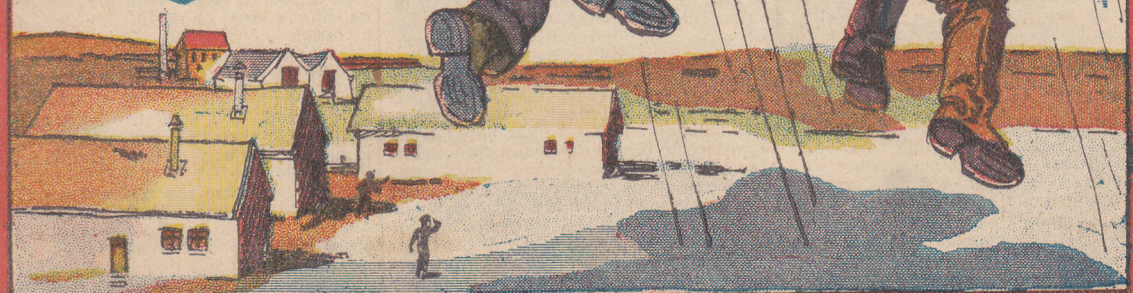


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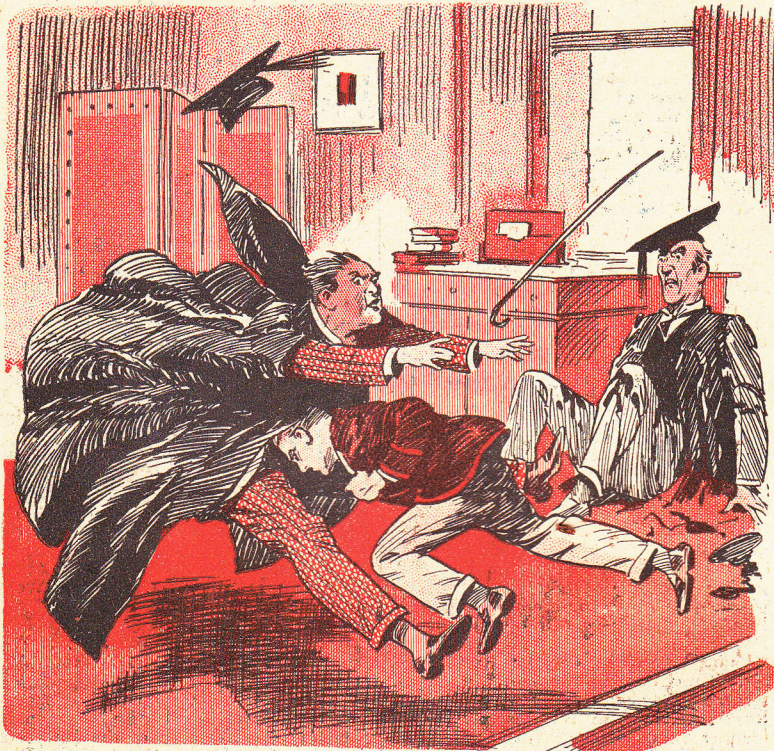
The RANGER

2^d

**“BALDY’S
ANGELS”**
*Thrilling
Flying
Yarn*
INSIDE!



The Fourth Form at GRIMSLADE



LAUGHS, THRILLS AND PERILOUS ADVENTURES ARE ALL TO BE FOUND IN THIS GRAND STORY, by famous FRANK RICHARDS.

before "Sammy" knew what was a-penning, he was butted! A prolonged escaped the Head of Grimslade, like escaping from a punctured tyre, an staggered back, the birch dropping his hand. Jim Dainty reeled, for moment, from the shock; but only moment. The next, he was spring for the window, and he went through with a headlong leap.

"Ach! Mein gootness!" came agonised yell from a fat junior under window; and Fritz Splitz went sprawling with Jim sprawling over him. Fritz come round to the window, to give eat the expected "bellowing" of the flog junior, and Jim had fairly landed on him. "Ach! I am purst like a pladder! I proken to pits! I have no more breff!"

Jim Dainty staggered up. He grasped the sprawling Rhinelander by the collar, and dragged him to his feet gurgling and spluttering.

"You fat fool! Show me the way out of this place!" he hissed in Fritz's ear. "Quick—before they're after me!"

