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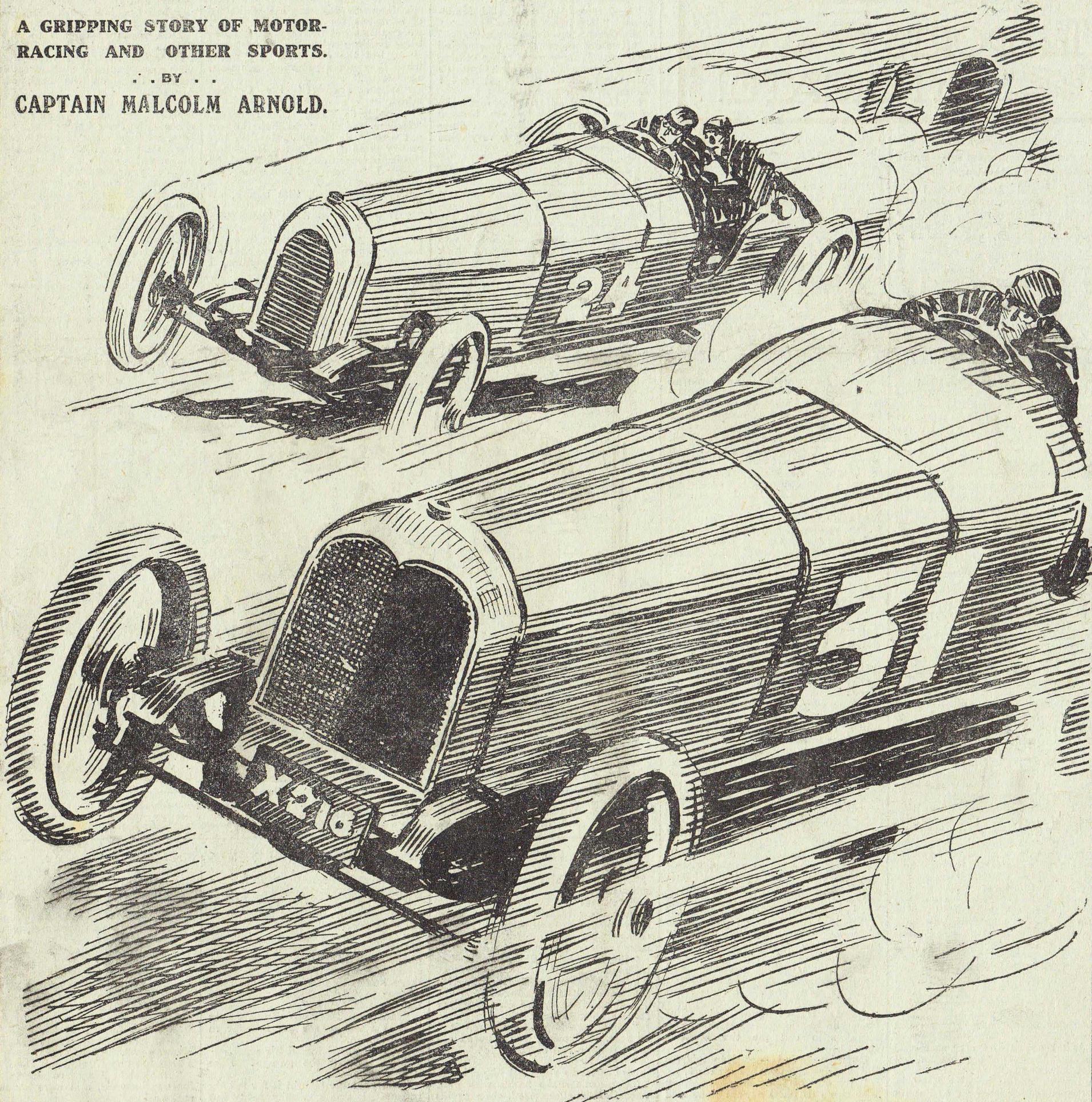
[Week Ending March 25th, 1922.]

THE SPORTS SYNDICATE!

A GRIPPING STORY OF MOTOR-RACING AND OTHER SPORTS.

