

6
GRAND FREE GIFTS STARTING NEXT WEEK!

SEE
PAGE
371.

The RANGER

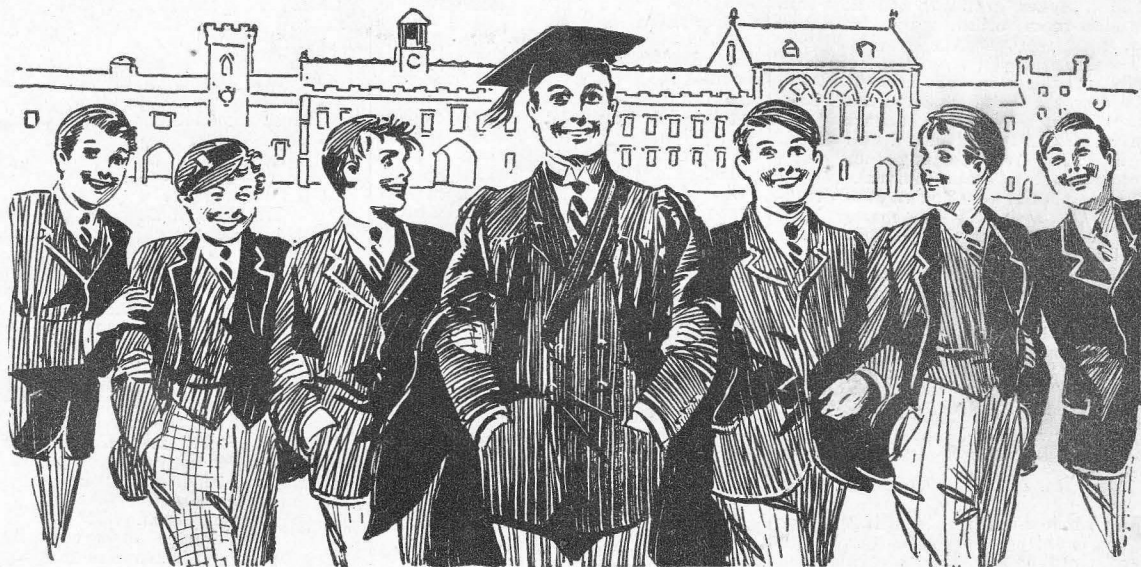
2^d



"What's
the
Game?"

THE BEST SCHOOL YARN OF THE WEEK! By Famous FRANK RICHARDS.

The Fourth Form at GRIMSLADE!



FRITZ VON SPLITZ, THE FAT BOY OF GRIMSLADE, THOUGHT HE WAS ON A "SNIP" WHEN HE RAIDED THE SCHOOL TUCKSHOP. BUT HE FORGOT THE OLD SAYING THAT AFTER THE FEAST COMES THE RECKONING!

Only Polly!

HOLD your row!" Mr. Peck, master of the Fourth Form at Grimslade, stopped speaking. Fellows in the Fourth jumped and stared round at one another.

"What—what—" gasped Peck. "Who—who spoke?"

There was a frozen silence in the class. Jim Dainty glanced at Ginger Rawlinson, rather suspecting that Ginger was the only fellow in the Form with cheek enough to make such a remark. Ginger, as it happened, was staring round at Dainty, with exactly the same suspicion in his mind.

Thunder grew in the brow of Peck. There were cheeky fellows in the Grimslade Fourth—and probably plenty of fellows who were tired of Peck's rather long-winded remarks on the subject of deponent verbs. But for any fellow to tell the Form master to "hold his row"—that was amazing, astounding, unnerving.

"Who spoke?" roared Peck. "Mein gootness!" murmured Fritz Splitz. "Was tat you, Tainty?"

"No, you bloated Boche!" growled Jim Dainty.

"Was it you, Chinger?"

"No, you German sausage!" grunted Ginger Rawlinson.

Peck scanned his class with glinting eyes. He thought he knew all the voices in the Fourth; but apparently the speaker must have spoken in disguised tones, for he had not recognised that voice. It had sounded rather squeaky—and Fritz Splitz had a squeaky voice. But, whoever it was, it was not Fritz, for Fritz's German accent was unmistakable.

