

SUNKEN GOLD!

A GRAND TALE OF THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS AMONG THE SEA THIEVES.

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Grey- friars

The POPULAR

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Stories, Jokes & Pictures
of Greyfriars, Rookwood & St. Jims

Rookwood

St. Jims.



THE NIGHT ALARM! Kit Erroll's last desperate attempt to prevent the robbery at the school!

(A TENSE MOMENT IN THE LONG COMPLETE TALE IN THIS ISSUE.)



GENTLEMAN JIM.
The notorious cracksman, and Kit Erroll's most dangerous enemy.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Morny's New Pal!

LOOK at them!"
Cyril Peele, of the Fourth Form, contracted his brows savagely as he glanced out of the window of Study No. 4.

Townsend, Topham, and Gower were seated round the study-table. There was a haze of cigarette-smoke in the room.

The nuts of the Fourth were enjoying themselves in their own peculiar way that sunny afternoon.

Through the open window, shouts could be heard from the cricket-field, where Jimmy Silver's eleven were playing a Modern team. But the sunshine and the breeze, and the green of cricket-field, did not call the nuts of Rookwood out of doors. They found banker in the study more attractive.

Peele was staring from the window, but it was not towards the cricket-ground that his glance was turned.

It rested on two juniors in the quadrangle below. One was in flannels, and had evidently come off the field after his innings. The other was an elegant youth in Etons.

Townsend, who was shuffling the cards, looked round lazily towards Peele.

"What's goin' on?" he asked.

"Look at them!" repeated Peele savagely.

The juniors joined him at the window. "Erroll!" said Townsend, glancing downward.

"And Morny!" said Gower. The two juniors below were chatting cheerily, heedless and unconscious of the dark glances from the study window.

"Thick as thieves!" said Peele bitterly. "Accordin' to what Morny used to say, Erroll is a thief, as a matter of fact. An' now they're chummy."

"Jolly queer!" said Townsend, shrugging his shoulders. "What can Morny see in the chap? And they used to be at daggers drawn, too!"

"That was before Morny was kidnapped," remarked Topham. "Accordin' to his yarn, Erroll got him out of that."

"That don't make any difference." "It seems to Morny."

IN HIS TRUE COLOURS!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., and Kit Erroll, of Rookwood School.

By **OWEN CONQUEST.**

"What can we do?" growled Townsend. "Morny always has his own way! Look at the way he picked up that little ragamuffin, 'Erbert, an' brought him to Rookwood, an' got the Head to let him enter the school as a new kid. We were down on that; but did it make any difference to Morny? Not a bit!"

"He's an obstinate cad! But we don't want to lose Morny. We can't keep our end up against Jimmy Silver without Morny," remarked Gower.

"He'll be chummin' with Jimmy Silver next, if Erroll can work it," sneered Peele. "That's the cad's game!"

"Blessed are the peacemakers!" grinned Townsend.

"It's jolly queer, too," said Peele, frowning. "When Erroll came here, that kid from the slums, 'Erbert, swore that the man who brought him wasn't really Captain Erroll at all, but a rotter he called Gentleman Jim, the cracksman. Mornington believed the yarn, an' accused Erroll. I must say I never swallowed it. But—but suppose there should be somethin' in it?"

Peele paused and looked at his nutty companions.

It was evident that, with Cyril Peele, the wish was father to the thought.

"But Erroll knocked the yarn on the head," said Townsend impatiently. "Didn't Morny go to the trouble of gettin' a photograph of Captain Erroll, and didn't it turn out to be as like Erroll as two peas?"

"That's so! But Erroll's father has never been near Rookwood since," said Peele. "There's a chance, at least, that there was somethin' in the yarn. Look here, let's have that kid 'Erbert up here, and question him."

"He wouldn't come—"
"Tell him Morny wants him. You go, Topsy!"

"Silly waste of time," said Topham. "I tell you there may be somethin' in it. If we could fix it on Erroll an' give him the kybosh, Morny comes back to us."

"Oh, I'll fetch the kid, if you like," said Topham, yawning. "But you're barkin' up the wrong tree, Peele. There's nothin' in it."

And Topham left the study. The "Giddy Goats" of Rookwood resumed their game while they waited for Topham to return with the waif of Rookwood. In about ten minutes there was a tap at the door, and little 'Erbert looked in.

"Come in, kid," said Peele. Topham had not returned with the waif. He had gone to join Mornington on the cricket-ground.

'Erbert of the Second came into the study, and Peele closed the door.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Mornington Chips In!

ERBERT looked round the study, puzzled. He had evidently expected to see Mornington there. "Master Topham told me Mornington wanted me 'ere," he said.

"That's all right! We want you," said Peele. "Don't be alarmed. I only want to ask you some questions."

"Yes, sir," said 'Erbert. He stood shuffling his feet. The little waif had been some time at Rookwood now, since Mornington, following a generous impulse, had rescued him from want. But he had not yet learned the repose upon which the nuts of Rookwood prided themselves. He shuffled his feet and twisted his thumbs uneasily.

"You remember Erroll of the Fourth coming here, a few weeks ago?" said Peele.

"Ye-es."

"The man who brought him here was called Captain Erroll—his father." The fag shifted uncomfortably.

"You told Mornington that the man wasn't Captain Erroll, but a criminal called Gentleman Jim, a cracksman you'd seen and known when you lived in some slum or other in London," continued Peele.

'Erbert did not reply, but his gaze wandered uneasily to the door. But Cyril Peele had his back to it.

