THE FOURTH FORM AT GRIMSLADE!

BY FRANK RICHARDS

SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY No 238

4d

7.2.35

UNIQUE!! DRAMATIC!! SENSATIONAL!!

The most amazing school you've ever read about! Where the masters are criminals and escaped convicts; where the pupils are being taught every branch of crime . . .

CROOKS' ACADEMY.

To this extraordinary school goes Ray Barry, the straightest kid breathing. One honest boy in a den of criminals! But Ray vows they'll never make a crook of him; he's determined to expose this evil place to the police. Read the story of Ray's battle for his honour and good name at—

CROOKS' ACADEMY.

This magnificent school yarn is now appearing week by week in

THE RANGER

EVERY SATURDAY . . . . . Price 2d.

The FOURTH FORM AT GRIMSLADE

by FRANK RICHARDS

A grand long complete yarn of school life, telling of the exciting escapades of JIM DAINTY & Co., the jolly chums of Grimslade School.

CHAPTER 1.

Keeping It Dark!

"Oh! My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger Rawlinson in alarm.

Ginger was fairly caught! It was rotten luck from the point of view of the juniors of Redmayes House at Grimslade, certainly.

Redmayes House was in constant rivalry with the other House at the famous Yorkshire school—White's. Ginger Rawlinson and his study-mates, Streaky Bacon and Sandy Bean, were the acknowledged leaders of the Redmayes juniors, while Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson, of Study No. 10, headed the stalwarts of White's House.

At the present moment Ginger was in No. 10 Study in White's House. The studies being on the ground floor and the dusk thick on the quad, Ginger had found it quite easy to get into Jim Dainty's study like a bad, bad burglar.

He was aware that Dainty and Dawson were in the gym. Perhaps he had forgotten the existence of their fat study-mate Fritz von Splitz, the German junior.

It was Fritz that happened.

Ginger had shut down the window behind him, and was just going to begin. Ragging the study was his intention—a playful jest on the chums of No. 10 in White's House. Then a fat figure rolled in at the door and switched on the light. Ginger ejaculated in alarm, and Fritz Splitz stared at him with startled moon-eyes.

"Mein goodness!" exclaimed Fritz. "Vat vas you do in dis study, you Ginger? You gum here for a vun rag before, ain't it?"

Fritz was no fighting-man. Ginger could have handled six or seven Fritzes. But a single yell from the fat Rhinelander would have brought a swarm of White's juniors in from the passage. There were plenty of them at hand. Ginger, captured in the enemy's quarters, would have been booked for the time of his life. But presence of mind was Ginger's long suit. In that moment of peril he had a brainwave.

"Quiet, old chap!" he breathed. "I've got a cake!"

Fritz's large mouth had already opened for a shout. But the shout was not uttered. The mention of a cake did it! It touched Fritz on the tenderest spot. Any other White's junior would

have buried himself on the man from Redmayes. But the House and the school did not weigh so much with Fritz as a cake.

"Oh, good!" said Fritz amicably. "Ferry good! Vere is tat gake?"

"Keep it dark," breathed Ginger. "I've got a whacking cake in my study, over the way. I—I want you to come over and—and whack it out, with me and Bacon and Bean. See? Not a word."

Fritz grinned.

He understood. He was being bribed. Ginger knew his man! Fritz was "on" at once.

"Tat is all right, mein gott Chinger," said Fritz. "I says nutting—I geeps it tark! Took out of sight—they are gumming."

Ginger ducked out of sight behind the back of the armchair in the corner. Fritz had warned him only in time. Bates and Pulley and Tucker of the Fourth appeared in the doorway. They came into the study.

Ginger hardly breathed in the corner.

"Where's Dainty and Dawson?" asked Tommy Tucker.

"Tey are in te chyn," said Fritz. "Tey vant you vellows to go and see lem tere. You go at vince, ain't it."

"Rot!" answered Tommy Tucker, seating himself in the armchair. "Dainty told us to come here about the footer. He won't be long."

"I—I tink tat he vill be ferry long," contradicted Fritz. "I tink that you petter go, ain't it."

"Rats!"

The three White's juniors remained in the study. Fritz blinked at them uneasily. Ginger made no sound. A few minutes later there was a tramp of feet in the passage, and Jim Dainty came into the study, followed by Dick Dawson. Ginger Rawlinson, behind the back of the armchair, suppressed a groan. He was fairly "for it" now, if [illegible]

"Oh, here you are," said Jim Dainty cheerily. He stared at the fat Rhinelander. "What are you goggling at, Fritz? Anything up?"

"Ach! Nein! Notting!" stammered Fritz. "I vas not groping anyting tark, mein good Tainty! But I tink I do not vant you vellows talking in tis study—I have some work to do. You go away mit yourself, ain't it."

"Rats!" said Dick Dawson. "Shut up, Fritz."

"Oh, grikey!" murmured Fritz, as the group of White's juniors began discussing football. "Oh, grumbs!" If Ginger was discovered in the study, the prospects of the cake were dubious. Fritz was naturally anxious.

So long as Ginger kept quiet, he was safe. Jim Dainty & Co. had no suspicion, so far. But it was not easy for a fellow to keep perfectly still in a narrow corner, jammed between an armchair and a wall.

For ten minutes or more Ginger Rawlinson did not stir. Then he became conscious of "pins and needles." For several minutes more he endured that infliction with heroic fortitude of the Spartan boy of old. But flesh and blood could not stand it, and Ginger had to move.

"Hallo, is that some animal in the room?" exclaimed Tommy Tucker, as he heard a sound behind the armchair. He rose to look.

"Ach! It is only te gat!" exclaimed Fritz in alarm. "It is all right, Tucker—only te House gat!"

"What the thump have you got the cat in the study for?" asked Dainty.

"I—I am ferry fond of gats!" stammered Fritz. "All Chermans are ferry fond of animals."

"How fond they must be of one another, then!" remarked Tommy Tucker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Tucker glanced over the high back of the chair. His glance became

a stare. He did not see a cat. What he saw was a mop of red hair. Ginger was packed close, and Tommy did not see him or his face—but he had a glimpse of the top of his red head. He stared—and then he grinned.

He stepped across to the study table and picked up the inkpot.

"What the dickens——" began Jim Dainty.

Without explaining, Tommy stepped back to the armchair. He leaned over the high back and up-ended the inkpot.

For an instant the other juniors stared at him in amazement. Then they understood. From behind the armchair came a fearful yell as the ink streamed down the red head of Ginger Rawlinson.

"Ooo-whoooop!"

"Ginger!" yelled Jim Dainty, as the spluttering Ginger leaped to his feet.

"Ach! Mein goodness!" gasped Fritz.

"Collar him!"

Ginger Rawlinson stood streaming with ink. His red head was drenched, and it ran in streams down his face. Ink smothered him. He dabbed it away wildly and coughed and spluttered as some got into his nose and mouth. Dainty dragged the armchair away. Four or five pairs of hands grasped the hapless Ginger, and yanked him out of the corner.

"A Redmayes tick—hidden in our study!" exclaimed Dick Dawson. "Bump him! Rag him! Give him jip!"

"Oh, my hat! Yaroooh! Leggo! Whoooop!" spluttered Ginger.

He struggled frantically in the hands of the enemy. But he struggled without avail. It was really awful for Ginger! He was bumped on the study carpet till the dust rose in clouds. More ink was found and scattered over him. A bottle of gum was unearthed for his especial benefit. By the time the White's fellows were done with him, Ginger Rawlinson was a remarkable-looking object. His best friends would not have recognised him.

He sprawled, breathless and spluttering, on the floor, streaming ink, sticky with gum. The study rang with laughter.

"Oooooogh!" gurgled Ginger. "Whoooogh! Oh, my giddy golosher! Oooooh! Yurrrrrrrgrgh!"

"Chuck him out!" chortled Dawson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The window was opened and Ginger Rawlinson dropped—not gently—into the quad. There was a howl as he landed. A roar of laughter followed the horrid-looking object that crawled away to Redmayes House.

"That fat freak knew he was here!" exclaimed Jim Dainty, fixing an accusing eye on Friedrich von Splitz. "He was keeping it dark!"

"Ach! I know nothing!" gasped Fritz in alarm. "I did not see tat poy, and he did not offer me vun gake to keep it tark—ach! Mein goodness! Let go! Kick me not on mein trousers! Ach! Pang me not in te pread-paskets! Bunch me not in mein eye! Yaroooooh!"

Ginger had had a severe ragging. But Fritz von Splitz fared still more severely. A White's fellow who backed up the enemy was a fellow to be made an example of—and Dainty & Co. made an example of Fritz. The hapless Rhinelander hardly knew what was happening to him. It seemed like a lot of earthquakes and air raids happening all at once. When he was finally kicked out of the study, what was left of Fritz von Splitz crawled away gasping and gurgling and groaning.

It was a couple of hours later when Fritz Splitz presented himself at Ginger's study in Redmayes House. Fritz still had hope of the cake—though after what had happened to Ginger, the hope was very faint.

To his surprise, and still more to his

satisfaction, he was received with open arms. Ginger Rawlinson, Streaky Bacon, and Sandy Bean, welcomed the fat German junior from White's House as if he had been their dearest pal, and Fritz's spectacle-eyes gleamed over a large plum cake that was ready on the table.

They opened still wider when he heard what Ginger had to say, while he ate the cake. Fritz was astonished at first. Then he grinned. Then he chuckled. And when he left—which was not till the last crumb of the cake was gone—Ginger winked at his chums.

"What price that for a rag on White's?" he asked.

"Priceless!" answered Bacon and Bean together.

"But keep it dark!" chuckled Ginger.

CHAPTER 2.
Mysterious!

JIM DAINTY stared.

He could hardly believe his eyes. He came into his study for prep, and as he switched on the light an amazing scene greeted him.

When he had last been in No. 10, that study had been as tidy as any junior study in White's House. Now there was a startling change.

The table was overturned, the chairs piled on it, the carpet draped over the chairs. Books and papers were scattered on all sides. The inkpot, on its side on the mantelpiece, dripped into the fender. The study clock lay on the floor, full of gum. The study looked as if a cyclone had struck it. On the looking-glass over the mantelpiece was a chalked inscription in large capital letters:

"WITH KIND REGARDS FROM REDMAYES."

The study was wrecked. Only the fireplace where the fire was neatly laid to be lighted for the evening, was in order. The raggers apparently had overlooked that.

"My hat!" gasped Jim Dainty.

"Oh, crumbs!" stuttered Dick Dawson, who was following him in.

"It's a Redmayes rag!" exclaimed Dainty. "But how the thump——"

There was a yell in the passage in the voice of Tommy Tucker.

"Look here! Who's been ragging my study?"

Dainty and Dawson ran along to No. 3. It was in much the same state as No. 10. They stared in blankly. Angry shouts along the passage from other members of the Fourth told that other studies had been ragged. Most of the fellows had been in the gym till prep, and the ragger had found the coast clear. There was wild wrath up and down the junior passage in White's House.

"But how the thump did they get away with it?" exclaimed Dainty. "It was Ginger & Co.—they've left a message in No. 10. Didn't anybody see them?"

"Must have got in by a window!" said Dawson. "Ginger got in by the window that time we caught him in No. 10."

"Look here, we're not standing this!" bawled Bates. "I'm jolly well going to call White!"

"Oh, chuck it," snapped Jim Dainty. "It's a House rag, and we've got to stand it. We'll give them as good some time."

There were loud exclamations of wrath as the White's juniors proceeded to put their studies to rights. It was not an easy or a brief task. Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson got No. 10 into something like order at last. They were rather tired by the time they had finished. Fritz Splitz grinned in at the doorway, too late to lend aid.

"Ach! I hear tat tere has peen a Redmayes rag," said Fritz.

"Didn't you see anything of them?" demanded Dainty. "You were in the House."

"Ach! Nein! I see nottings! I was in te gommon-room, eating mein gake."

"You might have come in and lent a hand getting the room to rights," growled Dawson. "Now you're here, put a match to the fire."

"Ach! I have no matches," said Fritz hastily. "I vill go and borrow some matches along te passage."

"I've got some, fathead," said Dawson.

But Fritz was gone. Perhaps for reasons of his own, the fat German did not want to put a match to the fire.

Dawson struck a match and knelt before the fire to ignite it. It caught and flared, and Dawson was rising to his feet when there came a sudden crack like a rifle shot from the fire.

He jumped.

"My hat!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "There's a cracker in the fire—left over from the Fifth, I suppose. Why—what—oh, crumbs—whoop!"

There was more than one cracker in the fire. There were a good many crackers—all carefully packed away in the fire. That was clearly the reason why the ragger had not disturbed it.

Crack, crack, crack!

Bang, bang, bang!

"Oh, crikey!"

"Great pip!"

Fireworks cracked and banged, and sticks and paper and lumps of coal scattered from the grate.

"Those Redmayne rotters!" yelled Jim Dainty, as a lump of coal caught him on the chin. "Oh, my hat! We ought to have guessed—yarooh!"

Bang, bang! Crack, crack!

There was a rush of fellows along the passage. A crowd stared into No. 10. Among them was the grinning, fat face of Fritz von Splitz.

"What is this uproar?" Mr. White, the Housemaster, came pushing through the crowd, with a frowning brow. "Fireworks! Dainty, you are aware that fireworks are not permitted in the studies! How dare you?"

Mr. White broke off as he stared at the grate. He realised that it was not the occupants of No 10 Study who had been letting off fireworks. Smoke and a smell of gunpowder filled the room, and a few final crackers cracked among the scattered sticks and coals.

"Who played this trick?" thundered the Housemaster.

Then his eyes caught the inscription on the glass, which had not yet been rubbed out.

"With kind regards from Redmayes!" he read out. "Upon my word! Is this a trick played by boys of the other House?"

Nobody answered that question. But the Housemaster did not need an answer. He strode away with a frowning brow.

"Oh, my hat!" said Jim Dainty. "Ginger's for it now! He was an ass to leave that on the glass! White's gone over to Redmayes."

Mr. White was losing no time. House rags, within limits, were not wholly disapproved of by Dr. Sparshott, the Head of Grimslade. But a rag like this was outside the limit, in Mr. White's opinion.

Outside the House, he almost ran into Dr. Sparshott, who had been strolling in the square, and had heard the uproar of the fireworks in No. 10 Study. "Sammy" Sparshott fully agreed with Mr. White that this "rag" was outside the limit, and walked across to Redmayes House with him, to look into the matter.

Mr. Redmayes, informed of what had happened, agreed also; and immediately sent word round by his prefects to call the House together in Hall. Dr. Sparshott's glance dwelt rather suspiciously on Ginger & Co. He was almost certain that he saw Ginger wink at Bacon and Benn.

But the inquiry grew blank. Strange to relate, every junior in Redmayes House was able to prove that he had been nowhere near White's House between call-over and prep. It really looked almost as if they had known that there might be an inquiry, and had got their alibis ready for it. The Housemasters were perplexed; Sammy Sparshott was puzzled. It was quite mysterious.

When the House was dismissed, Ginger & Co. went back to their study grinning.

"Some rag!" murmured Ginger.

Bacon and Dean chortled.

"Worth standing a cake or two, what?" chuckled Ginger.

Which was very mysterious indeed!

The following morning on the way to Big School Jim Dainty called to Ginger Rawlinson.

"Did you get whopped for that rag, fathead!"

"Whopped!" repeated Ginger, disdainfully. "Not in your lifetime! My dear man, we're going to rag your mouldy old House right and left, and we're not getting any whoppings! You'll find your dorm ragged to-night! Put it down to Redmayes!"

"Rats!" answered Jim.

But Ginger proved a true prophet.

CHAPTER 3.
Amazing!

YORKE of the Sixth was seeing lights out for the Fourth in White's House. At half-past nine the juniors marched into the dormitory, and there was a yell of surprise and wrath that woke most of the echoes of the House.

"Redmayes cads!"

"Another rag!"

Yorke stared in. The dormitory had been, and should still have been, a picture of neatness, tidiness and cleanliness from end to end. Instead of which beds had been dragged off the bedstead, bedclothes scattered all over the floor, pillows and bolsters thrown under the beds, pyjamas hurled right and left.

"Who's done this?" roared Yorke.

"Ach! I tink tat it is a Redmayes rag!" exclaimed Fritz Splitz.

Nobody had any doubt about that! Ginger Rawlinson had told Jim Dainty that the dormitory would be ragged—and ragged it was! It was ragged with a vengeance! But how the raggers had got in, and how they had got out again, unseen, was a mystery. Studies might be entered by the windows, but not the dormitories, high up in the building.

"Well, my hat!" said Yorke with a whistle. "Set to work and make these beds, you kids—and look sharp!"

Fritz von Splitz grinned a fat grin as the exasperated juniors set to work. Only one bed was left intact—and that was Fritz'. Why the raggers had spared the fat German's bed nobody knew, unless they had got had time to finish. Anyhow, Fritz' bed was untouched, and he rolled into it and watched the other fellows with a grinning face.

The Fourth were a quarter of an hour late in bed that night. When Yorke put out the light and went, there was a wrathful discussion from bed to bed. Redmayes had scored again over White's; and even Jim Dainty, keen as he was, could not guess how Ginger & Co. had got away with it. It seemed a sheer impossibility for Redmayes men to get into White's dormitory, upset it from end to end and escape unseen and undiscovered. Yet they had done it!

Fritz Splitz did not join in the excited discussion. His jaws were otherwise engaged. Fritz was sitting up in bed eating a big plum cake. When he had finished the cake Fritz chuckled and laid his bullet head on the pillow, but his saucer-eyes remained open. One by one the juniors dropped off to sleep.

Jim Dainty awoke suddenly.

He lifted his head on the pillow and

stared round him in the dark dormitory. From the clock-tower came the boom of eleven: an hour at which both Houses at Grimslade were usually buried in slumber, masters as well as boys. But someone was up in the Fourth Form dormitory in White's House. Jim could hear a movement near him, and he knew that some sound close to his head had awakened him.

"Who——" he began. He broke off with a wild howl. A paper bag descended on his face and burst.

From the burst bag came a flood of soot. It smothered Jim's face and his head and his pillow. Smothered and choked, he sat up, spluttering and gurgling.

"Urrrrgh! Ooooghl Oooh! Atchcooh—choo—ooooop!"

"What the thump!" came Dawson's sleepy voice.

"Yurrrggh!" gurgled Jim.

Fellows started up in bed on all sides. Dick Dawson jumped out and lighted a candle-end.

In the glimmer of the candle the White's juniors stared at Jim Dainly in horrified amazement.

"Is—is—is that you?" gasped Dawson.

"Oooooggghh!"

It did not look like Dainty! It looked like a chimney sweep sitting in his bed. He gasped and gurgled, coughed and spluttered. He gouged soot from his eyes and nose, his mouth and ears.

"Ooooogh! It's a rag!" he gasped. "That villain Ginger——"

"He can't be here!" exclaimed Dawson.

"Look!" snapped Jim.

On the coverlet of the bed lay a card. On the card was written:

"POOR OLD WHITE'S!"

The juniors stared at it in amazement. Ginger's fist was well known; evidently it had been written by the great thief of Redmayne.

"Ginger here!" gasped Dawson. "How the thump did he get out of his House? How the thump did he get into White's. My hat!"

Jim Dainty leaped from his bed.

"Look for him!" he panted. "I haven't heard the door open—and you know the hinge creaks! He's still here."

"Oh, crumbs!"

Three or four fellows rushed to the door, to guard it against the raider's escape. Two or three more candle-ends were lighted, and a crowd of fellows searched up and down the dormitory. Only one remained in bed—Fritz von Splitz, who seemed to be asleep, undisturbed by the clamour, for he was snoring peacefully.

Up and down the dormitory went the excited juniors, looking into corners, peering under beds. Jim Dainty was certain that the raider had not got out—and if he had not got out he was still there. But he was not to be found. Every bed was looked under—every corner and recess searched—but there was no trace of an intruder.

"He's gone!" said Dick Dawson at last.

"I suppose he must have!" growled Jim Dainty. "My hat! We'll make those Redmayne rotters sit up for this!"

The dormitory door opened with a creak of the hinge. The light switched on and Mr. White looked in. Evidently the Housemaster had heard something going on in the Fourth.

"What is this—why—what—who is that?" He stared in blank astonishment at Dainty. "Who—what——"

"Only me, sir!" stammered Jim.

"You are smothered with soot! You are all out of bed. Every boy in this dormitory will take two hundred lines!"

"Ach!" Fritz Splitz woke up very suddenly. "Mein goodness! I am not out of bed, sir! I am vast asleep mit myself!"

"You will not take the lines, Splitz. Every other boy!" exclaimed Mr. White.

"Dainty, clean yourself at once and go back to bed!"

Mr. White did not suspect a House raid this time—at eleven p.m. Nobody enlightened him. Jim Dainty washed off the soot as well as he could, and the frowning Housemaster saw the Form back to bed before he left.

"Two hundred lines each!" groaned Dawson. "That rotter Ginger——"

"We'll scalp him!" growled Bates.

It was some time before Jim Dainty dropped asleep again. He was puzzled and trying to think it out. How Ginger of Redmayes got in and out of White's, apparently with ease, and undiscovered, was an intriguing mystery. It seemed impossible—yet Ginger did it!

Jim slept at last, and did not wake till the rising-bell clanged out over Grimslade. He was the first out of bed, and fellows who had not awakened at the clang of the bell awakened fast enough at the roar that came from Dainty.

"Who's bagged my clobber?"

"Who's bagged mine?" yelled Dawson.

"Great Scott! Where's my trousers?"

"Where's my waistcoat?"

"Where's my socks?"

It was a chorus all over the dormitory. Jim Dainty's clothes were gone; Dawson's were gone, and every other fellow missed one or more articles—excepting Fritz Splitz. Fritz' "clobber" was intact, and the fat German grinned as he dressed himself.

"Ginger again!" howled Tommy Tucker. "He's raided our clobber!"

"Well, this takes the cake!" gasped Jim Dainty. "How does he do it? How the thump does he do it?"

The exasperated juniors searched for the missing clothes. They were still searching when Yorke of the Sixth tramped into the dormitory with an ashplant in one hand and a stack of clothing on the other arm, and an extremely warlike expression on his face.

"You young sweeps!" roared the White's prefect. "Who chucked these clothes out of the window? What?"

"Oh, crikey!"

Yorke hurled the stack of clothes in a heap on the floor. Then he whacked round with the ashplant, distributing the whacks with impartiality and liberality. The dormitory was full of sounds of woe when he stamped away.

"Ow!" gasped Jim Dainty, rubbing the place where he had caught a lick of the ashplant. "Wow! I'll spifficate Ginger! But how does he do it? Is the red-headed freak a magician or what?"

How Ginger did it was a baffling mystery. Really it looked as if the red-headed junior of Redmayes House dabbled in black magic!

CHAPTER 6.

The Traitor!

"THE door won't open!"

"Oh, rot!"

"I tell you it won't!" snapped out Jim Dainty.

And it didn't!

That evening, before prep, there was a meeting in the Junior Common-room in White's House. The mysterious and exasperating raids by the rival House were the topic. The meeting had to be adjourned for prep; but when Jim Dainty went to the door to open it, he found it fast. Someone had locked it on the outside.

"Some ass larking!" growled Dawson. "It can't be Ginger this time!"

"Look!" ejaculated Dainty.

A slip of cardboard was pushed under the door from outside. Jim caught it up, and every eye glared at it. On it was written in Ginger's hand:

"BOW-WOW! LIKEWISE RATS!"

"Ginger!" yelled Tucker.

There was a sound of retreating footsteps outside.

"We—we—we'll scalp that Redmayes lick!" gasped Jim Dainty. He hammered on the door. "If somebody

would turn up before he gets clear, we can catch him in the House."

Thump! Thump! Bang! Bang!

There was a step outside.

"Stop that row!" It was Yorke's voice. "You young sweeps——"

"Let us out, Yorke!" shouted Dainty. "The door's locked on us!"

"The key's not here!"

"Oh, my hat!"

It was a quarter of an hour before Mr. White arrived with another key to the door. The Housemaster demanded to know who had locked the door, but no one could—or would—tell him. The exasperated juniors went to their studies for prep.

It was another baffling mystery; for the House was closed, plenty of senior fellows had been about the passages, yet no one seemed to have seen a Redmayes man in the House. Unless it was magic, it was really impossible to guess how the amazing Ginger did it!

Dainty and Dawson arrived in No. 10. They found Fritz von Splitz there, engaged in demolishing a plum-cake. Fritz had not been at the meeting in Common-room. He grinned at them as they came in, with his mouth full of cake.

"Ach! I hear tat Chinger has been at it again!" he remarked. "Tat Chinger he peat you all along te line, ain't it?"

"Whose cake are you scoffing, you fat freak?" growled Dainty.

"Mein goot Tainty, it is mein gake! I vould have haf some for you, but it vas only a tree-pound gake." And Fritz carefully finished the last crumb and the last plum.

Jim gave him a sharp look. Fritz von Splitz was generally hard up, and if a fellow had a cake in his study it was never safe from the fat Rhinelander. Quite frequently, of late, Fritz had been seen devouring cakes; yet no one had missed tuck from his study. Unless Fritz had had unusual remittances, it was rather a mystery how he came by those cakes.

Prep, however, claimed Dainty's attention, and he forgot Fritz and his cakes.

When the Fourth turned in, in White's House that night, Jim Dainty did not close his eyes.

After the usual buzz of talk had died away, and the dormitory was deep in slumber, Jim's eyes were still open. When he was sure that the rest were asleep, he slipped from his bed without a sound, and tiptoed to the door. How the Redmayes raider got into the House after it was locked up for the night was a mystery that Dainty intended to solve—if Ginger came again. If the raider came that night he was going to find one wakeful fellow on the watch.

Eleven boomed out in the dim night. A few minutes after the last stroke had died away Jim heard a sound.

It was the creak of a bed. He wondered whether some other fellow was getting up with the same intention as himself. There was a pale glimmer of starlight in at the high windows, and in that glimmer he saw a moving figure. Dim as the light was, he recognised the fat, podgy figure of Friedrich von Splitz.

He stared. Fritz Splitz was about the last fellow likely to leave his warm bed on a cold night to watch for a raider. It was more likely that he was going to search for toffee in some other fellow's pockets. Evidently he did not know that anyone else was out of bed.

Dainty grinned and tiptoed silently towards the fat figure. If Fritz was after toffee, he was going to be caught in the act. To his amazement he saw the fat German lift a sheet of cardboard and pin it to the dormitory wall with a drawing-pin. Even in the dim light he could see what was daubed on the card in huge capital letters:

"WHITE'S HOUSE IS FLAYED OUT!
REDMAYES IS COCK-HOUSE!"

Jim Dainty stared dumbfounded.

He was too astounded to move. Almost he fancied that he was dreaming, or that it must be Ginger Rawlin-

son who was pinning up that placard. But there was no mistaking the podgy form of Fritz Splitz.

Having fixed the card, Fritz moved silently towards Dainty's bed. Something was in his podgy hand. It was a paper bag, and it flashed into Jim's mind what it contained. It was another bag of soot!

He made a spring.

"Ach! Mein goodness!" It was a startled yell of terror from Fritz Splitz as his arm was grasped.

He spun round.

"You!" roared Dainty. "You all the time! I've got it now!"

"Ach!" yelled Fritz. "Let go! It is not me—it is Chinger—I mean, I was vast asleep—tat is to say—mein goodness!"

"Wake up, you fellows!" shouted Dainty. "Get a light! I've got him!"

"What the thump—got whom?" gasped Dawson.

"The jolly old raider!"

"Great pip!"

Every fellow in the dormitory turned out. The light of a candle flickered on the fat, terrified face of Fritz von Splitz, wriggling in the grasp of Jim Dainty.

"What the dickens—that's Splitz!" exclaimed Dick Dawson. "Hallo! Ginger's been here, though—look, look at that card on the wall!"

"Ginger again!" exclaimed Tucker.

"Ginger be blowed!" roared Dainty. "It was Splitz all the time! I was on the watch for Ginger, and I saw that fat Boche pin up the card, and he was just going to chuck that bag of soot over my bed, thinking I was in it."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Ach! It vas not me!" shrieked Fritz. "I know nothing—mein mind he is vun perfect plank!"

"Now I know why the ragger never touched Splitz's things!" howled Dainty. "Now I know how he got into the House—he was here all the time! Now I know where that fat Hun got his cakes from! That villain Ginger has been bribing him with tuck!"

"Ach! I vas not pribed!" wailed Fritz. "A Cherman gannot be pribed!"

"My only hat!" gasped Dawson. "We never dreamed that there was a traitor in the House! The fat scoundrel!"

"Smash him! Jump on him!"

"Give him the soot!"

"Ach! Oooogh! Woooooough!" gurgled Fritz, as the bag of soot was burst over his bullet head. "Oooooooooh!"

"Rag him! Scrag him!"

The mystery was a mystery no longer. How Ginger had carried out those amazing raids was revealed now—he had carried them out by proxy! Fritz von Splitz had been his agent in White's House—carrying out Ginger's plans for him!

Nobody had dreamed of guessing it! Plenty of fellows had wondered whence Fritz drew his unusual supplies of tuck; but no fellow had guessed for a moment that the horn of plenty flowed from Redmayes House! But they knew now!

But for the fact that Jim Dainty had been on the watch for Ginger, and had caught Splitz, the mysterious raids might have gone on, as mysterious as ever, all through the term. But the traitor in White's House was caught now—the game was up!

"Ach! It vas not me!" wailed Fritz Splitz, as he was bumped and thumped, and thumped and bumped. "Ach! Groogh! Kick me not, you peasts and prutes! Bunch me not, you peastly pounders! It was all tat Chinger! It vas all vun choke—vun leetle choke! It vas because you kick me in mein stutty, not because Chinger pribe me mit duck! Ach goodness! Leaf off to kick me, you peasts! Mein goot Tainty——"

"Smash him!"

"Himmel! Mein goot Tainty, geep tem off!" howled Fritz. "Geep tem off, and I vill giff you te cake tat Chinger giff me next time. In te morning he giff me vun cake——"

"Scrag him!"

It was a wrecked Fritz that lay in a gurgling, sooty heap on the floor when the juniors had done with him.

"Now, you fat rascal," said Jim Dainty, "where were you going to see Ginger in the morning?"

"Ach! Wow! Himmel! Oooogh! I go to see him in te tool-shed after prekker!" moaned Fritz. "Ach! I have no more te breff! I tink tat I die! Ach! I have fearful pains in all my bones! I have vun ache in mein pread-pasket! Oooooogh!"

"Somebody else will see Ginger in the tool-shed after brekker to-morrow morning!" grinned Jim Dainty.

Fritz Splitz crawled, groaning, back to bed. He was not likely to take bribes from the rival House of Grimslade again! Dearly as Fritz loved plum-cakes, all the plum-cakes in the wide world would not have tempted him to go through another such ragging! Fritz had had his lesson—and after breakfast in the morning there was to be one for the enterprising Ginger.

CHAPTER 5.

Fit for Two!

GINGER RAWLINSON came into the tool-shed, a parcel under his arm, and a grin on his face. Sandy Bean and Streaky Bacon followed him in.

"Not here yet!" said Ginger, looking round. "The fat Boche is generally on the spot for his cake! What a skunk, you fellows, to back up against his own House! But what a stunt!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Streaky. "And White's will never guess!"

"Not in a lifetime!" chortled Sandy Bean. "They're all duds in White's!"

"Duds and duffers, the lot of them!" said Ginger. "We're keeping up this game all through the term. What? It costs something in cakes for that greedy Boche, but it's worth it. White's are getting frightfully wild! They don't know how we get into their House! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed Bacon and Bean.

"He, he, he!" came another roar from the doorway, and the Redmayes Co. spun round in surprise to see Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson, and a dozen White's fellows behind them, crowding in.

"Top of the morning, Ginger!" chortled Dainty. "Fancy meeting you! Is that a cake you've got there? I'm afraid Fritz won't be calling for it. At the present moment he's in my study, with two fellows sitting on his head to keep him quiet! We've come instead! Glad to see us?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the White's crowd.

Ginger's jaw dropped.

"Oh, my giddy galoshes!" he ejaculated. "That beastly Boche has given the game away! Out for it, you men!"

The Redmayes trio made a rush. But there was no escape for them. Hands grasped them on all sides, and Ginger & Co. sprawled on the floor, almost disappearing under the swarm of White's juniors.

What followed seemed like a nightmare to Ginger & Co. It had been a great stunt—a wonderful stunt—all Redmayes agreed that Ginger had excelled himself in planning that stunt! But the result was awful for Ginger & Co.

Three breathless, tattered, gasping wrecks were left sprawling on the floor of the tool-shed when Jim Dainty & Co. moaned away, roaring with laughter, and taking the cake with them. Jim Dainty lingered a moment, to up-end a pail of whitewash over the sprawling, gasping three, and then departed, leaving the heroes of Redmayes House feeling that life was hardly worth living.

Ginger & Co. picked themselves up. They blinked at one another through streaming whitewash. Then, slowly and sorrowfully, they limped away, roars of laughter following them as they limped.

That day there was a cake for tea in No. 10. But there was none for Fritz von Splitz! The horn of plenty had run dry for Fritz!

CHAPTER 6.
Sammy's Way!

SMACK!

Jim Dainty yelled as he caught it with his ear.

He staggered, and Fenwick of the Fifth Form strode on, leaving him staggering to his feet.

"The cheeky rotter!" exclaimed Dick Dawson.

Dainty righted himself and stared round with flushing eyes. He had seen Fenwick of the Fifth coming up the path towards Big School. As it was after class that looked as if Fenwick was booked for an interview with the Head in his study. It was not surprising, therefore, that the bully of White's House was in a bad temper. Still, that smack on the head in passing was quite unexpected. Perhaps Fenwick smacked Dainty's head because he loathed the new boy at Grimslade. Perhaps he smacked it because it was handy. Anyhow, he smacked it and walked on.

After him, like an arrow from a bow, went Dainty.

"Hold on!" shouted Dawson, rushing after Jim and catching him by the arm. "He's going in to see the Head——"

"I don't care! Let go, you ass!"

Jim tore his arm loose and rushed on after Fenwick of the Fifth. The senior stepped into the big doorway and disappeared. Jim came up the steps after him at a rush and tore into the doorway. There was a crash as he ran into somebody within.

"You rotter!" roared Jim, as he crashed, and hit out at the same moment. "Take that—and that—and that!"

"Great Mike!" gasped Dr. Samuel Sparshott, the Head of Grimslade, as he took them. "Who—what—what—Dainty! Are you mad?"

"Oh, crikey!"

A hand of iron dropped on Jim Dainty. "Sammy" Sparshott glared at him. Fenwick, in the passage leading to the Head's study, looked back and grinned. Dainty blinked at his headmaster; almost gibbered at him.

"Oh, sir! Sorry I didn't see it was you—oh, my hat! Oh, dear! Awfully sorry, sir! I—I was after somebody! Oh, lor'!"

"And you rushed in hitting out without taking the trouble to ascertain whom you were hitting?" drawled Sammy Sparshott. "You have a hefty punch for a lad of your age, Dainty! A very hefty punch! You must learn to take more care where you place it. Your headmaster is not a proper object. I suggest a punch-ball!"

Sammy released Jim Dainty's collar.

"Go to the gym, and tell Sergeant Starkey that you are to punch the ball from now till prep," he said. "Add that he is to touch you up with his cane if you slack."

"I—it's two hours to prep!" gasped Jim.

"Quite!" agreed Sammy.

He turned and walked after Fenwick to his study. Jim Dainty blinked after him, and then, with deep feelings, walked away to the gym to deliver his message to the school sergeant.

Dr. Sparshott opened his study door, went in, and beckoned to Fenwick to follow him. The black sheep of the Fifth had an expression of mingled sullenness and apprehension on his hard-featured face. No Grimslader liked to be up before Sammy, and Fenwick had more reason than any other Grimslader to dread an interview with him.

"Fenwick!" barked Sammy. "Have you given up smoking since the time I found cigarettes hidden in your study in Mr. White's House?"

"Entirely, sir," said Fenwick. "I realised, sir, that I had acted very foolishly, and made up my mind never to touch a cigarette again."

"No doubt the stains on your fingers are of ancient date?"

"Eh! Ah! Oh, yes!"

"And your pasty complexion is not due to smoking?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"And your shortness of wind in games practice—not due to smoking, either?"

"N-n-no!" stammered Fenwick, wondering savagely whether there was a single thing at Grimslade that escaped Sammy's eagle eye.

"Then how do you account for the fact that you were seen smoking only yesterday afternoon?" thundered Sammy.

Fenwick jibbed.

"Oh, sir! That—that was just once—merely once. I—I forgot——"

"You did not know that my eye was on you?"

"No, sir!" groaned Fenwick, dimly wondering how Sammy's eye could possibly have been on him when he had walked as far as Grimslade Water to enjoy that surreptitious smoke. "I—I never knew——"

"Neither was it!" said Dr. Sparshott calmly. "Nobody, so far as I know, saw you, Fenwick. But a guilty conscience needs no accuser!"

