

**"A TRIP ABROAD!"** The Holiday Adventures of the Chums of Rookwood!  
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# The POPULAR 2<sup>d</sup>

EVERY TUESDAY.  
Week Ending  
July 18th, 1925.  
New Series  
No. 339.



**BUNTER THE PUNTER!**

**"WATER" FATE FOR POOR OLD BILLY!**

A SPECIAL RIVER NUMBER of our Humorous Supplement—"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY" in this issue!

**MORNINGTON ON HIS OWN!** The arrival of the summer vacation brings great joy to the Rookwooders. But there is one boy who does not greet breaking-up day with a smile. Mornington is not glad to leave the school. He cuts adrift from his school-fellows, and sets out on his own!



**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
Down on His Luck!

**C**HEERIO, Morny!" Jimmy Silver clapped Mornington on the shoulder as he greeted him.

Jimmy was feeling in particularly good spirits that afternoon.

It was the last day before Rookwood broke up for the midsummer vacation, and Jimmy was looking forward to the holidays with considerable keenness.

School wasn't bad—in fact Jimmy Silver contrived to have a remarkably good time, as a rule, at Rookwood. But there was no doubt that holidays were better.

His chums—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—were going to be with him most of the vac, and though there might be a row or two it was very pleasant for the inseparable four to keep together.

So Jimmy greeted Mornington of the Fourth in his cheeriest tones when he found that youth "mooching" under the beeches in the quad, his hands driven deep in his pockets, and a moody frown on his brow.

Mornington looked at him, his gloomy face a strong contrast to Jimmy's bright visage.

"You're feelin' merry an' bright—what?" asked Morny.

"Tophole!" said Jimmy.

"Because you're goin' home for the holidays?"

"Naturally. No place like home, you know," said Jimmy Silver, smiling. "And we've got one or two things on for the vacation, including a run across to the Continent. I don't see anything to grouse about, myself."

"Suppose," said Mornington sourly, "suppose you were goin' home to a guardian who'd rather not see you, and a set of dashed cousins who looked on you as an interloper in the house?"

Jimmy Silver's face became grave.

"Would you feel so dashed chippy about it then?" asked Mornington bitterly.

"No, I shouldn't," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm sorry, old scout. If you feel like

that it must be rather rotten to see other fellows only thinking of a gay time. But—"

He paused.

"But—" grunted Mornington.

"Your guardian, old Sir Rupert Stacpoole, didn't strike me as a bad sort," said Jimmy. "I don't want to butt in, of course; but don't you think, Morny, that if you managed him a bit more carefully you'd keep on his right side? I've heard you speak to him in a—ahem!—rather cheeky way. I shouldn't expect my pater to let me talk to him like it, if I wanted to."

"Which you don't—being a good youth and a model to others," suggested Mornington.

Jimmy flushed a little. Morny had a bitter tongue sometimes. But the captain of the Fourth remembered that Valentine Mornington was in a rather unenviable position, and naturally feeling "down" about it. So he kept his good temper, and smiled.

He was glad of it the next moment, when Mornington went on quickly:

"Sorry, Silver! Don't mind my beastly temper. The fact is I'm feelin' utterly rotten about the vac. I wouldn't go home to Stacpoole if there was any other resource. But there isn't. I shall be jolly glad when the holidays are over and I can get back to Rookwood."

"If you leave it to your Uncle James," said Jimmy, with a smile, "he will point out another resource."

"What's that?"

"Come home with me for the vac," said Jimmy. "My father will let me bring any chap I like, and I'd be glad to have you, and Erroll, too, if he'll come."

Mornington's handsome, haughty face became crimson.

"So you think I was fishin' for an invitation?" he exclaimed hotly.

"Not at all. I—"

"I haven't come down to that yet," said Mornington savagely. "I'm hard up, and at a loose end, but I haven't fallen to Tubby Muffin's level yet,

Keep your dashed invitations till they're wanted, Jimmy Silver!"

"Morny, I—I never meant—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Valentine Mornington swung round and stalked away, with a savage frown on his brow.

Jimmy stared after him.

In spite of the well-known good temper and patience of Uncle James, of Rookwood, Jimmy was strongly tempted to stride after Mornington, collar him, and bang his head against the nearest beech. It was only with a great effort that Jimmy controlled that strong desire.