... BY ...

CAPTAIN MALCOLM ARNOLD.



FURTHER ADVENTURES OF KIT ERROLL AND THE MYSTERIOUS
VISITOR TO ROOKWOOD SCHOOL!

The Man With a Secret!

By Owen Conquest



The 1st Chapter.
A Council of War!

"Bosh!"

That was Lovell's opinion. Arthur Edward Lovell had quite a direct way of expressing himself. "Bosh!" he repeated. And, as if fearing that he had not made himself sufficiently clear, Lovell added: "Utter bosh! Rot, in fact!"

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome did not speak; but they looked very dubious.

There were six fellows in Study No. 4, in the Classical Fourth passage at Rookwood School. Erroll was standing by the table, with a grave and troubled face. Mornington was in the armchair, with his legs crossed, and his hands in his pockets. Jimmy Silver & Co. had come to the study, to hear something that Erroll had to tell them—something important, so they understood. But they had little dreamed what its nature was—and when Kit Erroll had made his communication, the Fiscal Four had fairly blinked at him in amazement.

Lovell's opinion, as he had stated with his usual directness, was that it was "bosh." And the other three members of the Co. looked as if they agreed with Lovell, though they did not say so.

Kit Erroll's face clouded still more. "You—you don't believe it?" he asked.

"I don't!" said Lovell. "You see, it's all bunkum," he went on. "The Head knows this young man Durie—knew his father at Oxford. He would know whether his name was Durie or not."

"I know!" said Erroll, in a low voice. "I think now that Durie is his name. But in the gang he was called Slippery Smith. It was under an assumed name that he became a criminal—a forger! When I was a kid, in the hands of Gentleman Jim's gang, I saw him often enough—and I know him well. Lucian Durie is the man who was called Slippery Smith, and under that name he has been to prison for forgery."

"Phew!" "If what you say is on the wicket," said Lovell, at last, "the police would know him."

"I am sure of it," said Erroll. "Not the local police here, of course. But in London, at Scotland Yard, his photograph will be kept. I believe they keep the photographs of all criminals."

Jimmy Silver nodded. "But—" he said.

"He's here for some dirty game," said Erroll. "Exactly what it is I don't know. He went to prison for forging cheques—having stolen a cheque-book. That may be his game here. When I saw him in the Head's study yesterday—alone—he was bending over the desk. I've seen the Head take his cheque-book from that desk. I should think that that is his game!"

Jimmy whistled. "Well, you've warned the Head, and he's caned you," said Newcome. "If you're right, you can't do more than that. I suppose you called us in as a giddy council of war?"

"That's it! I—I want advice!" Jimmy Silver rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Always come to your Uncle James for advice!" he said. "That's the right shop! But—but in this case—"

"Of course, I'm speaking in confidence," said Erroll. "The Head has said that I shall be expelled from Rookwood if I say anything against Mr. Durie to the other fellows. And I'm telling you."

"We'll keep it dark," said Jimmy. "But for goodness' sake, don't let on to anybody else. It would make a fearful talk in the school. And—and the Head would be no end waxy, of course. Whether Mr. Durie is Slippery Smith or not, Dr. Chisholm isn't likely to believe it. If he found it was being talked about up and down Rookwood, he would be in a terrific bait!"

"I should jolly well think so," said Lovell—"especially as it's all bosh!"

"It's not bosh, Lovell!" said Erroll quietly. "The man admitted it, in his surprise when I called him by the name I knew him by. He denied it

course, he would soon nose out the facts, whatever they are."

Erroll nodded slowly. "I think that's a good idea, Jimmy," he said. "I—I'll trot over to Rookham after lessons to-day."

"And I'll tell you what!" said the captain of the Fourth. "If there's anything in it Mr. Durie must be pretty well alarmed at your having recognised him. He must be expecting you to take some steps or other. He will be keeping an eye on you, to see whether you trot over to the police-station about it—what!"

"I am certain of that."

"Well," said Jimmy, with a grin, "we'll keep an eye on Mr. Durie, and if he takes a very special interest in you, we'll take a very special interest in him. Suppose he follows you? We'll see whether he does or not—and if he does, that will be evidence."

