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IN THE MADMAN'S CLUTCHES

This Week's Great Story of the Schoolboy Adventurers

MORNY JOINS THE TRAMPS! Along the broad highway the Rookwood Tramps continue their adventures with a new companion — Mornington, who has thrown in his lot with the schoolboy travellers!

The Runaway!



A Stirring Long Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Rookwood Tramps.

By
OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Pursuer!

"COME on, Morny!" Jimmy Silver called, but Valentine Mornington did not answer.

The Rookwood tramps were following a steep country road in Surrey, and every now and then the juniors gave a shove to the baggage-cart to help Trotsky, the pony, over a rough place.

The road wound up the green hillside, and, looking back from any point, the juniors could see it unwinding behind like a corkscrew, loops of white amid the green.

Mornington had stopped, and was looking back, with his hands in his pockets, and a fixed expression on his handsome, reckless face.

Jimmy Silver & Co. glanced back at him rather impatiently.

It was only the night before that Morny—the expelled junior of Rookwood—had joined the party. Jimmy Silver & Co. were glad to have him, but their feelings were very dubious on the subject. They knew that Morny had left Stacpoole Lodge without his guardian's permission, and it worried them.

It did not seem to worry Mornington in the slightest degree. He was accustomed to going his own way—to following any impulse whithersoever it led. Good or bad, he would follow it till he tired of it, and it was thus that he had come so terrible a "cropper" at Rookwood School. But the lesson seemed to have been lost on Valentine Mornington.

The addition of Mornington to the party was welcome enough to Jimmy Silver and his comrades—Lovell, Raby, Newcome, and Putty Grace. But they had rather more respect for law and order than Morny had, and certainly a much better defined idea of the respect due from the young to the old. But they felt a natural diffidence in arguing with Mornington, sensitive as he was, and already smarting under his disgrace at school. At the slightest remonstrance

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Morny would probably have left them and gone off "on his own," but most certainly he would not have gone home.

The one-time dandy of the Rookwood Fourth did not seem to hear Jimmy call, as he stood looking back by the way they had come, on the white road winding down the green hillside. Arthur Edward Lovell added his powerful voice:

"Are you staying behind, Morny?" he bawled.

Morny answered then, without looking round:

"Hold on a minute or two!"

"Can't stop on a hill like this!" called back Putty of the Fourth. "If Trotsky stops here, he'll never start again!"

"Come on, Morny!" shouted Raby.

"Go on without me, then!" answered Mornington.

Lovell grunted angrily.

"Let's!" he said.

But Jimmy Silver, who was leading Trotsky, came to a halt. Trotsky halted very willingly. Sometimes he was an unwilling animal, but never when he was called upon to halt.

"Look here, Jimmy," said Lovell warmly, "I'm jolly hungry!"

"Same here," said Newcome feelingly.

"And it's grub time, and we can't stop on this dashed road!" continued Lovell. "Let's get on!"

"Give Morny his head," said Jimmy Silver resignedly. "After all, he's our giddy guest."

"Oh, blow!" grunted Lovell.

Jimmy Silver walked back towards Mornington.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Only my giddy guardian!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Jimmy.

From the spot where Morny had stopped the hillside dropped away from the road almost like the wall of a house. The lower road curved round below, and a biscuit could have been tossed easily from the upper road to the lower, though for a traveller following the road round the curve it was a distance of a quarter of a mile.

On the lower road a horseman was coming up at a walk.

He was an elderly gentleman, in riding-clothes, and the sunshine glinted on his silver moustache and his eyeglass.

It was Sir Rupert Stacpoole, Morny's guardian, and his expression showed that his temper was not in its most amenable state. He looked, in fact, very angry indeed. Probably he was not enjoying a ride up a steep hillside in blazing sunshine, with dozens of gnats buzzing round his head.

Mornington looked down on him, a mocking smile curving his well-cut lips.

Jimmy did not smile. He looked grave and concerned. The other members of the party came back to the spot.

"Is that your guardian, Morny?" asked Newcome.

"Yes."

"I think I remember him now. I saw him at Rookwood," said Newcome. "I suppose he's coming after you?"

"Looks like it."

"Are you going home with him?" asked Lovell.