Peck breathed hard and deep. He had to let the incident pass. He got on with deponent verbs again. There was quite a tense atmosphere in the classroom. It was a sunny, spring morning; the class-room windows were open, letting in sunshine and the spring breeze. Everybody had been feeling rather cheery; now everybody was feeling rather tense. Nobody knew who had spoken, but fellows wondered whether

the unknown one would speak again as Peck's droning voice ran on.

"Shut up, will you, you old donkey?" It was the voice again! Mr. Peck stopped in the middle of a sentence. His face was crimson.

"Who spoke?" he hooted. "I command the boy to stand out at once!" Nobody stood out.

"My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger. "Who the dickens is ragging Peck?"

"I shall detain this Form for a half-holiday!" hooted Peck.

"You old donkey, you!" came the voice again. "You talk too much!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Really the Grimslade Fourth ought not to have laughed—really it was not a laughing matter. But they could not help it. The expression on Peck's face was too much for them. They yelled.

"Silence!" shrieked Mr. Peck, almost foaming. "Another sound and I will send the whole Form to Dr. Sparshott!"

There was instant silence. The Fourth Form did not want to be sent in bulk to the headmaster of Grimslade. Sammy Sparshott was the man to whop the whole Form.

"Now, who spoke?" demanded Peck. "I demand to know who spoke? I—"

"Hold your row!" came the voice.

"My giddy goloshes! It's somebody in the quad, sir!" shouted Ginger Rawlinson. "I'm sure it came from the window!"

"That's it!" exclaimed Jim Dainty.

"Nonsense!" hooted Peck. "There is no one in the quadrangle; everyone is in class. It was someone here!"

"You talk too much, you old donkey!" came the squeaky voice.

"Ha, ha! Give me a lump of sugar!"

Peck stood transfixed. He could see for himself this time that it was not a Fourth-Former who spoke. He jumped to the nearest window and stared into the sunny, breezy quad. Someone, after all, was there—two persons, in fact.

Mrs. Sykes, who kept the school tuckshop, was near at hand, and in the distance Mr. Sykes, the school porter, could be seen. Sykes seemed to be rooting about among the Grimslade oaks; Mrs. Sykes was quite close to the

windows of the class-room in Big School—where, obviously, Mrs. Sykes had no business to be. Peck stared at her dumbfounded.

"Woman!" he roared.

Mrs. Sykes stared up at him. It was really unimaginable that a plump, middle-aged lady should have come across to Big School to slang a Form master through an open window. But what was Mr. Peck to think? Somebody had slanged him, and there she was; and there was nobody else to be seen, except the school porter in the distance. Mrs. Sykes was well known to have a habit of telling Mr. Sykes what she thought of him, but it was quite amazing if she was allowing herself the same freedom with a member of Dr. Samuel Sparshott's staff.

"Woman!" repeated Mrs. Sykes. "Don't you call me a woman, Mr. Peck!"

"How dare you!" shrieked Mr. Peck. "Hold your row!" came the voice again. "You've been drinking!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Fourth.

Mr. Peck spun round from the window. It was not Mrs. Sykes who had said that, anyhow. The voice seemed to come from the other window. But there was nobody there! It was mysterious.

"Ha, ha! You've been drinking, you old donkey, you! Gimme a lump of sugar!"

Then Mrs. Sykes was heard:

"Oh, there you are, you naughty bird! Polly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Dick Dawson. "Tain't anybody; it's Mrs. Sykes' parrot!"

"Pi-pip-parrot!" stuttered Mr. Peck.

He rushed along to the other window. There on the window-sill squatted a parrot, who blinked at him with solemn eyes. Peck gazed at the parrot, and the parrot gazed at Peck. The parrot chuckled.

"Ha, ha! You old donkey, you! You talk too much! Hold your row!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Peck. He realised that the parrot must be repeating phrases he had picked up from overhearing Mrs. Sykes' remarks to her worst half. Generally that parrot was

in the cage in the little parlour behind the tuckshop. The cage door evidently had been left open and Polly had come forth to see the world.