The 2nd Chapter.

Two on the Track!

Jimmy Silver had some food for thought that afternoon. It was not thinking wholly of the valuable in-

"Coming down to the footer, Jimmy?" called out Lovell.

"Not now!"

"Fathead!" And Arthur Edward Lovell marched off with Conroy, and Oswald, and Putty, and a crowd more, to Little Side for a punt about. Arthur Edward Lovell, at least, was not going to waste his valuable time in putting Erroll's extraordinary story to the test.

Newcome had gone with Rawson to the latter's study, and Raby was busy in the end study grinding out lines. Valentine Mornington joined Jimmy in the quad.

"Keepin' a merry eye open?" he asked.

"Two!" said Jimmy, laughing. "Where's Erroll?"

"Puttin' on his best bib and tucker to call on the Sharpe bird," answered Mornington. "There's Durie yonder, talkin' to Mack."

"Yes; and he looks the real white article, doesn't he?" said Jimmy. "I—I can't quite swallow it, Morny."

"Same here," said Morny. "I believe in Erroll; but—but—I know it's rather thick—but one thing strikes me."

"What's that?"

"Mr. Durie seems to find it interestin' to chat with dear old Mack. Old Mack isn't what you'd call a brilliant conversationalist, at the best of times. Is our merry bird just standin' there jawin' to keep an eye on the gates, an' notice who goes out?"

Jimmy Silver started. That thought had not occurred to him; and certainly Lucian Durie did not look as if he were on the watch. But undoubtedly he was placed so as to keep a watch upon the school gates, if that was his object.

"We'll soon see!" said Jimmy.

Kit Erroll came out of the School House with his school-cap on, and crossed over to the gates.

started at a run by a path through ploughed fields. They reached the wood a considerable time before Erroll, going by the road. Both the juniors knew Coombe Woods well, and it did not take them long to thread their way through the trees and undergrowth, and reach the footpath at a short distance from the point where it left Coombe Lane.

"Now for a giddy ambush!" grinned Mornington.

And in cover among the trees, Jimmy Silver and Valentine Mornington waited for Erroll to come along—to watch him pass, and to watch whether Lucian Durie was still following him. For that, they both agreed, would settle definitely whether Erroll's suspicion of the man was well-founded. They little dreamed, at that moment, how dramatically the doubtful point was to be settled.

The 3rd Chapter.

Desperate Measures!

Kit Erroll glanced back along the road as he turned into the footpath in Coombe Woods.

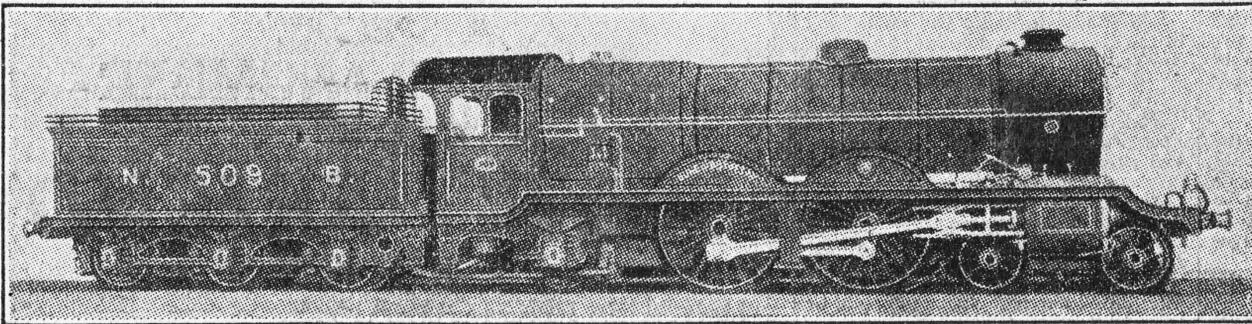
At a dozen yards distance he saw Lucian Durie strolling along the lane, twirling his walking-stick, with an air of careless unconcern.

Durie did not seem to see the junior. Erroll looked at him fixedly for a moment, and then entered the footpath through the trees.