"Hallo, old bean, what's been ruffling your little temper?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell, meeting his chum on his way to the School House. And Raby and Newcome gave Jimmy Silver inquiring grins.

"Oh, nothing in particular!" said Jimmy, his brow clearing.

Lovell chuckled.

"Been rowing with Morny?" he asked.

"Not exactly rowing."

"Morny's like a bear with a sore head, these days," remarked Raby. "He seems to hate the idea of the vac. I suppose he doesn't pull with his people at home."

"I think they'd have to be giddy angels for Morny to pull with them," said Jimmy. "It isn't everybody that can pull with Morny. It beats me how Erroll does it. But never mind Morny; let's get in to tea."

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Not Wanted!

**V**ALENTINE MORNINGTON pitched open the door of Study No. 4 in the Fourth Form passage in the School House and strode in.

Two or three fellows in the passage looked at him, but did not speak. Morny was evidently not in a humour for friendly and cheery remarks.

But some of the fellows looked at one another and smiled. Putty Grace re-

marked to Conroy that "Morny had his rag out again," and Conroy grinned. Morny "with his rag out" seemed to have its humorous side for the other fellows in the Classical Fourth.

Kit Erroll was in Study No. 4, and he looked round with a smile as his study-mate came in. Mornington did not return the smile; his frowning brow did not relax for a moment. Erroll's handsome face fell a little.

Morny slammed the door shut and crossed to the window, and stood for some minutes staring out into the sunny quadrangle. He could see a dozen fellows there, and every face he saw was cheerful. He caught sight of Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, chatting with Monsieur Monceau, the French master, both evidently in the best of spirits. Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth, came along and joined them, and that portly gentleman, too, looked cheery and contented. Apparently everybody at Rookwood was looking on the brighter side of life that afternoon, excepting Valentine Mornington, of the Classical Fourth.

He turned away from the window with an impatient exclamation. Erroll was quietly packing books, and he did not look up again. Morny stared for some moments at his chum's bent head.

"Well?" he said at last.

"Well?" said Erroll, looking up then, with a rather forced smile.

"Feelin' merry and bright?" asked Mornington, sarcastically.

"Well, yes, rather," admitted Erroll. "I'm looking forward to the holidays, like everybody else."

"Congratulations!"

"Well, I shall be glad to be with my father again," said Erroll. "Now that he's settled down in England I can always spend my vacations at home. I wish you'd come with me, Morny."

"Captain Erroll didn't seem specially to take to me when I made his acquaintance."

"He likes you well enough," said Erroll, rather awkwardly. "You—you don't always show your best side, Morny. I wanted you to like my father, and him to like you."

"Naturally, he doesn't! Who does?" said Mornington bitterly. "Why should anyone like me, come to that? If I were another person and met Valentine Mornington I'm pretty certain that I shouldn't like him."

Erroll laughed.

"Well, I like you, old chap," he said. "You could have as many friends as you cared to make. But your—"

"But my beastly temper and my bitter tongue, and my discontented nature—" suggested Mornington.

"I wasn't going to say that."

"You may as well say it as think it," said Mornington, shrugging his shoulders. "It's too true! Jimmy Silver's just asked me to go home with him for the vac. Taking pity on me, confound him. Of course, he meant well."

"I hope you were civil," said Erroll, with a troubled look.

"I wasn't."

"Oh!"

"I'm not in a mood to be civil to anyone," said Mornington. "For two pins I'd quarrel even with you, Erroll."

"You won't do that," said Erroll quietly. "It takes two to make a quarrel." He made a step towards his chum. "Look here, Morny! Why not come home with me to-morrow? The pater will be glad to see any friend of mine."

"And you'll be glad to take home a

fellow who hasn't anywhere to rest his weary head?" jeered Mornington. "Thanks! I'm not an object of philanthropy!"

"You know it isn't that. I should ask you just the same if you were rich, like you used to be."

"And I should very likely think you were suckin' up to me for my money," said Mornington. "Fellows used to. Not so very long ago Townsend and Topham would have begged me to come home in Towny's big car. Now they wouldn't have me at any price. Smythe of the Shell used to ask me regularly, and smiled sweetly every time I snubbed him. Now Smythe wouldn't touch me with a barge-pole. Money makes a lot of difference, doesn't it?"