"You naughty bird!" Mrs. Sykes made a grab at the parrot from below. "You naughty Polly, I've caught you!"

But Mrs. Sykes hadn't quite caught Polly. Polly wasn't tired of freedom yet. Polly fluttered off the window-sill as Mrs. Sykes grabbed, and flew into the class-room, brushing by Mr. Peck's ear.

There was a yell from the Fourth as Polly whizzed across the class-room and settled on the Form master's desk. Mrs. Sykes, from the quad, screamed to the parrot. Peck turned round and stared at it. The parrot, eyeing the yelling juniors solemnly, made remarks.

"Hold your row! You've been drinking! That's what's the matter with you, you old donkey, you—you've been drinking! Ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Fourth.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Peck.

"Bless my soul!" said Polly cheerfully. "Give me a lump of sugar! Bless my soul! Ha, ha!" Evidently Polly was very quick at picking up words.

"Bless my soul! You old donkey, you! Bless my soul!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shall we catch him, sir?" exclaimed Ginter.

"Yes—yes, at once!" gasped Mr. Peck.

The whole Fourth rose to it. It was an opportunity for a glorious rag—and the Grimslade Fourth were not the fellows to lose a chance like that. They rose to it as one man.

There was a rush and a roar. Polly flew off the desk and settled on top of the blackboard.

Crash! Blackboard and easel came down with a terrific concussion. Polly squawked and dodged, and flew, and fluttered, and after Polly went an uproarious crowd. Books and papers flew about the room—a globe went over—fellows jumped on the desks and forms—and in the wild confusion, White's House men barged over men of Redmayes' House, and Redmayes men tripped and tackled White's men. It was really glorious. Third school had never been so thoroughly enjoyed.

"Order! Silence! Take your places!" raved Mr. Peck. He rushed to his desk, stamped his foot and waved his arms.

"Order! I will have order!"

"But we're catching the parrot, sir—"

"You asked us to catch the parrot, sir—"

"We'll have him in a jiffy—"

"Order!" shrieked the unhappy Peck.

"Mrs. Sykes! Come in at once and take away that—that dreadful bird!"

Mrs. Sykes came into the class-room. But Polly, highly excited now and evidently enjoying life, flew and fluttered, and the plump dame gasped and panted in breathless pursuit. Every time she got near the parrot, some junior rushed in to help—starting Polly off again.

Finally, Polly made for the open window, and sailed out triumphantly—Mrs. Sykes, clutching wildly, stumbling over scattered books, and sprawling. A dozen fellows rushed to help her to her feet. With great politeness, they supported the plump, breathless, gasping dame to the door. In the quad, Sykes was in hot pursuit of Polly. Mrs. Sykes tottered breathlessly away.

"Take your places!" hooted Mr. Peck. "Take your places at once! Rawlinson, take a hundred lines for throwing that book—Dainty, take a hundred lines for tripping Bean—Splitz, get up at once! How dare you sprawl on the floor! How dare you, I say!"

"Ach! I had peen knock over!" gasped the sprawling Fritz. "Mein gootness! I have no more to breff! I have a bain in mein pread-pasket! Ooooh!"

Fritz sat up, gurgling. He sat on

something hard, and wriggled round to see what it was. It was a large key, evidently dropped by Mrs. Sykes when she sprawled over in the class-room. Nobody but Fritz saw that key—for the German juniors' fat hand closed on it instantly. Fritz's podgy brain was not always quick on the uptake. But it could work swiftly sometimes. It worked swiftly now. The key of the tuckshop disappeared into Fritz's pocket as he scrambled to his feet.

Order was restored in the Fourth Form class-room at last. Deponent verbs resumed their sway. Mr. Peck was cross and irritable; he had not enjoyed the rag like his Form. But all the Fourth were grinning as if they found deponent verbs, for once, quite amusing.

And the widest grin was on the fat features of Friedrich von Splitz—in happy possession of the key of the tuckshop, and already seeing dazzling visions of unlimited tuck.

Given Away!

"SUBBOSE—" said Fritz Splitz. "Prep, fathead!" said Dainty and Dawson together.