The black sheep of White's House blinked at him. He realised that Sammy had caught him. At that moment Cyril Fenwick hated Sammy!

"I shall not cane you, Fenwick!" said Dr. Sparshott. "I shall give you no punishment, because I have bluffed you into making the admission."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Fenwick, in great relief.

"I shall only endeavour," continued Sammy, "to impress on your mind the pernicious effects of smoking on a growing youth. Take off your jacket and put on those gloves."

Sammy Sparshott peeled off his own coat, pushed back his cuffs, and donned a pair of boxing gloves. The young man who was headmaster of Grimslade School was an old boxing Blue, and Fenwick of the Fifth, as he gingerly put on the gloves, wished that it was a caning instead.

"Boxing," said Sammy genially, "is a splendid exercise. It develops the muscle, quickness of eye and hand and foot. But it requires wind. You will soon know that only too well. I shall use only one hand—my left—to give you a chance, Fenwick. Do your best—your very best. I am going to give you plenty to stop!"

"If—if you don't mind, sir, I—I'd rather be whipped."

"I do mind!" said Sammy. "Stop that!"

Fenwick barely stopped it. He had another to stop a second later, and then another.

There was no help for Fenwick. Powerful athlete as Sammy was, a big Fifth Former ought to have been able to stand up to a man using only his left hand. But the hapless Fenwick crumpled.

He was rapped hard, and as he dodged and funked, harder. In sheer desperation he stood up to it at last, going all out.

Sammy grinned approval.

"That's better!" he said. "Get one good one fairly home, Fenwick, and I'll let you off the rest."

Fenwick strove desperately. He would have given a term's pocket-money to get one good one home on Sammy's cool, genial face.

But it was all in vain. He had bellows to mend. He panted and puffed and blew. Smoking had sapped his wind. He almost sobbed for breath. Sammy was endeavouring to impress on him that a fellow needed his wind for boxing. There was no doubt that Sammy was succeeding in his endeavour. Fenwick would have given worlds to recall the fags he had smoked that day and the day before. He gurgled, he gasped, he gurgled.

Mercilessly Sammy kept him at it till the wretched black sheep of the Fifth fairly crumpled up and sank against the wall, a breathless, spasmodic wreck.

"Winded?" asked Sammy genially.

"Gurrrrrrrrrgh!" was Fenwick's answer.

"Keep off the smoking, lad! Next time you put on the gloves with me I shall expect you to do better! Cut!" barked Sammy.

Fenwick of the Fifth crawled out of the study.

CHAPTER 7.

Trouble With the Tyke!

"THAT rotter!" growled Jim Dainty. It was the following day, and Dainty and Dawson were coming back from Middlemoor, cutting across the moor, when they sighted Fenwick of the Fifth. The senior was loafing along by a belt of willows, which fringed a hollow in the moor, where recent rain had collected in a muddy pool. He had his back to the two juniors. Jim's eyes gleamed. He had not forgotten that smack on the head of the previous day.

Leaving Dawson, he trotted on behind the Fifth Former, his footsteps making no sound on the damp grass. Dick Dawson grinned and watched. Evidently it was Dainty's intention to give Fenwick a Roland for his Oliver.

Among the willows ahead a squat figure appeared; that of a thick-set man with a bulldog jaw and a broken nose and several teeth missing. This unbeautiful individual waved a hand to Fenwick, for whom he was apparently waiting. Dick Dawson gave a whistle as he spotted him. He knew the squat man by sight—it was the Tatcham Tyke, locally famous for his prowess in glove-fights—and, according to rumour, fights without gloves. His wave of the hand was probably meant to warn Fenwick of the junior just behind him, but, if so, it came too late.

Jim Dainty, running softly and swiftly, overtook the Fifth Form man, as the prizefighter in the distance waved.

Smack!

Hard and heavy, as hard as Jim could land it, came that smack on Fenwick's ear, and the senior gave a startled howl and staggered over.

Splash!

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim.

Fenwick was walking close by the edge of the hollow. He staggered two or three paces, under the terrific smack, stumbled over the edge, and plunged in.

There was a fearful splash of water and mud, and Fenwick almost disappeared from sight. He sprawled at full length, wallowing in mud.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Jim Dainty, as the senior struggled to his feet and stood knee-deep, dripping with mud.

Fenwick was rather a dandy in matters of personal appearance. He did not look much of a dandy now! Mud clothed him like a garment. It smothered his face, it mixed with his hair, it ran down his clothes and his neck. He spluttered mud.

With a face white with fury under its coating of mud, Fenwick came charging up the bank. Jim Dainty backed away, still laughing.

"Back up, Dawson!" he shouted.

Dick Dawson rushed to join his chum. They stood shoulder to shoulder, with their hands up, facing the muddy senior. Fenwick halted. Enraged as he was, he did not care to tackle the two juniors at once.

"Come on!" grinned Dainty. "You're not nice to touch, Fenwick, but we'll touch you if you come on—hard!"

Fenwick turned his head towards the staring prizefighter in the willows.

"Tyke!" he yelled. "Lend a hand here!"

The Tyke came running to the spot. Dawson caught Jim's arm.

"Cut!" he whispered. "That's the Tatcham Tyke—and Fenwick knows him! He could handle two dozen of us."

But there was no time to cut. Fenwick's peculiar friend made a rush at the two juniors, and grasped Jim Dainty. Dainty struggled fiercely, but, strong and sturdy as he was, he found that he was a mere infant in the muscular grip of the pugilist. Never had Jim experienced so terrible a grip, except once when Dr. Sparshott had taken him in hand. Dawson valiantly jumped to the aid of his chum, and the Tyke gripped him with his free hand, instantly reducing him to helplessness.

"Got 'em, sir!" grinned the Tyke. "Leave 'em to me to 'andle, sir! Their own folks won't know 'em if I give 'em a lift with my left anjer."

"No, no!" exclaimed Fenwick. A "lift" with the bruiser's left would have mixed up the features of the juniors in a way that might have had alarming results for the Tyke and his Grimslade friend. "Duck them in the mud, Tyke."

"Leave it to me," said the Tyke.

"Let go, you ruffian!" roared Jim Dainty. "This is no blimey of yours."

"Ain't it?" chuckled the Tyke. "You smacked the 'ead of a friend o' mine——"

"He smacked mine yesterday."

"I dessay you asked for it! You're goin' in."

The chums of the Fourth struggled frantically, as the pugilist hooked them towards the muddy hollow. But their struggles availed nothing. The strength of the squat, thick-set man was overwhelming; they might as well have struggled in a giant's hands. Swinging one in either hand, almost as if they had been dolls, the Tyke swung towards the deep mud, Fenwick looking on with a savage grin, as he dabbed mud from his face.

Three Grimslade juniors came in sight, trotting across the moor. They were Ginger Rawlinson, Bacon, and Bean, of Redmayes House. Rivals and foes of the White's juniors as they were, Ginger & Co. ran on the scene at once.

"Here, stop that!" shouted Ginger.

"Rescue, Grimslade!" yelled Dawson.

"Stand back, you Redmayes rotters!" snarled Fenwick. "Chuck them in, Tyke."

Ginger & Co. rushed on the pugilist. He took absolutely no heed of them. All three hit him at once, to force him to release his victims. It would have been about as useful to hit one of the Grimslade oaks. The tough Tyke did not even seem to know that they were hitting him at all! Regardless of hefty punches, he stalked on, and swung Jim Dainty into the muddy hollow, and Dick Dawson after him.

Splash! Splash!

Dainty and Dawson wallowed and spluttered in oozy mud. Then the Tyke turned on his three assailants. Ginger & Co. were plucky—they had boundless pluck. They hurled themselves at the Tyke. What happened next they hardly knew. The Tyke opened his arms wide, and let them rush right at him, received without heeding their fierce punches, and gathered them up in his arms. Bands of steel could not have held the three hapless men of Redmayes House more mercilessly.

They crumpled in that terrible hug, like the hug of a bear. With his arms full of struggling, panting, kicking, yelling juniors, the Tyke turned towards the muddy hollow again. With a grinning face, he flung them out from the bunk, and they went sprawling wildly through the air, to land in a splashing mud.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Fenwick.

"Ooough! Groough! Ooooch! My hat! Gurrrggh!" came from the smothered juniors, struggling and spluttering wildly in the mud.

"Give 'em some more, sir?" grinned the Tyke. "Pitch 'em in as fast as they get out, if you say the word, sir."

"I think that'll do," chuckled Fenwick, as he walked away with his prize-fighting friend, and disappeared in the willows.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" groaned Ginger Rawlinson, as he crawled out.

"Ow! Oh! Groooough! Oooch!"

Five dismal, muddy, dilapidated juniors crawled out of the mud.

Jim Dainty gouged mud from his eyes savagely.

"Let's go after him!" he panted. "The five of us——"

"Rot!" groaned Dawson. "The Tyke could handle fifty of us! Let's go and get a wash before class! Oooough!"

"That cad Fenwick!" grunted Sandy Bean. "A Grimslade man setting a prizefighter on Grimsladers—just like a White's trick! Ough!"

"We're not proud of him in White's!" growled Jim Dainty. "We'll take it out of Fenwick, if we can't out of the Tyke."

"Oooough! I want a wash!" groaned Streaky Bacon.

A dismal quintet limped away to the school, leaving a trail of mud behind them. Fritz Splitz was the first fellow to sight them coming in at the gates, and he gave a yell.

"Mein goodness! Is tat you, Tainty? Is tat you, Tawson? Is tat you, Chinger? Ha, ha, ha! You vas more dirty tan nuffer vas before! Ach! I tink tat you vant a vash, isn't it?"

Fritz seemed to think it funny. Perhaps it was, but he ceased to think it funny the next moment, when the exasperated five closed round him, grasped him, and rolled him over, transferring plenty of mud to him in the process.

"Ach! Tat you led go!" shrieked Fritz. "You make me derribly muddy—I shall have to vash—I like not to vash—mein goodness! Feast and a prute, tat you led go."

Fritz was left sprawling, as the five marched on, and went to their respective Houses to clean themselves before afternoon class. The fat German staggered up, as muddy as any of them.

"Ach!" he gasped. "Mein goodness! Vunce to-day I have vashed, and now I must vash again! All tat washing is not good for a Cherman! Ach!"

And Friedrich von Splitz groaned deeply as he went away to wash.

CHAPTER 8.

Vengeance!

SAMMY SPARSHOTT frowned.

Taking a little walk in the school field a few days later, Sammy was rather startled by sounds of fierce strife that came from a corner of the field that was screened from view by clumps of evergreens.

The Head of Grimslade changed his direction at once, and strode swiftly towards the secluded corner. Excited voices fell on his ears as he approached.

"Got the rotter!" It was Dainty's voice. "I saw him sneaking off here for a smoke—I knew we'd nail him."

"Sit on his head!" That was Ginger's voice.

"You young scoundrels!" came a muffled roar from Fenwick of the Fifth. "I'll smash you! Lemme gerrup!"

"Pin him down!" chuckled Dick Dawson.

"Got the stick, Streaky?"

"You bet!" grinned Streaky Bacon.

"Lay it on—hard! Sammy ought to have this job, really," said Ginger Rawlinson thoughtfully. "He would take it on if he knew that the tick was smoking in this corner. We'll save Sammy the trouble!"

Dr. Samuel Sparshott smiled grimly. He looked over a bank of laurels at the scene. Fenwick of the Fifth was sprawling on his back, and Sandy Bean sat on his head, Jim Dainty on his chest, while Dawson stood on his legs. Bacon was handling a stick and Ginger grasped the senior's wrists. The black sheep of White's House was resisting frantically. Evidently the rivals of Grimslade had joined forces to deal with the bully of the Fifth.

Fenwick's struggles did not save him—they rather added to his plight. His collar and tie were torn out, his coat split and rumpled, his waistcoat buttons burst, and all sorts of things had fallen from his pockets, amongst them a number of cigarettes and a folded letter, written in a scrawling hand.

"Turn him over, you men!" said Ginger. "Better keep quiet, Fenwick: you don't want to bring a beak here with all those smokes scattered round you."

"A beak is here!" said Dr. Sparshott, quietly stepping from behind the laurels.

"Oh, my giddy golushes!"

Fenwick was released as suddenly as if he had become red-hot. The five juniors gave Sammy one startled stare and bolted. They vanished almost like ghosts at cock-crow.

The hapless sportsman of White's House would have been glad to vanish, too. But there was no vanishing for Fenwick. He sat up, dizzy and gasping.

for breath, and blinked at the stern eyes of Sammy.

The Head of Grimslade eyed him for a moment or two, and eyed the scattered cigarettes. Then he picked up the scrawled letter. Something written on it had caught his eye at the first glance.

"This is yours, I think, Fenwick!" said the Head.

"It—it's a private letter!" gasped Fenwick, springing up. "A letter from my father——"

"Is your father's name Tyke?" asked Sammy grimly.

"Oh!" gasped Fenwick.

Dr. Spardhott read the letter aloud to the wretched sportsman of Grimslade. Fenwick stood in sheer terror. The letter ran:

"Deer Sir,—Wot I told you the nther day is O.K., and you can lay to it. You put your money on me, Saturday at Tatcham, and you'll win! There ain't any doubt, and you take it from me solid.—Yores, TYKE."

"So it appears," said Sammy, "that you back prizefighters in the fights at Tatcham Ring, Fenwick! Gambling is a rather blackguardly thing, don't you think? You may know better than your headmaster—no man's infallible—but so long as I'm headmaster of Grimslade, Grimslade men will keep clear of betting and all that sort of dingy stuff. Come with me, Fenwick."

They never sacked a man at Grimslade School, and Fenwick had no fear of that as he followed dismally in Sammy's footsteps. Expelling a fellow was, in Sammy's view, admitting a failure. Sammy never admitted failure. He had been given all sorts of material to handle—some of it extremely uncompromising material—but he had always made something of it. He had no doubt of being able to make something of Fenwick in the long run! It was likely to be a very long run and a very painful run: not an enjoyable process to the fellow who was to benefit by it! But Sammy never gave up hope of any fellow.

In the Head's study Fenwick stood with his knees knocking together, wondering what was coming.

"Place all your money on the table," said Dr Spardhott, "every copper! Count it and make a note of the amount on this slip of paper. Seal the money and the paper in this envelope. Don't waste time!"

Quite an unusual sum for a schoolboy to possess was revealed. Fenwick's people were wealthy and injudicious. Every note and every coin was sealed up in the envelope, which Sammy locked in a drawer of his desk.

"You are not to be trusted with money, Fenwick!" said Sammy. "Money is meant to be put to good uses, not bad! For the rest of this term you will have no pocket-money at all. Not a copper! You get me?"

Fenwick fairly shivered with rage.

"I shall ask your Housemaster to attend carefully to your correspondence—all money sent you will be taken care of till the end of the term. If you are ever found in possession of cash, even a single sixpence, you will be flogged. Do you know what that will be like? You are about to ascertain. Bend over that desk!"

Sammy handled the cane like an expert. He gave Fenwick twelve, every one a scientific swipe, with Sammy's beef behind it. The Fifth Former was groaning with anguish when he was done.

"Out!" barked Sammy.

Jim Dainty & Co. were waiting for Fenwick when he came away from the Head. But after one glance at his face they stood back and let him pass in peace. Obviously, he had had enough.

In his study in White's House the sportsman of Grimslade writhed and groaned till the effects of the twelve were off. Then he walked about the study, gritting his teeth with rage. No money for the rest of the term: no more smokes, no more visits to forbidden places out of bounds; no more backing horses with Monty Moss—not even a bet on the Tatcham Tyke in the glove-

fight on Saturday! Hatred of Sammy burned like a flame in his breast, wild thoughts of vengeance danced in his furious mind. Anything—anything to get even with Sammy Sparshott!

And suddenly a thought flashed into his mind that made him start at first, and then grin savagely. He got his coat and hat and went out. In the November dusk he slipped into the back garden of an inn on the outskirts of Tatcham. A few minutes later he was speaking to a squat, broken-nosed man at a back window. An't the Tatcham Tyke listened to him with amazement and then with an explosive chuckle.

"Easy as winking to you," breathed Fenwick. "I'm stumped now, but you can take my word for a fiver when the school breaks up. I'll have lots of money in the hols. You'll do it?"

"I could do it on my 'ead!" chuckled the Tyke. "Leave it to me! Next week, sir—I've got to get through at Tatcham first. I shall have to get away for a bit after 'andling a schoolmaster, wot?"

Fenwick walked back to Grimslade feeling better.

CHAPTER 6.

Not According to Programme!

FRITZ SPLITZ saw the Tyke first, and stared at him with wide-open, saucer eyes, and ejaculated "Mein goodness!"

Old Sykes, the porter, saw him second, and came out of his lodge, grim and crusty. Sykes was old, but he was Yorkshire and tough and feared no foe.

"Aout!" said Sykes. "Thee's not wanted here, Tyke! Take thysen aout!"

The Tatcham Tyke grinned. The Tyke was a rough-and-ready but not bad-tempered man. He would hammer a man to a jelly, but not with malice. He was hard as nails, tough as hickory, savage as a bear when his temper was roused, but he had a streak of good-nature. That was why he took old Sykes by the neck and slung him back bodily into his lodge instead of giving him a "lift" with his left. A lift with the Tyke's left would have put the school porter of Grimslade on the sick list for a long time to come.

Sykes landed in his lodge with a crash! The Tyke really was treating him kindly, but it was a heavy-handed kindness. Sykes roared and sprawled and then sat rubbing his injured places, which were numerous. As tough as he was, old Sykes realised that he had run up against something terrifically tougher, and sagely decided to remain where he was.

The Tatcham Tyke marched in at the gateway.

"Mein goodness!" ejaculated Fritz Splitz. "Vat you vant here, mein good person?"

The Tyke stared at him. It was Wednesday afternoon, and, being a half-holiday, there was a crowd of Grimslade fellows about. A good number came down towards the gate at the sight of the Tyke and the sound of the old porter's yell.

"My solemn Sum!" said the Tyke, staring at the solemn-eyed Fritz. "You pie-faced, pink-eyed Dutchman, you want to know, eh? Sit down!"

Quite a gentle tap—for the Tyke—sat Fritz down. He bumped on the hard earth and bellowed:

"Ach! Feast and a prute! Vy for you bunch me on mein pread-paskets? Himmel! Who-hoogh! I tink that I die! Ooogh!"

The Tatcham Tyke marched on.

Squat and thick-set, sharp-eyed, with square jaw, his most prominent feature a broken nose, the Tyke's best friend would not have called him handsome. But he had a punch that many admired, and still more feared. Plenty of Grimslade men knew him by sight, and though they wondered what on earth such a character had called at the school for, they did not want trouble with him.

Crowds gathered round to stare at him, and there was a hum of excited voices. Jim Dainty & Co. came running over from White's House; Ginger & Co. from Delmayes. From a window in

White's House, Fenwick of the Fifth looked out with a glinting eye and a sour grin. Nobody at Grimslade knew that Fenwick had anything to do with the Tyke's visit. Nobody was to know. Fenwick's scheme of vengeance on Sammy had to be kept a dead secret. He gloated as he looked.

"It's that pug!" shouted Jim Dainty. "Look here! Rush him, you men, and run him out! Back up, Grimslade!"

"Hallo, young bantam!" greeted the Tyke, with a cheery grin. "Full of beans, not? Any bloke keen on becoming a 'orspital case?"

Dawson grabbed Jim's arm.

"Don't be an ass, Jim! Stand back!"

"What the thump does the brute want here?" exclaimed Ginger Rawlinson.

"Called to see his pal in the Fifth, perhaps!" chuckled Sandy Bean.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Tyke, with a heavy, solid tramp, marched on. He seemed to be enjoying the sensation he was creating.

Trafford of the Sixth, captain of Grimslade, a powerful Sixth Form man, stepped into his path and raised a hand.

"Hold on, my man!" said Trafford, quite civilly. "What do you want here?"

"Where's that blinking schoolmaster of yours?" demanded the Tyke.

"Do you mean Dr. Sparshott?" exclaimed Trafford.

"I don't mean nobody else!" answered the Tyke. "Tell 'im I'm 'ere! Tell 'im I want to see 'im, as man to man. Tell 'im I'm 'ere to wallop 'im! Cos that?"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger. "He's come to wallop Sammy!"

"Great pip!"

"You'd better get out, my man," said Trafford, with cool contempt. "If you kick up a shindy here you'll be run in!"

"You getting out of a bloke's way?" inquired the Tyke. He was still good-tempered, but he meant business.

"Stand back!"

Yorke, captain of White's, stepped to Trafford's side to help, if needed. The two big Sixth Formers blocked the Tyke's onward way. Mr. Rednayes and Mr. White came hurrying from their Houses; Sergeant Starkey bore down from the gym. Heavy odds were converging on the Tyke! He did not seem alarmed.

"Where's that man Sparshott?" he bawled.

"Never mind that—get out!" said Trafford.

"Leave these precincts at once!" exclaimed Mr. White indignantly. "How dare you come here, sir!"

"You Sparshott?" roared the Tyke, striding at him.

"Eh? No! But——"

"Old your row, then, and get out while you're safe!" said the Tyke. "'Ere, don't you shove a man! My eye! My golemin sam! 'Ere goes, if you ask for it!"

The two Housemasters were good men with their hands; Trafford and Yorke were athletes, and Sergeant Starkey, though not the man he had been in Flanders, was still good for a scrap. But the Tatcham Tyke fairly walked over them. How he did it the Grimsladers, staring open-eyed, hardly knew. But they know that Mr. Rednayes and Mr. White went to right and left; that Trafford, rushing in, was lifted off his feet and laid on his back; that Yorke, springing to help, was sent sprawling across him; and that the stiff old sergeant, grasping the pug with both hands, was swept off his feet in a grasp there was no resisting. The sergeant spun gasping in the air and dropped on the sprawling Sixth Formers, spluttering.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim Dainty. He was feeling rather glad, as he watched, that he had not led a rush at the prizefighter. Grimslade men were tough, but the Tatcham Tyke was tougher.

Fenwick of the Fifth strolled out of White's House and hovered at the back of the crowd, looking on with a grin. The Tyke was spreading havoc and dis-

may, and Penwick was keen to see him begin on Sammy.

Many eyes turned on the Head's study window. At that window, the astonished face of Dr. Samuel Sparshott was to be seen, gazing out. It was not easy to astonish Sammy Sparshott, but there was no doubt that Sammy was astonished now. The Tyke glared round, victorious.

"Where's Sparshott?" he roared. "Hiding from a bloke, what? Tell him to come out, as man to man! I've 'ard that he can box! I'll give 'im boxing! I'm 'ere to 'ave it 'out!"

Dr. Sparshott disappeared from his study window. In another minute he appeared in the doorway. Cool and calm, with a faint smile flickering on his clean-cut face, Sammy walked on the scene. In the midst of all Grimslade Dr. Sparshott faced the amazing visitor who had called to see him. Penwick, watching, gloated! This was the man who had docked his pocket-money for the term; this was the man who had given him twelve of the best. This was the man he was going to see knocked into a cocked hat, reduced to rack and ruin by the redoubtable Tyke. It was worth a fiver!

"Now, then, what's this?" asked Dr. Sparshott's cool and pleasant voice. "I needn't ask who you are, my man—I know you! But what do you want?"

"You Sammy Sparshott?" hooted the Tyke.

"Precisely."

"Then you're my blooming mutton!" declared the Tyke. "I've come 'ere to see you, as man to man, and now you're going to put up your 'ands, see?"

Mr. Redmayes struggled up.

"I will telephone for the police instantly, sir!" he gasped. He was holding his head with both hands, as if not at all sure that it was still adhering safely to his shoulders. It felt as if it wasn't.

"Give the word, sir," shouted Jim Dainty, "and we'll collar the brute fast enough!"

Sammy smiled and shook his head.

"Thank you, Dainty; I can allow nothing of the sort. Stand back, Trafford—stand back, Yorke—this man is far above your weight. Mr. Tyke, it appears that you have called to see me—why?"

"I got it in for you," said the Tyke. "You hit a pal of mine once. Now I'm going to hit you. Put up your hands!"

"A schoolmaster," said Sammy mildly, "cannot enter into a rowdy scrap, like one of your excellent friends at the Jolly Carters. Leave this school at once!"

"I don't think!" grinned the Tyke. He made a step towards the Head of Grimslade, his little eyes gleaming, his square jaw jutting. "Put up your 'ands I'm 'ere to 'ammer you 'ard! I mean it! I'll knock out every bloke in the school first, if you like—but I'll get you, see!"

"I see!" assented Sammy.

"The police——" gasped Mr. White.

"They'll find a lot of crocks to mend when they get 'ere!" roared the Tyke. "You, blooming Sparshott, put up your 'ands as man to man! I'm going to 'it you! That's a starter!"

The Tyke's celebrated left came out like lightning. To his amazement, it did not reach home. Something that seemed like the kick of a mule jarred his arm, and his drive went past Sammy's ear, and his jutting jaw came almost in contact with Sammy's smiling face as he lurched forward. Then something still more like the kick of a mule caught the Tyke under the chin, and he staggered back and sat down with a bump.

There was a startled gasp from the Grimslade crowd.

"Man down!" yelled Ginger.

"Bravo, Sammy!" shrieked a hundred voices.

The Tyke sat and stared.

He had had hard knocks in the ring, many a one, but outside the ring he had never had a knock like that before. It surprised him. And, tough as he was, it hurt! He sat and blinked. Dr.

Sparshott looked down on him with a smile, and gently rubbed his knuckles.

"I've told you to get out, my man!" he said. "Are you going?"

"Am I going?" gasped the Tyke. He leaped up. Rough good-humour was gone now; his rugged face blazed with ferocity. "My eye! I'll show you!"

He came at Sammy like a tiger.

There was a movement on the part of the Grimslade crowd. They were not the fellows to stand by and see their headmaster handled by a hooligan. But Sammy's voice barked sharply:

"Stand back, all of you! Leave this man to me!"

And the Grimsladers stood back.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. "He's standing up to him—standing up to the Tatcham Tyke!"

"Go it, Sammy!" shrieked Jim Dainty, forgetting entirely that Dr. Samuel Sparshott was not "Sammy" in his presence.

Sammy was going it, and so was the Tyke. Hard hitting had often been seen at Grimslade, but never hitting like this, and without the gloves. Sammy had thrown off his coat and pushed up his sleeves, revealing a pair of arms that rippled with muscles. He gave ground a little and the Tyke followed him hard and fast, and again his dreaded "left" flashed into play. The Tyke was quick, but Sammy seemed quicker. The Tyke was tough, but Sammy seemed tougher. His cool, handsome face never changed in its expression, but his eyes were like cold steel, a look that the Grimsladers knew. Few of the prize-fighter's blows, though well-planted, came home on Sammy. But again and again Sammy's kick of a mule landed on the Tyke, and he grunted at every one that came crashing home.

The Housemasters, the prefects, seniors and juniors stared on in a buzzing ring. Sammy was standing up to the prize-fighter—and holding his own. He was more than holding his own. Well as they knew their Sammy, this was a surprise for the Grimsladers.

Crash!

The Tyke was down, under a smashing blow that would have knocked out any ordinary man. It made the Tyke think. He sat up and panted.

"Take a rest, my friend!" said Sammy genially. He was not even breathing quickly. "Mr. White, pray keep time for us, as our boxing friend seems bent on a fight to a finish. Nothing like rules!"

Almost dazedly, the Housemaster of White's took out his watch to keep time. The Tyke was glad of a minute's rest. He had come there to smash the schoolmaster to a jelly with two or three of his jolts. Now he was glad to let it go on according to rule. The Tyke from Tatcham understood by this time that he was up against a stiff proposition.

"Time!" gasped Billy White.

The Tyke came on like a tiger. With right and left Sammy Sparshott met him. Hammer and tongs they went.

Jim Dainty grasped Dawson's arm ecstatically.

"Sammy's enjoying this!" he gasped. "Look at the grin on his chivvy. Look at his jolly old eye. Sammy's having the time of his life!"

Dawson chuckled.

But if Sammy Sparshott was having the time of his life, the Tyke from Tatcham wasn't. The Tyke was fighting hard with a schoolmaster as his adversary. Now he was fighting his hardest, putting in all his beef, and all he knew.

And, to the joy and delight of the roaring, cheering crowd of Grimsladers, he was putting it all in, in vain. Sammy was the better man of the two—Sammy was his master. Sammy was taking punishment, plenty of punishment, but he took it like a rock. The Tyke was taking more—more and more. He had pluck and bulldog determination, and again and again he rallied to the smashing blows that thudded on face and chin and chest. Again and again

he went down, again and again only the call of time saved him from owning up that he was thrashed.

One last terrific effort the Tyke made, closing in on Sammy with desperate determination, heedless of punishment and clinching. Up came a jarring uppercut that almost lifted the Tyke's head from his shoulders, and did lift the Tyke from his feet. He dropped with a crash that rang over Grimslade. He lay and gurgled. Mr. White called time and put away his watch. A minute's rest was no use to the Tyke after that. He needed a week.

The roar of all Grimslade made the old school ring and almost rock.

"Bravo, Sammy!"

"Good old Sammy!"

"Hurray!"

The Tyke sat up at last dizzily. He blinked at Dr. Sparshott with half-closed eyes.

"Oooogh!" he said. "Wooogh! You're a man, you are, schoolmaster or not! My solemn sam! You're a man, sir! I'll go! My sam! I'll be glad to go! Ooogh!"

Dr. Sparshott bent over the Tyke and gave him a hand to rise.

"You should not have come here, my friend," he said. "Nevertheless, may I thank you for a very enjoyable half-hour? Sergeant, please order the car to take this gentleman home."

That was the finishing touch. Grimslade fairly rocked with cheers. How the Tyke would have got home, unless he crawled on his hands and knees, was a mystery. Sammy saw him off in the car, and shook hands with him before he went. Then he went in to repair damages—followed by cheers that woke the echoes. Grimslade had always been proud of their Head. Now they worshipped him. They shouted and cheered and roared, as if they would never tire.

Only one fellow was dissatisfied. That was Fenwick of the Fifth. Fenwick, later on, had a fiver to hand to the Tyke—for nothing. Still, there was no doubt that the Tyke had earned it.

CHAPTER 12.

A Surprise for Sammy!

DR. SAMUEL SPARSHOTT stopped in his stroll round the quad and stood staring at White's House. It was eight o'clock, at which hour both Houses at Grimslade should have been deep in prep. Redmayes' House, over the way, was silent, and no doubt studious. White's House was not silent, and obviously not studious. From White's House came a terrific uproar, which told that the juniors of that House, however they were occupied, were not occupied in prep.

Bang! Crash! Bump!

"On the ball!"

"Pass, there, you dummy!"

"Leggo my neck! Think this is Rugger, you fathead?"

Bump! Bump! Bang!

"Play up, you 'uns!" Jim Dainty's voice rose above the tumult. "On the ball! Fancy you're playing Redmayes', and put some beef into it!"

"Hurrah!"

Sammy Sparshott smiled grimly and walked into White's House. Evidently no prep was going on there. Passage football was going on—and it was going strong.

Jim Dainty & Co., in point of fact, were having the time of their lives. There was a prefects' meeting that evening over in Big School. Mr. White was in charge of the House. But Mr. White, leaving the House deep in prep, walked over to Redmayes to speak to the other Housemaster. He was not aware that the minute he was gone the news spread through the junior studies.

Jim Dainty, Dick Dawson and Fritz Splitz were working in Study No. 10 when the door opened with a bang and Tommy Tucker rushed in with the news that the Beak had bunked off. Two minutes later the studies were empty and the passage was full.

The House match with Redmayes

due the following afternoon. White's juniors were living, breathing and talking Soccer. With no beak and no prefects about, football easily superseded prep. An old ball was kicked into the junior passage, sides hastily picked up, and in White's House it was as in the olden time, when there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Up and down the wide passage surged the juniors. The Common-room doorway at one end, the big bay-window at the other, were the goals. Hard and fast went the game. It was mostly kick and rush, and though it was supposed to be Soccer, it had some resemblance to Rugby, and still more to a dog fight.

Only one fellow stood out of the game, and that was Fritz Splitz. Friedrich von Splitz had no taste for footer. He stood in the doorway of No. 10 and stared on with his saucer eyes. Perhaps by accident the ball flew into that doorway, and caught Fritz under his fat chin.

There was a yell from Fritz as he went backwards in No. 10 and landed on the study carpet with a terrific concussion.

"Ach! Himmel! Mein gootness!" yelled Fritz. "Ach! Geep off! Feast and a prule, do not chump on me like tat! Ach! I have no more le breff! Oooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Five or six juniors swarmed into the study after the ball. Fritz was in the way, and he was trodden on. The ball was kicked out into the passage and the juniors rushed after it, leaving Fritz spluttering wildly and feeling like a pancake.

"On the ball!"

"Play up!"

"Hurrah!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Bump! Bang! Fellows slipped on the oak floor, and there were sometimes as many as five or six down at once. Other fellows stumbled over them. Many kicks, intended for the ball, reached other destinations, causing frantic howls.

Tommy Tucker, who had caught Dawson's boot with his ribs, grabbed Dick Dawson round the neck and rolled on the floor with him, punching freely. Half a dozen fellows fell over them. Others merrily chased the ball. It was not much like Soccer, but it was exhilarating and enjoyable, and an improvement on prep. The uproar was terrific.

It might have been heard across the quad, in Redmayne House. It was no wonder that Sammy Sparshott, taking his evening stroll in the quad, heard the din, and stepped in to investigate. In fact, Mr. White heard it over the way, and realising that something was amiss in his House, came hurrying back. But Sammy was on the scene first.

Dr. Sparshott stepped into the junior passage.

He did so at an unlucky moment for himself.

Jim Dainty had the ball at his feet and three fellows were jumping at him to capture it. Dainty kicked it in time and it soared along the passage, escaping capture. It came like a bullet, and Dr. Sparshott saw it too late. He did not, in fact, see it till he felt it—and he felt it with his nose, where it crashed.

Dr. Sparshott was an athletic young man, a boxer and a footballer. But that sudden crash bowled him over like a ninepin. It took him by surprise. Before he knew what was happening he was over, sprawling at full length on his back.

"Ooooo!" gasped the Head of Grimslade.

"Cave!" shrieked Jim Dainty. "It's Sammy!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Hook it!"

There was a rush to escape. Study doors banged after fleeing juniors. Sammy Sparshott sat up. [illegible]

dizzily. There was a trickle of crimson from his nose. He blinked round at an empty passage. Not a man was to be seen. White's juniors had vanished, like ghosts at cockcrow. Every study door was shut. Mr. White, hurrying in, found his chief sitting in a deserted passage, holding a handkerchief to his nose and gasping for breath.

"What—what——" stuttered the Housemaster. He gave Sammy a hand to rise. "What—what——"

Sammy dabbed his nose.

"An unexpected goal!" said Sammy calmly. "Dainty, I am sure, did not mean to bowl over his headmaster. But I suggest six as a warning to be more careful."

Dr. Sparshott walked out of White's House, leaving the Housemaster staring. Now that Mr. White had returned, the matter was left in his hands. Sammy was not the man to interfere with his Housemasters. Mr. White stepped in his own study for a cane, and then went along to No. 10.

He threw open the door of that study, disclosing three juniors, working hard at prep!

"Dainty!"

Jim stood up.

"You kicked a football at your headmaster!"

"An accident, sir!"

"Bend over that chair!"

Six of the best were duly administered. Jim Dainty wriggled as he rose after the infliction. Mr. White eyed him grimly. He was not finished yet.

"Every boy in the Form will take a hundred lines," he said. "You, Dainty, the ringleader, will be detained to-morrow afternoon."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Dainty, in dismay. "It's the junior House match to-morrow, sir!"

"That will do!"

Mr. White tucked his cane under his arm and walked away. He left dismay behind him in No. 10.

CHAPTER 11.

Drastic Measures!

"WOW!" yelled Jim Dainty.

He was on his way up to Big School in the morning. Paget, of the Fourth, junior football captain in White's, let out his boot in passing and landed a fierce hack. Jim spun round and glared at him. Paget glared back.

"That's a tip," he said, "and if you don't get off detention this afternoon, somehow, I'll boot you all round Grimslade."

Paget marched on, and Jim Dainty restrained himself from rushing after the football captain and rubbing his features in the quad. Jim was wanted in the junior House match that afternoon—wanted badly. Paget's action was really a compliment. He would not have kicked any other man for getting himself taken out of the team.

Grimslade was a footballing school, and House matches were fought hard and strenuously. It was a sore point with White's that Rodneyes House played a harder game, and generally pulled it off. Paget had been delighted when he found that the new boy at Grimslade was a wonderful man on the wing. Jim Dainty had been delighted when he found his name on the list for the House game. But a man under detention couldn't play football; hence the cloud on Jim's brow, and hence the hack his skipper had given him in passing.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott was standing in the doorway of Big School as the juniors streamed in to go to their Form-rooms. Jim stopped to speak.