"Not so much as you think, Morny. It would have been better for you if you'd never been rich."

"Very likely," said Mornington. "But I have been rich, and being poor galls me every minute of the day." He paced across the study restlessly. "It makes me suspicious. Sometimes I don't even trust you, Erroll. If I thought you pitied me I'd quarrel with you for good and all."

Erroll made no answer to that. He went on packing his books methodically.

"I've a dashed good mind to ask leave to stop at school over the vac," went on Mornington. "Fancy lounging about a deserted school, with only the house-keeper an' the porter to talk to; droppin' in at the porter's lodge for the sake of hearin' one's own voice!" He shivered. "I suppose old Stacpoole's place would be better than that. I can get a little amusement quarrellin' and raggin' with my Stacpoole cousins."

"Won't that be rather rough on your guardian?"

"He shouldn't have taken the job on," said Mornington. "Besides, he deserves it, bother him! I dare say I'm a rather trying chap to get on with, but—he doesn't want me home. That doesn't make a chap feel amiable. And I'm not goin' home for the vac."

"You'll come with me, old chap?"

"No."

"Then who—"

"I'm not goin' with anybody," said Mornington. "I'm goin' off on my own."

"You can't!" exclaimed Erroll, almost aghast.

"Can't I?" exclaimed Mornington. "Look here! Read that! It's from my merry guardian."

He pitched a letter on to the table. Erroll picked it up, and his brow set as he glanced over it. Morny's letter from Sir Rupert Stacpoole was short, but it could not be called sweet.

"Dear Valentine,—No doubt it will be your wish to pass the vacation with some one of your schoolfellows, one, at least, of whom, I am sure, will ask you. If you decide to do so I shall have no objection whatever to offer. I enclose a banknote for £10, to meet any incidental expenses that may occur.—Your affectionate guardian,

"RUPERT STACPOOLE."

"Very affectionate guardian, what?" grinned Mornington. "He's standin' me a tenner not to go home. That's what it amounts to."

"Probably he knows that I should be glad to have you, Morny," said Erroll wistfully. "Won't you come?"

"No."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I've got the tenner, and some other quids I've saved up out of my allowance," said Mornington. "That will

see me through. I'm goin' to phone to old Stacpoole that I'm fixed up for the vac. That will satisfy him, an' keep him from botherin'. And I'm going to quit Rookwood with the crowd to-morrow, and then go off on my lonely own."

"But—"

"Perhaps you may drop on me before Rookwood meets again," said Morny, in a softer tone. "Haven't you got some arrangement with Silver and his friends for a run across the Channel later in the vac?"

"Yes; and they'd be glad if you'd come."

"You may see me if you wander round the nearest and cheapest Continental resorts," said Mornington. "I'm going over to Calais."

"By yourself?"

"Why not?"

"You'll want a passport, for one thing. I don't suppose they'll hand out one to a kid at your age."

"You're not up to the times, dear boy. Day trips can be done without passports now. Our dear old grandmotherly Foreign Office is bein' forced to loosen its grip, bit by bit. People won't stand bein' worried for ever because there was a war years ago. Picture me among the giddy trippers, old scout, with my pockets full of oranges, and a Woodbine cigarette." Mornington chuckled. "I'll make it a Bank Holiday, if I can."

Erroll looked hard at his chum.

"What have you got in your head now, Morny? You don't want to run across the Channel just for one day."

"Long enough for my purpose," said Mornington, shrugging his shoulders.

"And what is your purpose?"

"If I told you that, dear boy, it would make your hair stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine, like giddy old Hamlet in the play," grinned Mornington. "Perhaps I'm goin' to get rich, and perhaps I'm goin' to be skinned of all my money!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Off to France!

"ALL aboard!" sang out Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was a couple of weeks since Rookwood School had scattered to the four corners of the kingdom for the midsummer holidays.

The Fistical Four had spent a week with Lovell's people, and then had landed at Mr. Silver's country house; and from that habitation they were going on a still more entertaining excursion. On the drive before Priory House a big motor-car was standing, and into the car was piling a merry party. Lovell and Raby and Newcome were there, and Kit Erroll, who had come over to join in the excursion. Mrs. Silver and cousin Phyllis were away in Scotland; but Mr. Silver was with the party—indeed, without the kindly gentleman the excursion could not have taken place. Jimmy certainly would have undertaken to pilot the party to La Belle France, and father, with all the serene confidence of "Uncle James" of Rookwood. But Jimmy's pater very wisely would not have allowed him to undertake anything of the sort.

