

Read David Goodwin's Great School & Mill Story—Inside!

*The*

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# POPULAR

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**THREE TO ONE—AND FRIAR TUCK IN HIS ELEMENT!**

*(A Thrilling Episode from the Grand Robin Hood Romance in this Issue.)*

## THE FACE FROM THE PAST!

Kit Erroll is placed in a terrible position, for he recognises in the Head's distinguished visitor an acquaintance of the dark past!

# Kit Erroll's Dilemma!



### THE FIRST 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 had 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-ho, 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 porten-

tously. 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 amongst 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, here'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 disap-

An Amazing, Long Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood.

By Owen Conquest.

peared 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 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 SECOND 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's 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 Morny'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 Morny, 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 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 Morny. "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. "Something did happen at Coombe, Morny."

"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, Morny? A man I knew—at least, a man I saw—long, long ago, at the time when I was—"

His cheeks crimsoned and he broke off.

Morny's face became grave.

"At the time when you were with Gentleman Jim, the cracksman, 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."

Morny 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—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 Morny. "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, Morny, 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 circles—"

And Morny 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 face, 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. Slippery Smith had brought back the past to his mind—the past he had striven to forget, and which he had almost succeeded in forgetting. And that was not all; it was the fact that Slippery Smith had somehow ingratiated himself with the headmaster of Rookwood that troubled Erroll most. What was the man's object, and what was Erroll to do? It was a troublesome problem that weighed on the mind of the junior. It was possible, after all, that what he had seen was a chance meeting—that Slippery Smith had already gone as he had come. It was not likely that he would be seen at Rookwood!

"Play up, Erroll!"

Erroll pulled himself together. He had missed a chance, and he strove harder to dismiss the problem from his mind, and give his attention to the game. And he succeeded.

The game swayed up and down the field, Moderns and Classicals contending hard for the victory. It was towards the finish that Jimmy Silver & Co., making a determined attack on the Modern goal, carried all before them, and there was a buzz of excitement in the onlooking crowd.

"Go it, Classicals! On the ball!" roared the Classicals.

"Buck up, Moderns!" yelled the rival juniors.

In the midst of the excitement two gentlemen walked on the field and stopped to look at the game. Dr. Chisholm was showing his visitor, Mr. Durie, round the school, and that exciting crisis in the junior football match drew their attention.

"Good game, sir!" said Mr. Durie, looking on. "The youngsters are going it!"

"They are very keen, I believe," said the Head with a smile.

"Kick!" roared Lovell. "Kick!"

Erroll had the ball.

He had just time for a rapid kick at goal, and the Modern goalie, who had slipped in fisting out the ball, was sprawling, and the citadel was for an instant undefended.

Every eye was on Erroll; he was just the fellow to be depended on to make a lightning-like use of a sudden chance.

Some of the Classical crowd were already murmuring "Goal!" and at that critical moment Erroll's glance took in the two watching figures over the heads of the junior crowd—the headmaster and Mr. Durie.

He miskicked!

In a second more a Modern back 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 dreaming? 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 had 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 THIRD 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 grin. 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 footballer! 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 him—the son of an old college friend of his. He mentioned that to the housekeeper. I heard him."

"The son of an old college friend?" repeated Erroll.

"Yes. His name's Lucian Durie. His father was with the Head at Oxford," said Muffin. "I know that much. Young Durie has been abroad for years. I heard the Head mention that to Mr. Dalton. He's staying here for some days, and I believe the Head is going to help him get a post somewhere. From what I heard Mr. Dalton say—"

Erroll made a movement of disgust. He was keen and anxious to learn what he could of Lucian Durie, alias Slippery Smith. But Tubby's methods of acquiring information were rather too much for him.

"That will do, Muffin!" he said curtly. "You can cut!"

"Eh? Aren't you going to have tea?"

"No, no! Get out, for goodness' sake!"

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin, in great disgust and wrath. "I say, you are a rotter, Erroll, as well as a fumbling chump at footer! Here, leggo my ear, Morny, you beast!" roared Tubby suddenly.

Valentine Mornington had arrived at the study door. His finger and thumb closed on Tubby's fat ear.