"I'm sorry, sir, that footer—— I never saw you——"

"Quite!" agreed Sammy Sparshott. "Keep football for the day-time and Little Side, Dainty. I believe you are playing for your House to-day?" he added genially.

"My name's down, sir, but my Housemaster's given me a detention."

Jim had a faint hope that Sammy Sparshott, well known to be a sportsman, might put in a word for him. Sammy himself would never have detained a man who was down to play in a match. But if Sammy disapproved of a Housemaster's methods he was not likely to let a junior know it.

"Ah! Hard luck, Dainty!" he said, and turned away.

There was no help from Sammy!

Peck, the master of the Fourth, did not find Dainty an attentive pupil that morning. Jim was thinking of Soccer. It was his first chance in a House match, and he was determined not to miss the game. By hook or by crook, he was going to be on the wing when White's played Redmayes.

When, in third school, the rain came down in torrents, dashing on the Form-room windows, some of the fellows groused in whispers and made blood-curdling remarks about the weather. But Dainty rather hoped that the downpour might cause the match to be postponed till Saturday.

When the Form came out, however, the rain had stopped, and there was a glimmer of sunshine from a watery sky. It was likely to be muddy on Little Side. But the Grimsladers did not mind a little mud, or a lot!

After dinner Paget tapped Dainty on the shoulder.

"Go and see Billy White and put it to him," he snapped.

Dainty went to his Housemaster's study. He put it to him, and Mr. White heard him with a grim, unsmiling face, and cut him short.

"You are the most unruly boy in the House, Dainty," he rapped. "You were the ringleader in the riot last night. At two-fifteen wait for me in the passage. I shall take you to the detention-room, where you will stay till five. Say no more."

"But, sir——" urged Jim.

"Another word, and I shall cane you."

"Look here, sir, it's a House match, and I'm wanted."

Mr. White rose and picked up a cane.

"Bend over, Dainty."

Swish! Swish!

Jim was dismissed—with that! Mr. White's back, evidently, was up, and there was nothing doing. But Jim left the study with his mind made up. Sammy Sparshott was teaching the rebel of Grimslade discipline, but Jim was far from having learned his lesson yet. It was settled, in his own mind, that he was going to play football that afternoon.

Paget came across to him in the passage.

"Playing?" he grunted.

"Yes," answered Jim.

"Oh! You've let off?"

"No."

Paget stared.

"Then how the dickens——"

"Leave that to me," interrupted Dainty. "I can wangle it, and if I get a flogging afterwards that's my look-out."

"Oh, all right! Kick-off at two-thirty," said Paget amiably. "We're going to beat Redmayes this time. I don't mind telling you that I'm relying on you. You're a rod in pickle for Ginger & Co. But, look here, if you cut detention, and Billy White spots you, he——"

"He won't—not till after the match."

"Leave it at that, then," agreed the White's junior skipper.

At two-fifteen most of the junior footballers were already in the changing-room. Prompt to the minute, Mr. White came out of his study to take the detained junior over to Big School. Jim Dainty was sitting on the banisters of the big staircase. Mr. White glanced up at him with a frowning brow and beckoned to him.

"Follow me, Dainty!" he snapped.

Dainty slipped from the banisters. Instead of coming down the staircase, however, he went up. Billy White stared after him in surprise.

"Dainty!" he shouted.

Jim glanced back over his shoulder.

"Come down at once!" thundered the Housemaster.

"Bow-wow!"

"What—what did you say?"

"Bow-wow!" repeated Dainty coolly.

He ran on lightly up the staircase. Billy White, his face red with wrath, mounted the stairs two at a time.

"Stop!" he shouted, as Jim scuttled up the dormitory staircase.

Dainty scudded on.

Breathing wrath and fury, the Housemaster of White's followed him up. Dainty scudded along the dormitory passage and ran up a narrow staircase at the end which led to the disused attics at the top of the House.

"You young rascal!" roared Billy White. "Come back at once!"

"Rats!"

That answer was too much for Billy White. He rushed up the attic stairs after the rebel of Grimslade, panting with wrath. There was a little landing at the top, on which an attic door opened. Jim darted into the attic. The door slammed almost on Mr. White's nose.

The next moment it was hurled violently open, and Mr. White strode into the little room. It was dusky and dark, lighted only by one small window, that looked over sloping tiles. Mr. White's angry stride carried him to the middle of the room, where he glared round for Dainty.

Jim slipped out from behind the door, darted out of the attic, and slammed the door after him. Mr. White spun round, glimpsing him as he vanished. He made one leap to the door.

Click!

The key had already been placed outside. Jim turned it as the enraged Housemaster grasped the door-handle.

Billy White almost staggered. He knew now why the rebel of the House had led him on that chase to the top of the building. He was locked in the attic! He dragged furiously at the door-handle.

"Dainty! You have locked me in! Open this door at once!" he roared. Thump! Thump! Thump! He hammered on the oak door. "Do you hear me, Dainty?"

"I hear you, sir," came Jim's cool voice through the keyhole. "But nobody else will hear you here. Catch on, sir?"

"Dainty! Boy! You shall be flogged—I shall report this to the Head——"

"I know that, sir."

"Open this door at once!" shrieked Mr. White.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Jim Dainty grinned. Billy White was welcome to make all the noise he liked—he could never be heard at such a distance, especially as the House would be deserted on a half-holiday. Jim drew the key from the door and dropped it into his pocket.

"Will you let me off detention, sir, please?" he asked politely, through the keyhole.

"What? What? I will thrash you! I—I—I will—I—I——"

Words failed Billy White.

Jim Dainty scuttled down the stairs. Mr. White heard his retreating footsteps with feelings too deep for words. A sound of shouting and thumping followed Dainty, but died into silence behind him. Billy White was left raging, a good deal like a tiger in a cage, while the rebel of Grimslade strolled into the changing-room to get dressed for the footer match.

CHAPTER II.

Under Gunner's Fire!

GINGER RAWLINSON and his merry men were already on Little Side, punting a ball about and collecting mud, when the team from White's House arrived. Trafford of the Sixth, a Redmayne man, was there to referee. A good many fellows

had gathered round the field, and Jim Dainty cast a quick and rather anxious glance over the crowd.

It was not uncommon for Dr. Sparshott to give the juniors' games a look-in, and when Sammy's eye was on them every man went all out and played the game of his life. Jim Dainty would have been glad to play in his first House match under Sammy's eye, but for one circumstance—Sammy knew that he was detained that afternoon, and would certainly not expect to see him among the white shirts.

If Sammy saw him he might conclude that Billy White had let him off, but it was far more likely that he would guess that the rebel of Grimslade had cut detention. So it was rather a relief to note that the athletic figure of the Head of Grimslade was not in view.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" said Ginger Rawlinson, as he spotted Dainty in the White's team. "They're playing that new kick!"

"He's not bad," said Sandy Bean. "I've noticed him in the pick-ups! But he won't get past me."

Sandy kept goal for Redmayes.

"If he does," said Ginger darkly, "we'll hold your head under the tap in the changing-room. So look out!"

The kick-off fell to White's; the sides lined up, and Trafford blew the whistle. The ball rolled, and the game was soon going hot and strong. Jim Dainty forgot his Housemaster, locked up in the attic over in White's House, and the wrath to come. What was going to happen to him after the match he could hardly guess. It was a comfort to reflect that they never sacked a man at Grimslade.

But it was certain that the fellow who had locked up his Housemaster would be made an example of. Jim dismissed it from his mind, and threw himself into the game. He was going to make the game worth the candle, anyhow.

Paget, who had a keen eye for a fellow's form, had said that the new man would be a rod in pickle for Redmayes, and he was right.

Ginger & Co. were soon running up the field in great style, and a hot attack on White's goal followed, and white shirts mingled with red in a fierce scrum. The ball came out on the right wing, and Jim Dainty was on it like a shot. So far, Jim had played only in the pick-ups, and he had shown that he was a born footballer. Now that he had his chance in a House match, he made the most of it.

He took the ball down the field at a pace that made some of the Grimsladers stare. Ginger Rawlinson, who played centre-half for Redmayes, got in his way. Ginger was nearly a stone heavier than Dainty, and he was greatly surprised to find himself shouldered out of the way as if he had been a feather-weight. Ginger sat down and stared after the fleet-footed forward, who raced on with the ball at his feet.

"My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger.

But the Redmayes backs had marked Dainty. They were sure of him; and how he wound round them they never knew. Dawson, at inside-right, was racing up to take a pass, but he was left behind. Jim ran in and kicked for goal, with only Sandy Bean to beat.

The Lancashire Scot in goal was a hard man to beat. The ball came in like a bullet, and a grin flickered over Sandy's freckled face as he drove it out. But the grin vanished, as if whisked away with a duster, as an active figure leaped, a ready head met the leather, and it came back like a pip from an orange. Before Sandy knew what was happening, it was in the net, and the White's crowd were yelling:

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

Jim Dainty panted, his eyes dancing. Paget rushed up the smacked him on the back.

"Good man!" he gasped.

"Goal! Goal!"

"First blood to White's!" chuckled Dick Dawson. "Jim, old bean, you've a giddy prize-packet!"

"White's! White's!" roared the House. "Goal! Goal!"

"Mein goodness!" remarked Fritz Splitz, who was sucking toffee behind the goal. "Tat is not bad! I fink tat I could not have done tat better meinself."

"Keep an eye on that new tick!" growled Ginger Rawlinson to his men, as they went back to the centre of the field. "That kid's the pick of the basket! They've got a good man for once!"

And after that goal, Jim Dainty was honoured with the very special attention of the Redmayes men. Ginger & Co. were rather accustomed to getting the upper hand of White's at Soccer, but it looked like a change was setting in with the coming of Jim Dainty.

The game went hard and fast, the Reds bent on equalising, at least, before Trafford blew the whistle for half-time. But it did not work out like that. Half-time was close at hand when Paget netted the ball, after receiving a pass from his new winger, and White's House roared deliriously:

"Goal!"

Two up in the first half was rather a record for White's. Ginger was a good sportsman, and knew how to take a reverse, but he was rather disgruntled now.

"For goodness' sake, Sandy, pull up your socks!" he said. "Are you making a collection of goals, or what?"

Sandy Bean snorted.

"They've got a good man in that new tick," he answered. "Better than any man we've got on the field—except the goalkeeper!"

Jim Dainty grinned as he sucked a lemon. He was thoroughly enjoying his first House match. He knew that his play was winning golden opinions; and he was far too happy and exhilarated to think of the hapless Housemaster locked up, all this time, in the attic at the summit of White's House in the distance. But he remembered him as he heard a squeak from Fritz Splitz.

"Here comes Sammy!"

Jim glanced round quickly. From the direction of Big School the tall, athletic figure of Dr. Sparshott appeared, striding towards the junior ground.

Jim's heart almost missed a beat.

If Sammy's eye fell on him now—Sammy was a strict disciplinarian. It would go against the grain with him to interrupt a game of Soccer, but discipline came first! The moment Sammy's eye picked him out, he would want to know how, and why, he was there! Jim's brain worked quickly.

Ginger Rawlinson, the next moment, had the surprise of his life. White's winger leaped on him, rushed him over, and rolled him on the ground. The ground was muddy and wet from the recent rain—every fellow on the field was well-splashed with mud. Quite a large puddle was close at hand, and Ginger, spluttering with surprise and rage, rolled into it in Dainty's grasp.

"My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. "What the thump—you mad idiot—— What's this game? Yaroooh!"

They rolled in the mud.

"Jim!" gasped Dick Dawson.

"Stop that!" roared Paget.

"Is the man mad?" howled Streaky Bacon.

The footballers stared on, amazed. Trafford came running up.

"You young sweeps!" he roared. "Chuck that at once! Ragging on the football field, by gad! Scrapping at half-time! My hat! Stop it at once, or I'll kick the pair of you off the ground!"

Ginger had the upper hand now, hardly knowing how he had got it. He was rubbing Jim Dainty's features in the puddle. It did not occur to Ginger that that was precisely what Dainty wanted.

At Trafford's angry roar, the two separated and scrambled up. Both

were streaming with mud and utterly unrecognisable. Only the colour of their shirts distinguished the Redmayes man from the White's man—and even their colours were almost blotted out by mud. Their nearest and dearest relatives would not have recognised their features.

"Any more of this——" hooted Trafford.

"Only a lark, Trafford!" gasped Dainty.

"Well, chuck it!"

Dr. Sparshott arrived as the sides were lining up again. Ginger had rubbed off some of the mud. Dainty hadn't! Sammy Sparshott smiled a little as he noted how muddy the footballers were, and especially the man on White's outside-right. But who that man was even Sammy's eagle-eye was not likely to discern. If he thought of Jim Dainty at all, he thought of him as sitting at his desk in the detention-room in Big School. Certainly he did not dream of recognising him on the football field.

"Play up, White's!"

"On the ball, Redmayes!"

The second half went on hard and fast, every man putting all his beef into the game under the eye of the Head. Sammy looked on approvingly. He liked to see Grimslade men putting their beef into it. And when a White's forward streaked through the Redmayes' defence like a knife through cheese, and slammed the ball home barely out of reach of Sandy Bean's finger-tips, Sammy shouted as loud as any White's junior on the ground.

"Goal! Goal! Bravo!"

"That's a good winger," Sammy remarked to Mr. Redmayes. "Is White here? No. A pity he's missing this! They seem to be finding new talent in his House. That man on the right wing is good—distinctly good. I must ask his name presently. I can't make him out."

Sammy stayed for a quarter of an hour, watching with keen interest, before he walked away. The muddiest man on the field was rather glad when he went; he dreaded Sammy's eagle-eye. But Sammy walked away without a suspicion. The game went on fast and furious, and it was almost on time when Streaky Bacon put in the ball for Redmayes. It was the last score, and White's House roared themselves hoarse when the players came panting off.

"Three—one!" chortled Dick Dawson. "Three—one! My hat! What price Ginger now?"

"White's! White's!" roared the House.

Jim Dainty, when he had changed, disappeared up the attic staircase in White's House. Ginger Rawlinson and Streaky Bacon were still busy in the changing-room—holding Sandy Bean's head under the tap!

CHAPTER 13.

Between Life and Death!

"HELP!"

No ear was likely to hear that faint cry from far up on the roof of White's House at Grimslade.

Billy White knew that!

He had shouted again and again, but he knew that no one would hear. And his numbed fingers were almost slipping from their hold.

For nearly an hour after Jim Dainty had locked him in the attic Mr. White had remained there—raging! He knew why the rebel of Grimslade had tricked him into that solitary room and turned the key on him there—it was to leave him free to play football! And Billy White had only one desire, but that was an intense one—to follow the young rascal down to Little Side, grasp him by the shoulder, and march him off, first to a record threshing, and then to detention! To let him get away with it seemed intolerable.

Many times the imprisoned Housemaster stared out of the little attic

window, his only way of escape. It looked on sloping roofs, but at a little distance was a chimney-stack, and if he could reach that he would be in view from the quad and could summon assistance.

The venture was a terribly risky one—and it was long before Mr. White resolved on it. But he resolved on it at last. Billy White's temper was at boiling-point, and he threw prudence to the winds at last.

He climbed out of the little window and worked his way along the roof-ridge towards the chimney-stack.

The roof was wet with the morning's rain, and the tiles slippery. Slowly, cautiously, carefully, the Housemaster worked his way along—till he slipped. He grasped hard on the cement ridge, slipped again, and just managed to grab hold of another ridge that ran along the roof a little below. There he hung, sprawling on the slanting tiles at full length.

Below him was a gutter and a drop of seventy feet. He had to drag himself on to the ridge above him from which he had slipped. And he found that he could not.

All he could do was to hold on to the lower ridge, and save himself from slipping down the slant to certain death.

As he held on he shouted for help again and again, but he knew that it was useless, and no one could hear.

Grimly he held on.

Again and again he strove to drag himself up, but every time he failed. The rounded, wet ridge gave no grip to the fingers, and his fingers were growing numbed with cold. He could not drag himself to safety, and his hold was growing more and more precarious.

He was not angry now. He knew that if help did not come, and come swiftly, he was a dead man; and there was no room in his heart for anger. He thought of Dainty, but it was with pity for the boy's remorse and horror when he learned what he had done.

With a face white as chalk, but calm, he held on with failing strength. After the game was over, no doubt Dainty would return to release him; and if he came in time—— But it was a matter of minutes now.

And Jim Dainty, running up the narrow stair to the attic, had a cheery grin on his face. He had won the House match for his side—he knew that. Paget had told him so—all the fellows had told him so! It was worth whatever Billy White handed out. Dick Dawson, following him up, was not grinning, however. Not till after the match had Jim told his chum how he had "wangled" his escape from detention.

"You mad ass, Jim!" said Dawson. "It's too jolly thick! Sammy will be frightfully wild about this!"

"Let him!" answered Dainty, as he drew the attic key from his pocket. "I know it's a whopping, and I can face the music."

He unlocked the door of the attic and threw it open. He expected to see the exasperated face of his Housemaster, and to feel a heavy hand on his collar. But Billy White was not to be seen, and Jim stared into the dusky little attic in wonder.

"My hat! He's gone!"

"Gone!" repeated Dawson blankly.

Jim stared round the room. It was empty. He ran across to the open window. He had been certain that escape by the window was impossible; he had satisfied himself as to that before selecting that attic. And if Billy White had escaped from his imprisonment, after all, he would have expected to see him on the football field.

Jim Dainty stared blankly from the open window. And then, with a sudden chill of horror at his heart, he saw and understood.

Along the wet roof a man with blue, numbed fingers clung somehow to the tiles. The colour was drained from Dainty's face as he looked. He could just see Mr. White's face as it was turned towards him, and in that face he read despair.

Even as he looked, one of the Housemaster's hands slipped. He disappeared from view, but one hand still remained visible. He made an effort to regain his hold with it, and failed. And by that one hand Billy White now hung over death.

"Oh!" gasped Jim. "Good heavens!"

"What——" began Dawson, joining him at the window.

Then, as he saw, he gave a cry. His face whitened.

Dainty caught his arm in a grip that almost made the bone crack.

"Get help!" he hissed. "Call all the House—get ropes—get Yorke here—and Sammy—quick! Don't stand staring—quick, I tell you—quick!"

He was clambering out of the window the next moment.

"Jim——" stuttered Dawson.

"You fool—quick, get help!" panted Dainty.

Dawson turned and rushed down the attic stairs. He shouted at the top of his voice as he went.

Jim dropped from the window to the roof-ridge. Mr. White came into view again. His eyes were on him. His lips moved; his voice came faintly to the boy.

"Go back, Dainty! You cannot help me now! Go back! I will not allow you to risk your life! Go back—go back!"

Jim Dainty did not even hear him. With a face set and almost desperate, he worked his way along the ridge. Only too well he knew that it was a matter now, not of minutes, but of seconds. In a few minutes there would be help, but it would be too late for the man whose feeble fingers were already relaxing their last grip. Every instant, as Jim clambered savagely along, he dreaded to see the Housemaster's last hold go, to see the rolling figure spin down the slant to death.

With set teeth, he clambered along.

"Dainty! Go back!"

It was hardly a whisper from the exhausted Housemaster. The numbed fingers were failing, when a strong grasp was fastened on Mr. White's wrist just before it relaxed its grip on the lower ridge.

Jim Dainty lay with his chest on the ridge above, his legs dangling over one side, his arms over the other, and both hands grasped the Housemaster's wrist.

And his grasp was like that of a vice.

He did not speak—he needed all his strength. For the Housemaster's numbed fingers had no hold now, and all his weight was on the schoolboy. Jim strove to drag him up, to give him a hold again on the ridge. But the man's weight was too much for him—he could not draw him up an inch.

And in a few seconds it was driven into Jim's mind that the Housemaster's weight was dragging him down. He cramped himself desperately on the cement ridge and held. So long as his strength lasted he could hold Billy White back from death, but when his strength failed under that terrible strain——

He knew what would happen then, but he did not think of letting go. He had done this—this was the fruit of reckless disobedience, of his disregard of all that Sammy had taught him since he had come to Grimslade. And he held on to the Housemaster, while his muscles ached and cracked under the strain, and the steady pull of the slipping man's weight dragged him nearer and nearer to death.

Mr. White's eyes met his. His lips moved, but no word came. But Jimmy Dainty knew that the lips formed the words "Save yourself!"

There was a sound of shouting voices, of trampling feet. Dick Dawson had lost no time. The face of Yorke of the Sixth looked from the attic window—the captain of White's had a coil of rope over his arm.

"Hold on, Dainty!"

Jim heard his voice, but he dared not look round. Every effort now was

concentrated on his hold. He heard another voice—the deep voice of Sammy Sparshott.

"Stand aside, Yorke!"

"But, sir, let me——"

"Stand aside, and hold the rope!"

Without looking round, Jim knew that it was Dr. Sparshott, the Head of Grimslade, who was clambering actively out of the attic window. The attic was packed now with Sixth Form men and masters, holding the rope. Sammy, with the end of it looped over his arm, was coming along the roof-ridge, active as a cat, steady as a rock.

Dainty knew that he was coming—knew that he was close. But the strain on him was too terrible. He was going—he felt himself being dragged down. Only by letting go his hold could he save himself. And he did not let go—he gritted his teeth and held harder. A muscular hand grasped him—an arm in which there seemed to be a giant's strength held him back from destruction.

"Hold on!"

From the packed window many eyes watched Sammy tensely.

Cramped on the ridge, he reached down and grasped the Housemaster's collar.

"Now you can let go, Dainty."

Sammy's voice was as calm as if he had been speaking to the junior in his study. Jim, at the very limit of endurance, was relieved of the weight, and he straddled the ridge, breathing in gulps. With an arm of iron Sammy Sparshott pulled the Housemaster up the slant and looped the rope round him. He barked out a word, and the crowd at the attic window pulled.

"Safe now, White!"

Many hands dragged on the rope; the Housemaster was pulled up to the attic window, and Yorke helped him in. Sammy's strong hand was on Jim Dainty, whose senses were whirling.

"Steady, the Bulls!" said Sammy.

"I—I'm all right, sir—I——"

"Come!" barked Sammy.

He worked his way back to the window, his strong grasp on the junior all the time. Now that the strain was over, Jim was feeling weak and sick—utterly at the end of his tether. Billy White was in safety now; but Jim knew that only the strong hand of his headmaster saved him from rolling down the slanting tiles.

It was hardly more than a minute, but it seemed an age to him before Sammy lifted him to the attic window, and many hands from within grasped him and drew him in.

Jim Dainty stared stupidly at a crowd of faces that were blurred to his sight. Dick Dawson grasped his arm.

"Jim, old man——"

The next moment Dawson caught him as he reeled and fell. For the only time in his life Jim Dainty had fainted.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott smiled grimly as a footstep approached his study door after prep that evening. There was a tap.

"Come in!" barked Sammy.

Jim Dainty entered. The Head of Grimslade gave him a nod, then turned to his table and selected the slimmest cane that lay there.

"Dainty," said Sammy, "I'm proud of you!"

"Oh," gasped Jim, "thank you, sir!"

"You've shown pluck—wonderful pluck!" said Dr. Sparshott. "You've saved a man's life and nearly lost your own. Both were endangered, however, by your disobedience. I think it probable that some day you will be captain of Grimslade, and giving orders! Obviously, you must learn to obey them first! You get me?" barked Sammy.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Jim.

"Mr. White has asked me to overlook your conduct—he forgives you fully. In view of what you did for him—very right and proper of Mr. White! But your headmaster is bound to take

a different view! I'm proud of you, Dainty—proud of your pluck—proud to have you at Grimslade! And I'm going to give you the whopping of your life!"

And Sammy kept his word.

Jim Dainty had had more than one whopping in that study, but the one he had now was a real record. Sammy had plenty of beef, and he put it all into that whopping. For a couple of minutes Jim Dainty shut his teeth hard and made no sound. Then he yelped—then he yelled—then he roared. Fellows at quite a distance heard him, and remarked to one another that Sammy was going it. Undoubtedly Sammy was! He was quite tired when he had finished.

Having finished, Sammy threw down the cane, smiled, and shook hands with Jim Dainty.

"Out!" he barked.

And Jim, as he limped back to his House, feeling as if he had been under a patent carpet-beater, did not quite know whether he worshipped Sammy or hated him like poison!

CHAPTER II.

Hare and Hounds!

"ROT!" said Jim Dainty to the fellows in White's House.

"Rubbish!" said Ginger Rawlinson in Redmayes House.

White's agreed with Jim Dainty that it was rot. Redmayes agreed with Ginger that it was rubbish. But it was for Sammy to decide; and whether it was rot or whether it was rubbish, Sammy's word was law.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade School, was a busy man; but he found time to take keen interest in many matters which most headmasters passed by like the idle wind which they regarded not. It was not very many years since Sammy Sparshott had been a boy himself!

All the Lower School at Grimslade were very keen, at present, on the cross-country run that was fixed for Wednesday afternoon; and for two or three days, juniors in both Houses had been tearing up old newspapers, exercise books, letters from home, and all sorts of things to fill the bags of "scent." Sammy picked out the hares for the run; and he picked out a White's man and a Redmayes man—Jim Dainty and Ginger Rawlinson.

White's House agreed that two White's men would have been ever so much better; White's being miles ahead of Redmayes in running and everything else.

Redmayes declared that two Redmayes men would have been ever so much better, Redmayes being miles ahead of White's in running and all other matters of a sporting nature!

But Sammy decided it, and that was that! And on Wednesday afternoon, when the swarm of Grimsladers gathered at the gates in the clear, frosty weather to start, Jim Dainty and Ginger carried the bags of "scent" slung over their shoulders. Sammy was there to start them with a cheery smile on his boyish face.

"Ten minutes' start for the hares!" said Dr. Sparshott. "Now, then, Dainty and Rawlinson! Off!"

Jim and Ginger trotted away down Middlemoor Lane. They vanished through a gap in a hedge, and the frosty mist swallowed them. The pack waited till Sammy gave the word to follow. At the signal they streamed away in pursuit.

Meanwhile, the hares were far afield.

Dropping the "scent" as they trotted, Jim Dainty and Ginger Rawlinson covered the ground fast.

"Put it on, you crawling White's tick!" said Ginger, smiling.

"I'm afraid of running you off your legs, you Redmayes wreck!" answered Dainty politely.

Ginger breathed hard, and put on speed. His long legs went almost like lightning. He was the best junior sprinter in his House, and he was de-

termined to leave the White's man standing if he could.

Jim Dainty grinned, and accelerated, keeping step by the red-headed junior's side. He was the only junior at Grimslade who could outpace Ginger; Sammy, as a matter of fact, had known what he was about when he picked them out for the run—as Sammy generally did. They were the pick of the whole bunch; and House rivalry spurred them on to excel themselves.

The torn paper lay in a wide streak behind them as they ran. Far behind, the hounds were pressing on the scent. White's pack were specially keen on catching Ginger. Redmayne's pack were specially keen on catching Dainty. There was no doubt that every man was going to put his best foot foremost.

Ginger had intended to look round and call to Dainty to back up. But he did not have to look round to see his fellow-hare. Dainty ran shoulder to shoulder with him for a time—and drew ahead. It was the White's junior who looked round with a grinning face, and called:

"Back up!"

"You cheeky tick!" gasped Ginger, and he put it on manfully. Jim slowed down a little. It was not good business for the hares to run themselves out in the first lap.

They ran on side by side, scattering the "scent." Two miles had been covered, when they came in sight of Grimslade Water, the stream that tumbled down from the slopes of Grimslade Pike, glistening in the wintry sunshine ahead. Across the stream lay a plank bridge—a single plank resting on stones in the bank. It was for the plank that the hares were heading.

Not a living being was to be seen on the wide stretches of the misty moor. Far behind, the pack were not in sight—only the trail of torn paper told them the way the hares had gone. Ahead stretched the wild moor, with the great Pike towering in the distance, and in another direction a blur of smoke on the sky where Blacknoor lay. Neither of the hares guessed, or dreamed, that from the thickets on the other side of the torrent two keen and malicious eyes were watching them as they came.

Fenwick of the Fifth, the black sheep of White's House, grinned as he sighted them. All the school knew that the run lay by Grimslade Water; and Fenwick had taken a short cut to get ahead of the run.

This was his chance for paying off his old score against Jim Dainty, and the rascal of Grimslade was not losing the opportunity. But he was very careful to keep in cover. If it should transpire that a Grimslader had loosened the plank over the stream, to give the hares a ducking, Fenwick knew what he had to expect from Sammy. He hugged cover and watched as the two juniors came trotting down to the steep bank of the moorland torrent.

They reached the plank together. There was room for only one to pass at a time. Ginger gave his companion a shove.

"Redmayne leads!" he remarked.

And as Dainty staggered back from the unexpected shove, Ginger chuckled and ran out on the plank.

A score of times, at least, Ginger had crossed that plank, and it had always been secure. It did not occur to him that it was not secure now—till he was in the middle of it. Then he realised that it was rocking and slipping at the further end.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger.

Jim Dainty would have been on the plank in another moment. But in that moment the further end slid into the water, and Ginger Rawlinson went tumbling into the stream.

There was a splash and a cry.

"Oh, my hat!" panted Dainty.

Ginger, struggling wildly, was carried down the torrent. For a fraction of a second, Jim stared at him, spellbound;

them he raced down the bank. From the thickets on the other side Fenwick's white face stared. He had intended to give the juniors a ducking; but he had not counted on the force of the current.

He stared in terror as Ginger was swept away, realising that the junior's life was in danger. Forgetful of cover, he stood staring, petrified with horror.

CHAPTER 15.

Luck and Pluck!

"GINGER!" panted Jim Dainty.

He pelted madly down the bank, to keep pace with the struggling junior whirling down the stream. Ginger was a good swimmer—one of the best in his House. But Grimslade Water ran almost like a millrace. Ginger was fighting hard and bravely, but the whirling current swept him away, and twice his red head had gone under.

Jim glimpsed his white face and staring eyes, and ran as he had never run before. He got ahead of the struggling junior as he whirled down the stream, threw down his bag of "scoff," and plunged in.

A weeping willow overhung the stream, and Dainty grasped the branch that extended furthest over the water. Hanging on to it with his left hand, tossed and buffeted by the current, he clutched at Ginger with his right, as the Redmayes junior swept by.

His grasp fastened on a shock of red hair.

Ginger swept by him; but Dainty held fast, one hand on the willow branch, the other winding in the very roots of Ginger's red mop. It seemed as if he must be torn away from his hold—he felt as if a giant's hand was plucking at him. But he held on, resolutely, fiercely, and Ginger Rawlinson was dragged back from death. Ginger still had his wits about him, and he grasped and caught at the trailing willow.

"Hold on!" panted Jim.

His voice was lost in the roar of the torrent; but Ginger was holding on. Jim struggled into the willow, still grasping Ginger's hair, dragging the Redmayes junior after him.

A yell came from Ginger.

"Let go, you dummy! You're yanking my hair out by the roots, you blinking idiot! I'll jolly well punch your head, you silly ass!"

Jim Dainty grinned. Ginger had a safe hold on the willow now, and was crawling back to the bank. But Dainty kept hold of his hair, and pulled. Ginger yelled frantically.

They rolled on the bank together. Then Dainty let go, and Ginger rubbed his drenched and dripping head, and glared at him.

"You silly ass!" he howled.

"All serene!" gasped Jim. "I've burned my fingers, but that doesn't matter."

"B-burned your fingers!" stuttered Ginger. "My giddy galoshes!" And he fairly hurled himself at the White's junior.

Ginger was rather sensitive on the subject of his flaming mop. He was proud of it, in a way, for he was a firm believer in the good old adage "Ginger for pluck." But he did not like jokes about it.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Oh, Crikey!" gasped Jim Dainty.

He hammered back. Forgetful of the peril they had both been through only a few minutes before, the rivals of Grimslade punched and thumped with terrific vigour. Sammy had foreseen that House rivalry would spur the rivals on to do their very best; but perhaps he had not foreseen this!

As a matter of fact, it was about the best thing the two juniors could have done, for that fierce rough-and-tumble warmed them up after the plunge in the icy water of the moorland torrent. They punched and thumped, panted and gasped, and were very soon as warm as toast.

On the other side of the stream a white-faced fellow came running. It

was Fenwick of the Fifth, frightened almost out of his wits at what he had done. He stared across the stream at the two juniors, and panted with relief at the sight of them. Jim Dainty saw him as he stared across.

"Hold on, Ginger!" he gasped. "Nuff's as good as a feast, old bean. The pack will get us at this rate."

And the combat ceased. Ginger Rawlinson grinned rather sheepishly at the White's junior.

"You're a cheeky tick, and you jolly nearly scalped me," he grunted, "but thanks for pulling me out. Blessed if I didn't think it was all up. What's Fenwick doing here?" he added, staring across the water at the Fifth Form man.

Dainty's eyes gleamed. Fenwick was already turning away—regretting that he had emerged from cover.

"I fancy I can guess!" snapped Dainty. "That plank never got loose on its own!"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. "You think that Fenwick——"

"I know he did!"

Fenwick was disappearing in the frosty thickets.

Ginger Rawlinson shook a fist after him.

"If I could get across——" he breathed.

"We'll see him again at Grimslade!" said Dainty grimly. "The rotter meant to give us a ducking, I suppose, but he might have got us drowned. We can't get across now, Ginger—the plank's gone. We shall have to go back and drop the 'scent'—can't leave a gap in the trail. Then we've got to keep on this side."

"Buck up, then—the pack will get us!"

The two juniors ran up the bank to the spot where the bridge had been and where the paper trail ended. The plank had disappeared in the torrent, and there was no crossing. Far away on the moor behind dotted figures appeared; and on the wind came the note of Streaky Bacon's bugle. The delay had given the pack a chance, and the hares were sighted. Loud and clear across the moor came the ta-ra-ra of the bugle as Streaky blew.

Dropping the paper scent again, the hares ran down the stream. The inequalities of the moor soon shut them off from the sight of the hounds, but the pursuit was close now. They were drenched from the plunge in Grimslade Water, but they were drying as they ran.

Grimslade Water barred them off from the intended course of the run to the west, and they had to decide on a new trail. Leaving the stream behind, Jim Dainty turned into a lane, and Ginger panted on after him.

"Hold on, you White's duffer!" panted Ginger. "This lane leads to Hawley's farm—we can't get through. You don't know your way about, you ass!"

"Who's Hawley?" asked Jim. Jim Dainty was now at Grimslade that term, and he was now in strange country.

"A farmer, fathead—a crusty old blighter, too—he comes up to the school regularly every other week to complain of somebody. He caught Fritz Spiltz once bagging his apples, and laid into him with a blackthorn. He's as mad as a hatter if anybody steps on his land. Look here, we——"

"He can be as mad as a March hare, if he likes," answered Jim Dainty. "We're not going to be caught. Come on."

"It will mean a row with Sammy!"

"Let it!"

"Look here," roared Ginger. "Stop, see?"

"Stop, if you funk it—I'm going on!"

The word "funk" was enough for the Redmayes junior. He raced on after Dainty.

The lane ended at a farm gate. Jim Dainty put one hand on the gate, and vaulted over. After him leaped Ginger, not to be outdone. Two men in smocks were in the yard, and they stared at the schoolboys, then ran towards them.

What they were going to do to the trespassers was quite clear, without questions being asked. They cut in front of the running schoolboys.

The nearest one grabbed at Jim Dainty, who was ahead. Dainty did not pause. It was neck or nothing now. To be turned back meant falling into the hands of the pack. He lowered his head and charged. The top of his head crashed on a stout stomach, and the farmer's man gave a gurgling gasp and sat down. Jim went round him and ran on, leaving him winded.

"Rescue!" came a yell from Ginger. "Oooooh! Yaroooh! Whoop! Rescue!"

Jim halted and looked round. The second man was smiting Ginger on his running shorts, and to judge by Ginger's yells, he was getting hurt. Dainty whirled round and charged back. He grabbed at the smock behind, hooked a leg, and the farmer's man went sprawling.

"Come on, Ginger!" Jim panted.

Ginger sprawled with the man who held him; but he tore himself free, leaped up, and ran on. Behind the juniors came a heavy tramp of feet. One of the farmer's men was in pursuit; the other was still sitting down and struggling for his second wind. The man in pursuit was putting on his best, and the juniors had to sprint—but they left the paper trail behind them as they sprinted.

They scrambled over a gate, and raced up a field-path across a meadow. Their pursuer stopped at the gate and yelled. Why he gave up the pursuit at that point the schoolboys did not know, but they were glad of it. He was shouting frantically after them; but the wind carried his voice back, and they did not catch the words.

"All clear!" chuckled Jim Dainty, slackening the pace a little. "My hat! We've left the pack some trouble, Ginger."

"There won't be a lot of them get through Hawley's farm," grinned Ginger. "We're lucky to get clear! I hope we shan't run into old Hawley. My giddy goloshes, what's that?"

"That" was a deep bellow that boomed across the meadow. Ginger Hawkinson stopped dead.

"Come on!" panted Dainty.

"Stop!" gasped Ginger. "Oh, my giddy goloshes! That's what that man was yelling *for*! This is the bull's field!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Old Hawley's Durham bull!" groaned Ginger. "As fierce as a tiger—hardly a man on the farm dares to go near him. If he sees us——"

"There he is!"