Mr. Silver was a kindly gentleman; he had been a boy himself in his time, and had not forgotten the fact. So he was taking a great deal of trouble to make the holiday a success for his son and his son's friends. The trip across the Channel was a prominent item in an extensive programme. And the juniors were delighted with the prospect. True, they

had had "runs" abroad before—they had heard strange tongues talked in strange lands. But there was always something pleasantly exciting in a trip across the sea among foreign folk. And their kindly host took all the trouble on his own shoulders. He had the passports for the whole party, Jimmy Silver & Co. being "minors" and in his official charge.

Arthur Edward Lovell stood up in the big car and blew on a tin trumpet, and shouted "All aboard! Tumble up! Do you want to lose the boat at Dover, you slackers?"

"Chuck in that bag, Jimmy!" said Newcome.

"Here you are!"

Jimmy Silver chucked in the bag, and perhaps by accident it caught Arthur Edward Lovell behind the knees. Lovell suddenly folded up like a penknife and sat on the floor of the car.

"Oh," he growled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, no time for gymnastics now, Lovell!" said Jimmy Silver. "Sit on a seat, old fellow—"

"Why, you—you—you—" stuttered Lovell. "I'll punch your nose—"

"Dear me! Is anything the matter?" asked Mr. Silver, arriving beside the car.

Arthur Edward Lovell undoubted his fists in a great hurry.

"Nothing at all, sir. Plenty of room, Jimmy, old chap—blow in!"

Jimmy grinned and got in. There was plenty of room for five juniors and a portly gentleman in the car. Algy Silver, Jimmy's young cousin in the Third Form at Rookwood, jumped up besides the chauffeur. He preferred to ride in front. Indeed, he had coolly told his cousin Jimmy that he didn't want to squash in with his dashed Bank Holiday crowd—a remark that would have cost Master Algy a "thick" ear but for the fact that Mr. Silver was hovering in the offing.

"Now we are all ready, I think," said Mr. Silver, taking a survey of his young companions and the baggage.

"Ready—ay, ready!" grinned Newcome. "Let her rip, sir!"

Lovell blew a squeaky note on the trumpet, having already recovered the exuberance of his spirits. Algy Silver turned his head and looked into the car.

"Order, there!" he said severely. The Rookwood fag found a great delight in checking Fourth Formers in the vac; in the term the Third had to be very careful how they cheeked the Fourth. "Not so much music, Lovell."

"Shut up, Algy!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Rats, old scout!" answered Algy Silver cheerfully. "If I'm coming with you fellows, you'll have to behave."

"If you didn't come," said Lovell, with crushing sarcasm, "there would be lots of dry eyes in the party."

"Phyllis wanted me to go up to Scotland with her," said Algy. "Almost wish I'd gone—only a fellow can't stand his sister orderin' him about in the vac. I thought I'd try to put up with you fellows. But not too much of your charabanc stunts, Lovell."

Lovell was at a loss for words. He blew another defiant blast on the trumpet, instead of squashing it on Algy's hat, as he dearly wanted to do. The car started, and glided away at a good rate. Arthur Edward Lovell allowed the tin trumpet to rest at last, and dug an elbow into the ribs of Kit Erroll, whose handsome face wore a thoughtful expression.

"Penny for 'em, old bean," he said.

Erroll smiled.

"I was thinking—" he said.

"I withdraw the offer," said Lovell, with a chuckle. "I know what you were thinking of. I'm sorry he's not with us, if you want him."

"Morny?" said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, he could have come," said Newcome. "Haven't you seen him since we broke up, Erroll?"

"No."

"Must be having a rare old time with his Stacpoole cousins at home, I think," grinned Lovell. "He looked in a fighting temper when he left, and they love each other about as much as Froggies and Huns."

Erroll did not reply. He knew that Mornington had not gone home to his guardian for the vacation, and that Sir Rupert Stacpoole believed that his ward was spending the holidays with some Rookwood schoolfellow. Erroll wondered whether it was right for him to keep silent and allow the reckless dandy of the Fourth to go on his own reckless way. Yet he could not feel justified in the idea of betraying what Morny had told him in confidence. It was an awkward position for Erroll—not the first awkward position he had been placed in by his perverse chum. He wondered where Morny was, and what he was doing—and whether he had landed himself in trouble. It was only too probable that wherever Valentine Mornington was, trouble would crop up.