"Now, we didn't swallow that yarn," said Peele. "But I've been wonderin' whether there was anythin' in it. Just you go ahead, kid, an' tell us all you know about that man, Gentleman Jim, an' Erroll. Give us the whole yarn from start to finish."

"I—I can't!" stammered 'Erbert. "You mean you won't, you cheeky cub!" exclaimed Townsend.

"Well, I won't, then!" said 'Erbert sullenly. "Master Mornington 'ave told me not to say nothin' about Erroll, an' I ain't going to."

"You want your arms twisted, you mean?" asked Peele.

'Erbert backed away a little. "I s'pose you can bully me, if you want, now you've got me 'ere," he said steadily. "But I ain't sayin' nothin', not agin Master Mornington's orders."

Peele strode towards him. The fag put up his fists at once. But Townsend and Gower joined Peele, and in a moment 'Erbert was wriggling in the grasp of the three. Peele took a savage grip upon his arm.

"Are you going to answer my questions now?" he asked, between his teeth.

"No, I ain't!"

"Take that, then!" There was a yell of anguish from 'Erbert as Peele twisted his arm with cruel force.

He struggled in vain in the grip of the three nuts.

"Ow! Lemme go!" panted 'Erbert. "I ain't going to tell you nothin'! Let me alone, you coward! Yah! Ow!"

The fag's yells rang through the study as Peele twisted his arm again.

"Now will you speak up, you scrubby little cad?" hissed Peele.

"No!" yelled 'Erbert. "I won't! 'Elp! 'Elp!"

"Hallo! What the merry dickens —" The door was thrown open, and Mornington strode into the study.

He stared at the scene in blank astonishment for a moment.

Then his brow grew thunderous. "Bullyin' 'Erbert—what? Let him go at once, you cads!"

He strode at the nuts with his fists clenched and a blaze in his eyes.

Peele & Co released the fog, who scuttled behind Mornington at once. The nuts of the Fourth looked angry and irresolute.

"Have they hurt you, kid?" asked Mornington.

"N-not much, sir," faltered 'Erbert. "It—it's all right."

"What were the cads bullyin' you for?"

"They wanted to know about Erroll and Gentleman Jim, sir!" muttered 'Erbert. "I wasn't saying nothin', as you told me, sir."

Mornington made a gesture to the door.

"Cut off, 'Erbert!"

Peele made a movement forward. He backed away again as Mornington faced him, with a glitter in his eyes.

'Erbert scudded out of the study.

"So you were bullyin' that kid to make him talk about Erroll?" said Mornington. "You won't do that again, Peele!"

"Who's goin' to stop me?" sneered Peele.

"I am! I'll lick you till you can't stand if you put a finger on that kid again!" exclaimed Mornington savagely.

"Understand that! And if I have two words from you, I'll lick you now. You're goin' to leave 'Erbert alone, and you're goin' to leave 'Erbert alone!"

And Mornington swung out of the study.

Peele gritted his teeth.

"Young cub thinks that finishes it, but it doesn't!" he said. "I'll show Erroll up in his true colours yet! I've got a surprise up my sleeve for Morny and his precious pal!"

And Peele went savagely out of the study.

"What the merry dickens was he drivin' at?" said Gower, in wonder.

"Only gas!" said Townsend, shrugging his shoulders. "Let's get on with the game!"

But there was more than "gas" in Peele's words, as Mornington—and Kit Erroll—were to discover before long.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Gentle Persuasion!

JIMMY SILVER paused. The captain of the Fourth was sauntering through the archway into Little Quad, towards the library, when he came on the scene.

On the old oaken bench near the stone arch four juniors were seated.

Peele held an open newspaper in his hands, and Townsend, Topham, and Gower were gathering close to read it with him.

There was evidently something in the newspaper that intensely interested Peele & Co.

It was the day following the scene in Mornington's study. Since that scene Mornington had been on icy terms with his former chums—a fact that did not seem to worry the lordly Morny in the least.

The four juniors were so deeply engrossed in the newspaper that they did not observe Jimmy Silver. Jimmy would have passed on his way but for the fact that they were speaking of Erroll in a way that struck his attention at once.

"There it is in print!" said Peele, through his compressed lips. "If Captain Erroll is Erroll's father, he can say so. He's still in England."

"So it seems," said Townsend. "I understood that he had gone back to British Honduras. He was a planter there when he joined up. I know that. Erroll thinks he's gone back."

"I know he does—I've heard him say so," grinned Peele. "Now, if he's Captain Erroll's son, as he says, how can he think his father's gone back to America when the newspaper says he's in England?"

"By gad!" said Topham; "it looks as if you're right, Peele."

"I was sure of it," said Peele. "I found this in the paper yesterday. That's what started me on it; and I haven't any doubt at all that Morny knows the truth about Erroll, and is keepin' it dark. It's odd the fellow being like Captain Erroll's portrait. But a son generally knows where his father is."

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather."

Jimmy Silver walked towards the bench. He disdained to listen to the talk of the nuts, though what they had said had made him feel very curious.

"Hush!" muttered Peele, as the captain of the Fourth came up.

He hastily thrust the newspaper under his jacket.

"Something about Erroll's father in that paper?" asked Jimmy.

"Find out!" said Peele coolly.

"I'm asking you to find out. It would interest Erroll. Lend me the paper to show him," said Jimmy Silver.

"Go and eat coke!"

Jimmy Silver's eyes gleamed. The four nuts rose to their feet and stood together. Four to one; they were not afraid of the chief of the Fistical Four.

Jimmy smiled, and uttered the signal of the Rook patrol. It echoed through the stone archway.

"He's calling those other cads here," muttered Gower. "Let's clear."