It was the hour of evening prep, and Dainty, Dawson, and Friedrich von Splitz were in Study No. 10 in White's House—at work. Dainty and Dawson, at least, were at work; but Fritz seemed to be thinking of other things than prep. There was a wrinkle of deep thought in the podgy brow of Fritz.

However, he remained silent till prep was over; then, as Jim Dainty and his chum were about to leave the study, he started again.

"Subbose—" began the fat Rhineland.

"Suppose what, you fathead?" asked Jim, staring at him. It was clear that there was something on Fatty Fritz's mind.

"Subbose tat a fellow vas to porrow some duck."

"What the merry thump do you want to borrow a duck for?" exclaimed Dainty.

"Ven I say duck, Tainty, I mean duck, not duck!" explained Fritz

lucidly. "Te duck in te duckshop, ain't it."

"Oh! Tuck!"

"Ja, ja! Tat is vat I say—duck! Subbose I porrowed some duck, which I vill pay for ven I get some gash from mein beoples in Chermany! I geep a list of all tat duck, and pay for him ven my beoples send me tat gash! Tat vill be ferry honest, vat you tink?"

Dainty and Dawson stared at Fatty Fritz. Apparently the fat German was struggling with a moral problem.

"You fat, foolzing, frumptions freak!" said Dainty in measured tones. "You've been kicked by every man in the House for snaffling tuck! Do you want some more?"

"I geep a list of tat duck, and pay for him ven mein beoples in Chermany send me some gash!"

"When!" grinned Dawson.

"Tat vill be ferry honest, I tink," said Fritz. "Vat you tink?"

"I'll tell you what I think," said Dainty. "I think it's time you were kicked again! Shove him over here, Dawson!"

"Ach! Tat you let go mein ears, you peast, Tawson!" yelled Fritz, as Dick Dawson obliged. "Mein gootness! Tainty, you peastly pounder, kick me not on mein trousers—yaroooh!"

"That's a tip!" said Dainty cheerfully. "Now let me catch you pinching, or borrowing anybody's tuck, and I'll give you some more like that!"

"Ach himmel! Leaf off!" shrieked Fritz. "You tamage mein trousers—I have a bain in mein trousers—peast and brute! Ach!"

Dainty and Dawson, chuckling, quitted the study, leaving Friedrich von Splitz roaring. They strolled along to the Common-room, and Fritz slammed the door after them.

"Peasts!" gasped Fritz. "Prutes! Pounders! Now I vill not giff tem any of tat duck tat I porrow."

From the Common-room, at the end of the passage, there was a buzz of cheery voices. Most of White's juniors gathered there after prep; and boxing was going on. At lock-up the House was closed; though as the studies were on the ground floor, fellows of both Houses sometimes got out for a "rag."

Friedrich von Splitz listened to the din along the passage for a few minutes, then he turned out the light in the study and crossed to the window and opened it. Dark night lay on the quadrangle of Grimslade, save where lights glimmered from study windows in the two Houses, and from Sammy Sparshott's window in Big School. Fritz blinked out with his saucer-eyes, and his fat hand gripped the key in his pocket.

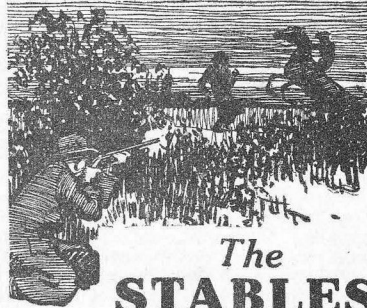
There was no glimmer of light from the direction of the tuckshop. That establishment was closed for the night, and deserted, as Mr. and Mrs. Sykes dwelt in the lodge. Whether Mrs. Sykes missed the key she had dropped in the Form-room that morning, Fritz did not know. But Sykes had another key, and the tuckshop would be locked up as usual, when the good dame left it for the night. But a locked lock would not stop a fellow who had a key.

Fritz Splitz climbed out of the window and crept away in the deep shadows.

There was nobody at hand when Fatty Fritz dodged into the little porch of the school shop. All was dark and silent there. The door was locked, as he expected; and he groped for the keyhole and slipped in the key he had picked up in the class-room. It turned easily; and the door was open.