"But, mein goot Tainty—" gurgled Fritz.

"Quick, you dummy! I want a bun over the wall—quick!"

"Ach! I geeps on telling you tat have no more to breff—Himmel! Tat you kiosk me not!" yelled Fritz. "I vil gum—I vill gum mit pleasure—I vil punk you over to vall—ach—tat you kiosk me no more on mein trousers!"

"Buck up!"

Jim Dainty raced away across the quad, dragging the German junior. The gates were closed, and the walls were high. But with help from below, he could climb the school wall; and once in the road, he was ready to trust to his heels. In the Head's study, "Sammy" Sparshott was still spluttering; but Mr. White was staring from the window and shouting. Heedless of him, or of the staring fellows in the quad, Jim Dainty raced on, with the panting, unwilling Fritz, and reached the wall.

"Stop him!" Mr. White was shouting. "Rawlinson—Bacon—Bean—seize that boy, Dainty!"

But Ginger & Co. affected not to hear. The new fellow was up against it, and they were the fellows to give him a sporting chance.

"Quick!" panted Dainty.

"Ach! I have no more to breff—Mein gootness! Do not pang mein prains out on tat vall!" shrieked Fritz; "I will help you—up you go—mein gootness!"

In hot haste, the German junior bunked Dainty up the wall. Even so, it was not easy to climb; but Jim was light and active, and he was desperate. He clutched the coping, and held on, Fritz gasping below. Trafford, of the Sixth, came racing up.

"Hold him, Splitz!" he yelled as he came.

"Mein gootness!"

Fritz dared not disobey the prefect! He clutched at Dainty's ankles, as they were whisking up the wall, and caught hold of one of them.

"Ach! Tat you gums pack mit you—yaroooooh!" roared Fritz, as Jim kicked with his free foot. His boot clumped on a thick German head, and Fritz Splitz let go his hold and staggered back, clasp ing both fat hands to the spot where the boot had landed.

Jim dragged himself fiercely up the wall. Trafford was below him a moment later,

"THE WORST BOY AT GRIMSLADE" SUMS UP JIM DAINTY, THE NEW BOY. HE DOESN'T CARE A HANG FOR PREFECTS, MASTERS, OR THE HEAD. ALL HE WANTS IS TO BE SENT HOME. BUT THERE'S GOOD IN THE "WORST BOY AT GRIMSLADE," AS DR. SAMMY SPARSHOTT, THE HEAD, DISCOVERS WHEN HE IS FACE TO FACE WITH DEATH!

Jim Dainty Bolts!

HERE he is!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Jim Dainty, the new boy at Grimslade School, stared round defiantly at the grinning crowd of Grimslade fellows.

Fellows of both Houses, Redmayes' and White's, were gathered in a buzzing crowd, and every eye was turned on Jim Dainty as he came along with his Housemaster's hand on his shoulder.

Mr. White held the rebel of Grimslade firmly. He was taking him to his headmaster for a flogging; and twice or thrice, on the way, Dainty had striven to tear himself loose and scud for it. "Sammy" Sparshott, Head of Grimslade, was waiting for him in his study, with his stoutest birch ready on the table. But Jim Dainty was not flogged yet; and he was not going to be flogged if he could help it.

"Here is tat Tainty!" grinned Fritz Splitz, the German junior. "I tink that we soon hear him pellowing like a pull, isn't it?"

"Sammy's going to make him sit up," remarked Ginger Rawlinson. "I could

see it in his jolly old eye! Well, he's asked for it."

Jim Dainty was led in at the big doorway, and disappeared from the sight of the Grimsladers. Still with a firm grip on his shoulder, Mr. White led him to the headmaster's study.

With a sulky and defiant face, Jim stood before the young Head of Grimslade, and the Housemaster released him—standing by the door, however, in case the reckless rebel should attempt to bolt.

"Sammy" Sparshott gave the new junior a genial nod. He picked up the birch, and pointed to the study table with it.

"I'm sorry for this, Dainty," he said cheerfully. "I've never had to flog a new boy before. We've had troublesome lads here—but never such a reckless young rascal as you! You are rather a record, Dainty! You are going to get a record flogging. It will do you good—take my word for that! Now, bend over the table."

Jim eyed him savagely. "I'm not going to be flogged!" he said, between his teeth. "I'm not going to stay in this rotten school. I'm going to get away, somehow!"