There was a patter of feet from Big Quad, and Lovell, Raby, and Newcome came through the archway at a run.

"Hallo! What's up?" demanded Lovell.

Jimmy Silver pointed to Peele.

"That worm's got a newspaper with something about Erroll's father in it," he said. "He won't lend it to me. I want to borrow it."

"Rotten worm!" said Raby. "Why can't you lend your paper?"

"Because I won't!" snarled Peele. "Hands off, you rotters!"

But Jimmy Silver did not "hands off," he put his hands on—hard! Cyril Peele struggled with him furiously.

The Co., grinning, charged the other three nuts off the scene. Torny and Topy and Gower were scattered before their rush.

Peele struggled in vain in Jimmy Silver's sturdy grasp. The crumpled newspaper was jerked out from under his jacket. Jimmy cheerfully sat Peele down on the ground with a bump.

"Thanks for the loan of the paper," he smiled. "I'll leave it in your study when I'm through with it."

"Hang you!" said Peele, between his teeth.

He scrambled up, and looked for a moment as if he would spring at Jimmy Silver. But he knew that it would be futile; and he turned away, scowling blackly. Lovell and Raby and Newcome rejoined their leader.

"Why didn't the disobliging rotter want to let you see the paper, Jimmy?" asked Newcome, in wonder.

"Blessed if I know! They've got something up against Erroll, I suppose. I'll soon see what there is here about Erroll's pater."

Jimmy opened the paper and scanned the columns in search of the item of news that had so interested the nuts.

He soon found it—a paragraph marked with pencil. The Fistical Four read it together:

"Among the passengers landed from the s.s. Cuba, recently wrecked off the Cornish coast, is Captain Erroll. The gallant captain, who was a planter in British Honduras before the war, was severely wounded in the Somme offensive, and intended to return to his Colonial home. Captain Erroll's many friends will not regret that the accident compels him to remain somewhat longer in his native land."

The Fistical Four looked at one another.

"I suppose Erroll knows?" said Raby.

"I—I suppose so," said Jimmy Silver. "Anyway, I'm going to take this paper to him. If he hasn't heard from his pater, he'll be glad to know that he's safe."

And Jimmy hurried off to the School House with the newspaper in his hand.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Under the Shadow!

"WHAT'S the trouble?"

Mornington asked the question. He was lounging in the window-seat in Erroll's study. Higgs and Jones minor, Erroll's study-mates, were out of doors.

Mornington had just come in, and he had found Erroll, with a moody brow, in deep thought. Erroll smiled slightly as the dandy of the Fourth spoke.

"Nothing!" he said.

"Thinkin' about Gentleman Jim?"

"Well, yes," said Erroll, colouring.

"I can't help thinking of him, Morny."

"You've seen the last of the rotter," said Mornington. "You've told me you are sure that he is not your father—and I feel sure of it, too. Why bother about him?"

"I am sure he is not my father, though he has always called himself that," said Erroll quietly. "I am not the son of a crackman. But—but if the other fellows knew all you know, Morny, they would believe—"

"They don't know, and they won't know."

"I'm not so sure," said Erroll. "I haven't finished with that man yet, Morny. Since I told you my story you've palled with me, and I'm jolly glad of it; but the others wouldn't look at it as you do. If it came out that the man who brought me here, and called himself Captain Erroll, was in reality Gentleman Jim, the crackman—"

He paused. "It's not my fault! But—but I'm here under a name that does not belong to me."

"But you don't know your own name," said Mornington. "You're as much entitled to that as any other."

"That's true. I must be called something," said the junior, with a slight smile. "I may as well be called Erroll as anything else. But—"

"Why did Gentleman Jim pick out that name for you?" asked Mornington. "It's not a common name."

"I don't know, unless—"

Erroll paused. "You remember, Morny, when you got the real Captain Erroll's photograph it turned out to be exactly like me. Gentleman Jim may have known of the resemblance, and that may be why he chose that name for me to compare to Rookwood under. It's queer. I—I've been thinking, Morny—"

He broke off again.

"There's nothin' to worry you. Give it a rest."

"But it does worry me," said Erroll quietly. "I'm not doing wrong in using the name, since I must use some name."

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But I am represented here as the son of Captain Erroll—and I am not his son. That does worry me."

"I don't see that it hurts him. Didn't you tell me that Captain Erroll went back to British Honduras after leavin' the Army?"

"Yes, Gentleman Jim told me so."

"Well, it won't hurt a man in America to be supposed to have a son at Rookwood," said Mornington, laughing. "Besides, you'll do him credit."

Erroll smiled.

"I can't quite square it with my conscience," he said. "I don't really know what I ought to do; but—but I've thought it all over, Mornny, and I'm afraid I shall have to clear out of Rookwood."

"What rot!" exclaimed Mornington. "I should miss you. Look here, Erroll, your fees are paid for this term, and you're going in for a scholarship to pay your own exes after that. You can do it."

"My fees were paid by Gentleman Jim in Captain Erroll's name. You know how he gets his money," said Erroll, in a low voice.

"But it can't be handed back now. By gad," exclaimed Mornington, "you're not thinking of telling the Head!"

"I've been thinking whether I ought to."

"It means clearin' out of the school."

Erroll nodded.

Mornington moved to and fro restlessly in his study. He was plainly perturbed.

Strange enough as it was that the reckless dandy of the Fourth should have chummed up with the son of Gentleman Jim, it was a very real friendship that had grown up between the two.

Mornington knew the whole of Erroll's dark story—of his boyhood passed in seclusion and shadow—of his determined and successful resistance to the crackman's efforts to draw him from the path of honour and honesty. Erroll had told him all.