In a far corner of the field, ahead of the hares, a huge form loomed in sight—a magnificent bull. Its back was turned to the schoolboys; it was not at them that the fearful animal was bellowing. Jim Dainty stopped. And as he stopped, there came a cry across the meadow from a bunch of willows close by where the bull was pawing the earth and roaring.

CHAPTER 12.
In Deadly Peril!

"A GIRL!" gasped Jim Dainty.

Ginger Hawkinson had already spun round. The gate was a good distance behind the juniors now, and over it the two men in smocks were staring. And they had been joined by a red-faced man in gaiters—Farmer Hawley himself.

Mr. Hawley was brandishing a big stick, but he did not open the gate or come over it. He shouted to the schoolboys, but they were too far off to hear him, though now they saw the bull, they knew why he was shouting. Farmer Hawley wanted to thrash the trespassers, but he did not want to see them gored to death by the savage denizen of the meadow.

Jim Dainty caught Ginger by the arm. The colour had drained from his face as he heard that scream from the corner of the meadow ahead.

"Ginger! It's a girl—hark!" It was another scream.

This time Ginger heard it, too, and he stopped.

"Oh, my giddy galoshes!" he gasped. "Dainty—what—you're mad—that brute will kill you."

Dainty was running. Among the willows, on the edge of the meadow, he glimpsed the girl who had screamed—a plump-faced Yorkshire lass of about fifteen, whose pretty face was colourless with terror. Apparently the girl had started to cross the meadow, and the bull had sighted her; and unluckily she was wearing a red bonnet.

The magnificent Durham bull stood pawing the earth only a few yards from her, his eyes glaring red, his broad nostrils steaming, a deep bellow booming from his mighty throat. That he was about to rush down on his victim was plain, and the hapless lass stood rooted to the earth, paralysed with terror.

Ginger panted on after Dainty. Dainty was running for the bull. What he fancied he could do in handling a huge brute almost as powerful as an elephant Ginger could not guess, and the men at the gate behind were too far off to help.

The girl in the red bonnet had seen the schoolboys, and screamed for help; but what could they do? But Dainty led, and Ginger followed, and they raced down in the corner of the meadow. Another terrible roar pealed from the bull, and the gigantic form was already getting into motion for a charge, when Dainty reached him.

He swung round his bag of "sennt," and struck the bull fairly in one of the blazing red eyes.

He leaped back the next second as the great animal turned on him. The bull's attention had been fixed on the red bonnet, and he had neither seen nor heard Dainty till he reached him and struck. Now he swung round with a bellow of fury on the daring schoolboy.

Ginger understood, and he ran on and reached the terrified girl. Dainty was drawing the bull farther and farther away from the spot. With the heavy hoofs of the great animal thundering behind him, he ran for his life.

Fast as he flew, the bellowing brute behind was faster. Jim knew that he had taken his life in his hands, though he had not hesitated for a second. Panting, he ran and ran, heading for a beech that grew at a distance; and closer and closer behind him came the thunder of crashing hoofs. If he reached the tree in time he had a chance.

The steam from the broad nostrils fanned the back of his neck. The mighty head was lowered; the horns were almost touching him when he twisted round the beech, and the Durham bull went thundering by.

The huge animal's weight and speed carried him a dozen yards before he could turn. Jim Dainty reeled against the tree, breathing in great gasps, almost in sobs, his heart pounding against his ribs. But he knew that he had drawn the savage brute a good hundred yards from the girl and Ginger.

Snorting and bellowing, the bull wheeled round and came charging back at the schoolboy. Jim Dainty clambered desperately up the beech. There was no branch within reach, but the trunk gave some hold—and he clambered like a cat. Had he slipped back, it was death—fearful death without hope or help.

He climbed desperately; his grasp reaching a jutting branch, and he dragged himself out of reach as the bull thundered below. Something brushed his foot as he swung; it was the mighty head of the bull. It sent a thrill through him; but in another second he was sprawling over the branch, his chest resting on it; too exhausted to drag himself farther, but out of reach of the tossing horns.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Dainty.

Below him the bull pranced in mad rage, roaring with fury. A minute's

rest, and Jim was able to drag himself on the branch. He stood there, holding to a higher branch, while the Durham bull roared below; but he hardly looked at the furious animal. His glance swept across the field towards Ginger.

"Thank heaven!" he panted.

He had a glimpse of the red bonnet in the distance. Ginger was helping the girl over a fence; and even as Dainty looked, the red bonnet disappeared on the further side. Ginger Rawlinson turned round to see what had become of Dainty now that the girl was safe. Jim waved his hand and shouted.

Ginger waved back as he spotted him in the tree. There was a shout from the distance. Farmer Hawley and his men had seen the chase, and they were over the gate, running across the field, the farmer waving his stick, the two men in smocks and pitchforks in their hands.

"Hook it, Ginger!" yelled Jim.

Ginger hesitated a moment; then he ran on, and leaped a stile into the next meadow. Dainty had no chance of getting away if the farmer and his men wanted him, and it was up to Ginger to carry on with the run. He vanished from Jim's sight, dropping the paper trail as he went.

Then Jim turned his eyes rather grimly on the three men coming up. From what he had heard of Farmer Hawley, he expected trouble; but at least they were going to drive away the bull. Rather to his relief, they did not heed him; they gave their attention to the Durham bull, driving the great brute across the field, with stick and pitchforks, into a shed in the distance.

Holding on to the branch, Jim watched them till they reached the shed and drove the bull in; then he dropped lightly to the ground, and started at a run in the direction Ginger had taken.

It was a chance of getting clear; and he did not neglect it. He was half-way to the stile when he heard a shout behind him. A glance over his shoulder showed the ruddy-faced man in gaiters in pursuit. Farmer Hawley was no longer carrying his stick; but he waved his hand to the running schoolboy, and shouted,

"Stop!"

Jim grinned breathlessly. He was not likely to stop. He put on a spurt, and the farmer dropped behind in the chase. Jim reached the stile, and cleared it at a bound. Without a pause he raced on after Ginger, who was now visible again far ahead.

He heard shouting behind him, but he was too far now to catch the words. Looking back, he saw the stout farmer at the stile, panting for breath, waving his hand and shouting. Jim laughed, then ran on again.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger, as the White's junior joined him. "What a run! All that rotter Fenwick's fault—we shouldn't have come across Hawley's farm, but for him. But, I say, it was rather lucky for that kid that we did."

"All clear now, anyhow," panted Jim.

"For us!" grinned Ginger. "But the pack will have some trouble, I fancy."

The moorland farm was left behind. The hares trotted on by lane and field-path. They stopped on the summit of a high hillock to look back. Far in the distance, dotted in the fields, were half a dozen running figures—all that remained of the pack.

Streaky Bacon and Sandy Bean were in the lead, and after them came Dick Dawson and Tommy Tucker, Paget and Pulley. The rest of the pack had tailed off by this time.

"Lucky they shut that beastly bull up!" said Dainty. "They'd never have got through if he'd been still loose, I fancy."

"Oh, Redmayes would have got through," said Ginger.

"Fathead! There's four White's men still running, and only two Redmayes," said Dainty, his eyes on the hounds.

"Redmayes are in the lead, though."

grinned Ginger. "Those White's ticks will be crawling on their hands and knees—if they get in alive at all!"

"Shut up, and run—if you've got a run left in you, you wreck!" snapped Dainty.

"I'll run you off your legs and chance it!" retorted Ginger.

Jim Dainty ran on again, down the slope of the hill towards the Grimslade road. It was rough going, as much jumping as running; and Jim went ahead like a deer. Ginger, panting, but resolute, followed fast.

It was borne in on his reluctant mind that this White's "tick" could out-run him; and Ginger Rawlinson was not to be out-run by any man in White's if he could help it. But it was a case of more haste and less speed. Ginger came careering down the hillside, slipped, rolled, and crashed. Jim Dainty halted and stared round as he heard a crash and a yell behind him.

CHAPTER IV.

Hard Pressed!

"OW!" groaned Ginger.

Jim ran back and stooped over the Redmayes junior.

"Hurt?" he panted.

"Ow! No! I'm just howling for fun!" groaned Ginger, with withering sarcasm. "Ow! My ankle! Wow!"

Dainty helped him to his feet. Ginger sat on a stone, and felt over his ankle tenderly; it was not a sprain, fortunately; but it was a painful twist, and it hurt. He had to rest, and Jim Dainty waited.

Over the hill appeared four caps—two adorned with the red rose of Redmayes House, two with the white rose of White's. Streaky Bacon's bugle sounded; the hares were sighted again at last. Bacon and Bean, Dawson and Paget, came careering down the hill.

Ginger scrambled up desperately.

"Come on!" he panted.

"Let me help you, old chap."

"Go and eat coke! I shall leave you standing, anyhow!"

But as they ran on, Ginger was glad of a helping hand from his rival after a few minutes. His face was pale with pain; but he ran on with set teeth. They came off the moor at last into the road, and the grey old tower of Grimslade rose against the sky in the distance. The end of the long run was in sight.

Ta-ra-ra-ra; rang Streaky's bugle behind.

The pack—what were left of them—were gaining now. Jim Dainty glanced back. Full in view, Streaky Bacon and Dick Dawson were running hard—farther back, Sandy Bean and Paget were falling behind. Only two of the pack were still in the running—but they were gaining; and Jim, who could have walked away from them, had to accommodate his pace to Ginger's.

A groan came through Ginger's closed teeth.

"Oh, my giddy galoshes! Cut on, Dainty, and leave me to it!"

"Both or neither!" said Dainty briefly. He grasped Ginger's arm firmly, and helped him on.

Ginger, savagely heedless of pain, put on a spurt. Again the hares drew ahead. Sandy Bean and Paget had dropped out of sight; but Streaky and Dawson were keeping pace, Streaky's long legs going tirelessly, and taking him ahead of the White's man. Streaky, at least, seemed likely to be in at the death. Dawson dropped farther and farther behind; but Streaky was going strong.

But home was near now. At the gates of Grimslade, visible in the distance, a crowd of fellows waited—many of them members of the pack who had given it up, and taken short cuts home.

Towering over the Grimsladers was the tall figure of Dr. Samuel Sparshott. Sammy had come down to see the finish of the cross-country run. His eyes were on the two panting hares, and there was a smile on his face.

Ginger Rawlinson staggered, and hung a dead weight on his companion.

His ankle had failed him at last, a hundred yards from home.

"I'm done!" he panted. "Cut on, Dainty!"

"Sink or swim together!" snapped Jim.

He turned on Rawlinson, grasped him, and swung him to his shoulders like a sack of coke.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger. "You can't carry me, you fathead! You can't carry half of me, you ass!"

"Shut up!" answered Jim.

Head down, with Ginger on his back, he trotted on. Behind sounded the ring of Streaky's bugle; but there was no pack to be called on now. Dawson was out of it, and Streaky ran alone; but he ran fast, his long legs fairly flashing. From the crowd at the school gates came a roar.

"Bravo, Dainty!"

"Put it on!"

"Bravo!" came the deep voice of Sammy Sparshott. "Good man! Bravo!"

That deep roar from Sammy Sparshott spurred on Jim Dainty. With Sammy looking on, he was not going to fail. Ginger clung to his back, and Dainty, bending under his burden, tore on. Behind came the pattering feet of Streaky Bacon—closer and closer.

"Put it on, Dainty!" came in a wild yell from the crowd ahead. Fellows shouted and yelled, and waved their caps. Even old Sykes came out of his lodge and yelled. Sammy yelled like the youngest fag.

It was a wildly exciting finish to the run—and it was still touch and go. Streaky, his teeth set, raced—but Jim Dainty, burdened by his fellow-hare, tore on as if he had the strength of three.

The shouting died down—every eye was fixed on the race with tense keenness. Streaky Bacon's outstretched fingers almost touched his chum on Dainty's back when Jim, with a last desperate spurt, tore ahead and plunged through the opening round into the old stone gateway—home!

He reeled, and would have gone over, but Sammy Sparshott's strong grasp held him. The Head of Grimslade lifted Ginger from his back. Jim Dainty leaned on his headmaster, gasping for breath. Streaky Bacon came charging in a second too late.

"Well run, Dainty!" barked Sammy. "Hurray!"

And a roar of cheering followed Jim Dainty to his House.

CHAPTER 16.

Something Like a Surprise!

"OH, my giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Rawlinson.

"What——" began Jim Dainty.

"It's jolly old Hawley—and there's going to be a row!"

Most of the pack had got in by this time. A bath and a change after the run made Jim Dainty feel a new man, and Ginger, limping a little, came over to White's House for him. Rivalry was dismissed for the present, and there was to be tea in Ginger's study.

But as the two juniors started to cross the quad towards Redmayes House, they sighted a ruddy-faced man in gaiters, who had driven up in a trap and was now stalking into the quad. Jim Dainty recognised him at a glance, and he whistled. In the excitement of the close finish he had forgotten Farmer Hawley, but it seemed that the farmer had not forgotten him.

Dr. Sparshott was strolling in the quad with the two Housemasters, Mr. White and Mr. Redmayes. The three "beaks" looked rather curiously at Farmer Hawley as he came striding in, and Sammy frowned. Six or seven times a term, at least, there was a complaint from that irate farmer, who disliked Grimsladers taking short cuts across his land. Dr. Sparshott glanced

round, sighted Jim Dainty and Ginger, and beckoned to them.

"Dainty! Rawlinson! Have you trespassed on Mr. Hawley's land during your run this afternoon?"

"Sort of sir!" admitted Jim.

"We couldn't get across Grimslade Water, sir——" Ginger began to explain, but Sammy cut him short.

"That's no excuse! Grimslade boys must not trespass! I shall excuse the pack, who no doubt considered themselves bound to follow the trail. But the hares are to blame, and I shall inflict any punishment that Mr. Hawley may demand."

Sammy saluted Mr. Hawley politely as the stout gentleman came up. The farmer's eyes were fixed, however, not on Dr Sparshott, but on Jim Dainty. It was evident that he knew Jim again at a glance.

"That's the boy!" he exclaimed.

Heedless of Dr. Sparshott, the farmer made a stride towards Jim Dainty, his big and heavy hand outstretched. But Dr. Sparshott, with a grim face, grasped him by the arm and swung him back. He supposed that Mr. Hawley was bent on administering punishment with his own hands, which was not good enough for Sammy.

"Hands off, please!" barked Sammy.

"Eh, what?" gasped Mr Hawley.

"Leave it to Sammy, sir!" said Jim Dainty coolly. "Sammy lays it on hard enough."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the gathering crowd of Grimsladers. A grin flashed over Sammy's face for a second.

"Silence, Dainty!" he barked. "How dare you! Now, Mr. Hawley, if you have a complaint to make of the boy——"

Mr. Hawley jerked his arm away.

A crowd of fellows stared on at the scene, among them Fenwick of the Fifth, who had a grin of anticipation on his face. But there was a surprise and a disappointment in store for the black sheep of White's House.

"That's the boy!" roared Farmer Hawley, pointing to Dainty. "Ain't seen him before to-day—but I know him again! Stand out of the way, Mister Schoolmaster! That's the boy I want to see."

"Punishment, my dear sir, is in my hands here!" said Sammy.

"Punishment be blessed!" said Mr Hawley. "Who's talking about punishment? I want to shake hands with that lad!"

"Eh?"

"Think I want to punish a lad for saving my lass Alice from my prize bull?" roared Mr. Hawley. "Out of your mind, sir, or what?"

"Wha-a-a-at?" gasped Dr. Sparshott.

He stared blankly at the farmer, who pushed past him and rushed down on Jim, and grasped his hand.

"You're the lad, you are!" said Mr. Hawley. "You're not Yorkshire, you are. I dunno your name but I know you're not Yorkshire! I'm proud to shake your hand, sir! If I'd caught you crossing my land, I'd have laid my stick about you till it cracked! But not after what you've done! Didn't I see you draw the bull away from my lass, and wasn't my heart in my mouth——"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim.

"Mister Schoolmaster, that's a lad for you to be proud of," said Mr. Hawley. "My lass Alice went into the bull's field without knowing he was loose—and she would have been killed, but for this lad—and if you'd seen him tackle a prize Durham bull, sir, as big as an elephant and as savage as a tiger, sir, your heart would have been in your mouth as mine was. How he got out of it alive I dunno. And when I got the bull shut up and came after him to speak to him, he cleared off."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim. "I thought——"

The farmer grinned.

"Yes, I s'pose you did!" he agreed. "So I drove over to the school, sir, to see you and give you a father's thanks. Give me your hand again, sir."

"Ow!" gasped Jim, as his fingers cracked in a terrific grip. "Go easy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And after this, sir," said Mr. Hawley, "you and any friends of yours are as free to go on my land as if it was your own." He glanced round at the staring crowd of Grimsladers. "Boys, this lad risked his life to save a lam from danger, and if you think as much of pluck as I do, you'll give him a cheer."

And the Grimslade fellows were not slow to play up, and Sammy's deep voice led the cheering.

* * * * *

"Luck, and no mistake!" said Jim Dainty, at tea in Ginger's study.

"And pluck!" said Ginger.

"Hear, hear!" said Sandy Bran and Stretky Baron and Dick Dawson in chorus. And Fritz Spiltz, who had wedged into the merry tea-party, as they were feeling too cheery and good-tempered to kick him out, added:

"Perry blucky, mein goot Tainty! I have said pefore, and I say vun more time, that you are almost as prave as a Chermun!"

And after tea, the rivals of Grimslade—temporarily at peace—walked over to White's House together to see Fenwick of the Fifth. And when they were done with him, it was quite a long time before the black sheep of Grimslade felt that life was worth living.

CHAPTER 11.

Detected!

"LOOK out! Stop him!"

Jim Dainty jumped and spun round.

"That's Sammy's voice!" he ejaculated.

The early dusk was falling when Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson trotted up to the gates of Grimslade School. They were just in time to dodge in before old Sykes closed the gates. But they stopped and turned back as that ringing shout and a patter of hurried footsteps came along the road.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott, the headmaster of Grimslade, had a powerful voice. It sounded rather like a megaphone as he roared to the two juniors. "Sammy" Sparshott was coming up the road at a rapid run.

Just ahead of him was a man who panted and gasped as he ran, evidently going "all out" to escape the grasp of Sammy. His face streamed with perspiration, and his nose streamed crimson, which looked as if he had had a knock on it. Sammy Sparshott was a first-class sprinter, but the man with the damaged nose was outpacing him as he came racing by the school gates.

Jim Dainty and his chum stared for a second. In another second the man with the crimson nose would have raced by. But Jim made a spring into the roadway.

"Back up, Dawson!" he shouted.

What the trouble was neither of the schoolboys could guess. But the man with the crimson nose looked a tough customer, and they had no doubt that their headmaster had good reasons for chasing him as he was doing. Anyhow, it was up to Grimslade men to heed Sammy's orders.

Crash!

The running man barged fairly into Jim Dainty. The junior went headlong on the frosty road, but he had hold of the fugitive, who went down with him. They sprawled together.

Dick Dawson leaped to his chum's aid. The red-nosed man was struggling up, and as Jim clung to him tenaciously, he rained furious blows on the junior. Dawson grabbed him by his rather unclean neckcloth and dragged him backwards.

The man sprawled on his back, panting out an oath. In a moment, however, he turned on Dawson like a wild-cat, and a jab in the ribs sent Dawson spinning. The fugitive scrambled to his feet.

"Hold him!" panted Dr. Sparshott. "He's a thief! He has stolen my notecase! Hold him!"

He came racing up. Dawson was still sprawling, gasping for breath; but Jim Dainty was up like a Jack-in-the-box, hurling the pickpocket's way. The man

glared round desperately. Jim was in front, Sammy Sparshott behind, both about to jump on him and grasp. In the twinkling of an eye the pickpocket darted into the open gateway of the school.

Old Sykes, the porter, had come down to close the gates. He stood staring at the startling scene outside. The sudden inrush of the pickpocket took old Sykes quite by surprise. Before he new what was happening, the Grimslade porter went over backwards, and the running man was treading on him!

Wild roars came from Sykes as his waistcoat was trodden on, hard and heavy. Leaving him roaring, the desperate man rushed on into the quad, where the shadows of the evening were falling thickly.

"After him!" panted Jim Dainty.

Sammy Sparshott spun in at the gates, swift as a deer. After him rushed Jim Dainty, and Dawson picked himself up, gasping, and followed. Sammy's voice rang the length and breadth of Grimslade.

"Stop that man! Stop, thief! Seize him!"

The dusk was deep, but many of the study windows gleamed with lights. Ginger Rawlinson, Sandy Bean and Streaky Bacon were in the doorway of Redmayes House when a panting man flew by. Then they heard Sammy's stentorian roar. Ginger & Co. rushed out at once. Ginger led, and did the House steps in one.

Unfortunately, he stumbled as he landed and went, at full length, right in the path of Dr. Sparshott. Sammy was going too fast to stop—even to see Ginger before he staggered over him.

"Oooooh!" roared Ginger, as the headmaster of Grimslade landed with his knees in Ginger's back. "Oh, my giddy galoshes! Wow!"

Bump! Jim Dainty, streaking like lightning behind his headmaster, crashed into his back, and Dr. Sparshott pitched forward.

There was a howl of anguish from Ginger, a gasp from Dr. Sparshott. Jim Dainty staggered from the shock.

But Sammy was up in a moment or two. Leaving Jim staggering and Ginger spluttering wildly, Dr. Sparshott dashed on in pursuit of the man with the crimson nose.

Other Grimslade men had taken the alarm now. Trafford of the Sixth rushed on the man from one direction; Yorke of the Sixth came speeding over from White's House. Mr. Redmayes appeared on one side, Mr. White on the other.

The desperate, breathless man dodged and twisted like a hare. Only to escape immediate capture had he fled into the school, and it looked as if he was trapped there. Old Sykes had got to his feet and slammed the gates, to cut off his escape. Fellows were pouring out of both Houses.

Fritz Splitz, the German junior, came along from the school shop, and met the desperate man in full career. Fritz was laden, with a bag of jam tarts in one podgy hand, and a bag of eggs in the other. He was heading for White's House and Study No. 10 for tea.

"Splitz, stop him!"

The fat German stared round with his saucer-eyes. The next moment there was a crash, and Fritz hit the ground with a concussion that made it shake.

"Ach! Himmel!" shrieked Fritz. "Ach! Vat vas tat? Mein tarts—mein eggs! Feast and a prute! Oooogh!"

Fritz Splitz rolled over—in tarts and eggs! The man with the crimson nose staggered, recovered, and dashed on, heading across the quad for White's House, with a shouting mob in chase. Fritz was left wallowing in squashed jam tart and broken eggs.

"After him!"

The man ran under the study windows of White's House. He paused for a second under an open window, as if with the desperate thought of clambering into the House. But the chase was hot at his heels, and he tore on. Twenty or thirty fellows were after him now, with Sammy Sparshott in the lead. More and more were joining up.

Fritz Splitz, Jammy and eggy, picked himself up and tottered to his House, but every other fellow in the quad was joining in the hunt. The fugitive left White's House behind after that momentary pause under the window of Study No. 10, and raced on to the wall that bordered the school field.

He reached the wall and made a desperate bound. But even as he bounded, Sammy Sparshott's grasp fell on him. He came backwards with a crash and landed at the feet of the headmaster of Grimslade.

"I think we have him now!" drawled Sammy.

They had him—there was no doubt about that. Sammy's powerful grasp dragged him to his feet, and he stood gasping, winded, done to the wide. Round him surged a crowd of fifty or more fellows.

"But what——" panted Mr. White.

"He picked my pocket in Middlemoor Lane," explained Sammy. "He has my notecase! Hand it over, my man!"

"I ain't!" gasped the culprit.

"Better hand it over," said Dr. Sparshott pleasantly. "Or would you like another tap like the one I gave you in the lane?"

"I tell you I ain't got it, and I never 'ad it! I jest 'appened to push agin you, sir, and you fancied——"

"Byles!"—the Head's man came up—"search this scoundrel for my notecase!"

The man with the damaged nose stood panting, while Byles searched him. He mopped his beaky nose, which was still oozing claret. The search was thorough, but no notecase was found.

"Wot did I tell you?" demanded the accused. "You was mistaken!"

"I was not mistaken," said Dr. Sparshott coldly. "You threw the notecase away, I presume, so that it should not be found on you. You had plenty of opportunities."

"You'll 'ave to prove it!"

"I shall not take the trouble! I shall deal with you myself!" said Dr. Sparshott. "Byles, fetch my cane!"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger Rawlinson. "He's going to cane him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Sammy!" chuckled Jim Dainty.

Nearly all Grimslade gathered round, and there was a roar of laughter. Byles came back with the cane; and even on the calm, impassive face of the Head's man there was a grin. Dr. Sparshott took the cane and swished it. The man with the red nose eyed him apprehensively and almost unbelievingly.

"Look 'ere, guv'nor!" he gasped. "You ain't going to wallop a cove with that there cane! You 'ave me run in if you like; you'll 'ave to prove it agin me! But you can't wallop a cove!"

"Your mistake!" said Sammy tersely. "I can, and will!"

His left hand was wound in the dingy neckcloth. The pickpocket was bent over, like a Grimslade fellow to take "six." He wriggled and struggled and roared, but in Sammy's iron grasp he was bent over and held as if he had been in the grip of a steel vice.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

The cane rang on frowsy trousers. Wild yells came from the hapless pincher of notecases. He struggled frantically.

Sammy laid it on with vigour. The crowd of Grimsladers roared with merriment. The Head of Grimslade had many original ways, and this method of dealing with a pickpocket was as original as any.

Probably the man with the nose would have preferred to be handed over to the police, especially as the proving of the charge would have been doubtful as the plunder was not found on him. But what he preferred did not matter to Sammy. Sammy was a busy headmaster, with no time to waste. His method was short and sharp.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroogh! Leave orf! Whoooop! Urrrrrggh! Oh, my eye! Oh, jumping

snakes! Wow!" roared the hapless pickpocket.

"Go it, Sammy!" yelled Jim Dainty from the back of the crowd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"I think that will do, my man," said Dr. Sparshott coolly. "Now I will give you ten seconds to jump that wall!"

Two seconds were enough for the pickpocket. He vanished over the wall like a ghost at cock-crow. Pattering footsteps were heard for a few moments and then he was gone.

Sammy Sparshott tucked the cane under his arm and walked away to his study, leaving the crowd of Grimslade men in the quad rocking with laughter.

CHAPTER 28.

A Windfall for Fritz!

"PEAST and a prute!" groaned Fritz Splitz.

Heedless of the uproar going on in the quad, Fritz limped dismally into his study in White's House. He was jammy and he was eggy, and he needed a wash. That did not worry Fritz. There was no limit to the amount of washing that Fritz could do without. Jam and eggs plastered about him were not nice, but what worried Fritz was that, having been taken externally, they could not be taken internally. There was the rub!

Who had barged him over in the November dusk, Fritz did not know, or care. That did not matter. What mattered was the loss of the tuck. Not a jam tart remained unsquashed. Not an egg remained unbroken. There was only one consolation, it was not Fritz who had paid for them. His study-mates, Dainty and Dawson, had stood those supplies for tea; which Fritz was to share if he had it ready when they came in.

"Prute! Peast! Frutal pounder!" moaned Fritz. "Ich bin hungrig; alretty I am ferry hungry pefore. Also I have no more le breff!"

The fat German sat down in the study armchair and gasped for breath. Through the open window he could hear roars of laughter in the quad, where Dr. Sparshott was dealing with the thief in his own original way. Fritz von Splitz heeded not. There was nothing for tea; and when there was nothing for tea the world was a dreary desert to Friedrich von Splitz. Life was no more than a delusion and a snare.

As he sprawled in the armchair Fritz became aware that he was sitting on something as well as the chair. Some small object in the seat caused him discomfort. He wriggled to one side and blinked with his saucer-eyes to see what it was.

"Ach! Mein goodness!" ejaculated Fritz.

He jumped out of the armchair as if he had been electrified. His fat hand clutched up the object on which he had sat.

It was a notecase!

Fritz stared at it blankly.

It was a small leather case, fastened by a button. Falling into the chair from somewhere, the button had jerked open and the case revealed its contents —currency notes!

Fritz in utter amazement, counted the notes—ten pound notes in one compartment, fifteen ten-shilling notes in another. With incredulous, amazed eyes the fat Rhinelander stared at that sum of money. Seventeen pounds ten shillings! Taken in Study No. 10, in White's House, like manna on the Israelites of old!

"Mein goodness!" gurgled Fritz.

He blinked round at the window. It was open, and the chair happened to face the window. Had someone passed that window and thrown the case of currency notes in? It seemed the only explanation, yet it was amazing.

Who on earth, at Grimslade, could afford to chuck seventeen pounds about? Certainly the notecase did not belong to Dainty or Dawson; they had no such sum of money, or anything like

it. To whom did it—could it—belong? It was a plain leather case; no name or initial on it. There was no clue to the proprietor. Where had it come from?

That was a mystery to Fritz Splitz.

"Mein goodness!" murmured Fritz again.

He slipped the notecase into his pocket and sat down in the armchair again to think over this amazing occurrence. Thinking it over did not bring Fritz any nearer a solution of the mystery. But the cash was safe in his pocket. It was likely to remain there.

Fritz von Splitz was of the opinion of Vespasian of old, that the smell of all money was sweet. A person who chucked seventeen pounds in at a study window could not, obviously, want it himself. But Fritz wanted it!

There was a tramp in the passage, and Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson came into the study. Fritz blinked at them.

"What about ten?" demanded Dainty.

"Ach! Tat is all right, mein goot Tainty," said Fritz. "Te cham darts and te eggs are all proken. A peast and a prute knocked me ofer and I fall on tem! But it is all right. Tis time I stand te ten."

"Gammon!" growled Dawson.

Fritz grinned as he hoisted his fat person out of the armchair. Fritz was in funds—for once! Whose funds they were was a trifle light as air. They were Fritz's now.

"Mein goot frients," said Fritz, "I have told you many dimes tat in Chermany te Von Splitzes have colossal estates——"

"Cheese it!" grunted Dainty.

"Now mein oldel, te Graf von Splitz, he send me vim pig remittance," said Fritz. "You, Tawson, you go to te duckshop and get te duck, and I gif you a pound note to change, ain't it?"

Dick Dawson chuckled.

"Like a shot—if you cough up the pound note," he said.

Fritz von Splitz threw a pound note on the study table. He threw it there with a flourish. It was the first time since he had been at Grimslade that Fritz Splitz had been able to throw pound notes about.

Dainty and Dawson jumped as they saw it.

"Seeing is pelieving," said Fritz, with dignity. "Vat do you tink of tat, Tainty and Tawson?"

"My only hat!" said Jim Dainty, staring.

"Well, it's about time you stood your whack, Fatty," said Dawson. "It's the first time this term. I'll cut down to the shop. How much shall I spend?"

"All of it," answered Fritz loftily. "I have more tan tat, Tawson! Mein peoples are colossally rich, as I have told you more tan vun time."

"Bow-wow!"

Dawson departed with the pound note. He returned laden with tuck. That tea-time there was a reign of plenty in Study No. 10. Fritz in funds was quite a new Fritz. Seldom or never did Fritz Splitz stand his "whack." But that, no doubt, was because the colossal riches of the Von Splitzes never travelled as far as Grimslade. Now that he was in funds Fritz spread himself.

News spread along the passage that Fritz was standing a spread. It was surprising news and interesting news! Fellows dropped in to see whether it was so; and, finding that it was so, they stayed to the spread. Tommy Tucker and Bates, Fulley and Lomas and Paget, sat round the festive board, and the fat founder of the feast beamed on them with his saucer-eyes.

Quite a lot of tuck was obtainable for a pound; but it all disappeared. After tea, Fritz Splitz disappeared also. But he might have been seen, as a novelist would say, in the school shop, where, for once, he was a welcome customer. He sat at Mrs. Sykes' counter, and consumed tuck till he could consume no more, and a second pound note was detached from the wad in Fritz's notecase. Mrs. Sykes was quite impressed.

Fritz rolled out at last, weary and

heavy-laden, with a big cake under one arm for supper, and a large bag of tarts and doughnuts under the other.

So long as that amazing windfall lasted Study No. 10 in White's House seemed likely to be a land flowing with milk and honey. But it did not seem likely to last long at this rate.

CHAPTER 21.
In the Dead of Night!

JIM DAINTY awoke suddenly.

He was fast asleep in the Fourth Form dormitory in White's House, dreaming of Soccer, when something awakened him. He started out of balmy slumber, to feel something groping over his face in the dark.

"Oh!" gasped Jim.

He started up in startled alarm. Something, apparently, was bending over him in the dark, for as he started up, his head came into contact with a hard object.

"Ach! Himmel!" came a howl of anguish. "Mein goodness! Mein nose! Ooogh! Vy for you preak me te poke, you dummkopf? Wow!"

"Ow!" gasped Jim, rubbing his head. "You silly chump, what the dickens are you up to?"

He peered at Fritz in the gloom. The fat German was clasping his podgy nose with both hands, and gurgling wildly. Jim's head was a little hurt by the crash—but Fritz's nose seemed to be very much hurt.

"Ach! Feast and prute!" groaned Fritz. "You preak me te poke! I have a colossal bain in mein nose! Ach!"

"You fat lunatic, what are you waking me up for?"

"Mein goot Tainty—ach, mein poke—I vant you to gum down to te study mit me to get te duck."

"The duck?" repeated Jim. "Oh, the tuck! You hungry octopus, go back to bed, and let a fellow sleep!"

"Ich bin hungrig—ich habe hunger, mein goot Tainty, and I tink—— Whooo-hoop!" spluttered Fritz as Jim, grasping his pillow, swept it through the air.

Crash!

Fritz von Splitz sat down suddenly.

"Now let a fellow sleep!" growled Jim Dainty.

"Ach! Feast and prute!" howled Fritz. "Now I vill not give you any of te duck! You can go and eat goke! Mein goot Tawson, are you avake? Vill you gum down to te study to fetch te duck—— Ach! Pang me not mit tat pillow, you feast and prute! Mein goodness!"

Fritz Splitz scuttled away to the door. Fritz had awakened hungry. How a fellow could be hungry after the supper Fritz had packed away in Study No. 10 was rather a mystery. But there was more tuck in Study No. 10—plenty of tuck—and the thought of it haunted Fritz in his slumbers.

He dreamed of it, and when he awakened about midnight, he yearned for it—and he turned out of bed at last. Dark staircases and passages at midnight's witching hour were not attractive, and Fritz wanted a companion on his trip to the study—but evidently he had to go on his own if he went at all. Jim Dainty heard the dormitory door open and close.

Fritz shivered as he groped along the passage. The December night was cold. The wind wailed over the roofs of Grimslade; windows creaked, and ivy rustled. Fritz's fat heart beat unpleasantly. The thought of burglars came disagreeably into his mind, and he was tempted to turn back. But there was a cake in Study No. 10—there was a bag of doughnuts! He screwed his courage up to the sticking-point, and groped on.

The study passage was dark, with only a faint glimmer of wintry starlight in the big bay window at the end. Fritz tiptoed along to Study No. 10. He reached the study, turned the door-handle, and opened the door.

Then he stopped dead, his fat heart pounding against his ribs. He thought he had heard a sound in the study!

Fritz Splitz's startled saucer-eyes peered at the open window—he saw the dark, shadowy silhouette of a man framed there! The sight terrified the hapless Rhinelander to the very marrow of his bones. "Ach! Himmel! Help!" he shrieked. "Burglars! Help!"

Burglars rushed into his startled mind. He stood rooted to the floor, his podgy heart going like a piston, listening. He had heard a sound—he was sure that he had heard a sound! But silence followed. He peered into the darkness of the study. Nothing could be seen save the dim, glimmering window. Fritz did not observe that it was open.

For a full minute he stood with palpitating heart. But the silence reassured him. After all, burglars would hardly burgle a schoolboy's study—there was nothing there to burgle! The most enterprising bandit could hardly have designs on Fritz's cake and doughnuts! Fritz Splitz stepped into the study at last, closing the door and peering round him through his saucer-eyes.

He moved across to the cupboard. He did not venture to put on a light; but he did not need one. He groped in the dark cupboard, and as he did so he became aware of a cold, chilly draught playing round his fat legs. The window was open.

His startled saucer-eyes peered at the window. The lower sash was up, and—his heart almost ceased to beat—he saw the dark, shadowy silhouette of a man framed there!

For a long moment Fritz stood rooted to the floor, forgetful even of the cake and the doughnuts! He would have given continents of cake, mountains of doughnuts, to have been safe back in bed in the dormitory.

He stirred at last, and with a suppressed squeak of terror made a rush for the door. But during his momentary hesitation the night intruder had acted.

Swiftly, silently, he climbed through the open window.

Before Fritz could reach the door he found himself confronted by a hard, stubbly face, with a nose that was red and bulbous—a nose that looked as if it was swollen, as the result of a hard punch. It was a mere glimpse in the gloom, but it terrified the hapless Rhinelander to the very marrow of his bones. He gave a gurgle of horror.