"I think not," said Dr. Sparshott. "Will you bend over that table, Dainty?"

"No, I won't!"

"Mr. White, will you take Dainty, and bend him over the table?"

"Certainly I will," said the Housemaster of White's, with a grim look at the latest addition to his House.

He stepped towards Dainty. The Head was still smiling genially; but his cool, clear-cut face was very determined. Jim cast a fierce glance round him. The Housemaster was between him and the door—but the window overlooking the quad was open. Mr. White's hand was almost upon him, when the new junior suddenly grasped the inkstand from the table, and hurled it. There was a gasp from Mr. White, as it crashed on his waistcoat, and he sat down suddenly on the floor of the Head's study.

Dr. Sparshott made a stride at the junior. Instead of seeking to elude him, Jim lowered his head, and rushed; and

clutching—but he missed by inches. The junior sat astride of the wall panting, and the captain of Grimslade glared up at him.

"Come down!" he gasped.

"Rats to you!"

Trafford made a spring, and caught the top of the wall with his fingers. A moment more, and he would have dragged himself up, and collared the escaping junior. A fist that seemed like a lump of iron crashed on his nose, and the captain of Grimslade lost his hold and dropped back. A fiendish yell from Fritz Splitz told what he had dropped on.

Jim did not give him a glance. He swung himself over the wall, and dropped on the outer side into the road. He was outside the walls of Grimslade School at last—with the wide world before him. And so long as he had a kick left, he was not going to be recaptured.

A Hot Chase!

JIM DAINTY, panting, stared up the road towards the village of Middle-moor. He knew that there would be swift pursuit; the village was a mile away, and capture was certain before he could get a train.

Across the road was a fence, beyond it the moors that stretched away to Grimslade Pike. Far away, the smoke of the manufacturing town of Blackslade blurred the blue sky. His only chance seemed to be to take to the moors; and he was about to scud across the road, when a motor-bike with a side-car came buzzing from the village.

On the side-car was painted the name and style of Mr. Links, the village grocer; and it was Bobby Links, the grocer's son, who was on the bike, with goods to deliver at the school. He stared at Jim Dainty, as he slowed down, and stopped at the tradesmen's gate farther on; and as he dismounted, Jim instantly made up his mind.

Bobby Links was ringing the bell at the tradesmen's gate when he suddenly became aware of the fact that the school-boy had rushed along and leaped into the saddle he had vacated, and that the motor-bike was re-starting after a very brief interval.

"Hi!" roared the grocer. "Hi! What's tha' dooin with my bike?"

Jim did not trouble to answer. Besides, there was no need of an answer; it was plain enough what he was doing with the bike. He was letting it out, and whizzing away along the road towards distant Blackslade, as fast as the jigger would go.

Bobby Links' eyes almost bulged from his head, as he watched the truant school-boy vanishing into the dusty distance, with the motor-bike, the side-car, and the cargo of goods. Zip! zip! zip! went the bike, the sound dying away on the moor.

The great gates of Grimslade were open now. Mr. White, streaming ink, and Sammy Sparshott, still gasping, Trafford and Yorke, and a dozen other fellows, poured out into the road. Dr. Sparshott shouted to the grocer.

"Links! Have you seen a boy—"

"Aye, that I have," gasped Bobby. "He's pinched my bike!" He pointed along the road, where the bike and side-car were vanishing.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Dr. Sparshott. "Mr. White, this new boy in your House is quite a card! You may leave him in my hands."

Three minutes later, Dr. Sparshott was wheeling his motor-bike from the garage, and it roared to life on the road. A crowd of Grimsladers stood staring after him, buzzing with excitement, as he shot away in pursuit of the truant.

"Sammy will get him!" grinned Ginger Rawlinson. "Sammy's bagged pots and things on that stink-bike! But—my word!—jevver hear of a man asking for it like that new chap, what?"

"Never!" chuckled Streaky Bacon.

"Hardly ever!" grinned Sandy Bean.

"Ach! I hopes tat Sammy will giff him a colossal peating!" wailed Fritz Splitz. "Mein ponies are broken, and all te breff is knock out of mein poddy! Tat Tainty almost pang out mein prains!

