you try to raise a loan from my father I shall chip in."

"Hallo, you chaps, rowing?" asked Lovell, coming along the balcony.

Mornington calmed himself.

"Not at all," he answered lightly. "Silver's givin' me some much-needed moral instruction—his usual stunt. He's only got to thirdly, so far. There's fourthly, fifthly, and sixthly to come, and a word in conclusion. Get on with the sermon, Silver."

Arthur Edward Lovell chuckled.

"He's not satisfied with the way I speak to the old bird," continued Mornington. "Now—"

Crash!

Jimmy Silver's temper boiled over at that point, which was not surprising.

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Almost without thinking, he hit out, and Mornington caught his clenched fist with the point of his chin.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Lovell, as Valentine Mornington went spinning backwards.

Mornington made an effort to recover his balance, but in vain. He staggered against a tub of palms, and fell at full length on the balcony.

There was a sound of running feet, and Raby and Newcome and Erroll came up, with Algy Silver in the rear. Two or three guests who were taking morning coffee on the hotel balcony looked round with shocked and disapproving frowns.

"Jimmy!" exclaimed Erroll.

Jimmy Silver stood breathing hard.

"Go it!" chuckled Algy. "This is like Rookwood again!"

Valentine Mornington sat up dazedly. For a moment he sat catching his breath, and then he leaped to his feet, with black fury in his face, and sprang at Jimmy Silver.

The next moment there would have been a terrific fight in progress; but the Rookwood juniors grasped Mornington in time and dragged him back.

"Stop it, you ass!" gasped Lovell. "Do you want all the waiters and half Calais round us?"

"Let me go!" yelled Mornington. "I'll—"

"Morny—" exclaimed Erroll.

"Let me go, I tell you!"

Mornington struggled frantically to free himself. All his schemes were forgotten at that moment of passionate rage; he only wanted to get at the junior who had knocked him down.

The dandy of the Fourth calmed down at last, as he found that the juniors would not let him go. He gave Jimmy Silver a bitter look.

Jimmy answered with a glance of disdain.

"You asked for it," he said, "and when we get back to Rookwood I'll give you all the scrapping you want. If you've got any decency, you'll take yourself off before my father comes back."

"No need for Mr. Silver to know there's been a row," said Lovell un- easily.

Mornington breathed hard.

"You can let me go," he said. "I'm not goin' to kick up a row now." He stepped back as the juniors released him. They kept an eye on him, however. "I'm goin', Silver; you've dished me, and I don't care to stay with your merry party simply to be bored stiff, if there's nothin' to come of it. But I'll make you sorry for yourself, yet."

And with that Valentine Mornington walked along the balcony to the steps that led down to the shore.

When Mr. Silver came back, to announce that the automobile was ready for the drive to Le Bosquet, Morny was not to be seen. The old gentleman looked surprised when he was informed that Morny had changed his mind, and was not coming on the drive; but there was no time to lose, and the party piled into the big automobile, and started out of Calais without Valentine Mornington.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

At Le Bosquet!

"JOLLY place!" remarked Lovell.

The Rookwooders were seated at a table in a garden bright with flowers.

At the foot of the cliff upon which Le Bosquet stood, the sea rolled bright and blue, dotted with the brown sails of fishing-craft. In the midst of the exten-

sive gardens where the juniors sat was a big white building with a handsome arched entrance—the Casino of Le Bosquet. Near the building a band in gaudy uniforms discoursed sweet music. Algy Silver cast many a longing glance towards the big white building; the sportive fag had by no means forgotten his desire to have a "flutter" while the party were on the French side of the Channel. Algy's fifteen pounds were burning a hole in his pocket. But between his uncle and his cousin, Algy felt that there was no chance.

The scene was merry and bright, with crowds of well-dressed loungers moving about the gardens, and an incessant buzz of voices in French and English, occasionally Italian and Spanish.

Like most of the French seaside resorts, Le Bosquet was an imitation of Monte Carlo on a smaller scale—with "petits-chevaux" in the gambling-room in the place of roulette.

The place was undoubtedly "jolly," as Lovell remarked; though all the people who emerged from the big white building did not look jolly.

The juniors sipped their coffee or lemonade, and devoured the sweet "gateaux," and watched the brilliant throng that passed and repassed.

Mr. Silver, leaning back in a deep chair in the shade, was deep in his pipe and a newspaper.