But for Morny's touchy pride he might have been a member of the present merry party. Yet Erroll could hardly blame him for his determination not to accept favours he could not return. Morny was proud, and touchy;

but his spirit, after all, was all right. He would not risk being looked upon as a "sponge." He had never been so proud in the days of his wealth as he was now in the days of his poverty.

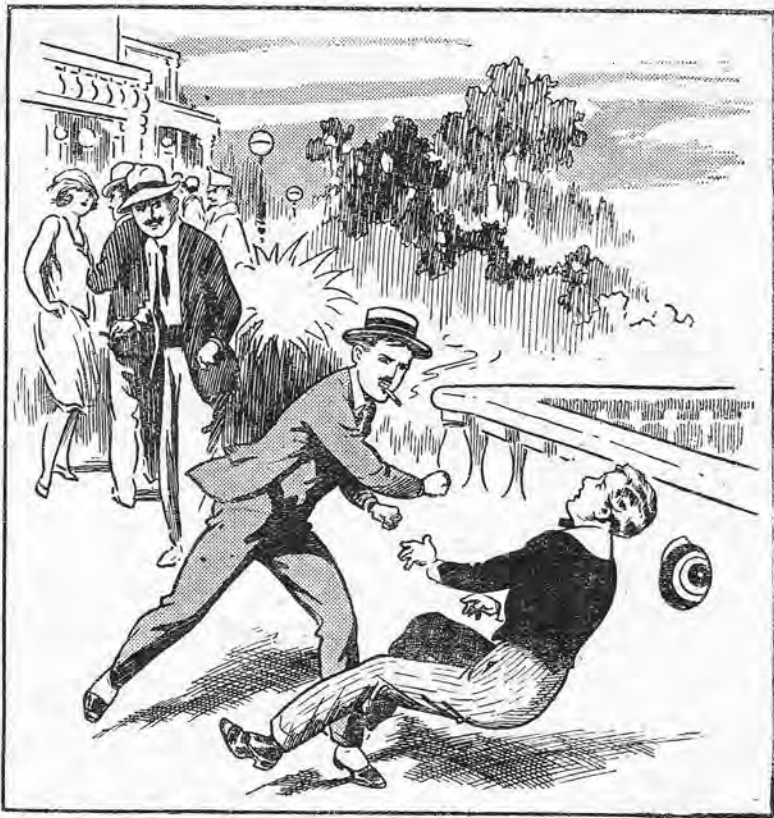
But Erroll strove to dismiss the thought of his chum from his mind, and to summon a cheerful smile to his face; he did not want to be a wet blanket to the party.

It was a glorious summer's day, with a sky of cloudless blue and a soft breeze, and Jimmy Silver & Co. thoroughly enjoyed the rapid run through the green countryside. They passed many a holiday charabanc on the road, and exchanged chaff with the occupants thereof; and at last they ran into the ancient town of Dover.

There was lunch at the Lord Warden, and then the party headed for the Channel boat, already lying by the quay. They walked cheerily down the long passage to the boat. There was a goodly crowd crossing, and a babel of cheery voices. As they filed on the gangway to the deck Erroll gave a sudden start, and his eyes were fixed on a figure in the crowd ahead. It was only for a moment—the next the figure had vanished in the throng.

When the party were aboard the next step was the selection of a favourable spot on deck, and the arrangement of deck-chairs. But while the Co. were busy with these arrangements Erroll slipped away from the rest. He left the first-class quarters and went forward, his eyes seeking among the holiday crowd for the figure that had caught his eye for a moment.

He found it at last. His hand dropped



**THE MADNESS OF MORNY!** "You've no right to enter that place, Morny," said Erroll. "It's rotten, blackguardly. I ought to keep you from going in, and, by Jove, I will!" "Will you?" Mornington's hand, clenched hard, came up, and a fierce blow was struck. With a cry, Erroll staggered and fell on the flagstones. (See Chapter 5.)

on the shoulder of a lad dressed in grey tweeds, with a cigarette in his mouth, who was leaning on the rail and staring shoreward. A loud and deafening blast announced that the boat was starting. The figure by the rail moved quickly and turned, staring blankly at Erroll.