"Look here, Erroll!" said Mornington at last, "there's no need for you to jaw to the Head, take my word about that! Gentleman Jim may never turn up again, now that he knows you're done with him. It may never come out."

Erroll shook his head.

"He will turn up, and soon," he said. "I was placed here to help him rob Rookwood. I was to get invitations to fellows' homes, and give him other chances there. He had it all cut and dried. He thought he would force me, by threatening to show me up here, if I refused. He will not let me off scot-free, Mornny. Besides, he will not give up the idea of robbing Rookwood. Every night I expect him to come."

"Good gad!"

There was a tap at the door. Mornington uttered an impatient exclamation, but Erroll said quietly:

"Come in!"

Jimmy Silver entered the study with a newspaper in his hand.

"News here about your pater, Erroll!" he said cheerily.

Erroll started.

"About whom?" he muttered.

"Captain Erroll. He sailed for America, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's back in England."

"Oh!"

"Safe and sound," said Jimmy Silver at once. "Nothing to worry about, Erroll. The steamer was wrecked, but the paper says he landed safely. Here it is."

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Erroll's face was crimson.

Hardest of all to bear, in his strange situation, was the hateful, implied deceit of his position in the presence of the cheery confidence of Jimmy Silver & Co.

He read the marked paragraph, and handed the newspaper back to Jimmy Silver, who was eyeing him oddly.

"Thank you, Jimmy!" he said.

"Didn't you know?" asked Jimmy.

"No."

"Oh? I thought your pater would have written."

"I have had no letter."

"Then that's jolly good news to you!" said Jimmy. "I made Peele lend me the paper, and I'm glad I did!"

"Peele!" said Mornington, with a start.

"Yes. Your merry pals were nosing over it, but Peele didn't want Erroll to see it, for some reason," said the captain of the Fourth. "The fact is, Mornny, your pals seem to have taken up that old yarn you used to spin about Erroll and they're trying to make something out of it."

"The rotten cads!" growled Mornington.

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Well, they're only following your example," he said. "Still, they're cads, there's no doubt about that. It really seems as if that yarn will never die out, at this rate."

And Jimmy left the study.

Erroll looked at Mornington.

"You see," he said, in a low voice, "I—I can't keep it up. I can't be taking in fellows who trust me! I can't stand it!"

And Mornington was silent. He felt, too, that the junior was right—that it could not last.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Good-Bye to Rookwood!

ALL eyes were turned upon Kit Erroll when he came into the junior Common-room that evening with Jimmy Silver & Co. Peele & Co. were grinning, as over some good joke. All the fellows looked curious.

"Hallo! What's the merry joke?" asked Jimmy Silver, looking round.

"Your friend Erroll is!" chortled Townsend.

Rawson came over to Erroll.

"I hear your pater's in London, Erroll," he said, in his direct way. "Peele says he's wired to him to come here."

Erroll started violently.

"Why, you cheeky cad, Peele!" exclaimed Lovell. "What business is it of yours to wire to Erroll's pater?"

"Only to show whether Captain Erroll is Erroll's pater at all," said Peele, with a mocking grin. "I've told these fellows, an' now I'll tell you. I telephoned to my cousin, who's got an Army job in Whitehall, to get Captain Erroll's address; an' he got it for me. And then I wired to Captain Erroll. Nice telegram, in perfectly good taste, pointin' out that his son's friends were awfully anxious to see him, because of his gallant conduct in Flanders, an' gettin' the D.S.O. Askin' him if he couldn't come down to Rookwood before he sailed next time, because his son's pals were so anxious to see him. Nothin' to complain of in that, was there?"

"Well, no," said Jimmy Silver. "Only, you're not a friend of Erroll."

"If Captain Erroll's his father, no harm's done," grinned Peele. "He'll take it as a schoolboy compliment. But if the merry captain hasn't got a son at Rookwood, it will be rather a surprise—what?"

"You rotter!" shouted Mornington.

"What are you complainin' about?" said Peele coolly. "Don't you want Erroll shown up, if he's an impostor? You were keen enough on it at one time."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the nuts, in chorus.

Erroll's face was deadly pale. "You needn't mind, Erroll," said Jimmy Silver. "No harm done if your pater does come here. We'd all like to see him."

Erroll nodded without replying. With the pallor as of death in his face, he walked out of the Common-room.

There was a buzz after he had gone. Mornington followed him, but the rest of the juniors remained in excited discussion.

When the school page came into the Common-room with a telegram in his hand, the excitement was very keen.

"Master Peele!"

"Here you are!" smiled Peele.

He took the telegram and opened it.

His brow grew a little perplexed as he read. The other fellows crowded round him to read it, too.

"Arriving Rookwood early morning.—ERROLL."

"Well, my hat!" said Gower.

Peele's jaw dropped. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver. "That rather knocks you out, Peele! The merry captain's simply accepted the invitation! Looks as if he thinks he's got a son here, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gad!" muttered Peele, utterly crestfallen.

The laugh was against the plotting Fourth-Former.

Jimmy Silver, still laughing, hurried away to Erroll's study. He found him pale and troubled.

"Right as rain, old fellow!" said Jimmy. "Your pater's coming down to-morrow morning early!"

Erroll gave him a strange look.

"How do you know?" he asked dully. Jimmy chuckled.

"He's wired back to Peele. Rather queer he didn't wire to you instead. But it's come to Peele, and it says he's arriving early in the morning. Of course, he doesn't guess that it was a cad asked him, for a rotten trick. No need to tell him that, either!"

"Well, it's a good thing Erroll's pater's coming," said Higgs, looking up from his prep. "It will stop the jaw about Erroll."