A minute later Durie turned into the footpath.

Once more Erroll looked back. The young man was following him along the footpath, and was drawing a little nearer. Erroll, remembering that Jimmy Silver and Morny were to "keep an eye" on Durie, wondered whether they were far away. It came into his head that "Slippery Smith" might have other plans in his head beside that of following the junior and discovering why he had

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afterwards to the Head. But I tell you he admitted it to me."

Lovell whistled. "Sure of that?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Sure you didn't take too much for granted?"

"Yes, yes!"

The captain of the Fourth turned to Mornington, who had not spoken. "What do you think, Morny?" he asked.

"I agree with Erroll," said Valentine Mornington. "I was a bit flabbergasted at first. But Erroll knows what he's talking about."

"Bosh!" murmured Lovell.

Erroll drew a deep breath.

"Have you fellows any advice to give?" he asked.

Lovell grinned. "Only to go to sleep and dream again!" he suggested.

Raby and Newcome grinned, too. Of the four chums, only Jimmy Silver was taking the startling story with due seriousness.

Erroll did not heed the grinning three. He fixed his troubled, earnest eyes upon the captain of the Fourth.

"Well," said Jimmy slowly, "you've done all you can with the Head—that's no go. But if you're sure—"

"I'm quite sure!"

"Then there's the police," said Jimmy. "Only—only they'd take no notice of what a schoolboy said. They'd refer to the headmaster, of course, and Dr. Chisholm would say it was all rot, and come down on you like a sack of coke. That wouldn't cut any ice. But Inspector Sharpe, over at Rookham, is a rather keen old johnny. Suppose you called on him and told him in strict confidence, and asked his advice?"

"He would laugh at the yarn," said Lovell.

"He might," assented Jimmy. "If he did, Erroll, you'd have done all you could, and you'd have to let the thing drop at that. But I think very likely Mr. Sharpe would look into it in a quiet way. He doesn't often get a chance of catching a big criminal in a quiet place like Rookham. He might look into it—and if he did, of

struction received from Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth. Erroll's strange story ran in his mind. The more he thought over it, the more amazing and improbable it seemed—and yet, at the same time, the more Jimmy Silver believed that there was something in it. He knew Erroll well; he knew that the quiet, serious junior must have thought the matter over with deep earnestness before he spoke. Erroll was certain, in his own mind; and his certainty could only be based upon his remembrance of Slippery Smith, in the days when the junior had been in the power of Gentleman Jim and his gang.

If the strange story was well founded—if Mr. Durie was a man with a double life—the affair was exciting enough. Jimmy Silver found that he was keenly interested in it; and very keen indeed to get at the facts. If the young man was indeed Slippery Smith, the forger, it was very probable that he was not simply idling away his days at Rookwood; it was much more probable that he had nefarious designs. To take a hand in the game, and perhaps succeed in defeating a desperate criminal, was rather an exciting prospect.

But after lessons, when Jimmy caught sight of Lucian Durie strolling in the quad, his doubts returned and intensified.

Lucian Durie looked like anything but a rogue and forger who had passed by such a name as "Slippery Smith." Jimmy, from a distance, saw him chatting with Bulkeley of the Sixth, smiling and genial. Bulkeley was obviously rather taken with him. When he left Bulkeley, Mr. Durie sauntered away to the gates, and stood there at the door of the porter's lodge, in talk with old Mack. And old Mack, the crusty porter, was as taken with the affable young man as Bulkeley had been.

From where they stood under the old beeches, Jimmy and Mornington followed him with their eyes.

They were getting almost breathlessly excited as Erroll passed Mr. Durie, and went out at the gates.

The young man's talk with old Mack ceased the next moment. He gave the porter a smile and a nod, and strolled out of gates.

"My hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

It was what the juniors had been looking for, and half expecting. But it was startling.

"He's after Erroll!" muttered Mornington.

"Or—or is he just going out by chance?" murmured Jimmy. "No reason why he shouldn't go for a walk."

"It's a coincidence. He was hangin' around the gates till Erroll went out, and he follows on at once," said Mornington quietly. "It may be only a coincidence. But come on."