"You!"  
"Morny!"

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### On the Channel Boat!

VALENTINE MORNINGTON recovered from his surprise the next moment. He put his hands in his pockets and stood leaning carelessly against the rail, blowing out smoke from his cigarette. There was a mocking smile on his face. The boat was pulling out now, with a dull throb of engines, and the space of water was widening towards the shore. Erroll, probably, was the only fellow for whom Mornington had ever felt a real attachment; but it was pretty clear that he was not glad to see his chum at the present moment on the Channel boat.

"Morny," repeated Erroll, "I thought I caught sight of you, but I wasn't sure. I'm glad to see you, old fellow!"

"Anybody with you?"

"Yes, Silver and the rest, and his father. Come along and join us, Morny."

Morny smiled sarcastically.

"You're goin' first-class, I suppose?"

Erroll nodded.

"I'm not," said Morny. "I'm a cheap tripper—not at all the kind of person to join your party; in fact, I shouldn't be allowed in your part of the ship with my ticket." He laughed. "Thus are the mighty fallen! Run along and join your crowd, Erroll, they'll miss you!"

"Never mind if they do," said Erroll. "Won't you come along? The difference on the ticket can be paid."

"Money's tight, old bean—dashed tight," said Mornington, "and I'm not spongin' on you, or anybody else."

"Then I'll stay here a bit."

Mornington blew out a cloud of smoke. It was evident that he had resumed some of his old reckless ways now that he was away from Rookwood.

"Just as you like, if you don't mind bein' taken for a tripper," he said.

"Don't be an ass, Morny!"

"Stayin' over long?" asked Mornington.

"We're staying a day or two in Calais and going along the coast to Boulogne and Wimereux, and so on," said Erroll. "I wish you'd come!"

"Couldn't be done. Mine's a day ticket," sneered Mornington. "If I don't go back to-night there'll be trouble, as I haven't a passport."

"I dare say Mr Silver could arrange to—"

"I'm not goin' to ask him. The fact is, I don't want to join your crowd," said Mornington bluntly. "I'm not crossin' the giddy Channel just on a trip. I've got somethin' on."

"Something you'd rather not let me know?"

"Yes."

"I'm afraid I can guess what it is," said Erroll, his brow clouding. "You are thinking of your old folly—gambling."

"You're a wizard!" said Mornington banteringly. "Well, why not? Haven't you found out long ago that I'm a bad hat—that there's a yellow streak in me somewhere, and I can't keep straight if I try? I'm goin' to skin the giddy Casino if I can."

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Erroll looked shocked, as he felt, and Mornington laughed mockingly.

"You would have it," he said. "Now clear off and join your merry crowd, who wouldn't be found dead near a green table. They're ever so much better company for you than I am, Erroll."

"There's one thing you've forgotten, Morny. I don't think they'll let a kid of your age play in the Casino. There's a limit, even for those unscrupulous gamblers."

"That's easily fixed. I've got a moustache in my pocket, in case it's wanted," said Mornington coolly. "They run a Casino for high profits, not high principles. I'll tell you what, Erroll, cut that gang and come along with me. There's no end of fun—"

"I don't think I ought to 'cut the gang,' as you call it, but I'd do it if it would keep you out of mischief, Morny."

"It wouldn't do that. I'm out to turn Stacpool's tenner into a hundred quids. Then I shall be able to keep my end up at Rookwood next term."

"Of all the mad schemes!" exclaimed Erroll.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"Hallo!" Jimmy Silver's voice broke in. "I've been looking for you, Erroll! Why, it's Morny!"

"Himself!" said Mornington eyeing the captain of the Fourth coolly. "How do you do, Silver? You're looking merry and bright."

"And feeling the same," said Jimmy cheerily. "Trot along with us, Morny. We're going in for lemonade and buns, and if you're not seasick—"

"I'm not seasick, but I shouldn't care for lemonade and buns, thank you."

Mornington turned and walked away. Erroll made a movement to follow him, but stopped, with a clouded face.

"Poor old Morny!" said Jimmy Silver. "If he wasn't so dashed touchy I'd— Come along, Erroll!"

Erroll accompanied Silver back to the party. But it was with difficulty that he banished the cloud from his brow. Mornington's insane scheme troubled him greatly.