"A very good thing," said Erroll tonelessly.

"Of course, it's a rotten cheek of Peele," said Jimmy, looking queerly at Erroll's colourless face. "But you'll be glad to see your pater, Erroll, won't you?"

Erroll nodded, and Jimmy left the study with that old chill of strange doubt in his breast again. Why did Erroll look like that? Jimmy Silver asked himself the question without being able to find an answer.

Erroll had been working at his prep, but he did not resume it when Jimmy was gone. He remained idle for some minutes, with contracted brows, and then rose.

He went out into the shadowed quadrangle.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

Long, in the dim starlight, the unhappy junior paced to and fro under the old beeches, thinking—thinking!

The end had come; he knew that! Captain Erroll, whose name he bore, was coming to Rookwood in the morning. The man he so strangely resembled, and whom he did not know—whose name had been chosen for him by Gentleman Jim, doubtless on account of that strange likeness. He was coming, and the imposture would be discovered!

One thought was borne in upon the boy's mind—he must go! No need to wait and face out the shame and humiliation of exposure. Before Captain Erroll arrived at Rookwood he must be gone.

Erroll was not seen again by the Rookwood juniors till bedtime. He came into the dormitory of the Classical Fourth with a face that was a little pale, but set and calm. His mind was made up.

When all the school was sleeping he was to leave Rookwood quietly, and the discovery that now must come would come after he had gone for ever.

Long after the rest of the Fourth were asleep, Erroll lay with wide-open, sleepless eyes, while the hours passed.

It was at midnight that he slipped quietly from his bed, and dressed in the darkness. The Classical Fourth were still sleeping soundly as the hunted junior closed the dormitory door quietly behind him. A few minutes more, and he had dropped softly from a window, and the cool wind of the summer night blew fresh upon his face.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
The Last Blow!

CLINK! Erroll stopped, his heart beating violently.

He was skirting the great building, with silent footfalls, in the dim starlight, to cross to the wall on the road, when that faint sound struck his ears, faint but clear, in the silence of the night.

His heart beat almost to suffocation as he listened, breathing hard.

Clink!
One thought rushed into his mind as he listened to that sound from the lower hall window in the dark recess of the School House porch.

"Gentleman Jim!"
He stood as if rooted to the ground for some minutes. He knew that the clink was of a fragment of glass that had fallen from a pane under the penetrating diamond of the cracksman.

Gentleman Jim had come at last! Every night Erroll had feared it—had dreamed of it! Now, on his last night at Rookwood, the cracksman had come, and the unhappy lad breathed a prayer of thankfulness that it was still in his power to save the old school from the lawless hand of the thief and outcast.

There was no fear in his heart as he stepped silently towards the porch. He knew—none better—the desperate nature of the cracksman. He knew that death itself might be his lot! And he did not falter!

He stepped noiselessly into the porch. The little window by the door was open. The cracksman had reached the fastening within by removing a fragment of glass. The window was open, and within the dark building was the unseen thief of the night.

Erroll smiled bitterly in the gloom. He had been sent to Rookwood to help in this work—to make it safer for Gentleman Jim to carry out the robbery. And now he was there to baffle it. He stood for some moments in thought, undecided. Then he grasped the great bell-handle beside the door, and dragged upon it.

Clang, clang, clang!
The sudden clanging of the bell rang with a din like thunder through the silent School House.

Clang, clang, clang!
A light gleamed from a window above. There was a sound of an opening door. Clang, clang, clang!

The School House was awakened from end to end.

Even from outside the House, where he stood, Erroll could hear the sound of startled voices.

He let go the bell, and stepped to the open hall window. There was a sound within—a hurried footstep—a panting breath. A figure loomed up within the window—a white and savage face looked out in the dimness. Even in the dark Erroll knew the hard, desperate face of the man he had called his father!

The alarm had been given, and the baffled cracksman was thinking only of

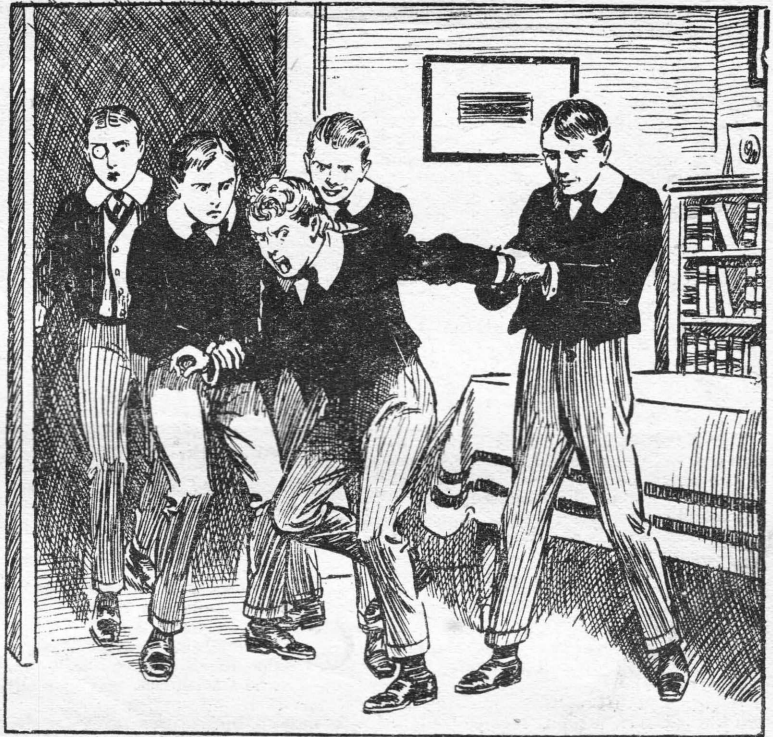
Gentleman Jim was scrambling, head-foremost, through the window.