With a thumping heart, Fritz Splitz stepped in and closed the door softly behind him. He had brought Jim Dainty's electric torch from Study No. 10, and it gave quite sufficient light for his purpose.

On tiptoe, though he knew there was no one at hand, he trod round the counter. An open doorway gave on the little parlour behind the shop, where Mrs. Sykes generally sat in the daytime with her knitting-needles, or



The STABLES CRIME

The exercise gallop was over and in the mists of the early morning two men, one mounted, stood talking. Suddenly from behind a bush came the sharp crack of a rifle and one of the men threw up his hands and staggered backwards! This is only one of the sensational incidents in a gripping novel of mystery and intrigue on the Turf that will hold you enthralled from start to finish. Ask for

SEXTON BLAKE
LIBRARY N^o. 378

At all Newsagents - - 4d.

darning Mr. Sykes' socks, when she was not wanted in the shop. It was intensely dark now, and Fritz did not even blink into the doorway. He had more interesting things to blink at.

The beam of the torch glimmered over tins of biscuits, bags of pastry, bottles of sweets, boxes of preserved fruits—all sorts of delicious things. Friedrich von Splitz fairly gloated.

There was a sound of munching and crunching. With his mouth full, not losing a moment, Fritz packed away sweets and nuts and other things into his pockets. Fritz had foresight. He was going to pack away all he could hold inside his capacious German interior. But later on he would be hungry again. So he filled his pockets while he ate, groping for easily portable articles.

Munch, munch, munch! Crunch, crunch, crunch! Fatty Fritz's podgy face beamed in the gloom. This was happiness! This was life! But suddenly the fat German jumped and choked, as a thrill of terror ran through his podgy carcass at the sound of a voice!

"Oh! There you are! Hold your row!"

"Ach! Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. His fat jaws dropped! The voice was hardly a dozen feet from him! It came from the dark interior of the little parlour. Fritz trembled.

"Hold your row!" came the voice. "You old donkey! You talk too much! Ha, ha! Give me a lump of sugar!"

"Ach! Gootness!" gasped Fritz, fairly gurgling with relief, as he realised that the speaker was Mrs. Sykes' parrot. "Himmel! It is tat parrot! Peast and prute of a parrot, you make me chump mit meinsel!"

"Hold your row!" came from the darkness, with a chuckle. "Peast and a prute, you make me chump mit meinsel!" That parrot had a really uncanny way of picking up anything that was said in its hearing, and repeating it on the spot. "Ha, ha! Peast and a prute of a parrot! Ha, ha!"

"Mein gootness! Tat you be quiet!" hissed Fritz. "Somepoddy may hear you, you peastly parrot."

"Ha, ha! Mein gootness! Ha, ha!"

Fritz trembled with terror lest someone should pass outside, hear the cackle of the bird and become suspicious.

"Vill you be quiet, you peastly pird?" he snarled. "Mein gootness! I vill gum and wring you te neck if you make tat noise, mit you!"

"Polly wants sugar!" was the answer. "Hold your row! You old donkey, you talk too much! I vill gum and wring you te neck, if you make tat noise!"

Fritz gave it up. The more he adured the parrot to be quiet, the more Polly talked. He resumed his feast. Every now and then a chuckle or a cackle or a friendly remark came from the darkness of the room behind the shop; but Fatty Fritz took no heed. Fatty Fritz's jaws worked steadily, with an incessant munching and crunching.

Cakes and tarts, sweets and fruits, doughnuts and other delicious things went down at an amazing rate. Every now and then he turned on a glimmer of the torch, to root out fresh provender; and he ate, and ate, and ate, till even the fat German could eat no more. There was a sea of crumbs and torn paper bags round him; his fat face was red and shiny, his saucer-eyes almost bolted from his head; he breathed with difficulty.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. "I tink tat I can eat no more."

"Ha, ha!" came from the darkness. "Hold your row! I tink tat I can eat no more! Peast and a prute of a parrot! Mein gootness! Ha, ha!"