A figure in grey tweeds and a straw hat came out of the crowd and stopped at the table, and Jimmy Silver & Co. stared blankly at Mornington.

After the happenings that morning at Calais, they had not expected to see Morny again.

The junior nodded coolly to the astonished party, and met Algy's grin with a pleasant smile.

"Fancy droppin' on you again!" he remarked.

Mr. Silver looked over his "Daily Mail."

"Why, Mornington!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Morny respectfully; "I'm sorry I missed comin' with you this mornin'."

"Why, what ever have you been doing to your chin?" exclaimed Mr. Silver. "Have you had an accident, Mornington?"

Morny passed his slim fingers over his chin, which bore rather plain marks of Jimmy Silver's knuckles.

"I got a knock there, sir," he answered equably. "May I sit down and sample the coffee?"

"By all means, my boy!" said Mr. Silver. "I was quite concerned about you, alone in a foreign town. I think it would be much better for you, Mornington, to remain with us until you return to England. I am sure your guardian would be very distressed if he knew you were in a foreign country by yourself."

Morny's lips opened to make an ironical reply; but he caught Jimmy's eyes fixed upon him grimly. Jimmy's look told him as plainly as words that if Morny pulled the old gentleman's leg again there would be another knock-out on the spot, regardless of appearances, and Mornington evidently had not come there for a "scrap."

"You're very kind, sir," he said, in the most respectful way; and Jimmy's brow cleared. "I don't feel that I ought to intrude on you, that's all."

"Nonsense, nonsense, my boy," said the old gentleman kindly. "Any friend of my son is welcome!"

"Thank you very much, sir!"

Mornington dropped into a chair, and sampled the coffee.

"How did you get here?" asked

Lowell, chiefly for the sake of breaking a rather painful silence.

"Walked," said Mornington.  
 "It's four or five miles," said Newcome.

"Well, I knew you chaps were comin' here, and I thought I might drop on you," said Mornington coolly. "In fact, I looked for you. So pleasant to see your cheery faces after an absence. I really felt that I couldn't keep away."

"I think I'll take a stroll round the gardens," said Jimmy, rising. "Any of you fellows coming?"

The Co. jumped at once, and Erroll, after a brief hesitation, followed their example. Jimmy dropped a word to Morny as he passed him, in a low voice: "You remember what I told you, Mornington. You're not to ask my father—"

Mornington gave him a bitter look.  
 "Do you think that's what I'm after?"

"I know it is!" said Jimmy curtly.  
 "You're mistaken!"

Jimmy hesitated. He did not trust Mornington one inch, in his present mood. But Mr. Silver settled the matter by rising, and laying down his newspaper.

"I think I will come with you, boys," he remarked.

"Oh, good!" said Jimmy, with such evident satisfaction that his father smiled.

Mornington remained seated, sipping at his coffee. But as Algy Silver, with a sulky yawn, rose to follow the rest, Morny whispered a word—and Algy started, and looked at him.

Jimmy Silver glanced back, and saw both Mornington and Algy following the party; but a few minutes later, when he glanced round again, neither of them was to be seen. They had disappeared into the throng in the gardens of Le Bosquet.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**  
**The Lowest Depths!**

"YOU will—really?"  
 Algy Silver's face was bright with excitement and anticipation. He had stopped with Mornington in a quiet, shady spot in the gardens. Through the trees came glimpses of bright dresses and parasols; the strains of the band came subdued from the distance.

Valentine Mornington regarded the eager fag with a curious smile.

"I do want to have a flutter," said Algy. "I do, you know. No end of a stunt to tell the chaps about next term at Rookwood. Why shouldn't a chap have a little fun? Everybody's doin' it here. But—but uncle's a bit watchful, and Jimmy's always got an eye on me, bother him! I shouldn't wonder if he misses me soon and comes round looking for me."

"Well, you're safe at the present moment," smiled Mornington.

"What luck did you have at Calais last night?" asked Algy.

"Rotten!"

"I'll lend you a couple of pounds, if you like, if you can help me get into the show," said Algy patronisingly. "I dare say I should have better luck than you. I've got a cool head. I dare say you got excited and didn't care how you were chuckin' your money about."

Mornington suppressed his feelings. Patronage from a fag of the Third was very hard to bear; but Valentine Mornington was prepared to bear any humiliation just then, if he could effect his object thereby.

All that was worst in Mornington's

strangely-mingled nature was uppermost now.