Lovell's look indicated that, in his opinion, that was about the best thing Valentine Mornington could do.

"No!"

"Then the sooner we get on the better!" said Lovell. "We don't want an argument with the old gentleman."

"Cut before he sees you, Morny!" said Raby.

"Too late, dear boy! He's seen me!" said Mornington coolly. "Besides, why shouldn't I have a word with my excellent uncle, if only to wish him 'Good-mornin'?"

The horseman, glancing up, had seen the row of faces looking down from the upper road. He recognised his nephew's face among the others at once. A black look came over his brow. He pulled his horse to a halt, and waved his riding-whip towards Mornington.

"So I have found you, you young rascal!" he exclaimed.

His voice came clearly up the intervening hillside.

Mornington raised his straw hat. "Good-mornin', uncle!" he called back cheerily. "Are you lookin' for me?"

"You know I am!" thundered the old baronet. "How dare you leave home without my permission—and with those young rascals, too!"

"Little us!" murmured Putty. "Morny, your uncle doesn't know what nice fellows we are!"

"Come down the hill at once, Valentine!"

"Thanks! I'm not comin'!"

"I command you, as your guardian, to return to your home with me, Valentine!"

"Anythin' else?" asked Mornington coolly.

Sir Rupert did not reply. He seemed to be gasping for breath.

"I'm not comin' back!" said Mornington. "I'm fed up with the Lodge and with my lovin' cousins! Did Augustus tell you I punched him last evenin'? Aubrey got away before I could punch him! Dear old uncle, I've had enough of Stacpoole Lodge an' cousinly affection an' avuncular duty! I'm not comin' back—ever!"

"Draw it mild!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Mornington did not heed him.

"This is kind of me, uncle," he continued. "I'm savin' you the trouble of fagin' up this hill after me! I suppose a sense of duty brought you out on my trail?"

Sir Rupert Stacpoole glared up at his cheerful nephew, gripping his riding-whip hard in his hand. If he had been able to push his horse up the steep hillside, certainly Mornington would have felt the weight of that whip. But to reach his nephew he had to follow the windings of the road. He sat in the saddle and glared.

"That's all," said Mornington. "Augustus an' Aubrey will be glad to hear they've seen the last of me—an' you'll be glad, too, when you come to think of it! Good-bye!"

The baronet found his voice. "Valentine! You insolent young rascal! I will not only take you home, but I will give you the soundest thrashing of your life and lock you in your room!"

Mornington laughed. "Haven't you ever heard the old recipe for making jugged hare, uncle?" he asked. "First catch your hare, you know!"

"You—you—"

Mornington turned away, leaving the baronet sitting his horse and spluttering with rage.

"Time we got on, dear men!" said Mornington.

Jimmy Silver & Co. rejoined Trotsky and restarted. They pushed on up the hilly road, Mornington smiling, the other five fellows looking very grave. Mornington talked cheerily as they pushed on, but the Rookwooders were silent and worried. And Valentine Mornington at last shrugged his shoulders and tramped in silence, too.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Lovell's Way!

"HALT!"

Jimmy Silver sang out the command a couple of hours later.

It was well on in the afternoon, and the Rookwood tramps were growing ravenous. But with Morny's pursuer so close on the track, Jimmy Silver did

not deem it advisable to halt for lunch at the usual time.

It would have been distinctly disconcerting for Sir Rupert Stacpoole, riding-crop in hand, to ride up to the camp demanding his nephew.

Jimmy considered it judicious to put a good distance between the Rookwood party and the baronet before halting, and his comrades agreed with him, though they were both tired and hungry, and perhaps growing a little irritable.

No member of the party approved of Mornington's insolence to his uncle—it was impossible to approve of it. Morny might or might not have had adequate reasons for taking French leave; but Sir Rupert was an old man, and his guardian, and there was a certain fitness of things of which Morny did not seem to be aware.

Anyhow, if Morny was sticking to the party, the sooner they were at a good distance from Stacpoole Lodge the better. All the Rookwooders agreed upon that.

Whether the old baronet was still on their track they did not know. They had done their best to shake him off. While Sir Rupert was riding slowly up the hilly road the Rookwooders had turned off the road and taken a slightly down-hill path, changing their intended route.