"Crimes!"

It was a low ejaculation, in a rough, harsh voice. The shadow loomed over Fritz, and he jumped back as if he had had an electric shock. A grasping hand just missed him.

"Ach! Himmel! Help!" shrieked Fritz. "Burglars! Burglars! Help!"

There was a muttered oath, and the dim figure lurched at him, the hands grasping. Fritz dodged round the study table. Generally his podgy brain was slow in action, but terror sharpened it now. He had the advantage of knowing his way about the room, and the intruder was a stranger there. Fritz whipped round the table, and he heard a savage grunt as his pursuer bumped into that article of furniture. He leaped for the door.

He grabbed the door-handle, but before he had time to turn it a hand was on his fat shoulder from behind, grabbing. With a shriek of horror Fritz spun away, leaving a strip of his pyjama jacket in the unseen's grasp. He circled the table again, shrieking and squeaking.

"Old your row!" came a husky voice. "Crimes! If you don't old your row, I——"

The looming shadow was after Fritz. It pursued him round the table again. Fritz remembered the inkstand on the table. Desperation was sharpening his fat wits wonderfully. He grabbed it up and hurled it.

Crash!

"Whoooooop!"

The dim-glimmering face in the gloom was suddenly blackened from sight. Ink smothered it. A yell of anguish told that the inkstand had done damage. The bulbous nose was no longer red, but black! But its last state was worse than its first!

"Ach himmel!" panted Fritz.

There was a rush of feet after him. He circled the table in frantic flight. He brushed by a chair—and his fat wits still working at unaccustomed pressure,

he snatched hold of it and threw it in the way of his pursuer. There was a crash, a roar of wrath and anguish as the shadowy figure stumbled over it and rolled on the floor.

Fritz bounded to the door. His wild yelling had reached many ears by that time. He could hear doors opening, voices calling. The House was alarmed! If he could only get out of the study——

He tore the door open. A hand grasped him in the darkness. Fritz Splitz gave one fearful shriek, and collapsed on the floor in a dead faint.

What happened after that Fritz did not know. Lights were flashing on in the passage, hurrying feet were approaching. Fritz neither saw nor heard. And he did not hear the hurried leap of the night-prowler from the study window, or the pattering of fleeing footsteps in the dark December night.

There was a buzz of voices—a trampling of feet. Mr. White, the Housemaster, Yorke of the Sixth, a crowd of half-dressed fellows behind them, rushed on the scene. They found Fritz Splitz lying senseless in the doorway of Study No. 10—and that was all they found. The study window was open, the cold winter wind blowing in, but there was no sign of any intruder.

CHAPTER II.
Sammy's Catch!

"GAMMON!"

That was the verdict of the House.

The next morning Fritz von Splitz was looking like the ghost of a fat German. He had had the fright of his life. He had also had "six" from his Housemaster for breaking dormitory bounds. And his story of a burglar in the study only made the House laugh!

No sign had been found of any burglar. It was absurd, on the face of it, to suppose that a burglar, if he came at all, would come to a junior study, where there was nothing to burgle but dog-eared school-books. Fritz was known to be a funk of the first water! He had been frightened by some shadow in the dark!

In vain Fritz persisted, almost with tears in his eyes, that there had been a burglar—that he had narrowly escaped the clutches of a fearful ruffian. Mr. White refused to believe a word of it—and the House shared the opinion of the Housemaster.

It was true that the window of Study No. 10 was found open. But it was not the first time that a forgotten window had been found open in the morning. Indeed, most of the fellows concluded that the open window had put the idea of the burglar into Fritz's fat mind, and that shadows and funk had done the rest. They refused positively to believe in Fritz's burglar!

"I tell you tat tere vas vun purglar!" wailed Fritz a score of times at least. "I tell you vunce more tat I had a derrible fight mit tat burglar! I knock him town, and he pellow like a pull!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jim Dainty. "We heard you bellowing like a bull—but we didn't hear the burglar!"

"Chuck it, Fritz!" said Dick Dawson. "You saw the window open and fancied the rest! Just funk!"

In morning break Fritz was sent for to Dr. Sparshott's study. The story of the night's alarm had reached the Head. Fritz had already had six from his Housemaster, and many fellows expected him to get another six from the Head for causing an alarm for nothing.

The fat German made his way to the Head's study in a state of trepidation. Really, it was hard lines not to be believed when, for once, Friedrich von Splitz was telling the truth!

To his relief, the cane was not featured in his interview with Sammy. Dr. Sparshott made him tell his thrilling tale over again, and listened very attentively. Nobody in White's House believed a word of it, and whether Sammy believed a word of it could not have been told from his face. When

the fat Fritz had finished, all Sammy said was:

"If you break dormitory bounds again, Splitz, I shall deal with you myself!"

"Ach himmel!" gasped Fritz. "I neffer, neffer, neffer preak formitory bounds any more after! Mein goodness! I tink two times pefore I go town in te tark again! I like not purglars in te tark!"

Dr. Sparshott sat with a very thoughtful brow after he had dismissed the German junior. In third school, when the fellows were all in the Form-rooms, Sammy walked over to White's House, and went into Study No. 10.

Whether he was looking for signs of a burglary or not, Sammy was certainly looking for something, for he searched that study as meticulously as a detective could have searched it. Whatever he was looking for, however, he did not seem to find, and there was a still more thoughtful and rather puzzled expression on his face as he left the House.

Later in the day Fritz recovered a little. He had been scared out of his podgy wits, he had been whacked by his Housemaster, and he was laughed at by the whole House. But there was still, so to speak, balm in Gilead. He still had his windfall. Two pounds ten had been expended out of seventeen pounds ten! Fifteen pounds remained!

The amount of tuck represented by fifteen pounds was really dazzling. It would have comforted any Deutschlander. It comforted Fritz. At tea-time there was another spread in Study No. 10. Fritz was not likely to break dormitory bounds again for a feed at night. But the amount he packed away during the day made it unlikely that even Fritz would be hungry that night!

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson could only stare when they found that Fritz was spreading himself again.

"Come into a fortune, or what?" asked Dainty.

"Been holding up a bank?" asked Dawson.

"Mein goot Tainty and Tawson, I tells you vunce tat mein beoples in Chermany are colossally rich," answered Fritz loftily. "Tey send me vun pig remittance, ain't it!"

And Fritz's study-mates almost began to believe that there was something in it. Certainly Fritz was in funds—ample funds—whether they came from his "beoples" in Germany or not. By that time, indeed, Fritz almost believed himself that it was his own cash.

Fritz had long ago given up wondering where that money had come from. The fact that he had got it was enough for him.

A whole pound note went on tea, a ten-shilling note on supper, and Fritz grunted laboriously when he crawled up to the dormitory that night. He always had plenty of weight to carry, but now he had quite an unusual cargo. And if he woke up that night and thought of the tuck that was left in the study, he did not think of going down for it! Wild horses would not have dragged him downstairs in the dark.

The Houses of Grimslade were buried in darkness and slumber. The last door closed, the last light was extinguished. The December gloom and mist hung heavy on the quad. But in the sleeping school there was at least one person who was awake.

Had Fritz Splitz been peering from the window of Study No. 10 instead of snoring in the dormitory, he might have fancied that his burglar had come back. For in the deep dusk of night, a shadowy figure stirred outside that window. A close inspection, however, would have revealed the fact that it was the figure of Dr. Samuel Sparshott.

In a dark coat and cap, almost invisible in the gloom, with a golf-club under his arm, Dr. Sparshott loomed in the shadows under the window of the study in White's House. He stood there for some moments watching and listening, and then backed into the cover of a stone buttress near at hand. Leaning on the wall, screened by the

buttress, the Head of Grimslade waited and watched.

White's fellows, had they known he was there, might have guessed that Sammy alone in Grimslade, believed in Fritz's burglar—and expected him to return.

For a long hour he waited, without sound or motion, and heard the chimes of midnight. Another long hour—and then, soon after the stroke of one had died away, another sound came to the alert ears of the patient Sammy.

It was a stealthy footfall in the dark quad.

Sammy smiled grimly.

From the shadows of the night came a slinking figure, approaching the window of Study No. 10. Dr. Sparshott, peering through the gloom, had a glimpse of a stubbly face with a red and bulbous nose. He did not stir.

The man with the crimson nose stopped under the window of Study No. 10. He stood there listening for a few moments. Then there was a faint creak and a crack as the window fastening was forced. Almost inaudibly the lower sash was pushed up.

The red-nosed face was inserted in at the open window; the shoulders followed—and at that point in the proceedings Sammy Sparshott stepped out from behind the buttress and grasped the legs that were about to whisk in.

There was a startled, gurgling gasp from within the study, and the man in the window twisted round like an eel.

"Crimes!" he gasped.

"Better come quietly!" said Dr. Sparshott gently.

The red-nosed man did not seem to think so. With a panting oath he twisted out of the window and grasped at the headmaster of Grimslade. There was a jemmy in his hand, but he had no time to use it. A golf-club swept through the air and landed with a loud crack!

"Oooooh!" came in a yell from the red-nosed man. He rolled over in the quad at the headmaster's feet.

Sammy's left grasped him by a dingy neckcloth. He jerked him to his feet. The golf-club was lifted in his right.

"I shouldn't argue any more if I were you," said Sammy placidly.

And the man with the damaged nose decided not to. He rubbed his head sadly as Sammy, with a grasp of iron, led him away.

CHAPTER 23.
Light At Last!

"DAINTY! Dawson! Splits! Headmaster's study!"

Mr. White rapped it out after breakfast the next morning. Study No. 10, wondering what on earth Sammy wanted, walked across the quad towards Big School.

Ginger Rawlinson yelled to them from Redmayes.

"Heard, you men? Burglar last night——"

"Gammon!"

"Honest Injun! Locked in the garage, waiting for a hobby to come from Blackmoor. They say Sammy got him!"

"Mein goodness! Perhaps dat is te same burglar!" ejaculated Fritz Splits. "Perhaps he gum back."

"Streaky's seen him, and he says it's the same man that Sammy whacked for picking his pocket!" said Ginger breathlessly.

"Great Scott!"

Jim Dainty & Co. looked very curiously at their headmaster as they entered Sammy's study. Dr. Sparshott had a rather grim expression on his face, and they noticed that his cane lay handy.

"Which of you boys found a notecase in Study No. 10, containing seventeen pounds ten shillings?" barked Sammy.

Jim Dainty jumped; Dick Dawson almost staggered; Fritz von Splits goggled at the Head. The three had wondered what Sammy had to say. They had not dreamed of anything like this. Sammy's keen eyes were on them. He read blank amazement in two faces;

more than amazement in the third. And his grey, penetrating eyes fixed on Friedrich von Splitz.

"Wha-a-at——" stammered Jim Dainty.

"You recall that a pickpocket was chased in the quadrangle the day before yesterday. The notecase was not found on him. I concluded that he had thrown it away in his flight. I did not know then that he had thrown it into a Grimslade study window!" barked Sammy.

"What-a-at——" stuttered Dawson.

"But I knew as soon as I heard that a burglar had entered a study in White's House!"

"Ach! Tat purglar——"

"And, guessing what he was after, I waited for him last night and took proper care of him," said Dr. Sparshott.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim Dainty. "Then Fritz's burglar——"

"Exactly! The plunder was still on the rascal when he was chased here, and he threw it into a study window to get shut of it. He hoped to be able to get hold of it again. That was the only explanation of what happened to Splitz. I have not mentioned the matter hitherto; I did not want to risk a word getting out and keeping the man away. You get me? Well, now he has called, and is safe for three months to come. Now, where's the notecase?"

"Mein goodness!" gasped Fritz.

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson glared at their podgy study-mate. Like a flash they understood the source of Fritz's recent wealth.

"Splitz!" barked Dr. Sparshott.

"Ach! I know nothing!" gasped Fritz. "Mein brain he is run berfect blank! I neffer find tat notecase in te study; also I link tat he is run present tat somevun gift to me. I neffer know tat you lost run notecase—I know nothing of tat bickbucket! Mein goodness!"

"Fortunately for you," said Dr. Sparshott grimly, "I believe that you did not know that the notecase was mine. But you know that it was not your own. You found it and kept it. Give it to me at once, and then bend over that chair!"

With a shaking, podgy hand, Fritz Splitz handed over the notecase. Thunder grew on the Head's brow as he ascertained that it held only thirteen pounds, ten shillings.

"Splitz, you have spent the money! You——"

"Ach! Mein goodness!" groaned Fritz. "I spend a few bounds, sir—I borrow it! Ach, goodness! I puy duck for Tainty and Tawson——"

"You Dutch villain!" roared Jim Dainty. "If we'd known—— May I kick him, sir?"

"Certainly!" said Dr. Sparshott.

"Ach! Yaroogh! Whoop!" roared Fritz. "Feast and a prute!"

"You may do the same, Dawson."

"Yooop! Mein goodness! Tat you kick me not on mein trousers!" yelled Fritz. "I have a colossal pain in mein trousers! Ach, himmel!"

"I was sure that you two boys knew nothing of this," said Sammy. "Splitz, I grant that you are too stupid to understand how dishonest you are! It will be my endeavour to make it clear to you. Your allowance will be confiscated until the sum of four pounds is made up. I shall give you a whopping that you will remember till the end of the term. Bend over that chair!"

Jim Dainty and Dawson left the study. Fearful yells followed them. They rang almost the length and breadth of Grimslade. Fellows in the quad heard the whacking of the cane. Sammy was laying it on as if he fancied that he was beating carpets.

When Fritz Splitz emerged at last he wriggled his painful way along like a wounded snake. His study-mates were waiting for him. Sammy had given Fritz what he considered enough. His study-mates seemed to think that he needed a little more. They did not speak; they charged. And Fritz fled for his House, with two incensed tactors

behind, dribbling him like a fat football.

How many kicks Fritz Splits collected that day he never knew. But there was no doubt that his windfall had brought him more kicks than ha'pence!

CHAPTER IX.

The Blackmoor Convict!

"HALT!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Three Grimslade Juniors were coming up the lane from Middlemoor to Grimslade School in the thickening dusk.

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson were walking fast; Fritz Splits was lagging woefully behind.

Fritz was tired. Fritz had walked a mile. He had not wanted to walk that mile. Ten yards was enough for Friedrich von Splitz when he wanted a walk—which was seldom. Prowling in the study was more in Fritz's line.

Fritz had taken that walk because his study-mates thought that it would be good for him. With Jim Dainty hooking one fat arm, and Dick Dawson hooking the other, the fat Fritz had had to walk as far as Middlemoor. Now he had to walk back, and he was feeling that life was scarcely worth living.

It was cold; it was getting dark; snow was falling on the moor, and the juniors had heard in the village that a convict had escaped from Blackmoor Prison. And in every shadow by the wayside Fritz's saucer-eyes spotted that convict lurking. Fritz grunted and groaned at every step.

But as the figure of a horseman loomed up in the gloom ahead, and rapped out a sharp order to halt, Fritz's grunts and groans changed to a squeal of terror. He had no doubt that it was the escaped convict this time.

"Ach, Himmel! Geep him off!" squealed Fritz. "Dainty! Dawson, keep off fat peast and a pride!"

"You silly ass!" growled Jim. "It's a bobby!"

"Ach! You vas sure it vas a polisy?" gasped Fritz.

"Yes, fathead—a mounted constable!" said Dick Dawson.

Which was a great relief to Fritz. Even then, however, he blinked very dubiously at the shadowy figure as the rider pushed his horse closer. But as he came nearer, even Fritz could see that the man was a mounted constable.

"Halt!" repeated the rider. He peered down at the schoolboys through the gloom and the falling flakes. "Oh, schoolboys!"

"That's all," said Jim Dainty, with a grin. "And rather in a hurry to get in for call-over, if you don't mind."

"Well, the sooner you get into your school the better. If you meet Silas Tins, you'll be sorry for it." The constable's eyes searched the faces of the juniors, keenly, sharply, almost suspiciously. "If you've seen anything of Timothy Gage, you're bound to say so. Understand that?"

"Of course," answered Jim. "Why shouldn't we?"

"Well, as he was at Grimslade School once upon a time——"

The horseman broke off, and, after another sharp look at the schoolboys, rode on his way and disappeared in the dusk towards Middlemoor. Jim Dainty stared after him.

"My hat!" he ejaculated. "Is that convict they're looking for an old Grimslader? I don't believe it! Let's get on."

"Ach, I'm derribly dired!" moaned Fritz Splitz. "I think tat we takes a rest, ain't it?"

"Take all the rest you want," grunted Jim. "Trot, Dick. If we cut call-over it means lines."

The chimes of Study No. 10 trotted. There was a howl from Fritz von Splitz.

"Ach, leaf me not pehind, you prutes!"

"Put it on, Fatty!" called back Dawson.

"Peast and a pride!"

Jim Dainty and Dawson trotted on,

and Fritz trotted behind them. But trotting was too much for Fatty Fritz, who had as much weight to carry as both the other fellows. He dropped behind. Two trotting figures vanished in the gloom ahead.

Fritz Splitz halted. Cold as it was, his fat face streamed with perspiration. He gasped and gurgled.

The snow was falling more thickly now. A bitter wind howled over the moor. By the side of the lane, through the leafless hedges, loomed up the dark shape of an old army hut. Fritz knew that building—a relic of the old War days.

He plunged through a gap in the hedge, and took shelter in the hut. He was too late for call-over, anyhow, and he wanted a rest out of the wind and the falling snow. Dainty and Dawson, under the impression that Fritz was rolling on behind, vanished in the direction of the school. Fritz, in the shelter of the old hut, gasped for breath, and hugged his thick overcoat about his podgy form.

"Peasts and prutes!" mumbled Fritz. "I tinks two times before I takes vun valk mit tem beastly pounders vun more time! Ach!"

A faint sound in the darkness of the interior of the hut made the fat Rhinelander jump. He had, for the moment, forgotten the convict. But a faint sound was enough to remind him. He stared round, his fat heart thumping, his saucer-eyes goggling in the dark.

"Ach, Himmel!"

Fritz made a bound for the open doorway of the hut, heedless now of wind and snow, and the ache in his fat legs. From the darkness a hand reached, grasped him by the collar, and hooked him back.

"Silence!" muttered a deep voice.

Fritz Splitz reeled in the grasp of the shadowy figure. His terrors had not been unfounded, after all. A dozen times in the dark lane he had fancied that he had seen the desperate man lurking. Now he realised, with a shudder of horror, that he had run into him—the fugitive had been hidden in the old army hut in which the fat German had taken refuge.

Fritz would have shrieked for help, but he dared not. Dainty and Dawson were still within sound of a yell. But Fritz dared not utter a yell. All he uttered was a frightened squeak.

His goggling eyes made out the dim figure in the hut. He could glimpse the drab uniform of the convict. There was no mistake about it. It was Timothy Gage, alias Slim Tim, once a Grimslade fellow—now Convict 39 of Blackmoor Prison. And Fritz was in his grasp.

He trembled like a leaf.

The convict was a small man—small and slight, hardly bigger than the schoolboy, certainly not so wide. A fellow like Jim Dainty might have been able to give a good account of himself. But Fatty Fritz was not thinking of anything. He shook and gurgled with fear.

"Who are you?" breathed a voice, in his fat ear.

"Ach, Himmel! I vas vun schoolpoy of Grimslade," groaned Fritz. "Blease let me go, good mister convict! I vill say nottings."

"A Grimslade boy!" Two fierce, sunken eyes gleamed at Fritz. "I was once a Grimslade boy myself." He gave a savage laugh. "Don't be scared, you fat fool! I shall not hurt you! Give me your coat!"

"Ach! But I vant mein goat! It is verry gold——"

A savage shake interrupted Fritz. He gasped, and peeled off his overcoat. The convict was shivering. Fritz' coat was an outside fur coats, and the slim convict was able to get it on. He grabbed the fat German's cap and scarf. Then his thievish hands ran through the pockets. But little in the shape of cash rewarded him.

One penny was the total sum of Fritz' wealth, and that was a French one. Fritz heard him mutter an im-

presentation. But he found a stick of toffee, which was instantly transferred to his mouth. Even Fritz himself could not have gobbled toffee so greedily. Evidently the fugitive of the moors was hungry.

For the moment he released Fritz. The second the convict's grip was off him, Fritz Splitz made a desperate jump. What the ruffian was going to do after robbing him, he did not know. But he was not disposed to wait and see. He went through the doorway with a sudden and desperate bound, and ran for his life.

The shadowy figure leaped from the hut in fierce pursuit. Luckily for Fritz, the convict's foot slipped in the snow, and he went down heavily. Fritz Splitz heard the fall and the oath that followed, but he did not stay to hear more. He fairly flew.

He barged through the hedge into the lane, headed for Grimslade, and raced on, his feet scarcely touching the ground. Whether the convict pursued him farther or not, Fritz never knew. Gasping for breath, streaming with perspiration, panting and puffing, Fritz von Splitz tore on, his heart pounding against his fat ribs, heedless of wind and snow, spurred on by the terror of a clutching hand behind.

CHAPTER 25.

Sammy Puts His Foot Down!

"OUT of bounds!" exclaimed Ginger Hawkinson indignantly.

"What utter rot!" said Jim Dainty.

"Sammy may know best!" said Sandy Bean.

"Kick him!" said Ginger.

There was a howl as Sandy was duly kicked for venturing to suggest that Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade, might possibly know best!

Generally, the Grimslade fellows admitted that Sammy was a downy bird, and knew a thing or two! Both Houses, which agreed on little else, agreed on that. Now, however, both Houses—at least, the junior portion thereof—agreed that Sammy was an ass, a fathead, a benighted bandersnatch, and a footling fooler.

All these names, and more, were bestowed on Sammy by the indignant fellows who stood reading the latest notice, in the Head's clear "fist," on the big notice-board in Big School.

For the notice stated that, owing to the fact that an escaped convict from Blackmoor Prison was lurking in the neighbourhood, school bounds were drawn in. School bounds, until further notice, were identical with the walls of Grimslade itself. Which meant that no fellow could go out of the school precincts. Every man was "gated."

As if Grimslade men couldn't take care of themselves, as Streaky Bacon remarked. As if the Fourth Form at Grimslade couldn't handle all the convicts at Blackmoor, with all the warders and the governor thrown in, as Ginger declared.

Ginger & Co., of Redmayne House, seldom agreed with Jim Dainty and his chums of White's. Now they agreed heartily. Reds and Whites were at one! Sammy was an ass, a duffer, a dummy, and a dunderhead. For two pins—perhaps!—they would have told him so.

"After all, the man's a tough bird," said Sandy. "Look how he handled Fritz Splitz yesterday. Bagged his coat——"

Snort from Ginger!

"That frowsy Boche is the only funk at Grimslade," he said. "I jolly well wish we'd dropped on him instead of Fritz! Besides, he wouldn't want to bag our coats! Our coats aren't double-width, like Fritz'. I tell you Sammy's a silly ass, and if you say he isn't, I'll bang your head on the board!"

"I'm jolly well going out, all the same!" exclaimed Jim Dainty.

"I shouldn't do that, kid!" said a quiet voice behind the crowd of indignant juniors.

"Oh, my hat!"

They spun round and stared at Sammy. Jim's face crimsoned. As a matter of fact, he meant what he said. But he did not want Sammy to know. Dr. Sparshott gave the crimson junior a cheery smile.

"Talking out of your hat, what?" he said genially. "I hope so, at least! We toe the line at Grimslade, Dainty—even when we know better than our headmaster, as it seems most of the Lower School do."

This was sarcasm. Sammy Sparshott was sometimes sarcastic, but he was very genial about it.

"So you think your headmaster an ass, Rawlinson?" went on Sammy.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" groaned Ginger.

"And you think him a feeble frump, Dawson?"

"I—I—I——" stuttered Dick Dawson.

"And your opinion is that he is a doddering dunderhead, Bacon?"

Streaky could only gasp. Many voices, all speaking at once, had made too much noise for the fellows to hear Sammy coming out of his study. Now they eyed him in crimson confusion.

Dr. Sparshott laughed.

"Perhaps you are right," he said unexpectedly. "Who knows? I may be mistaken in managing Grimslade my own way, instead of taking advice from the Fourth! I admit the possibility! All the same"—Dr. Sparshott's smile vanished, and his face grew grim and stern—"all the same, that notice stands!

"There is danger outside the gates of Grimslade, so long as Timothy Gage is loose. I am responsible for my boys. In this matter I exact the most implicit obedience. Any boy breaking school bounds while this notice is in force will be detained over the Christmas holidays."

"Oh crikey!"

Dr. Sparshott walked away, leaving the juniors gasping.

Break-up for the Christmas vacation was close at hand. The bare thought of detention over Christmas was unnerving. Such a punishment was unheard of. It showed what a deep importance Sammy attached to strict obedience to his latest order. And—unheard-of as it was—there was no doubt that Sammy was in earnest. Sammy was well known to be a slave of his word.

"My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger, when Sammy was gone. "It's not good enough, my beloved tarcers! No breaking bounds for me!"

"Same here!" said Streaky Bacon.

"The fact is, Sammy's right!" said Sandy Bean. "That man Gage is a dangerous ruffian, and Sammy knows —— Whooop! Yaroooh!"

Ginger and Streaky had quite abandoned the idea of disregarding Sammy's order. The prospect of spending the Christmas holidays in a deserted school was not good enough. But they were feeling sore, and Sandy's defence of Sammy was the last straw.

Both of them kicked Sandy Bean together, as if moved by the same spring. It was a case of two soles with but a single thought; two heels that beat as one, as the poet nearly said. Sandy Bean roared and dodged. He fled across the quad, with his fatherly chums in hot pursuit, dribbling him as far as Redmayes.

Jim Dainty walked away to White's House with Dawson, his brow clouded. He had said—and meant—that he was going out, all the same. There was a strain of obstinacy in Jim's nature which had not been subdued yet, though he was learning to toe the line at Grimslade. Several more days remained to run of the term. With a foot of snow on the ground, football was off. Jim had no fear of the convict, and he did not see why he should be gated.

At dinner, in White's House, Dawson glanced at his chum several times rather uneasily. When they came out

after dinner, he tapped Jim on the arm.

"Chuck it, Dainty," he said quietly. "You don't want Christmas at Grimslade, with nobody but the Honeslathe and old Sykes for company. Sammy meant every word of it."

"I know that! But it's a half-holiday to-day, and we were going up Grimslade Water!" growled Jim.

"No jolly fear!" said Dawson emphatically.

"Well, perhaps you're right. But if ——"

"Never mind the buts! There's Penwick of the Fifth—give him a snowball!"

Dainty grinned.

"What-ho!" he agreed.

Penwick of the Fifth was walking in the quad, his hands in his pockets, a frown on his face. Possibly he was thinking of his latest gee-gee that hadn't won. Passing Perkins of the Third Form, Penwick kicked him—perhaps because Perkins was a Redmayes fag, and perhaps because he was feeling inclined to kick somebody. Kicking little fags was one of Penwick's amusements. Perkins fled, with a yell. The next moment Penwick of the Fifth gave a yell as a snowball landed in his left ear.

He staggered to the right. A moment later another snowball caught him in the right ear, and he reeled a part.

The bully of the Fifth glared round him furiously. Dainty and Dawson let fly again, and two snowballs crunched together on Penwick's features.

"Good!" chuckled Jim Dainty.

"You cheeky little rotters!" roared the Fifth Form man, and he charged at the two juniors.

They scudded away through the snow, with the Fifth Former in pursuit. They headed for the House at a racing speed. Jim Dainty stopped suddenly, and turned, snowball in hand. Penwick was coming on fast. Whiz! The snowball flew with deadly aim, and crashed on the Fifth Form man's nose. The bully of the Fifth went over backwards like a skittle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two juniors dodged up the House steps, and vanished into the House as the infuriated senior scrambled to his feet.

"Mein goot Tainty—mein goot Tawson"—Fritz Splitz met the two as they came breathlessly in—"I vas look for you! Tat you stop ven I speaks mit you, peast and prute!"

But Dainty and Dawson did not stop. They scudded on to the safety of the junior passage. Fritz stood and blinked after them with his saucer-like eyes.

"Mein goodness! Vat for tose two suffers run away mit temselves like tat?" ejaculated Fritz. "I fink—— Ach! Himmel! Mein goodness!"

He knew the next moment why the juniors were scudding—as Penwick of the Fifth came charging in. Penwick did not see Fritz till he crashed.

Fritz sprawled and roared.

"Ach! Mein goodness! Vy for you pumps me ofer, peast and a prute!" he yelled.

Penwick staggered. He glared down at Fritz.

"You fat dummy!" he gasped. "Take that!"

"Ach! Mein goodness!"

"And that!"

"Yaroooooop!"

"Penwick!" Mr. White looked out of his study. "Penwick! Cease that this instant! Go to your study and write out a George!"

And the bully of the Fifth was too busy that afternoon to bestow any more attention on Jim Dainty.

CHAPTER IX.
Out of Bounds!

FRITZ SPLITZ had been thinking. The thoughts that passed through the podgy intellect of the fat schoolboy from Deutschland

were generally on the subject of eatables. But Fritz' fat brain could deal with other matters.

In Form and out of Form, Fritz was regarded by all Grimslade as an ass. He was no good in class, he was no good at games; he was, so far as any fellow could see, no good at anything, except packing away tuck, at which he was, undoubtedly, a very hefty man.

But, like many stupid persons, Fritz had a vein of slyness in him. There was a streak of cunning in his obtuseness. And since he had read Dr. Sparshott's notice on the board in Big School, Fritz had been thinking—to some purpose!

The threat of detention over the Christmas holidays did not worry Fritz. He was not going back to Germany for Christmas, in any case. According to Fatty Fritz, the Von Splitzes had immense estates and unlimited cash in that happy land; but it was clear that they were not going to spend any of the unlimited cash on Fritz' fare home at the end of the term.

Fritz was staying at the school during the vac, boarding in White's House, while all the other fellows were away. Fritz did not like the prospect. Now he was thinking that, after all, he might have a Man Friday while he played Robinson Crusoe, as it were. If any fellow was ass enough to disregard Sammy's warning, and was found out, he was booked for the vac at Grimslade.

Fritz could not help hoping that some fellow might be ass enough. And, aware of that strain of rebellious obstinacy in Jim Dainty, Fritz fancied that Jim was the man he wanted.

Having recovered his breath after the collision with Penwick of the Fifth, Fritz Splitz rolled away to No. 10, in the Fourth, where he found Dainty and Dawson. Jim was standing at the window, looking out at the quad, mantled in white, and at Redmayne House, opposite, ridged with gleaming snow in the wintry sunshine. It was bitterly cold, but a glorious winter's afternoon, and Jim simply yearned to be roaming the wide moor.

"I suppose you're right, Dick!" said Dainty discontentedly. "But it's all rot. Wherever that fatheaded convict is, he won't be on the moor—too jolly parky."

"Well, as he was a Grimslade man once, the police have an idea that he may be hanging about the school," said Dawson. "There's a lot of old nooks and crannies where a man might hide, and a Grimslader would know them. The fact is, old man, Sammy's right."

Jim grunted.

"Ach! I tink tat you are vun funk, Tawson," said Fritz in the doorway. "And you also vas vun funk, Tainty! I feel gontempt for you."

The two juniors stared round at Fritz Splitz.

"You burbling, babbling, benighted barrel——" began Dawson hotly.

Fritz waved a fat, scornful hand.

"Tainty say tat he go, all te same!" he said. "Now he have gold feet! I laugh at him. If he vas as prave as a Cherman——"

"You footling funk!" roared Jim Dainty. "You wouldn't dare to take a step outside the gates."

Fritz sniffed contemptuously.

"Ach! Vat do I gare for tat Sammy?" he said. "I gare nottings! Being a Cherman, I am ferry prave and gold. 'Tis afternoon I goes out to hunt for tat convict tat take away mein goat. Tat convict got mein goat!"

Jim stared at him. For a moment he fancied the fat German was speaking in the American language. But Fritz did not mean that the convict had "got his goat." He meant that Slim Jim had got his coat!

"If you have some lardo bluck," went on Fritz, "you gum mit me, isn't it?"

Jim Dainty laughed impatiently.

"You fat, frowzy Bache! You don't dare to go out, and you know it. You'd

be afraid of the convict, if you weren't afraid of Sammy."

"A Cherman is afraid of nothings!" declared Fritz. "Every Cherman is ferry prave and bold! Tat convict, he vill not be on te moor—I mean to say, I vill look for tat convict on te moor."

"Oh, can it!" growled Dawson.

Fritz curled a fat lip.

"Gum mit me," he said, "and you vill see me preak pounds. And if you are as prave as a Cherman you vill gum also, too. Tainty!"

Jim's eyes glinted.

"I'll come," he said, "and when you funk it, I'll kick you all the way back to the House. Mind, I mean that!"

And Jim picked up his coat and cap and followed Fritz. Dawson shrugged his shoulders and remained in the study. He had not the slightest doubt that Friedrich von Splitz was merely "gassing." Fritz's secret motive did not occur to his mind for a moment.

Jim Dainty equally had no doubt that it was "gas," and he followed the fat German out of the House, with the fixed intention of kicking him all the way back when he failed to make his words good.

Certainly he seemed to be in earnest. He did not approach the gates, where old Sykes would have stopped any junior going out at once. He made his way to a lonely spot, where a low wall bordered the school field. That field was out of bounds now, the wall being the limit, and Jim Dainty fully expected the fat Rhinelander to discover some sudden excuse for going no farther. Instead of which, Fritz blinked at him with his saucer-eyes and said:

"Punk me up, old pean!"

"You silly ass, what's the good of keeping this up?" snapped Jim Dainty. "Own up that you're gassing and take your kicking."

"Vill you punk me up?" demanded Fritz.

He grasped the snowy top of the wall. Jim stared at him, then, in silence, he bunked up the podgy Rhinelander. Fritz scrambled on top of the wall, sending down a shower of snow.

To Jim's amazement, he slid over the opposite side and dropped into the snow in the field.

Fritz was out of bounds.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Dainty.

"Mein goot Tainty!" Fritz' fat voice came over the wall. "Vill you gum mit me, or vill you be a peastly coward?"

Jim's eyes blazed. Already he was more than half inclined to take the risk. That taunt, from a fellow like Fritz was irresistible. To be "dared" by the podgy Boche was unthinkable. If the bewilderest funk at Grimslade had the nerve to defy Sammy Spearshott, Jim Dainty was not the man to back out. In a moment he had scrambled over the wall and joined Fritz in the field.

"You footling frump!" growled Jim. "You know jolly well that you're getting back before you're seen."

"Gum mit me!" was Fritz' answer.

And he rolled away across the field. Jim Dainty followed him, more and more amazed. It was borne in on his mind now that Friedrich von Splitz was in earnest. The funk of Grimslade was daring a risk that no other fellow in the school thought of taking. Nobody was afraid of the lurking convict, but every fellow was afraid of detention over Christmas. Fritz, for the first time in his frowsy career, was fearless.

Had Jim Dainty been aware that Fritz was booked to stay at Grimslade over Christmas, anyhow, he would have understood. But he was not aware of that, and he was utterly perplexed. But one thing was certain: Where the fat German dared to lead, Yorkshire lad dared to follow!

Fritz squeezed through a fence, and Jim followed him into the lane. With a fat grin on his face, Fritz started for the moor. He trudged away through the snow, and Jim tramped by his side

with a bright face. The keen wind on the moor was like wine to him, and he was enjoying his freedom.

"Buck up, Fritz!" he said. "The sooner we're out of sight of the school the better. We shall have to be jolly careful to get back without being seen, too. We shan't be missed if we turn up in time for tea."

Fritz grinned.

He trudged on at a snail's pace. Fritz had no intention, if he could help it, of getting back into bounds undiscovered. Unless that expedition was discovered by the beaks Fritz had had all his trouble for nothing!

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Jim suddenly.

Across a frosty hedge at a little distance, he sighted an athletic figure. It was that of Dr. Samuel Sparshott.

"Cover!" breathed Jim.

He grabbed the fat German by the shoulder and dragged him down into frosty bracken. Fortunately, Dr. Sparshott was not looking in their direction. They vanished from sight.

"Ach!" Fritz gurgled. "Ach! Pang me nat spout like fat, you peast and prute!"

Jim Dainty grasped his companion by the back of the neck and drove his fat face into thick snow. If Fritz had not sense enough to keep quiet, with the Head only a dozen feet away, drastic measures were needed. Fritz gave a faint, agonised gurgle as his podgy features disappeared in snow.

Jim's heart thumped. The Head was now coming towards him. In another minute he would be discovered. Christmas at Grimslade—detention over the holidays! He was desperate. He released Fritz' fat neck, gathered up snow, and rapidly kneaded a snowball. As a tall figure loomed over the bracken, he hurled the missile with sudden deadly aim.

Crash!

The snowball smashed full in the face of Sammy Sparshott. It hurled him backwards, and Jim heard him crashing through the bracken on the slope. He sprang up and dragged Fritz after him.

"Quick!" he panted.

"Ach! Peast and a prute!"