"Very likely," he said smoothly.  
 "But it's no good goin' in unless you're heeled, Algy."

"I've got fifteen pounds," said Algy loftily. "I've been savin' up for a chance like this. Three fivers, you know. I—I wanted to change them into French money this mornin' at the hotel, in case I got a chance of goin' into the Casino, but Jimmy stopped me—confound him. He asked me out quite loud what I wanted French money for, and as uncle's standin' all the exes, I hadn't anythin' to say. The old sport's given me fifty francs to spend, anyhow."

Morny's eyes glimmered.  
 "You'll have to get the money changed into French," he said. "They don't take English banknotes at the tables."

"Where can I get it done?" asked Algy, rather helplessly. "Is there a place here?"

"I can get it done for you, if you like," said Mornington indifferently. "A kid of your age might find it rather hard to change a lot of banknotes, unless you're with an elder."

Algy fumbled in an inner pocket at once.

"I say, that's jolly decent of you, Morny," he said. "Make 'em give you the proper exchange, you know—they always try to catch you on the exchange."

"Rely on me," said Mornington, with a smile.

"But what about gettin' into the Casino?" said Algy anxiously. "As

soon as they miss me, Jimmy's sure to look for me, and if he doesn't drop on me, he'll go round to the entrance to look there—"

"There's another way in," said Mornington, very quietly. "Wait for me here, Algy, and when I bring back the French money, I'll smuggle you into the petits-chevaux room all right."

"Oh, good! You're an awfully good pal, Morny—I wish Jimmy was more like you! Hurry up, won't you?"

"I won't lose a minute," answered Mornington.

He slipped the three five-pound notes into his pocket, and disappeared in the throng beyond the trees.

Algy Silver waited with feverish impatience. In spite of his impatience he grinned several times knowingly.

In spite of unpropitious circumstances, he was going to have his flutter, after all, with the help of Mornington.

He had not saved up his fifteen pounds in vain. That sum was going to flutter on the green baize. Algy was going to know the delights of hearing the croupiers drone "Marquez vos jeux!" and "Rien ne va plus!" And he was going to rake in uncounted winnings—at least, he hoped so.

Even if he lost his fifteen pounds, he would be able to "swank" no end, next term at Rookwood, as a fellow who had been tremendously doggish in the vac.

He could imagine the astonished and envious faces of Wegg and Stacey when he told them. They might be a bit shocked, but certainly they would have to admit that Algy was no end of a dog when he got going!



**DIVIDED FRIENDS!** Mornington leaped to his feet, with black fury in his face, and sprang at Jimmy Silver. The next moment there would have been a terrific fight in progress; but the Rookwood juniors grasped Morny in time, and dragged him back. "Stop it, you ass!" gasped Lowell. "Do you want all the waiters and half Calais round us?" (See Chapter 3.)



These happy anticipations comforted Algy of the Third for some minutes while he waited for Mornington; but after ten minutes had elapsed, impatience banished all other feelings. The minutes lengthened—half an hour passed, but Mornington had not reappeared.

There was a footstep at last under the trees, and a figure came through the shade, and Algy gave a gasp of relief.

"Morny, you beast— Why, what!" It was not Mornington.

"You young scamp!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, in great relief. "I've been looking for you everywhere! What are you hiding in this corner for?"

"Leave me alone!" exclaimed Algy shrilly.

He was almost wild with rage at the bare idea of being balked at this stage of the proceedings. At any moment Mornington might return with the French banknotes, and if he ran into Jimmy Silver—

Jimmy stared at his young cousin's excited face in wonder.

"What on earth's the matter with you, Algy?" he demanded.

"Nothing! Only just leave me alone!"

"We're going to have dinner now, Algy. Father's missed you."

"I don't want any dinner! Just sheer off, and don't keep on interfering with a chap!"

If Jimmy Silver had been much less keen than he was he would have discerned that something was wrong. He slipped his hand through Algy's arm.

"Come along, kid!" he said.

"I won't! Leave me alone!"

"Hallo! Here you are, are you?" Arthur Edward Lovell came up. "Your pater's beginning to think you're lost. Hallo, Algy! Come along and feed!"

"I'm staying here."

"What on earth for?" asked the astonished Lovell. "It's dinner-time. If you're looking for a chance to dodge into the playing-rooms, you young rascal, it's N.G.! The tables are closed down for two hours at dinner-time."