As the country round them was hilly and wooded, they hoped to escape the observation of the horseman, however hard he rode on their tracks.

Tramping in the fresh, keen air of the Downs gave Jimmy Silver & Co. good appetites. They felt missing their lunch, but there was no help for it.

They tramped on by winding lanes till the leader of the holiday party deemed it safe to halt. And gladly enough the Rookwood tramps halted at the word.

The Rookwooders were in a deep lane bordered by grass and hedges, and shaded by trees against the hot sun. They camped on the grassy border of the road.

Trotsky was tethered to a tree, and he began cropping the grass with great satisfaction. But Jimmy Silver & Co. could not turn to lunch so readily as Trotsky.

The spirit-stove had to be lighted and the eggs boiled. They decided not to wait to cook anything more substantial.

Fortunately, there was a good supply of eggs, and there was plenty of bread-and-butter in the larder in the baggage-cart, and the water-can was well filled.

The eggs were soon boiled, and the Rookwooders lunched on them, with cheese to help them out.

It was quite a good lunch, though the hungry juniors would have preferred a more solid one. The eggs were finished, though there was a large supply of them. The cheese went to the last paring and the butter to the last scrape.

Then the Rookwooders felt a little better. Valentine Mornington seemed to enjoy his lunch thoroughly, and he appeared in great spirits.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were as chummy as possible. They realised that Morny's affairs were his own, and that they were not called upon to pass judgment on his conduct towards his guardian. And, anyhow, he was their guest, and a very sensitive one.

So peace and goodwill reigned in the Rookwood roadside camp.

After lunch the juniors stretched themselves in the grass to rest. They needed a rest, after a seven hours' march on steep roads.

"I think we'd better camp here for the rest of the day," Raby remarked.

"We've done a good day's work, Jimmy."

Jimmy nodded.

"Ye-es—"

"Unless Morny's uncle comes butting along," said Putty Grace. "We don't want to meet him."

"Hardly!" said Newcome.

"What would it matter?" drawled Mornington. "We're six—enough of us, I suppose, to handle an old gent?"

Arthur Edward Lovell stared at him.

"Do you mean to say you would lay hands on your uncle, Mornington?" he demanded.

Morny shrugged his shoulders.

"He means to lay hands on me," he answered.

"That's jolly different!"

"I don't quite see it, dear boy."

"There's such a thing as respect for age!" said Lovell tartly.

"What about respect for youth?" yawned Mornington.

"Ass!" said Lovell.

"Thanks!"

"Well, I think—" Arthur Edward Lovell began hotly.

"It's all right!" said Jimmy Silver hastily. "We'll take care to keep out of Sir Rupert's way. There's not much chance of his spotting us here. We're miles from where we met him, and we've made a good many turns. All the same, we'll get on when we've rested, and put in a few more miles before sundown."

"I'm game," said Mornington. "As many miles as you like. I'd rather not meet the dear old Johnny, of course, but if he comes along there will be trouble. I'm not goin' back to the Lodge!"

"You can't leave your guardian for good, Morny," said Jimmy gently.

"I can—and shall!" A black and bitter look came over Mornington's handsome face. "It's not a bed of roses for me at Stacpoole Lodge. I know I was sacked from Rookwood. I know it was my own fault. I know it was hard on uncle. That's all admitted. But there's a limit. I know he means to do his duty by me, as he sees it; but there's such a thing as the milk of human kindness, and that was left out of Sir Rupert Stacpoole's composition somehow."

Mornington felt in his pocket, and produced a cigarette-case. Unconscious of the looks of the Rookwood quintette, he selected a cigarette and lighted it. Jimmy Silver & Co. said no word. It was not for them to criticise a guest.

"And my Stacpoole cousins!" said Mornington. "How would you fellows like to be taunted every other day with bein' sacked from school?"

The Rookwooders made no answer to that. The obvious reply was that they had not been expelled, and had never deserved to be. But they did not care to put it like that to Morny.

"And told every now and then that you're eatin' the bread of charity?" said Mornington bitterly.

"That's rotten enough!" said Jimmy Silver.

"That's what I've got often enough! Well, I'm done with the bread of charity, anyhow!"