Fatty Fritz paid no heed. Full inside, he groped round the counter and rolled to the door.

He opened it cautiously and peered into the quad. All was silent—the coast was clear. He stepped out, shut and locked the door behind him, and stole softly away. Peering to right, peering



"Order! Silence!" raved Mr. Peck, stamping his foot. "I will have order!" "But we're catching the parrot, sir—" "You asked us to catch the parrot, sir—" "We'll have him in a jiffy!"

to left, he stole back to White's House, and reached the window of Study No. 10. The window was still open as he had left it; there was no light in the study; Dainty and Dawson were still in the Common-room with the Fourth. Fritz Splitz gripped the window-sill to pull himself up.

"Ach!" he gasped. After the cargo he had taken on board, it was not easy. Twice, thrice, he strove to climb in, and slipped back. Then, with a desperate effort, he clambered in, rolled over the window-shelf, and bumped on the floor of the study.

"Ach! Oh crumbs!" gasped Fritz, as he bumped. "Oh crickey!"

He picked himself up and shut the window. He switched on the light, and sat down in the armchair, grinning a fat grin. He had had the feed of his life. There would be a row in the morning—but there was absolutely nothing to connect Fritz with what had happened. Nobody knew that he had been out of his House—nobody could possibly suspect! When, at bed-time, the study door was hurled open, Fritz was seated in the armchair, with a book open on his knees, apparently reading.

"Dorm, fatty!" called Jim Dainty.

"Mein gootness! Is it ped-time alretty, Taunt? I tink tat te time pass ferry quickly ven I an teep in a pook!" yawned Fritz. "All te time since brep I sit here and read tat pook!"

"Well, chuck it now, or you'll have Yorke after you," said Jim, and he cut away; and Fatty Fritz, with a happy grin, rolled after him.

Fritz had reason to feel happy. His ample interior was full of good things, and, with the key of the tuckshop still in his possession, there was every promise of more feasts to come.

Given Away!

"HEARD?" yelled Ginger Rawlinson. "Yes, rather! Who—" gasped Jim Dainty. "Goodness knows!" said Streaky Bacon. "There'll be a row!" said Dawson. "My giddy goloshes! You can bet your Sunday socks on that!"

After prayers in the morning, there was wild excitement in Grimslade. The news spread like wildfire of an amazing happening in the night. Outside the school shop there was a swarming crowd of Grimslade fellows, of both Houses, senior and junior. They would have swarmed into the tuckshop, too; but two prefects, Trafford and Yorke, kept guard in the doorway!

Inside, Mrs. Sykes could be seen—with a red, wrathful, and excited plump countenance. The crowd thronged and buzzed and hummed with excitement. Such a thing had never happened at Grimslade School before. Fellows could hardly believe that it had happened now! But it had! Somebody had raided the tuckshop overnight—feasted royally on the spot—and left plenty of traces of the feast, but no clue to his identity. Who?

When tuck was missing, White's House men naturally thought of Fritz Splitz. But this was rather beyond Fritz's usual performances—rather different from snooping a bag of tarts in a study. This, really, was a burglary! Fritz Splitz, mingling in the excited mob, had a fat and cheerful countenance. Certainly there was nothing to implicate Fritz; and if he had not a clear conscience, at

(Continued on page 375.)

"No! You've adopted the wrong tone with me, Jellen. I'm a man of substance, not of straw. I—"

The horse dealer broke off with a shout of alarm. A firm hand was gripping his collar, and fingers of steel were biting into his right wrist. Before he thought of resisting he was being frog-marched to the open door with a compelling force that left him helpless.

Having got him to the front door, Jellen gave him a jerk forward and raised his foot at the same time. The impudent horse dealer shot headlong down the steps; he stumbled, fell, and barked his nose upon the gravel.

He rose, with a howl of fury, and, turning, began to shout.

"I'll have damages for this! I'll bring the matter before the court! I'll show you the sort of man I am!"

"You've already shown me," said Jellen in the softest of voices. "You are a very nasty man. Take my advice and go home and wash your dirty face!"

Then the door slammed, and John Peacop, saying things to the winking stars, pursued an unsteady course towards the gate.