But tat poy is blucky," added Fritz. "I tink that he is almost as blucky as a Cherman!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bell for school called in the Grimslade crowd. But a good many thoughts wandered from lessons, to the chase that was going on across the moors.

It was a hot chase. For two or three miles, Jim Dainty flattered himself that he was clear of Grimslade. Borrowing the grocer's bike had been rather a high-handed act, as even the wilful, rebellious Dainty admitted; but it had been a case of any port in a storm. He meant to send it back when he reached Blackslade, with a note and a tip enclosed, which he hoped would make matters right.

At the busy town there were plenty of trains; and once in a train he was safe from pursuit. His further plans were vague—only to keep away from Grimslade and to return home after his father had gone back to Burma. But he was not in a train yet—and it was just as well that he had not wasted time on elaborating further plans; for he became aware of a motor-bike that was roaring behind him, and a glance back showed him Sammy Sparshott in full chase, and overhauling him at every turn of the wheels.

Dainty panted. He let out the bike to a reckless speed, coaxing every ounce out of it; but the pursuer drew nearer and nearer. The side-car with its load was a handicap. On his own bike, which

had been left at home, he might have had a chance of beating Sammy Sparshott—though a slim one. On the grocer's bike with its load there was no chance. Stopping to get rid of the side-car meant capture. Jim roared on, desperately, and behind him roared the headmaster of Grimslade, closer and closer.

Ahead of him, metals ran across the road; and a great gate was swinging out.

He caught his breath.

It was a level crossing; and in the distance, where the railway crossed the moor, the steam of a train volumned against the sky. The gates were closing across the road—and to stop meant the end of the chase; long before the train was past, and the gates reopened, the grasp of Sammy Sparshott would be upon him.

He set his teeth and roared on.

He heard a shout behind—a shout of anger mingled with alarm. He drove on unheeding.

Had he time?

The motor-bike and side-car rocked across the metals. The gates seemed to be leaping at him. He felt a jar—but by the skin of his teeth, as it were, he was through. There was a crash as the gates locked behind him, fairly in the face of Sammy Sparshott, who braked to a standstill barely in time.

Jim had escaped by inches—but he was through, and roaring onward, while the shut gates kept back his pursuer.



Half clambering, half stithering, Jim Dainty went down the almost perpendicular side of the shaft, and there he hung, his arms cracking under the strain of his weight. And now the man hidden in darkness below him knew that he was coming, for his voice floated up: "Boy! You are mad! Go back—go back!"

The Old Shaft on the Moor!

"HANG it!"

Bike and side-car rocked to the roadside, and Jim Dainty leaped from the saddle. Two miles from the level crossing the petrol had given out. He had not thought of that; but had he thought of it there was no help.

Far in the distance behind, Dr. Sparshott was coming on, going all out to make up for the loss of time at the level crossing. Jim would have had a chance, had not his mount failed him; but it had conked out, and that was that!

He flung himself to the ground, and stared back with desperate eyes. He could not see his pursuer; but he could hear the roar of the motor-bike on the wind. Sammy Sparshott was coming on fast, and Dainty clenched his hands. He would not be taken back—not while he could resist! But once that muscular grip closed on him, he could not resist—he had no chance with the athlete who had carried him at arm's length across the quad on the day of his arrival at Grimslade.

Beside the road rose the rugged moor, thick with grass and gorse and clumps of hawthorn, stretching away towards the distant Pike. Blackslade was still far away—he had no chance of reaching Blackslade. Hand-to-hand with Sammy Sparshott he had no chance, but it would not be easy for the schoolmaster to run him down on the wild moor. Jim left the road and started to run.

The ground rose under his feet, higher and higher towards the Pike that crowned the rugged fells against the sky. It was hard going; but Jim was strong and active, and his determination was hard as steel.

Looking back from the moor, high up above the road, he saw his pursuer come sweeping up, to halt beside the abandoned grocer's bike. With bitter eyes, he saw Dr. Sparshott dismount and stand staring at the moor in search of him—saw the smile that lit his face as he picked up Jim's figure against the sky.

Leaving his machine by the roadside, Dr. Sparshott came striding up the rugged moor, and Jim turned to run again. Behind him, on the wind, he heard a shout.

"Dainty! Stop!"

He laughed savagely.

"Dainty!" From the distance the powerful voice of Sammy Sparshott came faint but clear. "Boy! Stop! You are on dangerous ground—there are old pits on the hillside—take care, boy, take care!"