"We've seen your cousins now," said Jimmy, after a pause. "I can't say a fellow can think much of them. They don't seem nice, that's a fact. Still, you might humour them a little, you know, and get on with them somehow. Are they really wholly to blame for the trouble, Morny?"

Mornington laughed.

"No. Six of one and half a dozen of the other!" he answered. "I've got a tongue as bitter as theirs, I dare say. Still, they're a pair of rotters, as you've seen for yourselves."

Morny blew out a cloud of smoke, and then, remembering, he suddenly threw his cigarette into the road.

"I forgot!" he said. "That's rotten stuff to march on, any way, old man," said Jimmy mildly. "I know."

Arthur Edward Lovell rose to his feet. "There's a farmhouse across the fields," he said. "Whether we're camping here or going on, we want some grub for the larder. I dare say we can get eggs, and butter, and cheese—perhaps bacon. I'd better do the shopping."

Lovell had great faith in himself as a shopper—as most other things. But nobody was anxious to get out of the cool, rich grass and take the shopping off his hands, so Lovell was allowed to haps bacon. I'd better do the shopping." basket out of the baggage-cart. Then he looked for a practicable opening in the hedge.

"Better go round by the gate," said Jimmy Silver.

"Where's the gate?" "Blessed if I know, but there must be a gate somewhere."

"There's a path in the field," said Lovell. "It will be all right to go across the field. I can't see any gate. The farmhouse isn't a quarter of a mile straight from here—may be miles going round looking for a dashed gate."

"All the same—" said Putty of the Fourth.

Lovell waved his hand. "Leave it to me!" he said.

Lovell evidently knew best—it was one of his weaknesses. There was no opening to be found in the hedge, which was of hawthorn, thick and strong. But trees grew in it at intervals, and Lovell swung himself on a low branch, tossing the basket over first, and then swung himself over the hedge and dropped into the field.

About a minute later the cheery chat of the Rookwooders was interrupted by a startling sound from the field Lovell had entered.

Bellow! "My hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, springing to his feet.

"A bull!" exclaimed Putty. In a second the campers were on their feet in alarm. That loud, echoing bellow was more than enough to cause alarm. What had happened to Lovell?

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Run Down!

JIMMY SILVER swung himself up on a branch, and stared anxiously over the hedge. Before his eyes was a rich green meadow, stretching away towards the farmhouse in the distance, but enclosed on all sides by thick hedges or barbed wire. There was a pond in one corner, with a fringe of willows; and from amid the willows a huge form had emerged—a gigantic bull, nearly black, with great threatening head and red, savage eyes. Lovell was nearly half-way across the field, the big basket slung on his arm—and he had come to a dead stop, and was staring at the bull.

Jimmy's heart almost stood still. It was not a common bull, he could see that; it was a huge animal, of gigantic strength, and evidently of savage temper. And Lovell was almost in the middle of the field—he had been going on at an active trot when the bull emerged from the willows and bellowed. That field, carefully enclosed on all sides, was sacred to the prize bull—the gate, on the other side, was padlocked. Probably the farmer had never even

dreamed that a reckless trespasser would get over the hedge into the field and surprise the big bull with an unexpected visit.

"Lovell!" yelled Jimmy. "Good heavens!" muttered Mornington.

Lovell was running now. He was coming back towards the hedge at a frantic speed.

Bellow, bellow! "He's after him!" panted Raby.

The bull was in full pursuit, head down. To the horrified eyes of the Rookwooders he seemed to cover the ground like lightning.

Lovell ran desperately. Behind him he heard the thundering hoofs of the bull—hoofs that seemed to shake the ground as the gigantic animal thundered on.

He dropped the basket and ran for his life, Jimmy Silver & Co. watching him with white, strained faces. They could not help—they could only pray that Lovell would win that fearful race.

The big basket lay in the bull's path, and he stopped to toss it on his horns, it stuck there, pierced by one horn, and the bull dashed his head savagely in the grass to get rid of it. The delay was fortunate for Lovell.

He came on with desperate speed and reached the hedge.

"This way!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

He was on the branch over the hedge; he reached down a hand to Lovell. Lovell caught it, and Jimmy pulled. The bull had got rid of the basket now, and was coming on, thundering. With a desperate pull, Jimmy Silver dragged up his chum, and Lovell caught the branch and swung himself into safety. A few seconds later the bull was raging under the branch.

