

# The BOYS' FRIEND

TWELVE PAGES!

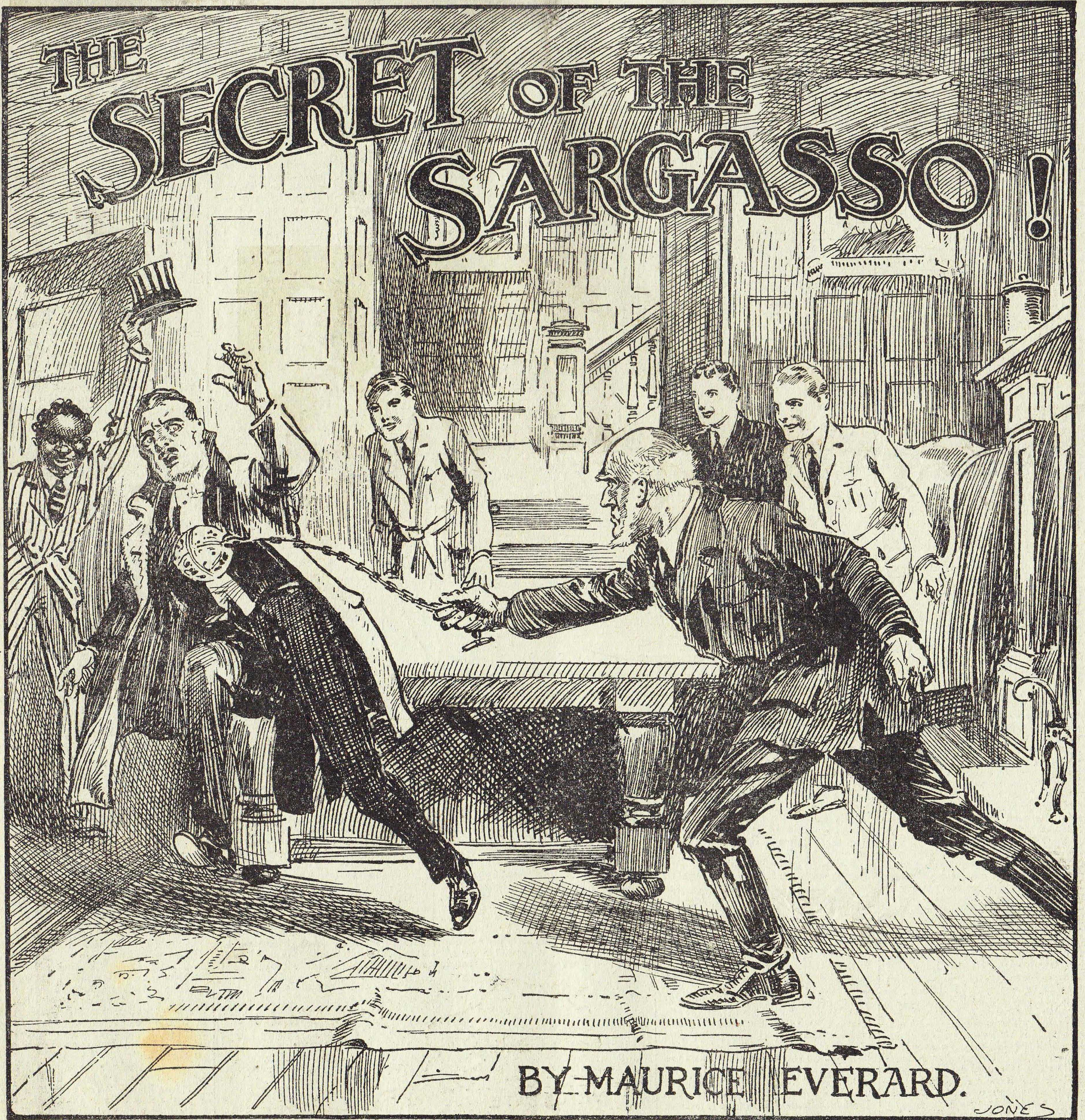
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27 YEARS OLD—AND STILL THE BEST!

[Week Ending March 18th, 1922.]



**JOE TREMORNE HITS OUT!**

"My answer to you is this, Cap'en Bastwick!" shouted the old sailor. The Moorish lamp swung round on its chain and caught the younger man in the chest, sending him reeling backwards!

**KIT ERROLL IS WORRIED BY A PHANTOM FROM THE PAST—A SPLendid  
LONG COMPLETE ROOKWOOD STORY!**

# The Face From The Past!

By OWEN CONQUEST



## The 1st Chapter.

### Waiting for the Kick-off!

"Not ready?" Jimmy Silver looked into Study No. 4, in the Fourth Form passage. He was looking for Erroll of the Fourth, and he frowned as he saw that junior. Erroll was seated on the edge of the study table, his hands in his pockets, staring at the embers in the grate. He gave a start and glanced round as the captain of the Fourth appeared in the doorway.