There was a good deal of interest in the party when they knew that Valentine Mornington was on board the boat. Mr. Silver asked why Jimmy's school-fellow did not come up and join them—a

question which was rather difficult to answer. Algy Silver looked thoughtful, and detached himself from the party after a time, and wandered about the decks, looking round him. He was looking for Mornington, and he found him at last, and tapped him on the elbow.

Mornington looked down at the Rookwood fag impatiently.

"What the dickens do you want?" he snapped.

"Oh, come off!" said Algy coolly. "None of your Fourth Form swank, now, you know. We're in the vac. What's your game over the water, Morny?"

"Find out!"

"That's not very hard," grinned Algy. "I know your little ways, and from Erroll lookin' like a thundercloud I—"

"Leave me alone!"

"Oh, don't be proud, on your seven-and-six ticket!" chuckled Algy. "You ought to be pleased at a first-class passenger comin' along here to talk to you. Cut the swank, old bun! Look here, if you're goin' in for a little fun over the water I'm game to cut in. I've got lots of oof, and if I can get away from that crowd I mean to make the fur fly. You know the ropes, Morny, and you can help. What?"

Valentine Mornington looked curiously at the fag. Algy's eagerness to "play the goat" was only too evident in his face. Considering his own intentions, Mornington had little reason to feel disgust; but disgust he certainly did feel. He dropped his hand on Algy's shoulder.

"You silly little idiot!" he said distinctly. "If I see you anywhere near the Casino I'll make it a point to let your uncle know at once, and I fancy you'll be buzzed home quickly."

"You're goin' there yourself," said Algy Silver resentfully. "Do you think I don't know?"

"Go back to your uncle at once," said Mornington harshly. "And keep your distance from me, unless you want the boot."

"You cheeky cad!" roared Algy wrathfully. The sportsman of the Third was far from pleased at this reception of his sportive suggestions.

Mornington raised his hand—and dropped it again. He walked quickly away, and Algy Silver returned sullenly to the party. So far as Mornington was concerned, the sportive Algy was not likely to receive any aid in "playing the goat" and painting the town red.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

##### Struck Down!

"CALAIS!" said Arthur Edward Lovell.

The white cliffs rose in a line above the sea, in a blaze of summer sunshine.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked about them with interest as the boat drew into the shore. They moored at last, and there was a babel of voices in French as an army of "facteurs" swarmed on board for the passengers' baggage. Erroll looked round for Mornington in the crowd gathering to disembark; but he did not see him—the throng was too thick. Probably Morny, too, was taking trouble to keep out of the way of the Rookwooders.

The party gave up their landing-tickets and went ashore, and went through the usual troublesome formalities of the passport office and the customs-house.

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The next move was to the hotel, where Mr. Silver had booked quarters in advance. The juniors were glad to sit down to tea in a quiet, shady room, that looked on the sea. Arthur Edward pointed out a large building on the front, and inquired of Mr. Silver what it was.

"The Casino!" answered that gentleman.

"Where they play petits-chevaux?" asked Lovell, with some interest.

"Yes," answered Mr. Silver rather dryly.

"Might have a look in there, uncle?" said Algy Silver.

"You young ass!" said Jimmy.

Mr. Silver fixed his eyes rather grimly on his nephew.

"It is not a place for you to enter, Algernon," he said. "You will certainly do nothing of the kind, my boy."

"Well, just to look on!" said Algy.

"Looking on at folly and vice is not good for anyone, especially a lad of your age," said Mr. Silver. "There are plenty of harmless amusements, Algy."

And Algy held his peace, though he was thinking the more. After tea Jimmy Silver & Co. went for a "trot" along the esplanade, Mr. Silver remaining in the hotel. He was not quite so active and tireless as his youthful companions. The summer evening was setting in; a blaze of red sunset lay on the sea, and the hot day was cooling. The seashore was crowded with bright dresses, and hats, and parasols. Crowds passed and re-passed, in and out of the Casino, evidently a centre of attraction, as in most French seaside towns. The strains of a band came somewhere from the garden.

"Algy!" shouted Jimmy Silver suddenly.

He made a rush after his cousin, and jerked him back from the steps of the building.

"Let go!" growled Algy.

"Come along, you young jackanapes!"