Lovell clung to the tree, white as chalk.

The bull, deprived of his victim, returned to the basket, and tossed it and trampled it, reducing it to fragments.

"Oh!" panted Lovell. "Oh—oh!" It was all he could say.

Jimmy Silver helped him from the tree, on the safe side of the hedge. Arthur Edward Lovell sank into the grass, panting and shuddering.

"Jolly close thing!" said Mornington. "All serene now, Lovell!"

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### RESULT OF "GOOGLIES" Competition No. 3.

THE FIRST PRIZE OF £2 2s. for the best "last line" sent in has been awarded to:

F. B. MOON, 38, Frederick Place, Brighton, Sussex, for the following:

Cecil Parkin can bowl out the best. He's a wonderful man in a "Test." With a hop, skip, and jump He takes aim at the stump, "With a 'duck' (not a 'Drake') bats 'go west.'"

THE SIX PRIZES OF 10/6 EACH have been awarded to the following:

- E. BLAKE, 32, St. Martin's Road, Canterbury, Kent.
- T. E. BRANCH, 37, Fairfield Place, Southville, Bristol.
- Master P. HICKMAN, 53, Crofton Park Road, Brockley, S.E.4.
- W. G. KEW, 115, Tavistock Crescent, N. Kensington, W.11.
- W. PENGELLY, Hazelgrove, Lower Lyndhurst Road, Pevenell, Plymouth.
- J. WENDEN, The Chase, Great Bromley, Colchester.

Arthur Edward did not speak for some minutes. He wiped the perspiration from his face in silence. When he spoke at last, it was evident that he had recovered from the shock.

"Of course, I didn't know there was a bull there," he said. "It was a good idea to cut across the field. Saved time. A fellow couldn't guess that there was a dashed bull."

Evidently Arthur Edward Lovell still knew best.

"Well, I'll go round by the gate," said Putty with a grin, taking a rucksack from the baggage-cart. "Too jolly hot to-day for sprinting about with bulls—though it's a good idea, and saves time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell grunted; and Putty of the Fourth went to do the shopping. He disappeared down the lane, looking for a gate, whistling cheerily.

For the next ten minutes or so, Arthur Edward Lovell was fully occupied in explaining to his comrades that he had been quite right, though it had turned out unfortunately. To which his comrades rejoined with brevity but emphasis: "Rats!"

It was the sound of a horse's hoofs trotting on the road that interrupted the talk. Mornington gave a quick glance along the sunny lane—hot and dusty in the sunshine beyond the trees. A hard, grim look came over his face.

A horseman was coming along the lane at a trot. Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged a startled look as they recognised Sir Rupert Stacpoole.

The rider had come round a bend of the lane, and was almost upon the camp before the Rookwooders saw him.

He did not see them for the moment; he was looking straight before him over his horse's ears. The juniors, sitting in the grass by the roadside, fixed their eyes upon him—and made no movement. They wondered whether he would pass the camp without glancing in their direction—they fervently hoped so.

Not a sound—not a movement—from the camp. Jimmy Silver & Co. almost held their breath as the horseman came abreast of the camp—and then suddenly Sir Rupert saw them, and pulled in his horse. The horse swung round to the grass by the road, and the baronet halted. His frowning brow darkened still more, and his eyes were fixed on Valentine Mornington. Of Jimmy Silver & Co. he took no notice.

Mornington did not rise from the grass. He sat where he was, his hands behind his head, leaning against a little hillock, and watched his uncle with perfect composure. "Valentine!"

The old baronet's voice was like the rumble of distant thunder. "Good-afternoon, Sir Rupert!" said Mornington cheerily.

Jimmy Silver & Co. rose to their feet, looking—as they felt—extremely uncomfortable. They raised their hats to the old gentleman; but he did not acknowledge the salute or glance at them.

"I have been riding for hours, Valentine, in search of you!" said the baronet, his voice trembling and almost husky with anger.

"What a lot of trouble for nothin'!" yawned Mornington.

"Get up immediately!" "Thanks! I'm quite comfy where I am."