"We shall see!" said Jimmy Silver.

With hearts beating a little fast, the two juniors hurried down to the school gates. In the distance, on the road towards Coombe, they saw Erroll, and behind him Mr. Durie was strolling carelessly in the same direction.

"Come on!" muttered Jimmy.

They walked down the road. "Hold on!" said Morny, in a low voice. "He's followin' Erroll, an' there's no mistake about that now. But—if he's what Erroll thinks—he will be rather on his guard, I should say. He will look round now and then, and he will spot us. We don't want that."

"But—" said Jimmy.

"Erroll's goin' by the footpath through the wood," said Morny. "Let's take the short cut across the fields, an' get into the wood first. We can get ahead on the footpath and watch, and see whether Durie follows him through the wood. That ought to settle it."

"Good!" said Jimmy.

And the two juniors slipped through a gap in the hedge, and

left school. A lonely path in a deep wood was not a safe place to meet Mr. Slippery Smith, when that gentleman felt his safety threatened.

Erroll was no coward, but he was a boy, and he had to deal with a man he knew to be desperate and ruthless. He stopped before he had gone a quarter of a mile along the shadowy footpath. If there was going to be trouble with Mr. Durie, Erroll did not want it to happen in the solitary heart of the old wood. He stood by the path, and waited for Mr. Durie to come up and pass him.

Lucian Durie came on, twirling his stick, but he did not pass Erroll. He stopped, and fixed his eyes on the schoolboy with a smile.

"You are taking rather a long stroll after lessons, my lad," he remarked.

"Yes," said Erroll curtly.

"May I inquire where you are going?"

"You may inquire!" said Erroll.

"Which means that you will not tell me."

"Why should you want to know?"

Durie smiled.

"Have you forgotten the scene in Dr. Chisholm's study yesterday?" he asked. "You made a ridiculous accusation against me—"

"I called you by the name you were known by before you went to prison for forging a stolen cheque," said Erroll steadily.

"Fortunately, my old friend Dr. Chisholm did not heed your story," said Durie. "You see, he has known me from a boy. He knew my father. He knows that Durie is my name."

"He does not know that you have passed by other names, and that you were in prison when he supposes that you were abroad," said Erroll scornfully.

Durie came a step nearer.

"Exactly," he said, in a low voice. "He does not know that, and I intend that he shall not know, Kit Erroll."

There was a faint rustle in the thick underwoods beside the path. Neither Erroll nor Durie heeded it.

The man's eyes were fixed on Erroll's steady, quiet face.

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"I saw you on the football field at Rookwood," he said. "I saw you stare at me, and it struck me that there was something familiar about you. But I did not know you till you came into the Head's study, and then I knew that there was a danger for me at Rookwood that I had never dreamed of. I have been watching since, my boy. I thought that you might not have let the matter drop, even after what Dr. Chisholm said to you. Now you have left the school—I was watching for it. I want to know where you are going, Kit Erroll, and what your intention is. You understand? The headmaster of Rookwood did not credit your story for a second. Others might give it more attention. For that reason, my boy, you are not going to spin your yarn outside the school."

Erroll did not answer. "Where are you going?" asked Durie, in a tone of deep menace. "I am going to Rookham."

"For what?" "To call on Inspector Sharpe, of the Rookham police."

Durie breathed hard. "I suspected something of the sort," he said. "After your headmaster's warning you are going to tell this slanderous story to the police?"

"You know best whether it is a slander," said Erroll contemptuously. "You know that Dr. Chisholm will punish you severely for taking this step?"

"I am risking that."

"It is not a risk—it is a certainty. He will expel you from the school."

"Let him!" "You are prepared to face that?" "Quite prepared!" said Erroll steadily. "My father will take the matter up. It will then be proved whether you are Slippery Smith or not. When the Head knows that I have saved him from harbouring a criminal, he will be glad enough to let me return to Rookwood."

Lucian Durie nodded. "You have a wit about you rather unusual at your age," he said. "You have thought this out well. No doubt it would turn out exactly as you have planned it, my boy—if I let you go ahead. But you will easily guess that it does not suit me for you to denounce me to the police and cause a scandal and an inquiry."