"What were you sayin', dear man?" asked Morny politely.

"Yaroooh!"

"No, that wasn't it. Somethin' about Erroll's footer," smiled Mornington.

"I—I was just saying what a splendid footballer he was. Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mornington released Tubby's ear, and the fat Classical rolled away, rubbing it ruefully. Morny came into the study, and closed the door, and fixed a curious glance on his chum.

"Well?" he said.

"I'm certain, Morny!" said Erroll.

"That the Head's giddy pal is a member of Gentleman Jim's old gang of cheery criminals?" grinned Morny.

"Yes."

Mornington shook his head.

"Can't be so!" he said. "You've got it wrong, somehow, Erroll. Put it out of your noddle."

"I can't do that, Morny. The man is Slippery Smith, the forger, and he must be here for mischief. I—I can't keep silent and let him go ahead. I—I must do something."

"You can't!" said Mornington. "Dash it all, Erroll! Are you thinkin' of buttin' into the Head's study, and tellin' him that his merry visitor is a man wanted by the police? I can imagine the Head's face!" Mornington laughed.

"There's some mistake, somehow. The man looks like the merry Smith-bird, perhaps. But there's an error somewhere. Don't do it."

"I've been trying to think it out," said Erroll. "I am sure he is the man. I

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was almost sure of it when I saw him in Coombe. When he stood there before me on the footer-ground—" Erroll shivered. "I tell you, Morny, there's no mistake."

"But the Head must know the man if he's asked him to Rookwood," said Mornington. "He doesn't pick up his friends at street corners without knowin' their names and addresses."

"I know—I know! I can't understand that. He has taken the Head in somehow. Muffin says he's heard that Durie is a son of an old college friend of the Head's. In that case, Dr. Chisholm ought to know all about him. But—but that is more evidence, because Slippery Smith was a man of education. I remember hearing it said in the gang that he had been a University man. Morny, he's a criminal and he's deceiving the Head for some rotten purpose of his own. I—I can't keep silent when I know the man."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't believe that you're not mistaken," he answered. "Anyhow, the Head believes in him, and if you start calling his pal a forger and a criminal I fancy he will drop down on you like a ton of bricks."

"I've got to risk that," said Erroll, setting his lips.

"You're going to speak to the Head?"

"Yes."

Kit Erroll had made up his mind. Mornington did not seek to dissuade him, though his doubts were very plain in his looks.

Erroll left the study. Mornington sat down to his prep, but he did not give much thought to his work. He was thinking of Erroll visiting the Head's study with such a purpose, and wondering what could possibly come of it.

Erroll wondered, too, as he made his way to Dr. Chisholm's study, but he did not hesitate. With such a conviction as he had in his mind, he felt that he had a plain duty to do, whatever the consequences.

He reached the Head's study, and hesitated at the door. For some minutes he stood in the corridor, his purpose unchanged, but pausing before he entered, trying to arrange his thoughts, and to decide exactly what he should say to the Head. He could picture, in his mind; the angry amazement in Dr. Chisholm's face, the lift of his stern eyebrows. He shrank from the ordeal before him. But it had to be gone through, and the junior nerved himself at last to face it. He tapped at the study door, and opened it.

There was a sound of a quick movement in the study.

Dr. Chisholm was not there. But a man who was bending over the Head's desk made a sudden movement, whirling round towards the opening door.

Erroll, his doubts and hesitation vanishing on the instant, sprang into the study.

"Slippery Smith!" he panted.

"What?"

"Slippery Smith, forger and thief, what are you doing here?"

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER

##### Face to Face!

**L**UCIEN DURIE stood motionless, his gaze fixed on the excited face of the Rookwood junior. His own face had become pale—deadly pale—every vestige of colour had for the moment deserted it. There was a hunted look in the man's startled eyes. Erroll's sudden denunciation had struck him like a thunderbolt.

If Erroll had doubted, his doubts

would have been resolved now. There was guilt, there was terror in the startled face of the man before him.

He stood panting, his eyes blazing at the suspected man. It was a full minute before Lucian Durie pulled himself together.

"What—what does this mean?" His voice was unsteady. "Are you mad, boy? Who are you? What do you mean? What name did you call me by?"