Sir Rupert's thin lips tightened. His grasp upon his riding-whip was almost convulsive. It was evident that the baronet was tired with his long ride in the hot sun, and in a black rage with





**FOR LIFE OR DEATH!** Straight down on Mornington and Sir Rupert dashed the bull. Mornny had his jacket off, and as the lowered head was within a yard of him he tossed the jacket on the horns. (See Chapter 4.)

his nephew and ward. His fatigue added to his irritation.

"Valentine! I have had enough—more than enough—of your rascally insolence!" he said, in a choking voice. "It was by no choice of mine that you were left on my hands. You have disgraced me and yourself; you have brought shame on your own name and mine. Now you add to it rank disobedience and rebellion against my authority. I command you, Valentine, to return with me to your home, and there to take what punishment I deem fit for your offence!"

A mocking curl of Mornny's lip was the only answer. He did not trouble to speak.

"And if you do not instantly obey," roared the baronet, his anger breaking out like a torrent, "I will dismount and lay my riding-whip about you, sir! I will thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"Dear old uncle!" was Mornny's reply. "Is it really wise to get so excited at your age? What about apoplexy?"

The baronet did not reply to that question. He urged his horse forward on the grass, raising his whip, with the evident intention of thrashing Mornington there and then.

With a quick spring, the junior was on his feet, and he leaped aside. His mocking nonchalance was gone now, his face was flushed, and his eyes glittered.

"Keep off, Sir Rupert Stacpoole!" he said, between his teeth. "I'm done with you, and you're done with me. Leave me alone!"

Without speaking, Sir Rupert wheeled his horse towards the junior. Mornington caught up a tent-mallet from the cart.

"Stand back, or—"

"No, you don't!" Lovell grabbed Mornington's arm, and wrenched the mallet from him. "Don't be a fool—"

Mornington quivered with rage. He was about to dash his fist into Lovell's face, when the baronet's horse came plunging close, and the whip circled over his head. He leaped away, and, with a spring, reached the bough of the tree that swung over the hedge.

In a second Mornington had swung himself across the hedge, and dropped into the field. Sir Rupert gave a shout of rage—the thick hedge was between him and his ward now.

"Come back, you young scoundrel!" he shouted.

Mornington laughed mockingly.

"Good-bye, uncle! Good-bye, Jimmy Silver! You've seen the last of me! I dare say you'll be pleased!"

"Mornny!" yelled Jimmy.

The thought of the bull was in his mind. Mornington had forgotten it, or, in his recklessness, he did not care.

Sir Rupert gritted his teeth. His anger—not unjustifiable—was boiling now to the pitch of passionate fury. He backed his horse into the road, and then gave him a touch of whip and spur. The juniors, realising then that it was his intention to leap the hedge, shouted to him:

"Stop!"

"Look out—"

"There's a bull! Danger!"

Sir Rupert, if he even heard, did not heed. The horse bounded at the hedge and rose to the leap. Jimmy Silver & Co. watched, petrified. With a gallant leap, the horse cleared the hedge, and came down with a thud of hoofs in the field. And from the distance there came, like echoing thunder, the bellow of the bull.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### For Life or Death!

**J**IMMY SILVER & CO. clambered into the tree, their hearts thumping with excitement and alarm.

Mornington was crossing the field with the speed almost of an arrow. The bull had been in the corner by the pond, but he had looked out and seen the junior, and lumbered out into the field. But Mornny's speed saved him as the huge animal lumbered on his track. He reached the opposite side of the field, and clambered on a high gate. Across the field, in hot pursuit, came the horseman, spurring. And the bull, with a bellow of rage, turned from the victim that had escaped him to the newcomer.

The gigantic animal charged blindly at horse and rider. A sudden pallor came into the baronet's tanned face as he saw his fearful danger. The charge of the bull would have hurled both horse and rider if it had reached its aim.

But Sir Rupert, though taken by surprise, was cool, and he was a good rider.

The horseman swerved, and the bull went thundering by with lowered head. Jimmy Silver caught his breath.

"He will be killed!"

The great bull swung round, and rushed back at the horseman.