Dainty ran on.

His resolution was fixed; he would not be taken. If there was danger, he would chance it—as he had chanced it already. Yet somehow, determined as he was to escape, never to see the walls of Grimslade again, never to come under the hands of Sammy Sparshott, he realised that he did not dislike this man who was pursuing him so relentlessly.

His own determination, perhaps, made him able to appreciate the same quality in another. And he knew, from the ring in the headmaster's voice, that Sammy Sparshott was anxious for him—anxious for his safety. It was not anger, but anxiety, that had rung in his voice as he shouted to the fugitive. The man was hard as steel, but he had a kind heart; and it was his duty that he was doing—dogged and obstinate as he was, Jim was forced to realise that.

But he ran on, winding among gorse and hawthorns, tireless, exhilarated by the keen air of the glorious Yorkshire moor. Right or wrong, he was up against Sammy Sparshott, and he was going to beat him if he could.

A mile from the road there was deep solitude; he might have fancied himself on some vast prairie in a distant land. Even the grazing cattle were not to be seen—no living thing met the eye, no sound came to the ear, save the murmur of the wind in the gorse.

Far away the dark blur of smoke over Blackslade told of human habitations;

that was all. Once or twice a shouting voice reached him from behind, but he was keeping the ground he had gained; and if the athletic headmaster ran faster than the active schoolboy, he lost ground continually as Jim dodged from sight among the bushes and gorse.

A broken fence, trailing amid thick, rank grass, caught Jim's eye—he was in the act of leaping over it when into his mind there flashed the warning Sammy Sparshott had shouted, and he dragged himself back in time.

Panting, he leaned over the broken paling and looked beyond, and across the high, thick grass he discerned a black gap in the earth, yards wide, of impenetrable depth. His heart leaped and throbbed. Had he jumped the fence, he would have gone headlong into that old, abandoned shaft—shooting down into the depths of darkness, to lie smashed at the bottom. For the moment the colour wavered in his face, with the realisation of his fearfully narrow escape.

He backed from the perilous verge, panting.

Lower down the slope of the moor he sighted, as he looked round, the head of Sammy Sparshott, bursting through the gorse not fifty yards away. He ran round the edge of the old pit and bolted on, running hard. But he had lost ground, and the schoolmaster was closer now. He heard Dr. Sparshott shout.

"Stop! You young rascal! Stop!"

"Rats!" yelled back Jim Dainty.

He had circled the old pit, hidden by the tall, rank grass and the bushes that clustered and clambered over the crumbling edges. Beyond it he scudded on, and he grinned as he heard a crash behind him, not doubting that the pursuer had stumbled and fallen. The grin was on his face as he stared back, but it died away—and he halted, swung round, and stared again.

Dr. Sparshott, whose hat had been bobbing among the bushes, was no longer to be seen. Neither was he to be heard—there was no rustling or swaying in the gorse, no shouting voice. Jim stared blankly. It seemed as if the wild moor had opened and swallowed up his pursuer from sight.

Breathing in gulps, he stood and stared. He was no longer pursued—but where was Sammy Sparshott?

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

His face, crimson with exertion, whitened as he realised the truth. The crash he had heard behind him had not been a stumble and a fall in the grass. He stared back in terror at the abandoned shaft—a dark gap in the moor.

He knew now!

He had circled the old shaft, never dreaming that his pursuer would not do the same. But Sammy Sparshott had cut straight towards him—ignorant of the death-trap that lay in his path. He had not, like Jim, seen the danger in time. His warning had saved Jim Dainty, but it had not saved himself. He had not seen the old pit as he came bursting through high grass and bush, and he had gone crashing over the verge. The crash that Jim had heard had been caused by his fall into the shaft, and the breaking away of the crumbling edge under his fall.

Jim stood quite still.

His heart almost missed a beat.

The moor lay silent, lifeless, round him. He was alone—unpursued—his pursuer lay at the bottom of the pit! He knew it, and the horror of it drove the colour from his face. The way of escape was open to him, but he was not thinking of that now. He was thinking of the man who had hurtled down to death in the darkness of the pit.

Slowly, with scarcely-beating heart, Jim Dainty crept back to the pit and looked across it.