"I called you Slippery Smith!" said Kit Erroll. "You scoundrel, what dirty game are you playing at Rookwood?"

"You are mad, I suppose!" Durie had recovered his self-command now. "Do you belong to this school? I suppose you do."

"I am Erroll of the Fourth Form."

"Well, Erroll of the Fourth Form, I shall report this outrageous conduct to your headmaster," said Mr. Durie calmly. "I am waiting here for him now, and as soon as he comes—"

"As soon as he comes, I intend to denounce you to him, Slippery Smith!" said the junior steadily.

Lucian Durie smiled.

"You seem in earnest," he said. "This is not a schoolboy practical joke, I take it?"

"You know it is not."

"But you astonish me, my boy! Who is this gentleman you allude to by so curious a name?"

"A forger—a thief—a member of the gang that Gentleman Jim was the head of before he was sent to prison!"

The man started.

"Gentleman Jim!" he repeated.

"You know the name!" said Erroll scornfully.

Durie looked at him steadily and grimly. A glitter had come into his deep-set eyes.

"Let's have this out!" he said. He crossed to the door, and closed it. Erroll eyeing him. "If you are a Fourth Form boy of Rookwood, my young friend, what do you know of criminals—of such men as Gentleman Jim and Slippery Smith?"

"You do not remember me?" said Erroll.

"I have never seen you before."

"I have seen you often enough."

"Where? When?" snapped Durie.

"At the meetings of Gentleman Jim's gang, when I was in the power of that scoundrel, who had kidnapped me from my father."

Again the man started.

"The boy—Gentleman Jim's boy—you have changed a good deal," he said, his eyes on Erroll's handsome, flushed face. "Yes, you are older and a good deal changed, but I remember you now. You are the son of Gentleman Jim, the cracksman."

"I am not his son! I was stolen by him when I was a child," said Erroll. "My father found me afterwards. I used to see a great deal of his rascally associates, and you were one of them, Slippery Smith. You have admitted it now."

Lucian Durie laughed.

"What is your game here?" he asked.

"My game?" repeated Erroll.

"You are not here simply to study the classics, I suppose?" said Lucian Durie, with a grin. "Be sensible, my boy. I need not interfere with you, and you need not interfere with me. Probably there will be enough for both, and we may be able to help one another."

Erroll shivered with disgust.

"You are making a mistake," he said. "I am at Rookwood as a junior school-boy. I never had a hand in Gentleman

Jim's rascalities, though you seem to think so. And I am going to denounce you to the Head if you remain here. There is time for you to go. Leave Rookwood at once on any excuse you like—"

"Scarcely!"

"If you do not leave on your own accord, you will be kicked out when the Head knows what I can tell him!"

"And you are going to tell him?"

"At once."

Lucien Durie remained silent, with a wrinkle of thought in his brow. His eyes never left Erroll's face, and there was a mocking light in them. Erroll watched him steadily.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage. Erroll knew the stately tread of Dr. Chisholm.

The Head was coming.

"Silence!" said Durie, with a significant look. "It will be better for you, Gentleman Jim, junior. Not a word, or—"

He had no time for more. The study door opened, and Dr. Chisholm came in. He gave Durie a nod and a smile, and then glanced at Erroll with inquiry.

"What do you want here, Erroll?"

"I—I—"

Erroll tried to choose his words, to make his startling accusation. The Head was so obviously unprepared for anything of the kind that the words almost died on the junior's tongue. Lucien Durie broke into a light laugh. "Is this boy quite in his right senses, sir?" he asked.

"Eh—what? Certainly, Durie!" said the astonished Head. "One of Mr. Dalton's best pupils in the Classical Fourth Form."

"He has acted in a most unaccountable manner," said Durie quietly and calmly. "He has just burst into this room and insulted me in a most outrageous way!"

"Bless my soul!"

The Head's brow became like thunder.

"Erroll, how dare you! What—"

"I must speak, sir," said Erroll, panting. "That man—"

"What! How dare you allude to Mr. Durie in such a way?" exclaimed the Head angrily.

"His name is not Durie, sir."

"What?"

"His name is Smith."