"I know."

"I am willing to come to terms with you," said Durie, sinking his voice. "What I am after at Rookwood does not concern you. Even if I abandoned my game there, it would not suit me for it to be known that Lucian Durie and Slippery Smith are one and the same. My real name is a safe refuge for me when Slippery Smith has made his trail too hot—you understand? You are the only one that knows the truth. Gentleman Jim's gang never knew my real name, and never saw me as Lucian Durie. You, and you only, know the facts. We have got to come to terms, Erroll."

"I cannot come to terms with a thief," said the boy. "Leave Rookwood, and I shall never see you again. That is all I can say."

"You know too much," said Durie, with a shake of the head. "We must come to terms. You are with me or against me. I am prepared to take you into the game with me, and make it worth your while to stand by me. What do you say to that?"

"I have nothing to say to it, excepting that you are a scoundrel, and I will have nothing to do with you!"

"You mean that?" "Every word!" said Erroll fearlessly.

Durie's lips set in a hard line. "I half expected it," he said. "I remember a good deal of the past now that you have recalled it. Gentleman Jim tried to make you take part in his doings, and you stood against him, though he beat you and flogged you. I recall it now. You are a hard case, Master Erroll—you are dangerous. You will not be silent upon any terms, then?"

"No!"

"Do you know," said Durie, in a low, menacing voice, "that there is a deep pool in this wood—not far from where we stand? Do you know that you would be an infant in my hands—that if you were picked out of the pool, drowned, your death would be supposed to be an accident? Think it over, my boy, and consider whether you will come to terms with me."

Erroll's face paled a little. But his look was still steady. He glanced down the footpath, in the faint hope of seeing his chums come into sight. Durie gave a low laugh.

"There is no help at hand," he said. "You need not look for that, Master Erroll. Ah, would you?"

Erroll made a sudden spring past the rascal, and started to run. In

an instant Durie had leaped on him and grasped him.

Crash! They went to the ground together, Erroll sprawling breathlessly. A heavy knee was planted on his chest. "That finishes it!" muttered Durie between his teeth. "You've asked for it. There's no other way, and, by gad—"

"Help!" shrieked Erroll. A savage hand was slapped over his mouth the next moment. The schoolboy struggled furiously, but he was like a child in the athletic grasp of the crook. There was a crashing in the underwoods, and the next moment Lucian Durie was seized from behind, and dragged backwards on the footpath.

The 4th Chapter. The Fight in the Woods!

Jimmy Silver and Valentine Mornington grasped the desperate rascal at the same moment, and dragged him back. Up to that moment the two juniors had remained in concealment, almost dazed by what they heard. Every word uttered in their hearing was a proof that Erroll's tale was true—that Lucian Durie was in reality Slippery Smith, forger, and thief, and gaol-bird. When the desperate ruffian made his attack, the two juniors were not long in taking action. With one accord they tore on the scene and seized him, and dragged him from his victim.

Taken quite by surprise, Lucian

"Thank Heaven you fellows turned up!" panted Erroll. "Never mind him! Let him go! His game is up now, at all events."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath. "The awful rascal!" he said. "Lucky we were on in this game, Erroll."

"You heard what was said?" "Nearly every word," said Mornington, with a faint grin.

"We got ahead of you, and we saw you stop, and came scouting through the thickets. Lucky we did! We know the facts now. By gad! I believe that awful villain would have potted us like so many partridges, if there'd been a chance that it could be kept dark."

"I believe he would," said Jimmy Silver soberly. "Erroll, old man, you've had a jolly narrow escape. That rotter meant to put you in the pool, as safe as houses."

"Found drowned!" grinned Mornington. "That would have suited him. But his game's up now. I fancy we'd better get out of this dashed wood—the blighter might change his mind and take the chance of potting us!"

"Not likely!" said Erroll. "It would be too risky for him. But let's get out, by all means."

"Going on to Rookham?" asked Jimmy Silver.

Erroll nodded. "We're bound to report this to the police," he said. "You two fellows are witnesses now that the man is Slippery Smith. He will hardly dare

your headmaster, of course. I think you may safely leave Mr. Slippery Smith to me. I shall make a few inquiries first—I shall get into communication with Scotland Yard at once. Now, you young fellows had better get back to school."