"And now," said Frank Jellen, half an hour later, "you look tired, Dug; I think you had better go upstairs to bed."

Dug dutifully arose; and Jellen, ringing a bell, asked a smart-looking maid to show the boy the small, blue room.

"Good-night, sir!" said Dug, lingering at the door.

"Good-night, Dug!" Frank Jellen lit a cigarette and turned over the pages of a weekly paper. "Sleep well."

Still the boy lingered.

"I want to thank you for what you've done for me, sir," he said.

"Not at all! You're a good scout, Dug," replied the young man, with a merry twinkle in his blue eyes. "And, I hope, so am I. The one good deed, you know. Good-night!"

"Good-night!" answered the boy, and then the door closed.

It was, perhaps, an hour later when Frank Jellen, feeling suddenly tired, yawned and stretched himself, and thought that for him, too, bed would be a pleasant place. He switched off the lights and went upstairs. But he had scarcely entered his bed-room, when he came out again and looked up the stairs towards the landing above. The small, blue room was up there, and a homeless boy who owned that queer-looking racehorse was sleeping there.

Frank Jellen felt suddenly concerned about that boy. Once he had been a friendless, forlorn youngster himself, and nobody had cared much about him, or thought much about his comfort. He remembered how much he would have given for a friendly word in those bygone, lonely days. And he wondered if, perhaps, he had been a little abrupt in his manner when he had sent Dug Donovan upstairs to bed—bundling him off neck-and-crop, so to speak. He recalled that the boy had lingered as if he wished to say something, and he had gone to bed with that something left unsaid.

Frank Jellen noiselessly mounted the stairs, and, reaching the door of the small, blue room, knocked.

Nobody answered.

Jellen entered the room and switched on the light, expecting to see the young jockey tucked up in bed and fast asleep. Then he blinked and looked again. The bed was empty.

Jellen walked along the landing, but found no windows open, save at the top for ventilation. He went downstairs, and saw that the bolts of the front door

had been drawn back and the chain pulled out of its groove.

Jellen opened the door and crept out under the stars. A mist shrouded the bushes and the drive. But Jellen did not hesitate. He believed he knew where to look, and his steps took him to the horsebox in which The Duke was comfortably housed.

The door was shut. He tried the top half and found it open to his pushing. He felt for the light switch, turned it on, and then peered over the lower door. And what he saw caused his lips to slacken in a very, very sympathetic smile.

The Duke was there, lolling in a great bed of clean straw. And as their eyes met Jellen fancied that The Duke winked.

Then Jellen's eyes travelled from the horse to the boy who was bunched up in the straw against the wall of the stall. Dug Donovan was lying there, fully dressed, fast asleep.

For a long half-minute Jellen hung upon the lower door of the stable, eyeing first the boy and then the horse. At last he closed the door and went back to the house. He shot the bolts home and slipped the chain into its groove.

And then Mr. Frank Jellen went very quietly upstairs to bed, whistling softly as he trod.

The bed in the small, blue room was very comfortable. But out there the straw, too, was comfortable and warm. And The Duke looked happy. So did Dug. Why worry?

(Meet Dug Donovan and his wonder racehorse in another grand story in next week's FREE GIFT issue of The RANGER. Tell all your pals about the wonderful photogravure plates and special album which are being presented free to RANGER readers, starting next Saturday.)

THE FOURTH FORM AT GRIMSLADE!

(Continued from page 369.)

least he had the certainty of not being found out, which was equally useful.

"Mein gootness!" said Fritz. "I tink tat it vas some purglar, pefore! I tink not tat any Grimslade man do tat ting! Nein! It is too pad!"

"Shouldn't wonder!" said Ginger. "Some tramp, perhaps."

"How did they get in, though?" asked Jim Dainty.

"I hear that Mrs. Sykes lost a key yesterday," answered Ginger. "May have lost it out of gates, and some tramp picked it up."

"Ach! Tat is right!" agreed Fritz. "Tat is vat I tink, pefore."

"But a tramp wouldn't know that it was the tuckshop key!" said Dainty, shaking his head. "Bet you it was a Grimslade man."