But as he did so a strong grasp was laid upon him from behind.

"I've got the rotter!"
It was the deep voice of Bulkeley of the Sixth, captain of Rookwood.

"Here he is!"
There was a fierce struggle, and Gentleman Jim disappeared from the window, dragged back into the house by the stalwart Sixth-Former. Erroll heard the fierce struggle within, and he scrambled furiously in at the window, fearful of hearing again the cracksman's revolver.

There was a flood of light in the hall. Mr. Bootles was down, and he had switched on the electric light. Bulkeley and the cracksman were struggling on the floor, and Gentleman Jim had freed his right hand to use his weapon. Erroll leaped upon him, and grasped his wrist, and turned the revolver to the floor.



"Will you speak now, you scrubby little cad!" hissed Peele, giving 'Erbert's arm another cruel twist. "No!" yelled the fag, struggling. "I won't." "Hallo! what's the row about—" The door was flung open, and Mornington strode into the study. His brow grew thunderous. "Bullying young 'Erbert, what? Let him go at once, you cads!" (See chapter 2.)

escape. Already lights gleamed on the stairs.

But Gentleman Jim started back at the sight of the face without the window.

He panted.
"You!"

He knew the schoolboy, even in the gloom. For a moment they looked at each other through the open window. Erroll's handsome face pale and tense—Gentleman Jim snarling like a cornered wild beast.

"You!" The cracksman choked with rage. "You!"

There was a glimmer of metal, and Erroll started back.

Crack!
The enraged cracksman had fired through the open window, and the bullet passed within a foot of the schoolboy, as he sprang aside. The next moment

With a fierce twist of the wrist he forced the ruffian to drop the weapon.

The stairs were crowded with startled fellows. Jimmy Silver and Carthew of the Sixth ran forward and collared the struggling villain. It was the signal to the rest. A moment more, and twenty pairs of hands were on the cracksman.

"Got him!" yelled Jimmy Silver.
"Sit on him!" shouted Lovell.

"Hurrah!"
"Bless my soul!" Mr. Bootles was gasping. "Dear me! Oh, bless my soul!"

The crowd moved back as the Head of Rookwood, in dressing-gown and slippers, hurried on the scene. Dr. Chisholm was startled, but very calm.

"A burglar, sir!" said Bulkeley, panting.

"So I see, Bulkeley! Secure the man, THE POPULAR.—No. 127.

but do not hurt him," said the Head. "Take up that pistol, please, Mr. Bootles!"

"We've got the rotter, sir!" chortled Lovell.

Gentleman Jim was dragged to his feet. With a dozen pairs of hands upon him, the cracksman could not even struggle. He stood, panting, with flaming eyes, exhausted by the savage struggle.

The Head eyed him grimly. Erroll stood quiet, silent, with deadly pale face. He was the only fellow there who was fully dressed, and already curious glances were turned upon him.

"Someone gave the alarm," said the Head. "Who was it that rang the bell?"

"It was I, sir," said Erroll quietly. "You, Erroll! You are dressed!" Dr. Chisholm frowned. "Is it possible, Erroll, that you were up at this hour of the night?"

"I was in the quadrangle, sir, and I heard that man enter," said Erroll dully. "I gave the alarm at once."

"You have prevented a robbery," said the Head. "I shall inquire to-morrow, Erroll, how you came to be out of doors at such an hour. This man must be secured till the morning, when the police—"

There was a fierce exclamation from Gentleman Jim. His eyes burned at Erroll with deadly animosity.

"Send for the police!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Let them take me, and let them take that boy at the same time! He is my son and accomplice!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the Head sternly. "How dare you!"

"It's the truth!" said Gentleman Jim, between his teeth. "Look at me, Dr. Chisholm—look at me, and you will remember my face! It was I who brought that boy to this school—under the name of Captain Erroll!"

The Head started violently. He bent forward, and scanned the sullen features of the cracksman, and his face became darker. Peele, on the staircase, pressed Townsend's arm.

"It's out now!" he whispered. "By gad, yes!" murmured Townsend. "But what the thunder did Erroll give his pater away for?"

"It is true!" said the Head, at last, in hard, icy tones. "I recognise you! You came to this school as Captain Erroll, bringing that boy with you! Who are you?"

"Gentleman Jim, the cracksman!" said the outcast, with a reckless laugh. "The father of that boy! We shall go to prison together!"

"Erroll!" gasped Jimmy Silver. Erroll did not speak. His face was like stone. Mornington drew to his side, and slipped a hand through his arm. The unhappy lad gave a faint smile.

Dr. Chisholm fixed his eyes upon Erroll.

"You hear what this man says, Erroll?" His voice was cold and hard.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you anything to say?" All eyes were upon the son of the cracksman. Erroll's head was drooping, but he raised it proudly.

"Only this, sir," he said, in a firm voice. "That man has told part of the truth. I was brought up as his son, but I never believed that he was my father. He tried to make a thief of me. He ill-used me because I would not consent. He placed me in this school, making me believe I was to be free of his influence here—that I was to have a chance in life. He deceived me. He told me later that I was to help him rob you—and others. I broke with him then for ever. I left my dormitory this night to leave Rook-

wood because Captain Erroll is coming here to-morrow, and I could not face him. I should have been gone, but—but I heard that man breaking into the house, and I stayed to give the alarm. That is all, sir. He lies when he says that I am his son, and he lies when he says that I am his accomplice. I have never been a thief!"