The inspector rubbed his hands with satisfaction when the juniors left.

Jimmy Silver & Co. lost no time in getting back to Rookwood.

The 5th Chapter.

Lickings for Three!

"Lines for three!" grinned Arthur Edward Lovell, when Jimmy Silver came into the School House with Morny and Kit Erroll.

The trio had been late for lock-up, and they had missed call-over. In the circumstances, they had not troubled much about calling-over.

"You duffers!" continued Lovell. "You're to go and report to Mr. Dalton and get your lines. Have you found out that it was all a mare's nest yet?"

"Not quite!" said Jimmy. "We've found out that Erroll was right."

"Wha-at?" "And Inspector Sharpe is after the Durie-bird!" said Jimmy, rather enjoying the expression on Arthur Edward Lovell's face.

"Bosh!" said Lovell.

"Honest injun, dear boy!" said Mornington.

"Oh, bosh!" "The three juniors proceeded to their Form-master's study, where Mr.

three juniors eyed one another. Inspector Sharpe, at Rookham, with his professional skill in sifting evidence and getting at the facts, had satisfied himself of the truth of their story. But the Head of Rookwood was quite another proposition. If Lucian Durie had had the audacity to return to the school, and had given his version to the Head already—

Jimmy Silver whistled. "He's got nerve!" he said. "But—but what's his game? He must know that it's all up for him here—that to-morrow at the latest even the Head will have to see the facts—"

"He must know that!" said Mornington. "He may mean to clear off to-night. Anyhow, we've got to tell Dr. Chisholm what's happened. If he doesn't believe us, that's his look-out."

With rather serious faces, the three juniors waited till the Head went to his study, and then followed him there.

In the corridor they passed Mr. Durie, who had walked with the Head as far as his study door.

The juniors looked at him, hardly knowing what to expect. But Lucian Durie did not glance at them.

He walked down the corridor past them, with a calm and impressive face, as if unaware of the presence of the three fellows with whom a few hours earlier he had been struggling desperately on the footpath in Coombe Woods. Evidently the crook was bent upon playing the game out to the end—though he could not fail to be aware now that the end was at hand.

"He's a cool card!" murmured Mornington half admiringly.

Jimmy Silver tapped at the door of the Head's study.

"I was about to order you to be sent to me," said the Head sternly. "I have received from Mr. Durie an account of what has happened."

"He—he has told you, sir?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Naturally, he informed me as soon as he returned to Rookwood," said the Head.

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy. "Then—then you know—"

"He cannot have told Dr. Chisholm the truth, or he would not be here still," said Erroll quietly.

"Silence, Erroll! How dare you make such an observation!" The Head picked up his cane. "You three boys waylaid Mr. Durie while he was taking a walk in the wood. You attacked him—"

"Oh, sir!" "We—we—"

"Silence!" thundered the Head. "It was what, I believe, is called a 'rag' in the Lower School. Erroll has, doubtless, told you of his wicked and ridiculous suspicions regarding my friend Mr. Durie. That you should have the audacity to lay hands upon a guest of mine passes my comprehension. I shall punish you severely!"

"But, sir—"

"You first, Erroll! Hold out your hand!"

"He admitted it, sir—" shouted Mornington.

"Don't make foolish and false statements to me, Mornington!"

"He attacked Erroll, sir!" "Nonsense!"

"We've informed the police—"

The Head started.

"If that statement proves to be correct, and you have indeed told this malicious slander outside the school, I shall expel you from Rookwood!" he said. "Meanwhile, I shall cane you for having dared to lay hands upon my guest. Silence! A word more, and I will call in the sergeant to lock you in the punishment-room for the night. Your hand, Erroll!"

Swish, swish, swish!

Jimmy Silver & Co. left the Head's study with aching palms, and in a state of dismay and rage. Perhaps it was natural that the Head should not listen to such a startling accusation against his guest, but it was exasperating enough to the juniors.