On the further side, where Dr. Sparshott had fallen in, he could see the broken grass, the torn bushes, the gap in the crumbling edge, where a mass of earth and roots had gone down with the fallen man. Slowly, his face like chalk, he circled the

pit again and reached the spot where Sammy Sparshott had gone in.

It was dangerous enough to approach the broken edge, but he cared nothing for that. He fell on his hands and knees, crawled to the verge, and stared down. For some distance he could see down into the old shaft, but beyond that the irregular sides were lost in darkness. Of the headmaster of Grimslade he could see nothing—Sammy Sparshott, dead or alive, lay beyond the range of vision, deep in the shadowy pit.

He listened with straining ears. A cry, even a groan, would have been music to his ears in those terrible moments. But there was no sound. The silence lay on him like lead.

A long minute passed—another! He stared into the darkness below and listened. Faintly, from far down, came a sound—it was a splash of water! There was water at the bottom of the old shaft—an accumulation of rain. And the splash meant that there was a movement—that it was a living man, not a dead man, who lay at the bottom of the shaft, and Jim Dainty almost sobbed with relief.

Following the splash came another and another, and then a faint sound—a groan! And then, echoing faintly, eerily, strangely muffled, from the depths of the earth, a calling voice:

"Help!"

Neck or Nothing!

JIM DAINTY scrambled to his feet and stared round him over the lonely moor with almost despairing eyes.

Help? There was no help! The old shaft was two miles from the road—a thin, winding ribbon of white in the far distance. On the other side the moor rose to wild fells, towards the towering Pike. To run for help—leaving the man at the bottom of the pit—sinking to death in the water—impossible! To clamber down—to share his fate—it was madness.

Madness as it was, or seemed, that was what Jim Dainty decided on. He had brought the headmaster of Grimslade into this fearful peril, and he would save him or take his chance.

With set teeth, cool and clearheaded, Jim crept to the verge of the pit again. All round it the earth crumbled; grass grew rank and trailing bushes hung over, with fragments of a fence that had long rotted away in wind and weather.

With a steady eye he scanned it. For a bold climber there was hand-hold, foot-hold, on the rough and irregular sides—here and there a jutting projection, here and there a cavity. If it was possible to clamber down, Jim Dainty could do it—and possible or not, he was going to try.

A splash echoed from below; he wondered whether "Sammy" had tried to climb, and fallen back in the water. Coolly, with unshaken nerve, the boy picked out the most favourable spot for climbing, grasped the bushes that trailed down, and swung himself over the verge.

A shower of earth and loosened stones went shooting down; splash on splash replied from the depths. He did not heed—he hardly heard. Below the trailing bush he grasped at the sides of the pit—he dug his hands into hollows, he squeezed himself against juts, he slipped and caught again, slipped again, and slid—and again caught hold, and half-clambering half-slithering, he went down the almost perpendicular side of the old shaft.

Down and down, swiftly, earth and stones falling round him as he descended, aching with exertion, streaming with perspiration, but with determination unshaken. The opening of the pit narrowed above him to a circle of blue sky—musty smells and deep shadows were round him.

Down and down, till at length he found that below him was smooth surface, with no hold for a fly, and he hung by his hands, his feet kicking and vainly seeking a hold under him—his arms cracking under the strain of his weight. And now the man hidden in darkness

below knew that he was coming, for his voice floated up:

"Boy! You are mad! Go back—go back!"

Jim Dainty heard, but he did not heed. For a long moment he hung there, and then, finding no further hold, he let go and slid.

Splash!

A flashing second and then he was up to his neck in foul water. Water splashed over his face, over his head, and he struggled and gasped. But he kept his footing and peered round him in the darkness. Black as the bottom of the pit had looked from above, there was a dim twilight.

A couple of yards from him a white face glimmered in the gloom—a face that was white but calm and steady. With one hand on the muddy wall, the water washing round his neck, Jim Dainty stared at the headmaster of Grimslade.

Sammy Sparshott's shoulders were above the water as he leaned on the wall of the pit. But even as Jim looked at him his chin sank to the level of the pool and dipped under. With an effort that contracted his face with pain he dragged himself up again. Jim splashed towards him and grasped him as he was sinking once more. Dr. Sparshott leaned on his shoulder.

"You're hurt, sir?" breathed Jim.