"Quick, you fool!"

Dragging the fat German after him, and keeping his head low, Jim Dainty dodged away through the snow-laden bushes. Fritz spluttered and stuttered, gasped and gurgled. But he had to go. Twice he fell, and Jim dragged him up and on with savage force. It was Fritz who had dragged him into this—Fritz who had endangered him by drawing Sammy's attention. And Jim had no mercy on the podgy, panting, puffing Rhinelander. From a distance came Sammy Sparshott's powerful voice ringing over the moor.

"Who is that? Stop! Stop, you scoundrel!"

It flashed into Jim's mind why Sammy Sparshott was there. He was joining in the hunt for the escaped convict. No doubt he fancied that it was Convict No. 29 who had hurled that snowball and who was escaping in the snowy bracken. Following the shout came rapid tramping and rustling.

"Oh, crumbs!" breathed Jim.

He plunged into a mass of frosty bracken and stopped. Fritz Spitz collapsed, gurgling.

"Quiet!" breathed Jim. "He won't spot us here if you're quiet. For goodness' sake, be quiet!"

"Ach! Peast—urrggh!" gasped Fritz, as a fist banged on his podgy nose. "Urrrgh! Oodgh! Peast and a prute!"

"Another sound, and I'll smash your face through the back of your head!" hissed Jim Dainty.

Fritz gurgled into silence. Jim's eyes blazed at him, and his knuckles were only an inch from his podgy nose. The fat German did not dare to make a sound—much as he longed to do so.

There was a trampling and rustling, and several times it approached close

to the hidden breakers of bounds. Jim hardly breathed, and Fritz was silent. The sounds died away farther and farther at last. Sammy Sparshott had missed them—to Jim's intense relief though not to Fritz'. There was silence at length; Sammy was gone.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Jim.

He rose to his feet.

"Come on, you fat freak!" he growled. "Blessed if I don't half believe that you wanted Sammy to spot us! Get a move on!"

And Jim Dainty resumed his way across the moor to Grimslade Water, with Fritz von Splitz puffing and panting at his heels, and wondering dismally whether, after all, his trickery was going to be a success.

CHAPTER 12.

The Stopper Comes Down!

"OH, what rotten luck!" groaned Jim Dainty.

Grimslade Water was frozen.

The torrent that came sweeping down from the high slopes of Grimslade Pike in the summer was now silent and still. Deep in the rugged moor the torrent had cut its path and the icy stream lay thirty feet below the level of the moor. The sides were rugged and precipitous, strewn with rocks and boulders and loose stones.

Jim Dainty had clambered up the bank of the torrent for a good distance, with Fatty Fritz groaning and gasping after him. By this time Fritz was rather repenting him of his cunning scheme. He still hoped that the breakers of bounds would be spotted before they got back into the school. But his fat limbs were aching with fatigue, and he was terribly hungry.

Jim came to a halt at a high point up the steep channel of the torrent, and Fatty Fritz sank down at the foot of a rock, groaning. And then, from below, came the sound of a clinking, falling stone, showing that someone else was ascending the torrent. Jim Dainty jumped into cover at once.

"What rotten luck! Sammy again!" he whispered.

Fritz' face brightened.

"You tink tat Sammy he gum after us?" he gasped.

"Somebody's coming, anyhow. Keep close!"

Fritz' sly eyes gleamed. This time, if he could help it, he was not going to be passed undiscovered—nor Dainty, either. And it looked as if the fat Rhinelander was in luck. There was plenty of cover among the rocks and boulders strewn up the rugged bank, and the two juniors were crouching out of sight. But if the newcomer came up as far as the spot where they crouched, it was more than likely that he would see them as he passed. Fritz, at least, was determined that he should see one of them.

"Ach! I tink——"

Jim thrust a threatening fist into the podgy face.

"You fat rotter! I don't know your game, but you're trying to get me spotted. Quiet, or I'll smash you!"

Fritz was very quiet after that.

Jim listened to the sounds from below. A man was coming up the steep bank, unseen as yet, drawing nearer and nearer. Was it Sammy Sparshott? It was impossible to tell. But it seemed likely enough. Jim hugged cover and listened breathlessly.

The clambering footsteps came nearer and nearer. Then they suddenly stopped.

The man, whoever he was, had not appeared in sight. Jim heard a rustling sound, as if bushes were stirring. Then there was silence.

He listened. Minute followed minute. But there was no fresh sound—only the wail of the winter wind on the moor. The man was not coming up—he was not going down. What was he up to?

Ten minutes passed—and still there was no sound. Jim ventured to lift

his head from behind the big boulder at last and looked round. No one was in sight. A dozen yards from him the side of the gorge rose precipitous like the wall of a house, and it was clothed thick in wild ivy, powdered with snow. It was the ivy, he fancied, that he had heard stirring.

But, thick as it was, it was not thick enough to hide a man—even if it was imaginable that a man should have wanted to hide in it. What had become of the man who had been ascending the ravine? It seemed to Jim Dainty that he had vanished into thin air!

He clambered at last on a high rock and scanned the ravine. From that high point he had a bird's-eye view among the wild boulders. No one was to be seen.

"My only hat!" muttered Jim, utterly mystified.

Obviously it could not have been Dr. Sparshott whose footsteps he had heard. But whoever it was, had vanished inexplicably. Jim almost pondered whether he had heard footsteps at all, or whether he had been deceived by some strange echo in the ravine.

Clink, clink, clink! Footsteps again—unmistakable this time. A voice shouted something after. On the high bank of the ravine the figure of a horseman appeared, looking down from the moor into the bed of the torrent. It was a mounted constable. Men on foot were coming up the ravine—three or four of them at least. Jim caught a glimpse of a uniform in the distance below.

"Ach! Vat——" gasped Fritz.

"It's the police from Blackmoor!" grunted Jim. "After the jolly old convict, I suppose. Oh, crumbs! If Sammy's with them——"

"Ach! Tat is goot!"

"What?" exclaimed Jim.

"Himmel! I mean to say tat is pad!" gasped Fritz.

Jim gave him a suspicious look. He could not help realising by this time that Fritz Splitz wanted to be discovered out of bounds, though why was a mystery to him.

Further concealment was useless. The Blackmoor police were searching the ravine as they advanced. Jim waited grimly for them to come up. If Dr. Sparshott was with them the game was up, and he had to pay the penalty of his recklessness.

There was a sudden shout, and a man in an inspector's uniform came scrambling over the rugged stones towards him. It was Inspector Rawson, of Blackmoor. He stared at Jim.

"A schoolboy!" he exclaimed. "A Grimslade boy! I warned Dr. Sparshott to keep his boys within bounds! You are in danger here——" He broke off suddenly. "Have you seen him?"

"Him? Whom?"

"The convict!" rapped the inspector impatiently. "He was seen on the moor, and we followed him into the ravine. He cannot have got out. There are mounted men riding along both sides on the moor. He must have passed you here."

"Nobody has passed us, sir," answered Jim.

Inspector Rawson gave him a dark look.

"You young fool! Are you thinking of helping the man because he was a Grimslade boy once? He is a desperate criminal now. I tell you that he must have passed you here. Answer me at once!"

"Oh, my hat!" panted Jim. He realised now whose footsteps he had heard coming up the ravine. It was the convict!

Inspector Rawson turned, and called to one of the constables behind.

"Call Dr. Sparshott here!"

Jim breathed hard. The Head of Grimslade was with the searching party, and the game was up. A minute later Sammy Sparshott came tramping

up. He started at the sight of Dainty and Fritz. His face set like iron.

"Dainty, you are out of bounds. You know the penalty!"

Jim made no answer.

"Slim Tim must have passed these boys, Dr. Sparshott," said the inspector. "They can give us information if they choose."

"Dainty, if you have seen the man ——"

"I've seen nobody, sir," Jim answered. "I heard someone coming up the path, and kept out of sight."

"Ach! Tat is so!" gasped Fritz. "I see nopody, sir."

"The wretch must have seen the boys here and crept past them unseen," said Dr. Sparshott. "We shall find him farther on, Mr. Rawson."

The inspector grunted.

"I don't see how he could have passed them unseen. Still, if they say they never saw him I suppose he must have. Forward, men!"

The inspector and the constable pressed on, searching every nook and cranny as they went. Dr. Sparshott lingered a moment.

"Go back to the school at once, Dainty! Write home and state that you will not be returning for the Christmas holidays owing to an act of reckless and wilful disobedience. You, Splitz, as you were staying over the holidays in any case, will be flogged."

"Ach himmel!" gasped Fritz.

Dr. Sparshott tramped on after the constables. Jim Dainty stood staring at Friedrich von Splitz.

"You—you—you——" gasped Jim. He understood now. "You were booked for the vac at Grimslade, and you've landed me in it, too. Why, I—I'll——"

"Ach! Geep your temper!" howled Fritz. "I did not do tis chust to geep you along mit me for te holidays. Nein nein! I neffer tought of tat! I did not tink tat your beoples vould send you huddings and tings. Neffer neffer! I vant you to stay mit me pecause you are so nice, and you are my beloved shum. Ach! Pang me not in te preadmasker! Woo-hoob! Kick me not on mein trousers! Yaroob!"

Fritz Splitz fled, yelling. After him came Jim Dainty. How many kicks Fritz captured before he reached Grimslade he never knew; but he felt as if the number ran into millions.

It was a weary, worn and woebegone Fritz that tottered into White's House at last. And that evening, when Sammy returned, there was more trouble for Fritz. Fritz's voice was heard all over Grimslade as Sammy laid it on.

* * * * * *

But there was balm in Gilead, so to speak for Fatty Fritz. A few days later, when Grimslade broke up for the Christmas holidays, Fritz von Splitz was not left, as usual, on his lonesome own. Jim Dainty, with a grim face, watched the crowd of fellows depart, leaving him alone with the fat Rhinelander. Sammy was as good as his word. Jim had asked for it, and he had got it.

"Cheer up, old pean!" said Fritz brightly. "After all pefore, you will have my gompany."

Jim Dainty stayed only to roll Fritz in the snow, and walked back to the deserted House. He little dreamed at the moment that the following days were to be packed with the wildest excitement he had known since he had come to Grimslade School.

CHAPTER 15.
Left Behind!

THUMP!

"Ach! Tat you pang me not!" roared Fritz Splitz.

Terrific yells rang and echoed from Study No. 10 in White's House at Grimslade.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade, started.

Except for the uproar from Jim

Dainty's study, all Grimslade School was strangely silent.

Grimslade had broken up for the Christmas holidays, and the Grimsladers had scattered to north and south, east and west.

Masters as well as boys were gone; the quad was deserted, the studies vacant, the passages silent.

Of all the beaks, only the headmaster was still there. Of all the crowd of fellows, only two remained—both juniors of the Fourth Form—Jim Dainty and Friedrich von Splitz. But these two, at the moment, were making enough noise for a dozen—at least, Sammy Sparshott thought so as he walked into White's House from the snowy quad.

The door of Study No. 16 was half open. Sammy Sparshott, looking up the passage, had a view of the interior. Rather a startling scene met Sammy's gaze.

Fritz Splitz was extended on the study carpet, face down. His fat and podgy features were grinding into the carpet, and it was only with difficulty that Fritz contrived to yell, for Jim Dainty was sitting on the back of his head.

In Dainty's hand was a heavy book. This was rising and falling hard and fast. Every time it fell it smote the seat of Fritz' baggy trousers. And as it smote him so the fat Rhinelander yelled, though with a fellow sitting on the back of his head it was rather hard to yell.

"You pie-faced Prussian porker!" Jim Dainty was saying, as the Head looked in from the passage. "You've got me stranded here over the Christmas holidays! All the fellows are gone except you—which is worse than nobody being left! Take that!"

Thump! came the book.

"Ach! Pang me not on mein trousers!" roared Fritz. "I have vun colossal bain in mein trousers! Mein goot Tainty——"

"You had to stick here over Christmas, as your fellow-porkers in Deutschland had too much sense to send you your fare home! And you wangled it for me to get left along with you! Take that!"

Dr. Sparshott, unobserved in the passage, looked in silently. His first thought had been to intervene. Now it occurred to him that perhaps Fritz von Splitz had asked for what he was getting. Sammy was not the man to prevent a fellow from getting what he asked for.

"Mein goot Tainty," wailed Fritz, "you preak pounds, and tat Sammy say tat anyvun tat preak pounds shall be detained ofer Christmas! Isn't it?"

"You dared me to break bounds, you fat freak, and I should have known why if I'd known you had to stay here for the hols. You wanted to get a fellow landed along with you, and you pulled my leg. Take that!"

"Yarooh! Tat you leaf off!" shrieked Fritz. "You vill vear out mein trousers! Also I have vun colossal bain! It is all Sammy's fault, tat Sammy is a peast and a prute."

Dr. Sparshott smiled grimly.

"Sammy's all right," said Jim Dainty, unconscious of the ears that heard. "He ordered us to stay in bounds, because there's a convict loose from Blackmoor Prison, and a fellow's not safe on the moors with Silas Tim around. I was the only fellow who was ass enough to go out of bounds, and I shouldn't have done it if you hadn't pulled my leg! Take that!"

"Ach! Leaf off! It vas pecause I vas so fond of you, mein tear Tainty—pecause you are so ferry nice! I could not bart mit you!" wailed Fritz Splitz. "It vas not pecause I vant somevun to stay ofer te holidays mit me, or pecause I think tat your beoples send you hie-and biddings——"

Thump!

"Whoop! Vill you leaf off!" shrieked Fritz. "Mein goodness, I vish tat tat convict, Timothy Gage, go to catch you and preak you te pones! I

vish I'at he knew you into Grimslade Vater I'at day he gum along! I vish—Whoosp!"

Thump!

"That's a dozen!" said Jim Dainty. "I'll make it a baker's dozen!"

Dr. Sparshott turned away from Study No. 10, and strolled out of White's House. There was a thoughtful expression on Sammy's face.

In the snow-mantled quad Sammy paced to and fro, thinking. Fritz Splitz spent his holidays at the school, having no choice in the matter. But it was hard on Jim Dainty—now that Sammy knew, from what he had heard at the study door, how it had happened that Dainty had provoked that severe punishment.

Sammy seldom or never let a fellow off a sentence. But he was thinking now whether he might not let off the rebel of Grimslade, in time to get home for Christmas.

Meanwhile, Jim Dainty, having finished giving Fritz his baker's dozen, rose from his perch on the back of Fritz's bullet head. The podgy Rhinelander staggered up.

"Peast and a prute!" he howled. "Now I am more glad tan effer vas tat you are detained over te holidays! And if you pang me vunce more on mein trousers, I will go to Sammy and say: Mein goutness! Whoosop! Yaroooh!"

Fritz von Splitz, roaring, travelled out of the study, with Jim Dainty's boot behind him. There was a bump in the passage, where Sammy had been standing a few minutes before.

Jim Dainty slammed the door after the fat German.

He was feeling a little better—after giving Fritz what he deserved for his trickery. But his face was rather glum as he stepped to the open window and looked out.

Grimslade was white with snow; every roof, every chimney-stack, every window-sill was thick with it. Against a steely sky Grimslade Pike loomed snowy in the distance, and Grimslade Water, which in the summer sang and bubbled down from the Pike, was frozen hard. The keen air from the Yorkshire moors was like wine.

Jim's eyes fell on the stalwart figure of Sammy, pacing in deep thought before the House. And his eyes gleamed.

The Head appeared very deep in thought—on what subject, of course, Jim knew nothing. The temptation was strong, and Jim fell in it! If Sammy did not like a snowball in his ear, he shouldn't detain a fellow over the Christmas holidays!

Jim Dainty gathered snow from the window-sill in a double handful, and intended a snowball, watching the Head as he did so.

As if to help him to get a good aim Sammy came to a halt. As a matter of fact, Sammy had reached a decision. He had decided to go into the House and tell Dainty he could cut! He stopped, and turned towards the House!

At the same instant the snowball flew!

Jim had intended it for Sammy's ear. But the Head, turning towards the House at that moment, got it on his nose.

It crashed and smashed there, taking Sammy quite by surprise.

He gave a startled bound, his feet slipped in the snow, and he sat down with a heavy bump.

Jim Dainty vanished from the study window like a ghost at cock-crow.

Whether the Head had seen him or not, he could not be sure. But he did not stay to ascertain.

Sammy struggled up. He felt his nose, as if to make sure that it was still there. It felt as if it wasn't!

"Dainty!" he roared.

If Sammy had not seen, Sammy had guessed. But there came no answer—Jim was out of hearing by that time.

Dr. Sparshott walked away to his study. He was no longer thinking of letting Jim Dainty off! He was thinking of giving him six of the best next time he saw him!

CHAPTER 12.

In Desperate Hands!

DECEMBER mist came drifting thickly over the Grimslade quad, over the lanes and the rugged moor. Jim Dainty, with his coat-collar turned up, a scarf tied round his neck, and his thickest boots on, tramped through the mist. Often these sudden mists came sweeping down from the Pike. Fritz Splitz was frowsting over a roaring fire; but the frosty air called Jim out.

He went rather warily, for Dr. Sparshott had ordered both the Juniors to keep within school bounds. With a desperate convict lurking in the vicinity, Fritz was more than willing to obey that order to the very letter. But now all the fellows were gone. Jim Dainty was fed-up with the solitude of the school.

Detention over the Christmas holidays was a heavy sentence—and Jim was more than half-inclined to bolt. At any rate, he was not going to keep within the school walls, and that was that! Sammy could keep him in—if he could!

Thicker and thicker the damp mist drifted down the Pike. Jim Dainty was cutting across the moor to Grimslade Water, intending to find a little vigorous, and rather risky, enjoyment in sliding down the frozen stream in the rugged, rocky, deep ravine. He halted suddenly as a voice came through the clinging mist, and dropped into cover behind a frozen mass of brambles. It was Sammy Sparshott's voice. Sammy, evidently, was out on the moor that misty morning.

"You believe the man is still in this vicinity, Mr. Rawson?"

"I am sure of it, sir!" Jim recognised the voice of Inspector Rawson of Blackmoor. "A few days ago he was seen, and chased into the ravine of Grimslade Water—and lost there. How he escaped is a mystery. He has some hiding-place."

"To be plain, you fancy that Timothy Cuge is hiding near Grimslade, because many years ago he was a Grimslade boy!" There was a sharp note in Sammy's voice.

"Well, sir, having been a schoolboy here, he may know a good deal that may be useful to him," the Inspector said. "Grimslade is an old place, full of nooks and crannies. Isn't there a legend that Margaret of Anjou hid in the Grimslade vaults, after a defeat in one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses, and escaped by way of a secret passage with an outlet on the moor?"

Jim heard Dr. Sparshott laugh.

"Oh, quite!" said Sammy. "But no such secret passage is known nowadays. Still, you may be right in supposing that Cuge may remember some hidden nook or cranny, from his schooldays at Grimslade——"

The voices passed on. Jim Dainty had not seen the speakers in the mist, and they had not seen him.

He tramped on his way when they were gone. In dim, damp mist he reached the ravine where Grimslade Water came down from the slopes of the Pike. He tramped up the steep banks of the frozen stream.

Back into his mind came an incident of a few days before break-up at Grimslade. The escaping convict had almost come on him and Fritz Splitz: he remembered how he had heard the man's footsteps coming up the ravine, the police at a distance after him; and suddenly the footsteps had ceased, and "Slim Tim" had apparently vanished into air.

Jim had been forced to believe that somehow the fugitive had crept past unseen; but now other thoughts were in his mind. Cuge had been a Grimslade boy in the old days; was it possible—as Mr. Rawson evidently suspected—that at that time he had chanced to discover the secret passage, and was now in hiding there?

Was it possible that the outlet of that old tunnel was in the ravine of Grimslade Water, and that that was how

the man had vanished so suddenly and strangely?

Jim Dainty did not slide on the ice of the frozen stream. With that idea in his mind he explored the rugged, rocky sides of the ravine. He had brought a rucksack with him, packed with a substantial lunch, and was in no hurry to return to the school.

For two or three hours, he roamed up and down the rugged bank of Grimslade Water; but if there was any discovery to be made he did not make it. But, at least, he had a busy morning, and grew as hungry as a hunter in the keen air. At last, as a glimmer of the noonday sun came through the mist, he stopped to rest and eat his lunch.

He brushed the snow from a boulder near the steep side of the ravine where it was mantled with thick, wild ivy powdered with snow, then sat down and unpacked his rucksack. Deep silence and solitude lay over Grimslade Water and the surrounding moor.

Suddenly, from behind the schoolboy as he sat, came a faint rustle. It sounded like the wind stirring the wild ivy on the cliff. With a sandwich halfway to his mouth, Jim Dainty glanced round. Then he leaped to his feet with a startled cry.

A figure—a strange, wild figure—was leaping at him.

"The convict!" panted Jim.

The man was slightly built; he was wearing the overcoat he had seized from Fritz a week since, and Fritz's cap was on his close-cropped head. But the convict garb could be seen. His face, bristly with several days' beard, was savage and desperate, the sunken eyes glittering like a wild animal's.

Jim had time only for a glimpse—then the man was upon him, and he was down on his back on the rocks, struggling.

"Help!" shouted Jim Dainty.

His shout rang and echoed in the ravine. The next moment a knuckly fist struck, and the savage blow stunned him. The steely sky, the snowy rocks, the savage, haggard face of the convict, swam before his eyes, and he sank back to the ground insensible.

How long he lay senseless he never knew. Probably it was only a matter of minutes. His eyes opened dizzily, and he stared round him.

He was alone in the snowy ravine. The convict was gone. Gone also was the rucksack and the food. Jim Dainty staggered to his feet. He wondered dazedly why the ruffian had attacked him—then, as he saw that the rucksack was gone, he understood. It was for the food that Convict 39 had leaped on him like a wild beast.

Jim pressed his hand to his bruised, aching head. There was a footstep, a clinking of stones, down the ravine. He stared round, and dimly sighted Inspector Rawson in the damp mist. The inspector from Blackmoor came quickly towards him.

"Was it you who shouted?" he snapped.

"Oh! You heard me?" gasped Jim. "Yes—I've seen him—he was here—he's bagged my lunch."

"The convict!" exclaimed the inspector, his eyes ablaze.

"Yes," panted Jim. "He knocked me out."

Inspector Rawson glanced round him quickly, and then tramped on up the ravine. That was the only way the hunted man could have gone.

But Jim wondered. He had a suspicion that Slim Tim's hiding-place was not far away, and that it was from his hiding-place that the convict had seen him, sitting down to his lunch, and crept on him. But his head was aching and spinning, and Jim Dainty tramped down the ravine and took the path across the moor to Grimslade School.

CHAPTER 14.

Fearful for Fritz!

FRITZ SPLITZ blinked into the porter's lodge at Grimslade with his saucer-eyes. Old Sykes, toasting his toes before his fire, and

smoking a pipe, glanced round at him and grinned.

"Doctor Sparshott vant to see you at vunce!" said Fritz.

Snort from Sykes! He did not want to leave his pipe and his cosy fire. But Sammy's word was law; and old Sykes rose, put on his coat and hat, and left the lodge, tramping away through the snow towards Big School.

Fritz watched him go with a gleam in his saucer eyes. Then he whipped into the lodge and picked up a parcel that lay on the table. That parcel was addressed to Jim Dainty, and Fritz knew what was in it; Jim was expecting a Christmas pudding from home, and it had arrived. Since the parcel had been handed in to Sykes, Fritz had been on the watch, cudgelling his fat brains for a scheme to get hold of it. Now he had hold of it!

Friedrich von Splitz disappeared from Sykes' lodge, with the parcel under his fat arm. Sykes came back five minutes later—having made the interesting discovery that Dr. Sparshott did not want him, and had not sent for him. In a very cranky temper Mr. Sykes sat down to his pipe. Ten minutes later, Jim Dainty's cheerful face looked in.

"My parcel come, Sykes?" he asked.

"It's coom," answered Sykes; "and if 'im wants it 'im'd better find that blooming 'Un who's took it away."

But it was not easy to find the "blooming Hun!" Friedrich von Splitz did not intend to be found until that Christmas pudding had gone the way of all Christmas puddings. Jim Dainty, in red wrath, hunted up and down and round about Grimslade, in vain. It really seemed as if Fritz Splitz and the Christmas pudding had vanished from the surface of the earth.

As a matter of fact, they had!

The minute Fritz had dodged into Mr. White's deserted study and abstracted therefrom an ancient iron key. A minute later he was standing at a nail-studded, arched oaken door at the end of a dusky corridor.

The key creaked as it turned in the ancient lock. The key to the stairs down into the ancient vaults, which extended far under all the buildings of Grimslade School, was seldom used. But the heavy old lock turned, and Fritz pushed the oaken door open and flashed on the light of an electric torch.

He stepped through the little arched doorway, and closed the heavy oak door behind him. He did not lock it—Fritz had no fancy for locking himself in the vaults. Dainty was not likely to track him there, and if he did, it was easy to keep out of sight. With the parcel under one arm and the torch gleaming in his hand, Fritz descended the old stone stair, grinning.

From the bottom of the stair the vaults stretched away in an almost endless series—dim and gloomy, cold and draughty. Strange lights and shadows danced among the dim old arches from the light of the gleaming torch.

Fritz blinked round him rather uneasily with his light-blue saucer-eyes. He did not like solitude and silence and shadows, and once the oaken door was closed he seemed shut off from all humanity. But he liked Christmas pudding—very much indeed did the fat German like that! And his thoughts were concentrated on Christmas pudding now!

"Tat Tainty is vun peast and a prute!" murmured Fritz. "Tat peastly pounder peat me mit vun hook till I pellow like a pull! Now I vill eat his Christmas pudding, and tat Tainty can go and eat coke!"

And Fritz chuckled.

He sat down on the lowest step and stuck the torch into a crevice, keeping it turned on. Then he unwrapped the parcel. His fat face beamed in the light, and his saucer-eyes shone as the Christmas pudding was revealed to view.

It was a large pudding, a rich pudding, a luscious pudding! There was enough for at least four or five fellows, so there was almost enough for Fritz Splitz. Great slices disappeared at a

record rate, and there was a steady sound of crunching and munching in the silence of the vaults.

Jim Dainty was hunting him high and low, but not, as it happened, low enough. Fritz grinned and munched and crunched, and reflected with great satisfaction on the success of his trickery in keeping Jim Dainty at Grimslade over Christmas—with his supplies from home! This was worth a few kicks.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz suddenly.

There was the sound of a footfall. He was so startled that he ceased to munch Christmas pudding.

Fritz rose to his feet. He laid the remnant of the Christmas pudding, in its wrappings, on the stair, lifted the torch, and blinked round him with scared and startled saucer-eyes. A sound came from the silence among the ancient arches. From the darkness Fritz Splitz had a glimpse of a creeping form.

He gave a gurgling gasp of terror.

The glare of the torch fell full on the creeping figure—a slight figure, in convict garb, covered by a schoolboy's overcoat!

Fritz Splitz stood as though rooted to the stone flags. It dawned upon his fat brain who it was, and that the convict, lurking in the vaults, had been guided to the spot by the gleam of the torch. While the hapless Fritz had been devouring the pudding that hideous figure had been stealing along the vaults towards him, guided by the light.

As the light gleamed on the glittering eyes that looked from the haggard, sunken face, Fritz gave a gasp of horror and shut off the torch. Madly he plunged up the stone steps to escape.

He heard a savage snarl behind him, and a pattering of rapid feet. He tore up the stair in terror, missed his footing in the darkness, and fell. As he scrambled up, there was a breathing in the darkness close by. A groping hand came in contact with him and grasped him. In another moment a grip was on the podgy throat of the German junior.

"Silence!" hissed a husky voice.

"Mein gootness!" groaned Fritz.

The next moment he was choked into silence.

CHAPTER 21.

The Secret Passage!

"OH, crikey!" gasped Jim Dainty. It seemed to Jim as if the solid globe had suddenly given way under his feet.

The dim December afternoon was deepening to dusk. Since the morning Jim had seen nothing of Fritz Splitz. Fatty Fritz had not turned up to dinner, which Jim had with the housekeeper in White's House. Jim Dainty certainly did not miss his company.

After dinner he donned coat and scarf and cap, and slipped quietly out of the school. Partly because the adventure appealed to him, and partly because he was fed-up with doing nothing, he headed for Grimslade Water to explore the ravine and hunt for a trace of the convict's secret hiding-place. He slipped a fives bat into his coat pocket before he started.

He was as watchful as a cat as he clambered along the slippery rocks and stones, and explored amid the masses of wild ivy that clung to the steep side of the ravine. And then, suddenly, it seemed to him that the earth opened under his feet, and he found himself plunging and rolling and falling, amid a shower of falling stones and powdered stone.

Bruised and breathless, Jim Dainty sprawled on damp earth. For some moments he lay gasping and panting, dazed and bewildered.

Then he struggled to his feet and stared round him with dizzy eyes.

From an opening far above him came the glimmer of the dying day. He had fallen into a slanting shaft, hardly

bigger than a chimney, the opening of which had been hidden by the masses of frosty ivy.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim.

By sheer accident he had stumbled on the secret—literally stumbled on it.

His heart beat faster as he realised that he had stumbled into the hunted man's hiding-place. He jerked the fives bat from his pocket and stared round him in the blackness.

But there was no sound, no movement in the darkness. With his left hand, keeping the fives bat gripped hard in his right, Jim drew an electric torch from his pocket and turned on the light.

The bright beam played on the rough earthen walls of the narrow shaft, and on an opening close by him—the mouth of a tunnel leading away into the solid earth. The sides of the tunnel were bricked, the ancient bricks thick with moss, reeking with damp.

Jim Dainty gave a low whistle. It was no natural rift in the earth, but a bricked passage, so narrow that his elbows almost touched the sides as he stepped into it.

The junior's eyes gleamed with excitement.

He had heard the legend of the secret passage from Grimslade to the moor, by which the "She-Wolf of France" had escaped the Yorkists in ancient days. Now he knew that he had found it, and at the same time he realised that he was not the first to find it.

Timothy Cage, once a Grimslader, had made that discovery in the old days when he had been at the school, and had evidently kept the discovery to himself. That was why Convict 29 had headed for Grimslade when he escaped from Blackmoor Prison.

Jim flashed the light along the tunnel, and watched and listened. But there was no sign of the convict.

The junior hesitated for a few moments.

Then he moved along the tunnel.

On the damp, earthern floor there were traces of mud and slime, which could only have been left there by the feet of the hidden convict. If the man was not there now, it was clear that he had been there quite recently.

Jim Dainty advanced slowly, but steadily, along the brick tunnel.

He had little doubt that the hunted man had made his den in the vaults under the school, only venturing out at night, or in the day-time when the mist was thick on the moor, in search of food. During the past week there had been several robberies at the lonely moorland farms, which had been put down to the hunted convict.

But for the fact that the door leading to the vaults was strong and thick, and always kept locked, the desperate man might have gained an entrance into the school, and obtained possession of the money and change of clothes he needed for flight.

Perhaps Slim Tim had some such hope in his desperate mind; and in the meantime, he had a safe hiding-place from the police and warders who were scouring the country for him.

Jim's heart was beating a little more quickly than usual as he trod along the subterranean tunnel.

But if the ruffian was there, he did not fear him. Slim Tim was a small man, hardly more than a match for the sturdy Grimslade fellow, and Jim Dainty was quite ready to knock him senseless with the fives bat. The ruffian could not take him by surprise, as he had done before. He kept the light of the torch gleaming steadily before him as he advanced along the tunnel. The fives bat was gripped hard in his right hand.

Suddenly dark and shadowy space opened out around him. He had reached the end of the narrow tunnel and emerged into a spacious vault.

Vault after vault, soaring into the shadows, opened before him. He could not doubt that he was now under Grimslade School. These were the vaults of the ancient Norman castle, of

which little now remained, save a few walls that were built into White's House.

More watchful than ever, Jim Dainty trod on along the series of vaults. At the end of the last vault he glimpsed a stone stair leading up. He reached it, flashed the light up the stairs, and discerned an arched oaken door at the top. That, there could be no doubt, was the door that gave access to White's House. Jim groaned at the thought of the House-dame's astonishment when he hammered at that door to be let out. He had no intention of returning the way he had come.

Suddenly he started, and his heart leaped. There was a sound in the darkness, and he spun round, flashing the light to and fro, the bat gripped in his hand.

The flashing light revealed nothing. No haggard face, or stealthy, creeping figure met his eyes. Cool and steady, though his heart beat fast, Jim Dainty stood and watched and listened.

Again he heard a sound—a faint, brushing sound, as of some helpless body that strove to drag itself on the slimy stone flags. And from the silence and darkness came a low, faint, inarticulate moan.

CHAPTER 12.

Jim Dainty to His Rescue!

"MEIN goodness!"

Fritz' teeth chattered.

How long he had been in the Crimelade vaults Fritz Splitz hardly knew. It seemed like days, weeks, if not years and centuries. That December day was short, but to Fritz von Splitz it seemed longer than the longest midsummer day. Minutes that seemed hours, hours that seemed centuries, had dragged dismally by.

Fritz lay slumped at the foot of a buttress, his hands tied, and his ankles knotted together with strips torn from his own clothes. In the darkness he could hear the restless movements of the convict.

After securing the fat German, Slim Tim had taken the key from him, crept up the stair, and locked the oaken door—thus destroying Fritz' faint hope that Jim Dainty, in quest of the missing pudding, might think of the vaults and follow him down. Then, resting on the lowest step, Convict 39 had finished the Christmas pudding to the last plum and the last crumb—under Fritz' mournful saucer-eyes. Fritz' only comfort was that he had already eaten nearly half of it.

After that, the convict shut off the light of the electric torch. Hours of darkness followed. It seemed to the wretched Fritz that Christmas must have passed, and that the New Year was well under way, so slowly did the long minutes drag. Every now and then the convict spoke from the darkness, rapping out some question, to which the fat German mumbled an answer. But for several hours now he had not spoken, and Fritz wondered whether the ruffian was sleeping.

Fritz was not likely to sleep. He was almost as well protected by fat as a Polar bear, but the cold of the vaults was intense and penetrating. Fritz groaned and mumbled and shivered as the long minutes crawled by. Then he heard the convict stirring again.

The convict had taken his watch, and at intervals Fritz saw a gleam of light as the man looked at it. It dawned on his podgy brain at last that Timothy Gage was waiting for dark. In the deep vaults night and day were one; but the crawling hands of the watch indicated at last that the day was done.

"At last!" Fritz heard him mutter.

With the torch gleaming in his hand, the convict came towards the German junior. Fritz' saucer-eyes goggled at him in terror.

"Goot Mister Convict——" groaned Fritz.

"Silence, fool!" It was a snarl from the convict. "It is dark now, and I am

going. You will stay here—there's no help for that. Later, I may be able to let it be known, and you will be found, but you will have to take your chance."

"Mein gootness! I tink tat I die if you leat me here in ie tark!" gasped Fritz. "Dhost Minter Convict, you let me go, and I say nefling—I geep it tark!"

"Fool!"

With a bunch of rags the ruffian gagged Fritz Splitz, tying the gag with a strip of cloth. Fritz gurgled and mumbled, and his saucer-eyes blinked beseechingly at the ruffian. Having gagged him, the convict rolled him away into a corner behind a buttress, and, with strips torn from his jacket, secured him to a jutting stone. Evidently Slim Tim was taking no chances.

Now that the winter night had set in, he was making his desperate venture. For days and days the desperate man had lurked in the vaults, hoping against hope to find some opportunity of getting into the school to lay hands on what he needed for flight, and the fatuous Fritz had given him the opportunity he wanted.

With one of the loose flagstones he could have beaten a way through the oaken door into White's House, but not without alarming the whole school. But now the key was in his hands, thanks to the hapless Fritz and the Christmas pudding! At long last Convict 99 saw before him a chance of flight and freedom.

He knew that the school had broken up for the Christmas vacation; but he had learned from Fritz that Dr. Sparshott was still at Grimslade, and in the Head's house, he would find clothes, money, all that he needed, and he was prepared for any desperate deed to obtain possession of them. The hunted ruffian was not likely to give much thought to Fritz—except to leave him safe and silent!

Almost fainting with terror, Fritz heard the convict glide up the stone stair to the arched doorway above. The key grated in the lock. The light was shut off; all was blackness. With straining ears the fat German heard the faint sound of the closing door, the grating of the key again. The escaping ruffian had locked the door after him.

He was gone!

Fritz mumbled and mouned. A yell from the vaults might have been heard in White's House, but the convict had taken care of that. The gagged junior could utter no sound but a faint, moaning mumble.

Deep silence, black darkness lay round the wretched Fritz. He wriggled on the icy flags, chewed at the gag, and strove to yell, but in vain. Suddenly his saucer-eyes goggled with amazement. From the blackness came a dancing gleam of light. For a minute or two Fritz Splitz wondered if he was dreaming. But it was no fancy. From the distance, far down the long line of vaults, came a gleam of light, steadily advancing.

Fritz goggled at it in sheer amazement.