And Master Algy was marched along, willy-nilly, with "Uncle James'" strong grip on his arm. His face was sullen and rebellious.

"Erroll's gone in!" he growled.

"Rot!"

"Well, he has—I saw him."

"Rot!" repeated Jimmy Silver.

But when he glanced round he saw that Erroll was no longer with the party.

Erroll was a dozen yards away, near the entrance of the Casino. He had caught sight of a figure in grey tweeds and a straw hat. There was a little black moustache on Mornington's upper lip now, and it made him look years older. He had a cigarette between his white teeth. He started, and uttered an angry ejaculation as he was caught by the arm.

"Morny, old man!" said Erroll.

"You again!" said Mornington.

"Comin' in?"

"No."

"Jolly place!" said Mornington cynically. "There's dancin' and music, an' a music-hall, and petits-chevaux?"

"Mr. Silver is taking us to the theatre this evening, Morny. Won't you come with us?"

"I've got to catch the boat home, kid—and besides, I don't care for the somewhat depressin' society of the estimable Mr. Silver," answered Mornington. "The fact is, I've got no time to waste. What are you holdin' my arm for?"

Erroll did not let go.

"I wish you'd listen to reason, Morny. Keep clear of that rotten show, and don't play the fool and—"

"The blackguard, you were goin' to say!" chuckled Mornington. "Give it a name, old bean—I don't mind. But let me go; time's short. If you're not coming in don't meddle."

"You mean—"

"I mean to do exactly as I like," said Mornington. "Now, let me go, Erroll, or there'll be trouble." His eyes glittered. "Let go my arm!"

Erroll's eyes flashed.

"You've no right to enter that show, Morny, and you know it. It's rotten—blackguardly. I ought to keep you from going in, and, by Jove, I will!"

"Will you?"

Mornington's hand, clenched hard, came up, and a fierce blow was struck.

With a sharp cry Erroll staggered and fell on the flagstones. He sat up dazedly, his hand to his face.

Valentine Mornington had disappeared.

THE END.

(There will be another stirring, long, complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, featuring Valentine Mornington, entitled "A Fool and His Folly!" in next week's issue.)

## "THE VENTRILOQUIST OF CEDAR CREEK!"

(Continued from page 6.)

"Let me out!" yelled Honk. "I guess I shall suffocate if I'm left in hyer! You said it was only to be for ten minutes, you fat jay!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I can't get the key!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Honk was getting desperate.

"Bless my soul! What is this?"

Honk's yells and thumps had reached the ears of Miss Meadows, and she came in again hastily. "What—what—"

Thump!

"Lemme out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is—is somebody locked in the cupboard? Todgers, you bad boy—"

Miss Meadows hastily unlocked the cupboard, and Bunker Honk, dusty and red and breathless, staggered out. "Honk—Todgers—what—what—"

Frank Richards & Co. beat a retreat from the school-room, leaving the two culprits to explain as best they could. When Honk and Todgers emerged into the playground a few minutes later they were both rubbing their hands and looking very excited.

"Yow-ow-ow!" Chunky Todgers was remarking.

"Oh swipes!" groaned Bunker Honk. "You fat jay, catch me helping you in a stunt again! You owe me half-a-dollar, anyhow!"

"You silly ass!" howled Chunky Todgers. "You spoiled the whole thing! Catch me giving you a half-dollar!"

"I guess I'll—"

"You pair of pesky spoofer!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Collar them, you chaps, and roll them in the snow! That's what they want!"

"Hear hear!"

"I—I—I guess—Yaroooop!"

"Leggo! Help! Yoop! I—I—I say—only a joke on you fellows! I—I—Ow!"

Chunky Todgers and Bunker Honk went rolling together in the thick snow, and they were rolled, and rolled, till Frank Richards & Co. were tired. By that time Chunky Todgers had probably repented of his fraudulent attempt to convince Cedar Creek of his wonderful ventriloquial powers, and Bunker Honk had probably repented of helping him, for the consideration of half-a-dollar—unpaid! And from that unlucky day nothing more was heard from Chunky Todgers on the subject of his new and amazing gift. It was the last performance of the Cedar Creek ventriloquist.

THE END.

Another rollicking, long complete tale of Frank Richards & Co., of Cedar Creek, entitled:

## "THE MEANNESS OF MR. PECKOVER!"

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