"My leg's hurt," said the Head of Grimslade, quietly. "It twisted as I fell! I shall not be able to keep up much longer. But you—you foolish, reckless boy, you have thrown away your life."

There was no anger in his voice or look. Sammy Sparshott was within measured distance of death, but he was not thinking of the boy's rebellious recklessness that had placed him in this fearful peril—he was thinking of the boy's own peril.

"Lean on me, sir!" muttered Jim.

"You should not have come down! There is no help—no possibility of help for—"

"I know! That's why I came."

"You young rascal!" said Dr. Sparshott.

He leaned heavily on the boy's shoulder. His right leg was crumpled under him, helpless. The other slipped and sank in the deep, thick mud at the bottom of the pool. The wall gave him no hold, and but for the support of the rebel of Grimslade, the life of Sammy Sparshott might have been counted in minutes. Jim Dainty, strong and sturdy, standing like a rock to take his weight, held him back from death.

Five minutes later he would have found only a dead man at the bottom of the old shaft. And he was glad—glad that he had come to share the fate of the man whose life he had endangered, though he could not doubt that the outcome must be death for two instead of one. Strong as he was, brave as he was, he knew that he could not stand the strain long—his own feet were slipping and sinking in the soft mud, as the headmaster's weight bore on him.

No help! No cry would be heard on the lonely moor—there was no help! But his courage did not falter.

"I'm sorry, sir," breathed Jim. "It's my fault—all my fault! If—if we get out of this, sir, I'll prove that I'm sorry."

"I believe you!" said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "But we shall not get out of this, Dainty—there is no chance for me. There is a chance for you, if you try to climb out at once, while I have still strength to help you up till you get a hold."

"And leave you?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Never!"

"I order you, boy, as your headmaster!" snapped Sammy Sparshott.

Something like the old defiant grin came over Jim's face.

"If we get back to Grimslade, sir, I'll obey every order you give me. But I won't obey that order."

Standing steady, Jim groped in his pocket, under the stagnant water. He had an electric torch there. He found it and drew it out, and flashed on the light. The bright beam picked up the glimmering surface of the foul water, the steep walls of the pit, dispelling the darkness where it

fell. Jim's eyes followed the beam as he circled it round—seeking, searching for some glimpse of hope, of escape.

He gave a sudden cry.

"Look!"

Across the pit, on the further side, the water washed over a stack of rubble and earth that had fallen from above, and piled up against the side of the pit. Here and there tangled roots showed over the water. In that one spot, over the rubble-heap, the water was shallow—a few inches.

Sammy Sparshott understood; there was no need of words. Half-swimming, splashing, supported by the rebel of Grimslade, Sammy Sparshott struggled across the deep pool, dragging his helpless leg, shutting his teeth to keep back a sound of pain. Both went under, again and again, before they got across, till at last, spent and exhausted, they crawled into the shallow water on the rubble heap.

Dr. Sparshott sank down there, with the water washing round his shoulders, leaning back against the side of the pit—utterly exhausted, breathing almost in sobs, but safe now from sinking to death in the pool. And Jim Dainty, spent, slumped down beside him, to wait for his strength to return.

The Last Chance!

JIM struggled to his feet at last.

The chill of the water was like ice. He was weary to the bone, but there was death in delay. Somehow, anyhow, help must be got, and Sammy Sparshott was helpless. He could remain where he was, safe till help came—if it could come. But it could not come unless Jim Dainty could clamber out of that pit of death.

GIFT BOOKS.

Our recent huge coupon-collecting scheme, in which many thousands of Fine Gift Books were offered, proved a tremendous success, and as a result readers all over the country are now enjoying the topping books they have won.

We congratulate them on the many magnificent totals of points scored—prizes were awarded for totals ranging from 32,700, sent by H. Leggetter, of Luton, down to 3,000—and we only regret that it is not possible to give all their names in the paper. All prizes for Home readers were, however, sent off promptly, and also personal letters from the Editor to all unsuccessful entrants.

The remaining 500 of the Prize Books offered are, of course, being reserved for Overseas readers—for whom there is a later closing date—and these will be awarded and sent as soon as possible after that date.

To and fro Jim flashed the torch, only steep walls meeting his despairing eyes. But at last he made the attempt, digging his hands into the earth for a hold, and as the light was shut off, Dr. Sparshott saw him no more, and could only listen to the scraping and rustling and panting as the schoolboy climbed.