Algy's jaw dropped.

"Are you sure? When did they close?"

"At six, and it's seven now."

"Why, they must have been closed then when Morny—"

Algy broke off.

"Morny!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver quickly. "What's that about Morny?"

"Nothing!"

"Morny's gone in," remarked Lovell. "He seems to have raised the wind somewhere. I saw him goin' up the steps, lookin' merry an' bright. I can just fancy him trottin' up and down the rooms now, like a giddy caged tiger, waitin' for the tables to reopen. He paid a waiter out of a hundred-franc bill for a cup of coffee before he went in, at one of the little tables. Some ass has been lending him money—Erroll, I suppose—"

There was a yell from Algy Silver.

"A hundred-franc note! He told me he was stony! He—he—he's gone in without me! Oh, the awful villain! He—he—" Algy choked, as the truth dawned upon him.

"Without you!" exclaimed Jimmy sternly. "Do you mean to say that that utter cad was going to take you—"

"He promised!" yelled Algy. "He got my money to change, and he promised to get me into the rooms! The villain, he's gone in to play with my money! He's a thief—"

Kit Erroll came up the path, looking for his companions. Algy made a jump at him, and caught him by the sleeve.

"Where's Morny?" he shouted shrilly. "You ought to know—you're his pal. Where is he?"

"I—I think he's gone into the Casino!" stammered Erroll.

Algy choked again, and burst into a flood of passionate tears. The disappointment was too great for him. In his passionate excitement he shook Erroll savagely by the arm.

"He's a thief—your precious pal's a thief!" he panted. "He's gone into the Casino with my money! He's a thief—a thief!"

THE END.

*(Mornington has fallen to the lowest depths, but can he be saved in time—saved from the disgrace and ruin he is going to? That you will learn in, "SAVED FROM HIMSELF!" An unusual, exciting long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, next week.)*

**THE MEANNESS OF MR. PECKOVER!**  
(Continued from page 11.)

"Mr. Peckover—" began the rancher in his deep voice.

"Keep your distance, sir!" gasped Mr. Peckover. "I—I—the—the law of—"

The rancher laughed contemptuously. "You have lied, sir," he thundered, "and you have nearly caused me to punish my innocent nephew by your falsehood. This boy, Bird, has saved him by owning up in the nick of time—a manly action, which he certainly did not learn from his headmaster. You deserve, sir, that I should lay this whip about you!"

"Keep your distance!" shrieked the hapless Hillcrest master. "If—if you dare—"

"You will pardon Bird for what he has done, and you will not punish him at Hillcrest," said Mr. Lawless.

Mr. Peckover's eyes blazed.

"I will punish him! I—I will—" He choked with rage.

"He deserves to be pardoned for his courage in coming here to prevent an injustice. You will assure him, in my presence, that no punishment shall fall upon him, or I will thrash you, sir, within an inch of your life!" roared the rancher.

And the whip half-rose. Mr. Peckover gulped.

"In the—the circumstances, I—I shall certainly pardon Bird!" he stuttered.

"I—I am, in—in fact, very much obliged to you, B-b-bird—"

"Thank you, sir!" said Dicky demurely.

"Bird," said Mr. Lawless, "if you should be punished, in spite of Mr. Peckover's words, let me know. I do not trust this man. Peckover, if you lay a finger on this courageous lad, I shall come to your house, sir, and I shall bring a stock-whip, and I will thrash you, sir, before your school till you howl for mercy!"

And with that the rancher strode out of the school-room. Dicky Bird slipped away, smiling, and mounted his horse. He felt quite secure now. As for the hapless Mr. Peckover, he seemed rooted to the floor for some moments. He detached himself at last, however, and limped away to the door, followed by a loud and prolonged hiss from all Cedar Creek. The buggy was heard to drive away a few minutes later, and Mr. Peckover was gone, without even the consolation in prospect of flogging Dicky Bird. The thought of the rancher and his stockwhip effectually prevented that.

Frank Richards' face was very bright that morning, and so were the faces of his chums, all the more so when they reflected upon the probable feelings just then of the discomfited Mr. Peckover.

THE END.

*(This is only the closing of one episode in the little encounter with Mr. Peckover, of Hillcrest. Next week we hear further of this unpleasant gentleman, and how Frank Richards teaches him a lesson. This story is entitled, "PAYING OUT PECKOVER!" and is full of thrilling and surprising moments.)*

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