"The boy is mad!" exclaimed the Head, staring at Erroll more in astonishment than anger.

"It is true, sir! He is a criminal—"

"Erroll!"

"You know, sir, where I was before I came to Rookwood," said Erroll desperately. "You know I was stolen by a criminal, and that I saw much of his wicked life and his wicked associates. That man was one of them. He was called Slippery Smith. He is a forger and a thief, and he has been in prison."

Astonishment deprived the Head of the power of speech for the moment. He could only blink at Erroll.

Lucien Durie broke in calmly:

"That is what the boy said to me just before you entered, Dr. Chisholm. Unless he is out of his senses—"

"He must be out of his senses, I think," said the Head, recovering his voice. "Erroll, how dare you—how dare you—"

"It is true, sir! I recognised him—"

"Nonsense!"

"It was my duty to tell you, sir," said Erroll earnestly. "You trust that man, and I know him to be a criminal. I should be to blame if I remained silent and allowed him to deceive you."

Dr. Chisholm gave a gasp.

"Try to excuse this boy, Durie," he



**THE HEAD'S STRANGE VISITOR!** There was a sound of a quick movement in the study. Dr. Chisholm was not there. But a man who was bending over the Head's desk made a sudden movement round towards the opening door. Erroll sprang into the study. "Slippery Smith!" he panted. "What are you doing here?" (See Chapter 3.)

said. "He had some very odd, and unfortunate experiences before he came to this school. No doubt, he supposes he sees some resemblance between you and some character he saw at that time. You must try to pardon him."

"Certainly," said Mr. Durie, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "I am very much surprised to find a former associate of criminals among the boys of this school. Doubtless he is acting under an error; he may mean well. But if he spreads this absurd story over the school, it will be impossible, of course, for me to remain here as your guest."

"I shall see that he does nothing of the kind," said the Head. "I beg your pardon a thousand times, my dear fellow. Erroll, you have made a foolish—indeed a wicked—mistake. You have wronged and insulted this gentleman. To convince you of your foolish error, I will tell you that his father was an old friend of mine, and that I have known Lucien Durie in his boyhood."

Erroll almost staggered. "You see how absurdly you are mistaken," said the Head, more kindly. "I am willing to believe that you spoke from a mistaken sense of duty. But you will be careful not to repeat a word of the kind in the school. If I hear that you have uttered such a suspicion with regard to my friend, Mr. Durie, I shall expel you from Rookwood."

"But, sir—but—" stammered Erroll almost wildly.

"Enough! You may go."

"I repeat, sir—"

"Do you dare to repeat your wicked statement, after what I have told you?" exclaimed the Head angrily. "This young man, whom I have known since he was a boy—"

"He admitted it, sir!" almost shrieked Erroll. "He admitted it only a minute before you came into the room, sir."

"Boy!"

"That is false," said Mr. Durie calmly. "But I need scarcely say that to you, Dr. Chisholm."

"Scarcely, Lucien," said the Head, whose brow was black with wrath. "No more, Erroll—no more!" He took a cane from his desk "I have dealt with you too leniently. You resort to palpable falsehood to support your wild and foolish accusation. Hold out your hand, or I will flog you!"

There was nothing for it but to obey. Erroll held out his hand, and the cane came down with a lashing swish.

"There!" said the Head. "That is a warning Erroll! Now leave my study. Another word, and you shall be flogged. And if I find"—the Head's voice had a tone of deep and angry menace—"if I find that you have uttered one word to your schoolfellows, disparaging my friend, Mr. Durie, I shall expel you from the school."

He pointed to the door with the cane. Erroll almost staggered to the door. His attempt to put the Head upon his guard had failed—failed disastrously. He opened the door with a shaking hand, and passed out into the corridor.

He went into Study No. 4, and the door closed on him. Mornington jumped up as his chum came in.

"Erroll, what's happened?"

Erroll burst into a bitter laugh.

"He's the man! And I've been caned for insulting the Head's guest; and I'm to be expelled if I say another word! And—and he's Slippery Smith; and he's here to play his old game. And—and I can do nothing."

THE END.

(There will be another topping long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood next week, entitled: "The Secret of the Head's Guest!")

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