There was a quiet dignity in Erroll's look and in his tone that carried conviction with it. A deep silence followed his words. It was broken by a scoffing laugh from Gentleman Jim.

"A likely story! I repeat—"
"Silence!" exclaimed the Head sternly. "That the lad is not your accomplice is proved by the fact that he has prevented your crime. Bulkeley, take that man to the cellars, and see that he is secured for the night."

"Yes, sir."
Gentleman Jim was led away by half a dozen of the Sixth, darting a last malevolent glance at Erroll as he went.

"Erroll," said the Head, after a long pause, "this matter must be inquired into. I forbid you to leave Rookwood. You will return to your dormitory. My boys, you may go back to bed."

"Let me go, sir!" said Erroll. "I have done you a service, which helps to make up for the wrong I have done—unintentionally, Heaven knows!—in deceiving you. I cannot remain at Rookwood. Let me go now!"

Dr. Chisholm shook his head. "You must not go, Erroll. I shall hear your story in full in the morning, and will decide what is to be done with you. For the present, go back to bed." Erroll bowed his head.

"Very well, sir!"
Mornington kept his arm as they went up the stairs. In the dormitory there was a scoffing chuckle from Peele, and Jimmy Silver turned upon the cad of the Fourth with fierce eyes.

"Silence!" he said, between his teeth. "One word to Erroll, and I'll smash you!"

And Peele & Co. thought it better to be silent. There was no word from Kit Erroll as he turned in. But it was long ere sleep visited his eyes.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Erroll Finds His Father!

"CAPTAIN ERROLL!"
Dr. Chisholm rose to greet the handsome, soldierly man who was shown into his study.

It was early morning, and the Head's look showed his surprise at so early a visit. Dr. Chisholm had barely breakfasted when the captain's card was brought in. He received him in his study. The captain's handsome, sunburnt face was pale, and as the Head glanced at it the strange resemblance to Erroll of the Fourth struck him forcibly.

"I beg you to excuse this early call, Dr. Chisholm." The captain's manner was courtly, though hurried. "You are doubtless aware of the telegram I received yesterday from this school—"

"I was not aware of it!" said the Head, in astonishment.

"A telegram from someone named Peele," said the captain. "A schoolboy, I presume. It was stated in this telegram that my son's friends wished me to visit Rookwood. I replied that I would come early in the morning. As I have, of course, no son at Rookwood, I should have taken the telegram for a foolish practical joke, but for one reason—"

He paused.
"One moment," said the Head, "You are Captain Erroll, formerly a planter in British Honduras, later an officer in the British Army?"

"Certainly!"
"I am very glad to see you. Pray be

seated," said the Head. "Your name has been used by a most conscienceless scoundrel. A month ago, Captain Erroll, a man came here, under your name, to place his son in the school. I had previously been in written communication with him, and had not the slightest doubt that he was the man he professed to be. I have since made the discovery that this man is a criminal, and, in fact, he attempted to rob the school last night, and is now in custody here awaiting the arrival of the police."

"By gad!" said the captain, in astonishment.

"The boy he called his son was the means of his being defeated in his attempt upon the school. That boy bears your name, and was—until last night—supposed to be your son, by all Rookwood."

"That explains the telegram, then," said the captain, tugging at his moustache. "I came here—foolishly enough, perhaps—with a vague hope. I have no son, Dr. Chisholm. But I had a son. He was stolen from me in early childhood, and I was never able to trace him. This telegram went to my heart like a dagger. It gave birth to a hope, foolish enough, as I see now, that perhaps something had been heard of my boy—something discovered." His voice faltered a little. "I have never given up hope, though ten years have passed since I have seen my boy. I am sorry that I have troubled you, sir."

"Not at all," said the Head. A strange expression had come over the Head's kind old face. "You might care to see the boy who has borne your name here?" He paused a moment. "It is an extraordinary coincidence that he bears a most remarkable resemblance to you. Such a likeness I have seldom or never seen. Stay, I will send for him."

The Head touched the bell, and the page was sent for Erroll. In a few minutes the junior, pale and quiet, entered the study.

The captain rose to his feet, his eyes upon the schoolboy's face.

His lips were trembling. "Good heavens!" he muttered. He started towards the junior. "Boy! What is your name? Who are you?"

"I do not know, sir," said Erroll quietly.

"You do not know!"
"This is Captain Erroll," said the Head.

The junior started, and the crimson crept into his face.

"Do not be afraid, my boy," said the captain, his eyes still upon Erroll's flushed face. "From my heart I believe that Heaven has been merciful to me at last. You say you do not know your name?"

"I never knew it, sir."
"Tell Captain Erroll your story," said the Head.

The junior obeyed. In few words he told it, as he had told Mornington—the strange life of the son of Gentleman Jim, of the hard fight he had fought to keep from following in the criminal's footsteps, of the belief always fixed in his mind that Gentleman Jim was not his father. The captain listened without interrupting him once. Erroll's voice died away at last.

"This man, Gentleman Jim, is still here?" he asked, turning to the Head.

"Yes—I was about to telephone to the police, when you came—"

"Let me see him!"
"Certainly. Remain here, Erroll."

The captain followed Dr. Chisholm from the study. Erroll remained alone—silent and pale, but his heart was beating with a strange hope.

Gentleman Jim, in the locked cellar,

(Continued on page 12.)

IN HIS TRUE COLOURS!

(Continued from page 6.)

turned savagely as he heard the key grate in the lock. His hands were bound. He rose from a stool as the door opened, and Dr. Chisholm rustled in. Then he started, and his desperate face grew white as Captain Erroll strode in. His eyes gleamed like a hunted animal's as he backed away.