At the end of the corridor they passed Mr. Lucian Durie. He glanced at them this time, and smiled as he saw them rubbing their hands. Mornington gave him a fierce look.

"You can laugh now," he said; "but your game's up, and you know it! The police will be here for you to-morrow, Mr. Slippery Smith!"

And, with that Partisan shot, the juniors passed on. And before bedtime all the Classical Fourth were in possession of the story. Every fellow in the Form was looking forward eagerly to the morrow, and wondering what would happen when it came.

THE END.

("Jimmy Silver & Co. at the Boatrace!" is the title of the long, complete Rookwood School story appearing in next Monday's Special Boatrace Number!)



THE ENCOUNTER IN THE WOODS! As "Slippery Smith" sent Erroll crashing to the ground Jimmy Silver and Mornington rushed at him! Then a fierce fight began!

Durie sprawled over on his back on the footpath, in the grasp of the Rookwooders.

Erroll staggered up white and shaken. He knew that he had been near to death—that only the intervention of the Rookwood juniors had prevented Slippery Smith from securing his silence by a fearful crime.

"Lend a hand, Erroll!" panted Mornington.

After the first moment of surprise, Durie was struggling fiercely.

With the grasp of the panting juniors upon him, he struggled to his feet, the juniors clinging to him like cats.

Erroll rushed to the aid of his chums. But the rascal tore himself loose and sprang away.

"Collar him!" panted Mornington.

"Stand back!"

Durie wrenched a revolver from his pocket and raised it. The three juniors sprang back at the glitter of the weapon.

Durie faced them, panting, white, his eyes blazing. For the moment it seemed that he would fire.

But prudence restrained him. It was no longer one schoolboy he had to deal with, secretly in the lonely wood. There were three, and the act would have been too desperate.

He lowered the revolver, and turned and strode away down the footpath. The juniors did not follow. They were glad to see the desperate ruffian go.

to stay at Rookwood after this."

"I wonder!" said Morny. "Anyhow, we'll let the merry old inspector have the story. Three witnesses are better than one, and Mr. Sharpe is bound to sit up and take notice."

Lucian Durie had disappeared. He had gone in the direction of Rookwood; but whether he would have the hardihood to return to the school after what had happened, the juniors could not guess. In any case, they had their plain duty to do, which was to inform the authorities of the man's murderous attack upon Erroll. And they hurried on by the footpath to Latham, where they took the train to Rookham, and arrived at the police-station there, and asked for Inspector Sharpe.

The three juniors were shown into the inspector's room, and Mr. Sharpe listened to their story with a rather blank look. Inspector Sharpe was a rather keen man, but the story was too surprising to be easily believed. He questioned the juniors closely, especially Erroll, till he was in possession of every detail.

Finally, the juniors observed a look of satisfaction dawning upon the inspector's grim face. That look was sufficient to show them that he was satisfied as to the truth of the story.

"If the facts are as you've told me, young gentlemen," he said—"and I don't doubt it—in that case, Mr. Smith isn't likely to return to the school. He will know that the game is up there. You will report this to

Dalton inquired where they had been. Mr. Dalton was very far from prepared for their explanation. Erroll gave him a full account of what had happened, and the master of the Fourth stared at him blankly.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed.

"It's true, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "The Head's friend—Mr. Durie—"

Mr. Dalton broke off. "You will, of course, make your report to the Head—if you are stating the facts. I shall leave it in Dr. Chisholm's hands. You may go."

"Very well, sir."

The three juniors quitted the study, leaving Mr. Dalton the most astonished individual at Rookwood.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome met them in the passage. The Co. were full of excitement and interest. They wanted to know what had happened—and they were told. Arthur Edward Lovell, for once, forgot to say "Bosh!" Even Lovell had to believe at last.

"Well, it beats me!" he said. "All the same, I shouldn't care to be the one to spin that yarn to the Head. He will want a lot of convincing."

"Well, as Durie will hardly have the nerve to come back to Rookwood, his absence will count," said Jimmy Silver.

"He's come back."

"What?"

"He came in long ago," said Raby. "He's dining with the Head now."

"Great Scott!" Jimmy Silver had not been prepared for that information. The