The convict had gone by the door into White's House. It was not the convict. But someone was coming, holding an electric torch that sent a steady beam of light before him as he came. Who it could be—how he could have got there—was an utter mystery to Fritz. But the light spelled hope, and Fritz watched it with his saucer-eyes.

Closer and closer it drew, and he could hear the sound of footsteps. He wriggled frantically, and his eyes almost bulged from his head in his efforts to speak.

But the light passed on, and he heard the footsteps stop at the foot of the stone stair.

Wildly, frantically, the fat German strove to make himself heard. He wriggled and squirmed, and his fat neck seemed on the point of bursting with his efforts to cry out. But only a

faint moan passed the gag jammed in his mouth. The bulging buttress concealed him from the unknown person who carried the light. Madly he wriggled and squirmed and mumbled.

Jim Dainty, at the foot of the steps, listened in utter amazement. That eerie moan from the darkness had sent a thrill to his heart. He could see nothing, but as he listened, with intent ears, he made out that the strange sound came from behind the great buttress. He left the stair at last and came round the buttress, his weapon gripped in one hand and the torch gleaming in the other.

The next moment a yell of astonishment broke from him.

"Fritz!"

Bound hand and foot, gagged, tied to the jutting stone, the fat German lay at his feet, his saucer-eyes goggling up beseechingly.

Jim stared at him spellbound for a moment.

"Fritz!" he gasped. "You! Great pip!"

Fritz mumbled frantically.

Jim Dainty stooped and freed his mouth from the gag. Fritz Splitz gasped with relief.

"Ach! Is tat Tainty? Mein gootness! Tat you untie me, isn't it? Ach!"

The amazed junior opened his pocket-knife and cut through the knotted bonds. He gave the shivering Fritz a helping hand to rise.

"My only hat!" said Dainty. "How on earth——"

"Ach! It was tat gonvict!" groaned Fritz.

Fritz flashed the light round.

"Ach! He is gone—he go up into te House," mumbled Fritz. "Ach! I am ferry gold and ferry hungry! Mein gootness! Tat peast and prute eat tat Christmas pudding!"

"You fat chump! You came down here with the pudding, and he got you." Jim Dainty understood now. "Then he's in the school?"

"Ach! Ja, ja! He vait till dark, and ten he go."

Jim gave a low whistle. If the convict had waited till dark, he could not have been gone a quarter of an hour.

Jim Dainty ran up the stone steps and tried the door. It was locked on the other side. It was useless to hammer on it if the convict had the key. Jim hurried down the steps again and flashed the light over the cracked and broken flags of the floor. He wrenched out a large stone.

"Mein goot Tainty——"

"Hold the light for me, fathead!"

Fritz held the torch, while Jim, taking the heavy stone in both hands, crashed it on the lock of the oaken door at the top of the stair.

Crash, crash, crash!

With all his strength he beat on the ancient, rusted lock. The din rang and thundered through White's House. With a rending crash the lock burst and the door flew open.

"Come on, Fritz!" panted Jim Dainty. "We may get him yet. I'll get to Sammy and call him. Come on!"

Jim Dainty raced away down the passage into White's House. Two or three startled voices called to him, but he did not heed. He dashed out of the House and sped across the dusky quad to call Sammy. But Fritz Splitz did not follow. Fritz was not interested in the escaping convict. Fritz was interested in getting something to eat. And Friedrich von Splitz gave all his attention to that much more important matter.

CHAPTER 11.

In the Nick of Time!

DR. SAMUEL SPARSHOTT stared. "What the dickens——" he ejaculated.

Sammy had been tramping on the moors, helping the Blackmoor police in the hunt for the elusive convict. He

came in tired and damp and muddy, and went up to his room to change.

As he opened the door he switched on the light. Then, in great surprise, he stared at his room. Wardrobe and chests of drawers were open, all sorts of garments, collars and ties, socks and boots, were strewn and scattered. It looked as if some reckless ranger had been at work, and Sammy's brow darkened. If this was that young rascal Dainty——

Dr. Sparshott strode into the room. As he did so a figure leaped from behind the door. Before the Head of Grimslade knew what was happening, he was down on the floor, a knee was planted on his chest, and two desperate hands were gripping his throat.

Seldom was Sammy Sparshott taken by surprise. But he was taken utterly by surprise now. Almost in stupefaction, he stared up at the haggard, desperate face of Convict 39. The truth flashed into his dazed mind. It was not a "rag"—it was the hunted convict who had been turning out his things. Slim Tim was there, though how he had got there was an amazing mystery. And Sammy had interrupted him—half through his hurried task of changing his prison garb for Sammy's clothes.

Swiftly the Head of Grimslade understood, but it was too late to save him. The man who had leaped on him like a tiger was desperate, and there was murder in the haggard eyes that glared down on Samuel Sparshott.

Sammy struck and struggled, but the pressure on his throat tightened and tightened, and his senses reeled and swam. Savagely, ruthlessly, the convict compressed his grip, and the haggard, desperate face swam before the dizzy eyes of the man choking under him.

The door had been left half open, but there was no one at hand. Byles was out, and the servants' quarters were distant. There was no help—no help—and Sammy, resisting with failing strength, knew that nothing could save him. Then suddenly there came a shout from below. It was Jim Dainty's voice—shouting.

"Dr. Sparshott, the convict's in the school somewhere!"

The junior came racing up the stairs. There was a growl of rage from Convict 39 as Jim Dainty appeared in the doorway.

Jim stared blankly for a second. Then he leaped into the room. Convict 39 sprang away from the prostrate Head and leaped towards him. His thought was to prevent the schoolboy getting away and giving the alarm. But Jim Dainty was not thinking of getting away. The fives bat was in his hand, and as the ruffian leaped at him, he struck with all his strength. The blow landed full on the close-cropped bullet head, and Timothy Gage staggered back and fell.

Before he could rise, Jim was upon him, and the bat struck again. Half stunned, the ruffian struggled with the sturdy junior. Sammy Sparshott, breathless, gasping, panting, scrambled up and grasped the struggling ruffian. The desperate wretch struggled and fought, but he had no chance. In three minutes he lay helpless, with one of Dr. Sparshott's neckties knotted round his wrists and a handkerchief twisted and tied round his ankles.

"Got him!" gasped Jim.

Sammy Sparshott sank into a chair, his hand to his bruised throat, breathing hard and deep. But there was a twinkle in his eyes.

"Dainty," he said. "I was feeling rather sorry yesterday that I had detained you over Christmas! I'm feeling rather glad now!"

. . . . . .

Jim Dainty was not, after all, detained over Christmas! The next day was Christmas Eve—and that day Timothy Gage was back at Blackmoor Prison, and Dr. Sparshott was driving Jim to the station to take the train for home—home, and a merry Christmas!

CHAPTER 16.
Unexpected!

"TAINTY!"

Jim Dainty jumped at the sound of that familiar voice.

Jim was coming out of the gate of Grey Gables, his home in Yorkshire, fifty miles or more from Grimslade School.

Fritz Splitz, the German junior, was left at the school over the holidays by his affectionate relatives in Deutschland. Jim had not expected—and still less wished—to see the fat and flabby Fritz again till the new term. Now he saw him—unexpectedly.

He stared at him blankly.

"What the thump are you doing here?" he demanded.

Fritz grinned an ingratiating grin.

"Mein tear, goot Tainty," he said, "I gum to see you because I am ferry foud of you. I like not to stay at Grimslade mitout mein beloved Tainty. All through Christmas I tinks of you, Tainty! And I tink—— Vat you going to do mit tat snow, Tainty?"

Jim Dainty had stooped to scoop up a double handful of snow from the road.

"You'll see in a minute!" he answered. "Did you walk from the station?"

"Ja! Tat vas vun long valk, and I am derribly dired," sighed Fritz. "Also, I am hungry!"

"Think you could run back to the station?" asked Jim.

"Ach! Nein! Tat vas not bossible!"

"Try," suggested Jim Dainty. "I'm going your way, and I'll follow. I'll help you along."

Fritz Splitz discovered the next moment what Jim was going to do with that double handful of snow. In the form of a snowball, it whizzed at Fritz and spread over his fat features.

"Ach! Peast and a prute!" spluttered Fritz.

"There's some more coming!" grinned Jim Dainty. "Better get going."

"Mein goot Tainty!" gasped Fritz. "I vas going to say—— Donner und blitzen! Yaroooop!"

Another snowball cut short Fritz' remarks. As his capacious mouth was open, a considerable quantity of snow went into it, and Fritz spluttered and grunted and gurgled.

Jim Dainty chuckled and gathered up more snow. If Friedrich von Splitz had fancied that the Grimslade junior would be glad to see him in the holidays, Fritz found out his mistake now. Snowball after snowball rained on him, and the fat German dodged and jumped, and at last turned and ran.

"Go it!" chortled Jim Dainty. "I'm after you!"

"Ach! Peast and a prute!" howled Fritz, as a snowball lodged on the back of his ear. "Peastly rounder! I vill thrash you till you pellow like a pull! Mein goodness! Leaf off mit tat snow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A mile's walk had tired Fritz Splitz, but he found that he could run, all the same! Snowballs crashing on the back of his bullet head spurred him on. He puffed and he panted, he gasped and he blew; but he ran fast. Jim Dainty trotted behind him, stooping every now and then to gather up the thick snow from the road and whiz a snowball at the fleeing Fritz.

Jim had been going to walk into the town that afternoon. But he was quite willing to run; and, in fact, he found it quite exhilarating to run behind the panting, puffing Fritz and pelt him with snowballs as he ran.

"Ach! Vill you leaf off?" roared Fritz.

"I'm seeing you to the station," chuckled Jim.

And another snowball spread over Fritz' fat features as he looked back.

"Grrrrgh! Ten I bunches you to nose!" roared Fritz, and he whirled round and came charging back at his pursuer.

Jim Dainty grinned, stepped aside,

and put out a foot. The charging Rhinelander stumbled over it and went headlong into the snowy road. He roared as he landed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Jim.

He grasped the sprawling German and rolled him to the side of the road, where the snow was piled thick and deep. Fritz plunged spluttering into the snowbank.

"You can take a rest there, Fatty!" chuckled Jim. "See you again at Grimslade next term. Don't let me see you before that if you're particular about your health!"

And Jim Dainty trotted on towards Northminster, leaving Fritz von Splitz sitting dazedly in the snow, half buried in it.

"Ach! Beast and a brute!" groaned Fritz, as he sat and gasped. He gouged snow from his fat features and blinked after Dainty's disappearing form with wrathful saucer-eyes. "Now I must go back, but I cannot go back when I have no cash to pay a ticket! Now I wish tat I had not spent all mein cash on tuck. Ach!"

Fritz groaned.

From the direction of the town, in which Dainty had disappeared, a small car came in sight. It slowed down as the driver caught sight of Fritz, and Fritz blinked at him. The driver was slight, brown-complexioned, evidently from the East, and thickly wrapped against the winter cold. A pair of glinting black eyes peered from his brown face, sharp and keen as a hawk's.

"Good young person, you tell me a way!" he called out.

Fritz grinned. He found the brown man's English rather amusing—as the Grimslade fellows found Fritz.

"Ach! Ja, ja!" said Fritz, extricating himself from the snowbank.

"You will know honourable mansion called Grey Gables?" asked the half-caste. "Honourable Mister Dainty dwell therein."

"Ach! Ja! Tat is vere I go," answered Fritz eagerly. "You gif me vun lift and I points out tat place."

"Enter a car!" said the gentleman from India, and Fritz made haste to do so.

The little car ran on. A few minutes later Fritz Splitz pointed out the house of Jim Dainty's father.

"I gets town here," he said. "I vaits for mein friend before I goes in, after!"

"Innumerable thanks, good young person!" said the gentleman from India, and after Fritz had stepped from the car he drove in at the gates and disappeared up the drive to the house.

CHAPTER 15.

The Man from the East!

JIM DAINTY came swinging up the road in the thickening winter dusk. He had been playing football that afternoon with some friends in Northminster, and had completely forgotten the podgy existence of Fatty Fritz. He was reminded of him as a fat figure emerged from the shadows of the wall under the gates of Grey Gables. Two light-blue saucer-eyes blinked at him in the dusk.

"Mein goot Tainty——"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Jim Dainty, staring at the fat German. "Mean to say you're still around?"

"I have vait for you vun long time, tear Tainty!" mumbled Fritz. "I cannot go back to Grimslade."

"And why not?" demanded Jim.

"Because I have run away from school!" mumbled Fritz. "Tat Sammy he beat me till I bellow like a bull, and I have run away."

"Great pip!"

Jim stared at Fatty Fritz blankly. Dr. Samuel Sparrhott, Head of Grimslade, had a heavy hand with a cane, as Jim had plenty of reason to know. Likewise, he was aware that very likely Fritz had given Sammy ample reason to handle the cane. But it was a sur-

prise to hear the fat German had run away from school.

"Tat is why I gum to see you, tear Tainty," said Fritz, with a sly gleam in his saucer-eyes. "I write von letter to mein beoples in Chermany, and tey send to fetch me home to my beloved Fatherland. But for two-tree tays I must stay somevhere. I tare not go pack to Grimslade—tar Sammy he vallop me so pad as neffer vas pefore."

Jim Dainty grinned. He could imagine the "whopping" that any Grimslade fellow would get for running away from school. True, it was holiday-time; but Fritz was left at Grimslade over the vacation in Dr. Sparshott's charge, and Sammy was responsible for him.

"Well, you silly ass," said Dainty at last, "you'll have to turn up for the new term, and then——"

"Nein, nein!" Fritz shook his head. "I neffer go pack! Mein beoples send for me, and I go to Chermany, vich is effer so much petter tan tis country. But vat can I do for two-tree day vhile I vait for that letter from Chermany?"

Jim Dainty grunted. Of all the fellows at Grimslade School, Fritz Splitz was the last he would have selected to stay with him in the vacation. But if the hapless Fritz had burned his boats behind him by running away from Grimslade, Jim felt that it was up to him. And there was consolation in the reflection that if Fritz was going home he would not be in Study No. 10 in White's House next term.

"Come along, fathead!" he said. "I'll ask my father if you can be put up for a day or two. Don't say anything about having bolted from school, though. The pater's a bit of a tartar, and he would pack you off and telegraph to Sammy."

"I says nothings, mein tear Tainty," promised Fritz. "I grasps it task."

Fritz grinned as he rolled in at the gateway with Jim Dainty. He had pulled it off, and it did not occur to Jim's unsuspicious mind that the sly Fritz had pulled his leg.

A car was standing on the drive as they reached the house, and Fritz blinked at it curiously. It was the car in which the brown-complexioned man had given him a lift two or three hours ago. Apparently the brown man was still at Grey Gables.

"Tat man is still here," remarked Fritz.

"Eh? What man?" asked Jim.

"Tat prown man gum in te car. He gift me vun lift," said Fritz. "He speak terry funny English, so funny as neffer vas pefore. I vunder terry much tat peoples do not learn to speak te English terry goot, vhen it is so easy to speak it like vun native of te gountry."

Jim chuckled.

They saw the brown man when they entered. He was seated by the fire in the hall, still wrapped in his thick coat, but huddling near the blazing log fire. Evidently the man from India felt keenly the cold of the Yorkshire moors in winter. The firelight played on his brown face and glinting, black eyes.

He rose to his feet as the two schoolboys came in, and gave them a quick glance. Then he bowed politely and sat down again. Jim returned his salute with a rather curious glance, and passed on with Fritz.

Jim's father was manager of a mine in Burma, home in England on leave, and Jim concluded that the brown man was some business acquaintance from the East. It was tea-time, and Mrs. Dainty was at the tea-table when Jim presented Fritz.

"Any friend of yours from school is more than welcome, my dear boy," said Mrs. Dainty; and Fritz grinned, with one saucer-eye on the well-spread table. Fritz had fancied that he would find himself in clover if he could land himself at Grey Gables for the holidays, and now he was sure of it.

"Mein tear Mrs. Tainty," said Fritz, "at Grimslade I am te pest friend of

Chim. Ve are like brudders, isn't it, Chim?"

Jim grunted. As he had asked his mother to put Fritz up for a few days, he could not very well explain that, personally, he had not the slightest interest in the German junior. Mrs. Dainty, at all events, was hospitable, and if Jim was lacking in enthusiasm Fritz did not mind.

Grimslade fellows thought that Jim was spoiled at home, and the delightful things on the tea-table seemed to prove that it was so. Fritz fairly gloated over them. For the next half-hour Fritz, much as he loved the music of his own voice, had little to say. His fat jaws were too busy for speech.

"Isn't the pater in?" Jim asked.

"He has not yet come back from Grimslade," said Mrs. Dainty. "But I expect him every moment."

Jim suppressed a whistle. His father had visited Dr. Sparshott, his old friend, that afternoon. If Sammy happened to mention to him that the German junior had run away from school—— In that case Fritz' stay at Grey Gables was likely to last until Mr. Dainty arrived, and no longer. Jim tried not to hope that Sammy had mentioned it.

"A gentleman has called to see your father," went on Mrs. Dainty. "You must have seen him in the hall. A gentleman from India. His name is Puri Din. Although I told him that Mr. Dainty would not be home for some hours, he persisted in waiting. He has refused to take any refreshment, and sat there all this time without speaking a word."

Mrs. Dainty was evidently a little worried about the taciturn brown man. Jim, however, gave him little thought. He had come in hungry after football. Fatty Fritz's whole attention was concentrated on the foodstuffs, which were disappearing under his attack at a rate that made little Mrs. Dainty open her eyes.

"Here is your father," said Mrs. Dainty at last, as the front door was heard to open.

The next moment the deep voice of Jim's father was heard.

"Puri Din! You scoundrel, what are you doing here?"

"Dear me!" murmured Mrs. Dainty, in surprise and alarm.

Jim Dainty jumped up and ran to the door, which opened on the hall. His father, a tall, powerfully-built man, with a deeply bronzed face, stood facing the brown man, who had risen to his feet. Puri Din was smiling, but his black eyes glittered at the mine manager like a snake's.

"Sahib, do not be angry with your servant," said Puri Din in a low, calm voice. "I have come to an honourable mansion as a friend. When you leave Burma you take in your estimable hands the great ruby."

"That is no concern of yours!" rapped Mr. Dainty. "Twice you tried to steal the ruby—once at the mines, and once at Rangoon. Have you come here to try again?"

"I have come over the black water for the ruby," said the half-caste, his eyes glittering. "After many days and many questions I find out where you reside in a mansion. But let us speak in private places."

"I have nothing to say to you, Puri Din, and I will not see you in private," answered Mr. Dainty. He threw the door wide open. "Get out!"

"I beg the noble sahib to see me in private places if but for few minutes!" urged the half-caste.

"I've told you to go!"

Jim Dainty looked on breathlessly. The brown man from India was half crouching, like a tiger about to spring. Jim had heard of the big ruby that his father had brought home from Burma, a stone that was worth a fortune.

That was what had brought the brown man from far-off India to the house on the Yorkshire moor. And as he looked at the tigerish face it flashed into Jim's mind that had his father suc-

assist to see the brown man in private. It was Puri Din's intention to make a desperate attempt to possess himself of the ruby.

Even as that thought was passing through Jim's mind Mr. Dainty made a stride towards the man from the East. His heavy hand dropped on the half-caste's shoulder.

"Get out!" he rapped.

The next instant the brown man had sprung on him. His dusky hand was under his coat, and it flashed out. There was something in it that gleamed and glittered in the electric light. Jim made a desperate spring forward, grasped the half-caste's arm, and dragged it aside. The knife clanged on the floor.

"You scoundrel!" roared the mine manager.

He grasped the slim half-caste with both hands and wrenched him off his feet. Puri Din gave a yell of fury as he was swung through the air in the Englishman's powerful arms. The next moment he was whizzing through the doorway and crashing down the steps. With a howl of pain and fury, he rolled in the snow on the drive.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim.

The half-caste scrambled up. For a moment his brown face was turned towards the lighted hall, distorted with rage and hate, his white teeth gleaming in a savage snarl. Then he scrambled into his car, started up, and drove away into the darkness.

Mr. Dainty shrugged his broad shoulders contemptuously.

CHAPTER 16.

In the Dead of Night!

"URRRRGH!"

"Shut up!"

Fritz Spliss did not shut up. Fritz was in trouble!

Jim Dainty sat up in bed and glared across the room at the fat German. The hour was late—very late—and Jim wanted to sleep. So did Friedrich von Spliss, for that matter. But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path. Fritz' supper stood in the way. At supper that night Friedrich von Spliss had done not wisely but too well.

Fritz had been four or five days at the Grey Gables now. In that space of time he had not made himself popular. Jim was more than fed-up. Mrs. Dainty was kind, but she could not help being surprised that her son had picked out this particular specimen to bring home from Grimslade. Mr. Dainty took little notice of Fritz, who felt uncomfortable under his rather grim and stern eye.

The letter from Germany had not arrived. That letter, according to Fritz, was to contain funds and instructions for his journey home to his dear Fatherland. Until it came Fritz was a failure at Grey Gables. And it did not yet occur to Jim Dainty that that letter was not coming at all.

There had been a party of young people that evening, and naturally there had been a supper. Fritz had not distinguished himself at the party by his manners or his attractions—but he had distinguished himself at the supper! Often and often Fritz approached the danger-line when the tuck was unlimited. Now he had passed it.

He had a bed in Jim's room, and they went to bed rather late—not to sleep! Strange pains and pangs were troubling the interior of the podgy German, and every time Jim dropped off into slumber he was awakened by groans or wails from the unhappy Fritz.

"It vas not te pudding!" groaned Fritz. "Many dimes I have eat vun whole Christmas pudding! It vas not te turkey—fat turkey vas ferry goot! It vas not te mince pies—I have eat only twenty—or dirty at te most! It vas not te cake—I liked dat cake! Vot do you tink it vas, mein tear Tainty, tat giff me dis fearful pain in mein pread-packet?"

"If you wake me up again I'll give

you a fearful pain with my slipper!" growled Jim Dainty.

"Peast and a prute!" groaned Fritz.

Jim closed his eyes again. But it was in vain. Fritz was sitting up in bed with his fat hands clasped over his extensive middle, where the pain was, and he rocked himself and moaned and groaned.

The Christmas pudding seemed to be on the worst of terms with the turkey and the mince pies and the cake.

Jim Dainty turned out of bed at last, slipped on a dressing-gown and slippers, and stirred together the embers of the fire. Fritz watched him with luck-lustre saucer-eyes.

Bright, silvery moonlight streamed in at the window. Outside, the thick snow was like a white mantle, the tall trees casting bars of black shadow. Jim Dainty looked from the window on the still, frozen scene, and thought of skating on the morrow. He sat at the window looking out at the fairy-like scene, while Fritz groaned and moaned and rocked.

"Are you ever going to shut up?" demanded Jim at last.

"Ach! I have vun colossal bain in mein grend-pasket!" groaned Fritz. "Tink you tat it vas te turkey, Tainty?"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

"Prutal peast!" moaned Fritz.

Jim Dainty gave a sudden start. Among the black bars of shadow cast by the trees on the white snow a shadow moved. Jim stared at it—a black shadow that moved, glided in the snow towards the house. In the window of the library, which was under Jim's room, there was still a light. Mr. Dainty had not yet gone to bed.

Jim pushed up the sash and leaned out to watch the sliding shadow. As he looked down, he saw the glow of light from the windows below. The French windows were open, and he could glimpse his father standing there looking out into the moonlight. In the still silence he heard his father turn back into the room below. Then with startled eyes he saw the black shadow dart from the trees and cross the snow towards the open french windows.

Jim's heart thumped.

He turned from the window and ran across to the door. Fritz stared after him.

"Mein gott Tainty, vere you go? Vat——"

Jim did not answer or listen. He tore open the door, ran out, and raced down the dark staircase. A light burned in the hall, and Jim stopped there for a second to grasp a golf club from his father's bag, then he ran to the door of the library.

Except for Mr. Dainty, the whole household was in slumber. The mine manager had stayed up late to go through a file of technical documents. As Jim reached the door of the library he heard a voice within, and he swiftly turned the door-handle.

"The ruby!" He heard a low, hissing voice. "Sahib, for many nights I have watched with an eye, and now chance is come! There is death in a pistol that points to the head of a sahib! The ruby—or termination of existence occurs with a prompt dispatch!"

The ridiculous English contrasted strangely, almost horribly, with the savage, hissing voice and the glare of ferocity in the black eyes of the man from the East. His eyes glinted over a levelled automatic.

There was no fear in the hard, bronzed face of the mine manager, but he stood very still.

"The ruby—or death with extreme suddenness!" hissed Puri Din.

The library door swung open silently under Jim Dainty's hand. Neither his father nor the man from India looked in his direction; their eyes were fixed on one another—the mine manager breathing hard and deep, but steady as a rock; the brown man glaring over the levelled automatic.

"Never!" said the cool, steady voice

of Jim's father. "You scoundrel——"

What!

Jim knew that he could not reach them in time to interfere. There was murder in the black eyes glinting over the automatic. He swung the golf club and hurled it with all his strength and with deadly accurate aim.

The iron head of the club crashed on the brown face, and Puri Din, with a startled scream, staggered and almost fell.

Instantly Mr. Dainty leaped forward and struck the automatic from his sagging hand.

In another moment his powerful grasp would have fastened on the half-caste; but Puri Din, with tigerish swiftness, leaped away. The iron head of the club had cut his face, and blood streaked his brown skin. But with swift agility he eluded the mine manager and sprang through the open French window. Almost in the twinkling of an eye he had vanished into the night.

"Father!" gasped Jim.

Mr. Dainty gave him a glance, picked up the automatic, and stepped to the open window. Slowly and carefully he closed the French windows and locked them: then he turned to his son, with a smile on his bronzed face.

"Thank you, Jim! But what are you doing out of bed at this hour?"

"I saw him from my window. That was Fritz at first and kept me awake. So I came down," panted Jim.

"Thank Heaven you did!" said Mr. Dainty quietly. "Puri Din meant business. I shall put the police on his track at once: he is too dangerous to leave loose. He would have shot me down and taken the great ruby."

"Father, is it safe to keep it in the house?" said Jim.

"It will not remain here another twenty-four hours." Mr. Dainty smiled again. "You shall see it, Jim. It is a stone worth seeing."

He unlocked a cabinet and took out a little morocco case. The lid shot up as he pressed a spring, and Jim Dainty started at the sight of the blood-red blaze within. He stared fascinated at the magnificent jewel.

"Dad, that must be worth a fortune!" he breathed.

"Fifteen thousands pounds, at least," said Mr. Dainty quietly. "And I found it almost by chance in the mountains in Burma. I came near losing it again—and my life also—as I have done tonight. But it leaves this house tomorrow night. Dr. Sparshott will take it with him in his car. He is going to dispose of it for me."

"Sammy!" exclaimed Jim, starting. "Is Sammy coming here?"

"Yes, he will come to dinner tomorrow, Jim. I believe you like your headmaster better than you did when you first went to Grimslade?"

"Oh, yes!" answered Jim. "I'm glad he's coming, but——" He was thinking of Fritz Spitz. But that was not a matter he could explain to Mr. Dainty, and he broke off. "Is Sammy taking away the ruby, then, father?"

"Yes; that was arranged when I saw him at Grimslade a few days ago. It will be safe then. Puri Din, if he is still loose, will not be likely to guess that Dr. Sparshott has it in his possession," said Mr. Dainty, with a smile. He replaced the Burmese ruby and closed the cabinet. "Now, good-night, Jim!"

"Good-night, dad!" returned Jim. "But, I say," he added anxiously, "will you be all right——"

"Don't you worry about me, boy," replied Mr. Dainty.

Jim went back to his room. Mr. Dainty resumed his work on his technical papers as coolly as if there had been no interruption. Outside the French windows a brown-faced man showed his white teeth in a gloating grin.

Puri Din was not gone yet! He had seen where the great ruby was hidden, and he had heard every word that was spoken within.

Softly Puri Din trod away through

the snow and disappeared. The great Burmese ruby, when it left Grey Gables in the care of Sammy Spurshott, was not to be so safe as its owner believed.

CHAPTER 12.
The Order of the Boot!

"THAT is all right, Tainty!"

That was the answer of Friedrich von Splitz the following day, when Jim told him that Sammy Spurshott was coming.

The letter from Germany had not arrived. Fritz was still a fixture at Grey Gables. Jim expected him to be wildly alarmed at the news that the headmaster of Grimslade was coming. Instead of which, Fritz did not seem perturbed in the very least.

He breakfasted with his usual excellent appetite; he lunched with the same; and in the afternoon he inquired whether Jim was to be allowed to dine with the Head.

"Yes, fathead!" answered Jim. "But you——"

"Tat is all right! If you tine, I tine also!" said Fritz. "I tink tat it vill be a good tinner, so tat is all right."

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Jim. "As soon as Sammy sees you, you will be bagged and bundled back to Grimslade!".

"I vill risk tat!" said Fritz. "It is all right, Tainty! I am not afraid of tat Sammy! Being a Cherman, I am ferry prave!"

"Haven't you any sense?" hooted Jim. "You've run away from school, and Sammy will be in a bait when he finds that I'm a party to it. I shall get into a row with my pater when he knows. You've got to be miles away before Sammy comes, and I only hope the pater won't happen to mention to him that you've been here at all. When are you starting?"

"Tat is all right!" protested Fritz. "I am not going, my dear Tainty!"

"You've got nothing to pack," said Jim. "It's dusk now, and Sammy is expected soon. Here's your coat and hat. I'll walk with you to the station."

Fritz Splitz unwillingly put on his coat and hat. Still more unwillingly, he went out with Jim, having no choice in the matter, as Jim had fastened an irresistible grip on his podgy arm. With more and more unwillingness, he walked down the drive.

"Buck up!" snapped Jim. "If Sammy finds you here, when you've run away from the school——"

"But—but I did not run away from school!" gasped Fritz, coming to a halt. "I confess, my goot Chim—my dear Tainty! I pull you te leg!"

Jim Dainty jumped.

"What?" he roared.

"Pecause you are my beloved chum," explained Fritz. "I like not to bart mit you! Von I gum, you gut up runty, so I tell you tat I run away from school, and ten you take me in, nicht wahr? It was vun choke! So it is all right if ter Sammy see me here. He gif me leaf to gum here and stay mit you. I tells him tat you ask me to gum, nin't it?"

Jim was speechless—but speech was not needed. It was a time for actions, not for words. He made a jump at Fritz von Splitz, grasped him by the collar, and up-ended him in the snow. Wild howls and gurgles came from Fritz as his fat features were ground into the snow, and into the gravel under it.

"Oooogh! Mein tear Tainty! Peast and a prute! Whoooop!"

Fritz tore himself away and ran. After him came Jim Dainty—not snowballing this time, but letting out his feet. Kick after kick crashed on Fritz Splitz, and the fat Rhinelander put on a remarkable speed. He vanished in the dusk on the road towards Northminster, yelling.

Jim Dainty, breathing hard, walked back to the house. He fancied that he had seen the last of Fritz Splitz till the new term. But he was prepared to give him plenty more of the same if he turned up at Grey Gables again.

Fritz was not likely to do that. Even Fritz realised that he had outworn his welcome. The hapless Fritz stopped in the winter dusk on the snowy road, and gasped and gurgled and groaned. Grey Gables was closed to him; Fritz did not want to be kicked out again. But how was he to get back to Grimslade without a railway ticket or the wherewithal to purchase one was a deep problem for Fritz.

A car flashed past him in the gloom. It was Dr. Sparshott's saloon car, and he recognised Sammy at the wheel. Dr. Sparshott was gone in a moment, and Fritz blinked after the car.

The sight of the car had put a new idea into Fritz' mind. Dr. Sparshott would be driving back to Grimslade that night. He could hardly refuse Fritz a lift. The fat German thought the matter out, and at last he turned his footsteps back to Grey Gables.

He could not venture to show up at the house, but he crept round to the garage. He blinked cautiously round with his saucer-eyes, but there was no one at hand. Dr. Sparshott's car stood in the garage.

Fritz crept in, opened the door of the car, and got into it. There were a couple of heavy rugs on the back seat. With a grunt of satisfaction, the fat German wrapped himself in the rugs—and went to sleep.

CHAPTER 12.
The Hold-Up!

JIM DAINTY and his father came out to the car with Dr. Sparshott when the time came for the headmaster of Grimslade to depart.

Jim had quite enjoyed "Sammy's" company that evening. Sammy was so genial that Jim forgot the innumerable "sirs" his headmaster had given him at Grimslade. In Sammy's breast pocket was the little morocco case containing the great Burmese ruby.

He shook hands with Mr. Dainty and with Jim, started up the car, and drove down the dusky drive. He had not even glanced at the piled rugs on the seat, and had not the faintest suspicion that there was a passenger in his car.

Neither had that unseen passenger the faintest idea that the car was going. Fritz Spiltz was still sleeping like a fat dormouse.

It was the jolting of the car on the high road that first disturbed the slumbers of Friedrich von Spiltz. He stirred uneasily in his sleep, and at last awakened, poked his bullet head like a tortoise from the rugs, and blinked round him drowsily.

A red light flashed on the road ahead; the car jolted and jarred to a halt. Dr. Sparshott leaned over, and peered at a dim figure that loomed through the gloom.

"What is it—road up, or what?" he ashed. "By gad—what——"

An automatic glimmered in the glare of the headlights, and then the muzzle was pressed to Dr. Sparshott's overcoat.

"A hold-up," said Sammy quietly.

Fritz lay in the rugs, almost dazed! It was a hold-up on the highway—the red light was a trick to stop the car. Fritz made no sound or movement. He saw Sammy's right hand release itself from the wheel, and grope, and grasp a heavy spanner. But Dr. Sparshott did not lift the spanner. The muzzle of the automatic was pressed into his ribs, and a pair of black, glinting eyes watched him like a cat's.

"You will have great kindness to descend into a road!" said a low voice. "Otherwise sudden death will approximate."

Fritz knew the voice of the half-caste, and his weird English. Dr. Sparshott quietly stepped into the road, leaving the spanner on the seat. With the automatic at his breast, Puri Din backed him to the roadside, against a tree.

"You will give me the ruby!" said Puri Din, in his hissing voice. "Give me the ruby and live, or I will detach

the same from lifeless body of your estimable self!"

Dr. Sparshott breathed hard.

"You've got me, my dusky friend!" he said calmly. And his hand slid into his pocket.

Puri Din's black eyes snapped. Sammy's hand came out of his pocket with the morocco case in it.

The man from the East snatched at it greedily, with his left hand. For a second the automatic wavered. That was what Sammy Sparshott was watching for. The half-caste grasped the morocco case, and at the same instant Dr. Sparshott leaped forward.

Crack! rang the automatic. But Sammy's grasp was on the brown man's arm, and he forced it upward as he fired. The bullet flew away among the leafless trees.

The next instant Sammy Sparshott had closed with the man from India. For a few moments they struggled, and then slipped in the snow and went down.

In the powdering snow they struggled, fiercely and silently, both unconscious of the staring, terrified face watching from the car. Fritz Splitz' eyes fell on the spanner on the seat. He grasped it with a shaking fat hand.

The fat German screwed up his courage, such as it was, to the sticking-point. With the heavy spanner in his fat hand, he crawled from the car. On hands and knees he waded silently through the thick snow. Nearer and nearer; now he was only a few feet away from the struggling figures. Slowly, cautiously, Fritz raised the spanner above his head. Then——

Crash!

Puri Din never knew what hit him. The blow on the back of his head stretched him stunned in the snow. Dr. Sparshott, amazed to find himself released, scrambled up. He tore the automatic from the relaxing hand of the half-caste.

"Who—what——" panted Dr. Sparshott.

"Mein gootness! Ach! himmel!" groaned Fritz.

"Splitz!" gasped the Head of Grimslade.

Fritz von Splitz gave him one dizzy blink, and fainted.

* * * * * *

"Sammy!" gasped Jim Dainty.

"Dr. Sparshott!" exclaimed his father.

It was less than half an hour since the Head of Grimslade had gone, when there was a grinding of a car on the drive, and a loud knock at the door of Grey Gables. Jim and his father came into the hall as the door was opened. They stared blankly at Dr. Sparshott; and at the fat figure that he was supporting with a strong arm.

"Fritz!" gasped Jim.

"Ach! Geep off!" gasped Fritz. "It is Tocter Sprushott tat pring me pack."

"A hold-up on the road, Mr. Dainty," said Sammy quietly. "Puri Din knew somehow that I had the ruby. I have left him at the Northminster police-station—out of harm's way now. Splitz was in the car—how, I cannot imagine—and he weighed in with a spanner."

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "Fritz did! Great pip!"

"I understand that Splitz has been staying here," said Dr. Sparshott. "You told me he had gone back to Grimslade, Dainty, but it seems that he must have given himself a lift in my car, and I was not aware of it. It was very fortunate, as it turns out. He fainted, so I thought I had better bring him in." He smiled in answer to Mr. Dainty's anxious look. "The ruby is quite safe—thanks partly to Splitz! Are you feeling better now, Splitz?"

"Ach! I am ferry hungry!"

Jim Dainty slipped his arm through the fat Rhinelander's.