"Why, you haven't even changed!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Erroll was in Norfolks, just as he had come in from a bicycle ride. It was two-thirty; and on Little Side the footballers were ready, the kick-off was for two-thirty. No wonder Jimmy Silver frowned.

"I'm sorry! I—"

"Sorrow will do after the match," said Jimmy testily. "Get into your things now, and follow me down, sharp."

"Oh, all right!" Jimmy Silver strode out of the study, still frowning. It was not like Kit Erroll to give trouble like this, and the captain of the Fourth did not like it.

Jimmy Silver left the School House, and met Mornington as he came out. Mornny had come to look for his chum.

"Hasn't Erroll come in yet?" asked Mornington.

Jimmy gave a sniff.

"Yes, he's mooning in the study instead of getting ready for the game. I've woke him up."

Mornington looked puzzled, and he went into the House. Jimmy Silver called after him.

"Hurry him up, Mornny! And don't waste time!"

"Right-oh, old top!"

Jimmy Silver went down to Little Side, considerably annoyed. Classics and Moderns were waiting there, ready to begin. Tommy Dodd & Co., the Moderns, were yawning portentously. They wanted the Classics to understand that they were ready, if the Classics weren't, and that they did not think much of footballers who weren't ready to start at the appointed time.

"Ready now, Silver?" asked Tommy Dodd, as the captain of the Fourth came up.

"Oh, hang on a few minutes," said Jimmy. "Erroll's not quite ready."

"Hang on as long as you like," said Tommy Dodd politely. "You Classical chaps have queer ideas about football matches, haven't you?"

"Why the thump isn't Erroll here?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell of the Classical Fourth. Arthur Edward was considerably annoyed by the smiles and yawns of the Modern juniors.

"Found him mooning in his study," said Jimmy Silver curtly.

"Then put in another man."

"I'll lend you a man," suggested Tommy Dodd. "I know you find it a bit difficult to make up a team among the Classics, Jimmy Silver. Like a Modern in your lot, to give it a backbone?"

"You silly ass!" roared Lovell.

Tommy Dodd gave a deep yawn.

"Hallo, there's the Head and his giddy visitor," remarked Putty Grace. "Order, my infants. Don't let the Head's visitor see you with your usual manners on, you Modern bouncers."

The juniors glanced round.

In the distance Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, could be seen, progressing along the drive at his usual stately pace. A young man was

walking by his side, rather a handsome fellow of about thirty.

"That must be Mr. Durie," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"Who the thump is Mr. Durie?" yawned Tommy Dodd, not much interested in the Head's visitor.

"Some pal of the Head's," said Jimmy. "I heard he was coming to-day; the Head's been down to Coombe to meet him, I suppose. Looks a bit of a knut."

The Head and his companion disappeared from sight. They went into the Head's house, and the juniors' interest in them, which was faint enough, faded away.

Jimmy Silver looked impatiently for Erroll. That rather exasperating youth appeared in sight at last, coming along with Mornington. Mornny was hurrying him along to the football ground.

"Hallo, here comes your man!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, as if in

least part of the time. When the play ceased, a thoughtful frown settled on Erroll's face and his lips set in a hard line.

"Penny for 'em, old bean," said Mornington suddenly.

Erroll started.

"Eh, what?" he exclaimed.

"What the merry dickens is the matter with you to-day, Erroll?" asked the dandy of the Fourth. "You seem to be star-gazing half the time. What have you got on your mind?"

"I—I—" Erroll stammered.

"You forgot the match," said Mornny. "Now you're thinkin' about somethin' else. Did anything happen at Coombe?"