The tall figure of Dr. Samuel Sparshott came striding across from Big School. The buzz of voices died away. There was a grim expression on Sammy's face. The Head had been informed at once of this extraordinary happening, and he was losing no time in looking into it. He strode into the school shop.

For several long minutes Mrs. Sykes poured forth wrath and indignation without Sammy being able to get in a word. Meanwhile, Dr. Sparshott examined the scene of the crime as Ginger humorously expressed it. The angry and indignant lady ran out of breath at last. Then there was blessed silence, only interrupted by a squawk from the parrot in the parlour.

With a keen eye the headmaster of Grimslade examined the traces left by the surreptitious feaster. But there was absolutely no clue to the culprit, not a sign of his identity. Some fellow had got out of his House secretly and done

this at night—if the offender was a Grimslader. But was he?

"Where did you lose your key, Mrs. Sykes?"

"I don't know! I dropped the dratted thing somewhere, sir!" answered Mrs. Sykes. "Some boy must have picked it up."

"Hold your row!" came from the parlour.

Dr. Sparshott jumped.

"What—who—"

"It's only the parrot, sir," said Mrs. Sykes hastily. "Polly picks up things I say to Sykes sometimes."

"Hold your row!" yelled Polly. "You've been drinking, you old donkey, you!"

"Really, Mrs. Sykes, I should be glad if you could keep that wretched bird quiet!" exclaimed Dr. Sparshott testily.

"Tat you be quiet!" came from the parlour. "Somepoddly may hear you! Peast and prute of a parrot!"

Dr. Sparshott gave a convulsive start. He stepped to the doorway, and looked into the little parlour with a really extraordinary expression on his face. Polly, in the cage, blinked at him with solemn red eyes.

"Mein gootness!" said Polly cheerfully. "You make me chump mit meinsel! I vill gum and wring your neck if you make tat noise mit you! I tink tat I can eat no more! Peast and prute of a parrot!" Cackle, cackle!

"Great gad!" ejaculated Dr. Sparshott.

Mrs. Sykes gazed at her weird bird in amazement. Polly had never talked with a German accent before. Mrs. Sykes wondered how Polly could have picked it up. Sammy's brain was quicker on the uptake. Sammy did not wonder—he knew!

Dr. Sparshott strode across to the door of the quad. His glinting grey eyes gleamed out on the crowd of Grimslade fellows, and picked out Fritz Splitz.

"Splitz!" barked the Head.

"Ach! Yes, sir?" gasped Fritz.

"You are aware," said Dr. Sparshott, "that we never expel a boy at Grimslade, otherwise you would not stay an hour longer in the school, Splitz. But you will receive such a flogging that I think you will never repeat this performance. Your pocket-money will be stopped until all the things you took last night have been paid for! Follow me!"

"But it vas not me!" shrieked Fritz, in dismay. "Mein prain is a perfect plank! I know nottings! I tink—" "I tink tat I can eat no more!" yelled Polly, from the parlour. "Peast and prute of a parrot, you make me chump mit meinsel."

"Ach himmel!" gasped Fritz. He understood now. "Mein gootness! Tat peastly parrot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Ginger. His red head was in the doorway, and he had heard Polly's yell.

"Give me Mrs. Sykes' key, Splitz! Thank you! Here is your key, Mrs. Sykes! I recommend you to take better care of it! Splitz, follow me!"

Fritz Splitz followed the Head, groaning dimly. He left the Grimslade crowd yelling. They crowded into the shop to listen to Polly.

"Ach! Mein gootness!" screamed Polly. "Peast and prute of a parrot! I tink tat I can eat no more! Somepoddly may hear you!"

Cackle, cackle, cackle!

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Grimsladers.

It was Polly who had betrayed the tuckshop raider! The Grimsladers yelled with laughter as they listened to the parrot. They rocked with merriment and yelled and yelled.

Over in the Head's study Fritz Splitz also was yelling. But Fritz's yells were not of merriment!

("Just in Time for Wembley!" That's the title of our special Cup Final story which is coming next week—in addition to our splendid FREE GIFTS.)