"This way to supper, Fritz!" he said.

When Dr. Sparshott drove to Grimslade a little later, he went alone in the car. Friedrich von Splitz was no longer in need of a lift. Fritz for

once in a way, had played up like a little man, and Fritz had his reward.

Fritz was booked to stay as an honoured guest till the end of the holidays.

CHAPTER 10.

Back to School!

"MIDDLEMOOR!"

"Wake up, fathead!" said Jim Dainty.

Fritz Spiltz was asleep in a corner of the carriage. There was a buzzing of voices and a trampling of feet on the platform at Middlemoor Station. Jim Dainty threw open the door and looked out over the crowded platform. It swarmed with Grimslade fellows, coming back for the new term.

Jim sighted Dick Dawson, his chum in Study No. 10 in White's House, and waved a hand to him. At the same time Ginger Rawlinson of Rednayes House sighted Jim in the doorway of the carriage, and stooped to gather a handful of snow from the bank at the back of the platform.

"Wake up, Fritz!" rapped Dainty.

Fritz did not wake up. He was not easy to wake. Jim turned to give him a shake before stepping down from the carriage. Ginger Rawlinson's snowball whizzed in as he turned, and just missed him.

But every bullet has its billet. The snowball, missing Jim by an inch as he turned, landed on the fat features of Friedrich von Spiltz.

Fritz woke up then!

He woke up quite suddenly.

"Ach! Himmel!" spluttered Fritz, his saucer-eyes opening wide. "Vat vas dat? Tainty, you peast and a prute——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! I am smuttered mit snow!" roared Fritz. "You peastly pounder, I tink tat I peat you till you pellow like a pull!"

Jim Dainty chuckled and jumped down. He rushed across the platform to greet Dick Dawson and Paget and Pigley and Bates and other fellows of White's House at Grimslade. A big Fifth Form man was in the way, and Jim shoved past him rather unceremoniously. He had no ceremony to waste on his old enemy, Fenwick of the Fifth. Fenwick made a grab at him and caught him by the back of his collar.

Smack! Smack!

Fenwick grasped Jim Dainty's collar with one hand, with the other he smacked. Dainty gave a roar of wrath. He turned on the Fifth Former, grasped him in turn, and hooked his leg. Fenwick of the Fifth sat down with a thump.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Smack! Smack!

It was Jim Dainty's turn to smack, and he smacked with right and left. Fenwick of the Fifth rolled over, roaring.

Jim Dainty scudded on. It was not judicious to wait till the bully of the Fifth was on his feet again. He joined a crowd of White's juniors heading for the exit. Outside the station the school brake was waiting. Plenty of Grimsladers were hurrying to secure seats. There were never enough seats to go round.

"Bag that brake, you men!" roared Ginger Rawlinson. "Sheer off, you White's ticks—no room for you!"

"No room for Rednayes!" answered Jim Dainty cheerily. "Sit down, old bean!"

A sudden shove in the chest caused Ginger to sit down on the slippery pavement outside the station. His comrades, Sireaky Bacon and Sandy Bean, were hurrying after him. Naturally, they had not expected their great leader to sit down under their feet so suddenly. Before they could stop, they had stumbled over Ginger, and were sprawling on him.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. "Gerroff! Bacon, you fathead—Bean, you blitherer! Wow!"

"Come on!" chuckled Dainty.

He headed the rush for the brake.

Sedate seniors, of the Fifth and Sixth, were walking to their brake, much too dignified to scramble, like the smaller fry. But there was a wild scramble for the juniors' brake. It was a frosty day and the keen air of the Yorkshire moors was exhilarating. Jim Dainty & Co. had come back full of beans! They wanted to beg seats. Still more they wanted to begin the term with a House row.

While Ginger & Co. were sorting themselves out, a crowd of White's fellows swarmed into the brake. Seeing the humorous side of the situation, the driver promptly whipped up the horses and the brake rolled off in the direction of Grimslade School.

CHAPTER 10.
Whose Cake?

"TAINTY!" yelled Fritz Splitz. "Tawson!"

It was evening, and Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson were in Study No. 10. There was no prep on the first night of the term. The chums of Study No. 10 were sorting out various belongings when there was a patter of running feet in the passage, and the voice of Friedrich von Splitz was heard on its top note.

Dainty looked out of the doorway. Fritz Splitz was coming up the passage like a charging rhinoceros. Behind him, in hot pursuit, came Cyril Fenwick of the Fifth Form. Fourth Form fellows, in the study doorways, watched the chase, with grinning faces.

"Go it, Fritz! Put a move on!" yelled Paget from Study No. 4.

Fritz was putting a move on. His fat face was crimson with exertion, and his elastic-sided boots creaked and squeaked as he raced. Under his fat arm was a parcel, to which Fritz clung desperately as he fled.

"Tainty! Tawson! Rescue!" bawled Fritz. "Tat peastly pully, he is after me! Mein goot Tainty—mein tear Tawson——"

"Back up, Dick!" exclaimed Jim Dainty.

And he ran out into the passage. Dawson followed him promptly.

They were only just in time. Fenwick of the Fifth, with red wrath in his rather ill-favoured face, had reached the fleeing Fritz, and his finger-tips already touched the fat shoulder when Fritz' study-mates piled in. Fritz bolted between them and they closed in on the Fifth Form man. They grasped him on either side and dragged him to a halt.

"Let go!" roared Fenwick furiously.

"No fear!" grinned Jim Dainty. "Hold on, Dick! Lend a hand, you men! We don't let the Fifth throw their weight about in this passage! What's the row, Fritz, old fat bean?"

"Ach! Tat peast and a peute, he want to take mein gake!" gasped Fritz.

"Rotten bully!" said Dawson. "Boot him out of our passage!"

"Let go!" roared Fenwick. "I tell you——"

"Boot him out!"

Fenwick of the Fifth yelled and struggled. But a dozen juniors swarmed round him, and as many pairs of hands grasped him wherever there was room. There was hardly room enough for so many, but the juniors got hold where they could, and Fenwick's ears and hair and nose and neck were all captured, as well as his arms and his legs.

"Frog's-march!" shouted Jim Dainty.

"Hurrah!"

Fenwick, in a forming state, was conducted back along the passage, his head tapping on the floor as he went. Fenwick was always a bully; but such a proceeding as bagging a fellow's cake, brought back to school on the first day of term, was unusually "thick," even for a bully like Fenwick.

Jim Dainty & Co. made it quite clear to Fenwick what they thought of such proceedings. Bumped and breathless, red and ruffled, hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his

Jack Fenwick of the Fifth was taken back to his own study, and landed on his carpet in a sprawling, gurgling, gasping heap. Jim Dainty grinned down at him as he lay and gurgled.

"Take that as a tip to leave the Fourth alone, old thing!" he said.

"Groooooough!"

Then, as other Fifth Form men came round to see what the row was about, the juniors beat a hurried retreat to their own quarters. Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson returned to Study No. 10, where they found Fritz Splitz struggling spasmodically for his second wind. The parcel was on the study table.

"Ach! Tat peast and a prute!" gasped Fritz. "Himmel! I have no more te breff! Oooooough!"

Gasping for breath, the fat German began to unwrap the parcel. It had already been unwrapped once, but the wrappings had been hastily gathered round it again. A large and luscious cake was revealed to view. Fritz's saucer eyes fairly gloated over it.

"That is vun goot gake!" he gasped. "Vat you tink? You get vun knife, mein goot Tainty, and I gifs you some also, mein tear Tawson! Ve vill eat tat gake at vunce, and not leaf a grumb!"

"Leave it for supper," advised Dainty.

"Nein, nein! Ve eats tat gake at vunce, so quick as neffer vas peford!" said Fritz. "I vhacks him out mit you—do not leaf a single grumb!"

The cake was large, and it looked tempting. Fritz's study-mates did not really need urging. Jim Dainty sorted out a knife, and three large slices were cut. Three pairs of jaws set to work at once. Fritz's was the busiest of the three. Fritz grinned an ecstatic grin over the cake.

"Tat is goot, nicht vahr?" he said, with his mouth full.

"Jolly good!" agreed Dawson. "Where did you get it?"

"Tat gake gum from mein beoples in Chermany!" explained Fritz.

There was a step in the passage, and Mr. White, the Housemaster, looked in. Behind him came Fenwick of the Fifth, still red and ruffled.

"There it is, sir!" exclaimed Fenwick. "That is my cake, sir! Those three young rascals are eating it!"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. White.

Jim Dainty jumped.

"Your cake!" he gasped.

"Ach! Mein goodness!" gasped Fritz Splitz, his fat jaw dropping. "Tat peast and a prute, he pring te Housemaster! I neffer tunk of tat!"

Mr. White strode into the study. His face was stern. Thoughtfully the Housemaster of White's had brought a cane under his arm.

"Dainty! Dawson! Splitz! How dare you purloin a cake belonging to a Fifth Form boy! You may take it away, Fenwick! Dainty, bend over that chair!"

Jim Dainty breathed hard and deep. Fenwick grinned. Three big slices of the cake were gone, but the bully of the Fifth considered that it was worth that to see the occupants of Study No. 10 licked.

"We—we never knew, sir!" stammered Dainty.

"What! Is not that Fenwick's cake?" demanded Mr. White.

"I—I suppose so! But——"

"Bend over that chair at once!"

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Now Dawson!" rapped Mr. White.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Now Splitz!"

"Ach! Mein goodness!" groaned Fritz, as he bent over.

Three licks of the cane brought three fearful howls from Fritz.

But even worse than the caning, to the fat German, was the sight of Fenwick carrying off the cake. Fritz wriggled and groaned, and his saucer eyes followed the cake mournfully. Mr. White stalked away with a frowning brow. Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson looked at Fritz.

"Ach! Mein goot gake!" groaned

Fritz. "He is gone like vun beautiful dream!"

"You fat Boche!" hissed Jim Dainty. "You pinched that cake from Fenwick—that's why he was after you—and you made us believe—— Oh, collar him!"

"Ach! Mein goot Tainty! Tat vos just pie!" roared Fritz, as the chums of Study No. 10 collared him. "Tat vas mein cake! It vas from mein boyden in Chermany! I tells you te troot; you can always take te vord of a Chermun! I tink—— Yaroooh!"

Fritz descended with a bump on the study carpet. Dick Dawson sat on his podgy shoulders and pinned him down; Jim Dainty took the fire-shovel from the fender. The flat of the shovel smote where Mr. White's cane had lately smitten, and Fritz von Splitz wriggled and yelled.

"Ach! Pang me not on mein trousers! I have vun colossal hein in mein trousers! Pease and a prune, tat you leaf off!" shrieked Fritz.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Jim Dainty was putting his best into it. Not till his arm was tired did he leave off. By that time Fritz was more than tired.

"Now give him the ink!" gasped Jim.

Fritz struggled to his feet as Dawson grasped the inkpot from the table. He made a wild bound for the door.

The ink flew in a stream, and landed on the back of his fat neck as he went.

"Oooooogh!" spluttered Fritz as he vanished.

Dainty and Dawson were feeling rather better now. Fritz, to judge by his howls as he fled down the passage, was feeling considerably worse.

CHAPTER 11.

Nailed!

"WHO pinched the cake?"

Three voices in unison asked that impertinent question to break the following morning. Ginger Rawlinson, Streaky Bacon and Sandy Bean were the questioners; and they grinned at Jim Dainty as they questioned.

"What?" ejaculated Jim.

"Who pinched the cake?" roared Ginger & Co.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled a crowd of Redmayne fellows.

Jim Dainty glared at them. He had almost forgotten the incident of Fenwick's cake. Now he was reminded of it. Evidently Ginger & Co. had got hold of the story and were bent on making the most of it, for the harmless and necessary purpose of chipping the rival House.

Jim strode on with crimson cheeks, followed by a howl of laughter from Redmayne.

Three or four Fifth Form men were standing idly by in a group, Fenwick among them. Fenwick sang out as he saw Dainty.

"Mind your pockets, you men! That's one of the pinchers."

The Fifth Form group chuckled.

"You cheeky rotter!" panted Jim. "You know jolly well that it was that fat Boche——"

"I know who was scoffing my cake!" sneered Fenwick. "If I miss anything else from my study I shall know where to come for it. It may be something more valuable next time."

Jim Dainty tramped into the junior passage, with feelings too deep for words. He found Dawson at the door of Study No. 10.

"Look at that!" said Dawson, pointing to the glass over the mantelpiece. In large capital letters was the sentence:

"WHO PINCHED THE CAKE?"

Jim Dainty breathed hard and deep as he took a duster and wiped it out.

"That's Fenwick, of course," he said. "Fenwick's going to make the most of this. He knows jolly well that it was that fat streak Fritz, and that we never knew. But he's up against this study! That smoky, bullying blackguard—he would have been sacked last term, only

they never suck a man here. I think Smithy's rather an ass never to suck a man!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Dawson.

On the way in Big School for third lesson Jim Dainty found a little solace in planting his boot on Fritz' baggy trousers. Mr. Peck, the master of the Fourth, led his flock into the Form-room; and as the juniors went to their places Mr. Peck stood staring at the blackboard.

"Who has done this?" he snapped. "What does it mean?"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger, with a chuckle.

On the blackboard was chalked, in large letters:

"BEWARE OF PINCHERS!"

"What does this mean?" snapped Mr. Peck again. There was no answer, and the Fourth Form master frowned and rubbed it out.

Jim Dainty's brows were knitted when he came out of school. Half a dozen voices inquired in the quad: "Who pinched the cake?" Redmayne fellows were enjoying the joke, and, what was more exasperating, some of the White's fellows seemed to think it funny.

That day Friedrich von Splitz led rather a hunted existence. Neither of his study-mates came near him without bestowing a kick on the fat Rhinelander, and Fritz was feeling sore.

He did not venture to come to Study No. 10 even for tea. Fritz tea'd gloomily in Hall. After tea, having—from a safe distance—watched Dainty and Dawson walk over to the gym, Fritz scuttled along to the study in the hope of discovering that there was something left.

But, like the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard, Fritz found that the cupboard was bare. Not a crumb had been left for the hungry Deutschlander.

"Peats and prutes!" groaned Fritz.

He wondered whether Fenwick of the Fifth was out of the House. Fenwick's study was like unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Fenwick's people were rich, and allowed him much more money than was good for him.

Fritz knew—none better—that Fenwick had brought back to school a well-packed hamper, which was not likely to be exhausted for days and days. Probably he had brought back other things of a less harmless nature—there was little doubt that the sportsman of the Fifth had taken the opportunity to renew his supply of smokes.

But it was the hamper in which Fritz was interested. Thinking of that gorgeous hamper, Fritz debated in his podgy mind whether he dared venture another raid. He was thinking it out, when the door-handle turned.

Like a fat rabbit vanishing into its burrow, Fritz darted behind the screen in the corner of the study. Whether it was Dainty coming in, or Dawson, he did not want to see either of them. He

TWO MORE MAGNIFICENT YARNS FOR MARCH!

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY

Nos. 239 and 240.

"THE SHYLOCK OF GREYFRIARS!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

"TOM MERRY'S ENEMY!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Make a note of the date they are on sale:

THURSDAY, MARCH 7th

—and give your order in advance.

had had enough kicks that day to last him for a whole term.

The door opened, a fellow stepped into the study and closed the door softly and swiftly. Fritz, blinking with his saucer-eyes through one of the many rents in the screen, almost squeaked aloud in astonishment at the sight of Cyril Fenwick of the Fifth Form. Fortunately, he suppressed that surprised squeak in time.

He watched Fenwick curiously through the rent in the screen.

The Fifth Former glanced quickly round the room, obviously not suspecting that anyone was there. Then he drew a package from under his coat and stepped to the study cupboard.

Fritz' eyes bulged in astonishment.

It was a cardboard package, evidently containing pastry, that had been concealed under Fenwick's coat when he came in. Now it was deposited in the study cupboard.

With a sour grin on his face, Fenwick hastily left the study.

"Mein goodness!" murmured Fritz when he was gone.

He emerged from behind the screen, and blinked into the cupboard. His fat fingers clutched at the cardboard box. It contained six juicy jam-tarts!

Fritz' saucer-eyes danced. His capacious mouth opened, and one of the tarts went down like an oyster. Another and another followed. Why Jim Dainty's enemy had brought this welcome present to Jim Dainty's study was a mystery to Fritz. But he did not trouble to think it out. He scoffed the tarts.

"Ach!" murmured Fritz. "Tat is goot! Now I feel efter so much petter in mein bread-basket! Tat Fenwick is a beast, but he is not such a beastly beast as I have tunk! Dose tarts vas goot!"

Fritz crumpled up the empty cardboard box, and threw it on the study fire. Then he rolled out of the study, feeling a much happier Fritz. He rolled into the Junior Common-room and settled down in an armchair to frowst before the fire, his fat thoughts dwelling pleasantly on those jam-tarts till he nodded off to sleep.

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson were in the gym, swinging on the parallel bars, when Yorke of the Sixth came in. The House captain of White's called to them with a frowning brow.

"Dainty! Dawson! You're wanted! Where's Splitz?"

"Haven't seen him," answered Jim Dainty. "What's the row, Yorke?"

"Follow me and see!" repped Yorke.

The two juniors followed him to White's House. Fenwick of the Fifth was in the Housemaster's study when they arrived there. Mr. White fixed a stern glance on the juniors.

"Dainty, yesterday a cake belonging to Fenwick was found in your study, and you were punished. Now Fenwick informs me that he has missed a box of tarts. If you have taken them——"

Dainty crimsoned.

"Nothing of the sort, sir! Neither of us has been anywhere near Fenwick's study—and we wouldn't touch his tuck anyhow, and he knows it."

"The tarts are gone, sir," said Fenwick, "and after what happened yesterday——"

"Quite so," said Mr. White. "Your study is under suspicion, Dainty. You or Dawson or Splitz——"

"We never——" began Dick Dawson.

"I shall search your study, Dainty," snapped Mr. White. "Follow me!"

Jim Dainty's eyes gleamed.

"I don't believe Fenwick has lost any tarts!" he exclaimed. "It's just gammon, to make out that we pinch tuck."

"Silence! Follow me!"

Mr. White rustled away with a grim brow. Dainty and Dawson followed him to Study No. 10 in the Fourth, Fenwick bringing up the rear with a lurking grin on his face. As Dainty and Dawson had been in the gym since tea, there was no doubt in Fenwick's mind that the plunder would be discovered in

Study No. 10. Mr. White threw open the door of the study and marched in.

"Open your cupboard, Dainty!"

Jim opened the cupboard door. Fenwick, lounging in the doorway of the study, watched for the discovery to be made. The irritated Housemaster stared into the cupboard. Nothing in the nature of tuck met his eyes.

"Are they there, sir?" asked Fenwick.

"No!" rapped Mr. White.

Fenwick jumped.

"Not there?" he ejaculated. He strode into the study and stared into the cupboard. He could hardly believe his eyes. A quarter of an hour ago he had left a box of tarts there. Nothing was to be seen of them now. The end of the Fifth stared blankly.

Mr. White looked about the study, but there was no sign of tarts to be seen. X-rays would have been needed to discover those tarts, and they would have had to be turned on the fat and flabby Fritz, at that moment snoring before the fire in the Common-room.

Fenwick set his teeth.

"There is nothing here," said Mr. White. "Possibly, Splitz—— You may find Splitz, and send him to my study, Fenwick."

The Housemaster rustled away. Fenwick, scowling, followed. But he did not trouble to look for Fritz Splitz.

Dainty and Dawson, left in the study, looked at one another.

"The rotter!" breathed Dainty. "He never missed any tarts. Fritz wouldn't dare raid him again, and nobody else would. It's gammon!"

When the chums of the Fourth came out of the study a voice called along the corridor:

"Who pinched the tarts?"

It was Tommy Turker who called, with a grinning face, from his study doorway. But he left off grinning the next moment. Two pairs of hands collared him, and he was up-ended into his study. Then he was left roaring, with his head in the coal-locker.

CHAPTER 11.

Unexpected!

GINGER RAWLINSON chuckled softly.

"All serene, you mean!" he whispered.

The misty January evening had closed in over Grimslade School. Lower School fellows in both Houses were going to their studies for prep. But Ginger & Co. had other business on hand, for which prep could wait.

Ginger, kneeling on the window-sill, pushed up the sash of Fenwick's study in White's House. There was a glow from the fire within, but otherwise the study was dark. Fenwick of the Fifth was over in Redmayes House calling on his pal Hake, a fact of which the three juniors were aware.

"Buck up, old bean!" whispered Streaky Bacon.

Ginger dropped softly into the study. Streaky followed him, and then Sandy Bean. Ginger drew the curtain across the window. Then he lifted the lid of a hamper in the corner of the study.

"My giddy goloshes! What a shop-full!" he ejaculated.

All Grimslade had heard of that well-packed hamper. The term was two days old now, but there was still plenty of tuck left.

"Where are you going to shove it?" breathed Sandy.

"Behind the books in the bookcase. Get a move on!"

There was a suppressed chuckle as the Redmayes trio set to work in the glimmer of the firelight. Ginger removed books from the bookcase shelves. Sandy handed him the numerous and various articles from the hamper as Streaky fished them out.

Cakes and tins of biscuits, potted meats, boxes of preserved fruits, jars of ginger, all sorts of expensive and excellent things which Fenwick had brought from his wealthy home were packed away at the back of the shelves. Then the books were replaced, quite concealing them from sight, and the glass

doors of the bookcase closed. The lid was shut down on an empty hamper.

"Now out!" murmured Ginger. "Fenwick will miss that lot at supper, and he will raise the dickens of a row! It will be a real shriek when they're found in his own study! My dear infants, there's going to be some fun in White's House this evening. Hook it!"

The three jokers dropped, one by one, from the study window. Ginger closed down the sash and jumped after Bacon and Bean. Then they cut off through the mist to Redmayes House. Ginger & Co. grinned over their prep that evening as if they enjoyed prep.

But in Study No. 10, in White's House, the fellows were not grinning over prep. Jim Dainty's brows were knitted. Dick Dawson looked worried, and Fritz Spiltz was far from easy in his fat mind. Fritz, these days, was in a constant state of being kicked or expecting to be kicked.

It was easy for Fritz' study-mates to deal with him as he deserved. But how to deal with Fenwick of the Fifth was a deeper problem. Study No. 10 was getting an unenviable reputation. It had been searched for purloined tuck, and Jim Dainty's fixed belief was that Fenwick had not lost any tarts at all, but had invented the loss. Not knowing what Fritz had seen in the study, he did not suspect worse than that.

Now that Study No. 10 was under suspicion, the cad of the Fifth had only to say that something was missing. It was an unpleasant position, and kicking Fritz, though satisfactory as far as that went, did not make it any better.

After prep Dainty and Dawson went along the passage to the Common-room. There was a chortle as they came in, and a voice inquired:

"Who pinched the tarts?"

It was Pulley of the Fourth who asked the question. The next moment he was mixed up on the floor with Jim Dainty.

Dainty was sitting on his chest, tapping his head on the floor, to an accompaniment of wild howls from Pulley, when Yorke of the Sixth looked in.

"Dainty! Dawson! Follow me at once!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Dainty. "Is it Fenwick again?"

The juniors followed Yorke, and the whole crowd of other fellows followed on. Yorke led the way to Fenwick's study in the Fifth. Mr. White was there, with a thunderous brow. Fenwick, almost stuttering with rage, was pointing into an empty hamper.

"Everything gone!" he gasped. "Pounds and pounds worth — every single thing taken! Look!"

"Calm yourself!" snapped Mr. White. "Such a quantity of comestibles cannot have been consumed! They shall be found! Dainty, what do you know of this?"

Jim set his lips.

"I know that Fenwick hasn't lost anything!" he almost shouted. "It's all gammon to make out that our study pinches tuck!"

"Silence! I shall search your study!"

"Search Fenwick's first, then!" exclaimed Dainty. "I tell you, sir, I don't believe that he's lost anything. It's easy enough for him to say that he has, and to get us called grub-pinchers all over Grimslade. Search Fenwick's study, sir, and make sure that the things are really gone!"

"You lying little villain!" hissed Fenwick.

"That's only fair, sir!" said Yorke, as Mr. White hesitated. "For Fenwick's own sake, it had better be proved that the things are really missing, after what Dainty has said."

"Perhaps so," assented Mr. White. "Please look round the study, Yorke."

Fenwick's face, which had been red with rage, paled now. His eyes had a hunted look as the House captain proceeded to search through the study. Various receptacles were turned out, and nothing came to light. Fenwick leaned back against the bookcase.

Yorke came to that article of furniture at last.

"Stop aside, Fenwick!" he said.

Fenwick almost jumped out of the way. The bookcase doors were opened wide. Yorke began to shift the books. There was plenty of room on the shelves behind the books for a number of articles to be hidden. The Sixth Former rummaged, and uttered an exclamation. He handed out a wrapped cake.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr White. "Fenwick, is that one of the comestibles that you stated were missing from your hamper?"

Fenwick almost fell down! He fairly goggled at the cake. Jim Dainty grinned, and Dawson burst into a chuckle.

"Here's something more, sir!" said Yorke. He handed out a jar of jam, and then a jar of marmalade. Then followed a tin of biscuits, a jar of ginger, and a box of preserved fruits. Article after article was unearthed and stacked on the study table. Fenwick watched them like a fellow in a dream. Mr. White with a brow that grew more and more thunderous, and the crowd of juniors in the doorway with a series of chuckles and chortles.

Last, but not least by any means came a box of cigarettes, then another box of cigarettes, a folded racing paper, a bridge-marker, and a pack of cards.

Ginger, when he stacked the tuck behind the books, had been blissfully unaware that the bookcase was already in use as a place of concealment.

Mr. White gasped. He almost gurgled.

"Fenwick! The—the comestibles that you alleged to have been taken from your study are here! But that is a much less serious matter than what now comes to my knowledge. Cigarettes — playing-cards — racing papers! Fenwick, I shall take these articles immediately to Dr. Sparshott! You will accompany me! You are a young rascal, sir! You are a disgrace to the House!" Billy White fairly boomed "Dainty! Dawson! You may go. Fenwick, come with me at once!"

The sportsman of the Fifth almost tottered after his indignant Housemaster. And a roar of laughter followed him as he went.

* * * * *

They never "sacked" a man at Grimslade. Fenwick of the Fifth almost wished that they did when Sammy Sparshott got to work with the cane. Sammy laid it on as if he had been trained as a carpet-beater.

Sammy was willing to believe that Fenwick had not hidden the tuck. No doubt some junior, with a misdirected sense of humour, had done that. But the Fifth Form sportsman had to own up to the cigarettes, the racing paper, and the playing-cards. And when Sammy started in with the cane, the hapless sportsman wondered whether he was ever going to leave off.

No more was heard of "grub-pinching" in White's House. Fenwick was tired of trouble with Study No. 10.

FUNNY FISH

HAVE you ever seen a fish that will bounce? You would have if you lived in Malay and went fishing in the sea there. It is called the puffer-fish, and when hauled out of the water it inflates its body with air so as to become round and grotesque. Its amazing appearance is quite terrifying, which is the reason for the puffing-out. The other fish which prey on the puffer take fright at its extraordinary shape, and promptly leave it alone.

Puffer-fish blow out their bodies by inhaling air, which expands their bodies in just the same way as a bicycle tyre is blown up. When they have blown themselves up you can bounce them on the ground just like a ball.

Fish that Climb Trees!

Malay is not so very far from Australia, the home of another of the world's queerest fish. It climbs trees!

The chap who invented the saying about "fish out of water" ought to see these tree-climbers in action! They have lungs and gills which can thrive on ordinary air, as well as on the air dissolved in water which ordinary fish use. They travel about on land by means of their flippers, or fins, which they use like legs, and they are so proficient in this quaint means of locomotion that they even climb trees in search of insects—hence their name.

Australia is also the home of the mud-fish. "Down under" most streams and lakes dry up during the hot season, and the fish in them would ordinarily perish. But the mud-fish has learned to hide itself in a little mud-burrow, in which it lies snug and safe until the rains come and turn its erstwhile dry home back into a running stream or well-filled lake.

The Devil Fish!

Mud-fish are so busy dodging the dry seasons that they never have much time for growing, but the fish that are unhindered in the sea sometimes grow to an amazing size. You know, of course, about hundred-ton whales, which are the biggest living creatures in the world, but the lesser-known deep sea denizens, if not so big as whales, are at least giants, and because of their lesser reputations, are much more terrifying. There is the devil-fish, for instance, which lives in tropic seas, and thoroughly lives up to its name in the hideousness of its appearance.

Sporting anglers are always keen on catching devil-fish with rod and line, for these fish sometimes run to several tons weight, and landing them is a terrific tussle. One which was brought ashore and weighed tipped the scales at six tons, and which carted away in a lorry—the biggest available—was so huge that its flesh dangled over the sides.

Rammed a Gunboat!

Swordfish are also much sought after by the big-game hunters of the seas. It's thrilling sport catching them, for a swordfish which turns round on an angler's boat may easily smash it to matchwood. A swordfish has been known to drive its "spike" through half-an-inch of copper plating and one inch of stout teak in a river gunboat.

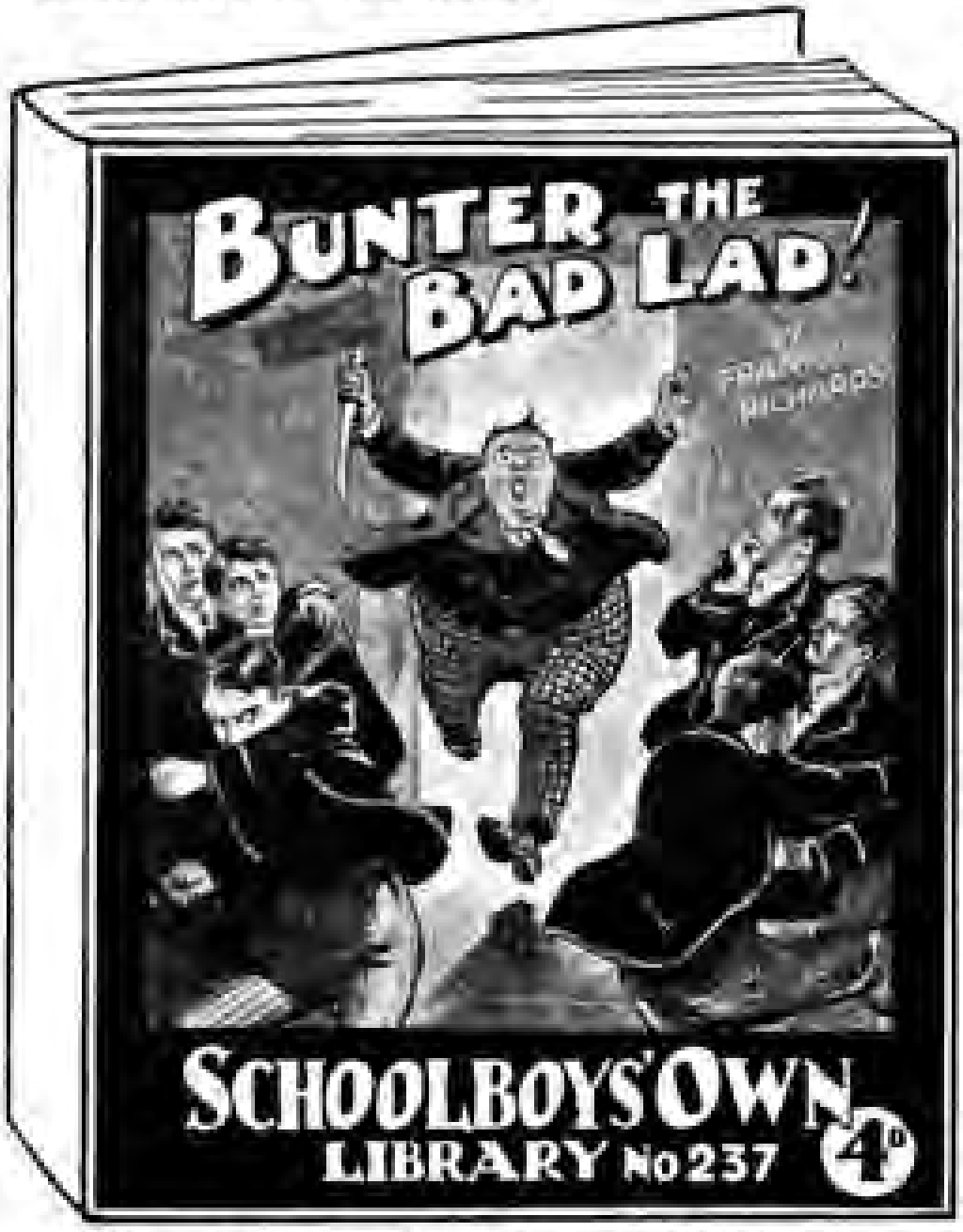
Even more amazing is the case of the swordfish which ran full-tilt into a three-ton motor-boat, holed it so badly that it sank, and still went on as if nothing had happened. That occurred in Florida Bay, off the U.S. coast, and was witnessed by several onlookers.

Florida Bay is also the home of the angler-fish, as well as of human anglers. This fish has a phosphorescent spike on its head, and the glow of this "bait" attracts other fish, which are swiftly snapped up by the deep-sea funny angler. A queer fish with a vengeance, that.

J.A.

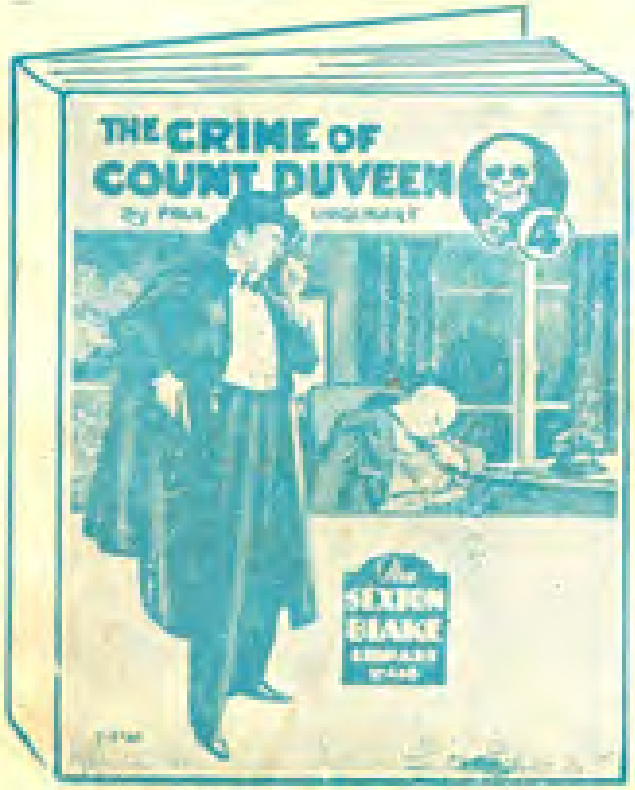
WANT A GOOD LAUGH? THEN READ ALL ABOUT THE LATEST ADVENTURES OF BILLY BUNTER, THE FATTEST AND FUNNIEST SCHOOLBOY IN THE WORLD!

ASK FOR THIS GREAT COMPANION NUMBER TO-DAY!



When Billy Bunter gets one of his weird and wonderful brainwaves it generally means trouble—for W.G.B.! But read what happens when he gets a brain-storm—it's a scream! You'll simply revel in the sparkling long complete yarn of Bunter's comic capers. Get it to-day!

On Sale Now - - - - Price 4d.



NOW ON SALE

Price 4d. per Volume

(10c. in Canada).

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY

FOUR NEW NUMBERS JUST ISSUED!

No. 465. THE TITHE WAR MYSTERY.
A gripping story of sinister plotting and brilliant detective work.
By GILBERT CHESTER.

No. 466. THE SECRET OF SMUGGLERS' COVE.
A sensational narrative of thrills and startling adventure on the South Coast.
By REX HARDINGE.

No. 467. THE VANISHED MILLION.
A clever novel of international intrigue, featuring GRANITE GRANT and MLLE. JULIE, Secret Service Agents.
By PIERRE QUIROULE.

No. 468. THE CRIME OF COUNT DUVEEN.
An amazing drama of baffling mystery.
By PAUL URQUHART.

DON'T DELAY! GET THEM TO-DAY!

And Don't Forget This Month's

BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY

No. 465. THE EARTHQUAKE-MAKER.
An Amazing Yarn of the World in Danger—starring CAPTAIN JUSTICE.
By MURRAY ROBERTS.

No. 466. THE WHITE INDIAN.
A Thrilling Yarn of Red Indians on the Warpath.
By JOHN BREARLEY.

No. 467. THE SMASHER.
A Knock-Out Story of the Boxing Ring.
By JOHN HUNTER.

No. 468. LOYAL TO KING CHARLES.
A Stirring Story of Roundheads and Cavaliers.
By ALFRED ARMITAGE.

Printed in Great Britain and published on the first Thursday in each month by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Subscription Rates: Inland and Abroad, 4s. per annum. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Limited; and for South Africa, Central News Agency, Limited.