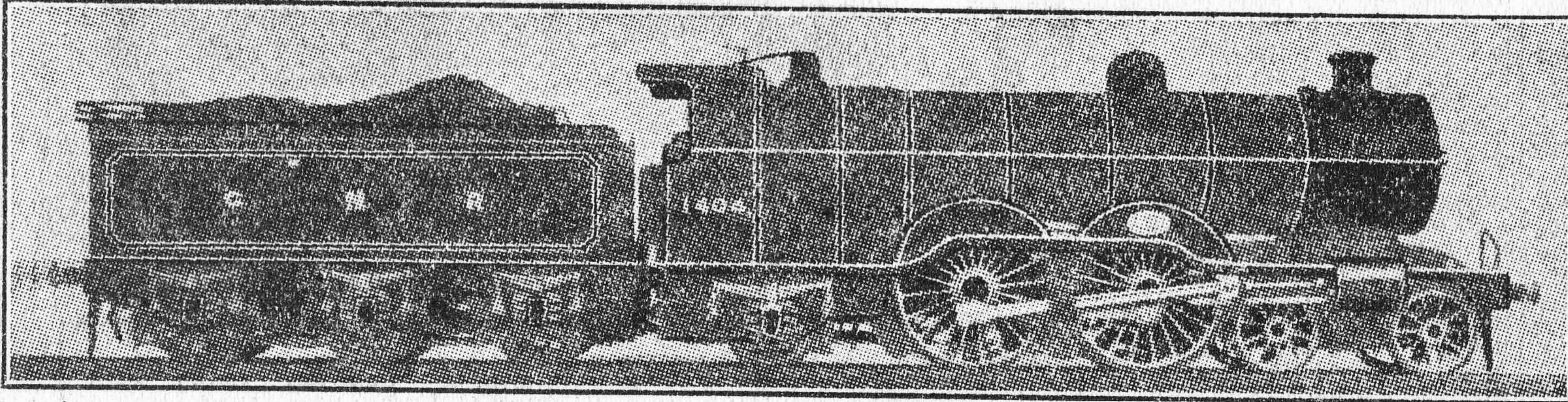
"At Coombe?"

"Yes. You've been wool-gatherin' ever since you came back from Coombe."

Erroll flushed a little.

"I—I—yes," he muttered. "Some-

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great surprise. "We shall be able to begin before dark after all."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled the Moderns.

"I'm ready, Silver," called out Erroll, rather breathlessly, as Mornington fairly rushed him on to the ground.

"Time you were!" snorted Lovell.

"I'm sorry. I—"

"Line up!" snapped Jimmy Silver.

And the Rookwood footballers got going at last.

## The 2nd Chapter.

### On the Football Ground!

Jimmy Silver's face cleared, as the ball rolled and the game began.

It was a fine afternoon, cold and clear, just the weather for football.

In a very short time, Moderns and Classics were going strong, and Kit Erroll, who was playing on the Classical right wing, played up in his best style. It was Erroll, who, getting the ball from Jimmy Silver at centre-half, passed it to Mornington just in time for Mornny to take a pot-shot at goal, which came off. It was first blood to the Classics, and the Classical crowd round the field roared applause.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Jevver see such a fluke?" the Modern crowd asked one another, and all agreed that they never had! But from the Classical point of view it was a masterly goal, and they cheered it loud and long.

"Good man, Erroll," said Jimmy Silver, as they walked to the centre of the field. "You were worth waiting for, after all."

Erroll smiled.

"It was Mornny's goal!" he said.

"Yours, too," said Jimmy. "Keep that up, old scout. I think we're going to knock the stuffing out of the Moderns this time."

Tommy Dodd & Co. played up hard from the restart. But it was close on half-time when Tommy succeeded in putting in the ball at last, beating Conroy in goal. When the whistle went the score was equal.

Erroll had played up well, but Mornny, who had rather curious eyes on his chum, noted more than once an absent look that came over Kit Erroll's face. He was playing well, but his thoughts were elsewhere, at

thing did happen at Coombe, Mornny.

"I thought so," said Valentine Mornington. "Blessed if I can guess what it was to knock you over like this. What on earth—"

"I—I saw a man—a man I knew—at least, I believe so," said Erroll in a low voice. "You—you understand, Mornny? A man I knew, at least, a man I saw—long, long ago, at the time when I was—was—" His cheeks crimsoned, and he broke off.

Mornny's face became grave.

"At the time when you were with Gentleman Jim, the crackman, before you came to Rookwood?"

"Yes."

"Confound the man, then," said Mornington. "Like his cheek to come buttin' along and remindin' you of all that. I suppose it gave you a bit of a shock—what?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'll never see him again," said Mornington. "Put it out of your head, old bean."

"It was queer," said Erroll. "Of course it's years since I've seen the man, but—but I am sure it was the same man. And—and he was speaking to Dr. Chisholm."

Mornny jumped.

"Speaking to the Head?"

"Yes, standing with him in the High Street at Coombe, and talking, as if they were friends."

Mornington whistled.

"That's jolly odd," he said. "You had a queer time when you were a kid, Erroll, and you met some queer characters. But I shouldn't have supposed that our merry old Head had any acquaintances of—of that kind."

"It startled me," said Erroll. "Unless I'm mistaken—and I don't think I am—the man is an old associate of Gentleman Jim, and ought to have gone to prison with him. He was a— a forger!"