Sir Rupert's horse came tearing across the field towards the gate. The lowered head of the bull was close—very close; the horns almost grazed the horse's flank as the terrified animal swerved away, and, in spite of the strong hand on the rein, went careering round the field, squealing with terror. What happened next was like a flash. For a second the juniors saw the rearing, plunging, maddened horse, with the rider striving in vain to regain control; the next, the baronet was rolling in the grass and the riderless horse was galloping away.

"He's down!"

"Good heavens!"

In utter horror the juniors stared on. They almost sobbed with relief as the bull, passing the dismounted baronet, rushed on after the horse. Sir Rupert staggered to his feet, dazed, breathless. He gave a wild glance round him.

Mornington waved his hand.

"This way! Uncle—uncle, this way! Run—run!" His voice rose to a shriek.

"Run for your life! Run!"

"Run! Run!" roared the juniors from the other side of the field.

Sir Rupert pulled himself together, and ran towards the gate where his nephew stood—he was nearer to it than to the road. He ran breathless, stumbling, dazed.

There was a roar of disappointed fury from the bull as the horse cleared a wire fence and vanished into the next field. The maddened animal glared round for

(Continued on page 28.)



**"THE RUNAWAY!"**

(Continued from page 25.)

another victim, and rushed on the track of the running baronet. Sir Rupert heard him behind.

"He will be killed!" groaned Lovell. It was clear now that Sir Rupert Stac-pole could not reach the gate in time.

For a fraction of a second Mornington looked at the scene, his face white as death. Then he leaped the gate and ran towards his uncle. In a moment he was between the old baronet and the rushing bull.

"Morny!" gasped Jimmy Silver. Sir Rupert staggered up, dazed, exhausted, at the mercy of the bull. But Mornington was in the path of the rushing animal.

He tore off his jacket and held it in one hand, standing like a statue and facing the charge of the bull.

Jimmy Silver stopped dead, still at a distance, his face ghastly, for it seemed that nothing on earth could save Mornington now from being overwhelmed by the gigantic animal. The lowered head was within a yard of Mornington when he tossed his jacket on the horns, and leaped aside with a quick activity worthy of a Spanish foreador. The

charging bull almost brushed him as he passed.

Roar on roar came from the maddened animal, blinded by the jacket flapping over his eyes. Mornington reached his uncle and grasped his arm. "Hook it!" he panted.

Half running, half dragged by his nephew, the baronet stumbled on and reached the gate. But his strength was gone. He held on to the gate, gasping in spasms, unable to climb, unable to save himself. Mornington grasped him and fairly dragged him over the gate.

"Thank Heaven," gasped Jimmy Silver.

He dropped back into the road, and the Rookwooders gathered again in their camp. Mornington and his uncle were safe; they had seen that. But there was no reaching them; the bull was raging and roaring in the field between. "What a go!" breathed Lovell.

"That fool Morny—" "Thank goodness it's no worse!" said Jimmy Silver.

It was ten minutes later that Putty Grace came back to the camp, with his rucksack full of supplies from the farm. He brought news. "You've seen them—" began Jimmy.

"Yes. They're all serene," said Putty. "The farmer's taken Sir Rupert in. The poor old chap's fairly knocked

up, but he's not hurt. He's resting on the sofa."

"And Morny?" "He seems anxious about his uncle," said Putty. "I spoke to him, and he didn't answer. He's a queer chap!" "Queer enough in some ways," said Jimmy Silver, "but as plucky as a chap could be! Good old Morny!"

It was nearly an hour before Valentine Mornington came back to camp, by way of the lane. His face was very grave.

"How's your uncle?" asked Jimmy. "Not hurt, thank goodness!" said Mornington in a low voice. "But he's had a severe shock, of course, and—and he looks pretty sick after it. The farmer's lending him a trap to get home. And—I'm going with him."

Jimmy Silver nodded. "Sorry to lose you, old scout," he said. "But it's the best thing you can do."

And Mornington shook hands all round with the Rookwooders, and they watched him disappear in the direction of the farmhouse. And Jimmy Silver & Co., from the bottom of their hearts wished him luck.

THE END.

(Look out for another topping yarn of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next week's POPULAR, entitled: "Honest John's Lucky Day!" by Owen Conquest. It's a ripper, chums!)

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