Splash!

Dr. Sparshott groaned. The boy had fallen, splashing again headlong into the pool.

But again, from the dimness, came the sound of scraping, of grasping, of panting breath, of falling earth and stones. The boy was climbing again—beaten once, but indomitable.

Jim's face was set, his teeth shut hard; his lips drawn tight. His arms ached and ached with the strain. But the worst of it was over now, and he found the upper wall less steep—inches by inch, foot by foot, he climbed, the patch of blue sky above drawing closer and closer, till at last he could feel the wind of the moor on his burning face, and his stretching hands pulled him over the edge of the shaft.

The sunset was red on Grimslade Moor. For long, long minutes Jim Dainty lay on his face in the grass, unable to stir a finger, his breath coming and going in sobs. But he lifted his head at last, glancing dully at his torn and bleeding hands. He dragged himself to his feet,

reeling with exhaustion, and started towards the road, swaying from side to side as he went—only a desperate determination keeping him on his feet.

Miles—miles of rugged moor lay between him and the road, but there was help—the only chance of help! He had to keep going if the life of the man he had left at the bottom of the shaft was to be saved.

Hours—or centuries—seemed to have passed before he came staggering down the rugged bank into the road, and then he heard a shout. There were figures on the road—he could see Mr. White and Mr. Redmayes, the two Housemasters of Grimslade, standing by the motor-bike Sammy Sparshott had left at the roadside. There were others—Trafford of the Sixth, and Yorke, and others.

"Dainty!" Mr. White's hand dropped on his shoulder. He stared sternly at the boy, but his face was little more than a blur to Jim's dizzy eyes. "Dainty—" "The headmaster!" Jim Dainty contrived to speak in a cracked and husky whisper. "In the old shaft—"

"What?"

"At the bottom of the old shaft—save him!"

And then darkness seemed to close on Jim Dainty, and he staggered and would have fallen but for the Housemaster's grasp.

"Mein goot Tainty!"

Jim opened his eyes dizzily. The voice of Fritz Splitz came to him like a voice in a dream.

"Ach! You vakes up mit yourself, ain't it?" said Fritz, grinning. "Py gootness, mein goot Tainty, I have tunk tat I likes to give you a pig peating and make you pellow like a pull, but I vill not give you tat peating, Tainty, after you have been so blucky pefore, for I tinks that you are almost as blucky as a Cherman."

Jim sat up and stared. He was in his bed in the dormitory in White's House at Grimslade. Fritz Splitz sat by the bedside, watching him, and sucking toffee while he watched.

"Dr. Sparshott—?" gasped Jim. His thoughts flew at once to the man in the abandoned shaft.

"Tat Sammy, he is all right," said Fritz, still sucking toffee. "Tey get him out mit ropes and pring him in."

There was a footstep, and Jim Dainty stared round. The tall figure of Sammy Sparshott came towards the bed, limping; but there was a smile on his face as he looked down at the rebel of Grimslade. Jim stared up at him.

"You've come to, Dainty! You've been through it, my boy—hard! You've played the fool, Dainty—"

"I know!" breathed Jim.

"But you've made amends. We value pluck at Grimslade," said Sammy Sparshott cheerfully. "In my study to-day, Dainty, you told me that you weren't going to be flogged—"

"I was a cheeky ass!" muttered Jim.

Sammy Sparshott gave him a look—a searching look. Then he smiled again.

"You were!" he agreed. "But as it happens, Dainty, you were right—you are not going to be flogged! What you have done since then has washed out all offences, and"—the Head's eyes twinkled—"I don't think you loathe me so much as you did, what?"

Jim could only stammer.

"You've given me more trouble," said Sammy Sparshott, "than any boy that ever came to Grimslade. I'm going to forget all about it. So are you! We're going to be friends, Dainty. You're going to be a credit to the school."

With a cheery grin Sammy Sparshott held out his hand, and Jim took it in silence. But his look told enough, and Sammy looked very satisfied as he limped out of the dormitory.

(Slowly Jim Dainty is being tamed—but for all that he is still the "worst boy at Grimslade." You'll enjoy next Saturday's magnificent school yarn by famous Frank Richards. Order your RANGER in advance, buddies.)