"Poor old chap!" muttered Mornny. "It was rotten for you to be thrown among such a crowd. It wasn't your fault, though. What was this cheery Johnny called?"

"Slippery Smith."

"Ye gods! What a name!"

"Of course, I might be mistaken," muttered Erroll. "But I'm sure—I'm sure! It was Slippery Smith, the forger—a man the police have been after for years. I don't know if there's anything against him now, he has been to prison, and may have come out lately. But—but what is such a man doing down here, in this quiet corner of the country, Mornny, and on friendly terms with our headmaster?"

"It beats me! Perhaps you had better give the Head a tip to be a bit more particular in his choice of friends!" grinned Mornington. "I don't know whether it's the duty of the Fourth to look after their headmaster. But in the circus—" And Mornny chuckled.

But Erroll did not smile.

His face was grave and troubled, and there was a haunted look on it; a look that his chum knew well. It was a look that always came to Erroll's grave, handsome face when he was reminded of the black old days he had spent with Gentleman Jim's gang.

"You fellows deaf?" bawled Arthur Edward Lovell. "Are you going to stand there chow-wowing all the afternoon, or are you going to line up?"

"Oh gad! Time!" said Mornington.

And the chums took their places in the front line. The second half began, and Erroll had perforce to dismiss his troublesome thoughts from his mind.

But he found it difficult. The sight of the man he called "Slippery Smith" had brought back the past to his mind—the past he had striven to forget, and which he had almost

had sent the ball spinning up the field, and the game rushed away to midfield.

"You ass!" roared Lovell.

Erroll did not heed. He did not follow the rush of the game. He was standing as if rooted to the ground, his eyes fixed on the Head's companion in an almost wild stare. Jimmy Silver caught him by the shoulder and spun him round.

"Erroll, you ass, are you dreamin'?" Play up!"

Erroll stumbled into the game again. But from that moment the winger was a "passenger" in the team, and his fumbling drew shouts of derision from the onlookers. And when the match ended with a draw, goal to goal, half the Classical team told Kit Erroll, with bitter sarcasm, that he made the Moderns a present of the game.

Erroll did not seem to hear. He threw on his coat, and almost stumbled off the football-field.

## The 3rd Chapter.

### Erroll's Resolve!

"Precious ass, ain't you?"

Tubby Muffin looked into Study No. 4 to make that remark.

Erroll was moving about his study restlessly. He seemed unable to keep still. The sight of Mr. Durie, whom he believed to be Slippery Smith, had greatly disturbed and alarmed him. What was the man doing at Rookwood? By what cunning trickery had he wormed himself into the confidence of Dr. Chisholm? What was to be the outcome of it? And what was he—Erroll—to do?

He did not heed the fat Classical who looked in at the doorway. Tubby Muffin's podgy face wore a scornful

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grim. The Classical fellows generally were irritated with Erroll for his inexplicable fumbling in the game, which had robbed them of a victory over their old rivals. Even Tubby Muffin felt called upon to add his fat voice to the chorus.

"Call yourself a footballer?" continued Tubby Muffin.

Erroll made a gesture.

"Clear off!"

"Call yourself a winger?" said Tubby. "Fancy Jimmy Silver putting you in and leaving me out! Call him a football skipper? Yah!"

Erroll turned his back on the fat Classical. He had not heeded the remarks of the Fistical Four and the other footballers, and he was not likely to be perturbed by Reginald Muffin's observations. But he turned back again to the fat junior.

"Step in a minute, Muffin!" he said.

"Going to have tea?" asked Tubby, his expression changing. "I don't mind if I do, Erroll. After all, you can't help being a fumbler at footer, can you? Tain't as if you were a player like me."

Erroll smiled faintly.

"You've seen the Head's visitor, Muffin?" he asked.

"The man you were staring at when you ought to have been kicking for goal?" grinned Tubby.

"Yes, yes."

"I've seen him," said Muffin. "I say, do you know him, Erroll? A lot of fellows are saying you were staring at him as if he was a giddy ghost."

"Can you tell me anything about him, Muffin?" asked Erroll, without heeding the question. "You generally know things—"

"Generally!" assented Muffin, with an air of proud satisfaction. "Precious little goes on at Rookwood without my getting on to it, I can tell you. I keep my eyes open."

Tubby Muffin did not mention his ears, which he was also in the habit of keeping open.

"Well, have you heard anything about this man, Durie?" asked Erroll.

Tubby nodded.

"Yes, of course I have! I knew he was coming before any of the fellows," said the Peeping Tom of Rookwood. "I knew the Head had ordered a room to be got ready for

**ANSWERS**  
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