Captain Erroll strode to him, and scanned his face in grim silence. He spoke at last.

"James Stanton!" he said.

The cracksmen shrugged his shoulders. "Gentleman Jim, at your service," he said.

"I have found you at last," said the captain, quietly. He turned to the Head. "Ten years ago, Dr. Chisholm, I was a young lieutenant, and this man—James Stanton—was in my regiment. He was discovered selling military information to a German agent, and it was I who exposed him. He fled, a ruined man, and a month later I received a letter from him. He had revenged himself by stealing my little son. He told me, in his letter, that the boy was to be placed in the hands of thieves to be brought up a thief. That was his revenge upon me. I sought him for years in vain—till I lost all hope, and went out to the colonies, giving up hope at last. And this is the man who brought that lad to the school?"

"This is the man!"

"It is enough!" said Captain Erroll. "James Stanton, I can almost forgive you now—now that I have found my son!"

"You have found him!" muttered the cracksmen. "You have found him—but beware; you have not done with Gentleman Jim yet!"

The captain quitted him without replying. His face was bright—years of age seemed to have dropped away from him. It was the call of duty that had brought him home from a distant colony to fight for the old flag—and it was so that he had found his son! Erroll, in the Head's study, was waiting—when the captain came in. He held out his hand to the boy.

"My son!" he said softly.

Erroll stood, with catching breath.

"It was your own name that the scoundrel gave you, my boy, when he brought you here," said the captain, as he took the junior's hands. "Your own name! He believed that I had gone back to Honduras, and it was safe to use my name—it is by chance, or rather by Heaven's mercy, that I was still in England—and have found my son! My son!"

Only one word fell from Erroll's trembling lips!

"Father!"

It was a nine days' wonder at Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co. rejoiced when they heard the news—and Mornington almost danced with satisfaction.

Only Peele of the Fourth looked glum.

Gentleman Jim was taken away by men in blue; and in the strong grip of the law, he was not likely to give more trouble to the gallant soldier whom he had so cruelly wronged, or to the boy

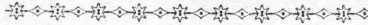
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who had suffered so much from his revengeful rascality. He was gone from Erroll's life.

Erroll of the Fourth, as even the nuts had to admit now, was not the son of a cracksmen—he was the son of Captain Erroll the brave soldier to whom he had been so strangely restored. There was no more thought of his leaving Rookwood. The shadow of the past had been lifted—the future lay before him bright and sunny—the reward of the long struggle he had made for honour and right. And in his happiness he fully forgave those who had schemed against him—and, indeed, could afford to forgive Peele of the Fourth—for it was due to Peele's cunning scheme that he had, at last, found his father, and that from the shadows of the past he had come into the light at last.

THE END.

(In next week's issue of the POPULAR there will be another splendid long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., entitled "Jimmy Silver's Enemy!" By Owen Conquest.)



POPULAR FAVOURITES!

No. 19.—
REGINALD TALBOT.



I think I am very safe in saying that Reginald Talbot is one of the most popular characters at St. Jim's, and a great favourite with the girl readers. He is a few months older than the other fellows in the Shell, and a somewhat quiet and reserved fellow.

Some people, looking at him, would say, "He has been through a hard time; it has made him a man before his time." They may be right, to a certain extent. A few years ago, before he entered St. Jim's, Talbot had a very hard life to live. Many of you know the history of his dark past, when he was a

member of a gang of cracksmen, and known as "the Toff."

He was very young then, and, having been brought up with such notorious characters and horrible surroundings, he did not know the difference between right and wrong. But as time passed, the horrible truth dawned upon him, and he shuddered at what he had been doing.

He left the old life, resolved to commence on the straight path, despite the black character he held in the eyes of the police. A little later he gained the King's Pardon through saving a troop train from disaster.

There are few fellows at St. Jim's who are not acquainted with Talbot's past, yet he is the most popular fellow in the school. Many respect him for his courageous, steadfast, and now honest nature, and a few hate him for it.

Gerald Crooke, his cousin, comes under the latter heading.

Between these two there has been a long feud, although it is a very one-sided affair. Crooke hates Talbot for many reasons, one being the close friendship between Colonel Lindon, their guardian, and the Shell fellow. Crooke has got it into his head that Talbot has "toaded up" to the old gentleman, in an attempt to get into the will, though that is all wrong. But on Talbot's side it is very different. He is quite prepared at any moment to be friends with his cousin. He bears no malice, although Crooke has many times tried to get him expelled from the school and into the black books of the colonel.

Many acquaintances of the olden days have turned up, like a bad penny, all doing their best to get Talbot to return to the old life, where he had been almost indispensable to them. Among these so-called friends was the Professor, or John Rivers, the head of the gang. He in particular proved a dangerous foe to Talbot, and long was the battle which raged between these two and the Professor's pretty daughter, who, through loyalty to her parent, stuck to John Rivers, hating herself all the time.

But there is an end to all things, good or bad. The fight finished, Talbot triumphed, and has the satisfaction of knowing himself responsible for the reformation of the Professor and his daughter. When the war broke out, John Rivers answered the country's call, distinguished himself on the field, and came back to take a post in Scotland Yard. Marie Rivers came to the school as a nurse in the sanatorium, and there she still is, looked upon as a fairy god-mother, and loved by all.

Now thoroughly reformed, and absolutely above suspicion, Talbot continues his career of success at St. Jim's, a great sportsman, a splendid scholar, and a friend to all.

Here is his signature:

Reginald Talbot